

Approved By: President

Date Approved: September 13, 2023

Effective Date: June 24, 2014

- 1. Summary:** This policy defines substantive changes and establishes criteria by which the College must notify, and if necessary secure approval from, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) for substantive changes.
- 2. Rationale:** The purpose of this policy is to ensure compliance with Standard 14.2 of the Principles of Accreditation: Foundations for Quality Enhancement and in accordance with the SACSCOC “Substantive Change Policy and Procedures,” the current versions of which can be found on the SACSCOC Website.
- 3. Entities Affected:** faculty, staff, trustees
- 4. Definitions:**

Substantive Change: a significant modification or expansion of the nature and scope of an accredited institution. Such changes include but are not limited to 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 credentials).
- 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 described in 34 C.F.R. § 668.5 under which an institution or organization not certified to participate in 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 increasing or decreasing the number of clock hours or credit hours awarded, 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.
- 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.

5. Policy: Criswell College is accredited by SACSCOC and is therefore required to report all substantive changes in an accurate and timely manner to SACSCOC. In some cases, depending on the nature of the change(s), the College must obtain approval from the Commission as early as six months prior to implementing the change(s). The College is aware that failure to follow the SACSCOC Substantive Change Policy and Procedures and Standard 14.2 (Substantive Change) may result in penalties, including:

- Loss of Title IV funding
- Reimbursement of federal funds
- Sanction or removal from SACSCOC membership by the Commission's Board of Trustees

Determination of Substantive Change

To ensure compliance with SACSCOC requirements, administrative staff and faculty are responsible for notifying the President's Office of all proposed substantive changes in a timely manner, including program/course level, department level, and institutional level changes. The President's Office must be consulted if it is unclear whether a proposed change qualifies as a substantive change as defined by SACSCOC. In most cases, the President's Office and the appropriate vice president will determine whether the proposed changes constitute substantive changes. If necessary, the President's Office or SACSCOC liaison will contact SACSCOC staff for clarification.

Reporting to SACSCOC

The SACSCOC Institutional Accreditation Liaison is responsible for reporting all substantive changes to SACSCOC in an accurate and timely manner.

6. Procedure:

- a. **Implementation:** The procedures for implementing this policy are governed by the SACSCOC “[Substantive Change Policy and Procedures](#),” the current version of which can be found on the SACSCOC Website. See also “Section 14: Transparency and Institutional Representation” in the [Resource Manual for The Principles of Accreditation](#).
- b. **Responsibility for Compliance:** Vice President of Academic Affairs as the College’s SACSCOC Institutional Accreditation Liaison.
- c. **Notification:** This policy will be posted on the College’s website.
- d. **Policy Review:** This policy will be regularly reviewed according to the College’s policy review procedure.

For the Office of the President only:

Policy version: 2.0	Policy number: 2.033
Related policies:	

Policy History

Version 1.0	June 24, 2014
Version 2.0	September 13, 2023