

SACSCOC Submissions: Cheat Sheet

(updated June 2026)

SACSCOC: Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges

OIE: Office of Institutional Effectiveness

Substantive Changes require approval by the SACSCOC.

A significant modification or expansion of the nature and scope of an accredited institution. Such changes are high-impact and high-risk that can affect the quality of educational programs and services.

Substantive Changes:

- A New Program that is a “significant departure” from the existing programs offered when the institution was last evaluated.

What is a significant departure?

- 50% or more of the content within the program will be new.

Content is new if it is not currently offered by the institution at the new program’s instructional level (baccalaureate, master’s, doctorate, etc.)

- Significant new resources: e.g., new faculty, facilities, equipment, or recurring costs.

If neither applies, the new program is likely not a significant departure and therefore NO submission is required. To clarify whether your proposal constitutes a substantive change, contact johnstonms@cofc.edu.

NB: A new, modified or terminated minor does NOT require a submission to SACSCOC.

- Closing an institution, a program, a method of delivery, and/or an off-campus instructional site.
A teach-out plan must be submitted once the decision is made to close: the point when students can no longer start/enter the program, method of delivery, or site.
- Increasing or decreasing by 25% or more the number of credit hours awarded for successful completion of one or more programs; and the expected time to completion changes by more than one term.
- Changing the competencies demonstrated or level of credential awarded for an approved program.
- Adding a new off-campus instructional site/additional location, including a branch campus.
Requirements may vary by site type and % of program offered; contact OIE before implementation.
- Adding a permanent location at a site where 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.

Other types of Substantive Changes:

- 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.
- Adding competency-based education programs.
- Adding each competency-based education program by direct assessment.

FOR A SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE

Contact Maddox Johnston (johnstonms@cofc.edu) of the Office of Institutional Effectiveness (OIE) and the SACSCOC accreditation liaison Mark Del Mastro at (delmastropm@cofc.edu) to clarify whether a proposal constitutes a substantive change.