



Substantive Change

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Responsible University Office: Office of the Provost


President


Date

SCOPE

This policy applies to all changes to academic programs which propose to significantly alter the nature and scope of those programs.

POLICY STATEMENT

PBA's policy on Substantive Change replaces the former "Substantive Change Policy" approved by Cabinet on January 16, 2014.

Palm Beach Atlantic University is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC). In order to maintain compliance with their *Principles of Accreditation: Foundations for Quality Enhancement*, PBA is committed to adhere to all SACSCOC guidelines concerning issues of substantive changes to the University and its academic programs. Faculty and academic staff are expected to work closely with the SACSCOC Liaison in order to propose and coordinate all substantive changes.

REASON FOR POLICY

This policy exists in order to provide a clear institutional roadmap which both orchestrates substantive changes and aligns the documentation and implementation of those changes consistent with SACSCOC standards.

This policy is required by the Southern Association of Colleges and School, Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) to meet the following standard:

Standard 14.2 The institution has a policy and procedure to ensure that all substantive changes are reported in accordance with SACSCOC policy.

SANCTIONS

"If an institution fails to follow SACSCOC substantive change policy and procedures, it may lose its Title IV funding or be required by the U.S. Department of Education to reimburse it for money received by the institution for programs related to the unreported substantive change. In addition, the institution's case may be referred to SACSCOC Board of Trustees for the imposition of a sanction or for removal from membership." (*The Principles of Accreditation: Foundations for Quality Enhancement*, p. 143)

Non-compliance with this policy must be reported immediately to the SACSCOC Liaison upon discovery.

DEFINITIONS

Substantive change – a significant modification or expansion of the nature and scope of an accredited institution. *PBA uses the definition provided by SACSCOC.*

POLICY PROCEDURES AND DETAILS

The changes with which this policy is concerned are those indicated by SACSCOC as being “substantive.” Below is a list of institutional changes that rise to this level:

- Institutional changes:
 - Any change in the established mission or objectives of the institution
 - change in legal status, form of control, or ownership
- Changes involving relationships with external institutions or locations:
 - Teach-out agreements for closing institutions
 - The establishment of an additional location geographically apart from the main campus at which the institution offers at least 50 percent of an educational program
 - Establishing or terminating a program, off-campus site, branch campus or institution
 - Entering into a consortial agreement with another institution for the purposes of delivery of credit-bearing coursework with that institution (see “Policy on Consortial Agreements”)
 - Acquiring another institution or a program or location of another institution
 - Entering into a contract by which an entity not eligible for Title IV funding offers 25% or more of one or more of the accredited institution’s programs”
- Changing involving academic programs:
 - The significant expansion of current degree programs
 - The addition of courses or programs of study at a degree or credential level different from that which is included in the institution’s current accreditation or reaffirmation
 - A change from clock hours to credit hours
 - A substantial increase in the number of clock or credit hours awarded for successful completion of a program

In some cases, substantive changes require advance approval from SACSCOC prior to implementation. In such cases this is done via the writing and submission of a full prospectus. In other cases a notification of changes sent to SACSCOC may suffice. Changes such as a department’s change of major or minor requirements likely require neither of these.

The most common form of substantive change is the addition of or significant alteration to an academic program. This includes the adding of new majors as well as the addition of Graduate programs. It is expected that the development of such changes will follow the administrative chain of command. Faculty will work with division leaders and department heads. Department heads will work with deans, and deans will function as the faculty liaison before the office of the Provost and President. Before this work begins it will be necessary for those tasked with conceptualizing the change to ascertain whether the change in question requires the writing of a full prospectus or mere notification of a change. Therefore it is expected that early in the process appropriate persons contact the SACSCOC Liaison in order to receive clarity regarding the nature of the change.

Once the nature of the change has been clearly articulated and has been delivered to the dean of the academic department in question, the dean will forward the proposed changes, together with a *Substantive Change Form* (available on myPBA under the Office of the Provost tab) to the SACSCOC Liaison.

Some changes, especially those involving the creation of a new academic program, require the writing of a full prospectus. SACSCOC provides guidelines for all prospectuses including length and content guidelines. It is expected that all submissions will adhere strictly to SACSCOC guidelines. The SACSCOC Liaison will not consider any substantive change proposal which is not conjoined with a completed prospectus.

If it is discovered that a substantive change has already been effected without notification or prospectus, the academic officer in charge of the program for which the change has occurred must contact the SACSCOC Liaison so that SACSCOC can immediately be notified.

RESOURCES

Academic personnel considering proposing a substantive change are strongly encouraged to read the guidelines on substantive changes supplied by SACSCOC here:

<http://www.sacscoc.org/SubstantiveChange.asp>

REFERENCES

Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, Commission on Colleges. *The Principles of Accreditation: Foundations for Quality Enhancement*, 2018.

Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, Commission on Colleges. "Substantive Change for SACSCOC Accredited Institutions: Policy Statement."

<http://www.sacscoc.org/pdf/081705/SubstantiveChange.pdf>.

CONTACTS

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