



RANGER COLLEGE: SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE PROCEDURE

According to the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC), a substantive change is “a significant modification or expansion of the nature and scope of an accredited institution.” The most common types of substantive change include the initiation or discontinuation of a degree or certificate program and the opening or closing of an off-campus site, but there are many more actions and items that constitute a substantive change as well. Importantly, substantive change is a federal concept, based in the regulations of the U.S. Department of Education, which regional accreditors such as SACSCOC are required to enforce.

Prior to the implementation of any substantive change, Ranger College is required to notify SACSCOC. In some cases, not only notification but formal approval by SACSCOC is required. In the latter case, the College is required to submit a full substantive change prospectus using the forms provided by the Commission.

The consequences of failing to abide by SACSCOC’s substantive change policy are serious. In the Commission’s own words,

If an institution is non-compliant with Substantive Change Policy and Procedures or Standard 14.2 (Substantive change), its accreditation may be in jeopardy. An unreported substantive change may require a review of the institution’s substantive change policy and procedures document by the SACSCOC Board of Trustees. Non-compliance subjects the institution to monitoring, sanction, or removal from membership. Failure to secure approval, if required, of a substantive change involving programs or locations that qualify for title IV federal funding may place the institution in jeopardy with the U.S. Department of Education, including reimbursement of funds received related to an unreported substantive change.

To ensure compliance, individuals should follow the procedure outlined below, and should also read in full Ranger College Board Policy [GK\(LOCAL\)](#), from which the procedure outlined here has been condensed, and which lays out the College’s substantive change policy and procedure in full. Individuals initiating what may constitute a substantive change should also refer to SACSCOC’s complete [substantive change policy](#).

As part of this procedure, the [Substantive Change Form and Checklist v2.0](#) form found in RCs *Substantive Change Procedure and Checklist* shared Google Drive should be completed at the very outset of any initiative to develop a proposed action or program that might constitute a substantive change for Ranger College. Following submission of the form, a determination will be made as to whether the proposal actually constitutes a substantive change and therefore requires SACSCOC notification and/or approval.

Questions concerning substantive change may be directed to Debbie Karl, Vice President of IE and Accreditation, at ext. 7009 or dkarl@rangercollege.edu.

SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE PROCEDURE

Condensed from Ranger College Board Policy [GK\(LOCAL\)](#)

NOTE: This is a general procedure for all substantive changes. Some sub changes require more documentation and will be handled on a case-by-case basis with the Vice President of Institutional Effectiveness (IE) and Accreditation

Step 1: The Project Owner of the possible substantive change establishes the need for it by completing a substantive change submission form and checklist. The Accreditation Liaison assesses the nature of the possible substantive change to determine the type of documentation, if any, that must be provided to SACSCOC, as well as the submission deadline that must be met relative to the desired implementation of the change. The Accreditation Liaison notifies the Vice President of Instruction (VPI) and the President of the proposed change.

Step 2: If the proposed action involves the establishment of a new workforce education program, the Project Owner brings together an Advisory Committee to help the College document the need for the program and ensure adequate resources and a well-designed curriculum to provide students with the knowledge, skills, and abilities essential for employment. The Project Owner conducts a needs assessment and creates a preliminary budget. Recommendations from the advisory committee are considered by faculty and submitted by the VPI to the Curriculum Committee, Administrative Board, Board of Regents and the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) for approval.

Step 3: The Accreditation Liaison works with the Project Owner to develop and complete the necessary documentation (letter of notification, substantive change prospectus, or modified prospectus) to be submitted to SACSCOC.

Step 4: Prior to submission to SACSCOC, all documents obtain all relevant internal approvals from key College District personnel. (Note for reviews subject to approval by SACSCOC's Executive Council: If the change is pending approval by the institution's governing board or by a state board or authority, note the expected approval date. The institution will be contacted at the time of review for evidence of approvals pending at the time of submission; do not send approval documentation until requested. Note for review subject to approval by the SACSCOC full Board of Trustees: Evidence of all required approvals must be included with the original submission.)

Step 5: The Accreditation Liaison submits the completed substantive change prospectus and supporting documentation to SACSCOC.

A NOTE ABOUT DEADLINES: Letters of notification and prospectuses must be submitted to SACSCOC many months in advance of the planned implementation of a substantive change.

Most common due dates requiring SACSCOC **approval**:

- New program (with 50% or more new content) January 1 for fall, July 1 for spring
- New Off-campus Instructional Site (OCIS) 50% or more January 1 for fall, July 1 for spring
 (for Limited Review)

The Accreditation Liaison keeps the Project Owner updated about communications from SACSCOC as the Commission is evaluating the prospectus and notifies the Project Owner and the VPI of the Commission's determination when it is received.

Link to the [Substantive Change Form and Checklist v2.0](#)