

SECTION: Instructional  
SUBJECT: Substantive Change Policy  
SOURCE REFERENCE: Southern Association of Colleges & Schools Commission on College (SACSCOC)

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NUMBER: J/1.11

## Substantive Change Policy

### Purpose

The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) defines substantive change as *"a significant modification or expansion of the nature and scope of an accredited institution."*

To define a process for adherence to the policies and guidelines (CS 3.12.2) of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) related to institutional change. Personnel from all divisions/departments of Gadsden State Community College will be responsible for ensuring timely notification of substantive changes in accordance with SACSCOC policies. Gadsden State Community College will notify the Commission of substantive changes and will seek approval prior to the initiation of changes when appropriate.

### Categories of Substantive Change

#### Category 1: Initiating a certificate program

Using existing approved courses	No action required
Beginning a previously approved program at a new off-campus site	Submit a modified prospectus prior to implementation
Initiating a certificate program that is a significant departure from previously approved programs	Submit a modified prospectus prior to implementation

#### Category 2: Expanding program offerings at previously approved off-campus sites

Program offerings are significantly different from current programs	Submit a letter of notification prior to implementation (e.g., ACR @ St. Clair)
Program offerings are <u>not</u> significantly different from current programs	No action required

#### Category 3: Initiating off-campus sites (including Dual Credit programs offered at the high school)

Programs where a student can obtain 50% or more of the credits for a program	Submit a prospectus 6 month in advance of implementation (e.g. GS Cherokee)
Programs where a student can obtain 25-49% of credits for a program	Submit a letter of notification prior to implementation
Programs where a student can obtain 24% or less of credits for a program	No action required

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#### Category 4: Expanding at current degree level

Offering a new program that is significantly different from current programs—the College must submit a prospectus six months in advance of implementation.

#### Category 5: Initiating a branch campus

The College must submit a prospectus six months in advance of implementation.

### Implications for Gadsden State

#### Substantive Change that is less likely to apply to Gadsden State Community College

- Initiating joint degrees with another institution
- Initiating program/courses offered through contractual agreement or consortium
- Relocating an off-campus instructional site
- Altering significantly the length of a program

#### Substantive Change that is unlikely to apply to Gadsden State Community College

- Initiating coursework or programs at a more advanced level than currently approved
- Altering significantly the educational mission of the institution
- Initiating a merger/consolidation with another institution
- Relocating a main or branch campus
- Changing governance, ownership, control, or legal status of an institution
- Closing an institution

#### Substantive Changes Previously Approved by SACSCOC

SACSCOC Acknowledgement Date	Substantive Change
December 11, 2008	Acceptance of notification- course offering Machine Tool at Anniston Army Depot
August 24, 2010	Acceptance of notification-Termination of Furniture Refinishing Program at St. Clair site
August 24, 2010	Acceptance of notification-Addition of short- term certificate Air Conditioning at St. Clair site
March 28, 2011	Acceptation of notification-Paramedics bridge into the A.D.N. program
September 1, 2011	Acceptance of notification-EMS Curriculum expansion
December 12, 2011	Acceptance of notification-Revised Mission Statement
March 30, 2012	Acceptance of notification-Articulated Credit Procedures -Appropriate faculty credentials and quality of courses for procedures involved

*Reviewed 10/20/2017*  
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November 1, 2012	Acceptance of notification-Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between GSCC and the University of Ibague, Ibague, Columbia (Aquaculture)
March 18, 2013	Acceptance of notification-Entrepreneurial and Small Business Operations short-term certificate

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	approved
May 13, 2013	Approval of Closure-Anniston Army Depot off-campus instructional site closure
November 4, 2013	Approval-Cosmetology Program Reporting (contact and semester hours)
November 5, 2014	Acceptance of notification-Site approval for off-campus sites: Cherokee County Career and Technology Center; Calhoun County Career Technical Center; Gadsden City High School
January 7, 2015	Acknowledgement-Addition of Health Information Technology Management Program short-term certificate
August 13, 2015	Approval of dual enrollment off-campus sites and to include them in the scope of the current accreditation: Cherokee County Career and Technology Center; Gadsden City High School; Calhoun County Career Technical Center
October 9, 2015	Verification-Health Information Technology certificate program is included in the scope of the accreditation to award Associate's degrees in Office Administration- Health Information Technology.
January 19, 2016	Approval of closure-Public Safety Telecommunications program
January 19, 2016	Approval of change in governance- moving from the Alabama State Department of Education to the Alabama Community College System and authorizing a Substantive Change Committee to review the system change. -Letter to ACCS from SACSCOC
September 17, 2015	
May 9, 2016	Acceptance of notification of the new Associate of Applied Science in Salon and Spa Management degree and certificate program
April 25, 2017	Acceptance of notification of change of nursing curriculum.
June 12, 2017	Approval of dual enrollment off-campus sites and to include them in the scope of the current accreditation: Coosa Christian School, Gaston High School, Sand Rock High School, Southside High School, and Westbrook High School.

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### Persons Responsible

President, Cabinet Members, and Academic Leaders (Deans and Directors) should report institutional changes to SACSCOC Institutional Liaison.

Institutional Liaison should monitor all institutional changes reported and provide training on substantive change as needed.

### Process

- At the beginning of each regular term, Fall and Spring, the SACSCOC Liaison will send a check sheet to deans and academic leaders requesting information on any institutional changes that are planned in their areas since the last report.
- The institutional liaison, appropriate academic leader and president will review the changes identified on the check sheets to determine which changes are substantive.
- For each change identified as substantive, the supervising dean or director will assign responsibility to appropriate divisional personnel to work with the institutional liaison to complete the required materials for submissions (e.g., prospectus and letters).
- The president will send completed substantive change documents to SACSCOC.

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### 3.12 Responsibility for Compliance with the Commission's substantive change procedures and policy

**3.12.1** The institution notifies the Commission in a timely manner of changes in accordance with the substantive change policy and, when required, seeks approval prior to the initiation of changes. (See Commission policy "Substantive Change for Accredited Institutions." **(Substantive change notification)**)

**3.12.2** The institution has a policy and adequate procedures to ensure that all substantive changes are reported to the Commission on Colleges. **(Internal policy)**

**Comment:** *Currently, an institution that fails to notify the Commission in advance of implementation of a substantive change is required to submit an internal procedure that outlines processes that will ensure that all future substantive changes are reported in accord with the Commission's policy on substantive change. That internal procedure is forwarded to the Board of Trustees for review. Based upon the recommendation of the Board, the Committee created a new standard (3.12.2) that expects all institutions to have such a policy and procedures—regardless of their record of compliance with the substantive change policy. The change also modifies the current standard 3.12.1 so that the emphasis is on timely reporting.*

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### Substantive Change Policy Checklist

Substantive Changes must be reported to SACSCOC prior to implementation. Please review the list of institutional changes below and complete the information at the bottom of this checklist if any of these are planned for your area:

- Initiating a certificate/degree program
- Expanding program offerings at approved off-campus sites
- Initiating off-campus sites (including Dual Credit programs offered at the high school)
- Expanding at current degree level
- Initiating joint degrees with another institution
- Initiating program/courses offered through contractual agreement or consortium
- Relocating an off-campus instructional site
- Altering significantly the length of a program
- Altering significantly the educational mission of the institution
- Other changes stipulated in SACSCOC CS 3.12 of *The Principles* ([www.sacscoc.org](http://www.sacscoc.org))

<b>Type of Change (per CS 3.12)</b>		
<b>Description of Change</b>		
<b>Person Submitting Substantive Change</b>		<b>Date</b>