

New WSCUC Substantive Change Requirements

Certificates that Carry Academic Credit

WSCUC revised its substantive change policies in spring 2017, most significantly retiring the Degree Level Approval Policy effective July 1, 2017. Those revisions were documented in the June 2017 edition of its [Substantive Change Manual](#). Excerpts (in italics) relevant to the newly added policies regarding review of certificates are at pp. 6-7 of this manual and include:

Non-Degree Program Reporting and/or Review Requirements

Institutions are required to report and/or submit for review all new non-degree programs. For this purpose, a non-degree program consists of all of the following:

- *is a series of courses*
- *carries academic credit from the offering institution*
- *results in a credential of some kind (certificate, diploma, credential, etc.)*
- *results in a credential that is independent and not awarded as a result of completing an approved degree program*

The distinction between new non-degree programs that require review and those that only need to be reported upon implementation is whether or not the program is a significant departure for the institution.

Significant Departure

A program that is a significant departure in either content or modality from the institution's current offerings will require a review by WSCUC. Generally, these will be staff reviews and will follow an expedited timeline (reviewed within 30 days). WSCUC does reserve the right to refer the proposal to a panel of the Substantive Change Committee. A specific template for proposals has been developed for non-degree programs and is available on the WSCUC website. Examples of significant departures include: an offering in a curricular area in which the institution has no current approved programs (such as a new accounting certificate offered by an institution with no Business programs) or offering an online program at an institution with no or very few approved online programs or vice versa. If there is any doubt as to whether or not a new program is a significant departure from current offerings, please consult with the Substantive Change staff.

Not a Significant Departure

A program that is not a significant departure from an institution's current approved curricular offerings or approved modality must be reported when implemented but does not require a review. As part of notifying WSCUC of implementation, the institution will be asked to identify the existing corresponding program that demonstrates the new program is not a significant departure. If, upon notification, the staff determines that the program is a significant departure, the institution will then need to submit a proposal to be reviewed. If there is any doubt as to whether or not a new program is a significant departure from current offerings, please consult with the Substantive Change staff.

With this requirement in place as of June 2017, all new certificates must be screened by WSCUC via a screening form accessed through the ALO electronic portal in advance of implementation. WSCUC staff reviews the screening form and determines whether the newly proposed certificate is a significant departure from our current offerings, thus requiring substantive change review.

New Additional Locations

Also new as of June 2017 is that WSCUC requires review of all newly proposed branch and additional locations, without regard to the distance the new location is from USF's main campus. In other words, the "25 mile rule" is retired and a substantive change review is required for all new locations implemented after June 2017.

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