

Texas Wesleyan University

Policy on Substantive Change

To ensure that substantive changes are reported to the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) in a timely and accurate manner, Texas Wesleyan University has adopted the following policy:

The **Accreditation Liaison** serves on the following committees and participates in the following activities:

1) Committee on Academic Affairs

- Receives proposed agenda items from the schools and from committees reporting directly to the Academic Affairs Committee
- Prepares agenda in consultation with the Committee chair (Provost)
- Prepares minutes

2) Committee on Graduate Programs

3) Provost Council

4) Senior Staff

5) Any new degree program development committees

6) Reviews and approves updated catalogs prior to publications

7) President and Provost consult with and update the accreditation liaison regarding potential substantive changes prior to implementation.

University administrators (School of Health Professions Directors, Deans, Associate Provosts, Provost, Vice Presidents, General Counsel, President) are responsible for communicating possible substantive changes to the Accreditation Liaison. Administrators should also be aware that different types of substantive change require different and specific procedures for communicating with the Commission, including certain deadlines.

The University's Accreditation Liaison assists with further information and is the individual, in addition to the President, who may communicate with the Commission and submit documentation on behalf of the University.

University administrators should be aware that SACSCOC lists the following substantive changes (see below). The Commission also notes that "SACSCOC reserves the right to consider an

institutional change, or a group of changes, as constituting a substantive change even if not specifically enumerated in Substantive Change Policy and Procedures. SACSCOC may require an institution to submit materials related to the change(s) for review by staff and for possible review and action by the SACSCOC Board of Trustees. A substantive change committee visit may be authorized.”

From the *SACSCOC Substantive Change Policy and Procedures (June 2024)*:

Substantive changes, including those required by federal regulations, include:

- *Substantially changing the established mission or objectives of an institution or its programs.*
- *Changing the legal status, form of control, or ownership of an institution.*
- *Changing the governance of an institution.*
- *Merging / consolidating two or more institutions or entities.*
- *Acquiring another institution or any program or location of another institution.*
- *Relocating an institution or an off-campus instructional site of an institution (including a branch campus).*
- *Offering courses or programs at a higher or lower degree level than currently authorized.*
- *Adding graduate programs at an institution previously offering only undergraduate programs (including degrees, diplomas, certificates, and other for-credit credential).*
- *Changing the way an institution measures student progress, whether in clock hours or credit-hours; semesters, trimesters, or quarters; or time-based or non-time-based methods or measures.*
- *Adding a program that is a significant departure from the existing programs, or method of delivery, from those offered when the institution was last evaluated.*
- *Initiating programs by distance education or correspondence courses.*
- *Adding an additional method of delivery to a currently offered program.*
- *Entering into a cooperative academic arrangement.*
- *Entering into a written arrangement under 34 C.F.R. § 668.5 under which an institution or organization not certified to participate in the title IV Higher Education Act (HEA) programs offers less than 25% (notification) or 25-50% (approval) of one or more of the accredited institution's educational programs. An agreement offering more than 50% of one or more of an institution's programs is prohibited by federal regulation.*
- *Substantially increase or decreasing the number of clock hours or credit hours awarded or competencies demonstrated, or an increase in the level of credential awarded, for successful completion of one or more programs.*
- *Adding competency-based education programs.*

- *Adding each competency-based education program by direct assessment.*
- *Adding programs with completion pathways that recognize and accommodate a student's prior or existing knowledge or competency.*
- *Awarding dual or joint academic awards.*
- *Re-opening a previously closed program or off-campus instructional site.*
- *Adding a new off-campus instructional site/additional location including a branch campus.*
- *Adding a permanent location at a site at which an institution is conducting a teach-out program for students of another institution that has ceased operating before all students have completed their program of study.*
- *Closing an institution, a program, a method of delivery, an off-campus instructional site, or a program at an off-campus instructional site.*
- *Participating in the federal Prison Education Program providing Pell Grant access to confined or incarcerated students.*

Other substantive changes, including those required by federal regulations, include:

- *An institution is required to notify or secure SACSCOC approval prior to implementing a substantive change.*
- *An institution is responsible for maintaining compliance at all times with Standard 14.2 (Substantive change) of the Principles of Accreditation and with the Substantive Change Policy and Procedures and related policies, viz.,*
 - o *Advertising and Student Recruitment [PDF];*
 - o *Agreements Involving Joint and Dual Academic Awards [PDF];*
 - o *Credit Hours [PDF];*
 - o *Direct Assessment Competency-based Educational Programs [PDF];*
 - o *Distance and Correspondence Education [PDF];*
 - o *Dual Enrollment [PDF];*
 - o *Merger/Consolidation, Acquisition, Change of Ownership, and Change of Governance, Control, Form, or Legal Status [PDF];*
 - o *Request for a Period of Noncompliance [PDF]; and*
 - o *Seeking Accreditation at a Higher or Lower Degree Level [PDF].*
- *An institution is required to have a written substantive change policy and procedure. It must be approved through institutional processes and published in institutional documents accessible to those affected. The purpose of the institution's substantive change policy and procedure is to ensure all substantive changes are reported to SACSCOC in a timely fashion as required by Substantive Change Policy and Procedures. Institutions are responsible for implementing and enforcing their substantive change policy and procedure.*

- *An institution's fiscal and administrative capability to operate off-campus instructional sites is assessed when a new site is reviewed for approval and as part of reaffirmation and fifth year interim reviews.*
- *A new off-campus instructional site is subject to a substantive change committee visit. A committee visit, when necessary, is authorized when a site is approved. The committee visit ensures the site has the personnel, facilities, and resources identified by an institution in its application or prospectus and ensures the quality of instructional and support services offered at the site.*
- *Different or additional requirements apply to an institution on SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RESTRICTION. Restriction applies if an institution has been placed on Warning, Probation, or Probation for Good Cause over the prior three academic years, or if an institution is under provisional certification for participation in federal financial aid programs.*
- *An institution is required to submit an institutional contingency teach-out plan to SACSCOC within 30 days of notification if the institution is placed or continued on Probation or Probation for Good Cause, or if the institution meets conditions enumerated in the procedures section of this policy originating from the U.S. Department of Education or state authority.*
- *Numerous changes: Numerous substantive changes may accelerate an institution's next reaffirmation of accreditation. Accelerated reaffirmation may be triggered by, but not limited to,*
 - a. a significant change in the number of off-campus instructional sites including branch campuses,*
 - b. a significant change in the number of programs,*
 - c. a significant change in enrollment, and*
 - d. frequent mergers/consolidations or acquisitions.*

Complete SACSCOC policy available at:

<https://sacscoc.org/accrediting-standards/substantive-changes/>