A substantive change is defined by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) as a significant modification or expansion of the nature and scope of an accredited institution. For degree programs, substantive changes include the following types of modifications to existing programs:

- Addition of courses or programs that represent a significant departure, either in content of method of delivery, from those that were offered when the institution was last evaluated. This includes initiating distance learning or increasing distance learning courses to 25-49% of a degree and over 50% of a degree.
- Addition of courses or program at a degree or credential level above that which is included in the institution’s current accreditation or reaffirmation.
- Substantial increase in the number of credit hours awarded for successful completion of a program.
- Establishment of an additional location geographically apart from the main campus at which the institution offers at least 50 percent of an educational program.

There are three procedures for addressing the different types of substantive changes, ranging from SACSCOC notification to SACSCOC approval. As outlined in their policy statement “Substantive Change for Accredited Institutions of the Commission on Colleges,” SACSCOC must be notified or provide approval prior to implementation of the changes. The following notification/approval timetable must be followed.

**18 months prior to substantive change implementation**

Program administrators are requested to develop a brief description (one paragraph should suffice) of the program change they wish to invoke and submit it to Assistant Provost for Assessment and Institutional Research Jessica Shedd via email (jshed@tulane.edu). The request will be forwarded to Tulane’s Office of Assessment and Institutional Research (OAIR) who will make a recommendation to the program regarding which procedure to follow.

**6 months prior to implementation**

After the program change has been developed and approved by the appropriate internal governance bodies - for example, the school’s curriculum committee - a final request for approval containing all of
the necessary documentation for reporting to SACSCOC must be submitted to Assistant Provost Shedd for approval by OAIR. A substantive change communication will be prepared by the Office of Academic Affairs and sent along with the required documentation to SACSCOC.

Note that the initiation of new degree programs may also carry with it substantive change implications. Program administrators are requested to consult the Guidelines for New Degree Programs on the Provost’s website before development.

These guidelines are to be reviewed annually by the Compliance Certification Committee.