



## DIVISION OF INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

### University Policy

### Substantive Change Policy

Revised 2026

#### I. Introduction

Albany State University (ASU) is responsible for maintaining compliance with the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) Principles of Accreditation, including Standard 14.2 (Substantive Change). Compliance with this standard is a condition of continued regional accreditation and eligibility to participate in federal Title IV financial aid programs.

SACSCOC requires accredited institutions to have policies and procedures that ensure all substantive changes are identified and reported to the Commission in a timely manner. Substantive changes must be reported to and, when required, approved by SACSCOC prior to implementation.

ASU adheres to the SACSCOC Substantive Change Policy and Procedures as the authoritative guidance for identifying, reporting, and managing substantive changes.

#### II. Purpose

The purpose of the ASU Substantive Change Policy is to:

1. Identify events that constitute substantive changes which must be reported to SACSCOC and approved when required prior to implementation.
2. Clarify institutional responsibility for identifying and reporting substantive changes.
3. Establish internal procedures to ensure timely reporting of substantive changes to SACSCOC.
4. Ensure that updates to SACSCOC substantive change policies are reflected in ASU institutional procedures.
5. Provide access to current substantive change information for all administrative and academic units.



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### III. Definition of Substantive Change

A substantive change is a significant modification or expansion of the nature and scope of an accredited institution.

Examples of substantive change include, but are not limited to:

- A change in the established mission or objectives of the institution
- A change in legal status, governance, control, or ownership
- The addition of academic programs representing a significant departure from existing programs
- The addition of programs at a new credential or degree level
- Significant changes in program length or credit hours
- Initiating programs using new methods of delivery (e.g., distance education)
- Establishing additional instructional sites or branch campuses
- Program or site closures
- Cooperative academic arrangements with external entities

The complete set of substantive change definitions and reporting requirements is outlined in the SACSCOC Substantive Change Policy and Procedures, available on the SACSCOC website.

### IV. Policy

All administrative and academic officers and their units are responsible for ensuring that proposed institutional changes are reviewed for potential substantive change implications.

Administrative and academic units must notify the SACSCOC Accreditation Liaison early in the planning process when considering changes that may constitute a substantive change.

Examples of activities that require early notification include:

- Proposals for new academic degree or certificate programs
- Changes to existing academic programs
- Program closures
- Establishment or closure of instructional sites



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- Changes in instructional delivery methods
- Institutional structural or governance changes

Early notification allows the Accreditation Liaison to determine whether the proposed change requires notification or prior approval from SACSCOC and to ensure compliance with SACSCOC submission timelines before implementation of the change.

Only two university officials are authorized to submit substantive change materials to SACSCOC:

- The **President of Albany State University**
- The **SACSCOC Accreditation Liaison**

All substantive change notifications, prospectuses, and related documentation are submitted through the SACSCOC Institutional Portal.

## V. Responsibilities of the Accreditation Liaison

The SACSCOC Accreditation Liaison is responsible for coordinating the university's substantive change compliance activities, including:

1. Maintaining and updating ASU's Substantive Change Policy consistent with SACSCOC requirements.
2. Monitoring changes to SACSCOC policies and communicating updates to relevant university officials.
3. Advising academic and administrative units regarding substantive change requirements.
4. Preparing and submitting required substantive change notifications or prospectuses to SACSCOC.
5. Coordinating institutional responses to SACSCOC requests related to substantive change submissions.
6. Maintaining documentation and records related to all substantive change communications and approvals.
7. Providing periodic updates to university leadership regarding substantive change submissions and approvals.

## VI. Exceptions



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There are no exceptions to this policy unless specifically permitted under the SACSCOC Substantive Change Policy and Procedures.

### **VII. Applicability**

This policy applies to all academic and administrative units of Albany State University involved in planning, implementing, or approving institutional changes that may constitute a substantive change under SACSCOC policy.

### **VIII. Accountability**

Responsibility for compliance with this policy rests with:

- Administrative and Academic Officers
- The SACSCOC Accreditation Liaison
- The President of Albany State University

### **IX. Contacts**

Office of Institutional Effectiveness  
Albany State University  
SACSCOC Accreditation Liaison

### **X. References**

SACSCOC Principles of Accreditation: Foundations for Quality Enhancement  
Standard 14.2 – Substantive Change

SACSCOC Substantive Change Policy and Procedures  
[Substantive Changes - SACSCOC](#)

### **Revision History**

March 2019 – Initial Policy

July 2019 – Updated following appointment of new Accreditation Liaison

March 2026 – Policy updated to align with current SACSCOC Substantive Change Policy and Procedures