



## **GAC Substantive Change Policy (GAC Handbook Section B.5.2):**

A **substantive change** to an accredited program is one that may impact the extent to which the program aligns with the GAC Accreditation Standards. Substantive changes may include, but are not limited to:

- Withdrawal, or risk thereof, of institutional/governmental accreditation.
- A change or variation in the name of the program and/or degree title.
- Changes in ownership, legal status or form of control of the institution.
- Introducing a new educational method beyond the scope described in the application under which the program received a grant of accreditation, for example, adding significant distance learning or self-evaluation components.
- Changes in the accredited program's source(s) of financial support.
- Merging of current accredited programs to create a new program.
- Significant changes to subjects/courses offered within the accredited degree or award that may affect the program's alignment with the GAC core areas of focus.

When substantive changes occur, the primary concern of the GAC is that the accredited program continues to align with GAC Accreditation Standards. Accredited programs must be able to demonstrate that any substantive change(s) will not adversely affect the ability of the program to comply with GAC Accreditation Standards. If the program changes are determined by GAC to represent a sufficient departure from practices in place at the time of application, GAC may elect to re-evaluate the program before the next formal submission GAC Renewal of Accreditation is due.

## **Reporting Substantive Changes (GAC Handbook Appendix F):**

All accredited programs are expected to report substantive changes in writing to the GAC in a timely manner. If a program is uncertain whether a change is substantive, the provider should contact the GAC staff for clarification and guidance.

The following procedures shall apply to substantive changes:

1. The program must submit a description and/or documentation describing the change(s) and explaining how the accredited program continues to be aligned with GAC Accreditation Standards.
2. The GAC Directors review the submitted substantive change report and documentation to evaluate the change and determine whether the change may impact the program's continued alignment with GAC Accreditation Standards.
3. After the review is completed, the accredited program will receive written notification from the GAC that:
  - a. The information is acceptable and will be kept on file for review at the time of the program's next scheduled GAC Reaffirmation of Accreditation;
  - b. Additional documentation is required; or
  - c. An interim review is initiated to reconsider the accreditation decision, as the program may no longer be in alignment with GAC Accreditation Standards.

If at any time, GAC discovers a program has undergone a substantive and unreported change, it will request additional information from the program along with a comprehensive report of any substantive changes that have occurred since the last accreditation review.

Submission of false or misleading information shall be grounds for withdrawal of GAC accreditation status. GAC may exercise its right to re-evaluate an accredited program at any time during its period of accreditation.