

UIW Policy for Substantive Changes to Accredited Activities

*Policy for Notifying and Reporting Substantive Change
to the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools
Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC)*

I. POLICY STATEMENT -- Comply with SACSCOC Requirement

This UIW Policy establishes procedures to ensure timely, accurate and complete notification to the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACSCOC) whenever UIW proposes a significant change to the nature or scope of activities that were accredited during the most recent SACSCOC evaluation.

II. PURPOSE – We Care About Quality

These procedures aim to ensure continuous compliance with SACSCOC standards for requesting and reporting Substantive Changes. UIW intends to maintain the highest standards of SACSCOC membership, where regular peer review contributes to high quality programs for our students. Increased oversight by the U.S. Department of Education also ties regional accreditation to our ability to participate in Title IV financial aid programs which enable university access for the students our mission calls us to serve.

This policy highlights that most proposals for Substantive Changes require SACSCOC approval *before* we implement those changes (see References below).

III. EFFECTIVE DATE

Originally approved by the UIW President’s Executive Council: 28 June 2012
Approved by Faculty Senate: 14 August 2012

IV. SCOPE – Everything Related to Academic Program Delivery

This policy applies to all changes in UIW academic programs and facilities – whether domestic or international – that fall under the scope of the SACSCOC Substantive Change Policy (see References below). All individuals that contribute to proposals or implementation of Substantive Changes are responsible for complying with this policy and for coordinating these changes with their respective senior administrator and the UIW SACS Liaison.

Most UIW proposals for Substantive Change will be ultimately reviewed by a common group of offices and committees; this policy identifies steps within the existing approval processes of these units to ensure the timely request and reporting of such proposals to SACSCOC when required. These groups include:

UIW President	UIW Board of Trustees
Chancellor	Faculty Leadership
Vice Presidents	University Strategic Goal Chairs
Provost	Deans
Curriculum committees	Site Directors / Rectors
Program Directors	Comptroller's Office
Registrar	Facilities Director

UIW compliance is mandatory. Each individual and office noted here is required to be familiar with and follow this policy.

V. POLICY MANAGEMENT

Responsible Executive:	UIW President Dr. Thomas Evans, 829-6040
Responsible Office:	Provost Dr. Kathi Light, 829-3943, light@uiwtx.edu
Responsible Officer:	UIW's SACSCOC Liaison – Associate Provost Dr. Glenn James, 829-3943, gjames@uiwtx.edu

VI. HELPFUL DEFINITIONS – From SACSCOC Publications

SACSCOC defines a **Substantive Change** as “a significant modification or expansion of the nature and scope of an accredited institution.”

***** Most Substantive Changes require UIW to notify SACSCOC before implementation. Many Substantive Changes also require UIW to get SACSCOC approval, before implementation. *****

Examples of Substantive Changes that might be proposed at the level of UIW's executives or board members include:

- altering significantly UIW's educational mission;
- initiating a merger or consolidation with another institution;
- changing UIW's governance, ownership, control, or legal status;
- changing from clock hours to credit hours;
- adding a permanent location;
- initiating a branch campus;
- relocating a main or branch campus;
- relocating a previously approved off-campus site; and
- closing a branch campus or an institution.

Other examples of Substantive Changes typically originate with proposals from department or academic program leadership:

- adding new programs that are significantly different from current programs;
- expanding programs at the current degree level;
- initiating joint or dual degrees with another institution;
- initiating a certificate program at an employer's request and on short notice;
- initiating other certificate programs;
- initiating off-campus sites;
- expanding program offerings at previously approved off-campus sites;
- relocating an off-campus instructional site;
- initiating distance learning programs or other programs where the faculty and students are not in the same location that are significantly different from current online offerings;
- initiating degree completion programs;
- initiating programs or courses offered through contractual agreement or consortium;
- entering into a contract with an entity not certified to participate in U.S. Department of Education Title IV programs;
- acquiring any program or site from another institution;
- altering the length of a program significantly; and
- closing a program or approved off-campus site.

The initiation of new off-campus sites, and the addition of new programs that represent significant departures from current offerings, are commonly reported Substantive Changes.

Contractual Agreement – typically is one in which an institution enters an agreement for receipt of courses/programs or portions of courses or programs (e.g., clinical training, internships ...) delivered by another institution or service provider. (Source: SACSCOC)

Consortial Relationship: typically is one in which two or more institutions share in the responsibility of developing and delivering courses and programs that meet mutually agreed upon standards of academic quality. (Source: SACSCOC)

Distance education - a formal educational process in which the majority of the instruction (interaction between students and instructors and among students) in a course occurs when students and instructors are not in the same place. Instruction may be synchronous or asynchronous. A distance education course may use the internet, one-way and two-way transmissions through open broadcast, closed circuit, cable, microwave, broadband lines, fiber optics, satellite, or wireless communications devices; audio conferencing; or video cassettes, DVD's, and CD-ROMs if used as part of the distance learning course or program. (Source: SACSCOC)

Dual degree – separate program completion credentials each of which bears only the name, seal, and signature of the institution awarding the degree to the student.

Joint degree - a single program completion credential bearing the names, seals, and signatures of each of the two or more institutions awarding the degree to the student.

Level: SACSCOC's level taxonomy categorizes institutions by the highest degree offered. As a university that offers four or more distinct doctorate degrees, UIW is designated as a Level VI institution.

Off Campus Site: Campus location providing educational course and/or program offerings that is at a different address than the main campus location.

(Source: SACSCOC)

VII. **PROCEDURES** – Contact the UIW Liaison Early, for Help and for Reporting

SACSCOC policy changed significantly regarding due dates for Substantive Change Proposals. In particular, for proposals reviewed by staff and approved by the Executive Council of the SACSCOC Board of Trustees (most approvals involving sites and programs), the updated due dates are:

January 1 for implementation between July 1 – December 31

July 1 for implementation between January 1 – June 30 of following year

IF YOU HAVE A NEW PROPOSAL: At the earliest stage of preliminary planning, notice of any change that could be deemed substantive must be submitted in writing to the appropriate UIW vice president and to the UIW SACSCOC Liaison.

The notice should include:

- (a) the title of the proposed change;
- (b) a brief description of the change, including its nature (e.g., new educational program, new off-campus site, initiation of distance education) and its scope (one program, multiple programs in one college/school, etc.);
- (c) contact information for the responsible individual;
- (d) a tentative timeline for approval, including steps in the approval process (e.g., school and university curriculum committees, Faculty Senate, Provost, President, Board of Trustees, external boards or associations, etc.); and
- (e) the earliest possible date for implementation.

The UIW Liaison will determine whether the proposal is reportable according to the latest SACSCOC standard. The Liaison will consult, as needed, the latest SACSCOC guidance, the UIW Institutional Effectiveness Council, and the appointed SACSCOC vice president. The Liaison will report these determinations regularly to the UIW Institutional Effectiveness Council.

The UIW Liaison will lead the preparation of reports to SACSCOC. The Liaison will coordinate accurate and complete input from all responsible offices.

Please see the References below for details of the procedures and required time frames for seeking prior approval from SACSCOC for various Substantive Changes.

ON A REGULAR BASIS: To ensure all UIW offices remain alert to the potential for new proposals to be reportable under this policy:

- a) The Liaison will participate in regular meetings of the academic Dean's councils and will chair the UIW Institutional Effectiveness Council;
- b) The Liaison or Provost will provide an annual report to the UIW Executive Council and the UIW Board of Trustees;
- c) The Liaison will meet annually with the UIW vice presidents;
- d) The Liaison will review regular minutes from the UIW Board of Trustees and all UIW curriculum councils;
- e) The Grants Oversight Committee will review all grant proposals to identify new activity that might constitute a reportable Substantive Change;
- f) All UIW curriculum councils, and the UIW Registrar, will institute a review step to identify the potential for a new curriculum proposal to constitute a Substantive Change;
- g) The Provost will share with the Liaison all changes in the status of program-specific accreditations, to determine which are reportable according to SACSCOC and U.S. Department of Education guidance.

UIW's Liaison will send initial written notification of this policy to all responsible UIW officers and faculty and will send thereafter annual written reminders regarding their responsibility for compliance. The President, Provost, and Vice Presidents are responsible to ensure that their respective areas provide notice of any potential Substantive Changes under this policy.

The Provost and UIW SACSCOC Liaison will ensure that information regarding this policy is available on UIW Assessment web resources.

VIII. **SANCTIONS** – We Will Pause Activity if Needed

If UIW fails to follow SACSCOC procedures for notification and approval of substantive changes, our accreditation may be placed in jeopardy. For that reason, if an academic program, unit or officer initiates a Substantive Change without following the procedures outlined in this policy, the President or Provost may direct the immediate cancellation or cessation of that change, with due regard for the educational welfare of students. In areas outside of academic affairs, the same sanction may be applied by the President or relevant Vice President.

IX. **EXCLUSIONS**

No exclusions from this UIW policy will be permitted.

X. **INTERPRETATION** – Please Do Not Contact SACSCOC Directly

Please direct any questions about the interpretation of this policy to UIW's SACSCOC Liaison. If the question requires consultation with UIW's assigned SACSCOC vice president, then UIW's Liaison will make that further contact.

REFERENCES

SACSCOC Substantive Change Policy

<http://sacscoc.org/SubstantiveChange.asp> (current)

This policy contains the most current guidance on which changes need Commission approval before implementation, which require more simple notification, and the respective timelines required.

SACSCOC Frequently Asked Questions about Substantive Change

<http://sacscoc.org/SubstantiveChangeFAQs.asp> (current)

SACSCOC Distance and Correspondence Education

<http://www.sacscoc.org/pdf/DistanceCorrespondenceEducation.pdf> (July 2014)

SACSCOC Collaborative Academic Arrangements: Joint and Dual Awards

<http://www.sacscoc.org/pdf/JointDualAwards.pdf> (July 2014)

Mar 2018

TRACKING of UPDATES

Update 5 (Mar 2018)

Updates UIW President to Dr. Evans.

Update 4 (Oct 2016)

Updates usage of UIW Institutional Effectiveness Council.

Updates Acting President, Dr. Doyle.

Removes the embedded table drawn from the SACSCOC policy on Substantive Changes, and refers instead to a link to the publication for the most current information.

Update 3 (Feb 2014)

Corrects language in Definitions, to note that *not* all Sub Changes need notices to SACSCOC.

Updates titles of UIW Institutional Effectiveness Council.

Reword more simply, from "...the University..." to "...UIW..."

Updates Definitions to conform to the latest SACSCOC Sub Change policy.

Update 2 (Feb 2013)

Updated the Types of Change table, using the new Feb 2013 version of the SACSCOC Substantive Change Policy. The new SACS policy reduces the number of changes that require prior notification, and streamlines the correspondence needed for Type I and Type II changes.

Update 1 (Aug 2012)

Added "C" indexes for the Types of Change table.

Added the review date for Faculty Senate, 14 August 2012.