

GAC Substantive Change Policy

(GAC Handbook (5.1) 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.

All accredited programs are expected to submit a Substantive Change Report to GAC before the change is made effective. The program should contact GAC staff for clarification and guidance if they are unsure about whether a change is substantive.

Substantive changes may include but are not limited to:

- Withdrawal, or risk thereof, of institutional/governmental accreditation;
- Change in the name of the program and/or degree title;
- Change in ownership, legal status, or form of control of the institution;
- Change in the program's source(s) of financial support;
- Merging of current accredited programs to create a new program;
- Significant changes to the curriculum of an accredited degree or award that may affect the program's alignment with the GAC core areas of focus, including replacing 25% or more of the program's courses or subjects that align to the GAC core areas of focus; and/or
- Change in the location of the degree or award, offering the degree or award at a branch campus, or discontinuing a branch campus.

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.

If the program changes are determined by GAC to represent a sufficient departure from practices in place at the time of affirmation/reaffirmation, GAC may elect to reevaluate the program before the next submission for GAC Reaffirmation of Accreditation is due.

The following procedures apply to reporting substantive changes:

1. The program must submit a Substantive Change Report demonstrating alignment with GAC Accreditation Standards.
2. The GAC directors review the report and evidence to evaluate the change and determine whether the change may impact the program's continued alignment with the GAC Accreditation Standards.
3. The GAC directors make one of the following decisions:
 - a. To accept the report;

- b. To request additional information; or
 - c. To require a visit before further action, as the program may no longer be in alignment with GAC Accreditation Standards.
4. A decision letter is sent to the program.

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 reevaluate an accredited program at any time during its period of accreditation.