



# TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY HEALTH SCIENCES CENTER EL PASO

## Operating Policy and Procedure

**HSCEP OP:** 59.07, **Substantive Change Reporting**

**PURPOSE:** The purpose of this Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center El Paso (TTUHSC El Paso) Operating Policy and Procedure (HSCEP OP) is to establish institutional procedures for recognizing and approving substantive changes and ensuring timely notification of such changes to the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC).

**REVIEW:** This HSC OP will be reviewed by November 1 of every even-numbered year (ENY) by the dean of each school, the TTUHSCEP SACSCOC liaison, and the vice president for academic affairs or designee, with recommended revisions submitted to the president or designee by December 1.

### POLICY/PROCEDURE

#### I. Definitions

**Substantive Change:** A significant modification or expansion of the nature and scope of an accredited institution. Substantive change includes high-impact, high-risk changes and changes that can impact the quality of educational programs and services.

**SACSCOC:** The regional accrediting body recognized by the United States Department of Education to accredit TTUHSC El Paso and its programs and services. As such, SACSCOC has incorporated federal requirements into its substantive change policy and procedures and is responsible for reviewing all substantive changes that occur between TTUHSC El Paso's scheduled accreditation reviews.

#### II. Background

A. In accordance with the [SACSCOC Substantive Change Policy and Procedures](#), TTUHSCEP will notify SACSCOC of any substantive changes and, when required, seek approval prior to the implementation of such changes. Depending on the nature of the substantive change, TTUHSC El Paso may be required to seek approval up to six months in advance of the proposed change. All requests for changes, which may result in a substantive change, and all questions about substantive changes, shall be directed to the TTUHSC El Paso SACSCOC liaison. For more information on substantive changes, see the [SACSCOC Substantive Changes website](#) and federal regulation [34 CFR § 602.22 – Substantive Changes and Other Reporting Requirements](#).

B. The SACSCOC *Substantive Change Policy and Procedures* document describes the types of substantive changes and respective requirements, including obligations and processes by the institution and by SACSCOC. Substantive changes, including those based on federal regulations, include the following:

- a) Substantially changing the established mission or objectives of an institution or its programs.
- b) Changing the legal status, form of control, or ownership of an institution.
- c) Changing the governance of an institution.

- d) Merging or consolidating two or more institutions or entities.
- e) Acquiring another institution or any program or location of another institution.
- f) Relocating an institution or an off-campus instructional site of an institution (including a branch campus).
- g) Offering courses or programs at a higher or lower degree level than currently authorized.
- h) Adding graduate programs at an institution previously offering only undergraduate programs (including degrees, diplomas, certificates and other for-credit credentials).
- i) 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.
- j) 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.
- k) Initiating programs by distance education or correspondence courses.
- l) Adding an additional method of delivery to a currently offered program.
- m) Entering into a cooperative academic arrangement.
- n) 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.
- o) Substantially increasing or decreasing the number of clock hours or credit hours awarded or competencies demonstrated, or an increase in the level of credentials awarded, for successful completion of one or more programs.
- p) Adding competency-based education programs.
- q) Adding each competency-based education program by direct assessment.
- r) Adding programs with completion pathways that recognize and accommodate a student's prior or existing knowledge or competency.
- s) Awarding dual or joint academic awards.
- t) Re-opening a previously closed program or off-campus instructional site.
- u) Adding a new off-campus instructional site/additional location including a branch campus.
- v) 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.
- w) Closing an institution, a program, a method of delivery, an off-campus instructional site, or a program at an off-campus instructional site.

C. Within the SACSCOC policy document, specific requirements are addressed by substantive change type and organized by institutional changes, off-campus instructional site / additional location changes, and program changes. SACSCOC requirements for substantive change may include the following:

- a) Notification, approval, or notification and approval
- b) Committee visit
- c) Fee to review the substantive change
- d) Additional or different requirements if the institution is on substantive change restriction

### III. Responsibilities:

A. TTUHSC El Paso vice presidents and deans assume responsibility for: (1) becoming familiar with policies and procedures in the SACSCOC substantive change document; (2) submitting all substantive changes in writing to the TTUHSC El Paso SACSCOC liaison to ensure that substantive changes are communicated to SACSCOC using the appropriate procedures; and (3) providing the SACSCOC liaison with the documentation and supporting data necessary for reporting such changes to SACSCOC. If a vice president or dean is unclear whether a change is substantive in nature, they should contact the SACSCOC liaison for clarification.

- B. The TTUHSC El Paso SACSCOC liaison is responsible for: (1) informing TTUHSC El Paso vice presidents and deans of changes or updates to the SACSCOC substantive change policy during meetings of the TTUHSC El Paso Academic Council; (2) working with vice presidents and deans to determine whether a proposed change is a substantive change; (3) assisting with generating the necessary documentation for reporting to SACSCOC; and (4) submitting the requested substantive change documents to SACSCOC.

#### IV. Procedure:

- A. The vice president for academic affairs shall request notification of substantive changes planned for the next 12-month period. Doing so will provide adequate time to ensure that SACSCOC requirements can be met at least six months prior to implementation of a substantive change, as required.
- B. The procedures for reporting substantive changes to SACSCOC will directly follow procedures specified in the SACSCOC *Substantive Change Policy and Procedures*. The document outlines three procedures for addressing the different types of substantive changes:
  - a) Procedure one for the review of substantive changes requiring approval prior to implementation (notification may also be required).
  - b) Procedure Two for the review of substantive changes requiring only notification prior to implementation (some changes also require submission of additional documents).
  - c) Procedure three for closing a program, site, branch campus or institution.

Procedures for the following types of changes are included in a separate SACSCOC document, ["Mergers, Consolidations, Change of Ownership, Acquisitions, and Change of Governance, Control, Form, or Legal Status."](#)

- a) initiating mergers or consolidations
- b) acquiring any program or site from another institution
- c) adding as a permanent location any site where the institution is conducting a teach-out for students of another institution that is closing
- d) changes in governance, ownership, means of control or legal status.

Procedures for approval of direct assessment competency-based education programs are described in a separate SACSCOC document, ["Direct Assessment Competency-Based Educational Programs."](#)

The initiation or revision of programs not offered for academic credit and that are not eligible for federal financial aid does not require reporting; however, such programs are subject to review at the time of SACSCOC reaffirmation.

- C. No substantive change will be implemented at TTUHSC El Paso until a letter of approval or acceptance of notification is received from SACSCOC. The original letter of approval or acceptance of notification will be filed in the Office of the President, and electronic copies will be maintained by the TTUHSC El Paso SACSCOC liaison and respective vice president or dean.
- D. Only the president or TTUHSC El Paso SACSCOC liaison may submit to SACSCOC substantive change notifications and requests for substantive change approvals.
- E. Failure to comply with SACSCOC reporting requirements for substantive change may result in a loss of Title IV funding, reimbursement of related Title IV funding to the U.S. Department of Education, imposition of an accreditation sanction, and/or removal from SACSCOC membership.