

ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY

Approval Authority: Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs

**Current version
effective as of:
January 1, 2022**

Responsible Administrator: Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs

Responsible Office: Office of Academic Program Review, Assessment, and Accreditation

**Revised:
July 1, 2023**

Policy Contact: Director, OAPRAA

POLICY STATEMENT/REASON FOR POLICY

Vanderbilt University is committed to meeting or exceeding the requirements of all federal regulations that govern its operation. Vanderbilt willingly engages in the federal Department of Education’s Institutional Accreditation process by demonstrating that it complies with the standards of its institutional accreditor, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC, or “the Commission”). SACSCOC is a private non-profit organization contracted by the United States Department of Education to accredit institutions of higher learning.

The Commission accredits the entire institution and its programs and services, wherever they are located and however they are delivered. Accreditation, specific to an institution, is based on conditions existing at the time of the most recent evaluation and is not transferable. When an accredited institution significantly modifies or expands its scope or changes the nature of its affiliation or its ownership, a substantive change review is required.

A member institution is responsible for following the accrediting body’s substantive change policy (and related policies) by informing its institutional accreditor of changes in accord with the stated procedures and, when required, seeking approval prior to initiating the change.

Principle 14.2 in the 2018 SACSCOC Principles of Accreditation states that “The institution has a policy and procedure to ensure that all substantive changes are reported in accordance with SACSCOC policy.”

THIS POLICY APPLIES TO

This policy applies to all the following employment categories:

Faculty, Executive Officers, Administrator-AC, Administrator-AD1, Administrator-AD2
Professional Exempt.

POLICY

Vanderbilt is responsible for notifying or obtaining approval from its institutional accreditor before any substantive change to its programs, or to its program offering, is implemented. A [substantive change](#) is any significant modification or expansion of an institution's mode of operating, and - as such changes relate to degree programs – include, in part:

- adding new programs,
- closing a program,
- initiating joint degrees, or
- offering programs/courses through collaborative agreements.

This is not an exhaustive list of potential changes that may require prior approval from or notification of Vanderbilt's institutional accreditor.

If an administrative unit or academic department or school is contemplating a substantive change or is unsure if planned changes are considered “substantive,” it will consult with the Office of Academic Program Review, Assessment, and Accreditation (OAPRAA) to determine if the change needs to be reported to the university's institutional accreditor in advance. OAPRAA staff will assist Vanderbilt University faculty with the development of all change proposals, notify appropriate internal review committees of the need to review proposals, and communicate all changes that meet the definition of substantive change to our regional accreditor.

DEFINITIONS

Substantive change is a significant modification or expansion of the nature and scope of an accredited institution.

CONSEQUENCES OF NON-COMPLIANCE

Institutional consequences: A failure to report substantive changes properly means that SACSCOC has based its accreditation of an institution on an incorrect impression of the institution's programs, character, or structure; furthermore, SACSCOC would have, in turn, unintentionally misrepresented the institution's character and structure to other constituencies, including the U.S. Department of Education.

If an institution fails to follow SACSCOC substantive change policies and procedures, it may lose its Title IV funding or be required by the U.S. Department of Education to reimburse it for money it has received for programs related to the unreported substantive change.

PROCEDURES

Specific information on the PCCAP Process can be found on the website of the Office of Academic Program Review, Assessment, and Accreditation ([OAPRAA](#)).

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Specific information on the PCCAP Process can be found on the website of the Office of Academic Program Review, Assessment, and Accreditation ([OAPRAA](#)).

ADDITIONAL CONTACTS

Subject	Contact/Position	Office	Phone
Questions	Eric Cummings, Director	OAPRAA	615-343-1453

RELATED POLICIES/DOCUMENTS

HISTORY

Issued: unknown

Reviewed:
July 2016 by Dawn Turton
November 2021 by OAPRAA Director
July 2023 by OAPRAA Director (revisions)

Amended:
February 2022 by OAPRAA Director

***Disclaimer:** The policies and procedures that guide employment practices are intended to assist in consistent administration and compliance. Vanderbilt reserves the right to modify its policies and practices, in whole or in part, at any time. Revisions to existing policies and procedures, and the development of new policies and procedures, will be made from time to time at the discretion of the University. When new policies are implemented or existing policies are revised, the University will notify members of the University community as soon as practicable. However, where differences occur, the most recent policy as reviewed and approved by the University will take precedence. The policies and procedures do not create a contract, implied, or expressed, with at will employees at Vanderbilt.*

