

Policy Title: Substantive Change

Policy Type: Academic **New/revised:** New

Old Policy #: http://www.etsu.edu/sacs/substantive_change/etsupolicy.htm

Approval level: Board of Trustees
 President
 Vice President
 Other (specify here)

Purpose: The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all substantive changes regarding the nature and scope of East Tennessee State University (ETSU) are reported to the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) in accordance with defined standards and federal regulations.

Definitions:

Significant departure: a program that is not closely related to previously approved programs at the institution or site or for the mode of delivery in question. The addition of courses or programs that represent a significant departure, either in content or method of delivery, from those that were offered when the institution was last evaluated, are included in this policy. To determine whether a new program is a “significant departure,” it is helpful to consider the following questions:

- What previously approved programs does the institution offer that are closely related to the new program and how are they related?
- Will significant additional equipment or facilities be needed?
- Will significant additional financial resources be needed?
- Will a significant number of new courses will be required?
- Will a significant number of new faculty members will be required?
- Will significant additional library/learning resources be needed?

Policy:

- I. ETSU maintains compliance with the substantive change policy and procedures of SACSCOC.
 - A. ETSU recognizes the responsibility of SACSCOC to review substantive changes that occur between decennial reviews and to determine if the University continues to meet defined standards and federal regulations.
 - B. ETSU notifies SACSCOC of significant modification or expansion of the nature and scope of the university and, when required, seeks approval prior to the initiation of changes.
 - C. If unclear as to whether a change is substantive in nature, ETSU contacts SACSCOC staff for consultation.
- II. ETSU faculty and administrative officials that approve substantive changes for academic programs and off-campus instructional sites do so in accordance with established procedures.
 - A. *Academic Programs* include changes to current academic degree programs, dual or joint degrees, offerings through contractual agreements or consortia, and certificate programs. The most common substantive changes for academic programs include:
 1. expanding at current degree level (significant departure from current programs);
 2. initiating degree completion programs;

3. initiating dual or joint degrees involving program expansion (significant departure from current programs);
 4. initiating dual or joint degrees with other SACSCOC accredited institution(s);
 5. initiating programs or courses offered through contractual agreement or consortium;
 6. initiating a certificate program at a new off- campus site at employer's request and on short notice (previously approved program);
 7. initiating a certificate program that is a significant departure from previously approved programs at employer's request and on short notice;
 8. closing a program, approved off-campus site, branch campus, or institution where the institution plans to teach out its own students.
- B. *Off-campus Instructional Sites* are teaching sites located geographically apart from the main campus of ETSU. These sites are not independent of the main campus in terms of faculty and administrative or supervisory organization or budgetary and hiring authority. The most common substantive changes for off-campus instructional sites include:
1. initiating a new off-campus site where students can obtain 25- 49% of credits toward a program or certificate;
 2. initiating a new off-campus site where student can obtain 50% or more credits toward a program or certificate;
 3. expanding program offerings at previously approved off- campus sites by adding programs that are significantly different from current programs at the site and at the institution; and
 4. moving an approved off-campus site within the same geographic area to serve essentially the same pool of students.
- III. Substantive changes that are unlikely to occur at ETSU are included in this policy. A complete list of substantive changes is provided in the Substantive Change for SACSCOC Accredited Institutions Policy Statement, available on the SACSCOC website (www.sacscoc.org). These changes include:
- A. altering significantly the educational mission of the institution;
 - B. altering significantly the length of a program;
 - C. changing governance, ownership, control, or legal status of ETSU;
 - D. relocating ETSU's main campus;
 - E. initiating a branch campus;
 - F. adding a permanent location at a site where the institution is conducting a teach-out for students from another institution that is closing;
 - G. adding a site under a U.S. military contract for a previously approved program;
 - H. entering into a contract with an entity not certified to participate in USDOE Title IV programs if the entity provides any portion of an educational program offered by ETSU;
 - I. initiating dual or joint degree with at least one institution not accredited by SACSCOC;
 - J. initiating a merger/consolidation with another institution;
 - K. initiating a direct assessment competency-based program;
 - L. acquiring any program or site from another institution; and
 - M. closing a program, approved off-campus site, branch campus, or institution where the institution plans contracts with another institution(s) to teach-out students.
- IV. SACSCOC requires notification when initiating distance education for the first time. However, ETSU was approved by SACSCOC to offer distance education in Fall 2001; therefore, this policy does not include substantive changes for initiating distance learning.

Note: SACSCOC Substantive Change policy refers to “Branch Campus” which is a location of an institution that is geographically apart and independent of the main campus of the institution. A location is independent of the main campus if the location is:

- permanent in nature;
- offers courses in educational programs leading to a degree, certificate, or other recognized educational credential;
- has its own faculty and administrative or supervisory organization; and
- has its own budgetary and hiring authority.

ETSU has no branch campus.

3/24/2017 – approved by the Board of Trustees.