



Commission on Colleges
Southern Association of Colleges and Schools
1866 Southern Lane
Decatur, Georgia 30033-4097

UNREPORTED SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE

Policy Statement

Current Standards and Policies Addressing Unreported Substantive Change

The *Principles of Accreditation* requires an institution to comply with Comprehensive Standard 3.12.1 which reads as follows:

The institution notifies the Commission of changes in accordance with the substantive change policy and, when required, seeks approval prior to the initiation of changes.

The Commission on Colleges' policy "Reaffirmation of Accreditation and Subsequent Reports" states:

Unreported Substantive Changes Discovered or Reported during Reaffirmation

If an institution fails to report a substantive change that requires prior approval or prior notification and that unreported substantive change is discovered during the off-site or the on-site review, the committee will take the following actions:

If discovered during the off-site review. The Off-Site Review Committee will mark CS 3.12.1 out of compliance. The institution will be able to address this in its Focused Report and before the on-site review.

If discovered during the on-site review. The On-Site Reaffirmation Committee will mark CS 3.12.1 out of compliance and write a recommendation. The institution will address the recommendation in its response to the Commission.

Commission Procedures for the Review of Unreported Substantive Changes Requiring Notification or Approval Prior to Implementation

Unreported substantive changes requiring prior notification or prior approval come to the attention of the Commission through two means: (1) information discovered by the institution or by the Commission between periods of formal review by the Commission and (2) information discovered during an off-site or an on-site review by the Commission. The procedure for such unreported substantive changes is as follows:

1. Upon discovery, the Institution formally notifies the President of the Commission on Colleges of the unreported substantive change. The letter of notification must include the date of the original implementation of the change. A completed prospectus/application should accompany the letter for cases outlined in Procedure 1 of the Commission's policy entitled "Substantive Change for Accredited Institutions of the Commission on Colleges." (See Commission web page at <http://www.sacscoc.org/policies.asp> and then click onto the policy itself.)

2. Commission staff will review the substantive change notification; the prospectus, if required; and any additional information that may have been requested. Following analysis, Commission staff will recommend to the President of the Commission one of the following actions: (1) approve the program, with or without a site visit; (2) refer the prospectus to the Commission for review at its next meeting (June or December); or (3) acknowledge receipt of the notification and indicate that the change will be included in the scope of the institution's accreditation.

3. The policy issue of failure to report a substantive change automatically will be forwarded to the Commission for action at its *next meeting*, if the change required prior approval. If the change required prior notification only, the issue of failure to report will be addressed in correspondence from the President of the Commission.

4. If the unreported substantive change requiring prior notification or prior approval is discovered during the institution's off- site or on-site review of reaffirmation, the Commission will follow its policy "Reaffirmation of Accreditation and Subsequent Reports" as described on page 1. If it is discovered during an on-site review by another type of Commission committee, the review committee will write a recommendation. The recommendation will ask the institution to report the change to the Commission and to provide in its response to the Committee Report a statement describing internal procedures established that would ensure future substantive change reporting and evidence that the procedures have been implemented. The institution's response will be forwarded to the Commission for action on failure to report a substantive change.

Non-Compliance with Reporting Requirements

If an institution fails to follow the substantive change policy and procedures of the Commission on Colleges, the accreditation of the institution may be placed in jeopardy, the institution's case may be referred to the Commission for the imposition of a sanction, and the institution may lose its Title IV funding or be required by the U.S. Department of Education to reimburse it for money received by the for programs related to the unreported substantive change.

Endorsed: Executive Council, February 2008
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