



Substantive Change Policy

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I. Policy Statement

Dalton State College (DSC) is responsible for complying with the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges ([SACSCOC](#)) policy statement, [Substantive Change Policy and Procedures](#), as a condition of continued regional accreditation and reaffirmation. SACSCOC defines substantive change as “a significant modification or expansion of the nature and scope of an accredited institution” (SACSCOC, 2020, p. 1).

II. Background

Per its policy statement on substantive change, SACSCOC requires Dalton State “to have a policy and procedure to ensure that all substantive changes are reported to the Commission in a timely fashion” (p. 1). This requirement also complies with SACSCOC Standard 14.2 (Substantive Change) of *The Principles of Accreditation: Foundations for Quality Enhancement, 2018*. This institutional policy outlines the types of substantive changes, appropriate actions for applying for the SACSCOC approval changes, and the roles and responsibilities of the College in applying this policy.

III. Audience and Impact

Substantive change decisions and actions at Dalton State directly impact students, faculty, and staff because the College’s accreditation and reaffirmation status are associated with the institution’s compliance with this policy.

IV. Exclusions or Exceptions

There are no exclusions or exceptions to this policy.

V. Reporting Substantive Changes

The time period and required information for reporting substantive changes vary depending on the extent and type of change. All changes to program curriculum, course delivery method and type, location of offerings, and required credit hours must be reported to Dalton State's SACSCOC liaison, with sufficient notice before planned implementation to determine if reporting is necessary, and to allow for the completion of forms and approval and review by SACSCOC. Any questions about reporting should be directed either to the Office of the Provost and Academic Affairs or the Dalton State SACSCOC liaison.

The full list of substantive changes is detailed in the "Reporting the Various Types of Substantive Change" section of the *Substantive Change for SACSCOC Accredited Institutions Policy Statement* (<http://sacscoc.org/pdf/081705/SubstantiveChange.pdf>), which has been included with this policy as Appendix 1.

For further information on definitions and terms associated with reporting substantive changes that comply with SACSCOC policy, refer to the "Glossary of Terms" section of the *Substantive Change for SACSCOC Accredited Institutions Policy Statement* (Appendix 1).

VI. Institutional Action and Responsibilities

Institutional decisions that would be considered a substantive change can be determined when discussed in advance of any major course of action. It is important to recognize that substantive change can occur at the program, departmental, or institutional level. For a full list of the different types of substantive changes, the specific procedure to be used for each, their respective approval/notification requirements, and their reporting timelines, see the "Reporting the Various Types of Substantive Change" section of the *Substantive Change for SACSCOC Accredited Institutions Policy Statement* (<http://sacscoc.org/pdf/081705/SubstantiveChange.pdf>, Appendix 1).

Responsibilities

The President's Executive Cabinet and other academic officers are primarily responsible for being mindful of the substantive change policy in order to inform the College's accreditation liaison at the earliest point in the development of a proposal or plan that may constitute a substantive change for DSC. Senior administrative and academic officers will provide the accreditation liaison with any data or information necessary to comply with the SACSCOC policy as needed. The accreditation liaison is also responsible for:

- Maintaining and updating the College's policy on substantive change in keeping with SACSCOC policy changes as needed;
- Maintaining a file of all accreditation materials related to substantive change;
- Keeping senior administrative and academic officers up to date on the substantive change policy;
- Publishing on the [Institutional Research website](#) information on the College's actions, procedures, and documents regarding substantive change;
- Collaborating with the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs and deans to determine whether a proposed change is substantive and what action may be required by the institution when a change is substantive;
- Notifying SACSCOC in advance of substantive changes and program developments in accord with the substantive change policies of the Commission;
- Submitting the appropriate notice, prospectus, or application with SACSCOC; and
- Coordinating with SACSCOC and College officials on any required follow-up action.

VII. Assistance with Substantive Change Policy

The Dalton State College accreditation liaison will provide assistance and all necessary and required information to academic schools/departments involved in the substantive change to ensure compliance. This will include forms and instructions involved in the substantive change to ensure the use of the most current reporting documentation.

VIII. Non-Compliance

If Dalton State fails to comply with the *Substantive Change for SACSCOC Accredited Institutions Policy Statement*, the institution could be subject to special review and lose its federal financial aid (Title IV) funding or be required by the U.S. Department of Education to reimburse money received by the institution for programs related to an unreported substantive change. In addition, SACSCOC may impose a sanction on the institution or remove it from the Commission's membership.

IX. Review

The Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness will be responsible for reviewing DSC's *Substantive Change Policy* through the institutional annual and assessment reporting processes or more often as may be needed.

X. SACSCOC Policies and Regulations

The following SACSCOC documents and [Website](#) are necessary for keeping up to date all information requirements, announcements, and documentation related to substantive change:

- a. *SACSCOC Principles of Accreditation: Foundation for Quality Enhancement, Standard 14.2* (<http://www.sacscoc.org/pdf/2018PrinciplesOfAccreditation.pdf>).
- b. *Substantive Change for SACSCOC Accredited Institutions Policy Statement* (<http://www.sacscoc.org/pdf/081705/SubstantiveChange.pdf>).
- c. *SACSCOC Substantive Change – Reporting the Various Types of Substantive Change* (<https://sacscoc.org/pdf/081705/SubstantiveChange.pdf>)
- d. *Documentation Templates in Preparation for a Substantive Change Committee Visit to an Institution* (<http://www.sacscoc.org/SubstantiveChangeCommitteeVisit.asp>).
- e. SACSCOC Substantive Change site (<https://sacscoc.org/accrediting-standards/substantive-changes/>)

DSC Documentation

Dalton State Substantive Changes Submitted to SACSCOC with Associated Notices and Responses

Dalton State College went through a major substantive change in 1998 when [SACSCOC approved a change of mission from a Level I institution to a Level II institution](#), enabling the College to begin offering baccalaureate-degree programs, and eventually becoming a 4-Year College institution. The following provides a complete accounting of Dalton State's submitted substantive changes to SACSCOC and associated notices and responses. They also provide documentation to show Dalton State's compliance with [SACSCOC Policy](#) and [Standard \(14.2\)](#) on Substantive Change.

DSC Substantive Changes, Prospectuses, and Updates

1. [Substantive Change Prospectus \(Off-site Facility at Ellijay, Gilmer County, Georgia\), 2010](#)
2. [Substantive Change Prospectus \(Off-site Facility at Ellijay, Gilmer County, Georgia\) – Response to Additional Information Requested by SACSCOC, 2010](#)
3. [Substantive Change Prospectus \(WebBAS Online Degree Initiative\), 2004](#)
4. [Substantive Change Prospectus Application Update \(Approved membership at Level II\), 2000](#)
5. [Substantive Change Application \(Change of Mission – Level I to Level II\), 1998](#)
6. [Addendum to Substantive Change Prospectus \(Consolidation of Health Occupations\), 1996](#)
7. [Substantive Change Prospectus \(Consolidation of Health Occupations\), 1995](#)

Program Initiatives

1. [Dalton State application to offer BAS Online Degree Program, 2004](#)

DSC Notifications and Correspondence

1. [Notification to add Intercollegiate Athletics to campus programming, 2018](#)
2. [Notification to rename off-campus site, the Gilmer Center, as the Dalton State College Gilmer Campus, 2017](#)
3. [Notification about entering into an Agreement with the Georgia Film Academy, 2017](#)
4. [Notification of Intent to offer Coursework through the USG eMajor Consortium, 2013](#)
5. [Notification to close Department of Continuing Education, 2011](#)
6. [Notification to open an Off-site Facility at Ellijay, Gilmer County, 2009](#)

SACSCOC Responses and Requests

1. [Acknowledgement of Gilmer Center Name Change, 2018](#)
2. [Response to Accepting Georgia Film Academy Credits at DSC, 2018](#)
3. [Notification Approving eMajor BS Criminal Justice, 2015](#)
4. [Acknowledgement of Receipt of Letter of Intent to offer Coursework through USG eMajor Consortium, 2013](#)
5. [Response to Closing of Department of Continuing Education, 2011](#)
6. [Approval of Gilmer County Center \(Campus\), 2011](#)
7. [Response to DSC Notification regarding becoming an Affiliate Institution of the USG eCore Program, 2011](#)
8. [Request for Additional Information Regarding Gilmer Center Substantive Change Prospectus, 2010](#)
9. [Approval for WebBAS Online Degree Program, 2004](#)
10. [Approval of DSC Membership at Level II, 1999](#)
11. [Approval to Consolidate Health Occupations, 1996](#)