



POLICY & PROCEDURE DOCUMENT

NUMBER: 1.4010

DIVISION: Academic Affairs

TITLE: Substantive Change

DATE: January 23, 2012

REVISED:

Authorized by: A. Gordon Emslie, Provost and VPAA

I. Purpose and Scope

This policy sets forth the steps and requirements for faculty, administrators, and staff to monitor substantive changes occurring within academic programs at Western Kentucky University, including changes to programs, certain types of changes to courses, where and how programs are offered, and institution-level changes.

A. Definition of Substantive Change

1. WKU is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) Commission on Colleges, which defines substantive changes as "significant modifications or expansion of the nature and scope of an accredited institution." A more detailed explanation of SACS requirements and a list of specific types of changes that constitute a substantive change can be found at <http://www.SACS.org/SubstantiveChange.asp>.

B. Types of Change that may Constitute Substantive Change

1. Program changes that could result in substantive change include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - a. Adding a program of a nature that is substantially different than existing offerings
 - b. Significantly changing the length of a program
 - c. Expanding a program (e.g., other tracks, concentrations,...)
 - d. Closing a program

- e. Offering a traditionally on-campus program using off-campus sites or distance learning
 - f. Expanding program offered to regional campuses
 - g. Adding or removing Distance Learning modes for a program or course
 - h. Offering courses/programs with a partner organization or agency
 - i. Initiating a degree completion program
2. Institution-wide changes that could result in substantive change include, but are not limited to, the following:
- a. Initiating a merger/consolidation with another institution
 - b. Changing governance, ownership, control or legal status of WKU
 - c. Relocating main or a branch campus
 - d. Adding sites for existing courses/programs to off-campus sites, (including dual enrollment courses)
 - e. Changing from clock hours to credit hours
 - f. Closing an approved off-campus site
 - g. Closing a regional campus
 - h. Altering significantly the mission of the institution
 - i. Initiating a regional campus
 - j. Adding off-campus sites

II. Policy

1. Any unit within WKU that intends to make a change to its curricular offerings must take due steps to verify whether such a change constitutes a substantive change.
2. If the change does constitute a substantive change, Academic Affairs will ensure that appropriate notification to SACS occurs.

III. Procedure

A. Responsibilities

To ensure compliance with this policy,

1. The Associate Vice President for Planning & Program Development will:
 - a. Develop and maintain a website with examples of substantive changes at:
http://www.wku.edu/academicaffairs/pd/sacs_substantive_changes.php
 - b. Provide the deans, department heads/chairs, and faculty information about the substantive change policy;
 - c. Monitor programmatic additions and changes that proceed through the curriculum change process;

- d. Identify those proposed changes that require notification to the SACS Commission on Colleges; and
 - e. Work with WKU department heads and deans to determine if proposed changes constitute a substantive change.
2. Department heads/chairs and deans are responsible for:
- a. Completing, in a timely manner, the form for changes in programs under their charge; and
 - b. Working with the Associate Vice President for Planning & Program Development to gather relevant information to complete the notification process of a substantive change to SACS.
3. The Division of Extended Learning and Outreach (DELO) will monitor changes to programs as they add off-campus sites, online/hybrid delivery, and dual-credit courses and liaise with pertinent departments about programs to determine whether substantive changes have occurred.
- a. If substantive changes have not occurred, DELO will continue monitoring
 - b. If substantive changes have occurred, DELO will inform the SACS Liaison accordingly
4. The Associate Vice President for Enrollment Management will monitor those programs involving joint admissions and Early College High School programs, will liaise with the Associate Vice President for Planning & Program Development to determine whether revisions to programs constitute substantive changes and will report any substantive changes as necessary to the SACS Liaison.
5. In the event that the Office of Academic Affairs becomes aware that a substantive change has been made prior to notifying SACS, the WKU SACS liaison will work with SACS to notify them of the unreported change, following pertinent SACS policies.

B. Processes

- 1. Those unsure if an action or actions require WKU to notify SACS of a substantive change should contact the Associate Vice President for Planning & Program Development for clarification and consultation.
- 2. When a unit within WKU intends to make a change to its curricular offerings, the appropriate coordinator should work with the Associate Vice President for Planning & Program Development, to make sure that the appropriate parties are notified in a timely manner.

3. As soon as the decision is made that an action may constitute a substantive change, department chairs/heads should contact the Associate Vice President for Planning & Program Development to begin the substantive change process, if necessary.
4. The WKU SACS Liaison, in consultation with the Provost, will
 - a. Liaise with SACS to determine which SACS procedures should be followed;
 - b. File the appropriate notification and/or prospectus as deemed necessary;
 - c. Coordinate any follow-up actions required of Western Kentucky University by SACS
5. For substantive changes that are institution wide changes (i.e. I. B. 2.), the Provost will work in conjunction with the President to inform SACS in a timely manner of those changes, following the procedure and guidelines as posted on the SACS website.

IV. Related Policies

V. Reason for Revision