

**Austin Peay State  
University**

## **Substantive Change**

### **POLICIES**

**Issued:** May 13, 2022

**Responsible Official:** Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs

**Responsible Office:** Office of Academic Affairs

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### **Policy Statement**

It is the policy of Austin Peay State University to adhere to accreditation standards of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (“SACSCOC” or “Commission”).

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### **Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to comply with the substantive change requirements of SACSCOC. This policy is applicable to all units, departments, centers and campuses.

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### **Procedures**

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#### **Background Information**

- A. Austin Peay State University is accredited by the SACSCOC. The accreditation provides public documentation of institutional quality and enables the University to seek eligibility to participate in federal programs.
- B. In addition to five-year and ten-year reviews by the Commission, the University is required to follow substantive change procedures established by SACSCOC that include notification and approval by the SACSCOC prior to initiating

a substantive change. “Substantive Change” means a significant modification or expansion of the nature and scope of an accredited institution as defined by SACSCOC. Failure to comply with the substantive change procedures of the Commission can result in serious consequences that include suspending the activity until SACSCOC approval is received, requiring the University to pay back financial aid dispersed to students, placing the University on sanctions or removing the University’s accreditation entirely.

C. Substantive changes include but are not limited to:

1. Entering into a cooperative academic agreement
2. commencing or expanding off-campus sites or distance education programs
3. adding an additional method of delivery to an existing program
4. expanding programs at the current credential level
5. initiating coursework or a program – including a certificate, diploma, degree, or other generally recognized credit-bearing program - at a different level than previously approved or authorized by SACSCOC
6. initiating a program designed for prior learning (requiring students to possess prior learning as a condition of admission)
7. changing from clock hours to credit hours
8. changing the length of a program by 25% and increasing or decreasing time to completion
9. closing a program or reopening a previously terminated or inactivated program
10. relocating an off-campus site, main campus or a center
11. significantly altering the mission of the institution
12. changing governance, ownership, control or legal status

- D. Certain substantive changes require prior notification to SACSCOC. Other substantive changes require submission of a substantive change prospectus prior to the implementation of the substantive change. Many substantive changes require on-site committee reviews by SACSCOC. In consultation with the SACSCOC policies and staff, the University's Accreditation Liaison determines the applicability of SACSCOC Substantive Change policy to the above described activities.
- E. The University is dedicated to the expansion of academic opportunities through the development and offering of programs and courses offered off-site or by electronic means, in support of the University's mission. The University's SACSCOC Accreditation Liaison will be consulted, using established applicable university procedures and forms, prior to beginning a process that results in a substantive change. Accordingly, the University's SACSCOC Accreditation Liaison is responsible for reporting any substantive changes to the Commission.

### **Monitoring and Reporting Changes**

- A. The University has developed procedures for departments and units to follow when developing and delivering College courses off-site, electronically, or for a new program and program level, program closures and contracts or consortial agreements for instruction. Prior to developing and delivering University courses off-site, electronically or for a new program and program level, please consult these procedures. These procedures can be found by contacting the University's SACSCOC Accreditation Liaison.
- B. Depending on the specific nature of the change, all changes must be reported to SACSCOC for notification and approval in a timely manner. All submissions will be coordinated through the University's SACSCOC Accreditation Liaison. Utilizing established applicable university procedures and forms, units or departments initiating a substantive change must notify the University's SACSCOC Accreditation Liaison as soon as the change is considered.
- C. All questions about whether a change is substantive should be directed to the University's SACSCOC Accreditation Liaison for guidance.

D. All correspondence with SACSCOC will be submitted by the University President or the University's SACSCOC Accreditation Liaison.

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**Links**

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**APSU Policies**      <https://www.apsu.edu/policy>

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**Revision Dates**

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APSU Policy 2:018 – Rev.: May 13, 2022  
APSU Policy 2:018 (previously 2:019) – Rev.: March 8, 2017  
APSU Policy 2:018 – Issued: July 21, 2016

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**Subject Areas:**

| Academic                            | Finance | General | Human Resources | Information Technology | Student Affairs |
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**Approved**

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President: signature on file

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