

SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE

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The Office of Academic Planning and Assessment facilitates the institution's reporting and compliance activities for accreditation with the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC).

As a member of the SACSCOC, Sam Houston State University is responsible for notifying and, when necessary, seeking approval for substantive changes from the Commission in accordance with the SACSCOC substantive change policy. In addition, some substantive changes require notification to the Department of Education for federal financial aid purposes.

What is a Substantive Change?

As defined by the SACSCOC, a "substantive change is a significant modification or expansion of the nature and scope of an accredited institution."

Substantive changes include, but are not limited to

- Initiating coursework or programs at a different level than currently approved
- Expanding at current degree level (significant departure from current programs)
- Initiating a branch campus
- Initiating certificate programs
- Altering significantly the educational mission of the institution
- Initiating joint or dual degrees with another institution
- Initiating a certificate program at employer's request and on short notice
- Initiating off-campus sites
- Expanding program offerings at previously approved off-campus sites
- Altering significantly the length of a program
- Changing from clock hours to credit hours
- Initiating a direct assessment competency-based program
- Initiating distance learning
- Entering into a contract with an entity not certified to participate in UDOE Title IV programs (for the delivery of an educational program)
- Initiating programs/courses offered through contractual agreement or consortium
- Initiating a merger/consolidation with another institution
- Changing governance, ownership, control, or legal status of an institution
- 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 program, approved off-campus site, branch campus, or institution

Why is it so important that we report substantive changes to SACSCOC and other relevant entities?

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Substantive Change
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[SACSCOC Substantive Change Website](#)

[SACSCOC Policies and Publications Website](#)

Failure to comply with the SACSCOC Substantive Change policy and report substantive changes in a time-appropriate manner may result in negative actions being taken against SHSU by the Commission or the Department of Education. Specifically, potential consequences include

- Loss of Title IV Funding
- Repayment of monies received from the U.S. Department of Education for programs related to the unreported substantive change
- Sanctions or removal from membership of the SACSCOC

Some substantive changes must also be reported to the Department of Education for federal financial aid purposes. The SACSCOC Liaison will notify the Office of Financial Aid of substantive changes involving off-site locations and initiation of new programs.

What are my responsibilities in reporting a substantive change?

As changes occur at all levels of the institution, it is the responsibility of each unit to ensure that appropriate reporting to all oversight agencies and accreditors occurs. If you believe an upcoming change within your unit may qualify as a substantive change, please notify the institution's SACSCOC Liaison, Somer Franklin, at your earliest convenience. The SACSCOC Liaison will work with you in determining if the change is substantive in nature and requires notification and/or approval from the Commission. Procedures have been implemented to ensure that the academic deans and the division vice presidents receive training in substantive change procedures. In addition, the Office of Academic Planning and Assessment has made available on this website a number of substantive change resources to include SHSU policies and procedures, SACSCOC policies and guidelines, and additional educational training materials.

Who should I contact if I have questions?

For questions relating to substantive changes, please contact the institution's SACSCOC Liaison:

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Texas Homeland Security
Texas Veterans Portal
TRAIL
Report Fraud and Abuse

Title IX (Sexual Misconduct)
The Texas State Auditor's Office Hotline
Online Institutional Resumes
Governor's Committee on People with Disabilities
Where the Money Goes
Compact with Texans
Texas CREWS
HB 2504 Compliance
Web Site Accessibility
The Counseling Center/Mental Health Resources