



---

EAST TENNESSEE STATE  
UNIVERSITY

---

## **Substantive Change Policy**

# **Policy Name: Substantive Change Policy**

## **Policy Purpose**

This policy specifies that all substantive changes regarding the nature and scope of East Tennessee State University (ETSU) are reported to the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) in accordance with defined standards and federal regulations.

## **Applicability**

This policy is applicable to ETSU faculty and academic administration.

## **Responsible Official, Office, and Interpretation**

The Provost is responsible for the review and revision of this policy. For questions about this policy, please contact the Office of the Provost. The Office of the Provost in conjunction with the Office of University Counsel has the final authority to interpret this policy.

## **Defined Terms**

*A defined term has a specific meaning within the context of this policy.*

### Substantive Change

A significant modification or expansion of the nature and scope of an accredited institution.

### Accreditation Liaison

The designated ETSU employee responsible for the duties described in the SACSCOC Guideline: [The Accreditation Liaison](#), as noted in the individual's ETSU position description.

### Institutional Officer

An ETSU academic and/or administrative officer who, by virtue of their position, can initiate, modify, review, approve, and allocate resources toward a Substantive Change.

# Policy Name: Substantive Change Policy

## Policy

### 1. Compliance with SACSCOC Policy and Procedures.

ETSU maintains compliance with the current version of SACSCOC's *Substantive Change Policy and Procedures* as published on the SACSCOC [website](#). Implementation of a Substantive Change at ETSU will not occur until the institution notifies SACSCOC of its intention and/or receives approval, as appropriate.

### 2. Scope.

This policy applies to all institutional changes that may be considered a Substantive Change.

### 3. Designated Responsibility.

#### 3.1. ETSU's Accreditation Liaison is responsible for:

- 3.1.1. Providing guidance and information about Substantive Change to university personnel;
- 3.1.2. Reviewing proposed changes to determine whether action is required;
- 3.1.3. Initiating the reporting and completion of required SACSCOC notification and/or approval documentation for a Substantive Change upon receipt of information from an Institutional Officer;
- 3.1.4. Assembling the documentation required to meet SACSCOC policies and standards for completeness and appropriateness;
- 3.1.5. Submitting necessary information to SACSCOC regarding the Substantive Change;
- 3.1.6. Notifying the appropriate university personnel when the institution is notified by SACSCOC that a Substantive Change has been acknowledged, approved, denied, or if additional materials are necessary;
- 3.1.7. Coordinating with SACSCOC and the appropriate university personnel regarding any required actions or follow up activities;
- 3.1.8. Maintaining information on Substantive Changes submitted by the university to SACSCOC; and
- 3.1.9. Updating this policy as relevant SACSCOC policies or requirements change.

**Policy Effective Date:** 3/24/ 2017 • **Policy Revised Effective Date:** 11/7/24  
**Procedures Effective Date:** 3/24/2017 • **Procedures Revised:** 11/7/24

## Policy Name: Substantive Change Policy

- 3.2. ETSU's Institutional Officers are responsible for:
  - 3.2.1. Recognizing potential Substantive Changes;
  - 3.2.2. Notifying ETSU's Accreditation Liaison at the earliest point possible of proposals/actions that may be considered a Substantive Change; and
  - 3.2.3. Ensuring that the Accreditation Liaison is provided timely, accurate information and any documentation needed for the Substantive Change submission.

## Procedures

### 1. Notification.

At the earliest stage of consideration, the Institutional Officer informs the Accreditation Liaison of the potential Substantive Change. In some cases, Substantive Changes necessitate submission of required information by a specified date in order to be implemented in a certain timeframe. In some cases, advance notification of at least twelve months is required.

### 2. Review of Proposed Changes.

The Accreditation Liaison reviews the potential Substantive Change and determines if SACSCOC notification and/or approval are required. If required, the Accreditation Liaison:

- 2.1. Works closely with the Institutional Officer to develop a submission that adheres to SACSCOC requirements,
- 2.2. Submits the required documentation to SACSCOC, and
- 2.3. Communicates the SACSCOC decision to the appropriate university personnel upon receipt from SACSCOC.

### 3. Periodic Review.

Institutional Officers review their units' internal processes periodically to ensure compliance with this Substantive Change policy. If a Substantive Change that has been implemented without the required SACSCOC notification or approval is discovered, the Institutional Officer notifies the Accreditation Liaison immediately, and the Accreditation Liaison then notifies SACSCOC of the change as directed by the SACSCOC *Substantive Change Policy and Procedures*. NOTE: Some SACSCOC standards require a published

## **Policy Name: Substantive Change Policy**

institutional policy or procedure. This policy is in place to comply in part with the institution's responsibility to meet SACSCOC Standard 14.2: Substantive Change.

## **Applicable Forms and Websites**

N/A

## **Authority and Revisions**

**Authority:** TCA § 49-8-203, et seq.; SACSCOC *Substantive Change Policy and Procedures* (available at <https://sacscoc.org/accrediting-standards/substantive-changes/>).

**Previous Policy:** N/A

The ETSU Board of Trustees is charged with policy making pursuant to TCA § 49-8-203, et seq. On March 24, 2017, the Board delegated its authority to ETSU's President to establish certain policies and procedures for educational program and other operations of the University, including this policy. The delegation of authority and required process for revision to this policy can be found on the [Policy Development and Rule Making Policy webpage](#).

To suggest a revision to this policy, please contact the responsible official indicated in this policy. Before a substantive change to the policy section may take effect, the requested changes must be: (1) approved by the responsible office; (2) reviewed by the Office of University Counsel for legal sufficiency; (3) posted for public comment; (4) approved by either Academic Council or University Council; and (5) approved by ETSU's President.