



Policy 10.11 Substantive Change

Responsible Official: Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs

Administering Division/Department: General Policies

Effective Date: August 01, 2012

Last Revision: August 09, 2018

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Overview

Emory University is obligated to follow the substantive change procedures of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC). This document presents Emory University procedures for determining and reporting substantive changes to SACSCOC.

Applicability

This policy applies to all Emory University academic units.

Policy Details

Substantive Change Review Process

Substantive change is defined by SACSCOC as “a significant modification or expansion of the nature and scope of an accredited institution.” For more information see SACSCOC website: [Substantive Change for Accredited Institutions of the Commission on Colleges](#)

Accredited institutions are required to notify the Commission of substantive changes, and when indicated, to seek approval prior to the initiation of changes. Examples of substantive change include (but are not limited to) the following:

- The addition of courses or programs that represent a significant departure, either in content or method of delivery, from those that were offered when Emory’s accreditation was last reaffirmed;
- The addition of courses or programs of study at a degree or credential level different from that which is included in Emory’s current accreditation or reaffirmation;
- A substantial change in the number of contact or credit hours awarded for successful completion of a program;
- The establishment of a geographic location apart from the main campus at which the institution offers at least 50 percent of an educational program;
- The establishment of a branch campus;

- Closing a program, off-campus site, branch campus or institution;
- Entering into a collaborative academic arrangement that includes the initiation of a dual degree program or a joint academic program with another institution.

Process

The Commission must be notified of all substantive changes as much as 12 months in advance of implementing the change. Every SACSCOC member institution has an Accreditation Liaison whose charge is to ensure compliance with accreditation requirements and who is responsible for reporting substantive changes to SACSCOC. Deans must inform the University's SACSCOC Accreditation Liaison of substantive changes as early as possible so that the information required by SACSCOC is submitted according to the SACSCOC specified timeline with the appropriate internal review and approvals. Deans proposing substantive changes should consult pages 6-9 in the SACSCOC [Policy for Substantive Change](#) for Accredited Institutions of the Commission on Colleges and use the schedule for internal review and approval, submission to SACSCOC, and planned program implementation posted on the Emory website [Office of Planning and Budgeting].

Starting New Programs

(1) Academic units proposing new programs should complete a proposal using the [SACSCOC Prospectus Template](#) (Appendix A) or follow their own program proposal guidelines, as long as they address the elements required by SACSCOC. In addition, they should complete the New Program Information Request Form (Appendix B).

(2) For those degree programs that involve a collaborative academic arrangement with another institution of higher education (i.e., dual or joint degree programs), academic units should consult the SACSCOC Policy on [Agreements Involving Joint and Dual Academic Awards](#) for additional requirements.

(3) The academic unit must obtain approval from the applicable school's curriculum committee or other appropriate governing body.

(4) Following such approval, all documents should be submitted for review to the SACSCOC Liaison as early as possible. Assisted by the Substantive Changes Review Committee, the University's SACSCOC Liaison will review all new program proposals and provide feedback.

(5) The proposal will then be presented to the Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs followed by the Board of Trustees. Upon final approval within Emory, the SACSCOC Liaison will file the appropriate documentation with the Commission and, if needed, coordinate any follow-up action with the Dean.

Changing Existing Programs

Substantive changes may involve not only launching new programs, but also significantly altering the length of an existing program or initiating or significantly increasing distance learning within a program. A brief worksheet is included with this policy that outlines possible substantive changes. The [SACSCOC Commission on Colleges Substantive Change Policy](#) contains a more comprehensive list of substantive changes. In case of doubt, the Dean or the unit's Substantive Change Liaison must check with the university SACSCOC Liaison to clarify whether the proposed program change constitutes a substantive change. If a prospectus is needed, the Dean must use the SACSCOC Prospectus Template to report the change. Upon final approval within Emory, the university SACSCOC Liaison will file the appropriate documentation with the Commission and, if needed, coordinate any follow-up action with the Dean.

Closing Programs

If a school decides to close a program, it must choose one of the following options:

(1) The school teaches out currently enrolled students, no longer admits students to the program, and terminates the program after students have graduated. (Teach-out plan); or

(2) The school enters into a contract for another institution or organization to teach out the program. (Teach-out agreement).

Teach-out plans and teach-out agreements must be submitted for review to the Emory University Substantive Changes Review Committee, the SACSCOC Liaison and then approved by the Commission on Colleges in advance of implementation. The [SACSCOC Commission on Colleges Substantive Change Policy](#) offers guidelines for preparing these documents.

Responsibilities

Responsibilities of Deans and Substantive Change Liaisons

In each school, the Dean will assign a Substantive Change Liaison for the unit. Typically, this person is the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs. Deans and their Substantive Change Liaisons will be aware of the substantive change policy, inform the SACSCOC Liaison at the earliest point possible of proposals that may be considered a substantive change for the University, and provide any data, information, or prospectus necessary to comply with the Commission on Colleges policy when requested. To provide sufficient advance time for internal approval and notification and/or approval by the SACSCOC in advance of program changes, the Substantive Change Liaison in each school will complete each fall as part of the Provost's Annual Report a list of anticipated programmatic changes for the upcoming academic year. This list is intended to be only a projection of programmatic changes; the Substantive Change Liaisons must follow the process outlined above for starting, modifying, and closing academic programs.

Responsibilities of the University's SACSCOC Liaison

Every SACSCOC member institution has an Accreditation Liaison whose charge is to ensure compliance with accreditation requirements. The current SACSCOC Liaison for Emory University is:

Nancy Gourash Bliwise

Vice Provost for Academic Planning

313A Administration Building

404-727-4170; nancy.bliwise@emory.edu

The University's SACSCOC Liaison or designate will:

- (1) Provide the schools with information about the SACSCOC substantive change policy. This includes, but is not limited to, maintaining a section on Emory's SACSCOC Commission on Colleges website concerning substantive changes and sending information about substantive changes to the Deans at least annually;
- (2) Work with the Substantive Changes Review Committee to determine whether a proposed change is substantive and provide feedback on proposals; and
- (3) Coordinate with the appropriate Substantive Change Liaisons in the schools any required follow-up action.

Related Links

- Current Version of This Policy: <http://policies.emory.edu/10.11>
- [Previous version of policy:](http://www.oirpe.emory.edu/Accreditation/Emory%20University%20Substantive%20Changes%20Policy%202.pdf)
(<http://www.oirpe.emory.edu/Accreditation/Emory%20University%20Substantive%20Changes%20Policy%202.pdf>)
- [SACSCOC Program Prospectus Template](http://policies.emory.edu/uploads/Prospectus-SubstantiveChange%20Policy%202014.pdf)
(<http://policies.emory.edu/uploads/Prospectus-SubstantiveChange%20Policy%202014.pdf>)
- [SACSCOC Substantive Change Policy:](http://policies.emory.edu/uploads/SubstantiveChangeforAccreditedInstitutions.pdf)
(<http://policies.emory.edu/uploads/SubstantiveChangeforAccreditedInstitutions.pdf>)
- [SACSCOC Joint and Dual Degree Agreements Policy](http://policies.emory.edu/uploads/JointDualAwards.pdf) (<http://policies.emory.edu/uploads/JointDualAwards.pdf>)

Contact Information

Subject	Contact	Phone	Email
Clarification of Policy	Office of Provost	(404)727-4170	nancy.bliwise@emory.edu

Revision History

- Version Published on: May 04, 2017
- Version Published on: May 04, 2017
- Version Published on: Jan 28, 2015

- Version Published on: Mar 14, 2014 (Previous Version: 8/2012)

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