

SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE IN MEMBER AND AFFILIATED INSTITUTIONS

INTRODUCTION

The accreditation of an institution by the Commission signifies that the institution has undergone a successful peer group review, and the members of the Commission confirm for the public interest that the institution is achieving the mission and goals which it has set for itself. When an institution is accredited -- or the accreditation is continued -- it is important to remember that the review was made of conditions and programs at the institution at a particular point in time. Since institutions grow and adapt to changes in the external environment, the Commission requires that all institutions be periodically reevaluated.

The decision by an institution to modify its mission/goals is the prerogative of the institution, and the Commission encourages its member institutions to be innovative and entrepreneurial. When an institution plans a change that is substantive in nature -- a change that is a basic alteration of the mission or scope of the institution, the control of the institution, or the ability of the institution to maintain the quality of the instructional program -- the Commission is obligated to monitor such changes to determine the impact of the substantive change on the institution's effectiveness and integrity.

POLICY

Substantive change in an institution is subject to review by the Commission prior to and subsequent to implementation. A substantive change is not automatically covered by the institution's current accreditation status (or candidacy status). A significant change that indicates a lack of concern for consistency with an institution's stated mission, quality of instruction, or ability to maintain its financial integrity might jeopardize the continuation of accreditation for the institution.

The Commission has a responsibility to the public and to the education community to seek assurance that a major institutional change, particularly one that signifies a departure from the institution's stated purposes at the time of its latest accreditation action, is both appropriate to the institution's mission and within the capability of the institution to implement the change with an emphasis on quality. Thus the Commission reserves the right to reconsider the accreditation status of member institutions at certain times.

An institution planning to make a substantive change as described below must request Commission approval prior to the initiation of the change. In the event that an unplanned substantive change occurs, this change must be immediately brought to the attention of the Commission. Commission decisions about these matters are based on recommendations that emerge from the Commission's peer review process and/or investigatory review process. If an institution is unclear if a change is substantive in nature, it should contact the Commission for consultation. Please see attached sample notification letter.

CATEGORIES OF SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE

The circumstances surrounding a substantive change have been placed into categories as described below. Various types of reviews can occur depending upon the nature of the change and the implications of such a change upon the institution.

A. Changes requiring an on-site visit by a peer review team or Commission staff member within six months

Contracting with non-regionally accredited institutions/organizations that provide more than 50% of the instruction in a credit-bearing program

The co-offering of programs with other institutions

The merger of a regionally accredited institution with another regionally accredited institution

The merger of a regionally accredited institution with a non-regionally accredited institution

The relocation of a campus

Any change in the established mission or objectives of the institution

The establishment of an additional location geographically apart from the main campus at which the institution offers at least 50 percent of an educational program.

B. Changes requiring either a peer review reaction to written documents or an on-site peer review visit or Commission staff visit within six months

The initiation of a new program that requires either the infusion of substantial new funding or the substantial reallocation of existing financial resources. The concern here is the degree to which an institution may harm existing programs/majors by removing financial and other resources from existing programs/majors to fund the costly new program/major

The establishment of a new program that changes the mission of the institution (an institution with a career orientation adding a program that is primarily transfer in nature, for example)

The opening of a new instructional site

A change from clock hours to credit hours or vice versa

A substantial increase in the number of clock hours or credit hours awarded for successful completion of a program or the length of a program

The addition of courses or programs that represent a significant departure either in content or method of delivery from those that were offered when the Commission most recently evaluated the institution

C. Changes requiring a report from a Commission staff member to the Commission following an on-site visit within six months

A change in ownership, control, and/or legal status of the institution

Any action seeking to merge or to transfer the accreditation status of two or more institutions

Any financial circumstances that jeopardize the stability of the institution: bankruptcy, a declaration of financial exigency due to budget cuts, or other reasons

An announcement of the closure of an institution

D. Institutional circumstances that may require action after a review by the Commission

The existence of highly publicized, divisive controversies between, among or within the governing board, the administration, the faculty, and/or the students

Significant unplanned reductions in program offerings, faculty and/or enrollments during the past two years

Notification of sanctions applied by governmental agencies and/or by other institutional or professional accrediting groups that threaten the viability of the institution

Serious legal, financial, or ethical investigations

Natural disasters that jeopardize the institution's physical infrastructure that make it "impossible" for the institution to continue to operate

Serious misrepresentation to students and/or the public regarding such matters as the financial condition of the institution; the authority the institution has to offer certificates or diplomas; the education and experience of the faculty; and similar concerns

**NEW ENGLAND ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES
COMMISSION ON TECHNICAL AND CAREER INSTITUTIONS**

SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE NOTIFICATION FORM

Name of Institution: _____

Address: _____

Name and Title of Individual
Reporting the Change: _____

Date of Change or Projected Change: _____

Please complete and return this form by checking the type of substantive change that your institution is reporting to the Commission.

PART I

GROUP A

- _____ Contracting with non-regionally accredited institutions/organizations that provide more than 50% of the instruction in a credit-bearing program
- _____ The co-offering of programs with other institutions
- _____ The merger of a regionally accredited institution with another regionally accredited institution
- _____ The merger of a regionally accredited institution with a non-regionally accredited institution
- _____ The relocation of a campus
- _____ Any change in the established mission or objectives of the institution
- _____ The establishment of an additional location geographically apart from the main campus at which the institution offers at least 50 percent of an educational program.

Group B

- _____ The initiation of a new program that requires either the infusion of substantial new funding or the substantial reallocation of existing financial resources. The concern here is the degree to which an institution may harm existing programs/majors by removing financial and other resources from existing programs/majors to fund the costly new program/major
- _____ The establishment of a new academic program that changes the mission of the institution (an institution with a career orientation adding a program that is primarily transfer in nature, for example)
- _____ The opening of a new instructional site
- _____ A change from clock hours to credit hours or vice versa
- _____ A substantial increase in the number of clock hours or credit hours awarded for successful completion of a program or the length of a program

Substantive Change Notification Form

_____ The addition of courses or programs that represent a significant departure either in content or method of delivery from those that were offered when the Commission most recently evaluated the institution

Group C

- _____ A change in ownership, control, and/or legal status of the institution
- _____ Any action seeking to merge or to transfer the accreditation status of two or more institutions
- _____ Any financial circumstances that jeopardize the stability of the institution: bankruptcy, a declaration of financial exigency due to budget cuts, or other reasons
- _____ An announcement of the closure of an institution

Group D

- _____ The existence of highly publicized, divisive controversies between, among or within the governing board, the administration, the faculty, and/or the students
- _____ Significant unplanned reductions in program offerings, faculty, and/or enrollments during the past two years
- _____ Notification of sanctions applied by governmental agencies and/or by other institutional or professional accrediting groups that threaten the viability of the institution
- _____ Serious legal, financial or ethical investigations
- _____ Natural disasters that jeopardize the institution's physical infrastructure that make it "impossible" for the institution to continue to operate
- _____ Serious misrepresentation to students and/or the public regarding such matters as the financial condition of the institution; the authority the institution has to offer certificates or diplomas; the education and experience of the faculty; and similar concerns

PART II

Please describe in detail the change itself and your assessment of the impact on the institution. Please include financial data, planning documents, enrollment data, and other pertinent information. Feel free to use additional sheets as needed.

Signature

Date

Return to Paul Bento, Director
NEASC Commission on Technical and Career Institutions
209 Burlington Road, Suite 201
Bedford, MA 01730-1433
e-mail: pbento@neasc.org Tel # 781-271-0022, ext. 5416 - Fax # 781-271-0950

SAMPLE NOTIFICATION LETTER

~

FAILURE TO REPORT A SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE

NEW ENGLAND ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES, INC.

209 Burlington Road, Suite 201, Bedford, MA 01730-1433

Tel. (781) 271-0022, ext. 5416 - Fax (781) 271-0950

COMMISSION ON TECHNICAL AND CAREER INSTITUTIONS

Paul Bento
Director of the Commission
781-541-5416
pbento@neasc.org

[[Contact:26]]
[[Title:46]]
[[Company:25]]
[[Address 1:27]]
[[City:30]], [[State:31]] [[Zip:32]]

Dear _____

While we are gratified by the Institution's success with its new program, we are concerned that the program at the new location started without Commission approval. We remind you of our policy on Substantive Change which specifies that such changes are to be submitted to the Commission at least six months before the planned implementation. Should the Institution contemplate any additional off-campus locations or other substantive changes, you are encouraged to work closely with the Commission's staff. Failure to do so may result in an adverse action by the Commission.

Sincerely,

Paul Bento