

2.3.5. OFTC Substantive Change Notification Procedure

Procedure

The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) 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 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.

SACSCOC 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 U.S. Department of Education, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools/Commission on Colleges has incorporated federal requirements into its substantive change policy and procedures. An institution is expected to seek and receive approval prior to the initiation of substantive change so that the change can be included in the institution's scope of accreditation.

Oconee Fall Line Technical College (OFTC) maintains compliance with the Principles of Accreditation: Foundations for Quality Enhancement and SACSCOC policies as required to obtain and maintain accreditation. Specifically, OFTC will notify SACSCOC of changes in accordance with the substantive change policy and, when required, seek approval prior to the initiation of changes. The SACSCOC Substantive Change Policy to which this procedure refers was revised in December 2018 and can be found on the SACSCOC website.

The purpose of this procedure is to establish institutional procedures for recognizing and approving substantive change and ensuring timely notification to SACSCOC. The college's SACSCOC Accreditation Liaison is the individual responsible for ensuring that this procedure is implemented.

The Accreditation Liaison requests notification of substantive changes in planning for the next 12-month period. The 12-month timeframe will allow a long-range outlook to ensure that notifications can be carried out six months prior to implementation of substantive change. Deans and Directors must communicate changes through the appropriate chains of communication to their supervisors on the president's senior leadership team. The Accreditation Liaison will coordinate the preparation of the prospectus in conjunction with the president's senior leadership team.

Substantive Changes Related to Academic Affairs

All substantive changes related to curriculum and academic affairs will first go through the Academic Affairs and Curriculum Committee. The Vice President of Academic Affairs and the Vice President of Facilities, Planning, and Research serve on this committee. These two members, also members of the President’s senior leadership team, are responsible for comparing proposed changes to the SACSCOC Substantive Change Policy and making the determination of the needed course of action with SACSCOC notification. These two members also work together to ensure that substantive changes are not implemented before SACSCOC approval is granted.

Types of Change	Change is Monitored and Reported to the SACSCOC Liaison by:
Initiating coursework or programs at a different level than currently approved	VPAA
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)	VPAA
Expanding at current degree level (<i>significant departure from current programs</i>)	VPAA
Expanding program offerings at previously approved off campus sites by adding programs that ARE significantly different from current programs at the site AND at the institution	VPAA
Initiating degree completion programs	VPAA
Initiating a branch campus	President
Initiating distance learning by offering 50% or more of the first program for the first time	VPAA
Relocating a main or branch campus	President
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	VPAA
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	VPAA
Initiating joint or dual degrees with at least one institution not accredited by SACSCOC	VPAA

Types of Change	Change is Monitored and Reported to the SACSCOC Liaison by:
Initiating a program or courses delivered through cooperative academic arrangement	VPAA
Initiating a direct assessment competency-based program	VPAA
Initiating a merger/consolidation with another institution	President
Changing governance, ownership, control, or legal status of an institution	President
Acquiring an institution or location (including programs) of another institution	President
Adding a permanent location at a site where the institution is conducting a teach-out for students from another institution that is closing	President
Initiating a certificate program at a new off-campus site at employer's request and on short notice (previously approved program)	VPAA
Initiating a certificate program that is a significant departure from previously approved programs at employer's request and on short notice	VPAA
Adding a site under a U.S. military contract for a previously approved program	VPAA
Altering significantly the length of a program	VPAA
Altering significantly the educational mission of the institution	VPAA
Changing from clock hours to credit hours	VPAA
Moving an off-campus instructional site (serving the same geographic area)	VPAA
Initiating dual or joint degrees with other SACSCOC accredited institution(s)	VPAA
Initiating programs or courses offered through contractual agreement or consortium	VPAA
Entering into a contract with an entity not certified to participate in USDOE Title IV programs if the entity provides less than 25% of an educational program offered by the SACSCOC accredited institution	VPAA
Initiating off-campus sites where student can obtain 25-49% of 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)	VPAA
Initiating distance learning by offering 25-49 of the first program for the first time	VPAA
Closing a program, approved off-campus site, branch campus, or institution where the institution plans to teach out its own students	VPAA

Types of Change	Change is Monitored and Reported to the SACSCOC Liaison by:
Closing a program, approved off-campus site, branch campus, or institution where the institution plans contracts with another institution(s) to teach-out students (Teachout Agreement)	VPAA

Adopted: June 27, 2013

Reviewed: February 24, 2014; March 17, 2016; March 23, 2017, March 21, 2018

Revised: March 19, 2015; December 7, 2017, February 25, 2019