

Clayton State University
SACSCOC Substantive Change Reporting Policy

As a member institution of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC and under federal guidelines, Clayton State University is responsible for reporting to SACSCOC any changes that are a “significant modification or expansion of the nature and scope of an accredited institution” (SACSCOC, 2009, 2013, 2015).

The time period and required information for reporting varies depending on the extent and type of change. All changes to program curriculum, course delivery method and type, location of offerings, and required credit hours must be reported to Clayton State’s SACSCOC Liaison, in ample time to determine if reporting is necessary and to allow for the completion of forms and approval and review by SACSCOC. Any questions about reporting should be directed to either the Provost Office or the Clayton State SACSCOC Liaison.

Please consult the sections below for specific information on the timeline and paperwork needed.

(Information provided in the subsequent tables adapted from Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges Substantive Change for SACSCOC Accredited Institutions Policy Statement).

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Changes Requiring Academic Affairs Notification Only

Type of Change	When to Inform Clayton State SACS Liaison	Prior Notification Required by SACSCOC	Time Frame for Contacting SACSCOC	Prior Approval Required from SACSCOC	Documentation Needed by SACSCOC	Procedure
Initiating a certificate program at employer's request and on short notice using existing approved courses and location	When approached by employer	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Initiating certificate program (not at employer's request and not on short notice) using existing approved courses and location	At the point of initial discussions	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Initiating off-campus sites (including Early College High School and dual enrollment programs offered at the high school) where student can obtain 24% or less of credits toward a program						
Expanding program offerings at previously approved off-campus sites by adding approved programs that ARE NOT significantly different from current programs at the site						

Type of Change	When to Inform Clayton State SACS Liaison	Prior Notification Required by SACSCOC	Time Frame for Contacting SACSCOC	Prior Approval Required from SACSCOC	Documentation Needed by SACSCOC	Procedure
Expanding program offerings at previously approved off-campus sites by adding approved programs that ARE significantly different from current programs at the site but NOT at the institution	At the time of initial discussions	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Expanding program offerings at previously approved off-campus sites by adding approved programs that ARE significantly different from current programs at the site but NOT at the institution						
Initiating distance learning by offering 24% or less of any program for the first time						

**While initiation or revision of programs not offered for academic credit and that are not eligible for federal financial aid does not require reporting, such programs are subject to review at the time of reaffirmation.*

Changes Requiring Notification, Application or Prospectus, and Approval by SACSCOC Prior to Implementation

Type of Change	When to Inform Clayton State SACS Liaison	Prior Notification Required by SACSCOC	Time Frame for Contacting SACSCOC	Prior Approval Required from SACSCOC	Documentation Needed by SACSCOC	Procedure
Initiating coursework or programs at different level than currently approved	At time of new program forecast	No	Due dates: March 15 or September 1	Yes	Application for Level Change1	1
Initiating off-campus sites where student can obtain 50% or more credits toward a program (including but not limited to Early College High School, dual enrollment programs offered at a high school, and certificate programs that are not at employer’s request and not on short notice)	At time of initial discussions	No	Due dates: January 1 for 7/1-12/31 implementation July 1 for 1/1-6/30 implementation	Yes	Cover Sheet Prospectus	1
Expanding program offerings at previously approved off- campus sites by adding programs that ARE significantly different from current programs at the site AND at the institution						
Initiating degree completion programs						

Type of Change	When to Inform Clayton State SACS Liaison	Prior Notification Required by SACSCOC	Time Frame for Contacting SACSCOC	Prior Approval Required from SACSCOC	Documentation Needed by SACSCOC	Procedure
Initiating a branch campus (See definition of “branch campus” on p. 3 of this document.)	At time of initial discussions; agreement review	No	Due dates: January 1 for 7/1-12/31 implementation July 1 for 1/1-6/30 implementation	Yes	Cover Sheet Prospectus	1
Initiating distance learning by offering 50% or more of the first program for the first time						
Relocating a main or branch campus						
Entering into a contract with an entity not certified to participate in USDOE Title IV programs if the entity provides 25% or more of an educational program offered by the SACSCOC accredited institution						
Initiating dual or joint degrees involving program expansion (significant departure) or initiating a new site where student can obtain 50% or more credits toward a program	At the time of initial discussion; agreement review	No	Due dates: January 1 for 7/1-12/31 implementation July 1 for 1/1-6/30 implementation	Yes	Cover Sheet Prospectus Copy of signed agreement, contact information for each institution, and additional details on non-SACSCOC institution(s) involved. See Policy	See SACSCOC policy “Agreements Involving Joint and Dual Academic Awards”

Type of Change	When to Inform Clayton State SACS Liaison	Prior Notification Required by SACSCOC	Time Frame for Contacting SACSCOC	Prior Approval Required from SACSCOC	Documentation Needed by SACSCOC	Procedure
Initiating dual or joint degree with at least one institution not accredited by SACSCOC	At the time of initial discussion; agreement review	No	At least 6 months prior to implementation	Yes	Acceptance of notification, copy of signed agreement, contact information for each institution, and additional details on non-SACSCOC institution(s). See Policy.	See SACSCOC Policy "Agreements Involving Joint and Dual Academic Awards"
Initiating a direct assessment competency-based program	At the time of initial discussion	Yes – Screening Form	Due dates: March 15 (for June review) September 1 (for December review)	Yes	Submit "Screening Form" with letter of notification. If Prospectus is required	See SACSCOC Policy " Direct Assessment Competency - Based Educational Programs "
Initiating a merger/consolidation with another institution	At the time of initial discussion	Yes: December 15 (for June review); June 1 (for December review)	Due dates: March 15 (for June review); September 1 (for December review)	Yes	Cover Sheet Institutional Summary Form Prospectus	See SACSCOC Policy: " Mergers, Consolidations, Change of Ownership, Acquisitions, and Change of Governance, Control, Form, or Legal Status "
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-out for students from another institution that is closing						

Type of Change	When to Inform Clayton State SACS Liaison	Prior Notification Required by SACSCOC	Time Frame for Contacting SACSCOC	Prior Approval Required from SACSCOC	Documentation Needed by SACSCOC	Procedure
Initiating a certificate program at a new off-campus site at employer's request and on short notice (previously approved program)	At the time of initial discussion	No		Yes	Cover Sheet Modified Prospectus Contact Commission Staff	1
Initiating a certificate program that is a significant departure from previously approved programs at employer's request and on short notice						
Adding a site under a U.S. military contract for a previously approved program						
Altering significantly the length of a program						
Altering significantly the educational mission of the institution						
Changing from clock hours to credit hours	At the time of initial discussion	No	March 1; September 1	Yes	Justify reasons for change, indicate calculation of equivalency, and other pertinent information	1
Moving an off-campus instructional site (serving the same geographic area)	At the time of initial discussion	Yes	NA	No	Letter of notification with old address, new address, and implementation date	2

Type of Change	When to Inform Clayton State SACS Liaison	Prior Notification Required by SACSCOC	Time Frame for Contacting SACSCOC	Prior Approval Required from SACSCOC	Documentation Needed by SACSCOC	Procedure
Initiating dual or joint degrees with other SACSCOC accredited institution(s)	At the time of initial discussion; agreement review	At least 6 months prior to implementation		No	Acceptance of notification, copy of signed agreement and contact information for each institution. See Policy.	See SACSCOC Policy “Agreements Involving Joint and Dual Academic Awards”
Initiating programs or courses offered through contractual agreement or consortium	At the time of initial discussion; agreement review	Yes		No	Letter of notification and copy of signed agreement	2
Entering into a contract with an entity not certified to participate in USDOE Title IV programs if the entity provides less than 25% of an educational program offered by the SACSCOC accredited institution						
Initiating off-campus sites where student can obtain 25- 49% of credits toward a program (including but not limited to Early College High School, dual enrollment programs offered at a high school, and certificate programs that are not at employer’s request and not on short notice)	At the time of initial discussion	Yes		No	Letter of notification Including street address and implementation date	2
Initiating distance learning by offering 25-49 of the first program for the first time						

Type of Change	When to Inform Clayton State SACS Liaison	Prior Notification Required by SACSCOC	Time Frame for Contacting SACSCOC	Prior Approval Required from SACSCOC	Documentation Needed by SACSCOC	Procedure
Closing an academic program, approved off-campus site, branch campus, or institution where the institution plans to teach out its own students	At the time of initial discussion	Yes		Yes	Description of teach-out plan included with letter of notification	3
Closing a program, approved off-campus site, branch campus, or institution where the institution plans contracts with another institution(s) to teach-out students (Teach- out Agreement)	At the time of initial discussion	Yes		Yes	Description of teach-out plan, copy of signed teach-out agreement(s) detailing terms included with notification	3

Changes Requiring Notification to SACSCOC Prior to Implementation

Type of Change	When to Inform Clayton State SACS Liaison	Prior Notification Required by SACSCOC	Time Frame for Contacting SACSCOC	Prior Approval Required from SACSCOC	Documentation Needed by SACSCOC	Procedure
Initiating off-campus sites (including Early College High School programs offered at the high school) where a Student can obtain 25-49 % of credit	When initial discussions of program expansions begin	Yes	Prior to Implementation	NA	Letter of Notification	2
Moving an approved off-campus instructional site within the same geographic area to serve essentially the same pool of students.	During initial site move discussions	Yes	Prior to move	NA	Letter of notification	2
Initiating the first distance learning program that offers 25-49 % of the credits toward program	When initial discussions of program expansion begin	Yes	Prior to implementation	NA	Letter of Modification	2
Initiating programs/courses offered through contractual agreement or consortium	When negotiations begin	Yes	Prior to implementation	NA	Letter of notification and copy of signed agreement ⁴	2
Entering into a contract with an entity not certified to participate in USDOE Title IV Program if the entity provides less than 25% of the educational program offered by the COC accredited institution	When negotiations begin	Yes	Prior to Implementation	NA	Copy of the signed agreement	2
Repackaging of an existing approved curriculum to create a new degree level *	When initial discussions regarding curricular changes begins	Yes	Prior to implementation	NA	Letter of notification	2

*Example: an institution that offers a full 120-hour baccalaureate program creating an associate degree from its lower-division offerings

Glossary of Terms

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

Contractual Agreement – typically is one in which an institution enters an agreement for receipt of courses/programs or portions of courses or programs (i.e., clinical training internships, etc.) delivered by another institution or service provider.

Consortial Relationship - A consortial relationship typically is one 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 course work 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, or may be offered via distance learning technologies.

Direct Assessment Competency-Base Educational Programs - Federal regulations define a direct assessment competency-based educational program as 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 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; or video cassettes, DVD's, and CD-ROMs if used as part of the distance learning course or program.

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).

Geographically separate - an instructional site or branch campus that is located physically apart from the main campus of the institution.

Joint degree - a single program completion credential bearing the name

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 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. The policy and procedures for reporting and review of institutional substantive change are outlined in the document "Substantive Change for Accredited Institutions of the Commission on Colleges."

Significant departure – a program that is not closely related to previously approved programs at the institution or site or for the mode of delivery in question. 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 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% or more of at least one program offered, cease 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% or more of at least one program, ceases to operate before all students have completed their program of study, and 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.

1 Form can be obtained from CSU SACSCOC Liaison

2 Template of Prospectus form can be obtained from CSU SACSCOC Liaison

3 Template of Modified Prospectus form can be obtained from CSU SACSCOC Liaison

4 Sample MOU can be obtained from CSU SACSCOC Liaison

5 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

6 Information on initiating joint or dual degrees with another institution may be found on the SACSCOC website. See “Agreements Involving Joint and Dual Academic Awards” policy (formally called Collaborative Academic Arrangements”).

7 Initiating a significant change in the established mission of the institution. Significant changes in mission are those that lead to a fundamental shift in the nature of the institution. Examples include the following: the transformation of a technical college into a comprehensive community college, the initiation by a seminary of significant liberal arts offerings, the addition by a medical college of general education offerings, the initiation of an engineering school at a liberal arts institution. Editorial changes in the language of a mission statement are not substantive and need not be reported. See Commission staff regarding the prospectus. The change in mission may dictate a mix of required documentation.

8 Direct Assessment Competency-Based Educational Programs - Federal regulations define a direct assessment competency-based educational program as 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 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.

Procedures for approval of direct assessment competency-based education programs are in a separate document, “Direct Assessment Competency-Based Educational Programs”.