

Title: Off-Campus Instructional Sites

Category: Academic Affairs

Responsible Cabinet Member: Provost

Policy Statement: This policy establishes internal procedures for identifying, approving and managing Off-Campus Instructional Sites (OCIS), ensuring full compliance with Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) standards, including definitions, thresholds for reporting/substantive change and quality oversight. No OCIS may operate or deliver courses beyond 25% of a program until all approvals are finalized.

Scope: The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all OCIS are identified, reviewed, approved and monitored in accordance with SACSCOC Principles of Accreditation and Substantive Change Policy and Procedures. This policy safeguards academic quality, consistency with the University's mission and equitable access to resources for students at all locations.

Definitions:

- Accreditation Liaison: The accreditation liaison is the individual appointed by the University President to ensure the institution's compliance with SACSCOC accreditation requirements and policies.
- The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC): The SACSCOC is an institutional accreditor responsible for quality assurance in higher education. It accredits institutions that award associate, baccalaureate, master's and doctoral degrees, including those offered through distance education, correspondence education and direct assessment.
- Substantive Change: A substantive change is a significant modification or expansion of the nature and scope of an accredited institution, as defined in SACSCOC's substantive change policy. The types of substantive change and the required procedures are outlined in the SACSCOC's Substantive Change Policy and Procedures available on the SACSCOC website.
- Branch Campus: As defined by SACSCOC, a special form of off-campus instructional site:
 - that is geographically apart from an institution's main campus;
 - where instruction is delivered; and
 - is independent of the main campus of an institution. An off-campus instructional site is independent of the main campus if it:
 - is permanent;
 - offers courses in educational programs leading to a degree, diploma, certificate or other for-credit credential;
 - has its own faculty and administrative or supervisory organization; and
 - has its own budgetary and hiring authority.
- Off-campus Instructional Site (OCIS): As defined by SACSCOC, any location geographically separate from the main campus that is:
 - Permanent in nature; and
 - Where instruction is delivered.

- **Academic Award:** As defined by SACSCOC for the purpose of an OCIS, a for-credit credential for which an institution awards a degree, diploma, certificate or other credential at any level of instruction.
- **Percentage of program instruction:** The percentage of the total instruction required to earn a credential measured in credit hours, clock hours, competencies or other generally accepted measure of progress to completion.
- **Site Coordinator:** Individual appointed by the dean who serves as the primary liaison and is responsible for overseeing all academic programs administered by that college and offered at specific OCIS.
- **Instructional Equivalency:** All courses delivered at OCIS shall maintain the same academic rigor, learning outcomes and assessment standards as their main campus counterparts.
- **Dual Enrollment Site:** High-school based OCIS providing university credit.

Responsibilities:

- **Chief Administrative Officers (CAOs) and Other Responsible Individuals are responsible for:**
 - Staying informed about the definitions and criteria of OCIS;
 - Notifying the Accreditation Liaison of any new or potential changes to an existing OCIS;
 - Monitoring the instruction at OCIS by conducting an annual review of off-site course offerings to track total award percentage delivered;
 - When a site approaches the 25% threshold (notification) or 50% threshold (approval), ensuring that no additional courses contributing toward the award is scheduled at that site until all required SACSCOC reporting and approval requirements are completed;
 - Coordinating the preparation of a prospectus or other required documentation; and
 - Identifying and designating a Site Coordinator who will serve as the primary liaison and have oversight for the academic programs administered at the off-campus location.
- **Site-Coordinator is responsible for:**
 - Serving as the primary liaison between the college, the OCIS and the Accreditation Liaison;
 - Ensuring that programs offered at the OCIS comply with University policies and accreditation standards by coordinating faculty qualifications, instructional quality and resource adequacy;
 - Collaborating with the Accreditation Liaison to ensure that all appropriate documentation is submitted including the development of the prospectus as necessary; and
 - Immediately notifying the Accreditation Liaison of any changes related to the OCIS, including changes to the site's location, name, program offerings or operational status, and facilitating all required reviews and documentation for the site.
- **The Accreditation Liaison is responsible for:**
 - Educating and informing campus leaders about policies regarding OCIS and their implications;
 - Implementing and overseeing institutional processes for identifying, monitoring and reviewing OCIS in compliance with SACSCOC's substantive change policy and SACSCOC's Principles of Accreditation;
 - Serving on leadership councils and committees to facilitate early identification of OCIS;

- Providing guidance and support to academic officers and units during the proposal and planning stages;
- Ensuring timely notification and submission of required documentation to SACSCOC;
- Documenting institutional decisions regarding whether an action qualifies as a substantive change;
- Coordinating the preparation and submission of required notification and approvals in collaboration with relevant stakeholders; and
- Maintaining comprehensive records of all approved OCIS at the institution.
- **Procedures for OCIS**
 - **Planning and Approval Annual Review of OCIS instructional activities**
 - Deans, department chairs and site coordinators must annually review off-site course offerings to track total award percentage delivered.
 - If any site is approaching 25% for notification or 50% for approval, academic units are responsible for submitting a notification of intent to the Office of Strategic Planning and Institutional Effectiveness (OSPIE).
 - **Procedures for Reporting an OCIS Curricular Review Process**
 - In accordance with the University's curricular review process, all proposals to establish, modify, relocate, rename or close an OCIS must be reviewed in accordance with the University's curricular review process.
 - OSPIE will maintain a list of all approved OCIS.
 - Any party who wishes to provide 25% or more of an academic award at an OCIS must:
 - Submit a notification of intent to OSPIE for the review and evaluation of potential substantive changes;
 - Collaborate with the SACSCOC Accreditation Liaison and OSPIE to ensure timely submission of required documentation to SACSCOC prior to implementing the change, as required.
 - Submit the proposed change through the University's curricular review process.
 - Ensure that all changes, including change in name, location, program closure at the site or closure of the site, are provided to OSPIE to ensure ongoing compliance with SACSCOC's substantive Change Policy.
 - Ensure proper oversight over the site and the educational quality of the site.
- **Reporting Requirements:** If the Accreditation Liaison determines that a prospectus is required by SACSCOC, the dean or appropriate senior administrators are responsible for coordinating the preparation of the prospectus and submitting it to the Accreditation Liaison for final review and submission.
- **OCIS Quality Assurance and Oversight:** All approved OCIS must have a site coordinator who is responsible for working with OSPIE to ensure ongoing compliance with SACSCOC's Principles of Accreditation. To ensure the academic integrity and institutional accountability of OCIS, the following expectations must be met:
 - Instructors at OCIS must meet the same credential requirements as their main campus counterparts and will follow all procedures and policies established by the Office for Faculty Advancement.

- OCIS courses must be equivalent in rigor, content and oversight to all campus-based instruction and must be integrated into the institution's program assessment processes.
- Library and Information Resources must be accessible to OCIS students.
- Academic and Student Support Services (e.g., advising, tutoring, career services) must be available and appropriate in scope for OCIS locations.
- Students must be provided with accurate marketing through recruiting, admission and transfer information.

To ensure expectations are met, OCIS are expected to be regularly evaluated for the adequacy of faculty, facilities and academic/student services; the administrative and fiscal capacity to support off-campus instruction; and the effectiveness of ongoing academic controls and governance mechanisms.

References and Related Information:

- University of Kentucky Substantive Change Policy
- SACSCOC Substantive Change Policy
- SACSCOC Maintaining Quality and Compliance at Off-Campus Instructional Sites