



AOP 10.15: SUBSTANTIVE CHANGES

PURPOSE

The purpose of this Academic Operating Policy (AOP) is to provide instructions on the procedures and processes for reporting substantive changes to the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACSCOC).

POLICY/PROCEDURE

SACSCOC defines a substantive change as “a significant modification or expansion of the nature and scope of an accredited institution.” SACSCOC must be notified of any substantive change prior to implementation of the change at Mississippi State University. Depending on the nature of the change, a full prospectus may be required six months prior to implementation.

It is the responsibility of the Provost and Executive Vice President, Deans, Department Heads, and Directors to be familiar with the SACSCOC substantive change policy (<https://sacscoc.org/app/uploads/2019/08/SubstantiveChange.pdf>) and the Mississippi State University substantive change policy. The SACSCOC Liaison and the Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness will assist units in drafting the appropriate substantive change documentation.

Substantive change is grouped into three types:

1. Institutional Changes
2. Programmatic Changes
3. Instructional Sites

Institutional Changes

Institutional Changes are initiated by an academic dean or the Office of the Provost and Executive Vice President, and almost always need approval from the Board of Trustees of the Institutions of Higher Learning (IHL) prior to submission to SACSCOC. These changes include the following:

- Change in the mission or objectives of Mississippi State University
- Changes in measure of student progress (e.g., changes in how credit hours are determined; adjustment to competency-based measures)
- Merger / consolidation
- Governance change

Programmatic Changes

New academic programs or modifications to academic programs must follow the approval process in AOP 12.08 Requirements for Degrees, Academic Minors, Certificate Programs, and Consortial/Contractual Agreements, as well as the process described in the University Committee on Courses and Curricula (UCCC)'s *Guide and Format*.

- Addition of programs, since the last SACSCOC reaffirmation for Mississippi State University, representing a significant departure (measured as 50% new offerings) in content or method of delivery. The two methods of delivery to which this policy applies are face-to-face and distance education.
- Changes in program length
- Closing a program, a method of delivery, off-campus site, or a program at an off-campus site
- Adding programs with completion pathways that recognize and accommodate a student's prior or existing knowledge or competency.
- Entering into a collaborative academic arrangement
- 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.

Instructional Sites

- The establishment of an additional location geographically apart from the main campus.
- Closing a program, a method of delivery, off-campus site, or a program at an off-campus site

REVIEW

This AOP will be reviewed every four years or whenever circumstances require an earlier review by the Executive Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate School with recommendations for revision to the Provost and Executive Vice President.

REVIEWED:

/s/ Peter Ryan
Executive Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate School

8/10/2022
Date

/s/ David Shaw
Provost and Executive Vice President

9/21/2022
Date

/s/ Jason Barrett
President, Robert Holland Faculty Senate

11/11/2023
Date

/s/ Tracey Baham
Associate Vice President, Institutional Strategy and Effectiveness

1/31/2023
Date

/s/ Joan Lucas
General Counsel

3/17/2023
Date

APPROVED:

/s/ Mark E. Keenum
President

3/27/2023
Date

Appendix I.

Type of Substantive Change	Actions Required by Levels								
	Department Faculty	Department Head or Director	Dean	UCCC	Dean's Council	Provost & Executive Vice President	IHL Board of Trustees	SACSCOC Liaison	President
Academic									
Expanding at current degree level (<i>significant departure from current programs</i>)	I	AR	AR	AR	AR	AR	A	E	L
Initiating a certificate program at employer's request and on short notice	I	AR	AR	AR	AR	AR	A	E	L
Initiating joint or dual degrees with another institution	I	AR	AR	AR	AR	AR	A	E	L
Initiating off-campus sites (including Early College High School and dual enrollment programs offered at the high		I	AR			A		E	L
Altering significantly the length of a program	I	AR	AR	AR	AR	AR	A	E	L
Initiating programs or courses offered through contractual agreement or consortium	I	AR	AR	AR	AR	AR	A	E	L
Entering into a contract with an entity not certified to participate in USDOE Title IV programs		I	AR			A		E	L
Moving an off-campus instructional site (serving the same geographic area)		I	AR			A		E	L
Closing a program	I	AR	AR	AR	AR	AR	A	E	L
Closing an approved off-campus site, branch campus, or institution			I			AR	A	E	L
Acquiring any program or site from another institution			I			AR	A	E	L
Administrative									
Initiating a branch campus			I			A		E	L
Altering significantly the educational mission of the institution						I	A	E	L
Changing governance, ownership, control, or legal status of an institution							I & A	E	L
Relocating a main or branch campus						I	A	E	L
Initiating a merger/consolidation with another institution							I & A	E	L
Creating a new department, school or college			I			AR	A	E	L
Merge two or more departments, schools or colleges			I			AR	A	E	L
Closing a department school or college			I			AR	A	E	L

I = Initiate

AR = Approve and recommend approval at next level

A = Approve

E = Evaluate and determine if documentation must be sent to SACSCOC L = Letter/documentation to SACSCOC if warranted