



Substantive Change Policy and Procedures

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Commented [KWS1]:

All markups in this proposed policy revision are related to the federal Prison Education Program (PEP) providing Pell Grant access to confined or incarcerated students.

Summary of changes:

1. New substantive change type created: Prison Education Program - Institutional-level Approval.

2. Existing requirements and related information updated for the Prison Education Program, viz.,

- * Method of Delivery - Approval,
- * Substantive Change Visits, and
- * miscellaneous resulting updates such as the Quick Reference Summary of Substantive Change Types, the glossary, and others.

Reference: *Federal Register*, vol. 87, no. 208, Friday, October 28, 2022, Rules and Regulations, pp. 65426-65498. 34 CFR Parts 600, 668, and 690, as amended, viz., §§ 668.8, 668.32, 668.43, 668.234–668.242, § 668 Subpart P [new]; and 484(t) [new] of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended.



- Entering into a cooperative academic arrangement.
- Entering into a written arrangement under 34 C.F.R. § 668.5 under which an institution or organization not certified to participate in the title IV Higher Education Act (HEA) programs offers less than 25% (notification) or 25-50% (approval) of one or more of the accredited institution's educational programs. An agreement offering more than 50% of one or more of an institution's programs is prohibited by federal regulation.
- Substantially increase or decreasing the number of clock hours or credit hours awarded or competencies demonstrated, or an increase in the level of credential awarded, for successful completion of one or more programs.
- Adding competency-based education programs.
- Adding each competency-based education program by direct assessment.
- Adding programs with completion pathways that recognize and accommodate a student's prior or existing knowledge or competency.
- Awarding dual or joint academic awards.
- Re-opening a previously closed program or off-campus instructional site.
- Adding a new off-campus instructional site/additional location including a branch campus.
- Adding a permanent location at a site at which an institution is conducting a teach-out program for students of another institution that has ceased operating before all students have completed their program of study.
- Closing an institution, a program, a method of delivery, an off-campus instructional site, or a program at an off-campus instructional site.
- Participating in the federal Prison Education Program providing Pell Grant access to confined or incarcerated students.

Commented [KWS2]: This is the only POLICY change; all other changes are in PROCEDURES

Other substantive change requirements, including those required by federal regulations, include:

- An institution is required to notify or secure SACSCOC approval prior to implementing a substantive change.
- An institution is responsible for maintaining compliance at all times with Standard 14.2 (Substantive change) of the *Principles of Accreditation* and with the *Substantive Change Policy and Procedures* and related policies, viz.,
 - [Advertising and Student Recruitment](#) [PDF];
 - [Agreements Involving Joint and Dual Academic Awards](#) [PDF];
 - [Credit Hours](#) [PDF];
 - [Direct Assessment Competency-based Educational Programs](#) [PDF];
 - [Distance and Correspondence Education](#) [PDF];
 - [Dual Enrollment](#) [PDF];
 - [Merger/Consolidation, Acquisition, Change of Ownership, and Change of Governance, Control, Form, or Legal Status](#) [PDF];
 - [Request for a Period of Noncompliance](#) [PDF]; and
 - [Seeking Accreditation at a Higher or Lower Degree Level](#) [PDF].
- An institution is required to have a written substantive change policy and procedure. It must be approved through institutional processes and published in institutional documents

Specific Requirements by Type of Substantive Change

Institutional Changes

- [Acquisition](#)
- [Change in Measure of Student Progress to Completion](#)
- [Competency-based Education by Course/Credit-based Approach – Institutional-level Approval](#)
- [Distance Education – Institutional-level Approval](#)
- [Governance Change](#)
- [Institution Closure](#)
- [Institution Relocation](#)
- [Institutional Contingency Teach-out Plan](#)
- [Level Change](#)
- [Merger / Consolidation](#)
- [Mission Change](#)
- [Ownership, Means of Control, or Legal Status Change](#)
- [Prison Education Program – Institutional-level Approval](#)

Acquisition

REQUIRES	
Notification and Approval	
Full Board of Trustees	
COMMITTEE VISIT	
Required	
FEE	
Yes	
No	SUBJECT TO SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RESTRICTION

Acquisition is the sale, exchange, or transfer of a component of an institution's or entity's assets to a SACSCOC accredited institution. Following acquisition, the participating entities remain in operation as separate institutions or entities. Acquisition includes off-campus instructional sites, for-credit educational programs, or other tangible educational assets. Acquisition excludes assets unrelated to the core mission of the SACSCOC institution such as non-educational real estate and intangible property. Acquisition is independent of financial consideration; i.e., an acquisition may or may not involve the exchange of money between participating



Prison Education Program – Institutional-level Approval

Subject to SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RESTRICTION

Commented [KWS3]: New substantive change type

REQUIRES	
Approval	
Exec Council of the Board	
—OR—	
Full Board of Trustees	
(see contingencies)	
COMMITTEE VISIT	
Required	
EEE	
Yes	
Yes	SUBJECT TO SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RESTRICTION

The federal Prison Education Program (PEP) provides Pell Grant access to confined or incarcerated students. Institutional participation in the federal program is voluntary. To participate, institutions

1. enter into an agreement with an oversight entity (as defined below).
2. secure SACSCOC Prison Education Program – Institutional-level Approval, and
3. secure federal approval.

An institution must receive SACSCOC PEP approval for its first program at its first two PEP off-campus instructional sites.

SACSCOC reviews an institution's capacity, financial stability, planning, and resources to initiate and sustain PEPs to ensure the quality and integrity of curricula, instruction, learning support, library and information resources, faculty qualifications, and plans to ensure ongoing comparability of PEP versus non-PEP programs. Approval is granted or denied by the SACSCOC Board of Trustees.

Because federal regulations require the review of an institution's first two PEP off-campus instructional sites, an institution may need to submit more than one Prison Education Program – Institutional-level Approval prospectus. However, an institution may submit two sites in one PEP prospectus.

After an institution secures SACSCOC approval of its first two PEP off-campus instructional sites, it may initiate additional programs at those sites or at additional off-campus instructional sites with confined or incarcerated students without additional SACSCOC PEP approval. However, additional PEP programs or additional PEP sites may require SACSCOC notification or approval under *other non-PEP* substantive change requirements. For example, if an institution has secured SACSCOC PEP approval for two off-campus instructional sites where PEPs are delivered, no further *PEP approval* is required for a new off-campus instructional site offering PEPs; however, the new site will require SACSCOC off-campus instructional site approval prior to implementation if 50% or more of a program's instruction is offered at the site.

An institution enters into a written agreement with an oversight entity or entities responsible for the site where the PEP will be delivered. The oversight entity may be a state department of corrections or other entity responsible for overseeing correctional facilities, the Federal Bureau of Prisons, or other oversight entity consistent with federal regulations. The content and expectations of the agreement are detailed in Appendix A of this policy (see *What to Submit* below). The institution is responsible for securing the



agreement before submitting a PEP prospectus to SACSCOC; a copy of the signed final written agreement is submitted as part of the prospectus. The institution is responsible for coordinating the approval processes and monitoring the program with (a) the oversight entity, (2) SACSCOC, and (3) the U.S. Department of Education.

SACSCOC PEP approval is required regardless of an institution's prior experience delivering instruction at a prison or other similar facility or prior experience delivering instruction to confined or incarcerated students. A PEP delivered at an already approved off-campus instructional site must go through the PEP approval process as an institution's first or second PEP site, but the site is not required to go through the off-campus instructional site approval (by extensive review or limited review) process again.

All prisons or similar facilities with confined or incarcerated students — jails, juvenile justice facilities, penitentiaries, reformatorys, work farms, and others — are considered off-campus instructional sites for PEPs regardless of the method of instructional delivery at the site (such as face-to-face, distance education, etc.).

An institution's SACSCOC financial responsibility score based on financial data submitted by an institution as part of its annual financial profile is included in the review. If the score suggests financial instability, the review may be deferred for additional information or denied approval by the SACSCOC Board of Trustees.

The first two off-campus instructional sites reviewed as part of a PEP prospectus require a substantive change committee visit. The visit is authorized by the SACSCOC Board of Trustees at the time of the PEP approval. The visit is independent of any prior off-campus instructional site visits.

All other substantive change requirements, policies, and the *Principles of Accreditation* apply without exception to programs and off-campus instructional sites delivered as part of an institution's PEP.

Federal regulations stipulate:

1. Proprietary (for-profit) institutions are ineligible for PEP approval.
2. An institution subject to adverse action by SACSCOC
 - a. will have its PEP approval rescinded,
 - b. must submit teach-out plans for closure approval for all PEP programs and PEP off-campus instructional sites, and
 - c. is ineligible for PEP re-approval (by submitting a new PEP prospectus) for five years commencing on the date of the adverse action.
3. Subsequent to its PEP approval, an institution adding a method of delivery not previously used in its PEPs must secure SACSCOC method of delivery approval prior to implementation; for more information, see Method of Delivery–Approval in this policy.



SACSCOC's PEP requirements are subject to revision as federal regulations and interpretations are updated.

Because new prison education programs may constitute multiple types of substantive change, the PEP prospectus may include multiple parts, each addressing different substantive change requirements:

Part 1: All institutions will submit this part of a PEP prospectus. It will contain information directly related to the PEP program(s) and off-campus instructional site(s); institutional capacity, stability, planning, and resources; and the signed final written agreement with the oversight entity.

Part 2: Some institutions may need to submit this part of a PEP prospectus. If the proposed PEP also contains other types of substantive changes to be concurrently implemented, prospectus information for these types of changes is also submitted for review in the PEP prospectus package submitted for review.

Examples

- If the PEP will be offered at a new off-campus instructional site, Part 2 of the PEP prospectus will include prospectus information for Off-campus Instructional Site Approval (by extensive review or by limited review, as applicable).
- If the PEP will offer a new program with all new content never before taught at the institution, Part 2 of the PEP prospectus will include New Program–Approval prospectus information.

Other substantive change types that may need to be included in Part 2 of a PEP prospectus include:

- Competency-based Education Course/Credit-based Approach–Institutional-level Approval
- Competency-based Education Direct Assessment – Notification
- Competency-based Education Direct Assessment–Approval
- Distance Education – Institutional-level Approval
- New Program–Approval
- New Program–Notification
- Off-campus Instructional Site Approval by Extensive Review
- Off-campus Instructional Site Approval by Limited Review

or other substantive change types as defined in the SACSCOC *Substantive Change Policy and Procedures* as determined by institution.

PEP prospectuses will normally be reviewed by SACSCOC staff and referred to the Executive Council of the Board of Trustees for action. The submission deadline depends on the intended implementation date; those deadlines are contained elsewhere in this



policy. However, if any existing SACSCOC policy requires an institution's prospectus be reviewed by the Board of Trustees (typically in June or December), then those requirements and submission deadlines prevail. For example, if the PEP prospectus includes prospectus information for approval of a new Off-campus Instructional Site Approval by Extensive Review, then the prospectus is reviewed by the Board of Trustees (June or December meetings) and those meeting prospectus deadlines will apply.



What to submit

A prospectus: Submit a substantive change prospectus using the outline provided in Appendix A for a Prison Education Program – Institutional-level Approval (Part 1) and, as needed, submit other substantive change notifications or prospectuses (Part 2).

(End of Institutional Changes)



Method of Delivery – Approval

Subject to SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RESTRICTION

REQUIRES	
Approval	
Exec Council of the Board	
COMMITTEE VISIT	
No	
FEE	
No	
Yes	SUBJECT TO SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RESTRICTION

Adding a method of instructional delivery ~~to an existing program~~ requires approval prior to implementation ~~only for if~~

1. an institution is on SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RESTRICTION
~~—OR—~~

2. an institution with SACSCOC Prison Education Program (PEP) – Institutional-level Approval adds, for the first time, a method of delivery not previously used in its PEPs. For example, if an institution's PEPs are delivered by face-to-face instruction only and the institution adds

distance education as a method of delivery for the first time in a PEP, then adding the distance education method of delivery requires approval prior to implementation. All other method of delivery approvals and notifications also apply without exception as applicable: Competency-based Education by Course/Credit-based Approach – Institutional-level Approval, Competency-based Education Direct Assessment–Approval, Competency-based Education Direct Assessment – Notification, and Distance Education – Institutional-level Approval.

Institutions that are not on SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RESTRICTION or are not adding its first method of delivery in a PEP are not required to secure approval to add a method of delivery. However, all institutions are subject to method of delivery notification (see Method of Delivery – Notification).~~An institution not on SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RESTRICTION is not required to seek approval to add a method of delivery to a program but is required to provide notification (see Method of Delivery – Notification).~~

A specific method of delivery applies when 50% or more of a program is delivered by that method. A program may be delivered 50% or more by more than one method (students may have the option to choose from different methods of delivery for the same program, e.g., predominately face-to-face versus predominately distance education).

The three methods of delivery are

- competency-based education,
- distance education, and
- face-to-face instruction.

Commented [KWS4]: Previously, Method of Delivery-Approval was required ONLY for institutions on Substantive Change Restriction.

The federal PEP creates an additional instance in which institutions must secure accreditor approval to add a method of delivery the first time one is added to a PEP program.

Committee Visits

A substantive change committee visit is a quality assurance mechanism designed to ensure the quality of an approved substantive change and to ensure the institution remains in compliance with all *Principles of Accreditation* and policies.

A committee visit is required for certain types of substantive change. A committee visit may also be required if certain institutional conditions are met. A committee visit is authorized at the time a substantive change is approved. The SACSCOC Board of Trustees and the SACSCOC President are authorized to appoint a substantive change committee to review an institution for any change requiring a more in-depth evaluation beyond the prospectus submitted by the institution. The Report of the Substantive Change Committee is reviewed by the SACSCOC Board of Trustees to determine ongoing accreditation status of an institution. A committee visit is within six months after *implementation* of the change.

A substantive change committee visit is required for the following ~~six~~seven types of substantive change. The criteria for a committee visit are detailed under the specific requirements by substantive change type in policy.

1. **Initiating an off-campus instructional site that requires SACSCOC approval.**

In addition to a committee visit at the time of approval if one or more visit criteria are met, visits to a representative sample of off-campus instructional sites are required at the fifth-year interval between reaffirmations if the additional sites have been initiated since the last reaffirmation and if the sites have not been visited. At any time, SACSCOC may choose to authorize a visit to a new site(s) developed between the fifth-year review and the next scheduled reaffirmation of accreditation. As part of reaffirmation, SACSCOC conducts a thorough review of a representative sample of approved off-campus instructional sites. The extent of the review at reaffirmation depends, in part, on whether there has been a recent review of the site(s).

If a committee is authorized to visit an additional location, the committee is required to determine compliance with the *Principles of Accreditation*, including verification of personnel, facilities, and resources as asserted by the institution in its application for the additional site.

The institution-specific criteria for a committee visit are listed in the in the Off-campus Instructional Site – Approval section of policy.

2. **Initiating a branch campus.**

The criteria to qualify an off-campus instructional site as a branch campus are listed in the Off-campus Instructional Site Approval section of the procedures.



Initiating a branch campus requires a committee visit regardless of the number of already-approved off-campus instructional sites.

3. **Initiating a change in governance or a change in ownership with a change in control.**

Refer to the *Merger/Consolidation, Acquisition, Change of Ownership, and Change of Governance, Control, Form, or Legal Status* policy for additional information.

4. **Initiating a merger / consolidation or acquisition.**

Refer to the *Merger/Consolidation, Acquisition, Change of Ownership, and Change of Governance, Control, Form, or Legal Status* policy for additional information.

5. **Initiating a level change.**

Initiating coursework or programs at a different level than currently approved requires level change approval and a substantive change committee visit. Depending on the existing related programs offered by an institution, a committee visit may not be required of institutions moving from Levels III (offers the master's degree as the highest degree) to IV (offers the master's and specialist degree as the highest degrees) or from Levels V (offers three or fewer doctoral degrees as the highest degrees) to VI (offering four or more doctoral degrees as the highest degrees). A level change adding authorization of a degree level lower than the highest degree level currently authorized for an institution may not require a visit if the new program(s) at the lower degree level do not constitute a significant departure from existing programs. Refer to the *Seeking Accreditation at a Higher or Lower Degree Level* policy for additional information

6. **Initiating a competency-based education by direct assessment program that requires SACSCOC approval.**

A committee visit is required for *each* competency-based education by direct assessment program that is approved.

7. **Initiating a Prison Education Program at an off-campus instructional site.**

- 6- A committee visit is required for the first two off-campus instructional sites approved under the Prison Education Program – Institutional-level Approval requirements. The committee visit requirement applies regardless of any prior approval or committee visit to the site.

Commented [KW55]: The Prison Education Program creates additional obligations for committee visits to off-campus instructional sites



Mission Change

☒ Submit a prospectus to include the following:

1. A Substantive Change Cover Sheet [\[PDF\]](#).
2. Provide the current mission statement.
3. Provide the proposed mission statement.
4. Provide the intended implementation or effective date of the change.
5. Provide evidence of the institution's governing board approval of the mission change
6. Describe the impetus and rationale for the mission change.
7. Assess the impact on the number and mix of programs in the institution's portfolio.
8. Assess the impact on the number and composition of the institution's faculty in the short- and long-term.
9. Assess the impact on staff members.
10. Describe the impact on the non-academic operations of the institutions, e.g., business services, facilities and maintenance, intercollegiate athletics, etc.
11. Describe the current financial stability of the institution.
12. Assess the financial impact of the mission change.'
13. Describe any expected, forthcoming substantive change because of (not concurrent with) the mission change, e.g., new program prospectuses, off-campus instructional site prospectuses, level change application, etc.

Prison Education Program – Institutional-level Approval

Part 1 – All institutions

☒ Submit a prospectus to include the following:

1. Common Content A – Background and Context, as defined in the substantive change policy, relative to the proposed prison education program.
2. A copy of a signed final written agreement between the institution and the oversight entity (or entities) responsible for the facilities where confined or incarcerated students are located addressing all requirements stipulated in Part 668.236 of the federal regulations, including,
 - a. the oversight entity's approval of the institution to operate in its facilities;
 - b. the oversight entity's approval of the programs to be offered in its facilities with programs identified by name to include, for each, credential (e.g., Associate of Arts, certificate, diploma, etc.) and discipline (e.g., Dental Hygiene, Medical Office Management, Web Development, etc.);
 - c. how the oversight entity will determine, after the initial two-year approval, that the programs operating in its facilities are in the best interest of students;
 - d. assurance of transferability of credits to at least one other institution for each program identified above;

- e. programs to be offered satisfy professional licensure or certification requirement, if applicable;
- f. programs to be offered do not prohibit licensure or employment of formerly incarcerated individuals, if applicable; and
- g. acknowledgement that PEP programs and sites must be taught-out and closed by the institution if the institution is subject to adverse action by SACSCOC.
- 3. Evidence of an effective methodology developed and implemented by the institution to establish the prison education program, in collaboration with the oversight entity (or entities), meets the same standards as substantially similar programs delivered to non-prison education program students. The methodology *may* include PEP versus non-PEP similarity evaluations of
 - a. academic advising;
 - b. academic policies such as grade appeals, conditions for continued enrollment, program completion time limits, student codes of conduct, etc.;
 - c. access to appropriate library / learning and information resources;
 - d. access to learning and student support services;
 - e. admission requirements;
 - f. career services;
 - g. curricula;
 - h. faculty qualifications;
 - i. student learning outcomes; and
 - j. other measures or evidence at the institution's and the oversight entity's discretion.

Part 2 – Some institutions, as needed

☒ Submit a prospectus or prospectuses, appended to Part 1 above, for the following substantive change types, as needed for other substantive change types to be concurrently implemented as part of the institution's PEP:

- 1. New Program–Approval
- 2. New Program–Notification
- 3. Off-campus Instructional Site Approval by Limited Review
- 4. Off-campus Instructional Site Approval by Extensive Review
- 5. Competency-based Education Course/Credit-based Approach–Institutional-level Approval
- 6. Competency-based Education Direct Assessment–Approval
- 7. Competency-based Education Direct Assessment – Notification
- 8. Distance Education – Institutional-level Approval

or other substantive change types as defined in policy as determined by the institution.



the disclaimer statement in the *Agreements Involving Joint and Dual Academic Awards: Policy and Procedures*).

11. Describe how courses and other program requirements will be transcribed and which institution(s) will maintain the official academic transcript.
12. Describe the institutions plan to award a single credential or diploma bearing the imprints and signatures of the officers of each participating institution. Demonstrate how the institution will represent, via the diploma and transcript, that the academic credential was jointly award by multiple institutions.

If one or more partnering institution is not accredited by a USDE-recognized accreditor, provide the following additional information:

13. Demonstrate that the written agreement includes boilerplate language that SACSCOC accreditation does not extend to the non-SACSCOC entities and stipulating that the SACSCOC accredited institution(s) is(are) responsible for ensuring compliance by the participating entity/entities.
14. A description of
 - a. any external governmental or accrediting agency approval for the institution(s) or program(s) involved in the agreement, excluding the SACSCOC institution(s);
 - b. the process of quality assurance used by the agency granting this approval; and
 - c. any required legal or licensing approvals.
15. Documentation that faculty involved in the collaboration are qualified to teach assigned components or courses and a description of the means by the SACSCOC-accredited institution(s) will monitor these qualifications. Provide Common Content B – Faculty Qualifications, relative to the joint academic award.
16. Documentation of the physical resources and learning resources contributed by the institution(s) not accredited by a USDE-recognized accreditor.

Method of Delivery – Approval

☒ Submit a prospectus to include the following:

1. A Substantive Change Cover Sheet [\[PDF\]](#).
2. The name of the program (to indicate the discipline).
3. The credential to be awarded (e.g., Associate of Arts, Master of Accounting).
4. The instructional level (associate, baccalaureate, master's, education specialist, or doctoral, if not obvious from the credential).
5. The method of delivery to be added: competency-based education, distance education, or face-to-face instruction.
6. The intended implementation date.
7. **If the institution is on SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RESTRICTION, ~~An~~ provide an** assessment of the impact of the addition of a method of delivery relative to the reason the institution is on SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RESTRICTION.



8. Demonstrate the addition of a method of delivery will not negatively impact student learning outcomes, student support services, library and learning/information resources, or institutional financial stability.

8.9. If the institution is seeking method of delivery approval due to its participation in the federal Prison Education Program, include the institution's SACSCOC PEP approval date and case identification (Case ID).

Reminder: Method of delivery approval is required only for institutions on SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RESTRICTION and for institutions already approved by SACSCOC for Prison Education Programs (PEPs) that are adding, for the first time, a method of deliver not previously used in its PEPs.

New Program – Approval

☒ Submit a prospectus to include the following:

1. Provide Common Content A – Background and Context, relative to the proposed change.
2. Provide the curriculum for the program.
3. Provide a projected schedule of course offerings for the program
4. Provide program-specific goals (objectives) and specific student learning outcomes for the program.
5. Describe how the student learning outcomes for the program will be assessed.
6. Provide course descriptions for all courses in the proposed program. Do not provide syllabi or catalogs (though course description *excerpts* from a catalog are acceptable).
7. Describe admissions and graduation requirements for the program.
8. Provide the planned method(s) of delivery, as defined in policy, of the program.
9. Provide the planned location(s) at which the program will be delivered, i.e., on-campus and/or at specific off-campus instructional site(s). (Providing this information does not replace submitting a notification or prospectus for approval, if necessary, of an off-campus instructional site as required by policy.)
10. Demonstrate compliance with Standard 10.7 (policies for awarding credit) of the *Principles of Accreditation*.
11. Describe administrative oversight to ensure the quality of the program.
12. For a program offered in compressed time frames, describe the methodology for determining that levels of knowledge and competencies comparable to those required in the traditional formats have been achieved.
13. Provide Common Content B – Faculty Qualifications, relative to the proposed change.
14. Provide Common Content C – Resource, relative to the proposed change.
15. Provide Common Content D – Institutional Evaluation and Assessment Processes, relative to the proposed change.

institution or entity.
(See also acquisition)

Method of delivery: The principal method by which instruction is delivered to include:

- competency-based education (all forms),
- distance education, and
- face-to-face instruction.

Notification: An official communication from an institution to SACSCOC as defined in *Substantive Change Policy and Procedures*. A notification is complete only when accepted by SACSCOC upon satisfactory review by staff.
(See also approval)

Off-campus instructional site / additional location: A location

- geographically apart from an institution's sole main campus and
- where instruction is delivered.

An off-campus instructional site may qualify as a branch campus.

(See also branch campus)

Oversight Entity: Under the federal Prison Education Program (PEP), the state department of corrections, Federal Bureau of Prisons, or other entity responsible for facilities where confined or incarcerated students are located.

Program: a coherent course of study leading to a for-credit credential including a degree, diploma, certificate, or other generally recognized credential.

Exception: General education, for substantive change purposes, is usually considered a program even if a credential is not awarded. See also Standard 8.2.b (Student outcomes: general education) Standard 9.3 (General education

requirements) of the *Principles of Accreditation*.

Prison Education Program (PEP): A federal program providing Pell Grant access to confined or incarcerated students.

Substantive Change Restriction: Additional or different requirements for institutions meeting defined criteria. The criteria are defined in this policy and the additional or different requirements are identified for each substantive change type. These restrictions and the criteria for which institutions are affected are required by federal regulations.

Teach-out: The process and time period of a teach-out plan.

(See also closure, teach-out agreement, and teach-out plan)

Teach-out plan: A written plan developed by an institution for students to complete their programs of study because it decided to end a program, off-campus instructional site, method of delivery, or to close the institution. A teach-out plan provides an orderly process, the equitable treatment of students, minimal disruption and additional costs to students, and covers all enrolled students regardless of their progress to completion.

(See also closure, teach-out, and teach-out agreement)

Teach-out agreement: An optional written agreement with an institution or entity under which students covered by a teach-out plan may complete their programs of study. A teach-out agreement may include student eligibility criteria, time limits, fee waivers, tuition parity, or other negotiated terms.

(See also closure, teach-out, and teach-out plan)

Appendix C: Quick Reference

Substantive Change Types

This quick reference is designed as a summary only. It is not intended to replace a careful reading and understanding of policy. As a summary of select information, it provides an efficient reference to identify substantive change types and to make comparisons across types.

Substantive Change Type	Requires			Visit		Other	
	Notification	Approval – Exec Council	Approval – Full Board	Contingent	Required	Review Fee	Sub Change Restriction
<i>This is a summary only. Always consult policy for complete information of substantive change types.</i>							
INSTITUTIONAL CHANGES							
Acquisition	●		●		●	●	
Change Measure Progress to Completion		●				●	
CBE Course-Credit Approach-Institutional Approval		●				●	
Distance Ed-Institutional-level Approval		●				●	
Governance Change	●		●		●	●	
Institution Closure		●					
Institution Relocation		●				●	
Institutional Contingency Teach-out		●					
Level Change ^(a)			●		●	●	
Merger / Consolidation	●		●		●	●	
Mission Change		●				●	
Ownership, Means of Control, or Legal Status Change	●		●		●	●	
Prison Education Program – Institutional-level Approval (* Note: Approval-Exec Council –OR– Approval-Full Board contingent on institutional status; see explanations in procedures)		● *	● *		● *	● *	
PROGRAM CHANGES							
Clock-Credit Hour Conversion		●					
CBE Direct Assessment-Approval			●		●	●	
CBE Direct Assessment-Notification	●						
Coop Acad Arr Title IV Entities	●						
Coop Acad Arr Non-Title IV Entities-Approval		●				●	●
Coop Acad Arr Non-Title IV Entities-Notification	●						●
Correspondence Education		●				●	
Dual Academic Award	●						
Joint Academic Award with Non-SACSCOC Accredited Institution(s) or Entity(ies)		●				●	
Joint Academic Award with SACSCOC Institution(s)	●						

Appendix D: Summary of Recent Changes

- March 2023: Added policy and procedure changes to accommodate the federal Prison Education Program (PEP) providing Pell Grant access to confined or incarcerated students.
- March 2022: Multiple updates and revisions (in approximate order of appearance) –
 - Moved the language addressing “Numerous change” (previously described as “Extensive changes”) from procedures to policy.
 - Added language regarding teach-out institutions’ – the institutions to which students in closed programs or sites may complete their programs of study – option to request exceptions to Standards 9.4 or 9.5 to accommodate displaced students as addressed in the new [Request for a Period of Noncompliance](#) policy.
 - Removed reference to the obsolete and now-removed *Good Practices* document for closing a program, site, branch or institution (all of which is now addressed in the substantive change policy).
 - Added an additional requirement, mandated in federal regulations (34 C.F.R. § 602.24(a) and/or 602.24(c)(9-10)), that institutions submit copies of planned communications regarding credit transfers with all closure approval requests/teach-out plans involving other institutions.
- December 2021: Multiple updates and revisions (in approximate order of appearance) –
 - *Note:* There are no material changes to policy; most changes are in procedures.
 - Institutional disclosure of reimbursement status for title IV federal student aid programs is no longer required with each substantive change submission.
 - “Instructional level” parenthetical references changed from “undergraduate or graduate” to “associate, baccalaureate, master’s, education specialist, or doctoral.” These appear under the ☒ *What to submit* sections for substantive change types. The changes are for precision and internal consistency (12 instances changed). “Instructional level” is added to the glossary.
 - Information added under the ☒ *What to submit* section to be submitted for these substantive change types:
 - New Program – Approval
 - New Program – Notification
 - Off-campus Instructional Site Approval (by extensive review and by limited review)
 - Information to be submitted added in Appendix A to
 - Common Content B – Faculty Qualifications, and
 - Common Content C – Resources.
 - Corrected the criteria comparison for Program Length Change for institutions not on SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RESTRICTION versus institutions that are on restriction.

Note: For major changes, a redline companion resource will be made available when feasible for at least two months after the change is made.



Document History: Procedures

June 2009

Edited: February 2013

Edited: January 2015

Edited: November 2015; September 2020; June 2021

Edited: May 2016, July 2016

Edited for the Principles of Accreditation: May 2018

Revised: December 2018; December 2020; March 2021; June 2021; December 2021; March 2023

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