



To: Administrative Council Members

From: Randy J. Dunn, President

Date: April 10, 2012

RE: SACSCOC Substantive Change Policy and Procedure

Murray State University is accredited by the Commission on Colleges (COC) of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS). As Standard 3.12.1 of the Compliance Certification document suggests, MSU must submit a notification of substantive change to the COC prior to implementation of the change. This memo establishes a procedure to assist in recognizing what constitutes a substantive change, as well as a procedure to approve the change and notify the COC in a timely manner. Please review the information and matrix below. Should any campus administrator or constituency have any questions, they may contact Associate Provost Dr. Jay Morgan, Office of the Provost, 333 Wells Hall, Murray, KY, 42071, (270) 809-3027, or at jmorgan@murraystate.edu.

SACSCOC Substantive Change Policy and Procedure

I. Definitions

- A. The *Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges* accredits an entire institution and its programs and services, wherever they are located or however they are delivered. It is responsible for reviewing all substantive changes that occur between an institution's decennial reviews to determine whether or not the change has affected the quality of the total institution and to assure the public that all aspects of the institution continue to meet defined standards.
- B. The *Commission on Colleges* is recognized by the U.S. Department of Education as an agency whose accreditation enables its member institutions to seek eligibility to participate in Title IV programs. To maintain its recognition with the U.S. Department of Education, the Commission on Colleges has incorporated federal requirements into its substantive change policy and procedures. Some of those requirements expect an institution to seek approval prior to the initiation of a substantive change so the change can be included in the institution's scope of accreditation.

C. **Substantive change** is a significant modification or expansion of the nature and scope of an accredited institution. Under SACSCOC Policy, substantive change includes:

- Any change in the established mission or objectives of the institution
- Any change in legal status, form of control, or ownership of the institution
- The addition of courses or programs that represent a significant departure, either in content or method of delivery, from those that were offered when the institution was last evaluated
- The addition of courses or programs at a degree or credential level different from that which is included in the institution's current accreditation or reaffirmation
- A change from clock hours to credit hours
- A substantial increase in the number of clock or credit hours awarded for successful completion of a program
- The establishment of an additional location geographically apart from the main campus at which the institution offers at least 50 percent of an educational program
- The establishment of a branch campus
- Closing a program, off-campus site, branch campus or institution
- Entering into a collaborative academic arrangement such as a dual degree program or a joint degree program with another institution
- Acquiring another institution or a program or location of another institution
- Adding a permanent location at a site where the institution is conducting a teach-out program for a closed institution
- Entering into a contract by which an entity not eligible for Title IV funding offers 25% or more of one or more of the accredited institution's programs

D. **Notification** to the COC regarding substantive change means a letter from an institution's chief executive officer, or hi/her designated representative, to SACSCOC President summarizing a proposed change, providing the intended implementation date, and listing the complete physical address, if the change involves the initiation of an off-campus site or branch campus. The policy and procedures for reporting and review of institutional substantive change are outlined in the document "Substantive Change for Accredited Institutions of the Commissions on Colleges."

- E. A *prospectus* is a concisely worded narrative that describes a proposed substantive change according to a format specified by the COC.
- F. The *Accreditation Liaison* is the individual appointed by the President of Murray State University to help ensure MSU remains in compliance with SACS accreditation requirements and policies.
- G. A *branch campus* is a location of an institution that is geographically apart and independent of the main campus of the institution. A location is independent of the main campus if the location is (1) permanent in nature, (2) offers courses in educational programs leading to a degree, certificate, or other recognized education credential, (3) has its own faculty and administrative or supervisory organization, and (4) has its own budgetary and hiring authority.
- H. An *off-campus site* is a location of an institution that is geographically apart, but not independent, of the main campus. The site may be used in an ongoing manner to deliver programs or courses leading to a degree, certificate, or other recognized educational credential, but it does not have its own faculty, administrative organization or budget.
- I. *Distance education* is a formal educational process in which the majority of the instruction (interaction between students and instructors and among students) in a course occurs when students and instructors are not in the same place. Instruction may be synchronous or asynchronous. A distance education course may use the internet; one-way and two-way transmissions through open broadcast, closed circuit, cable, microwave, broadband lines, fiber optics, satellite, or wireless communications devices; audio conferencing; or video cassettes, DVD's, and CD-ROMs if used as part of the distance learning course or program.

Note: All definitions can be found in the glossary of the [SACSCOC Substantive Change Policy](#)

II. Procedure for Murray State University

1. The university SACSCOC liaison shall notify the university president and all administrative council members of what constitutes a substantive change at the beginning of each academic year. The administrative council members that will receive notification are as follows:
 - President
 - Chief of Staff

- Senior Executive Coordinator for the President and Coordinator for Board Relations
 - General Counsel
 - Director of Equal Opportunity/ADA Compliance
 - Director of Community Relations
 - Executive Director for Regional Outreach
 - Coordinator for Institutional Research
 - Athletic Director
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- Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs
 - Associate Provost for Graduate Education and Research
 - Associate Provost for Undergraduate Education
 - Dean- Center for Continuing Education and Academic Outreach
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- Vice President for Finance and Administrative Services
 - Director for Human Resources
 - Chief Facilities Officer and Director, Facilities Construction
 - Chief Information Officer
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- Vice President for Student Affairs
 - Assistant Vice President for Student Affairs
 - Executive Director for Enrollment Management
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- Vice President for Institutional Advancement
 - Associate Vice President for Institutional Advancement
 - Assistant Vice President for University Communications
2. The appropriate university administrative council member, vice president, or the president notifies the MSU SACSCOC liaison before an intended change or upon approval of the change by the respective board, committee, or body.
 3. The campus SACSCOC liaison prepares a substantive change notification for the university president to sign. If a prospectus is required, the university SACSCOC liaison shall work with the appropriate administrative council member to prepare the criteria.
 4. The campus SACSCOC liaison forwards the notification of substantive change to the SACSCOC office in Decatur, Georgia, to be placed on file within six months of the noted change. (Note: Some Substantive Changes require twelve month notification.)

5. The campus SACSCOC liaison will hold both a paper copy and electronic copy of the substantive change on file for permanent record of the university.

Note: It is the responsibility of an institution to follow the substantive change procedures of the Commission and inform the Commission of such changes in accord with those procedures. If an institution is unclear as to whether a change is substantive in nature, it should contact Commission staff for consultation. The Commission on Colleges accredits institutions not systems. While a system may provide the Commission with important information regarding changes planned or underway at its institutions, it is expected that each institution will follow the reporting requirements of the substantive change policy.

III. Procedures for Reporting

There are three different procedures for addressing the different types of substantive changes:

1. [Procedure 1: Requires Notification and Approval Prior to Implementation](#)
2. [Procedure 2: Requires **only** Notification Prior to Implementation](#)
3. [Procedure 3: Closing a Program, Site, Branch Campus or Institution](#)

Procedures for the following types of changes are included in a separate document, "[Mergers, Consolidations, Change of Ownership, and Change of Legal Status](#)," located on the SACSCOC Website:

- Initiating mergers or consolidations
- Acquiring any program or site from another institution
- Adding as a permanent location any site where the institution is conducting a teach-out for students of another institution that is closing
- Changes in governance, ownership, means of control or legal status

The initiation or revision of programs not offered for academic credit and that are not eligible for federal financial aid does not require reporting; however, such programs are subject to review at the time of reaffirmation.

Note: This Overview of Policy Procedures and Matrix of Various Types of Substantive Change have been directly taken from the Policy Procedures and Matrix on the [SACSCOC website](#), and both can be found in the [SACSCOC Substantive Change Policy](#).

Matrix of Substantive Change

<i>Types of Change</i>	<i>Procedure</i>	<i>Prior Notification Required</i>	<i>Time Frame for Contacting COC</i>	<i>Prior Approval Required</i>	<i>Documentation</i>
Initiating coursework or programs at a more advanced level than currently approved	Procedure 1	Yes	12 months	Yes	Application for Level Change Due Dates: April 15 or October 1
Expanding at current degree level	Procedure 1	Yes	6 months	Yes	Prospectus
Initiating a branch campus	Procedure 1	Yes	6 months	Yes	Prospectus
Initiating joint or dual degrees with another institution: (See: "Collaborative Academic Arrangements: Policy and Procedures")	Procedure 2	Yes	Prior to implementation	Yes	Copy of signed agreement and contact information for each institution
Joint programs- with another SACSCOC accredited institution	Procedure 1	Yes	6 months	Yes	Prospectus
Join programs- with an institution not accredited by SACSCOC	Procedure 2	Yes	Prior to implementation	No	Copy of signed agreement and contact information for each institution
Initiating a certificate program at employer's request and on short notice					
...using existing approved courses	NA	NA	NA	NA	None
...at a new off-campus site (previously approved program)	Procedure 1	Yes	Approval required prior to implementation	Yes	Modified Prospectus
...that is a significant departure from previously approved programs	Procedure 1	Yes	Approval required prior to implementation	Yes	Modified Prospectus
Initiating other certificate programs					
...using existing approved courses	NA	NA	NA	NA	None
...at a new off-campus site (previously approved program)	Procedure 1	Yes	Approval required prior to implementation	Yes	Modified Prospectus
...that is a significant departure from previously approved programs	Procedure 1	Yes	Approval required prior to implementation	Yes	Modified Prospectus
Initiating off-campus sites (including Early College High School programs offered at the high school)...					
...student can obtain 50 percent or more credit towards program	Procedure 1	Yes	6 months	Yes	Prospectus
...student can obtain 25-49 percent of credit	Procedure 2	Yes	Prior to implementation	No	Letter of Notification
...student can obtain 24 percent or less	NA	NA	NA	NA	None
Expanding program offerings at previously approved off-campus sites					
...adding programs that are significantly different from current programs at the site	Procedure 2	Yes	Prior to implementation	No	Letter of notification
...adding programs that are NOT significantly different from current programs <u>at the site</u>	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Altering significantly the educational mission of the	Procedure 1	Yes	6 months	Yes	Prospectus

institution					
Altering significantly the length of a program	Procedure 1	Yes	6 months	Yes	Prospectus
Initiating distance learning...					
...offering 50 percent or more of a program <u>for the first time</u> (Adding subsequent programs requires advance notification only for programs that are significant departures from the originally approved programs)	Procedure 1	Yes	6 months	Yes	Prospectus
...offering 25-49 percent	Procedure 2	Yes	Prior to implementation	No	Letter of Notification
...offering 24 percent or less	NA	NA	NA	NA	None
Initiating programs/courses offered through contractual agreement or consortium	Procedure 2	Yes	Prior to implementation	No	Letter of Notification and copy of signed agreement
Entering into a contact with an entity not certified to participate in USDOE Title IV programs					
...if the entity provides 25% or more of an educational program offered by the COC accreditation institution	Procedure 1	Yes	6 months	Yes	Prospectus
...if the entity provides less than 25% of an educational program offered by the accredited institution	Procedure 2	Yes	6 months	No	Copy of the signed agreement
Initiating a merger/consolidation with another institution	See SACSCOC policy "Mergers, Consolidations and Change of Ownership..."	Yes	6 months	Yes	Prospectus Due Dates: April 15 or October 1
Changing governance, ownership, control, or legal status of an institution	See SACSCOC policy "Mergers, Consolidations and Change of Ownership..."	Yes	6 months	Yes	Prospectus Due Dates: April 15 or October 1
Relocating a main or branch campus	Procedure 1	Yes	6 months	Yes	Prospectus
Moving an off-campus instructional site (serving the same geographic area)	Procedure 2	Yes	Prior to implementation	No	Letter of Notification with New Address and Starting Date
Changing from clock hours to credit hours	Procedure 1	Yes	6 months	Yes	Prospectus
Altering significantly the length of a program	Procedure 1	Yes	6 months	Yes	Prospectus
Initiating degree completion programs	Procedure 1	Yes	6 months	Yes	Prospectus
Closing a program, approved off-campus site, branch campus, or institution					
Institution to teach-out its own students	Procedure 3	Yes	Immediately following decision to close	Yes	Description of teach-out plan included with letter of notification
Institution contracts with another institution to teach-out students (Teach-Out Agreement)	Procedure 3	Yes	Immediately following decision to close	Yes	Description of teach-out plan, copy of signed teach-out agreement detailing terms included with notification
Acquiring any program or site from another institution	See SACSCOC policy "Mergers, Consolidations and Change of Ownership..."	Yes	6 months	Yes	Prospectus
Adding a permanent location at a site where the institution is conducting a teach-out for students from another institution that is	See SACSCOC policy "Mergers, Consolidations and Change of Ownership..."	Yes	6 months	Yes	Prospectus

closing					
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