

**OFFICE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT FOR ACADEMIC AFFAIRS
AND OFFICE OF PLANNING, ASSESSMENT, ACCREDITATION and RESEARCH
POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

POLICY

Substantive Change Reporting

Georgia Highlands College welcomes the expansion of academic opportunities through the development and offering of new degree programs and/or courses offered on its main campus, additional sites, or electronic means. Substantive change is defined as *a significant modification or expansion of the nature and scope of an accredited institution*. The College must report “substantive changes” to its major accrediting body the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC). In some cases the college need only notify SACSCOC of a substantive change. In many cases, however, approval prior to the implementation of the program must be acquired from SACSCOC.

The SACSCOC policy is as follows:

The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) accredits an entire institution and its programs and services, wherever they are located or however they are delivered. It is responsible for reviewing all substantive changes that occur between an institution’s decennial reviews to determine whether the change has affected the quality of the total institution and to assure the public that all aspects of the institution continue to meet defined standards.

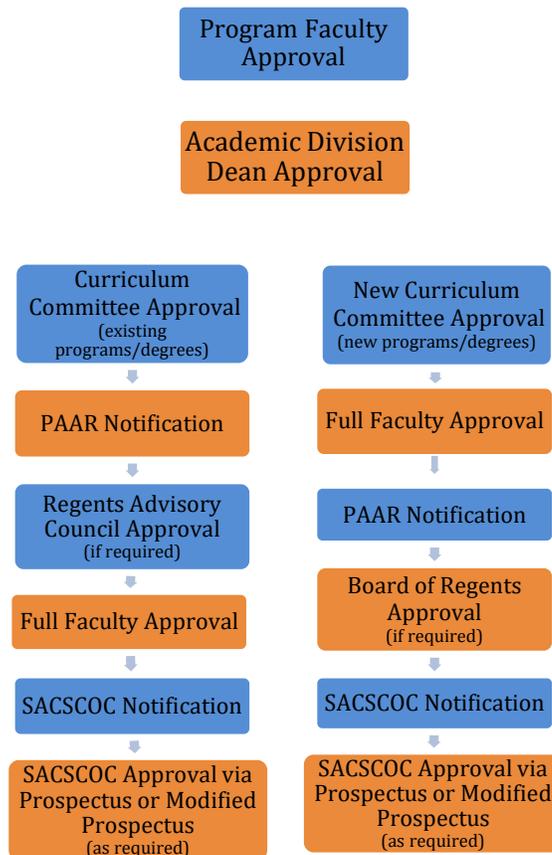
The SACSCOC is recognized by the U.S. Department of Education as an agency whose accreditation enables its member institutions to seek eligibility to participate in Title IV programs. To maintain its recognition with the U.S. Department of Education, the SACSCOC has incorporated federal requirements into its substantive change policy and procedures. Some of those requirements specify that an institution seek and receive approval prior to the initiation of a substantive change so that the change can be included in the institution’s scope of accreditation.

Depending on the specific nature of the change, it must be reported to the SACSCOC as notification and/or for approval in a timely manner. All submissions will be coordinated by the SACSCOC Liaison in the Office of Planning, Assessment, Accreditation and Research (PAAR). The first step is a letter of intent signed by the accreditation liaison with basic information regarding the change. SACSCOC will then determine if a formal prospectus (template available from PAAR), will be required. The time frame for submitting this information to the PAAR Office should accommodate the guidelines for submission to SACSCOC below. Do not make an assumption regarding the type of change being addressed. Always contact the PAAR Office for guidance.

POLICY

The following guidelines as depicted in the flowchart should be followed when developing and delivering Georgia Highlands College courses or for a new degree program or level change:

1. Not all changes will require the same degree of substantive change documentation for SACSCOC. PAAR will determine what is required and provide the Division Dean with the necessary template for documentation.
2. The SACSCOC Liaison will offer guidance regarding timing, deadlines, and documentation structure to the Division Dean when the template is provided. All documentation will be given to the SACS Liaison for review and approval before SACSCOC submission.
3. Upon SACSCOC approval, the Division Dean or appropriate administrator will be notified that the College has been cleared to begin offering a program, level change, or teach-out per the substantive change documentation.



Note: Changes or additions not addressed above may also require Faculty Senate notification and/or approval. This chart contains basic information regarding submission of changes. There is considerably more detail in each step of the process. For advanced information pertaining to a specific step, please contact the associated area directly.