



Belmont University

Substantive Change Submissions

Policy Statement

Institutional Obligations

1. Ensure that any substantive change proposals are consistent with Belmont's mission, vision and values.
2. Ensure that any substantive change proposals fulfill a demonstrable need within our community.
3. Ensure that substantive change proposals meet the SACSCOC procedures and timeline for proper approval or notification prior to the changes taking effect at the institution.

Definition: According to SACSCOC, substantive changes are any significant modification or expansion of the nature and scope of an accredited institution. Changes of this nature will require, at minimum, notification to the Commission, and more than likely, approval from SACSCOC prior to the implementation of the changes. Substantive changes include:

- Any change in the established mission or objectives of the institution
- Any change in legal status, form of control, or ownership of the institution
- The addition of courses or programs that represent a significant departure, either in content or method of delivery, from those that were offered when the institution was last evaluated
- The addition of courses or programs of study at a degree or credential level different from that which is included in the institution's current accreditation or reaffirmation.
- A change from clock hours to credit hours
- A substantial increase in the number of clock or credit hours awarded for successful completion of a program
- The establishment of an additional location geographically apart from the main campus at which the institution offers at least 50% of an educational program.
- The establishment of a branch campus
- Closing a program, off-campus site, branch campus or institution
- Entering into a collaborative academic arrangement that includes only the initiation of a dual or joint academic program with another institution
- Acquiring another institution or a program or location of another institution
- Adding a permanent location at a site where the institution is conducting a teach-out program for a closed institution
- Entering into a contract by which an entity not eligible for Title IV funding offers 25% or more of one or more of the accredited institution's programs

(adapted from SACSCOC Policy Statement on Substantive Change for SACSCOC Accredited Institutions)

Overview: Substantive changes may be non-curricular, pertaining to structural aspects of the institution (e.g., mission and vision, adjustments to the number of campuses or branch locations, or agreements with outside entities that impact the operation of the university). Substantive changes may also be curricular in nature, including the addition of courses or programs that are significantly different than current offerings. As an institution accredited at the highest level of degree offerings, Level VI, all types of substantive changes must meet the current submission deadlines for SACSCOC approval of Procedure 1 changes:

- January 1 for implementation between July 1 and December 31 of the same year.
- July 1 for implementation between January 1 and June 30 of the following year.

Adherence to the timelines established by SACSCOC for substantive changes is necessary and compulsory to remain in compliance with accreditation standards, specifically Comprehensive Standard 3.12.1, Substantive Change Procedures and Policy. The procedures for meeting the submission deadlines for curricular and non-curricular substantive changes are discussed in this policy statement. If a substantive change proposal is not able to meet the established institutional and SACSCOC timelines, the implementation date will be delayed to comply with the SACSCOC Policy Statement on Substantive Change for SACSCOC Accredited Institutions.

Curricular Proposals: Like all curricular proposals, substantive change proposals that pertain to curriculum must be reviewed and approved through the established University catalog and curriculum procedures. The proposals are reviewed at the college level before being reviewed at the University level by the Undergraduate and Graduate Catalog and Curriculum Committees. If the proposal is approved by the committees, it continues through the approval process; first by the Faculty Senate and finally by the Board of Trustees, the University's governing body.

Once approved by the University's Board, curricular proposals that are substantive in nature must then be reviewed and approved by the SACSCOC before the changes may take effect. This additional step in the approval process means that substantive change proposals must be prepared well in advance of the desired implementation date.

The University's Catalog and Curriculum Committees review curricular changes during the fall and the spring semesters. With bi-annual meetings, it is possible to have substantive curricular changes approved in both semesters, provided proper adherence to the SACSCOC notification and approval processes. The following timeline outlines Belmont University's approval processes for substantive curricular change proposals.

Fall Semester Submissions

<u>Date</u>	<u>Action</u>	<u>Responsible Entity</u>
Friday before Labor Day	Proposals & Curriculum Change Impact Statements Due to Catalog & Curriculum Committees	Programs making curriculum change proposals.
Friday after Labor Day	Curriculum Proposal Review Begins	Undergraduate & Graduate level Catalog & Curriculum Committees
October – November	Decisions (approval/denial) rendered on curriculum proposals	Undergraduate & Graduate level Catalog & Curriculum Committees
Monday after Thanksgiving	Faculty Senate reviews and acts on curricular proposals approved by the Catalog & Curriculum Committees	Faculty Senate
First Friday in December	University Board of Trustees reviews and acts on curricular proposals approved by the Faculty Senate	Belmont University Board of Trustees
Before December 31	Substantive Curricular Change Proposals Submitted to SACSCOC	Accreditation Liaison
* Any substantive curricular changes submitted during the Fall review cycle will have a target implementation date on or after the start of the next academic year.		

Spring Semester Submissions

<u>Date</u>	<u>Action</u>	<u>Responsible Entity</u>
Friday before MLK, Jr. Day	Proposals & Curriculum Change Impact Statements Due to Catalog & Curriculum Committees	Programs making curriculum change proposals.
Friday after MLK, Jr. Day	Curriculum Proposal Review Begins	Undergraduate & Graduate level Catalog & Curriculum Committees
February – March	Decisions (approval/denial) rendered on curriculum proposals	Undergraduate & Graduate level Catalog & Curriculum Committees
First two Mondays in April	Faculty Senate reviews and acts on curricular proposals approved by the Catalog & Curriculum Committees	Faculty Senate
Third Friday in April	University Board of Trustees reviews and acts on curricular proposals approved by the Faculty Senate	Belmont University Board of Trustees
Before June 30	Substantive Curricular Change Proposals Submitted to SACSCOC	Accreditation Liaison
* Any substantive curricular changes submitted during the Spring review cycle will have a target implementation date after July 1 of the next year.		

Notes on the Substantive Change Approval Timeline:

- The University Catalog is updated annually. All curricular changes take effect when the new catalog is released in the summer prior the start of the academic year, regardless of which review cycle the proposal was approved.
- Once the substantive change request is submitted to SACSCOC, the program may be advertised on the University website for the appropriate college as “Pending Approval from SACS,” and updated accordingly once the Commission’s decision is received.

Non-curricular Proposals: Substantive changes of a non-curricular nature will require vision and forethought, to include substantial planning and several levels of institutional approvals, well before the changes are implemented. Changes of this nature will involve the University's senior administration, which includes our SACSCOC Accreditation Liaison, currently Dr. Thomas Burns, Provost. When changes of this nature arise, the Accreditation Liaison will consult with SACSCOC to determine if the change is substantive, signifying the need for the Commission's approval prior to implementation. It is the responsibility of the Accreditation Liaison to remain current on SACSCOC policies and timelines related to substantive changes to ensure that we comply with the Commission's approval process.

Effective Date and Notification to University Community: The effective date of this policy is January 1, 2017. Committees, programs, departments and colleges impacted by the substantive change process were informed of the pending changes to the approval timeline during the Fall 2016 semester. A copy of this policy is available on the Faculty Resources page of the Office of the Provost section of the Belmont University website (<http://www.belmont.edu/provost/resources.html>). Additionally, the Catalog and Curriculum Committees communicate this timeline to campus at the start of each semester as they begin their curricular review cycle. This regular notification to campus will ensure that the approval process is taken into consideration when new programs are under development.

Policy Review and Amendment (when needed): The timeline set forth in this policy is determined by the substantive change approval process established by the SACSCOC. This process is subject to change, thus possibly necessitating changes to our institutional policy. The Accreditation Liaison attends the SACSCOC annual meetings where policy changes and updates are presented to member institutions. During this time, the Accreditation Liaison is expected to review our institutional procedures to ensure that we remain compliant with the Commission's established policies. Additionally, as new programs are under development, programs and colleges are encouraged to work with the Accreditation Liaison early and often to ensure that the institution adheres to SACSCOC policies and procedures. Should discrepancies arise between institutional and SACSCOC policies, the Commission's policies will take precedence and our policies will be revised to align with those of SACSCOC.

Effective January 2017