

SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE PROCEDURE

Substantive changes may be initiated through the University's planning process and facilitated by the Strategic Planning Committee. When an academic substantive change is under consideration, the planning process is initiated by the Department Chair/Program Coordinator working in conjunction with the College Dean. Administrative substantive change proposals are initiated by the Vice President of the respective administrative unit.

Roles and Responsibilities

Faculty: Responsible for course/program research and development. All curriculum changes should follow the Athens State University Curriculum Review Process.

Department Chair/Program Coordinator: Responsible for ensuring that all required approvals and notifications are received prior to scheduling or marketing courses. Each Department Chair or Program Coordinator should keep on file copies of substantive change requests, notifications, and SACSCOC approvals for each program, location (off-campus site) and delivery format (online) in which the program is offered.

College Dean: Responsible for ensuring that no substantive change is implemented without the prior approval through internal and external processes. College Deans are also responsible for notifying the Provost/Vice President of Academic Affairs and the SACSCOC Accreditation Liaison at the time the project planning process begins, normally 12-18 months before a substantive change implementation is sought.

Provost/Vice President of Academic Affairs and Student Services: Responsible for managing the approval process and ensuring that all internal and external approvals and notifications are completed on time.

Institutional Accreditation Liaison: Responsible for providing leadership and guidance to all University personnel related to COC substantive change policies and procedures. The Liaison serves as a resource during planning and implementation of all substantive change projects and serves as the authorized contact for all institutional communication with the Commission.

Office of Institutional Research and Assessment: Responsible for systematic collection, analysis, evaluation, and dissemination of valid and reliable data used to support and assist in the development of substantive change documents. The Director of OIPRA will assist with review and revision of substantive change prospectus documents. The OIPRA office will serve as the official repository of all SACSCOC documentation.

Undergraduate Curriculum Committee: Responsible for reviewing all undergraduate curriculum proposals for addition or deletion of courses, changes in degree requirements, and changes in course descriptions for existing courses. The Committee also reviews all proposed new undergraduate programs (certificates, minors and majors) suggested by the Department and supported by the College as evidenced by the completed Curriculum Review Request form.

Graduate Curriculum Committee: Responsible for reviewing all graduate curriculum proposals for addition or deletion of courses, changes in degree requirements, and changes in course descriptions for existing graduate courses. The Committee also reviews all proposed new graduate programs suggested by the Department and supported by the College as evidenced by the completed Curriculum Review Request form.

Internal Planning and Approval Process for Substantive Change

The following University procedures have been developed to ensure timely and accurate adherence to all COC substantive change requirements.

Timeline for Notification to SACSCOC:

Due dates for specific substantive change documents are posted by the Commission on Colleges. Most changes require submission to the COC at least 9 months in advance of the proposed change. Please contact the University's Accreditation Liaison to determine due dates.

Step 1

At the time the potential substantive change is being considered, the College Dean or appropriate administrative Vice President must complete and submit electronically the [Curriculum Review Request Form \(CRR\)](#) (for academic substantive changes) or the [Substantive Change Checklist](#) (for administrative substantive changes) This alerts the appropriate parties of a substantive change action.

For Academic Substantive Changes

All academic substantive changes must begin with the [Curriculum Review Request \(CRR\) Form](#) to be presented to either the undergraduate Curriculum Committee (undergraduate curriculum) or the Graduate Curriculum Committee (graduate curriculum). No curriculum changes will be approved without a completed CRR. This form includes language specific to substantive program changes and is shared with the University's Accreditation Liaison by the Provost's Office as part of the approval process. (See [Curriculum and Review Approval Process Flowchart](#))

For Administrative Substantive Changes

All administrative substantive changes must begin with a [Substantive Change Checklist](#) to be presented to the President's Cabinet for review and approval. All approved substantive change checklists will be forwarded to the University's Accreditation Liaison and the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment.

Step 2

Once the proposed substantive change has been approved through the appropriate internal process, the Accreditation Liaison and the Director of Institutional Research and Assessment will work with the proposer to prepare the appropriate documentation for SACSCOC. The President will begin the process of securing appropriate approvals from the President's Cabinet, the University Board of Trustees and the Alabama Commission on Higher Education (ACHE), when appropriate.

Step 3

Upon approval by all appropriate stakeholders, the Accreditation Liaison will submit the documentation to SACSCOC.

Submission to SACSCOC

Official copies will be kept on file in the University's official SACSCOC files and the final package will consist of:

- Original President's Cover Letter
- Copy of the approved action item from the University's Board of Trustees
- Copy of the approval letter from the Alabama Commission on Higher Education (if appropriate)
- All required supporting documentation
- Payment for Necessary Fees and Expenses