ACCJC

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Substantive Change Manual

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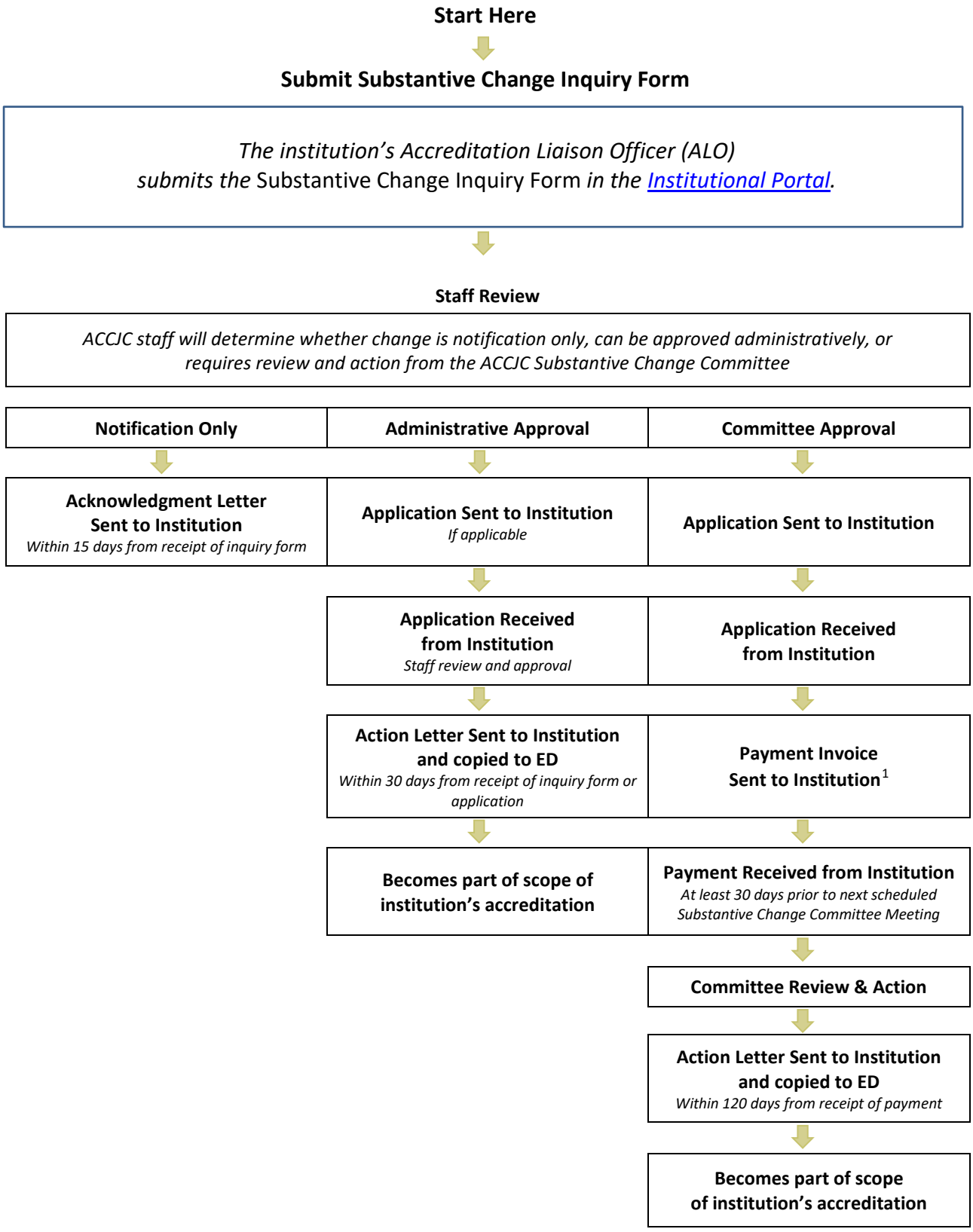
Introduction

The Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) supports all efforts of continuous improvement at our member institutions. The U.S. Department of Education (ED) regulations require that accrediting agencies have policies and procedures to ensure that any substantive changes, as defined in the *Policy on Substantive Change* and in this manual below, do not adversely affect the capacity of the institution to continue to meet Accreditation Eligibility Requirements, Accreditation Standards, and Commission policies. Federal law mandates that accrediting agencies require institutions to obtain accreditor approval of a substantive change before it is included in the scope of the accreditation granted to the institution (34 CFR § 602.22). The scope of an institution's accreditation covers all activities conducted in its name.

ACCJC, through its Substantive Change Committee and processes, ensures institutions continue to meet the Eligibility Requirements, Accreditation Standards, and Commission policies. The substantive change process requires evidence of institutional planning, resource commitment to the proposed change, and evidence that following the change, the institution continues to meet the Eligibility Requirements, Accreditation Standards and Commission policies.

It is the institution's responsibility to demonstrate the effect of a substantive change on the quality, integrity, capacity, and effectiveness of the total institution. Substantive changes must be approved by the Substantive Change Committee prior to implementation (34 CFR § 602.22). The Committee will not approve a substantive change retroactively. The approval date of a substantive change application will be the date of the action letter to the institution indicating approval by the Substantive Change Committee.

1 Notification and Approval Process for Substantive Changes



[1] Payment must be received by ACCJC 30 days before Substantive Change Committee review and action.

2 Types of Substantive Changes[2] Notification and Approvals

Institutions in good standing can notify ACCJC of substantive changes through the submission of the Substantive Change Inquiry Form in the Institutional Portal.

Circumstances where institutions require prior approval from ACCJC to implement certain substantive changes are noted in Section 6 of this manual.

The following table lists the various types of changes and indicates those that only require notification to ACCJC, those that can be approved administratively, and those that require committee approval.

Notification: These changes should be reported to ACCJC within 30 days of implementation. ACCJC will send the institution an acknowledgment letter within 15 days from receipt of notification.

Administrative Approval: The Commission has designated senior staff authority to administratively approve these changes. In cases where no application is required, an action letter indicating approval will be sent to the institution within 30 days from receipt of notification. For those requiring an application, one will be sent to the institution following receipt of notification. Upon receipt of the completed application, ACCJC senior staff will review and send an action letter of decision within 30 days from receipt of application. For circumstances that require greater staff capacity, ACCJC will make a final decision within 90 days of receipt of the completed application. No fee is required for administratively approved substantive changes. For applications staff determine require review and approval by the Substantive Change Committee, due to significant circumstances related to the substantive change, a decision and notification will occur within 180 days. In this circumstance, a payment invoice will be sent to the institution.

Committee Approval: These changes require Substantive Change Committee approval. Following receipt of notification, an application will be sent to the institution. Upon receipt of the completed application a payment invoice will be sent to the institution. Payment must be received within 2 weeks of the next scheduled Substantive Change Committee meeting for the application to be placed on the agenda. An action letter of the committee's decision will be sent to the institution immediately following the meeting. See ACCJC's website for Substantive Change Committee meeting dates: https://accjc.org/substantive-change/.

Federal financial aid (Title IV funds): the approval date of a substantive change will be the date of the action letter to the institution indicating approval.

[2] Note that although some changes at an institution may not warrant Substantive Change Committee review and approval, the institution should still take all necessary steps to ensure the Eligibility Requirements, Accreditation Standards, and Commission policies related to that change are being met.

Type of Substantive Change	Notification	Administrative Approval	Committee Approval
PROGRAMS, DEGREES, AND CERTIFICATES			
New credit degree.	**X** *If has existing types of degrees and less than 50% of the courses are new to the institution*	**X**	
Distance Education – first course offered in distance education modality.		**X**	
50% or more of a degree offered through distance education or correspondence education*. ** Prior approval before implementation is required if circumstances in Section 6 exist.*	**X** *If received approval to offer degrees in DE or CE modality*	**X** *Initial modality approval* *When at least 50 percent of students enrolled through DE* *When at least 50 percent of courses offered through DE*	
Addition of a baccalaureate degree.			**X**
Addition of an area of emphasis within a baccalaureate degree program of study.		**X**	
Designation of a minor which can be awarded in association with a baccalaureate degree.		**X**	
Course additions that constitute 25% or more of a degree*. ** Prior approval before implementation is required if circumstances in Section 6 exist.*	**X** *If has similar types of degrees*	**X**	
Creation of focus areas/concentrations within existing degree.	**X**		
Certificate (*16 units/credits or greater*) that requires significant institutional resources.		**X**	
Certificates (*16 units/credits or greater*) integral to existing degrees.	**X**		

Type of Substantive Change *continued…*	**Notification**	**Administrative Approval**	**Committee Approval**
LOCATIONS			
Addition of a permanent location (*either owned or leased by the college on a long-term basis*) where students can complete 50% or more of a program that is geographically apart, per ACCJC definition, from main campus *(includes programs at correctional facilities approved by ED for students to receive federal financial aid)*.		**X** *If received approval for two additional locations*[3]	**X** *First two additional locations*
Relocation (moving) of an existing additional location where students can complete 50% or more of a program to a new location that is geographically apart, per ACCJC definition, from the original site. ** Teach-out plan required for any programs offered 100% at original site not moving to new site.* ** Teach-out plan required if the original site is considered by the Secretary to be a closed site.*[4]		**X** *If received approval for two additional locations With teach-out plan, if needed*	**X** *First two additional locations With teach-out plan, if needed*
Relocation (moving) of an existing additional location where students can complete 50% or more of a program to a new location that is not geographically apart, per ACCJC definition, from the original site. ** Teach-out plan required any programs offered 100% at original site not moving to new site.*	**X** *If received approval for two additional locations and all programs offered moving*	**X** *If received approval for two additional locations and any program offered 100% not moving With teach-out plan*	**X** *First two additional locations With teach-out plan if needed*
Closure of a permanent location (*either owned or leased by the college on a long-term basis*) geographically apart from the main campus at which students can complete at least 50% of an educational program. ** Teach-out plan required for any programs offered 100% at location.*		**X** *With teach-out plan, if needed*	
New international location at which 50% or more of at least one program will be offered.			**X**
Addition of a permanent location at the site of a teach-out another institution is conducting.			**X**
Move of the institution to a new permanent location.			**X**

[3] 34 CFR § 602.22(c)

[4] 34 CFR § 602.24(c)(2)(iv)

Type of Substantive Change *continued…*	Notification	Administrative Approval	Committee Approval
PRISON EDUCATION PROGRAM (New Location)			
Offering 50% or more of a non-Pell eligible (Title IV) program at a correctional facility.		**X** *If received approval for two additional locations*	**X** *First two additional locations*
Offering a Pell eligible (Title IV) program at a correctional facility.[5]* ** See Pell eligible Prison Education Programs in Section 4 below.*	**X** *If received approval for two additional locations*		**X** *First two additional locations*
Offering a prison education program through different mode of delivery than previously approved.[6]	**X** *If received approval for one program offered through different modality*	**X** *First program offered through different modality*	

CONTRACTUAL RELATIONSHIP			
Contractual relationship with a non-accredited organization offering up to 25% of one or more of the accredited institution's for-credit educational programs*. ** Prior approval before implementation is required if circumstances in Section 6 exist.*	**X** *If not more than 25%*	**X** *If more than 25%*	
Contractual relationship with a high school for dual enrollment when the institution's regular students receiving Title IV funds can apply credits for courses taken either at the high school or from high school instructors towards a Title IV-eligible program of study at the institution.		**X**	

[5] 34 CFR § 668.234-242

[6] 34 CFR § 668.237(b)(2)

Type of Substantive Change *continued…*	Notification	Administrative Approval	Committee Approval
CREDIT OR CLOCK HOURS			
Change or development of an instructional program from clock hours or credit hours to direct assessment* of student learning (i.e. competency-based education). ** See Direct Assessment CBE – FAQs for more information.*			**X**
Change in the way an institution measures student progress (i.e. clock hours, semesters, trimesters, or quarters).		**X**	
25% or more increase or decrease in the number of clock or credit hours awarded*. *Program length for clock-hour programs required to prepare a student for gainful employment in a recognized occupation, cannot generally exceed the State minimum.* [7] ** Prior approval before implementation is required if circumstances in Section 6 exist.*	**X** *If less than 25%*	**X**	

MISSION, NAME, LEGAL STATUS			
Change in the mission or objectives of the institution or its programs.			**X**
Change in the intended student population.			**X**
Courses or programs offered outside the geographic region currently served.			**X**
Change in the official name of the institution.		**X**	
Change in control, legal status, or ownership of the institution.			**X**

[7] 34 CFR § 668.14(b)(26)

Type of Substantive Change *continued…*	Notification	Administrative Approval	Committee Approval
MERGER, SEPARATION, BRANCH CAMPUS			
Merger with another institution[8].			**X**
Merger of two separately-accredited ACCJC institutions into a single institution.			**X**
Separation of one unit of the institution into separate institutions.			**X**
Division of an institution into two or more separately controlled and accredited units.			**X**
Change of an accredited institution into an off-campus site or branch campus.			**X**
Change of an off-campus site into a separate institution or branch campus.			**X**
Addition of a branch campus geographically apart from main campus.			**X**
Acquisition of another institution's program or location.			**X**

[8] See *section* on Contractual Relationships with Non-Accredited Organizations

Type of Substantive Change *continued…*	Notification	Administrative Approval	Committee Approval
CLOSURE/DISCONTINUANCE			
Discontinuance of a program		**X** *With teach-out plan*	
Reduction of programs to an extent that the institution's mission cannot be accomplished.			**X** *With teach-out plan*
Loss of state authorization or licensure for the institution.			**X**
Withdrawal of or from accreditation if such withdrawal will result in closure[9].			**X** *With teach-out & closure plans*
Closure of an institution[10].			**X** *With teach-out & closure plans*

[9] See the *Policy on Closing an Institution* for further discussion of requirements related to closing an institution, as well as the *Policy on Teach-Out Plans and Agreements*.

[10] See the *Policy on Closing an Institution* for further discussion of requirements related to closing an institution, as well as the *Policy on Teach-Out Plans and Agreements*.

3 Types of Changes that do not Require Notification to ACCJC

The following types of changes are not considered substantive and do not require notification through submission of the substantive change inquiry form:

- Courses at a high school (dual enrollment). However, notification is required if:
    - courses offered constitute 25% or more of one of the institution's educational programs
    - high school students are eligible for federal financial aid
    - the institution's regular students receiving Title IV funds can apply credits for courses taken either at the high school or from high school instructors towards a Title IV-eligible program of study at the institution
- Course and/or programs offered at a correction facility that constitute less than 50% of a program and are not approved by ED for students to receive federal financial aid
- Courses at an offsite location that constitute less than 50% of a program
- Certificates that are fewer than 16 units and do not require significant resources from the institution
- Non-credit courses and/or programs.

4 Details, Guidelines, and Application Requirements for Particular Substantive Changes

Additional Locations

Defined as a location that is geographically apart from the main campus, and at which students can complete 50% or more of a program. Substantive Change Committee approval is required for the first two additional locations.

Institutions that have successfully completed at least one cycle of accreditation and have received ACCJC approval for the addition of at least two additional locations, have not been placed on probation or equivalent status or been subject to a negative action by the agency over the prior three academic years, and that are not under a provisional certification, as provided in 34 CFR § 668.13, can receive administrative approval of subsequent additional locations. These locations must be reported to ACCJC within 30 days of establishment. [11]

Application Requirements

- list of all courses that are part of the program and clearly note those that students can complete at the additional location
- explanation of how the institution has engaged in long-range planning for expansion
- explanation of how the location has been integrated into the institution's planning and evaluation processes
- explanation of academic controls for the new location
- explanation of adequate faculty, facilities, resources, and academic and student support services at the additional location
- explanation and documentation of the fiscal and administrative capacity to operate the additional location

The addition of locations after the institution undergoes a change in ownership resulting in a change of control[12] cannot be approved until the institution demonstrates that it meets the conditions for the Commission approval of additional locations[13].

Branch Campus[14]

Defined as an additional 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 permanent in nature
- offers courses in educational programs leading to a degree, certificate, or other recognized educational credential
- has its own faculty and administrative or supervisory organization
- has its own budgetary and hiring authority

[11] 34 CFR § 600.22(c)

[12] As defined in 34 CFR § 600.31

[13] 34 CFR § 602.22(a)(1)(ii)(I)

[14] 34 CFR § 600.2

An institution must provide a business plan in advance of establishing a branch campus (describing the educational programs, the projected revenues/ expenditures/cash flow, the operation, management and physical resources of the branch campus). Approval (accreditation) can only be given after determining the campus has sufficient educational, financial, operational, management, and physical resources.

International Locations

Defined as being in a country outside the United States where 50% or more of at least one program will be offered.

The first international location in each country requires a follow-up site visit six months to one year after implementation. Additional locations in a country may require a visit at the Substantive Change Committee's discretion (see sections on Contractual Relationships with Non-Accredited Organizations and International Education Programs).

Closure of Institution, Location, or Program

In addition to the substantive change application, a teach-out plan, per the *Policy on Teach-out Plans and Agreements,* is also required when;

- closing an institution,
- closing a location that offers 100% of a program,
    - a teach-out plan is not required when closing a location, if less that 100% of a program is offered at location.
- eliminating a degree level program,
- loss of state authorization or licensure for the institution or a program, or
- withdrawal of accreditation if such withdrawal will result in closure.[15]

Relocation (moving) of Existing Location

Substantive Change approval is required when an institution relocates (moves) an existing location where 50% or more of a program is offered to a new location, regardless of whether the move is geographically apart or not, per ACCJC definition, from the original location.

A teach-out plan, per the *Policy on Teach-out Plans and Agreements,* is also required;

- if original location is being relocated (moved) to a new site that is geographically apart, per ACCJC definition, from original site and where most of the students, staff, and faculty are not moving to new site, or
- for any programs offered 100% at original site not moving to new site, and/or
- the original site is considered by the Secretary to be a closed site[16].

[15] See the *Policy on Closing an Institution* for further discussion of requirements related to closing an institution and *Policy on Teach-out Plans and Agreements* for institutional or programmatic closures.

[16] 34 CFR § 602.24(c)(2)(iv)

Prison Education Programs (New Location)

Non-Pell (Title IV) eligible – 50% or more of a program

Substantive Change Committee approval is required for first two additional locations when an institution offers 50% or more of a program at a correctional facility. Subsequent prison education programs can be approved administratively. A site visit is required within six months of approval.

Note: Course and/or programs offered at a correction facility that constitute less than 50% of a program and are not Pell (Title IV) eligible do not require substantive change approval.

Pell (Title IV) eligible programs

Institutions seeking federal financial aid (Title IV) eligibility for its prison education program(s) are encouraged to consult the relevant federal regulations (34 CFR § 668.234-242).

Substantive Change Committee approval is required for first two Pell eligible programs offered at a correctional facility[17]. Notification is required for any subsequent Pell eligible prison education programs. A site visit is required as soon as practicable but no later than one year after approval[18].

Institutions seeking federal financial aid (Title IV) eligibility must also apply to the Department of Education for its first prison education program at the first two additional locations[19].

Following a "best interest determination" by the oversight entity[20], which must be made within two years of the program's initiation, Substantive Change administrative approval is required of the oversight entity's methodology to determination that the prison education program is operating in the best interest of students and meets the same standards as substantially similar programs that are not prison education programs at the institution[21].

The institution is required to provide ACCJC with the approval letter from Department of Education for Pell eligible prison education program.

Substantive Change administrative approval is required for first additional prison education program offered by a new method of delivery[22]. Notification is required for any subsequent programs offered by a new method of delivery.

Additional Guidance for Pell-eligible Prison Education Programs

DCL ID: GENERAL-24-118: *Revised Instructions for Applying for Prison Education Programs* – offers updated guidance to institutions interested in applying to operate an eligible Prison Education Program.

DCL ID: GEN-23-05: *Eligibility of Confined or Incarcerated Individuals to Receive Pell Grants (Updated Sept. 30, 2024)* – includes an update that USDE has fully integrated the PEP application into the Electronic Application to Participate in the Federal Student Financial Aid Programs (E-App).

[17] 34 CFR § 668.237(b)(1)

[18] 34 CFR § 668.237(b)(3)

[19] 34 CFR § 668.238

[20] 34 CFR § 668.241

[21] 34 CFR § 668.237(b)(4)

[22] 34 CFR § 668.237(b)(2)

Distance Education or Correspondence Education[23]

Administrative approval is required when an institution, that has previously had no course offerings in the distance education modality, offers a course in this modality for the first time. Thereafter, administrative approval is required when 50% or more of a program is offered in either the distance education or correspondence education modality. After the initial approval of 50% or more of a program, the institution is required to notify ACCJC of any additional programs offered in these modalities within 30 days of implementation.

Note: 50% or more of a program is determined by the total number of credit hours required for completion of a degree or certificate. For associate degrees, this includes general education and any other institutional degree requirements.

See Section 6 for circumstances where prior approval for the implementation of additional programs after receiving initial approval is required.

Subsequent Substantive Change approval is required for distance education when either:

- the institution enrolls at least 50 percent of its students through distance education. For purposes of this calculation, a student is "enrolled in distance education" if the student enrolls in at least one course offered through distance education; [24] or
- the institution offers at least 50 percent of its courses through distance education.

Application requirements

The substantive change application must list all of the courses that are part of the program and indicate those that are being offered through distance education or correspondence education.

Certificates (16 units/credits or greater)

A new certificate that requires a commitment of significant additional institutional resources (human resources, physical resources, technical resources). Administrative approval is required. For certificates integral to existing degrees that do not require significant additional institutional resources, notification to ACCJC is required within 30 days of implementation.

Short-term programs that qualify for Direct Loan Program[25]

This type of program must provide at least 300 but less than 600 clock hours of instruction offered during a minimum of 10 weeks of instruction.

Course Additions (25% or more of a degree)

Notification to ACCJC is required within 30 days of implementation.

See Section 6 for circumstances where prior approval is required before adding courses that constitute 25% or more of a degree.

[23] See the *Policy on Distance Education and Correspondence Education*.

[24] 34 CFR § 600.22(a)(1)(ii)(C)

[25] See 2019-2020 FSA Handbook Volume II, section 2-23 for more information

Baccalaureate Degrees

ACCJC is authorized by the U.S. Department of Education to approve bachelor's degrees at the institutions it accredits that are within the institution's mission and, if applicable, authorized by their governmental authorities.

It is the responsibility of the college to ensure it is meeting any other regional or state requirements and provide documentation, if appropriate, of state/regional authorization within one year of ACCJC approval. Requires Substantive Change Committee approval.

An accredited institution conforms to a commonly accepted minimum program length of 120 semester credit hours or 180 quarter credit hours for a bachelor's degree, or 90 semester hours or 135 quarter hours for an accelerated applied bachelor's degree. Any variation is explained and justified.

Application requirements

The Substantive Change Committee does not approve baccalaureate degrees in concept. Applications should include:

- a complete description of the program including rationale and need for the program,
- demonstration that the program is consistent with the college's mission,
- evidence of the planning process leading to the program,
- description of alignment with the existing college planning processes,
- documentation of complete program requirements including program SLOs and unit count
- description and documentation of support services for baccalaureate students,
- evidence of resources (personnel, physical, technology, and fiscal) that will support the program, and
- details of the leadership and governance structure ensuring academic quality and institutional effectiveness are sustained.

Approval of bachelor's degrees may include the requirement for a follow-up report and team visit to address specific issues identified by the Substantive Change Committee and to verify that the institution remains in compliance with Eligibility Requirements, Accreditation Standards, and Commission policies as the program implementation moves forward.

Upon approval, ACCJC expects that the baccalaureate degree program will demonstrate and maintain compliance with Eligibility Requirements, Accreditation Standards, and Commission policies as part of an accredited institution.

ACCJC monitors the quality of its institutions, including baccalaureate degree programs, on a regular basis through its annual reporting and midterm reporting processes. As part of an institution's comprehensive peer review, both the institutional self-evaluation report (ISER) and the peer review team report will be expected to specifically address the applicable components pertaining to compliance of the baccalaureate degree program with Accreditation Standards, Eligibility Requirements, and Commission policies.

Implementation of Direct Assessment[26]

Change or development of an instructional program from clock hours/credit hours to direct assessment of student learning, including programs using a hybrid approach. See *Direct Assessment CBE – FAQs* for more information. Requires Substantive Change Committee approval.

Note: Direct assessment is not the same as credit for prior learning. Credit for prior learning is college credit awarded to students for college-level skills and knowledge gained outside of a college classroom setting (e.g., military training, job experience, national examinations). See Appendix B on Principles of Good Practices for Credit for Prior Learning for additional details.

Application requirements

The substantive change application should include:

- a complete description of the program including how the program is consistent with the college's mission;
- description of how assessment and validation of the quality/efficacy of the program will occur;
- demonstration that the program fits into existing integrated planning processes;
- description of the college's definition of credit or clock hour;
- description of the methodology used to equate direct assessment to credit or clock hours, which should be congruent with norms of higher education (i.e., based on learning outcomes, rigor, estimated time for learning activities and assessments, milestones to demonstrate competency, etc.). The methodology should clearly articulate how the amount of learning in the direct assessment program is equivalent to the amount of instruction, student work, and demonstrated knowledge expected in a similar traditional program;
- the competencies of the program and how the institution determined these are at the appropriate level and complexity congruent with the achievement expected at the relevant degree level for an institution of higher learning;
- demonstration how regular and substantive interaction between faculty and student will occur;
- evidence describing how the institution will ensure faculty responsible for the program have the appropriate academic qualifications;
- documentation of the impact on institutional resources; and
- detail of the leadership and governance structure ensuring academic quality and institutional effectiveness are sustained.

The institution must also obtain United States Department of Education (ED) approval for its first direct assessment program it offers (including hybrid programs) to be eligible for Title IV funding. Subsequent programs from the same institution will not require ED approval for Title IV funding.[27]

[26] See the *Policy on Competency Based Education*

[27] See 34 CFR § 668.10

Contractual Relationship with a Non- Accredited Organization[28]

Non-accredited organizations are those that are not accredited by an agency recognized by the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education (34 C.F.R. § 602.1-602.3).

When an institution contracts certain educational programming that results in the awarding of credit under the auspices of the member institution to a non-accredited entity, the institution is responsible to the Commission for evaluating all significant matters and relationships that may affect accreditation requirements and decisions. Although a non-accredited organization may affect an institution's ongoing compliance with the Accreditation Standards, the Commission will review and hold responsible only the applicant, candidate, or accredited institution for compliance with the Accreditation Standards. The Commission will protect the confidential nature of all information submitted by the institutions or by the non-accredited entities except as otherwise required by law or other Commission policies.

Administrative approval is required when more than 25% of one or more of the accredited institution's for-credit educational programs are offered by the non-accredited organization. For all others (less than 25%), notification is required to ACCJC within 30 days.

See Section 6 for circumstances where prior approval is required before establishing a contractual relationship.

Note: After receiving substantive change approval for the contractual relationship with a non-accredited organization, the accredited institution is obligated to report any changes in control, legal status or ownership of the non-accredited organization through the substantive change process.

In accordance with 34 § CFR 668.5(c)(3)(ii)(A) the institution's for-credit program is eligible for Title IV if the non-accredited institution or organization provides more than 25 percent but less than 50 percent of the educational program. [29]

- The non-accredited organization may provide more than 25% but less than 50% of the program as long as (1) the accredited institution and non-accredited organization are not owned or controlled by the same individual, partnership, or corporation; and (2) ACCJC has determined and confirmed in writing for the accredited institution that the agreement meets its standards for contracting out education services. [30]
- The accredited institution is responsible to perform all aid processing and disbursement for students attending the non-accredited institution or organization and is responsible for maintaining all records necessary to document student eligibility and receipt of aid. [30]

Institutions contracting with providers of software platforms designed to support distance education programs is not considered a written arrangement under 34 § CFR 668.5 when:

- such a contractor provides only the software or platform for coursework, and
- the instruction in the program is still performed by the school's own faculty under the school's supervision.

[28] 34 CFR § 602.22(a)(1)(ii)(J).

[29] 34 CFR § 602.22(a)(1)(ii)(J).

[30] See section on Contractual Arrangements in Federal Student Aid Handbook, Chapter 2, Distance Education and Correspondence Education.

However, if the contractor's staff provides instruction as part of its provision of software or other services, the school must have a contractual agreement in place that establishes the proportion of the program provided by the contractor and ensures it does not exceed the legal limits. [30]

Guidelines for Good Practice in Contracting with Non-Accredited Organizations

The Contract should:

1. Be executed only by duly designated officers of the institution and their counterparts in the non-accredited entity. While other faculty and administrative representatives will undoubtedly be involved in the contract negotiations, care should be taken to avoid implied or apparent power to execute the contract by unauthorized personnel.
2. Establish a definite understanding between the institution and the non-accredited organization regarding the work to be performed, the period of the agreement, and the conditions under which any possible renewal or renegotiation of the contract would take place.
3. Clearly vest the ultimate responsibility for the quality and academic integrity of the performance of the necessary control functions for the educational offering with the accredited institution granting credit for the offering. Such performance responsibility by the credit-granting institution would minimally consist of adequate provision for review and approval of work performed in each functional area by the non-accredited organization, and provisions for ending the contract if the work performed does not meet the institution's requirements, which should include adherence to all the Commission's Standards, federal laws and regulations.
4. At a minimum, clearly establish the responsibilities of the institution and the non-accredited organization regarding:

    a. Indirect Costs
    b. Approval of Salaries
    c. Equipment
    d. Subcontracts and Travel
    e. Property ownership and Accountability
    f. Inventions and Patents
    g. Publications and Copyrights
    h. Accounting Records and Audits
    i. Security
    j. Termination Costs
    k. Tuition Refund
    l. Student Records
    m. Faculty Facilities
    n. Safety Regulations
    o. Insurance Coverage

International Educational Programs

Administrative approval is required for the change or development of an instructional program at an approved international location, including branch campuses or with an affiliated institution at which credit-bearing programs are offered to non-U.S. nationals. This applies both to those institutions which have established their own instructional sites abroad and to those which offer instruction through a contractual relationship with a non-accredited entity.

Non-credit courses or courses offered primarily to U.S. nationals, such as study-abroad programs, do not require substantive change approval.

The principles of good practice follows the basic assumption that regardless of the program's location overseas, the accredited institution is responsible for the program's quality in accordance with the Commission's Accreditation Standards and Policies. The accredited institution also bears the responsibility to assure that any international entity does not claim for itself or infer any accredited status other than that held by the accredited institution.

Principles of Good Practice

Institutional Mission

1. The international program is rooted in the U.S. institution's stated mission and purposes and reflects any special social, religious, and ethical elements of that mission.
2. The faculty, administration, and governing board of the U.S. institution understand the relationship of the international program to the institution's stated mission and purposes.

Authorization

3. The international program has received all appropriate internal approvals where required, including system administration, government bodies, and accrediting associations.
4. The international program has received all appropriate external approvals where required, including system administration, government bodies, and accrediting associations.
5. The U.S. institution documents the accepted legal basis for its operations in the host country.

Instructional Program

6. The U.S. institution specifies the educational needs to be met by its international program.
7. The content of the international educational program is subject to review by the U.S. institution's faculty.
8. The international education program reflects the educational emphasis of the U.S. institution, including a commitment to general education when appropriate.
9. The educational program is taught by faculty with appropriate academic preparation and language proficiencies whose credentials have been reviewed by the U.S. institution.
10. The standard of student achievement in the international program is equivalent to the standard of student achievement on the U.S. campus.
11. The international educational program where possible and appropriate is adapted to the culture of the host country.

Resources

12. The institution currently uses and assures the continuing use of adequate physical facilities for its international educational program, including classrooms, offices, libraries, and laboratories, and provides access to computer facilities where appropriate.
13. The U.S. institution has demonstrated its financial capacity to underwrite the international program without diminishing its financial support of the U.S. campus. Financing of the international program is incorporated into the regular budgeting and auditing process.

Admissions and Records

14. International students admitted abroad meet admissions requirements similar to those used for international students admitted to the U.S. campus, including appropriate language proficiencies.
15. The U.S. institution exercises control over recruitment and admission of students in the international program.
16. All international students admitted to the U.S. program are recognized as students of the U.S. institution.
17. All college-level academic credits earned in the international program are applicable to degree programs at the U.S. institution.
18. The U.S. institution maintains official records of academic credit earned in its international program.
19. The official transcript of record issued by the U.S. institution follows the institution's practices in identifying by site or through course numbering the credits earned in its off-campus programs.

Students

20. The U.S. institution assures that its institutional program provides a supportive environment for student development, consistent with the culture and mores of the international setting.
21. Students in the international program are fully informed as to services that will or will not be provided.

Control and Administration

22. The international program is controlled by the U.S. institution.
23. The teaching and administrative staff abroad responsible for the educational quality of the international program are accountable to a resident administrator of the U.S. institution.
24. The U.S. institution formally and regularly evaluates all faculty and staff associated with its international program.
25. The U.S. institution assesses its international program on a regular basis in light of institutional goals and incorporates these outcomes into its regular planning process.

Ethics and Public Disclosure

26. The U.S. institution can provide to its accrediting agencies upon request a full accounting of the financing of its international program, including an accounting of funds designated for third parties within any contractual relationship.

27. The U.S. institution assures that all media presentations about the international program are factual, fair, and accurate.
28. The U.S. institution's primary catalog describes its international program.
29. The U.S. institution does not sell or franchise the rights to its name or its accreditation.
30. The U.S. institution assures that all references to transfer of academic credit reflects the reality of U.S. practice.
31. The U.S. institution assures that if U.S. accreditation is mentioned in materials related to the international program, the role and purpose of U.S. accreditation is fairly and accurately explained within these materials.

Contractual Arrangements

32. The official contract is in English and the primary language of the contracting institution.
33. The contract specifically provides that the U.S. institution controls the international program in conformity with these guidelines and the requirements of the U.S. institution's accreditations.
34. The U.S. institution confirms that the foreign party to the contract is legally qualified to enter into the contract.
35. The contract clearly states the legal jurisdiction under which its provisions will be interpreted will be that of the U.S. institution.
36. Conditions for program termination specified in the contract include appropriate protection for enrolled students.
37. All contractual arrangements must be consistent with Substantive Change requirements for Contractual Relationships with Non-Accredited Organizations.

Credit Hour, Clock Hour, and Academic Year

Administrative approval is required if change to how the institution measures student progress (i.e. clock hours, semesters, trimesters, or quarters), or if there is a 25% or more increase or decrease in the number of clock or credit hours awarded.

Notification is required if there is less than 25% or more increase or decrease in the number of clock or credit hours awarded.

Substantive Change Committee approval is required if there is a change of an instructional program from clock hours or credit hours to direct assessment of student learning (i.e. competency-based education). *See* Policy on Competency Based Education *for guidance on outcomes based approaches to earning a degree or credential, including direct assessment programs.*

Principles of Good Practice

The Commission's Eligibility Requirements, Accreditation Standards, and Policies require institutions to meet generally accepted practices when awarding credit. These practices require evidence of the following:

1. academic study of sufficient content, breadth, and length;
2. levels of rigor appropriate to the programs and/or degrees, including baccalaureate degrees offered;
3. statements of expected student learning outcomes relevant to the disciplines; and
4. assessment results which provide sufficient evidence that students are achieving key institutional and program learning outcomes.

An accredited institution conforms to a commonly accepted minimum program length of 60 semester credit hours or 90 quarter credit hours awarded for achievement of student learning for an associate degree, 120 semester credit hours or 180 quarter credit hours for a bachelor's degree, or 90 semester hours or 135 quarter hours for an accelerated applied bachelor's degree. Any variation is explained and justified.

An accredited institution must have in place written policies and procedures for determining a credit hour that generally meet commonly accepted academic expectations, and it must apply the policies and procedures consistently to its courses and programs.
Federal Definitions[31]

Credit hour:

Except as provided in 34 CFR § 668.8(k) and (l), a credit hour is an amount of student work defined by an institution, as approved by the institution's accrediting agency or State approval agency, that is consistent with commonly accepted practice in postsecondary education and that—

1) Reasonably approximates not less than—

   (i) One hour of classroom or direct faculty instruction and a minimum of two hours of out-of-class student work each week for approximately fifteen weeks for one semester or trimester

[31] 34 C.F.R. § 600.2

hour of credit, or ten to twelve weeks for one quarter hour of credit, or the equivalent amount of work over a different amount of time; or

(ii) At least an equivalent amount of work as required in paragraph (1)(i) of this definition for other academic activities as established by the institution, including laboratory work, internships, practica, studio work, or other academic work leading to the award of credit hours.

2) Permits an institution, in determining the amount of work associated with a credit hour, to take into account a variety of delivery methods, measurements of student work, academic calendars, disciplines, and degree levels.

Clock hour:

1) A clock hour is a period of time consisting of—
   (i) A 50- to 60-minute class, lecture, or recitation in a 60-minute period;
   (ii) A 50- to 60-minute faculty-supervised laboratory, shop training, or internship in a 60-minute period;
   (iii) Sixty minutes of preparation in a correspondence course; or
   (iv) In distance education, 50 to 60 minutes in a 60-minute period of attendance in—
      a. A synchronous or asynchronous class, lecture, or recitation where there is opportunity for direct interaction between the instructor and students; or
      b. An asynchronous learning activity involving academic engagement in which the student interacts with technology that can monitor and document the amount of time that the student participates in the activity.
2) A clock hour in a distance education program does not meet the requirements of this definition if it does not meet all accrediting agency and State requirements or if it exceeds an agency's or State's restrictions on the number of clock hours in a program that may be offered through distance education.
3) An institution must be capable of monitoring a student's attendance in 50 out of 60 minutes for each clock hour under this definition.
4) For clock-hour programs required to prepare a student for gainful employment in a recognized occupation, the program length cannot generally exceed the State minimum[32].

Clock-to-Credit-Hour Conversion Formula

Federal Formula[33]:

For purposes of determining whether a program meets requirements set forth in Title IV, HEA programs—

1) a semester hour must include at least 30 clock hours of instruction;
2) a trimester hour must include at least 30 clock hours of instruction; and
3) a quarter hour must include at least 20 clock hours of instruction.

[32] 34 CFR § 668.14(b)(26)
[33] 34 C.F.R. § 668.8 (l)(1)(2)

Academic Year:[34] for the purposes of Federal student assistance programs, an academic year has a minimum of 30 weeks of instructional time for a course of study that measures its program length in credit hours or a minimum of 26 weeks of instructional time for a course of study that measures its program length in clock hours. A full time student is expected to complete at least 24 semester credit hours or 36 quarter credit hours in an academic year.

An academic year in a direct assessment program is a period of instructional time that consists of a minimum of 30 weeks of instructional time during which a full time student is expected to complete the equivalent of at least 24 semester credit hours, 36 quarter hours or 900 clock hours.

A week of instructional time is any week in which—

(i) At least one day of regularly scheduled instruction or examinations occurs, or, after the last scheduled day of classes for a term or payment period, at least one day of study for final examinations occurs; or

(ii) (A) In a program offered using asynchronous coursework through distance education or correspondence courses, the institution makes available the instructional materials, other resources, and instructor support necessary for academic engagement and completion of course objectives; and

(B) In a program using asynchronous coursework through distance education, the institution expects enrolled students to perform educational activities demonstrating academic engagement during the week; and

Instructional time does not include any scheduled breaks and activities not included in the definition of "academic engagement" in 34 CFR § 600.2, or periods of orientation or counseling.

Other Significant Changes

The Commission reserves the right to request reports and visits to assess the effects of any change it deems to be a significant departure from the previous reaffirmation of accreditation.

[34] 34 C.F.R. § 668.3

5 Application Submission Requirements and Institutional Responsibility

Substantive change applications are not approved in concept or at planning phase. Applications should be submitted when the institution is able to demonstrate and provide evidence that the change does not impact the institution's ability to continue to meet Eligibility Requirements, Accreditation Standards, and Commission policies and any specific evaluation criteria.

Substantive Change Applications and associated fees (ACCJC Fee Schedule) are due to ACCJC 30 days prior to the scheduled meeting of the Substantive Change Committee. The Substantive Change Committee will not review applications and take action until ACCJC has received payment from the institution. Substantive Change Committee meeting dates are posted on the ACCJC website at (https://accjc.org/substantive-change/).

Prior to submission, the ALO should ensure all relevant constituents are aware of the proposed change and have had the opportunity for review and input into the application, to ensure adherence to the institution's quality assurance processes. Faculty must be appropriately involved in developing and approving programs, especially those who will be responsible for instructional delivery and assessment of the program.

Once the application has been completed, it should be submitted along with any accompanying evidence and the fee. ACCJC staff will review the application and give the institution the opportunity to provide any missing information and to clarify any aspects of the application that are unclear. ACCJC Staff and the Substantive Change Committee reserve the right to defer any application that is incomplete. The preliminary review is designed to assist institutions in avoiding a denial or deferral of the application.

The Substantive Change Committee will review as many Substantive Change Applications as possible at a meeting. Applications that are unable to be reviewed will be scheduled for the next regular meeting of the Committee.

6 Changes that Require Prior Approval from ACCJC before Implementation[35]

Institutions that have been placed on probation or show cause, have been subject to negative action by the Commission over the prior three academic years, or are under a provisional certification, as provided in 34 CFR § 668.13, must receive prior approval from ACCJC to pursue the following changes (all other institutions must report these changes to ACCJC within 30 days):

- A change in an existing degree's method of delivery.
- An aggregate change of 25 percent or more of the clock hours, credit hours, or content of a program since the institution's most recent accreditation review.
- The development of customized pathways or abbreviated or modified courses or programs to—
    - accommodate and recognize a student's existing knowledge, such as knowledge attained through employment or military service; and
    - close competency gaps between demonstrated prior knowledge or competency and the full requirements of a particular course or program.
- Entering into a written arrangement under 34 CFR § 668.5 under which an institution or organization not certified to participate in the title IV, HEA programs offers up to 25 percent of one or more of the accredited institution's educational programs.

Institutions seeking prior approval should notify ACCJC of their intent to implement change through ACCJC's Substantive Change Inquiry Form in the Institutional Portal. ACCJC will notify the institution of the timeline for implementation of change within 15 days of receipt of the inquiry.

[35] 34 CFR § 600.22(b)

7 Substantive Change Committee Actions

The ACCJC Substantive Change Committee will take one of the following actions:

Action	Requirements
Approval	The institution has demonstrated that it meets the evaluation criteria.
Approval with follow-up report	The institution meets the evaluation criteria, but the committee has specific questions (which do not require deferral), requires general verification of sustained practice, or has questions concerning further implementation stages. A visit timeline will be specified, generally within 6-18 months. The Substantive Change Committee will review any follow-up report(s).
Provisional approval	The institution's submitted plans for a change of ownership, additional location, or creation of a branch campus demonstrate future actions that will meet the evaluation criteria. The provisional approval allows the institution to move forward with steps of implementation in preparation for seeking approval of the substantive change. The provisional approval may include a site visit. The provisional approval must state a date, not to exceed three years, by which the change must be approved for inclusion in the institution's accreditation. If that time is exceeded, then the substantive change request process must be initiated anew. An additional location that requires a federally mandated site visit cannot be provisionally approved if there has been a change in ownership since the institution has successfully had three additional locations approved by substantive change. The Committee may require additional reports or visits before the approval is final.
Defer approval pending additional information	Consideration of the request cannot move forward without receipt of additional information demonstrating the evaluation criteria are met.
Refer the proposed change to the Commission	The substantive change application can be referred by the Substantive Change Committee to the Commission when it has determined there may be the need for a comprehensive review or for a special report and visit. The evaluation of the institution's substantive change follow-up report and/or visit may also be referred to the Commission when deemed appropriate for review by the full Commission. The Committee's referral to the Commission will include the reasons for such referral.
Deny the substantive change	The institution has not demonstrated that the change meets the evaluation criteria.

Appeal of Committee Decision

If the institution wishes to appeal the decision of the Substantive Change Committee, the appeal must be filed in writing and will be deliberated at the next meeting of the Commission.

Members of the Substantive Change Committee may participate in the discussion but will abstain from voting on the appeal.

8 Site Visits and Special Reports

Federal regulations require that certain substantive changes include a site visit within six months of the start of operations as part of the approval. Visits are required for:

- an additional location where at least 50% of a program is offered, unless the institution has had at least two previously approved additional locations;
- a new branch campus is established; and
- a change of ownership that results in a change of control.

The purpose of the visit is to verify that the information provided by the institution in its substantive change application was accurate and complete. The visit is also done to verify that the actions implemented align with the plans that received provisional approval by the committee.

Substantive Change site visit teams may either consist of Commission staff, or peer academic and/or administrative reviewers. The type of visit and size of the team will be based on the complexity and type of the proposed change. The visit will focus on the content of the original Substantive Change Application and any updated information requested by Commission staff prior to the visit, as well as any stated concerns of the Substantive Change Committee. The institution will be responsible for the cost of visits that require a team.

A visit is not required for an additional location or branch campus if the institution has provided evidence demonstrating it has clearly identified academic control; regular evaluation of locations; adequate faculty, facilities, resources and academic and student support systems; financial stability; and long-range planning for expansion. Additionally, the institution must meet the conditions below:

- the institution has successfully completed one full cycle of accreditation (comprehensive peer review —midterm review —comprehensive peer review) and has achieved reaffirmation of accreditation; and
- has at least two additional locations that were previously approved by the accreditor; and
- has a demonstrated record of effective oversight of additional locations; and
- the institution has not been on sanction over the prior three academic years.

Additional Locations

A visit must occur within six months after the location has been approved by the Substantive Change Committee. The visit will verify the additional location has the personnel, facilities, and resources the institution described in it its substantive change application.

Branch Campus

A visit must occur as soon as possible, but no longer than six months after the campus is established[36]. The visit will verify the branch campus is permanent in nature, offers courses in programs that lead to a degree or certificate, has its own faculty and administrative organization, and has its own budgetary and hiring authority, as described in the substantive change application.

Change of Ownership

A visit must occur as soon as possible, but no longer than six months after the change takes effect. The Substantive Change Committee can designate the effective date of its approval as being the date of the actual change, so long as the Committee decision is within 30 days of that change of ownership.

Other Site Visits

The Substantive Change Committee may require a visit if it deems one necessary. This could include, but is not limited to the following:

- If the institution is not due for a comprehensive peer review within two years of the approval of the substantive change.
- If there has been rapid growth in the number of additional locations (3 or more within one year) where more than 50% of an educational program is offered.

Interval Site Visits to Approved Additional Locations

In alignment with an institution's mission, educational programs offered, and enrollment, ACCJC conducts site visits to a representative sample of approved additional locations, where 50% or more of a program is being offered, every eight years. ACCJC aspires to visit all locations within the comprehensive review cycle as practical, and at minimum must visit 25% of an institution's additional locations every 8 years. When an institution begins its comprehensive review process, the assigned staff liaison in consultation with the institution and based on current information pertaining to the institution's mission, educational programs, enrollment, and history of prior additional location site visits, will determine which sites require a visit per 602.22(d). Site visits may be conducted by Commission staff or assigned peer reviewers.

Special Report and/or Visit

As a result of a Substantive Change application or review, the Committee may recommend to the Commission that a special report is required by the institution. This report may be followed by a visit. These circumstances are:

- information that reveals or indicates a significant departure from Eligibility Requirements, Accreditation Standards, and Commission policies;
- evidence of unethical practices;
- closure of a program or institution due to loss of state authorization or licensing;
- lack of effective educational policies and practices; or
- other circumstances or the accumulation of changes wherein the Commission concludes the institution to which it granted accreditation, has effectively ceased to operate under the conditions upon which accreditation is granted.

[36] The campus will be deemed to be established when classes are first offered after the criteria for independence are met.

The Commission will use these reports to assess the impact of the implemented change. Requirements for these reports will be specified in the action letter approving the substantive change.

Comprehensive Evaluations

The Substantive Change Committee may decide that a comprehensive peer review is required.[37] Comprehensive peer reviews will include a visit by a peer review team and a Commission decision. Comprehensive peer reviews are required for the following types of major changes:

- change of ownership/control/legal status during the process of reaffirmation of accreditation or candidacy status;
- complete or significant change in mission and/or a significant change of mission within two years of a change of ownership and change of control;
- any relocation coupled with a change of mission;
- a change of classification from an off-site location to an independent institution;
- student indebtedness compared to program, job market, and salary;
- poor student graduation rates, program quality, performance and/or program outcomes;
- rapid growth in the number of additional locations (3 or more within one year) where more than 50% of an educational program is offered;
- any change that results in the transition to a primarily distance education institution; or
- other circumstances or the accumulation of changes as determined by the Substantive Change Committee.

[37] 34 C.F.R. § 602.22(a)(h) Comprehensive peer reviews triggered by a major substantive change will proceed in the same manner as a regularly scheduled comprehensive peer review, with an institutional self-evaluation report, peer review and peer review team report, and action by the Commission on the accredited status of the institution.

Appendix A: Definitions

Administrative Approval	Approval of a change by senior ACCJC staff. Changes that receive administrative approval are included in the institution's scope of accreditation, as of the date on the approval letter.
Committee Approval	Approval of a change by ACCJC's Substantive Change Committee. Changes approved by the committee are included in the institution's scope of accreditation, as of the date on the approval letter.
50% or more of a program	Determined by the total number of credit hours required for completion of a degree or certificate. For associate degrees, this includes general education and any other institutional degree requirements.
Additional Location	A location that is geographically apart from the main campus, and at which students can complete 50% or more of a program. This includes any purchased or leased locations for a term of five or more years. The lease can be either for the full term or renewable for the minimum period.
Branch Campus	An additional 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: (1) is 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.
Geographically apart	A location is geographically apart if it is not within the same reasonable contiguous geographic area of the main campus. This determination takes into account the college mission, geographical setting, transportation, and/or geological barriers.
Credit Hour/Clock Hour	See section on Credit Hour, Clock Hour, and Academic Year.
Distance/Correspondence Education	See ACCJC's *Policy on Distance Education and on Correspondence Education*.
Rapid growth	Rapid growth is considered to be the implementation of three or more additional locations, within one year, where more than 50% of an educational program is offered.
Teach-out plan	See ACCJC's *Policy on Teach-Out Plans and Agreements*.

Appendix B: Principles of Good Practice for Credit for Prior Learning

The Commission is committed to excellence and integrity in credits, certificates, and degrees awarded by member institutions. Institutional policies and procedures must outline the process and standards by which direct assessment of prior learning is conducted, and credits, certificates, and degrees are awarded.

Policies on transfer and award of credit should encompass educational accomplishment attained in extra-institutional settings. Most programs which provide students with the means to acquire knowledge and skills at an individual pace and then to demonstrate achievement of specific competencies to apply toward a course, certificate or degree, do so by clock hour or credit awards. However, an increasing number of programs provide for award of certificate or degree by direct assessment of student learning.

Transfer and award of credit is a concept that increasingly involves transfer between dissimilar institutions and curricula and recognition of extra-institutional learning, as well as transfer between institutions and curricula with similar characteristics. As their personal circumstances and educational objectives change, students seek to have their learning, wherever and however attained, recognized by institutions where they enroll for further study. It is important for institutions to develop reasonable and definitive policies and procedures for acceptance of such learning experiences, as well as for the transfer of credits earned at another institution. Such policies and procedures should provide consideration for the individual student who has changed institutions or objectives. It is the receiving institution's responsibility to provide reasonable and definitive policies and procedures for determining a student's knowledge in required subject areas. Institutions also have a responsibility to advise the student that the work reflected on the transcript may or may not be accepted by a receiving institution as bearing the same (or any) credits as those awarded by the provider.

The basic principle is that each institution is responsible for determining its own policies and practices with regard to the transfer, acceptance, and award of credit. Institutions are encouraged to review their policies and practices periodically to assure that they accomplish the institutions' objectives and that they function in a manner that is fair and equitable to all students. The institution's articulation and transfer procedures should evaluate courses, programs and other learning experiences on their learning outcomes, and the existence of valid measures for assessing learning.

Assessing Prior Learning

In making the determination whether to award college credits, certificates, and degrees to students for prior learning

1. Credit or its equivalent should be awarded only for learning, and not for experience.
2. Assessment should be based on standards and criteria for the level of acceptable learning that are published.
3. Assessment should be treated as an integral part of learning, not separate from it, and should be based on an understanding of learning processes.
4. The determination of credit awards and competence levels must be made by appropriate subject matter and academic or credentialing experts.
5. Credit or other credentialing should be appropriate to the context in which it is awarded and accepted.

6. If awards are for credit, transcript entries should clearly describe what learning is being recognized and should be monitored to avoid giving credit twice for the same learning.

7. Policies, procedures, and criteria applied to assessment, including provision for appeal, should be fully disclosed and prominently available to all parties involved in the assessment process.

8. All personnel involved in the assessment of learning should pursue and receive adequate training and continuing professional development for the functions they perform.

9. Assessment programs should be regularly monitored, reviewed, evaluated, and revised as needed for currency.

Selection of Evaluators for Prior Learning

Faculty members who conduct the evaluation of prior learning experience exercise professional judgment and competency in applying the evaluative criteria and procedures. Faculty who are involved in evaluating prior learning should have the data necessary to determine the skills, competencies, and knowledge held by the candidate for direct assessment of learning, including position descriptions, outlines of training programs completed, and records of examinations taken, if any; and the means to compare the demonstrated learning with the learning outcomes acquired by students who have completed the related course or curriculum.

Appendix C: Relevant Policies and Brief Description

The complete set of ACCJC policies is available on the ACCJC website. The following selection are Commission policies that are particularly relevant to substantive changes.

- The ***Policy on Substantive Change*** provides the framework for this manual and all actions related to Substantive Change.
- The ***Policy on Closing an Institution*** includes requirements of provisions for student completion of programs and transfer to other institutions, academic records, financial aid, faculty and staff, and completion of institutional financial obligations.
- The ***Policy on Teach-Out Plans and Agreements*** includes definitions of teach-out, teach-out plans, and teach-out agreements, and outlines when each would be required, and the process for the Commission's review.
- The ***Policy on Competency Based Education*** provides a definition of competency based education, federally recognized approaches to competency based education, Title IV requirements, and the Commission's responsibility for ensuring direct assessment programs are eligible for Title IV funds.
- In the ***Policy on Distance Education and on Correspondence Education*****,** the Commission recognizes that most institutions will make use of the growing range of systems for delivery of instruction, including various electronic means. The policy is based on principles of good practice to help assure that distance learning is characterized by the same concerns for quality, integrity, and effectiveness that apply to more traditional modes of instruction.