



Policy Approval/Review Form

This form is used for the approval, amendment, removal or review of a Gordon State College policy. Once authorized with the President's Signature, the policy will be posted to the Gordon State Website. This approval form will be filed in the Office of the President with Cabinet minutes noting approval.

Policy Title *	Substantive Change Policy
Department/Organization	Academic Affairs
Policy Editor	Kristi Hayes
Request Type	New ☐ Amended/Edited ☒ Removed ☐ Reviewed Only ☐

OBJECTIVE (Briefly state your purpose.)

To align Gordon State College substantive change policy with SACSCOC policy

RESOURCES AND CONSULTATION (Briefly describe the resources (i.e. website, link) used in developing, amending, removing, or reviewing the policy. Include names of other individuals who assisted with this change.)

<https://sacscoc.org/app/uploads/2019/08/SubstantiveChange.pdf>

<https://www.gordonstate.edu/documents/departments/human-resources/substantive-change-policy-approved-5-4-21.pdf>

COMMUNICATION PLAN (Identify how information about how the policy will be communicated to the college as well as training plans if applicable.)

Policy will be distributed to appropriate campus members and published on Gordon State College Policy webpage

Authorizations

Chair/Dean/or Supervisor Signature and Date:

Kristi Hayes

Digitally signed by Kristi Hayes
Date: 2024.04.11 11:33:50
-04'00'

Cabinet Sponsor (VP) Signature and Date:

Donald Green

Digitally signed by Donald Green
Date: 2024.04.23 09:32:19 -04'00'

President Signature and Date:

Donald Green

Digitally signed by Donald Green
Date: 2024.04.23 09:31:53 -04'00'

***Policy Template must be submitted with this form.**

Office of the President

Substantive Change Policy for SACSCOC

Gordon State College

The purpose of this policy is to establish institutional procedures for substantive change. Obligations for substantive change for accredited institutions of the Commission on Colleges are as follows:

1. Member institutions are required to notify the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) of changes in accordance with the substantive change policy and, when required, seek approval prior to the initiation of changes.
2. Member institutions are required to have a policy and procedure to ensure that all substantive changes are reported to the Commission in a timely fashion.
3. The SACSCOC Cover Sheet must be attached to each prospectus or Application for Level Change.

As defined in the SACSCOC ***Substantive Change Policy and Procedures***, substantive change is a significant modification or expansion of the nature and scope of an accredited institution. Substantive change includes high-impact, high-risk changes and changes that can impact the quality of educational programs and services.

SACSCOC accredits an entire institution. Accreditation extends to all programs and services of an institution wherever located and however delivered. SACSCOC does not accredit individual programs, locations, or portions of an institution. However, some new programs, locations, and other institutional changes are subject to notification and/or approval as defined in Substantive Change Policy and Procedures.

Substantive changes, including those required by federal regulations, includes, but is not limited to:

- 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.
- 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 change requirements, 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.;
 - [Advertising and Student Recruitment \[PDF\]](#);
 - [Agreements Involving Joint and Dual Academic Awards \[PDF\]](#);
 - [Credit Hours \[PDF\]](#);
 - [Direct Assessment Competency-based Educational Programs \[PDF\]](#);
 - [Distance and Correspondence Education \[PDF\]](#);
 - [Dual Enrollment \[PDF\]](#);
 - [Merger/Consolidation, Acquisition, Change of Ownership, and Change of Governance, Control, Form, or Legal Status \[PDF\]](#);
 - [Request for a Period of Noncompliance \[PDF\]](#); and
 - [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.

Non-compliance

If an institution is non-compliant with Substantive Change Policy and Procedures or Standard 14.2 (Substantive change), its accreditation may be in jeopardy. An unreported substantive change may require a review of the institution's substantive change policy and procedures document by the SACSCOC Board of Trustees. Non-compliance subjects the institution to monitoring, sanction, or removal from membership. Failure to secure approval, if required, of a substantive change involving programs or locations that qualify for title IV federal funding may place the institution in jeopardy with the U.S. Department of Education, including reimbursement of funds received related to an unreported substantive change. For additional information, refer to Appendix A, Standards and Policy Addressing Unreported Substantive Change, in Substantive Change Policy and Procedures.

Policy

It is the responsibility of Gordon State College to follow SACSCOC substantive change procedures and inform SACSCOC of substantive changes as specified in those procedures. A letter from the office of the President of Gordon State College, or his/her designated representative, to the SACSCOC President summarizing a proposed change, providing the intended implementation date, and listing the complete physical address if the change involves an off-campus site or branch campus will be submitted. The policy and procedures for reporting and a review of institution substantive change can be found by going to <https://sacscoc.org/app/uploads/2019/08/SubstantiveChange.pdf>.

Procedure

Gordon State College has developed procedures to ensure that all substantive changes are reported to SACSCOC in a timely manner.

- The President, Provost/Vice President of Academic Affairs, any Academic Affairs Associate/Assistant Vice President, School Dean or Department Head, and the Registrar are responsible for reporting substantive changes to the SACSCOC Liaison in accordance with the revised due dates set forth by SACSCOC Substantive Change Policy Statement.
- Any academic or administrative unit at Gordon State College that plans to implement a change to an academic program that will be substantive, as stated above, must have the change reviewed by the Gordon State College SACSCOC Accreditation Liaison. The Liaison will attend the Academic Policy Committee meetings to ensure all substantive changes are reported.
- The Substantive Change Policy for Gordon State College will be disseminated in the following manner:
 - Policy available at https://www.gordonstate.edu/documents/departments/institutional-effectiveness/Substantive_Change_Approval_Policy_Form_Revised_2017.pdf.
 - SACSCOC Accreditation Liaison will familiarize faculty, staff and administration with the standards
 - The Liaison will provide detailed information to the Provost's Academic Council.
 - The Liaison will provide updates to appropriate individuals as policies and procedures are revised.
- Reporting to SACSCOC as notification and approval must be made in a timely manner. Lead time for SACSCOC approval is from 6 months to one year. Institutional documentation and submission lead time prior to the deadline for SACSCOC notification is at least 60 days for applications for level change, at least 60 days for a prospectus, and at least 30 days for signed agreements and letters of notification prior to implementation.
- While the SACSCOC liaison will retain the primary responsibility for facilitating the substantive change process, all campus administrators will have responsibilities to ensure the appropriate documentation and reporting of substantive change.

Revised January 2014

Revised November 2016

Approved January 2017

Revised April 2024