



Policy Title: Substantive Change Policy	Effective Date: 7/1/2017
Policy Number: AA-PO-1100	Date of Last Review: 9/1/2023
Oversight Department: Office of Institutional Effectiveness & Quality Improvement (SACSCOC Accreditation Liaison)	Next Review Date: 9/1/2026

1. PURPOSE

The

State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV): The Commonwealth of Virginia's coordinating body for higher education, whose mission is "to advocate and promote the development and operation of an educationally and economically sound, vigorous, progressive, and coordinated system of higher education in the Commonwealth of Virginia and to lead state-level strategic planning and policy development and implementation based on research and analysis"

Substantive Change: As defined by SACSCOC, a substantive change is a significant modification or expansion of the nature and scope of an accredited institution (See [SubstantiveChange.pdf \(sacscoc.org\)](#)).

4. POLICY

- A. The University is an accredited member of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC). As a member, the University must follow all SACSCOC policies and procedures. In addition, the University is required to follow policies and procedures established by the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV) relating to review and/or approval of academic program proposals and changes.
- B. Any new, revised, or discontinued degrees and/or the establishment of distance learning sites must first be approved by the University President/President's Cabinet and the Board of Visitors, and subsequently must be reported to SCHEV for review and approval prior to implementation.
- C. Likewise, any structural and/or programmatic changes to the University that are deemed to be "substantive change(s)" must first be approved by the University President/President's Cabinet and the Board of Visitors, and subsequently must be reported to SACSCOC for review and approval prior to implementation.
- D. The University must meet the notification and approval requirements of both agencies, as compliance with one does not constitute compliance with the other. The University must follow the procedures that each organization has developed in order to fulfill these requirements.

5. PROCEDURES

- A. 



- D. Division Heads must bring forward all potential substantive changes for discussion and approval by the President/President's Cabinet. In accordance with SACSCOC and SCHEV policies, the University will notify or seek approval from SACSCOC and SCHEV of any planned substantive changes as necessary prior to implementation.
- E. In order to ensure timely notification to SACSCOC, Division Heads must keep the Provost and SACSCOC Accreditation Liaison apprised of potential situations that may rise to the level of substantive changes.
- F. Once all internal notifications and reviews are completed and the substantive change is approved internally, the relevant Division Head and the President will notify the Board of Visitors of, and seek approval for, the desired substantive change.
- G. The official delegated by the Provost will review proposed substantive changes to ensure compliance with SCHEV and University regulations, policies, and procedures. Additionally, he/she will assist units in identifying ways to meet the requirements and ensure that deans and directors perform their responsibilities in this regard.
- H. The SACSCOC Accreditation Liaison will oversee the process of preparing appropriate notification, in conjunction with those involved with the substantive change, according to the requirements in the *SACSCOC Policy on*

In July 2020, the *Substantive Change Policy* was reviewed by the oversight department and the Office of Policy and Tax Compliance. Only minor editorial changes were made that did not affect the substance or intent of the policy.

Reviewed September 1, 2023, with only minor editorial revisions.

For questions or guidance on a specific policy, contact the Oversight Department referenced in the policy.