

ALCORN STATE UNIVERSITY SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE POLICY

Alcorn State University is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) to award the Associate, Bachelor's, Master's, and Specialist in Education degrees. Contact the Commission on Colleges at 1866 Southern Lane, Decatur, Georgia 30033-4097 or call 404-679-4500 for questions about the accreditation of Alcorn State University.

As a standard of accreditation the University must notify the SACSCOC of substantive changes before they occur. The purpose of this policy is to establish institutional procedures for recognizing and approving substantive change and ensuring timely notification to SACSCOC.

Substantive change is defined as a *significant modification or expansion in the nature and scope of an accredited institution*. The types of substantive change and the procedures for addressing them are found in the Commission on Colleges' substantive change policy document and its substantive changes website at <https://sacscoc.org/app/uploads/2019/08/SubstantiveChange.pdf>.

Institutional changes at ASU are likely to evolve from an organizational level approach such as (1) Program/Course Level, (2) School/College/Departmental Level, and (3) Institutional Level.

If a department or school at Alcorn State University is contemplating changes at the **Program/Course Level** that would:

- (a) expand significantly a current degree program;
- (b) add courses or programs that would represent a significant departure, either in content or method of delivery, from those offered currently;
- (c) initiate programs or courses offered through a contractual agreement or consortium; change significantly the length of a program;
- (d) initiate degree completion programs; or
- (e) initiate programs at any degree level;

then the University may have to obtain approval or at least notify the SACSCOC before the change can be implemented.

If a department or school is contemplating changes at the **School/College/Department Level** that would result in:

- (a) initiating an off-campus site;
- (b) initiating distance learning;
- (c) adding significant changes in existing technology-based delivery systems in distance learning
- (d) initiating dual or joint degrees
- (e) initiating a program or courses delivered through cooperative academic agreement

Finally, if the University is contemplating one of the following **Institutional Level** changes:

- (a) initiating a branch campus;
- (b) initiating a merger/consolidation;
- (c) initiating any change in the established mission of the institution;
- (d) relocating a main campus;
- (e) initiating any change of legal status, governance, form of control, or ownership of the institution; or
- (f) closing an institution/program and initiating teach-out agreements;
then the University may have to obtain approval or at least notify SACSCOC before
the change can be implemented
- (g) initiating coursework or program at a different level than currently approved

Vice Presidents, Associate and Assistant Vice Presidents, Deans, Associate and Assistant Deans, Directors and Department Chairs have the fundamental responsibility to be generally aware of the substantive change policy, inform the University's Accreditation Liaison at the earliest point possible of proposals that may be considered a substantive change for the University, and provide the Accreditation Liaison with any data, information, or prospectus necessary to comply with Commissions on Colleges' policy when requested. (Appendix B provides detailed information on the types of substantive changes and notification regulations.)

The established institutional approval process must be followed prior to submitting substantive change reports to the Commission on Colleges. In order to facilitate and document the internal review process, the Substantive Change Checklist (Appendix A) must be completed in the originating department. The institutional approval process must be completed sufficiently early so that the Commission on Colleges' reporting requirements are met.

The initiator in the originating department must submit the completed checklist to the Accreditation Liaison to determine if the change is considered a substantive change. A determination whether or not the change is substantive is returned to the initiator. Upon receipt of that determination, the initiator proceeds to collect all required data supporting the change and submits the request for change to all appropriate University committees and officers for approval. Upon obtaining all approvals, the initiator submits the formal request and evidence of approvals to the appropriate Vice President for final action. Upon receipt, the Vice President will notify the Accreditation Liaison of internal approval and the need to submit the appropriate communication to the Commission on Colleges.

After all internal approvals have been obtained, the Liaison will prepare the President's "Notification Letter" for approval. In addition to the "Notification Letter," a "Substantive Change Prospectus" may also be required. (SACSCOC requires use of their Substantive Change Prospectus Template (www.sacscoc.org - Substantive Changes) .

Anyone seeking to make changes should involve the Institutional Accreditation Liaison to determine if any actions being contemplated might qualify as substantive changes.

OFFICIAL NOTIFICATION OF APPROVAL FROM SACSCOC IS REQUIRED PRIOR TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ANY PROGRAM.

APPENDIX A

SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE CHECKLIST

INTRODUCTION

Substantive change is a federal term pertaining to any “significant modification of the nature and scope of an accredited institution.” Colleges and Universities must notify their accrediting body of potential or actual substantive change in a timely fashion and in many cases must receive approval for such change from the accrediting body before the initiative is implemented.

Alcorn State University’s regional accrediting body, the Commission on Colleges (COC) of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS), is required by the federal government to monitor its constituents’ compliance with the substantive change policy and to grant permission for major changes to occur. In order to ensure our compliance, all proposers of new programs, degrees, and other major initiatives should review the substantive change policy on the ASU website. In addition, anyone proposing a curriculum or instructional delivery change must fill out this checklist and submit it to the Alcorn State University Liaison to SACS for consideration and approval before proceeding with the change.

The following are the steps required to execute the Checklist.

1. The Checklist is initiated in the unit desiring to make the change.
2. The Initiator forwards the Checklist to the Accreditation Liaison for a determination whether or not the change is substantive.
3. The Accreditation Liaison makes the determination regarding substantive change and returns the form to the Initiator and logs in a notice of a possible substantive change.
4. The Accreditation Liaison notifies the appropriate Vice President of the possible substantive change.
5. The Vice President notifies the Accreditation Liaison if the proposal for change has passed all appropriate approval entities.
6. Upon notification of receipt by the Vice President, the Accreditation Liaison drafts the appropriate communication to SACS-COC.

Please feel free to call the Institutional Accreditation Liaison with any questions (601) 877-4187.

CHECKLIST

This initiative...

			YES	NO
Initiates coursework or programs at a more advanced level than currently approved.			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Expands a current degree level (significant departure from current programs)			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are a number of new faculty required	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Are > 25% of the courses new?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Are > 50% of the courses new?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Are new library or other learning resources required	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Initiates branch campus.			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Initiates off-campus sites where students can obtain 50% or more credits toward a program.			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Allows students to obtain 25-49% of program credit.			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Adds a significantly different program at an approved site			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Initiates distance learning offering 50% or more of a program.			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Offers 25-49% of a program by distance learning.			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Initiates programs/courses offered through contractual agreement or consortium.			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Changes the number of credit hours awarded for successful completion of a program.			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Initiates a merger/consolidation.			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Changes governance, ownership, control or legal status of a college program or property.			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Alters significantly the length of a program.			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Closes an institution/program; initiates teach-out agreements.			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Proposed Program _____

Department _____

School _____

Point-of-Contact _____

Date _____

APPENDIX B

Types of Substantive Changes*

The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) defines three procedures for addressing the different types of substantive changes:

1. Procedure One for the Review of Substantive Changes Requiring *Notification and Approval Prior to Implementation*
2. Procedure Two for the Review of Substantive Changes Requiring *Only Notification Prior to Implementation*
3. Procedure Three for the Review and Approval of *Consolidations/Mergers*

Reporting the Various Types of Substantive Change

The different types of substantive change, the specific procedure to be used for each, their respective approval/notification requirements, and their reporting timelines are included in the table that follows. Please refer to the appropriate procedure for details regarding reporting.

* This information, including the following chart, is taken from the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges’ “Substantive Change For Accredited Institutions of the Commission on Colleges” policy statement.

Types of Change	Procedure or Policy	Prior Notification Required	Prior Approval Required	Documentation and Time Frame for Contacting SACSCOC
Initiating coursework or programs at a different level than currently approved	Procedure 1	No	Yes	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Application for a Member Institution Seeking Accreditation at a Higher or Lower Degree Level</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Due dates: March 15 (for June review) September 1 (for December review)</p>
Initiating off-campus sites where student can obtain 50% or more credits toward a program (including but not limited to Early College High School, dual enrollment programs offered at a high school, and certificate programs that are not at employer’s request and not on short notice)	Procedure 1	No	Yes	<p style="text-align: center;">Cover Sheet <u>Prospectus</u> <u>(See Appendix B of this document)</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Due dates: January 1 for 7/1-12/31 implementation July 1 for 1/1-6/30 implementation</p>

Expanding at current degree level (<i>significant departure from current programs</i>).				
Expanding program offerings at previously approved offcampus sites by adding programs that ARE significantly different from current programs at the site AND at the institution				
Initiating degree completion programs				
Initiating a branch campus (See definition of “branch campus” on p. 3 of this document.)				
Initiating distance learning by offering 50% or more of the first program for the first time				
Relocating a main or branch campus				
Entering into a contract 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 SACSCOC accredited institution				
Types of Change	Procedure or Policy	Prior Notification Required	Prior Approval Required	Documentation and Time Frame for Contacting SACSCOC
Initiating dual or joint degrees involving program expansion (significant departure) or initiating a new site where student can obtain 50% or more credits toward a program	See SACSCOC policy Agreements Involving Joint and Dual Academic Awards	No	Yes	Cover Sheet Prospectus (See Appendix B of this document) Due dates: January 1 for 7/1-12/31 implementation July 1 for 1/1-6/30 implementation Copy of signed agreement, contact information for each institution, and additional details on non-SACSCOC institution(s) involved. See Policy
Initiating dual or joint degree with at least one institution <u>not</u> accredited by SACSCOC	See SACSCOC Policy Agreements Involving Joint and Dual Academic Awards	At least 6 months prior to implementation	Yes	Acceptance of notification, copy of signed agreement, contact information for each institution, and additional details on nonSACSCOC institution(s). See Policy.

Initiating a program or courses delivered through cooperative academic arrangement	Procedure 2	At least 6 months prior to implementation	No	Acceptance of notification, copy of signed agreement, contact information for each institution/entity
Initiating a direct assessment competency-based program	See SACSCOC Policy <u>Direct Assessment Competency-Based Educational Programs</u>	Yes – Screening Form	Yes	Submit “Screening Form” with letter of notification. If Prospectus is required, Due dates: March 15 (for June review) September 1 (for December review)
Initiating a merger/consolidation with another institution	See SACSCOC Policy: <u>Merger/Consolidation, Acquisition, Change of Ownership, and Change of Governance, Control, Form, or Legal Status – Substantive Change for SACSCOC Accredited Institutions Policy Statement</u>	Yes: December 15 (for June review); June 1 (for December review)	Yes	Cover Sheet Institutional Summary Form Prospectus (See Appendix in SACSCOC Policy: <u>Merger/Consolidation, Acquisition, Change of Ownership, and Change of Governance, Control, Form, or Legal Status – Substantive Change for SACSCOC Accredited Institutions Policy Statement</u>) Due dates: March 15 (for June review); September 1 (for December review)
Changing governance, ownership, control, or legal status of an institution				
Acquiring an institution or location (including programs) of another institution				
Adding a permanent location at a site where the institution is conducting a teach-out for students from another institution that is closing				