

# SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY AT NEW ORLEANS

## Substantive Change Policy

Southern University at New Orleans is accredited by Southern Association of Colleges and Schools - Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC). SACSCOC Comprehensive Standard 3.12.1 states, *inter alia*, that:

***“The institution notifies the Commission of changes in accordance with the substantive change policy and when required seeks approval prior to the initiation of the changes.”***

According to “*Substantive Change for SACSCOC Accredited Institutions*” Policy Statement, institutional obligations are two-fold:

1. Member institutions are required to notify 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.

### Statement of Compliance with SACSCOC Policy

The Southern University at New Orleans Substantive Change Policy complies with SACSCOC Substantive Change for Accredited Institutions. This internal Substantive Change Policy provides a description of the processes and procedures for intended substantive changes at Southern University at New Orleans. The policy is not intended to replace the SACSCOC’s policy on Substantive Change. It seeks to supplement the SACSCOC policy and explain the processes and procedures used specifically at Southern University at New Orleans to keep the institution compliant with Comprehensive Standard 3.12.1.

### Responsible Officer

The Accreditation Liaison Officer for Southern University at New Orleans is responsible for identifying when a substantive change action is required and ensuring that the appropriate documentation, a notification or a prospectus, is submitted to SACSCOC. The Accreditation Liaison Officer shall develop a working relationship with the institution’s Commission Staff and seek advice as necessary on substantive change matters as well as other accreditation-related matters.

Furthermore, the Accreditation Liaison Officer shall be the custodian of all Substantive Change submissions to SACSCOC and approvals by SACSCOC.

## Policy Revision

This policy shall be revised as necessary to remain current with whatever changes might occur in the SACSCOC policy.

## What is a Substantive Change?

SACSCOC defines a substantive change as ***“a significant modification or expansion of the nature and scope of an accredited institution”***. Consistent with Federal regulations, SACSCOC policy on substantive change stipulates that substantive change includes:

- Any change in the established mission or objectives of the institution
- Any change in legal status, form of control, or ownership of the institution
- The addition of courses or programs that represent a significant departure, either in content or method of delivery, from those that were offered when the institution was last evaluated
- 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
- The establishment of an additional location geographically apart from the main campus at which the institution offers at least 50% 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 only the initiation of a dual or joint academic program with another institution
- Acquiring another institution or a program or location of another institution
- Adding a permanent location at a site where the institution is conducting a teach-out program for a closed 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

The SACSCOC Board of Trustees has approved additional substantive changes that require notification and, in some cases, approval prior to implementation. This policy and its procedures address substantive changes identified through Federal regulations and Board approval.

## Initiating a Substantive Change

Substantive Change application or notification shall be made only after a basis for the modification or expansion warranting the request has been established and approval granted by all required entities at Southern University at New Orleans, the SUS Board of Supervisors, and the Louisiana Board of Regents. Southern University at New Orleans has a new program approval or program modification policy entrenched in the Faculty Handbook. All changes that may warrant substantive changes outlined above invariably emanate at the departmental level. Faculty recommendation at the

departmental level is conveyed in writing by Departmental Chair to the College Dean who submits a recommendation to the University Curriculum Committee. The recommendation of the committee is conveyed in writing by the committee chair to the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs who likewise makes a recommendation to the Chancellor. Certain proposal such as the addition of new academic program, program termination, program mergers, etc. require approval by the Southern University System Board of Supervisors and subsequently by the Louisiana Board of Regents. The latter publishes all final approvals granted an institution under a Database Tracking System ([www. regents.louisiana.gov/data-and-publications](http://www.regents.louisiana.gov/data-and-publications)).

#### Substitute Change Notification or Prospectus Submission Process

The Accreditation Liaison Officer in consultation with the Chancellor determines the appropriate action to take on any approved changes, i.e. whether,

- (a) notification and approval prior to implementation
- (b) notification only prior to implementation
- (c) closing a program, site, branch campus or institution.

The substantive change request is signed by the Chancellor and addressed to Dr. Belle S. Wheelan, SACSCOC President. The COC staff assigned to Southern University at New Orleans is copied. SACSCOC's response and any follow-up actions are addressed appropriately by the Accreditation Liaison Officer and the Chancellor. The goal is to ensure that the institution remains compliant with SACSCOC Comprehensive Standard 3.12.1.

#### Monitoring the Extent of Online or Distance Learning Course Offering

The Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, in collaboration with departmental Chairs, College Deans, and the Director of E-Learning shall regularly monitor the extent of Online course offering proposed by each degree program every semester as published in the Course Schedule. This is to ensure that the institution is in compliance with SACSCOC Substantive Change Policy regarding exceeding 25% threshold which requires a notification, or 50% threshold which requires prior approval of the Online delivery mode.

In extenuating circumstances such as unexpected faculty resignations, emergency sick leave, etc. colleges may recommend for the approval of the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs moderate increase (not above 35% threshold) for the particular semester to address the emergency situation. Appropriate documentations must be submitted when seeking the approval of the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs. Prompt measures must be taken to address such extenuating circumstances in subsequent semesters.

Whenever changes in the threshold is a planned action by the institution, appropriate information (notification or prospectus) shall be submitted to SACSCOC as required by SACSCOC policy.

In addition to monitoring the extent of Online course offering as outlined above, Southern University at New Orleans is mandated by this policy to be in compliance with the recently added SACSCOC Policies on Distance Education which have been included as Federal Requirements 4.8.1, 4.8.2, 4.8.3.

#### Substantive Changes Approved by SACSCOC by the 2011 Reaffirmation

- Request to develop online degree programs:
  - B.G.S. in General Studies
  - B.S. in Criminal Justice
  - B.S. in Early Childhood Education
  - M.A. in Museum Studies
- Elimination of 20 academic programs by the Louisiana Board of Regents (LA BoR)
- LA BoR's requests to develop three new programs:
  - B.A. in Public Administration
  - B.A. in Human Development & Family Studies
  - B.S. in Health Information Management
- LA BoR's requests to restructure four programs:
  - The M.A. in Urban Education to the M.Ed. in Curriculum & instruction with concentrations in Early Childhood Development & Elementary Education
  - The B.S. in Computer Information Systems to the B.S. in Management Information Systems
  - The M.S. in Computer Information Systems to the M.S. in Management Information Systems
  - The B.S. in Business Administration to the B.S. in Business Entrepreneurship
- Notification of the reinstatement by the LA BoR of the:
  - B.S. Mathematics
  - B.A. English
  - B.A. History
- Approval to start the B.S. in Health Information Management Program (HIM) that was approved by the LA Board of Regents in June 2006
- Changing of the name of the College of Education to College of Education & Human Development

Detailed information on these reports and SACSCOC approval is available in the Office of Institutional Effectiveness.

### Substantive Changes Approved Since the Last Reaffirmation

- SUNO-EOServe Contractual agreement to offer Bachelor of General Studies (Humanities Concentration) in a condensed 8-week Online mode.
- Notification on:
  - Offering of the Bachelor of General Studies (Humanities Concentration) in a condensed 8-week Online mode
  - BoR approval to offer B.S. Forensic Science
  - BoR approval to offer 6 Post-Baccalaureate Certification programs in Education
- Termination of the B.A. Sociology program