A. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to outline the requirements, procedures, and processes necessary to maintain compliance with the *Principles of Accreditation: Foundations for Quality Enhancement* with specific focus on coordinating timely and complete notification of substantive changes to the University’s regional accrediting body, the *Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC)*.

B. AUTHORITY

*Code of Virginia Section 23.1-1301, as amended*, grants authority to the Board of Visitors to make rules and policies concerning the institution. Section 6.01(a)(6) of the *Board of Visitors Bylaws* grants authority to the President to implement the policies and procedures of the Board relating to University operations.

*Board of Visitors Policy 1002, Major Goals of the University*, outlines the major goals of the University including quality of academic programs (Goal 3) and identifies the University’s commitment to a continual improvement process, allowing for “rigorous and regular evaluation of the quality, pertinence and effectiveness of academic and other University programs.”

C. DEFINITIONS

The *Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC)* – The recognized regional accrediting body in the 11 U.S. southern states and in Latin America for those institutions of higher education that award associate, baccalaureate, master’s or doctoral degrees.

*Substantive Change* - A significant modification or expansion of the nature and scope of an accredited institution. Such changes and the applicable institutional notifications are codified in *SACSCOC Policy for Substantive Changes for Accredited Institutions*. *Table 1* lists the types of institutional changes that are considered to be substantive under this policy.

*Branch Campus* - A location of an institution that is geographically apart and independent of the main campus of the institution. A location is independent of the main campus if the location is (1) permanent in nature; (2) offers courses in educational programs leading to a degree,
certificate, or other recognized educational credential; (3) has its own faculty and administrative or supervisory organization; and (4) has its own budgetary and hiring authority.

**Degree Completion Program** – A program for which the institution accepts or requires a substantial amount of transfer credit prior to entry and the primary offerings are in the program major.

**Distance Learning** - A formal educational process in which the majority of the instruction (interaction between students and instructors and among students) in a course occurs when students and instructors are not in the same place. Instruction may be synchronous or asynchronous. A distance education course may employ correspondence study or audio, video, or computer technologies.

**Level** - SACSCOC’s level taxonomy categorizes institutions by the highest degree offered. Old Dominion University is designated as a **Level VI institution**: Offers four or more doctorate degrees.

**Merger/Consolidation** - SACSCOC defines a consolidation as the combination or transfer of the assets of at least two distinct institutions (corporations) to that of a newly-formed institution (corporation), and defines a merger as the acquisition by one institution of another institution’s assets. For the purposes of accreditation, consolidations and mergers are considered substantive changes requiring review by SACSCOC. (Examples include: a senior college acquiring a junior college, a degree-granting institution acquiring a non-degree-granting institution, two junior or senior colleges consolidating to form a new institution, or an institution accredited by SACSCOC merging with a non-accredited institution.)

**Off-Campus Site** – Campus location providing educational course and/or program offerings that is at a different address than the main campus location.

**Program or Program of Study** - A course of study leading to a formal award, e.g., degree, certificate.

**SACSCOC Accreditation Liaison** – The individual at the institution who is responsible for ensuring the timely submission of annual institutional profiles and other reports as requested by the Commission in the years between accreditation reviews. With the President, the Accreditation Liaison is responsible for the accuracy of all information submitted to SACSCOC and for ensuring ongoing compliance with SACSCOC standards, policies, and procedures beyond reaffirmation. During the Reaffirmation Cycle, the Liaison serves on the SACSCOC Reaffirmation Leadership Team and oversees all staffing aspects of the Reaffirmation process.

**Significant Departure** – A program that is not clearly related to previously approved programs at the institution or site or for the mode of delivery in question. To determine whether a new program is a “significant departure,” it is helpful to consider the following questions:

- What previously approved programs does the institution offer that are closely related to the new program and how are they related?
- Will significant additional equipment or facilities be needed?
- Will significant additional financial resources be needed?
- Will a significant number of new courses be required?
- Will a significant number of new faculty members be required?
- Will significant additional library/learning resources be required?

**Teach-Out** – The process by which the University provides instructional and academic support services to students enrolled at a site that has been closed and/or in a program that has been
discontinued. The teach-out process often extends well beyond the closing of a site or program to allow time for enrolled students to complete their programs in a reasonable amount of time.

**Teach-Out Agreement** - A written agreement between accredited institutions that provides for the equitable treatment of students if one of those institutions stops offering an educational program before all students enrolled in that program complete the program.

### D. SCOPE

This policy applies to all University officers who can initiate, review, approve, and allocate resources to any changes, including those to academic and non-academic programs and activities that may be considered a substantive change according to [SACSCOC Policy for Substantive Changes for Accredited Institutions](http://www.sacscoc.org). Within academic areas, such changes can originate with individual or groups of faculty members, department committees, Department Chairs, Deans and Associate Deans, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, Faculty Senate, or any other area reporting to the Provost. In units outside academic areas, substantive change actions may involve the allocation of resources from other divisions. Each individual hereby designated is required to comply with this policy.

### E. POLICY STATEMENT

To maintain the commitment undertaken by virtue of its membership in SACSCOC, the University is required to demonstrate continuing compliance with the [Principles of Accreditation: Foundations for Quality Enhancement](http://www.sacscoc.org) by adhering to all standards, requirements, policies and procedures associated with the definition and scope of a substantive change and found in [SACSCOC Policy for Substantive Changes for Accredited Institutions](http://www.sacscoc.org).

The SACSCOC Policy is as follows:

*The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) accredits an entire institution and its programs and services, wherever they are located or however they are delivered. It is responsible for reviewing all substantive changes that occur between an institution’s decennial reviews to determine whether the change has affected the quality of the total institution and to assure the public that all aspects of the institution continue to meet defined standards.*

*The SACSCOC is recognized by the U.S. Department of Education as an agency whose accreditation enables its member institutions to seek eligibility to participate in Title IV programs. To maintain its recognition with the U.S. Department of Education, the SACSCOC has incorporated federal requirements into its substantive change policy and procedures. Some of those requirements specify that an institution seek and receive approval prior to the initiation of substantive change so that the change can be included in the institution’s scope of accreditation.*

Substantive changes include, but are not limited to:

- Initiating coursework or programs at a more advanced level than currently approved
- Expanding at current degree level (significant departure from current programs)
- Initiating a branch campus
- Initiating joint or dual degrees with another institution
- Initiating a certificate program
- Initiating off-campus sites
- Expanding program offerings at previously approved off-campus sites
• Altering significantly the educational mission of the institution
• Initiating distance learning
• Initiating a certificate program at employer’s request and on short notice
• Initiating programs/courses offered through contractual agreement or consortium
• Initiating a merger/consolidation with another institution
• Relocating a main or branch campus
• Relocating an off-campus instructional site
• Changing governance, ownership, control, or legal status of an institution
• Changing from clock hours to credit hours
• Altering significantly the length of a program
• Initiating degree completion programs
• Closing an institution or program, approved off-campus site, branch campus, or institution (may require a teach out agreement)
• Initiating a direct assessment competency-based program
• Entering into a contract with an entity not certified to participate in U.S. Department of Education Title IV programs (for the delivery of an educational program)
• Adding a permanent location at a site where the institution is conducting a teach-out for students from another institution that is closing

To ensure timely notification to SACSCOC, members of the Provost’s staff will keep the Provost apprised of the continuing viability and progress toward implementation of the potential change. The Vice Provost for Academic Affairs/SACSCOC Accreditation Liaison (“SACSCOC Accreditation Liaison”) will oversee the process of preparing appropriate notification, in conjunction with those involved with the change, according to the requirements in SACSCOC Policy for Substantive Changes for Accredited Institutions and other related policy and accreditation documents maintained by SACSCOC.

All responsible University officers and faculty will be notified of this policy and reminded annually regarding their responsibility for compliance. The SACSCOC Accreditation Liaison will provide information regarding this policy and associated resources available from SACSCOC.

F. PROCEDURES

1. All proposed changes must be submitted in writing to the SACSCOC Accreditation Liaison, during the early planning stage, as outlined above in Section E. These notifications must include: (a) title of the proposed change; (b) a brief description of the change including its scope; (c) responsible individual to act as contact; (d) tentative timeline for approval; and (e) earliest date possible for implementation. These preliminary notifications will be reviewed by the SACSCOC Accreditation Liaison or designee.

2. If the proposed change is considered substantive by the SACSCOC Accreditation Liaison, he or she will work with the designated individual(s) to develop documentation related to the change. The anticipated earliest date of implementation will be recorded to ensure that adequate time exists for SACSCOC notification, including the development of a Substantive Change Prospectus. Should the planned implementation date not allow for timely SACSCOC notification, the implementation date will be adjusted to allow for timely notification to SACSCOC.

3. The SACSCOC Accreditation Liaison will regularly monitor the progress and outcomes of the proposed changes with the Institutional Effectiveness & Accreditation Analyst, who develops the Substantive Change Prospectus. When the Substantive Change Prospectus is completed, the President will send SACSCOC a written notification of the proposed change.
4. Implementation of the approved substantive change will occur no sooner than six months following submission of the prospectus or application to SACSCOC, where applicable.

G. RETENTION

Applicable records are retained and then destroyed or transferred to the Old Dominion University Archives in accordance with the Commonwealth’s Records Retention Schedules. For Accreditation Records: Final Accreditation, use General Schedule 111, Series 101132 – Permanent Retention).

H. RESPONSIBLE OFFICER

Vice Provost for Academic Affairs/SACSCOC Accreditation Liaison

I. RELATED INFORMATION

Old Dominion University Organization Chart
Substantive Change – Frequently Asked Questions
What is a Substantive Change and How Should It Be Handled?
POLICY HISTORY
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Policy Formulation Committee (PFC) & Responsible Officer Approval to Proceed:

/s/ Brian Payne  May 1, 2017
Responsible Officer  Date

Policy Review Committee (PRC) Approval to Proceed:

/s/ Donna W. Meeks  February 28, 2017
Chair, Policy Review Committee (PRC)  Date

Executive Policy Review Committee (EPRC) Approval to Proceed:

/s/ Augustine O. Agho  May 16, 2017
Responsible Oversight Executive  Date

University Counsel Approval to Proceed:

/s/ R. Earl Nance  May 16, 2017
University Counsel  Date

Presidential Approval:

/s/ John R. Broderick  May 17, 2017
President  Date

Policy Revision Dates:  September 1, 2009; April 26, 2011; May 17, 2017

Scheduled Review Date:  May 17, 2022