

# SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE

**POLICY NUMBER:** ADM-SUBSTANTIVECHANGE

**POLICY TYPE:** ADMINISTRATIVE

**RESPONSIBLE OFFICIAL TITLE:** PROVOST AND EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT FOR ACADEMIC AFFAIRS:

**RESPONSIBLE OFFICE:** VICE PROVOST FOR UNDERGRADUATE ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** UPON APPROVAL – 2/20/2018

**NEXT REVIEW DATE:** APPROVAL PLUS THREE YEARS – 2/20/2021

**SUPERSEDES POLICY DATED:** 2009

**REQUIRES LEGAL/COMPLIANCE REVIEW:**

(PER SECTION V. OF THE APPROVED POLICY REQUEST FORM)  YES  NO

**REQUIRES I.T. POLICY COUNCIL REVIEW:**

(PER SECTION V. OF THE APPROVED POLICY REQUEST FORM)  YES  NO

**REQUIRES HUMAN RESOURCES REVIEW:**

(PER SECTION V. OF THE APPROVED POLICY REQUEST FORM)  YES  NO

**BOARD OF REGENTS REPORTING (CHECK ONE)::**

(PER SECTION V. OF THE APPROVED POLICY REQUEST FORM):

PRESIDENTIAL RECOMMENDATION (CONSENT AGENDA/VOTING ITEM):

PRESIDENTIAL REPORT (INFORMATION ONLY)

## I. POLICY STATEMENT

Timely reporting of substantive changes is a requirement for all Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) member institutions. The SACSCOC Standard 14.2 reads: “The institution has a policy and procedure to ensure that all substantive changes are reported in accordance with SACSCOC policy.”

Northern Kentucky University (NKU) will be proactive in ensuring all incidences of substantive changes are reviewed and reported in a timely manner. This policy establishes the parameters for compliance with the SACSCOC Substantive Change requirement. Failure to submit in a timely manner the request for approval of a substantive change, provide the required information, or the inclusion of inaccurate information can put the University’s accreditation at risk.

A substantive change is only effective after SACSCOC approval.

## II. ENTITIES AFFECTED

This policy applies to:

- Academic programs, departments, and colleges, including Steely Library
- All administrative departments and units at the University
- NKU Board of Regents
- Any entities that propose a change that affects current university compliance or may result in changes in the University’s current mission

## III. AUTHORITY

SACS Substantive Change requirement: <http://www.sacscoc.org/pdf/081705/SubstantiveChange.pdf>

## IV. DEFINITIONS

According to SACSCOC, a substantive change is a significant modification or expansion of the nature and scope of an accredited institution. According to their Policy Statement (<http://www.sacscoc.org/pdf/081705/SubstantiveChange.pdf>), the following will be considered a substantive change:

- 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 at a degree or credential level above that which is included in 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 percent of an educational program, and
- 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

Not all program changes qualify as substantive changes. Substantive changes are defined as any changes that may cause significant departure from the institution mission.

A glossary of terms can be found on page 3 of the SACSCOC Substantive Change Policy Statement: <http://www.sacscoc.org/pdf/081705/SubstantiveChange.pdf>.

## V. RESPONSIBILITIES

1. The SACSCOC Liaison (the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Academic Affairs) is responsible for:
  - a. Informing the University community of the requirements under the Substantive Change policy.
  - b. Providing guidance to departments, colleges and other administrative units regarding the requirements under the Substantive Change policy and determining whether the proposed new program or initiative represents a substantive change.
  - c. Working with substantive change initiators to prepare necessary documentation.
  - d. Reviewing substantive change requests.
  - e. Determining which reporting procedure to follow.

- f. Collaborating with the initiator to prepare and submit a substantive change request form
  - g. Gathering all required documentation
  - h. Preparing the letter of intention prior to implementation and depending on the procedure
  - i. Forwarding substantive change requests to the Provost, along with a recommendation (approval or not approval).
  - j. Submitting the substantive change request, along with required documentation (e.g. prospectus), to SACSCOC by the nearest deadline.
  - k. Tracing SACSCOC actions on submitted substantive change requests.
  - l. Informing university community of SACS decision on submitted substantive change request.
  - m. Consulting with SACSCOC for clarification on cases where application of the Substantive Change policy is unclear.
2. The initiators are responsible for:
    - a. Consulting with the SACSCOC liaison at the beginning of the program development process to determine whether the proposed program/initiative represents a substantive change.
    - b. Seeking the approval from their respective dean or unit supervisor, as appropriate, for submitting a substantive change request.
    - c. Preparing and submitting a substantive change request form, along with all required documentation.
    - d. Preparing a prospectus if applicable. The SACSCOC prospectus guidelines are found at <http://www.sacscoc.org/pdf/081705/SubstantiveChange.pdf> . The cover sheet to accompany each prospectus is found at [http://www.sacscoc.org/forms/principle/subchange/Substantive\\_Change\\_Cover\\_%20Sheet.pdf](http://www.sacscoc.org/forms/principle/subchange/Substantive_Change_Cover_%20Sheet.pdf)
    - e. Refraining from publicizing or otherwise implementing new program/initiative until and unless approval is received from SACSCOC. A substantive change is only effective after SACS approval.
  3. The Dean or Unit Supervisor (or designee) is responsible for:
    - a. Reviewing the substantive change request.
    - b. Overseeing the development and submission of the prospectus, if applicable.
    - c. Making all necessary documents from their unit are submitted on time and as requested.
  4. The Provost is responsible for:
    - a. Reviewing the substantive change request.
    - b. Consulting with appropriate university bodies (e.g. Faculty Senate).
    - c. Making a decision on the substantive change request.
    - d. Paying the fees to SACS for reviewing an application for substantive change.

## VI. PROCEDURES

Substantive change reporting will follow different procedures according to type of change being considered:

- Procedure 1: Review of substantive changes requiring notification **and** approval prior to implementation

- Procedure 2: Review of substantive changes requiring **only** notification prior to implementation
- Procedure 3: Closing a program, site, branch campus or institution.
- Procedure for mergers, consolidation, change of ownership, acquisition and change of governance, control, form or legal status are included in this separate document: <http://www.sacscoc.org/pdf/081705/Mergers.pdf>
- Procedures for competency based education direct assessment are included in this separate document: <http://www.sacscoc.org/pdf/081705/DirectAssessmentCompetencyBased.pdf>

Guidelines and forms required for each procedure can be found on the following website: <https://inside.nku.edu/viceprovost/sacs-accreditation.html>.

## VII. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Substantive change reports, as appropriate, will be submitted by the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Academic Affairs and SACSCOC Liaison.

## VIII. COMMUNICATIONS

President’s Executive Team, Academic Affairs Council, Associate Deans Council, Council of Chairs.

## IX. REFERENCES AND RELATED MATERIALS

See Substantive Change Request Form (will be posted at <https://inside.nku.edu/viceprovost/sacs-accreditation.html>).

See Substantive Change Workflow (will be posted at <https://inside.nku.edu/viceprovost/sacs-accreditation.html>)

### REVISION HISTORY

REVISION TYPE	MONTH/YEAR APPROVED
Revision	February 20, 2018
Revision	2009
Choose an item.	
Choose an item.	

**PRESIDENTIAL APPROVAL**

**PRESIDENT**

Signature 

Date 2/20/18

Gerard St. Amand

**BOARD OF REGENTS APPROVAL**

**BOARD OF REGENTS (IF FORWARDED BY PRESIDENT)**

- This policy was forwarded to the Board of Regents on the **Presidential Report (information only)**.  
Date of Board of Regents meeting at which this policy was reported: 5 / 2 / 18.
- This policy was forwarded to the Board of Regents as a **Presidential Recommendation (consent agenda/voting item)**.
  - The Board of Regents approved this policy on \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_.  
(Attach a copy of Board of Regents meeting minutes showing approval of policy.)
  - The Board of Regents rejected this policy on \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_.  
(Attach a copy of Board of Regents meeting minutes showing rejection of policy.)

**EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT TO THE PRESIDENT/SECRETARY TO THE BOARD OF REGENTS**

Signature 

Date 4.3.18

Benjamin Jager