



## **POLICY STATEMENT 116 REPORTING SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE TO SACSCOC**

### **POLICY DIGEST**

Monitoring Unit: Office of Academic Affairs  
Initially Issued: September 4, 2013  
Last Revised: May 10, 2021

### **I. PURPOSE**

To establish the requirements and procedures to ensure that Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College (LSU) notifies the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC), the university's regional accrediting body, of all substantive changes in a timely fashion, and when required, seek approval prior to the initiation of those changes.

### **II. DEFINITIONS**

According to SACSCOC, a substantive change is “a significant modification or expansion of the nature and scope of an accredited institution” and “includes high-impact, high-risk changes that can impact the quality of educational program and services” (see Source A). Specifically, substantive changes relevant to LSU (a Level VI institution) include the following actions:

- A. Substantially changing the established mission or objectives of an institution or its programs.
- B. Changing the legal status, form of control, or ownership of an institution.
- C. Changing the governance of an institution.
- D. Merging/consolidating two or more institutions or entities.
- E. Acquiring another institution or any program or location of another institution.
- F. Relocating an institution or an off-campus instructional site of an institution (including a branch campus).
- G. Offering courses or programs at a higher or lower degree level than currently authorized.
- H. 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.
- I. 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.
- J. Initiating programs by distance education or correspondence courses.
- K. Adding an additional method of delivery to a currently offered program.
- L. Entering into a cooperative academic arrangement.

- M. 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.
- N. Substantially increase 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.
- O. Adding competency-based education programs.
- P. Adding each competency-based education program by direct assessment.
- Q. Adding programs with completion pathways that recognize and accommodate a student's prior or existing knowledge or competency.
- R. Awarding dual or joint academic awards.
- S. Re-opening a previously closed program or off-campus instructional site.
- T. Adding a new off-campus instructional site/additional location including a branch campus.
- U. 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.
- V. Closing an institution, a program, a method of delivery, an off-campus instructional site, or a program at an off-campus instructional site.

### III. GENERAL POLICY AND PROCEDURES

It is the responsibility of LSU to notify and/or secure SACSCOC approval *prior* to implementing a substantive change as well as to follow all procedures and timelines as delineated in the commission's "Substantive Change Policy and Procedures" (see Source A):

This university policy statement applies to all faculty or staff members who have the authority to initiate, review, approve, or allocate resources to changes that may be considered a substantive change. Academic and support units, committees, or administrators proposing and/or approving changes that are substantive in nature must inform the university's accreditation liaison in writing via the Office of Institutional Effectiveness. The accreditation liaison shall be appointed by the President, the university's chief executive officer, upon the recommendation of the Executive Vice President & Provost.

Once the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and the accreditation liaison have reviewed the proposed change(s) and determined that it qualifies as a substantive change as defined by the Commission's policy, the President or their designee via the accreditation liaison will notify SACSCOC and submit all relevant materials as specified in SACSCOC policy. The Office of Institutional Effectiveness SACSCOC shall maintain records of all substantive change activity. Academic and support units proposing substantive changes should not implement those changes until receiving written confirmation from the accreditation liaison and/or Office of Institutional Effectiveness that the required SACSCOC substantive change process has been completed.

Failure to comply with SACSCOC substantive change policy and procedures may result in the loss of the university's Title IV funding, or the university may be required to reimburse the U.S. Department of

Education for any money it received for programs related to the unreported substantive change. Additionally, the university may be referred to the SACSCOC Board of Trustees for the imposition of a sanction, monitoring, or for removal from membership.

This policy statement shall be reviewed annually and updated by the accreditation liaison and Office of Institutional Effectiveness as changes occur to the SACSCOC policy on substantive change.

#### **IV. SOURCES**

- A. SACSCOC Policy Statement “Substantive Change Policy and Procedures” Policy and Procedures” (<https://sacscoc.org/accrediting-standards/substantive-changes/>)