# Substantive Change Policy: 8.11

# Substantive Change Procedure: 08:0405

The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) [defines a substantive change](https://sacscoc.org/app/uploads/2019/08/SubstantiveChange.pdf) as “a significant modification or expansion in the nature and scope of an accredited institution.” There are two major types of substantive change: institutional-related substantive change and academic-related substantive change.

All substantive changes must be submitted to SACSCOC by the college’s Accreditation Liaison either as a notification or as an approval with a completed prospectus, depending on the nature and complexity of the change involved. Substantive changes requiring a prospectus must be reviewed and approved by SACSCOC before those changes can be implemented at R-CCC.

According to SACSCOC, a substantive change requiring approval by the full Board of Trustees (which meets biannually), to be implemented after the date of the Board meeting, must be submitted as follows

• March 15 for review at the Board’s biannual meeting in June of the same calendar year, and

• September 1 for review at the Board’s biannual meeting in December of the same calendar year.

For a substantive change requiring approval by the Executive Council of the Board of Trustees (which meets year-round), the submission deadlines are

• January 1 for changes to be implemented July 1 through December 31 of the same calendar

year, and

• July 1 for changes to be implemented January 1 through June 30 of the subsequent calendar

year.

Substantive change requiring notification only can be submitted any time before implementation. The college does not have to receive a response from SACSCOC before implementing.

Below are some of the more common substantive changes:

*NOTE: This list is not exhaustive.*

* 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 credential).

* 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. Substantive Change

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* Entering into a cooperative academic arrangement.
* 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.

* Substantially increase or decreasing the number of clock hours or credit hours awarded or

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.

## R-CCC Procedure

To ensure the college’s compliance with SACSCOC’s and R-CCC’s *Substantive Change Policy*, all curricular and student support proposals must be submitted through the **Curriculum and Student Services Committee**, using the **Change Request Form**. The form includes a section for indicating whether or not the proposal qualifies as a substantive change. The employee making the proposal must provide a rationale defending his or her judgement. Ultimately, the accreditation liaison will make the final decision regarding SACSCOC notification or approval requests related to substantive change.

### Substantive Change Proposals

If a proposal is determined to meet the substantive change criteria, the senior academic administrator conducts a final review of the proposal for content accuracy and forwards the curriculum change(s) to the president for consideration and approval at the next scheduled President’s Cabinet meeting.

The president must sign off on all substantive changes/curriculum changes prior to review by the R-CCC Board of Trustees. If approved by the Board of Trustees, the substantive change/curriculum change is submitted to the North Carolina Community College System (NCCCS) as needed. The NCCCS does not approve all potential substantive change proposals; however, the system office does approve new programs and program terminations. The president informs senior staff of this submission so that each senior staff member can inform key members of their staff. The senior academic administrator is responsible for submitting all NCCCS-required documentation and approval forms.

If not approved by the NCCCS, the president determines if the substantive change/curriculum change should be resubmitted based upon their feedback. If resubmitted and approved, the president notifies senior staff so that they may notify key members of their staff. The vice president of instruction and student services and accreditation liaison notifies institutional research and the registrar.

The vice president of instruction and student services and accreditation liaison provides notification of NC State Board approval and appropriate documentation (e.g., letter, application, plan, prospectus, etc.) to the accrediting agencies. This documentation includes the planned implementation date of the substantive change/curriculum change. This date is determined based on the type of change and the college’s ability to effectively implement the change. Implementation dates will range between 3 to 12 months after submission to the accrediting agencies.

The vice president of instruction and student services notifies the registrar about curriculum change(s) approvals so that college curriculum may be updated. These changes are then incorporated into the electronic program of study and the *R-CCC College Catalog*.

The director of financial aid notifies the U.S. Department of Education and the Veterans Administration to seek financial aid eligibility for the substantive change/curriculum change. Finally, the vice president of instruction and student services and accreditation liaison notifies all stakeholders (admissions, advising, division directors, associate dean, AVP of student services, and faculty and staff) that the substantive change/curriculum change has/have been approved. The tentative effective date for implementation is also communicated during this notification.

Upon receipt of approval from both SACSCOC and NCCCS (as needed), the College notifies external stakeholders and implements the substantive change/curriculum change based on the appropriate implementation date determined earlier.

The curriculum process at Roanoke-Chowan Community College is driven by faculty and supported by academic administration.

For changes to be effective in a fall term, the substantive change proposal must be reviewed by the Curriculum and Student Services Committeeby **October 1**. Subsequently, the change will need approval of the President’s Cabinet and the R-CCC Board of Trustees by no later than **December** so that a notification can be sent to SACSCOC by **January 2**.

The System Office will process applications received by the first working day of the month within 90 days of submission.

*Example Timeline*:

March 1 -- Application received by System Office

April Board Meeting -- System Office presents to Board "For Future Action"

May Board Meeting -- System Office presents to Board "For Action"

Any questions about the Substantive Change procedure should be directed to the vice president of instruction and student services and accreditation liaison.