

TEXAS STATE TECHNICAL COLLEGE
STATEWIDE OPERATING STANDARD

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| No. GA 1.23 | Page 1 of 9 | Effective Date: 01/04/2019 |
| DIVISION: | General Administration | |
| SUBJECT: | Substantive Change | |
| AUTHORITY: | Executive Action 06-15 | |
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| PROPOSED BY: | Celina S. Garza | |
| TITLE: | Vice President & SACSCOC Liaison | Date: 01/04/2019 |
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| RECOMMENDED BY: | Jonathan Hoekstra | |
| TITLE: | Vice Chancellor & CFO | Date: 01/04/2019 |
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| APPROVED BY: | Original Signed by Mike Reeser | |
| TITLE: | Chancellor | Date: 01/04/2019 |

STATUS: Approved by Leadership Team 01/04/2019

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 Approved by Executive Management Council 03/19/15
 Proposed 03/16/15

I. STATEWIDE STANDARD

POLICY: It is the policy of Texas State Technical College (TSTC) that the College notify the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) of planned institutional changes in accordance with the SACSCOC substantive change policy and, when required, seek approval prior to the initiation of institutional changes.

II. PERTINENT INFORMATION

In accordance with the published policies of SACSCOC, member institutions shall notify SACSCOC of changes in accordance with the [Substantive Change for SACSCOC Accredited Institutions Policy Statement](#) and, when required, seek approval prior to the

initiation of changes. Member institutions shall have policy and procedures to ensure the timely reporting of all substantive changes to SACSCOC.

III. GENERAL GUIDELINES

TSTC is accredited by SACSCOC; and, therefore, the College must comply with the accrediting agency's policy statement on substantive change. The purpose of this Statewide Operating Standard (SOS) is to outline the College's process and procedures for institutional compliance with obligations for the timely and efficient reporting of substantives changes to SACSCOC prior to implementation. All TSTC functional areas and its units must comply with this SOS.

IV. DEFINITIONS

Substantive Change: As defined by SACSCOC, "a significant modification or expansion of the nature and scope of an accredited institution." Under federal regulations, substantive changes include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Any change in the established mission or objectives of the institution;
- Any change in legal status, form of control, or ownership of the institution;
- 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;
- The addition of courses or programs of study at a degree or credential level different from that which is included in the institution's current accreditation or reaffirmation;
- A change from clock hours to credit hours;
- A substantial increase in the number of clock or credit hours awarded for successful completion of a program;
- The establishment of an additional location geographically apart from the main campus at which the institution offers at least 50 percent of an educational program;
- The establishment of a branch campus;
- Closing a program, off-campus site, branch campus, or institution;
- Entering into a collaborative academic arrangement that includes only the initiation of a dual or joint academic program with another institution;
- Acquiring another institution or a program or location of another institution;
- Adding a permanent location at a site where the institution is conducting a teach-out program for a closed institution; or
- Entering into a contract through which an entity not eligible for Title IV funding offers 25 percent or more of one or more of the accredited institution's programs.

Branch Campus: 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.

Competency-Based Educational Programs: An outcome-based assessment of a student's attainment of competencies as the sole means of determining whether the student earns a degree or a credential. Such programs may be organized around traditional course-based units (credit or clock hours) that students earn to complete their educational program, or they may depart from course-based units (credit or clock hours) to rely solely on the attainment of defined competencies.

Contractual Agreement: An agreement in which an institution enters into an arrangement for receipt of courses/programs or portions of courses/programs (i.e., clinical training internships, etc.) delivered by another institution or service provider.

Consortial Relationship: An agreement 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.

Correspondence Education: A formal educational process under which the institution provides instructional materials by mail or electronic transmission, including examinations on the materials, to students who are separated from the instructor. Interaction between the instructor and the student is limited, is not regular and substantive, and is primarily initiated by the student. Courses are typically self-paced.

Degree Completion Program: A program typically designed for a non-traditional undergraduate population, such as working adults, who have completed some college-level coursework but have not achieved a baccalaureate degree. Students in such programs may transfer in credit from courses taken previously and may receive credit for experiential learning. Courses in degree completion programs are often offered in an accelerated format or meet during evening and weekend hours. They may also be offered via distance education technologies.

Direct Assessment Competency-Based Educational Program: An instructional program that, in lieu of credit hours or clock hours as a measure of student learning, uses direct assessment of student learning relying solely on the attainment of defined competencies, or that recognizes the direct assessment of student learning by others. The assessment must be consistent with the accreditation of the institution or program using the results of the assessment.

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; web camera, and CD-ROMs.

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.

Educational Program: A coherent course of study leading to the awarding of a credential (i.e., a degree, diploma, or certificate).

Executive Management Council (EMC): A core team comprised of one Vice Chancellor and members of the Management Council.

Geographically Separate: An instructional site or branch campus that is located physically apart from the main campus of the institution.

Hybrid Direct Assessment Competency-Based Educational Program: An educational program that combines course-based competencies (clock and credit hours awarded) with non-course-based competencies (no clock or credit hours awarded).

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.

Leadership Team (LT): A team consisting of the Chancellor and Vice Chancellors.

Off-Campus Site: A location of an institution that is geographically apart from, but not independent of, the main campus. The site may be used in an ongoing manner to deliver programs or courses leading to a degree, certificate, or other recognized educational credential, but it does not have its own facility, administrative organization, or budget.

Prospectus: A narrative that describes a proposed substantive change for the College as specified by SACSCOC.

Modified Prospectus: A prospectus submitted in lieu of a full prospectus for certain designated substantive changes. When a modified prospectus is acceptable, the Commission specifies requested information from the institution.

Notification: A letter from an institution's chief executive officer, or his/her designated representative, to the SACSCOC President summarizing a proposed change, providing the intended implementation date, and listing the complete physical address if the change involves the initiation of an off-campus site or branch campus.

SACSCOC Accreditation Liaison: Person who serves as the liaison between TSTC and SACSCOC to ensure that the College fulfill its accreditation responsibilities. The Liaison is the point of contact for Commission staff and is responsible for ensuring that compliance with accreditation requirements is incorporated into the planning, evaluation, and reporting processes of the institution.

Significant Departure: A program that is not closely related to previously approved programs at the institution or site or that has undergone a significant change in its mode of delivery. 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?

Teach-Out agreement: A written agreement between accredited institutions that provides for the equitable treatment of students and a reasonable opportunity for students to complete their program of study if an institution, or an institutional location that provides 50 percent or more of at least one program offered, ceases to operate before all enrolled students have completed their program of study. This applies to the closure of an institution, a site, or a program. Such a teach-out agreement requires SACSCOC approval in advance of implementation.

Teach-Out Plan: A written plan developed by an institution that provides for the equitable treatment of students if an institution, or an institutional location that provides 50 percent or more of at least one program, ceases to operate before all students have completed their program of study and that may include, if required by the institution's accrediting agency, a teach-out agreement between institutions. This applies to the closure of an institution, a site, or a program. Teach-out plans must be approved by SACSCOC in advance of implementation.

V. DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY

The Chancellor, or his/her designee, or the SACSCOC Accreditation Liaison is authorized to establish and to maintain policies and procedures that are substantive in nature. The Office of Institutional Accreditation is responsible for notifying SACSCOC of any change that meets the requirements for substantive change reporting.

VI. PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

1. TSTC administrative and instructional management timely identifies any potential substantive changes and uses established TSTC procedures as dictated by Section VII of this SOS to ensure appropriate SACSCOC notification and approvals, as required, are obtained prior to any substantive change implementation.
2. All educational program changes (i.e., curriculum revisions, adding new programs, closing a program, etc.) are planned in collaboration with instructional management (i.e., Vice Presidents with oversight for student learning, Division Directors, and

- Department Chairs), the Office of Curriculum, and the Office of Institutional Accreditation, to ensure SACSCOC notification and approvals, as required, are obtained prior to implementation.
3. Approval of educational program substantive changes follows procedures established by the Office of Curriculum as dictated by the College's SOS ES 2.15, Curriculum Review and Revision.
 4. Institutional administrative changes (i.e., change of mission, closing or opening of off-site location, execution of new collaborative agreement, etc.) are planned in collaboration with TSTC administrative and instructional management, where appropriate, and the Office of Institutional Accreditation to ensure appropriate SACSCOC notification and approvals, as required, are obtained prior to implementation. Approval of institutional administrative changes are authorized by the College's LT, the EMC, or by the appropriate executive/management designee within a functional area.

APPENDIX

VII. RELATED STATEWIDE STANDARDS. LEGAL CITATIONS, OR SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

[ES 2.15 Curriculum Review and Revision](#)

[ES 2.14 Curriculum Committee](#)

[GA 1.2 Purpose and Composition of Executive Management Council](#)

[ES 2.19 Dual Enrollment Partnerships Between TSTC and Secondary Schools](#)

[Substantive Change Reporting Deadlines](#)

[Substantive Change for SACSCOC Accredited Institutions Policy Statement](#)

VIII. OPERATING REQUIREMENTS

Procedures:

1. When proposing changes that could trigger the need for SACSCOC substantive change reporting, all administrative and instructional management must be diligent in raising the question early in consideration of the changes. Managers shall submit a Substantive Change Form, accessible in the Institutional Accreditation Portal Page, to initiate the process of review and consultation with staff from the Office of Institutional Accreditation on potential substantive changes.
2. The Office of Institutional Accreditation, through the SACSCOC Accreditation Liaison, shall have the sole responsibility of submitting all substantive change notifications in a timely manner to SACSCOC as dictated by the [SACSCOC Substantive Change Policy Statement](#). Substantive changes, in many cases, require only advance notification before implementation while others require up to six months advance notice for SACSCOC approval before the change can be implemented. Types of changes are detailed within this SOS.
3. Upon receipt of approval or acknowledgement of changes from SACSCOC, the Office of Institutional Accreditation shall notify appropriate offices for implementation of changes as necessary. Employees shall not implement a substantive change without acquiring appropriate notification or approval from SACSCOC. Certain substantive changes are subject to a substantive change site visit six months after implementation.
4. Training on how to recognize and request substantive changes shall be conducted for key administrative and instructional management personnel on an annual basis by the Office of Institutional Accreditation. In addition, information on substantive change requirements shall be available from the Office of Institutional Accreditation on the employee portal page.
5. All substantive change notifications and prospectuses shall follow institutional processes prior to submission to SACSCOC for final approval of the change. TSTC

administrative and instructional management shall follow internal deadlines established for the submittal of substantive change documentation and requests to adhere to SACSCOC reporting procedures as stipulated in the College's [Substantive Change Reporting Deadlines](#) document. The Office of Institutional Accreditation shall work with respective departments to acquire necessary documentation for notification and/or prospectuses.

Types of Changes Requiring a Letter of Notification Prior to Implementation:

1. Educational Program Changes include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - Repackaging an existing approved curriculum to create a new degree level from its lower-division offerings.
2. Institutional Administrative Changes include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - Moving an off-campus instructional site (serving the same geographic area);
 - Initiating or expanding educational offerings at an off-campus site in which students can earn 25-49 percent of credits toward a program (e.g., dual enrollment programs offered at the high school);
 - Initiating programs or courses offered through contractual agreement or consortium;
 - Entering into a contract with an entity not eligible for Title IV funding that offers less than 25 percent of a program;
 - Entering into an agreement involving dual or joint academic degrees with an institution accredited by SACSCOC; and
 - Entering into an academic arrangement with another institution or entity where TSTC transcripts credits earned by students from that institution or entity as its own.

Types of Changes Requiring SACSCOC APPROVAL Prior to Implementation:

1. Educational Program Changes include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - Closing a program (teach-out plan required);
 - Significantly altering the length of a program or changing from clock hours to credit hours;
 - Offering a new program not related to existing degree programs that represent a significant departure from those previously approved;
 - Initiating certificate programs at an employer's request and on short notice at a new off-campus site or initiating a program that represents a significant departure from previously approved programs; and
 - Initiating an adult degree completion program.
2. Institutional Administrative Changes include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - Expanding educational offerings at an off-campus site in which students can earn 50 percent or more of credits toward a program (e.g., dual enrollment programs offered at a high school);
 - Relocating of the main campus;

- Closing an off-campus site or the institution;
- Altering significantly the established mission of the institution;
- Initiating a merger/consolidation with another institution;
- Changing governance, ownership, control, or legal status of an institution;
- Acquiring any program or site from another institution;
- Adding a permanent location at a site where the institution is conducting a teach-plan for students from another institution that is closing;
- Initiating coursework or programs at a more advanced credential level than currently approved for the institution (e.g., associate to baccalaureate);
- Initiating a dual or joint program with an institution not accredited by SACSCOC;
- Entering into a contract with an entity not eligible for Title IV funding that offers 25 percent or more of a program; and
- Initiating a direct assessment competency-based program.