

Guidelines for Identifying Substantive Changes

(effective May 1, 2008; updated September 6, 2014)

The University recognizes that substantive changes, as defined by the attached table, must be reported in a timely manner to the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Schools and Colleges (SACS-CoC). Also, certain changes must also be reported to and approved by the IHL Office prior to implementation.

The University has procedures for the approval of new academic programs, including the identification of whether a new program is intended to be delivered off-campus or via distance education. These procedures involve review and approval at the level of the department, school/college, Graduate or Undergraduate Council, Council of Academic Administrators, and Chancellor, with there being a separate process for seeking approval by the IHL Board of Trustees before activation of the program. This approval process for a new program identifies a substantive change situation and allows time for submission of information to SACS-CoC. However, the approval steps have been less clear for converting an existing program to an off-campus location or distance education delivery mode and the steps for expansion to a new off-campus location.

The purpose of this memorandum is to establish guidelines for identifying substantive changes in all cases and in a timely manner.

New Programs: The approval process for new programs is described in UM Policies *Procedure for Creating a New Undergraduate Program* and *Creation, Suspension, Deletion and Review of Graduate Programs* and IHL document *Academic Guidelines*. The new program request form, which is a part of the Academic Council Workflow, has instructions stating that if the program is to be delivered at an off-campus site and/or via distance education (or online), is a program at a different level than previously offered, involves a contractual arrangement with another institution, is a dual or joint degree program with another institution, or is a certificate program, the proposed program should be reviewed by the SACS Liaison at the earliest possible time for a determination of whether a substantive change notification or prospectus must be submitted to SACS-COC. The SACS Liaison will advise the Provost, department chair, and dean proposing the program and will work with the latter individuals in preparing the proper notification or prospectus.

Converting Existing Programs: Whereas the above procedures involve approval steps for new programs that will identify substantive change situations, the University must make a special effort to identify substantive changes that result from the porting of existing programs to an off-campus and/or distance education delivery mode. While individual courses might be delivered at off-campus locations or via distance education, the key criterion is whether 25% or more of the courses for a degree program credit is delivered (for the first time and when no similar program at a given level has previously been delivered) to an off-campus site and/or via distance education (including online).

To identify these situations, the Division of Outreach and Continuing Studies must be the principal gate keeping office. Secondly, the deans of our schools and college and the deans of the off-campus centers must be aware of the criteria for substantive changes.

The Provost's Office is ultimately responsible for informing other offices and enforcing the requirements. The Division of Outreach and Continuing Studies and the deans are responsible for disclosing to the SACS Liaison and Provost any instance where an existing academic program is planned for porting to an off-campus location. This disclosure must occur at least eight months before planned implementation.

Creating Online or Distance Education Programs: Any plan to offer at least 25% of the course work for a major program via any distance education modality (online or station-to-station video), through our Division of Outreach and Continuing Studies or schools/college, must be disclosed to the SACS Liaison and Provost at least eight months before the course is delivered.

New Locations: Any plan to offer courses at a new physical location, through our Division of Outreach and Continuing Studies or schools/college, must be disclosed to the SACS Liaison and Provost at least eight months before the first course is to be delivered. This applies whether the course will be delivered in person or via station-to-station video.

Other Reportable Substantive Changes: In a similar manner, any other potentially reportable substantive changes planned by any of the units in the Division of Academic Affairs must be disclosed to the SACS Liaison and Provost at least eight months before the action.

Annual Inventory of Programs: The Provost's Office will maintain an inventory of programs, including the location of their delivery and whether any surpass the 25% and 50% delivery levels.

Reporting the Various Types of Substantive Change

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

Types of Change	Procedure	Prior Approval Required	Prior Notification Required	Time Frame for Contacting COC	Documentation
Initiating coursework or programs at a more advanced level(or different level) than previously approved	1	Yes	NA	NA	Application for Level Change; Due dates: April 8 or September 15
Expanding at current degree level (<i>significant departure from current programs</i>)	1	Yes	Yes	6 months	Prospectus
Initiating a branch campus	1	Yes	Yes	6 months	Prospectus
Initiating off-campus sites (including Early College High School and dual enrollment programs offered at the high school) ...Student can obtain 50 % or more credits toward program; ...Student can obtain 25-49 % of credit; ...Student can obtain 24 % or less.	1 2 NA	Yes NA NA	NA Yes NA	NA Prior to implementation NA	Prospectus Letter of Notification NA
Initiating a certificate program at employer's request and on short notice ...using existing approved courses; ...at a new off-campus site (previously approved program); ...that is a significant departure from previously approved programs.	NA 1 1	NA Yes Yes	NA NA NA	NA NA Approval required prior to implementation	NA Modified Prospectus Modified Prospectus
Initiating other certificate programs ...using existing approved courses ...at a new off-campus site (previously approved program); ...that is a significant departure from previously approved programs.	NA 1 1	NA Yes Yes	NA NA Yes	NA NA 6 months	NA Prospectus Prospectus
Altering significantly the educational mission of the institution	1	Yes	NA	NA	Contact Commission Staff
Expanding program offerings at previously approved off-campus sites ...adding programs that are significantly different from current programs at the site; ...adding programs that are NOT significantly different from current programs at the site.	NA NA	NA NA	NA NA	NA NA	NA NA
Initiating distance learning... ...Offering 50 % or more of program <u>for the first time</u> ; (<i>Subsequent programs do not need reporting unless they are significant departures from initially approved program(s).</i>) ...Offering 25-49 %; ...Offering 24 % or less.	1 2 NA	Yes No NA	NA Yes NA	Yes Prior to implementation NA	Prospectus Letter of notification NA

Initiating joint or dual degrees with another institution: Joint programs ...with another SACSCOC accredited institution;	2	NA	Yes	Prior to implementation	Copy of signed agreement and contact information for each institution Prospectus
...with an institution not accredited by SACSCOC;	1	Yes	Yes	6 months	Copy of signed agreement and contact information for each institution
...dual programs.	2	No	Yes	Prior to implementation	
Initiating programs/courses offered through contractual agreement or consortium	2	NA	Yes	Prior to implementation	Letter of notification and copy of signed agreement
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 COC accredited institution;	1	Yes	NA	NA	Prospectus
...if the entity provides less than 25% of an educational program offered by the accredited institution.	2	NA	Yes	Prior to implementation	Copy of the signed agreement
Initiating a merger/consolidation with another institution	See policy on mergers	Yes	Yes	6 months	Prospectus; due dates, April 8 or September 15
Relocating a main campus or branch campus	1	Yes	Yes	6 months	Prospectus
Moving an off-campus instructional site (serving the same geographic area)	2	NA	Yes	Prior to implementation	Letter of notification with new address and starting date
Changing governance, ownership, control, or legal status of an institution	See policy	Yes	Yes	6 months	Prospectus; due dates, April 8 or September 15
Changing from clock hours to credit hours	1	Yes	NA	NA	Justify reasons for change; indicate calculations of equivalency and other pertinent information.
Altering significantly the length of a program	1	Yes	NA	NA	Prospectus
Initiating degree completion programs	1	Yes	NA	NA	Prospectus
Closing a program, approved off-campus site, branch campus, or institution: ...Institution to teach-out its own students;	3	Yes	Yes	Immediately following decision to close (both cases)	Description of teach-out plan included with letter of notification
...Institution contracts with another institution to teach-out students.	3	Yes	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 policy	Yes	Yes	6 months	Prospectus
Adding a permanent location at a site where the institution is conducting a teach-out for students from another institution that is closing	See policy	Yes	Yes	6 months	Prospectus
Adding a combination degree program that reduces the hours needed to complete the combined degrees (e.g., combination baccalaureate and master's degrees)	1	Yes	NA	Approval required prior to implementation	Provide details on both programs of study and justify any deviations from Core Requirement 2.7.1 or its interpretation

Procedures 1-3 refer to the following:

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*.