

14.2

Substantive Change

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

Judgment

Compliant Non-Compliant Not Applicable

Narrative

University policy [ACAF 2.11 Substantive Change](#) governs procedures for notification and approval for substantive change. This policy is published in the publicly accessible [Policies and Procedures Manual](#) via the [Office of the Provost's website](#).

The policy defines "substantive change" as a "significant modification or expansion of the nature and scope of an accredited institution" and includes the following examples of substantive change:

- Initiating coursework or programs at a more advanced level than currently approved;
- Initiating a branch campus;
- Altering significantly the educational mission of the institution;
- Initiating a merger or consolidation with another institution;
- Relocating a main or branch campus;
- Changing governance, ownership, control, or legal status of an institution;
- Changing from clock hours to credit hours;
- Adding a permanent location at a site where the institution is conducting a teach-out for students from another institution that is closing;
- Closing a branch campus or an institution;
- Expanding program offerings at current degree level;
- Initiating joint degrees with another institution;
- Initiating a certificate program at employer's request and on short notice;
- Initiating other certificate programs;
- Initiating off-campus sites;
- Expanding program offerings at previously approved off-campus sites;
- Relocating an off-campus instructional site;
- Initiating online programs or other programs where the faculty and students are not in the same location that are significantly different from current online offerings;
- Initiating degree completion programs;
- Initiating programs or courses offered through contractual agreement or consortium;
- Entering into a contract with an entity not certified to participate in USDOE Title IV programs;
- Acquiring any program or site from another institution;
- Altering the length of a program significantly; and
- Closing a program or approved off-campus site.

The policy further clarifies:

The initiation of new off-campus sites and the addition of new site-based programs that represent significant departures from current offerings are commonly reported substantive changes. A "significant departure" is one in which the proposed new program has no closely related counterpart among the previously approved programs in the curriculum offered at a site, whether the location is the main campus or an off-campus location. To determine whether a new program is a "significant departure," the Commission on Colleges considers whether the new program requires significant amounts of additional faculty, courses, library or other learning resources, equipment or facilities, or financial resources.

The Director of Institutional Effectiveness and Accreditation serves as the liaison to the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges with responsibility to report substantive changes in a timely manner. As required by [ACAF 2.11](#), the [Office of Academic Programs](#) and the [Academic Program Liaison Committee](#) meet every other month to discuss issues regarding academic programs, to identify upcoming challenges, and to find solutions to potential substantive change problems. Detailed procedures regarding all academic program planning and revision processes are found in the Appendices to University Policy [ACAF 2.00 Creation and Revision of Academic Programs](#). The University uses the [Academic Programs Proposal System \(APPS\)](#), a web-based submission and approval system, to facilitate the submission and approval process for course and program curriculum forms. The Office of Academic Programs and the University SACSCOC Accreditation Liaison review APPS submissions to determine whether or not they rise to the level of significant departure. All proposers of changes approved for further development must keep the Provost, Dean, Office of Academic Programs, and the SACSCOC Accreditation Liaison apprised regarding the continuing viability and progress toward implementation of the potential change.

Substantive Change Actions and Status

The University publishes official correspondence related to substantive change, including submissions to SACSCOC and responses from the Commission, [on its website](#).

Policy Approval and Oversight

The Office of the Provost also maintains a description of the policy approval process, which includes review by the Provost, University of South Carolina Executive Council, and Council of Academic Deans, in addition to Presidential approval, [online](#). Responsibilities related to policy oversight, including [ACAF 2.11](#) can be found on the [Office of the Provost's website](#). The responsible officer is the division head and develops, authorizes and implements that division's policies. The officer is responsible to keep all division policies up-to-date and revise policies to reflect current policy, practice and procedure of the university. Each university policy should be reviewed by the originating division and revised as necessary at least every five years.

Policy Enforcement

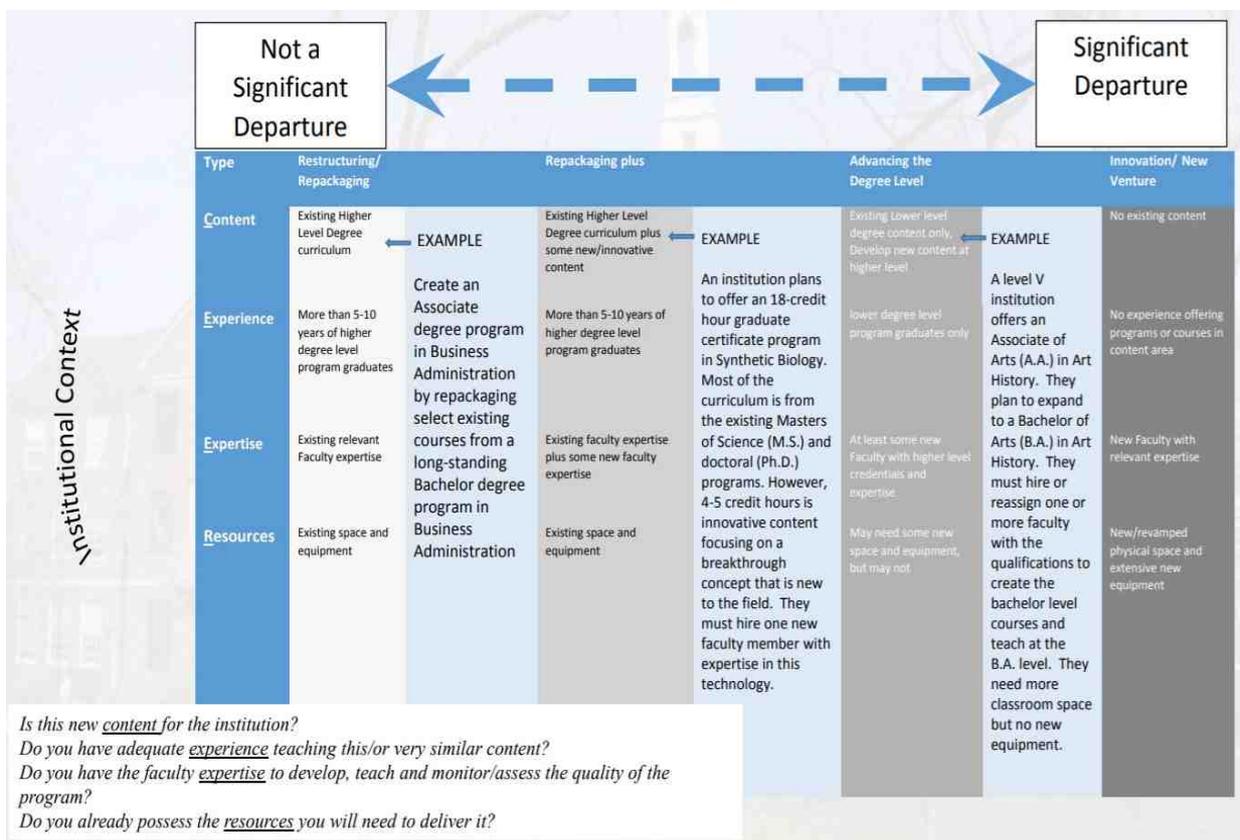
Responsibility for enforcement of [ACAF 2.11](#) resides with the President. Each Dean is responsible for ensuring unit adherence to the procedures set forth in the policies governing academic programs. The Provost is responsible for ensuring that they do. The Director of Institutional Effectiveness and Accreditation serves as the liaison to the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges with responsibility to report substantive changes in a timely manner.

Monitoring and Implementation of Substantive Change Policy

In order to launch a new academic degree program (including certificate of graduate study) or academic unit, faculty are first asked to complete a Program Pre-Authorization Request for Provost review. Similarly, substantive changes to an existing degree program or academic unit will also require pre-faculty-governance completion of the [request form](#). The Office of Academic Programs and the SACSCOC Liaison review [six questions](#) from pre-authorization forms that are submitted to determine a change is substantive or a significant departure. The six questions review are:

1. What previously approved programs does USC offer that are closely related to the new program and how are they related?
2. Will significant additional equipment or facilities be needed?
3. Will significant additional financial resources be needed?
4. Will a significant number (greater than 25%) of new courses be required?
5. Will a significant number of new faculty be required?
6. Will a significant number of additional library/ learning resources be required?

When making decisions regarding significant departure the university SACSCOC liaison evaluates the questions listed above and compares it against the significant departure continuum provide below.



The university has provided evidence of implementation of this review process, as documented in the communication between the Office of Academic Programs and the university SACSCOC Liaison:

- New Program B.S Cyber Intelligence
- New Program B.S. in Music Industry
- New Program Master of Science in Business
- Proposed Ph.D in Informatics
- Proposed Ph.D Psychology
- Program Change M.A. in Economics
- USC Columbia Liaison Question for SACSCOC

Sources

-  ACAF 2.00 Creation and Revision of Academic Programs
-  ACAF 2.11 Substantive Change
-  Policies and Procedure Manual
-  Pre-Authorization Form
-  RE_ New Program B.S. Cyber Intelligence
-  RE_ New Program Pre-Authorization Request_BS in Music Industry
-  RE_ New Program Pre-Authorization Request_Master of Science in Business
-  RE_ Proposed Ph.D. in Informatics
-  Re_ New Program Pre-Authorization Request_Ph.D. Psychology
-  Re_ Program Change Pre-Authorization Request_M.A. in Economics
-  Significant Departure Review Questions
-  USC Columbia Liaison to SACSCOC Substantive Change Questions