

Mars Hill University Substantive Change Policy

Updated and adopted: 3.2.21

Substantive change is defined as a significant modification or expansion of the nature and scope of an accredited institution as defined by federal regulations and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC). The Commission's procedures and policies related to substantive changes are [published at sacscoc.org](https://www.sacscoc.org/).

Substantive changes can include but are not limited to the following, and all substantive changes should adhere to the definitions and reporting expectations outlined in SACSCOC substantive change guidance in effect at the time of the change:

- altering significantly the length of a program
- initiating a degree completion program
- changing from clock hours to credit hours
- initiating courses or programs at a different credential level than currently approved
- expanding degree or graduate certificate programs at the current approved credential level if a significant departure from current programs
- initiating a new off-campus instructional site
- relocating an off-campus instructional site, a main campus, or a branch campus
- establishing programs or courses offered through contractual agreement or consortium, including joint or dual degrees with another institution
- initiating a direct assessment competency-based program
- entering into certain contracts with entities not certified to participate in U.S. Department of Education Title IV programs (e.g., to deliver courses)
- closing a degree or graduate certificate program
- closing an off-campus instructional site or a branch campus

Within academic areas, substantive changes may originate from faculty members, academic departments, faculty standing and special committees, deans, the provost, or other academic years. Curricular substantive changes are subject to normal faculty governance. In other areas, potential substantive changes may arise in areas such as individual units, the senior leadership team, committees, or directors and vice presidents.

Vice presidents, deans, directors, and the chair of the faculty should :

- Be aware of the substantive change policy
- Ensure that all potential substantive changes emerging in their respective area are identified and reported to the SACSCOC liaison at the earlier possible time
- Assist with data, information, or prospectus development as appropriate
- Conduct an annual review in their respective areas to monitor for any potential or unreported substantive changes

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At the earliest possible stage of consideration, a potential substantive change should be reported to the SACSCOC liaison. The SACSCOC liaison will determine if the proposed change is substantive, and will seek guidance from the Commission when necessary. Certain substantive changes require advance notification to the Commission of as much as 12 months and may require development and submission of a prospectus.

If a vice president, dean, director, or the chair of the faculty becomes aware of a potential substantive change that has been implemented without notification, they have the responsibility to notify the SACSCOC liaison as soon as possible. The SACSCOC liaison will then be responsible for reporting the change in accordance with SACSCOC policy.