

## CAROLINAS COLLEGE OF HEALTH SCIENCES POLICY AND PROCEDURE

### ACADEMIC

**SUBJECT:** MINOR AND SUBSTANTIVE CHANGES

**REVIEWER(S):** Provost\*  
Dean of Administrative and Financial Services  
SACSCOC Liaison

### POLICY

The college welcomes proposals from faculty and staff to expand programs, facilities, student learning opportunities, and processes and procedures. Carolinas College seeks to empower teammates with the freedom to make timely changes as needed while ensuring that affected entities are informed and allowed input. The change procedure provides the necessary framework and guidelines needed for faculty and staff to make academic or institutional changes that may have potential ramifications for other programs, departments, or the institution as a whole.

The College identifies two types of changes for inclusion within this policy: minor changes and substantive changes. Carolinas College is aware of and supports the need to notify its accrediting bodies and approval agencies of substantive changes. The College recognizes that external bodies have different levels of need for information, different thresholds for notification versus approval, and different definitions of substantive change. Therefore, academic program chairs will be responsible for knowing the policies of the bodies that accredit or approve their programs, and for making the appropriate notifications or requests for approval. Regarding institutional accreditation with the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC), the college accreditation liaison will be familiar with substantive change requirements, alert to actions which may necessitate notification or approval, and will advise the college president in preparing substantive change notifications. Notification of changes to the Veteran's Administration and the U.S. Department of Education will be the responsibility of the dean of administrative and financial services.

### TYPES OF CHANGES

- A. Minor changes are those that require approval from the appropriate academic program and/or committee. Minor changes include but are not limited to:
- a. Minor or stylistic/editorial changes to a course title or description
  - b. Significant changes to student learning outcome content
  - c. Changes to course prefix
  - d. Changes to the course number
  - e. Changes in course delivery mode\*
  - f. Cross-listing of two or more courses
  - g. Reactivating a course (republishing a course in the catalog)
  - h. Changes in prerequisites or co-requisites
  - i. Changes in course credit hours\*
  - j. Changing the substance of an existing course
  - k. Adding a new course\*
  - l. Changing the level of a course\*
  - m. Inactivating a course (removing the course from the catalog)
  - n. Changes to admissions requirements
  - o. Offering 25-49 percent of a program via distance education
  - p. Adding a new clinical site

\*These changes need to be evaluated to determine if they are substantive (see below).

B. Substantive changes are those that represent a significant modification or expansion in the nature and

scope of the college or one of its programs. Substantive change includes high-impact, high-risk changes and changes that can impact the quality of educational programs and services. Typically, these changes require approval from the appropriate academic program and/or committee as well as the college leadership team and/or board of directors.

The types of substantive change and the procedures for addressing them may be found in the **SACSCOC Policy on Substantive Change** at <https://sacscoc.org/app/uploads/2019/08/SubstantiveChange.pdf>.

Substantive changes that require approval must be submitted to SACSCOC more than six months in advance. Substantive changes that require notification must be submitted prior to implementation of the change. Examples of common substantive change types include:

**Program-/Course-Level Changes:**

- Entering into a cooperative academic agreement with another institution or entity (e.g.- instructional delivery, dual awards, joint awards, study abroad)
- Adding an academic degree or certificate program with more than 25% new content from currently offered programs or at a higher degree level (significant departure)
- Adding a method of instructional delivery to an existing program (e.g.- competency-based education, distance education, or face-to-face instruction)
- Deciding to stop admission (initiating closure) for an existing program or a method of instructional delivery for a program

**Off-campus Instructional Site Changes:**

- Initiating a new off-campus instructional site
- Re-naming or changing the address of an off-campus instructional site
- Closing a program at an off-campus site or closing the entire off-campus site

**Institutional-Level Changes:**

- Altering significantly the educational mission of the institution
- Initiating a merger/consolidation with another institution
- Changing governance, ownership, control, or legal status of an institution

**PROCEDURE**

- A. All academic administrators and committee chairs whose responsibilities may involve them in actions that could constitute substantive changes will maintain a current understanding of the SACSCOC substantive change policy and of this policy. They will especially be knowledgeable about the types of actions that constitute substantive changes, the procedures required for each type, and the time frames for each type by completing ongoing substantive change training and providing information updates to faculty and staff regarding curricular and organizational changes requiring SACSCOC and other notification and approval.
- B. All major change forms will contain an action item block designed to remind approvers to consider the possible need for substantive change notification or approval. The Substantive Change Guidelines can be referenced to identify types of substantive changes and the required notifications and/or approvals, if necessary. The evaluation of approved changes for the possible need for substantive change notification or approval is noted on the college's recommended change form and decision and change log.
- C. Concurrent with the approval of any significant changes (such as changes to an academic program, a course delivery method, the level of instruction, etc.), an assignment of responsibility will be made for handling substantive change notifications/requests.

- D. Regarding SACSCOC, the accreditation liaison will ensure substantive change compliance. The accreditation liaison will be familiar with commission policy and procedure, will ensure that substantive changes are recognized and reported in a timely manner, and will consult with the college's SACSCOC staff member about any questions. The college president will notify the commission president of substantive changes. The accreditation liaison will apprise academic leaders of the status of such recommendations and of any subsequent follow-up needed. The SACSCOC policy on substantive changes will inform the process (see reference above).
- E. Program chairs will be familiar with programmatic accrediting agencies' substantive change policies and procedures, will ensure compliance, and will consult with accreditors regarding any questions. They will ensure that timely substantive change notifications are made. Programmatic substantive changes are all reviewed by the SACSCOC accreditation liaison to determine the need for SACSCOC notification or approval.
- F. The Substantive Change policy will be reviewed bi-annually.

## **REFERENCES**

### **Related Policies to Consult**

#### **Carolinas College:**

ACADEMIC – Curriculum and Academic Program Approval

ADMINISTRATIVE - Shared Governance

**SACSCOC:** Substantive Change

**Related Form:** Decision and Change Log

Substantive Change Guidelines

### **Related 2024 SACSCOC Standard(s):**

14.2 Substantive change