



**POLICY STATEMENT**

**NO. 2.24.01**

**COORDINATED BY:** Office of Academic Affairs

**EFFECTIVE:** August 18, 2010

**REVISED:** March, 2014

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**SUBJECT:** SACSCOC Substantive Change

**I. PURPOSE**

To set forth the process regarding any programmatic changes that meet the definition of substantive change as provided by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC).

**II. POLICY**

Louisiana State University in Shreveport (LSUS) welcomes the expansion of academic offering of programs and/or courses. Substantive change is defined as *a significant modification or expansion of the nature and scope of an accredited institution*. The University must report “substantive changes” to its major accrediting body, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC). While some changes only require that the University notify SACSCOC, others require approval prior to the implementation of the program. Due to the importance of determining into which category the change falls, the Office of Academic Affairs (OAA) must be consulted prior to beginning the process.

The [SACSCOC Policy](#) is as follows:

*The Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges accredits an entire institution and its programs and services, wherever they are located or however they are delivered. It is responsible for reviewing all substantive changes that occur between an institution’s decennial reviews to determine whether or not the change has affected the quality of the total institution and to assure the public that all aspects of the institution continue to meet defined standards.*

*SACSCOC is recognized by the U.S. Department of Education as an agency whose accreditation enables its member institutions to seek eligibility to participate in Title IV programs. To maintain its recognition with the U.S. Department of Education SACSCOC has incorporated federal requirements into its substantive change policy and procedures. Some of those requirements specify that an institution seek and receive approval prior to the initiation of a substantive change so that the change can be included in the institution’s scope of accreditation.*

**II. PROCEDURE**

**A. Academic Program Changes (Identified in the Table Below with an “A” Designation)**

The following guidelines apply to all academic related changes and must be followed when initiating

coursework or programs at any level, initiating off campus sites, initiating distance learning, and contractual agreements of consortia regarding academic programs. Proposals for academic changes at the University originate within the academic departments based on identified needs and preliminary determination of consistency with the LSUS Mission (<http://www.lsus.edu/iep/mission.php>) and Strategic Plan ([http://www.lsus.edu/iep/planning\\_assessment.php](http://www.lsus.edu/iep/planning_assessment.php)). The procedural flow-chart and the table outlining the types of change are used as a guide to determine the appropriate steps to follow and the timeframe by which the contact with SACSCOC must occur.

### LSUS SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE PROCEDURAL FLOW CHART

**Departmental/Unit Action:** Faculty determine the need for a change typically the result of data summarized through the annual planning and assessment process.

Offering a new program or existing program at an off-site location

Offering a new program or existing program electronically or through contractual agreements of consortia

Initiation of a new degree program or an existing program at a different level (i.e. undergraduate to graduate)

**Approval by Appropriate Department/Unit:** Faculty present proposed changes to appropriate members of the Department/Unit for approval to ensure the elements are reflective of the Departmental/Unit and the University Mission and Strategic Plan.

**Approval by Appropriate Associate Dean and Dean:** Department/Unit representative presents proposed changes to Deans, for approval to ensure the elements are reflective of the Departmental/Unit and the University Mission and Strategic Plan.

**Submit to the Office of Academic Affairs for Provost and Chancellor Approval:** Deans present proposed change to the Office of Academic Affairs for the Provost to review and ensure the elements are reflective of the University Mission and Strategic Plan. If approved, the Provost will present to the Chancellor with a request to proceed with SACSCOC reporting.

**Reporting to SACSCOC through a Letter of Intent from the Chancellor:** The Chancellor sends a letter to the President of the Commission summarizing the proposed change, planned implementation date, and other required information.

**Determination of SACSCOC/LSUS Procedures:** Request for a Formal Prospectus (pg. 18 of [SACSCOC Policy on Substantive Change](#)), Additional Information, or No Further Action

**Writing and Submission of the Request from SACSCOC and/or Following Board of Regents Policies and LSUS Courses & Curricula Guidelines Posted at:**

Board of Regents: <http://regents.state.la.us/Academic/PP/policies.aspx>

Undergraduate: <http://www.lsus.edu/acadaffairs/publications/candcmanual.pdf>

Graduate: <http://www.lsus.edu/acadaffairs/publications/gradpolicy.pdf>



**B. Non-Academic Changes (Identified in the Table Below with an “N” Designation)**

All significant programmatic changes organizational changes including mergers/consolidation, relocation, closure of a campus or program, significant changes in educational mission of the Institution, and changes in governance of the campus will be initiated by the Louisiana Board of Regents in accordance with Article VIII, Section 5 of the Louisiana Constitution

(<http://regents.state.la.us/Board/articleviii.aspx>) and the Louisiana State University System Bylaws Article VII ([http://www.lsusystem.edu/userfiles/file/bylaws/BYLAWS\\_Article%20VII.pdf](http://www.lsusystem.edu/userfiles/file/bylaws/BYLAWS_Article%20VII.pdf)). The LSU Shreveport leadership will collaborate with the Board of Regents and the LSU System to ensure compliance with the [SACSCOC Policy on Substantive Change](#).

Types of Change	Procedure	Prior Notification Required	Time Frame for Contacting COC	Prior Approval Required	Documentation
Initiating coursework or programs at a different level than currently approved (A)	1	NA	NA	Yes	Application for Level Change Due dates: April 15 or September 15
Expanding at current degree level ( <i>significant departure from current programs</i> ) (A)	1	Yes	6 months	Yes	Prospectus
Initiating a branch campus (See definition of “branch campus” on p. 3 of this document.) (N)	1	Yes	6 months	Yes	Prospectus
Initiating a certificate program at employer’s request and on short notice (A)					
...using existing approved courses	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
...at a new off-campus site (previously approved program)	1	NA	NA	Yes	Modified prospectus
...that is a significant departure from previously approved programs	1	Yes	Approval required prior to implementation	Yes	Modified prospectus
Initiating other certificate programs (A)					

...using existing approved courses	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
...at a new off-campus site (previously approved program)	1	NA	NA	Yes	Prospectus
...that is a significant departure from previously approved	1	Yes	6 months	Yes	Prospectus
Altering significantly the educational mission of the institution (N)	1	NA	NA	Yes	Contact Commission Staff (Also see page 16, item 9)
Initiating distance learning... (A)					
Offering 50% or more of a program <u>for the first time</u>	1	NA	NA	Yes	Prospectus
...Offering 25-49%	2	Yes	Prior to implementation	No	Letter of notification
...Offering 24% or less	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Initiating programs or courses offered through contractual agreement or consortium (A)	2	Yes	Prior to implementation	NA	Letter of notification and copy of signed agreement
Entering into a contract with an entity not certified to participate in USDOE Title IV programs (N)					
...if the entity provides 25% or more of an educational program offered by the COC accredited institution	1	NA	NA	Yes	Prospectus
...if the entity provides less than 25% of an educational program offered by the COC accredited institution	2	Yes	Prior to implementation	NA	Copy of the signed agreement
Initiating a merger/consolidation with another institution (N)	See SACSCOC policy <u>"Mergers, Consolidations"</u>	Yes	6 months	Yes	Prospectus Due dates: April 15 or September 15

Changing governance, ownership, control, or legal status of an institution (N)	See SACSCOC policy <b><u>"Mergers, Consolidations and Change of Ownership: Review and Approval."</u></b>	Yes	6 months	Yes	Prospectus Due dates: April 15 or September 15
Relocating a main or branch campus (N)	1	Yes	6 months	Yes	Prospectus
Moving an off-campus instructional site (serving the same geographic area) (N)	2	Yes	Prior to implementation	NA	Letter of notification with new address and starting date
Changing from clock hours to credit hours (A)	1	NA	NA	Yes	Justify reasons for change, indicate calculation of equivalency, and other pertinent information
Altering significantly the length of a program (A)	1	NA	NA	Yes	Prospectus
Initiating degree completion programs (A)	1	NA	NA	Yes	Prospectus
Closing a program, approved off-campus site, branch campus, or institution (N)					
... Institution to teach out its own students	3	Yes	Immediately following decision to close	Yes	Description of teach-out plan included with letter of notification
... Institution contracts with another institution to teach-out students (Teach-out Agreement)	3	Yes	Immediately following decision to close	Yes	Description of teach-out plan, copy of signed teach-out agreement detailing terms included with notification
Acquiring any program or site from another institution (N)	See SACSCOC policy <b><u>"Mergers, Consolidations and Change of Ownership: Review and Approval."</u></b>	Yes	6 months	Yes	Prospectus

Adding a permanent location at a site where the institution is conducting a teach-out for students from another institution that is closing (N)	See SACSCOC policy <a href="#">“Mergers, Consolidations and Change of Ownership: Review and Approval.”</a>	Yes	6 months	Yes	Prospectus
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<sup>1</sup> a significant departure in program is one in which the proposed new program has no closely related counterpart among the previously approved programs in the curriculum. To determine if a new program is a “significant departure”, it is helpful to ask if the new program requires:

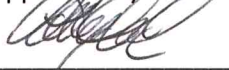
- Numbers of new faculty?
- Many new courses?
- New library or other learning resources?
- New equipment or facilities?
- A new resource base?

<sup>2</sup> significant changes in mission are those that lead to a fundamental shift in the nature of the institution, such as an institution that had offered only professional programs deciding to add general education offerings, or a technical college transforming itself into a comprehensive community college.

<sup>3</sup> significant changes in program length are those with noticeable impact on the program’s completion time (e.g., increasing a baccalaureate degree from 124 hours to 150 hours).

*\*Chart Taken from SACSCOC Policy Statement on Substantive Change, March 2014*

Approved by:

  
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 Larry Clark, Chancellor

  
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 John Vassar, Provost and VC Academic Affairs

This policy was written, approved and published in accordance with LSU Shreveport General Policy **1.01.01 Policy Manual** published at [http://www.lsus.edu/facultystaff/policieshb/pdf\\_files/1.01.01.pdf](http://www.lsus.edu/facultystaff/policieshb/pdf_files/1.01.01.pdf).