Substantive Changes:

- Identifying Them
- Reporting Them
- Approving Them

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What are Substantive Changes?

Changes which significantly alter an institution's objective, scope, programs, location, standing with another nationally recognized accrediting agency or state/federal agency, financial stability, ownership, or control.

Types of Substantive Changes

- PLANNED
  - Must be applied for and approved by COE ***before*** the change takes place
- UNPLANNED
  - COE must be notified ***within 5 days*** after the change occurs
  - Following COE notification an application for approval of the change must be submitted

NOTE: Schools in candidate status may not apply for any substantive changes except for changes to existing programs

Planned Substantive Changes

- Name Change
- Change in Mission or Programmatic Scope
- Location Change
- Change of Ownership/Control
- Change in Existing Program (increase of 25% or more of program length)
- New Program
- Program Deletion

Planned Changes (continued)

- Teach-out
- New Branch
- New Extension
- New Extended Classroom
- New Instructional Service Center
- Change in Branch/Main Campus Relationship
- Change of a Branch to a Main Campus
- Clock Hour/Credit Hour Conversion

Planned Changes (continued)

- Merger of Institutions/Campuses
- Initial Associate Degree
- Institutional Distance Education
- Branch/Extension Closure
- Main Campus Closure
- Withdrawal from Accreditation

(See Handbook of Accreditation, 2013 Ed., pp. 27-28)

Unplanned Substantive Changes

- Loss of Licensure or State Approval
- Conditional or Adverse Status with Another Accreditor or Authorizing Agency
- Significant Loss of Funding or Bankruptcy
- Substantial disruption of classes
- Eviction or unplanned change of location
- Teach-out of another institution

Most Substantive Changes Require:

- Applications
- State approval
- Fees
- Site visits
- Commission approval
- Refer to *Handbook of Accreditation*, 2013 Edition, pp. 27-28

The Approval Process

- Letter of Intent of Planned Change or Notification of Unplanned Change
- Application (due to COE 90 days in advance of implementation)
- Review by Commission or Commission Executive Committee
- Letter of Initial Approval
- Site Visit

The Substantive Change Site Visit

- Within 180 days of Initial Approval date
- Two-person team
- One “working day” Visit
  - Noon-to-Noon over two days
  - 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on one day
- State/Bias/Personal Interest Criteria Apply
- Check Sheets and document exhibits
- Exit Interview (Optional)

The Approval Process (continued)

- Team Report sent to COE Executive Director and Institution
- Institution’s Response (if necessary)
- Commission Action
  - Approve
  - Defer
  - Deny
  - (Appeal option in case of denial)
- Letter of Final Approval

Planned Substantive Changes will not be Approved when:

- Any Unplanned Substantive Change has not been granted final Commission approval
- Any Violation Status is Pending
- An Appeal is Pending
- An Invoice is Past Due
- Within 6 months prior to an accreditation visit
- In the time between an accreditation visit and the Commission’s renewal of accreditation

NOTE:

Final approval for planned substantive changes requiring site visits must be granted before additional applications for changes requiring site visits will be accepted.

Pointers for Quick COE Approval

- Send one hard copy and email one PDF file of the application and all attachments
- Enclose correct payment amount (application fee *plus* site visit deposit)
- Do not combine multiple substantive change requests into one application
- Include copy of state approval
- Send amended PDF file if changes or additions are required by the Council

A Word to the Wise

Unapproved sites and programs can lead to financial paybacks.

For More Information…

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