



Substantive Change Policy

WPU is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) and complies with the [Substantive Change for SACSCOC Accredited Institutions Policy Statement](#), ensuring all substantive change processes are reported in a timely and accurate manner.

The Commission defines a substantive change as “a significant modification or expansion of the nature and scope of an accredited institution” (SACSCOC Substantive Change Policy and Procedure, p. 1). Consistent with the SACSCOC Policy and Procedure, and federal regulations, substantive changes include:

- Substantially changing the established mission or objectives of an institution or its programs.
- Changing the legal status, form of control, or ownership of an institution.
- Changing the governance of an institution.
- Merging / consolidating two or more institutions or entities.
- Acquiring another institution or any program or location of another institution.
- Relocating an institution or an off-campus instructional site of an institution (including a branch campus).
- Offering courses or programs at a higher or lower degree level than currently authorized.
- Adding graduate programs at an institution previously offering only undergraduate programs (including degrees, diplomas, certificates, and other for-credit credential).
- Changing the way an institution measures student progress, whether in clock hours or credit-hours; semesters, trimesters, or quarters; or time-based or non–time-based methods or measures.
- Adding a program that is a significant departure from the existing programs, or method of delivery, from those offered when the institution was last evaluated.
- Initiating programs by distance education or correspondence courses.
- Adding an additional method of delivery to a currently offered program.
- Entering into a cooperative academic arrangement.
- Entering into a written arrangement under 34 C.F.R. § 668.5 under which an institution or organization not certified to participate in the title IV Higher Education Act (HEA) programs offers less than 25% (notification) or 25-50% (approval) of one or more of the accredited institution's educational programs.
- Substantially increasing or decreasing the number of clock hours or credit hours awarded or competencies demonstrated, or an increase in the level of credential awarded, for successful completion of one or more programs.
- Adding competency-based education programs.
- Adding each competency-based education program by direct assessment.
- Adding programs with completion pathways that recognize and accommodate a student's prior or existing knowledge or competency.

- Awarding dual or joint academic awards.
- Re-opening a previously closed program or off-campus instructional site.
- Adding a new off-campus instructional site/additional location including a branch campus.
- Adding a permanent location at a site at which an institution is conducting a teach-out program for students of another institution that has ceased operating before all students have completed their program of study.
- Closing an institution, a program, a method of delivery, an off-campus instructional site, or a program at an off-campus instructional site

WPU is required to notify SACSCOC or secure approval prior to implementing a substantive change. To ensure compliance with SACSCOC policy, WPU has procedures in place (found on the [Accreditation page in MyPacerNet](#)) to approve institutional substantive changes, program changes, and site or location changes, including but not limited to those defined above.

To ensure timely reporting and following of federal guidelines and SACSCOC policy, campus members are instructed to inform the SACSCOC Institutional Liaison immediately of any possible substantive change proposals. Specifically, the Curriculum Committee, Academic Council, and Senior Leadership Team are informed of their responsibility in this process. Furthermore, the SACSCOC Liaison will maintain updated forms, timelines, and records related to the SACSCOC Substantive Change policy that are accessible to all of campus to aid in timely, accurate reporting. It is the responsibility of the WPU SACSCOC Liaison to report and advise the campus on all necessary substantive changes in advance of implementation in accordance with the SACSCOC Substantive Change Policy and Procedure.

Created January 2017

Updated June 2020

Updated January 2021

Substantive Change Procedures

In order to monitor substantive changes and maintain compliance with federal regulations and SACSCOC and WPU policies, the following procedures are in place.

1. **Policy Education:** The SACSCOC Institutional Accreditation Liaison shares the WPU Substantive Change Policy and Procedure policy and procedure with the Senior Leadership Team, Academic Council, and the Curriculum Committee.

2. **Publication of Policy and Procedure:** The policy is printed in the Faculty Handbook. The policy and procedure are posted on the Accreditation page in MyPacerNet for all faculty and staff to access. The policy and procedure are available to the public on the WPU website.

3. **Consultation and Substantive Change Assessment Form:** Individuals are encouraged to consult with the SACSCOC Institutional Accreditation Liaison to determine if a proposed action will be a substantive change and to discuss the timeline if SACSCOC notification or approval are required.
 - a. The Substantive Change Assessment Form must be completed prior to implementation. No changes may be made until the assessment is submitted and reviewed.
 - b. The forms are retained by the Accreditation Liaison.
 - c. The Liaison is responsible for sending communication and required information to SACSCOC.
 - d. The Liaison will advise the community on the implementation timeline.

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Substantive Change Assessment Form

In accordance with the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) Substantive Change Policy and Procedure, William Peace University (WPU) has a Substantive Change Policy and Procedure to assure compliance. It is the responsibility of institutional leadership to report proposed changes to the SACSCOC Institutional Accreditation Liaison for assessment and review prior to any implementation.

Person Submitting Form _____

Role _____

Date of Submission _____

Proposed Implementation Date _____

Type of Proposed Change (select all that apply):

- Institutional Change (examples: level change, mission change, governance change, competency based education)
- Program Change (examples: competency based education, cooperative academic arrangement, dual or joint academic award, new academic program/major, closure of a program/major, program length change)
- Site/Location Change (examples: addition of off campus site, addition of off campus location, closure of site, reopen of site)

Explanation of Proposed Change

Please provide an overview of the change. For new academic programs, please attach the Proposal for New Academic Program Form.

Approvals Given for Proposed Change

List all WPU approvals given to support this request.

Institutional Accreditation Liaison Review

1. SACSCOC Substantive Change Determination

- Substantive Change
- Not a Substantive Change

Rationale for determination:

2. Action Required

3. Timeline for Action and Responsible Parties

Signature _____ **Date** _____

Institutional Accreditation Liaison

Signature _____ **Date** _____

Vice President for Academic Affairs

For proposals affecting institutional status:

Signature _____ **Date** _____

President