

Orangeburg-Calhoun Technical College Statement of Procedure

Title: SACSCOC Substantive Changes

Number: 2.004.01

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Department of
Responsibility: Vice President for Academic Affairs

Authorization:

President

Date Approved: March 15, 2011

Last Revised: May 21, 2024

Last Reviewed: June 21, 2016

Purpose: To establish a process for adherence to the policies and guidelines of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) related to institutional change. In accordance with SACSCOC policies, OCtech will notify the Commission of substantive changes and will seek approval prior to the initiation of changes when appropriate.

Definitions

A. The following are examples of types of institutional change that might be substantive change

Method of Delivery – Approval

Subject to SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RESTRICTION

REQUIRES	Approval Exec Council of the Board
COMMITTEE VISIT	No
FEE	No
Yes	SUBJECT TO SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RESTRICTION

Adding a method of instructional delivery requires approval prior to implementation if

1. an institution is on SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RESTRICTION

—

OR

—

2. an institution with SACSCOC Prison Education Program (PEP) – Institutional-level Approval adds, for the first time, a method of delivery not previously used in its PEPs. For example, if an institution’s PEPs are delivered by face-to-face instruction only and the institution adds distance education as a method of delivery for the first time

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in a PEP, then adding the distance education method of delivery requires approval prior to implementation. All other method of delivery approvals and notifications also apply without exception as applicable: Competency-based Education by Course/Credit-based Approach – Institutional-level Approval, Competency-based Education Direct Assessment–Approval, Competency-based Education Direct Assessment – Notification, and Distance Education – Institutional-level Approval.

Institutions that are not on SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RESTRICTION or are not adding its first method of delivery in a PEP are not required to secure approval to add a method of delivery. However, all institutions are subject to method of delivery notification (see Method of Delivery – Notification).

A specific method of delivery applies when 50% or more of a program is delivered by that method. A program may be delivered 50% or more by more than one method (students may have the option to choose from different methods of delivery for the same program, e.g., predominately face-to-face versus predominately distance education).

The three methods of delivery are

- competency-based education,
- distance education, and
- face-to-face instruction.



What to submit

A prospectus: Submit a substantive change prospectus using the outline provided in Appendix A for method of delivery – approval.

Method of Delivery – Notification

Subject to SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RESTRICTION

REQUIRES	
Notification	
COMMITTEE VISIT	
No	
FEE	
No	
Yes	SUBJECT TO SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RESTRICTION

Adding a method of instructional delivery to an existing program requires notification prior to implementation. A specific method of delivery applies when 50% or more of a program is delivered by that method. A program may be delivered 50% or more by more than one method (students may have the option to choose from different methods of delivery for the same program, e.g., predominately face-to-face versus predominately distance education).

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The three methods of delivery are:

- competency-based education,
- distance education, and
- face-to-face instruction.

For example, adding a distance education delivery to an existing program delivered face- to-face requires notification.

Adding some methods of delivery may require approval as a separate type of substantive change:

- Adding a direct assessment competency-based education delivery of a program requires SACSCOC approval if 50% or more of the program can be earned by direct assessment
- Adding a course/credit-based competency-based education delivery of a program requires SACSCOC approval if 50% or more of the program can be earned by course/credit-based competency-based education *and* if the institution has not been previously approved to offer 50% or more of a program by course/credit-based competency-based education.
- Adding a distance education delivery of a program requires SACSCOC approval if 50% or more of the program can be earned by distance education *and* if the institution has not been previously approved to offer 50% or more of a program by distance education.

An institution on SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RESTRICTION adding a method of instructional delivery to an existing program requires SACSCOC approval prior to implementation; notification is not an option (see also Method of Delivery–Approval).

1. A completed Substantive Change Cover Sheet [PDF].
2. The name of the program (to indicate the discipline).
3. The credential to be awarded (e.g., Associate of Arts, Master of Accounting).
4. The instructional level (associate, baccalaureate, master’s, education specialist, or doctoral, if not obvious from the credential).
5. The method of delivery to be added: competency-based education, distance education, or face-to-face instruction.
6. The intended implementation date.

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New Program – Approval

Subject to SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RESTRICTION

REQUIRES	Approval Exec Council of the Board
COMMITTEE VISIT	No
FEE	Yes
Yes	SUBJECT TO SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RESTRICTION

A new program with 50-100% new content is a significant departure from the institution's existing programs and requires SACSCOC approval prior to implementation.

For an institution on SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RESTRICTION, a new program with 25-100% new content is a significant departure from the institution's existing programs and requires SACSCOC approval prior to implementation.

- Content is new if it is not currently offered by the institution at the new program's instructional level (associate, baccalaureate, master's, education specialist, or doctoral).
- A determination of the percentage of new content is made by the institution, not SACSCOC.
- New program approval equally applies to a degree, diploma, certificate, or other for-credit credential.
- If the institution is not currently approved to offer courses or programs at the new program's instructional level, a level change approval is required (e.g., the institution's first courses or programs at the baccalaureate degree level).
- Increasing the level of a program, i.e., offering a new program in a discipline at a higher instructional level than a currently offered program, is by definition a significant departure. For example, if an institution offers a baccalaureate degree program in a discipline and begins a new program in the same discipline at the master's degree level, then the new program is a significant departure and requires approval prior to implementation. This applies across all instructional levels.

A prospectus: Submit a substantive change prospectus using the outline provided in Appendix A for new program approval.

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New Program – Notification

Subject to SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RESTRICTION

REQUIRES Notification
COMMITTEE VISIT No
FEE No
Yes SUBJECT TO SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RESTRICTION

A new program with 25-49% new content is a significant departure from the institution's existing programs and requires notification prior to implementation.

For an institution on SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RESTRICTION, a new program with 25-49% new content is a significant departure from the institution's existing programs and requires SACSCOC approval prior to implementation (see also New Program – Approval).

- Content is new if it is not currently offered by the institution at the new program's instructional level (associate, baccalaureate, master's, education specialist, or doctoral).
- A determination of the percentage of new content is made by the institution, Not SACSCOC.
- New program notification equally applies to a degree, diploma, certificate, or other for-credit credential.
- If the institution is not currently approved to offer courses or programs at the new program's instructional level, a level change approval is required (e.g., the institution's first courses or programs at the baccalaureate degree level).

What to submit

1. A completed Substantive Change Cover Sheet [PDF].
2. The name of the program (to indicate the discipline).
3. The credential to be awarded (e.g., Associate of Applied Science, Bachelor of Music, Master of Science, etc.).
4. The instructional level (associate, baccalaureate, master's, education specialist, or doctoral), if not obvious from the credential).
5. An affirmative statement that the new program consists of 25-49% new content not previously offered by the institution at the new program's instructional level.
6. The method(s) of delivery: competency-based education, distance education, or face-to-face instruction.
7. The intended implementation date.

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Program Closure

Closing a program requires SACSCOC approval. Approval requires a teach-out plan.

REQUIRES	Approval Exec Council of the Board
COMMITTEE VISIT	No
FEE	No
No	SUBJECT TO SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RESTRICTION

Closure is defined as closed to admission or entry, not the cessation of instruction; i.e., closure date is when students can no longer start, not the date instruction ends. Closure approval ensures the institution has a plan and process to provide students reasonable completion options that minimize disruption and additional costs. Because closure approval is approval of the teach-out process, not the closure per se (i.e., not after the fact), a teach-out plan should be submitted as soon as possible after the decision is made to close.

Program closure includes ending a program at all locations or by all methods of delivery, but also includes ending a student’s completion option at a specific location or by a specific method of delivery. Therefore, program closure approval is required if a program closes

- at a location (on-campus or off-campus instructional site) but continues to be offered at other locations, or
- by a method of delivery but continues to be offered by other methods of delivery.

Program closure is not required for a specialization embedded *within* a discipline-specific program. Depending on an institution’s terminology, a specialization within a program may be called a minor, concentration, cognate, or other similar term.

Because time is of the essence – to provide students maximum time to consider and adapt to alternate completion plans – an institution may generally begin a program teach-out plan after it has been submitted to SACSCOC for approval. This assumes the institution completes a teach-out plan with all due care to address the requirements explained here and in the teach-out plan requirements in Appendix A. If upon review by SACSCOC the teach-out plan is incomplete or inadequate, the teach-out plan may be deferred pending additional information, explanation, or an acceptable revised teach-out plan is provided to SACSCOC. Although the institution may begin a teach-out immediately after submitting it, the closure is not approved until action is taken by the SACSCOC Board of Trustees. Starting and completing a teach-out plan before securing SACSCOC Board approval does not relieve the institution of its obligation to provide an acceptable teach-out plan.

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The teach-out institution(s) – i.e., the institution(s) accepting displaced students from the closing program – may request an exception to Standard 9.4 (institutional credits for an undergraduate degree) and/or Standard 9.5 (institutional credits for a graduate or professional degree) to accommodate students near the end of their program of study. Refer to the Request for a Period of Noncompliance policy for guidance. The institution

closing its program should ensure the teach-out institution(s) are aware of this option and may wish to include it in any teach-out agreement(s) executed pursuant to the closure.



What to submit

A teach-out plan: Submit a teach-out plan using the outline provided in Appendix A for a program closure.

Program Re-open

REQUIRES	Notification
COMMITTEE VISIT	No
FEE	No
No	SUBJECT TO SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RESTRICTION

A closed program may re-open within five years of the closure date by submitting notification. The closure date is the date the program was closed to admission, not necessarily the date of last instruction or the date SACSCOC approved the closure. If more than five years have elapsed, the program is subject to new program notification or approval.



What to submit

1. A completed Substantive Change Cover Sheet [\[PDF\]](#).
2. The name of the program (to include its discipline).
3. The credential of the program (e.g., Diploma, Master of Education, etc.).
4. The instructional level of the program (associate, baccalaureate, master's, education specialist, or doctoral if not obvious from the credential).
5. The closure date (date of last admission) of the program as submitted to SACSCOC for closure approval.

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6. The date SACSCOC approved the closure.
7. The case identification (Case ID) from the SACSCOC closure approval letter or, if there is no Case ID, a copy of the SACSCOC approval letter.
8. A statement of assurance that the institution has adequate instructional space and equipment, financial resources, library and learning/information resources, student support services appropriate to the programs, and faculty members qualified in the programs discipline to support the re-opening of the program.
9. The intended implementation date, i.e., the date new students will matriculate.

Off-campus Instructional Site Notification

(See also Off-campus Instructional Site Definitions and Guidelines.)

REQUIRES	Notification
COMMITTEE VISIT	No
FEE	No
No	SUBJECT TO SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RESTRICTION

An off-campus instructional site at which 25-49% of a program's instruction is delivered requires notification prior to implementation.

Instruction at a site may cross the 25% notification threshold any time after the institution submits notification; the institution does not have to wait for a SACSCOC response to implement (note this applies to site notification only, not to site approval).



What to submit

1. A completed Substantive Change Cover Sheet [PDF].
2. Site name (must be unique, i.e., it cannot be the same as an institution's existing site).
3. The physical address or location of the site (i.e., no post office box numbers).
4. The intended implementation date.

Off-campus Instructional Site Approval (including branch campus)

(See also Off-campus Instructional Site Definitions and Guidelines.)

An off-campus instructional site at which 50% or more of a program's instruction is delivered requires SACSCOC approval prior to implementation.

An off-campus instructional site may qualify as a branch campus; refer to the federally defined branch campus criteria under *Off-campus Instructional Site Definitions and*

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Guidelines. Before submitting a prospectus for approval of branch campus, ensure – and demonstrate in the prospectus – *all* branch campus criteria are met. A site name may not include “branch” or “branch campus” unless approved as a branch campus as defined in policy.

There are two site approval pathways:

- approval by extensive review, and
- approval by limited review.

The pathway available to an institution depends on:

- the number of sites previously approved by extensive review, and
- the status of an institution as explained below for each pathway.

Extensive Review

Subject to SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RESTRICTION

REQUIRES Approval Full Board of Trustees
COMMITTEE VISIT Contingent
FEE Yes
Yes SUBJECT TO SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RESTRICTION

An extensive review has two components:

- an institutional-level review, and
- a site-specific review.

The purpose of the institutional-level review is to ensure institutional capacity and planning to offer courses away from its main campus and to ensure quality across locations. Institutional capacity and planning considers:

- adequacy of faculty, facilities, resources, and academic and student support services at sites;
- sufficient fiscal and administrative capacity to add additional sites;

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- clear academic control of sites;
- regular evaluation of all sites;
- financial stability of the institution;
- engagement in long-range planning for expansion;
- and other factors.

The site-specific review considers

- physical resources including specialized equipment or materials at a site,
- qualifications of faculty at the site,
- adequate financial resources and financial planning for the site,
- adequacy of library and learning/information resource available to students at the site, adequacy of student support services available to student at the site,
- and other factors.

There are two extensive review approval methods:

- ✦ **Approval method one** – Approval of an off-campus instructional site by extensive review method one is required if the institution, at the time a site prospectus is submitted to SACSCOC,
 - has less than two sites approved under the extensive review criteria and process,
—OR—
 - has not successfully completed at least one reaffirmation of accreditation,
—OR—
 - is on SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RESTRICTION.

Approval by the SACSCOC Board of Trustees based on a prospectus review: The institution prepares and submits an off-campus instructional site by extensive review prospectus. The prospectus, in part, addresses the requirements listed above; refer to Appendix A of this document for guidance and requirements. An extensive review prospectus is reviewed by the full SACSCOC Board of Trustees at a regularly scheduled biannual meeting, usually in June and December. Submission due dates are published in this policy and on the SACSCOC website. An institution may submit a single prospectus for up to ten off-campus instructional sites provided program offerings are *identical* across all sites; otherwise, a separate prospectus (or prospectuses) is required for exceptions.

What to submit

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A prospectus: Submit a substantive change prospectus using the outline provided in Appendix A for off-campus instructional site approval by extensive review.

✦ **Approval method two** – Approval by the SACSCOC Board of Trustees based on inclusion and review at reaffirmation: An existing, approved site(s) that was (a) included as an approved site on the Institutional Summary Form submitted as part of the institution’s on-site reaffirmation review and (b) reviewed by the on-site reaffirmation committee to include the site- and institutional-level extensive review requirements, will be considered approved by extensive review after the SACSCOC Board of Trustees takes positive action on the institution’s reaffirmation. Approval method two applies to institutions reaffirmed in 2020 or afterwards.

Note: If an institution is on SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RESTRICTION for a reason(s) related to an off-campus instructional site(s), approval(s) by method two may be postponed while the institution is on restriction.

Sites approved before the extensive review requirement was included in policy in 2020 are not deemed approved by extensive review except as provided by approval method two described above.

Limited Review

Subject to SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RESTRICTION

Approval of an off-campus instructional site by limited review is required if the institution, at the time a site prospectus is submitted to SACSCOC,

- has two or more sites approved under the extensive review criteria and process,
—AND—
- has successfully completed at least one reaffirmation of accreditation• is not on SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RESTRICTION.

—AND—

REQUIRES	Approval Exec Council of the Board
COMMITTEE VISIT	Contingent
FEE	Yes
Yes	SUBJECT TO SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RESTRICTION

Approval by limited review requires approval by the Executive Council of the SACSCOC Board of Trustees. Executive Council reviews occur year round. The prospectus submission due date depends on the planned implementation date; due dates are published in this policy and on the SACSCOC website.

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Limited Review

Subject to SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RESTRICTION

Approval of an off-campus instructional site by limited review is required if the institution, at the time a site prospectus is submitted to SACSCOC,

- has two or more sites approved under the extensive review criteria and process,
—AND—
- has successfully completed at least one reaffirmation of accreditation • is not on SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RESTRICTION.
—AND—

REQUIRES	Approval Exec Council of the Board
COMMITTEE VISIT	Contingent
FEE	Yes
Yes	SUBJECT TO SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RESTRICTION

Approval by limited review requires approval by the Executive Council of the SACSCOC Board of Trustees. Executive Council reviews occur year round. The prospectus submission due date depends on the planned implementation date; due dates are published in this policy and on the SACSCOC website.

An institution on SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RESTRICTION does not have the option of a limited review: all off-campus instructional site approvals are through the extensive review pathway only.

An institution may submit a single prospectus for up to ten off-campus instructional sites provided program offerings are *identical* across all sites; otherwise, a separate prospectus (or prospectuses) is required for exceptions.

What to submit

A prospectus: Submit a substantive change prospectus using the outline provided in Appendix A for off-campus instructional site approval by limited review.

Off-campus Instructional Site Committee Visits

(See also *Committee Visits, International Off-campus Instructional Sites*)

A substantive change committee visit is required if *any* of the following criteria is met at the time an off-campus instructional site is approved:

- the site is a branch campus;

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- the institution has less than three already-approved off-campus instructional sites — i.e., the institution’s first three approved sites each require a visit;
- the institution has not successfully completed at least one reaffirmation of accreditation;
- the institution is on sanction (Warning, Probation, or Probation for Good Cause);
- any of the *International Off-campus Instructional Sites* conditions in the *Committee Visits* section of this policy is met; or
- the institution has not, in the professional judgment of SACSCOC staff, demonstrated effective oversight of off-campus instructional sites or if there is reason to believe the institution may not be able to meet all SACSCOC requirements at the new off-campus instructional site.

A visit, if required, is authorized by the Board of Trustees at the time of approval. The SACSCOC President is also authorized to appoint a substantive change committee to determine compliance with the *Principles of Accreditation*, including verification of personnel, facilities, and resources as asserted by the institution in its application for the additional site.

Exception. An off-campus instructional site approved by the extensive review approval method two, as defined herein, is not subject to a substantive change committee visit; the site would have been subject to review as part of the institution’s reaffirmation of accreditation.

Refer to the committee visits section of this policy for additional information, including additional considerations for visits to international off-campus instructional sites.

Off-campus Instructional Site Name or Address Change

REQUIRES	Notification
COMMITTEE VISIT	No
FEE	No
No	SUBJECT TO SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RESTRICTION

Changing the name or address of an off-campus instructional site requires notification prior to implementation.

Name change: A site name should be unique to the institution (i.e., no duplicate site names). The site name can include “branch” or “branch campus” only if the site has been approved as a branch campus and is on record with SACSCOC as approved as a branch campus. The name of a site should not suggest to students, prospective students, or the public that the site is a separate institution.

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Address change: If the location at which instruction is delivered *is not changing* but the address of the location is changing, then a change of address is necessary. Examples are renaming a street or road, adding a qualifier to a street name, changing a suite or room number, and changing a ZIP code. If the location at which instruction is delivered *is changing*, then that is an off-campus instructional site relocation, not an address change, and is addressed elsewhere in policy.

If the address of a site changes but there is no change to where instruction is delivered, an address change notification is appropriate.



What to submit

1. A completed Substantive Change Cover Sheet [PDF].
2. The current name and address of the site. The name and address must match the name and address on record with SACSCOC. The name and addresses on record can be verified via the institutional portal or via the institutional information available to the public on the SACSCOC website.
3. The new name and/or address of the site (must be unique, i.e., it cannot be the same as an institution's existing site).
4. The intended implementation date (i.e., the effective date) of the change.
5. A statement stipulating the name and/or address change does not include a change of instructional location as described above.

Off-campus Instructional Site Closure

REQUIRES	Approval Exec Council of the Board
COMMITTEE VISIT	No
FEE	No
No	SUBJECT TO SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RESTRICTION

Closing an off-campus instructional site requires SACSCOC approval. Closure approval equally applies to

- notified sites and
- approved sites.

All closure approvals require an acceptable teach-out plan. For SACSCOC, a site is considered closed as of the date the institution stops admitting students to the site; closure is *not* the date of last instruction.

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Closure is defined this way because SACSCOC's approval is of the teach-out process, not the closure per se, to help ensure students have reasonable opportunities to complete their program of study as originally planned at initial matriculation and with minimal disruption and additional costs. Because closure approval is for the teach-out process, not the closure per se (i.e., not after the fact), a teach-out plan should be submitted as soon as possible after the decision is made to close. Institutional, system, or state definitions of closure must be reconciled by the institution with the SACSCOC definition.

If a program will no longer be offered at a site but the site will remain open for other programs, see program closure approval requirements under Program Closure.

A teach-out plan is due to SACSCOC as soon as possible after the institution decides to close a site.

Because time is of the essence – to provide students maximum time to consider and adapt to alternate completion plans – an institution may generally begin a site teach-out plan after it has been submitted to SACSCOC for approval. This assumes the institution completes a teach-out plan with all due care to address the requirements explained here and in the teach-out plan requirements in Appendix A. If upon review by SACSCOC the teach-out plan is incomplete or inadequate, the teach-out plan may be deferred pending additional information, explanation, or an acceptable revised teach-out plan is provided to SACSCOC. Although the institution may begin a teach-out immediately after submitting it, the closure is not approved until action is taken by the SACSCOC Board of Trustees. Starting and completing a teach-out plan before securing SACSCOC Board approval does not relieve the institution of its obligation to provide an acceptable teach-out plan.

The teach-out institution(s) – i.e., the institution(s) accepting displaced students from the closing off-campus instructional site – may request an exception to Standard 9.4 (institutional credits for an undergraduate degree) and/or Standard 9.5 (institutional credits for a graduate or professional degree) to accommodate students near the end of their program of study. Refer to the *Request for a Period of Noncompliance* policy for guidance. The institution closing its off-campus instructional site should ensure the teach-out

institution(s) are aware of this option and may wish to include it in any teach-out agreement(s) executed pursuant to the closure.



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A teach-out plan: Submit a teach-out plan using the outline provided in Appendix A for an off-campus instructional site closure.

Off-campus Instructional Site Re-open

REQUIRES	
Notification	
COMMITTEE VISIT	
No	
FEE	
No	
No	SUBJECT TO SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RESTRICTION

An off-campus instructional site previously approved for closure may be re-opened within five years of the closure date by submitting notification. The closure date is the date the site was closed to admission, not necessarily the date of last instruction or the date SACSCOC approved the closure. If more than five years have elapsed, the site is subject to notification or approval as a new site. The name of a site may be changed concurrent with its re-opening, but the address of a site when re-opened must be the same as the address on record with the site was approved for closure.

Notes:

- A re-opened site is ineligible for relocation until at least one full academic term of instruction has been offered and completed at the site with students enrolled after the site was re-opened.
- A re-opened site is subject to review and visit by a peer review committee at the institution's next accreditation reviews.



What to submit

1. A completed Substantive Change Cover Sheet [PDF].
2. The name and address of the site as it appears on the SACSCOC letter approving the site's closure.
3. The date SACSCOC approved the site's closure and either (1) the closure's case identification number (Case ID) found on the closure approval letter or (2) a copy of the closure approval letter.
4. The name of the site upon its re-opening.
5. The intended implementation date (i.e., the effective date) of the re-opening.
6. An affirmative statement by the institution
 - a. assuring the site remains appropriate for instruction and conducive for the specific type of instruction to be delivered at the site, including any specialized instructional equipment, materials, laboratories and supplies, and instructional support materials necessary; and

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services and library and learning/information resources appropriate to the instruction offered at the site.

Persons Responsible

- President, vice presidents, and deans - report institutional changes to the institutional liaison.
- Institutional liaison - monitors all institutional changes reported and provides training on substantive change as needed.

Process

- The institutional liaison is a member of the OCtech Curriculum Committee, which meets as required each academic year. Although non-voting, the institutional liaison provides pertinent information regarding substantive change to the committee and the academic leadership at the institution. In addition, as a member of the committee, the institutional liaison is aware of any approved significant curriculum and/or program changes that may require notification or approval to SACSCOC.
- For each change identified as substantive, the supervising vice president will assign responsibility to appropriate divisional personnel to work with the institutional liaison to complete the required materials for submission (e.g., prospectus, faculty rosters, and letters).
- The institutional liaison will send completed substantive change documents to SACSCOC following approval by the Vice President for Academic Affairs and the President.