

80.90.015 SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE POLICY

Substantive Change Policy**PURPOSE**

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines at the St. Jude Children's Research Hospital Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences ("Graduate School") for identifying, assessing and reporting substantive changes in accordance with the standards set forth by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC).

SCOPE

Accredited institutions with SACSCOC are required to notify SACSCOC of substantive changes, and when required, obtain approval prior to implementing such changes. The Graduate School must comply with the current SACSCOC substantive change policy by reporting substantive changes to SACSCOC concerning the following:

- Substantially changing the established mission or objectives of an institution or its programs.
- Changing the legal status, form of control, or ownership of an institution.
- Changing the governance of an institution.
- Merging / consolidating two or more institutions or entities.
- Acquiring another institution or any program or location of another institution.
- Relocating an institution or an off campus instructional site of an institution (including a branch campus).
- Offering courses or programs at a higher or lower degree level than currently authorized.
- Adding graduate programs at an institution previously offering only undergraduate programs (including degrees, diplomas, certificates, and other for-credit credential).
- Changing the way an institution measures student progress, whether in clock hours or credit-hours; semesters, trimesters, or quarters; or time-based or non-time-based methods or measures.
- Adding a program that is a significant departure from the existing programs, or method of delivery, from those offered when the institution was last evaluated.
- Initiating programs by distance education or correspondence courses.
- Adding an additional method of delivery to a currently offered program.
- Entering into a cooperative academic arrangement.
- Entering into a written arrangement under 34 C.F.R. § 668.5 under which an institution or organization not certified to participate in the title IV Higher Education Act (HEA) programs offers less than 25% (notification) or 25-50% (approval) of one or more of the accredited institution's educational programs. An agreement offering more than 50% of one or more of an institution's programs is prohibited by federal regulation.
- Substantially increase or decreasing the number of clock hours or credit hours awarded or competencies demonstrated, or an increase in the level of credential awarded, for successful completion of one or more programs.
- Adding competency-based education programs.
- Adding each competency-based education program by direct assessment.

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- Adding programs with completion pathways that recognize and accommodate a student's prior or existing knowledge or competency.
- Awarding dual or joint academic awards.
- Re-opening a previously closed program or off-campus instructional site.
- Adding a new off-campus instructional site/additional location including a branch campus.
- Adding a permanent location at a site at which an institution is conducting a teach-out program for students of another institution that has ceased operating before all students have completed their program of study.
- Closing an institution, a program, a method of delivery, an off-campus instructional site, or a program at an off-campus instructional site.
- Participating in the federal Prison Education Program providing Pell Grant access to confined or incarcerated students.

STAKEHOLDERS AFFECTED BY THIS POLICY

Stakeholders affected by this policy include all Graduate School staff and faculty.

POLICY

1.1 Definition and Examples of Substantive Change

1.1.1 A substantive change is defined as any significant modification or expansion of the nature and scope of an accredited institution. According to SACSCOC guidelines, substantive changes require notification or approval prior to implementation.

1.2 Identification of Substantive Changes

1.2.1 The Graduate School will identify potential substantive changes through:

- Regular program review processes
- Strategic planning initiatives
- Feedback from faculty, staff, and administration
- Monitoring trends in higher education

PROCEDURE

2.1 Assessment Process

2.1.1 Upon identification of a potential substantive change, the following steps will be taken:

2.1.2 Initial Review: The Office of Academic Affairs will conduct an initial assessment to determine if the change qualifies as substantive under SACSCOC guidelines.

2.1.3 Documentation: If a substantive change is identified, comprehensive documentation must be prepared, including:

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- A detailed description of the change
- Rationale for the change
- Impact on existing programs and resources
- Plans for assessment and evaluation

2.1.4 Approval: The documentation will be submitted to the appropriate Graduate School committees for review and approval, including:

- Dean of the Graduate School
- Curriculum Committee
- Board of Trustees

2.1.5 Notification to SACSCOC: If the change is deemed substantive, the Graduate School will notify SACSCOC through the appropriate channels, including submission of the required forms and documentation.

2.2 Implementation

2.2.1 Following SACSCOC notification and/or approval, the Graduate School will implement the change in accordance with the approved plans and timelines.

2.3 Monitoring and Evaluation

2.3.1 The Graduate School will continuously monitor the effects of the substantive change, ensuring it aligns with institutional mission and goals. A formal evaluation will be conducted at the end of the first academic year post-implementation, and findings will be documented and shared with relevant stakeholders.

2.4 Training and Awareness

2.4.1 The Graduate School will provide training and resources to faculty and staff regarding the substantive change policy to ensure awareness and compliance.

DEFINITIONS

- **SACSCOC:** Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges

REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

- SACSCOC Accreditation Standards
- Institutional Mission and Vision Statements
- Policy on Policies

FORMS AND OTHER DOCUMENTS

N/A

POLICY DETAILS

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Policy Sponsor	Stacey Schultz-Cherry
Approval Authority	Dean of the Graduate School
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Policy Owner (Contact Info)	Stacey Schultz-Cherry (stacey.schultz-cherry@stjude.org)
Policy Alternate	Stacey Schultz-Cherry
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REVISION HISTORY

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APPROVALS

Dean of the Graduate School – Approved on September 29, 2025