



March 31, 2023

Dr. Michael Amiridis  
President  
University of South Carolina - Columbia  
206 Osborne Administration Bldg.  
Columbia, SC 29208

Dear Dr. Amiridis:

Thank you for submitting the following substantive change:

Substantive change:  
**OCIS Approval Limited Review**  
**River Bluff High School**  
**320 Corley Mill Road**  
**Lexington, SC 29072**  
Submission date:  
**12/17/2021**  
Intended Implementation date:  
**8/1/2022**  
Case ID:  
**SC019950**

The institution's submission is dated December 17, 2021, but SACSCOC has no record of the submission. As a courtesy, we are accepting the institution's copy of the original submission for review received on November 10, 2022.

We requested the following additional information on December 9, 2022; the institution responded on January 4, 2023:

1. the date the site will reach 50% of the degree(s) offered there;
2. an updated course schedule and course descriptions based on the intended implementation date;
3. whether the site is intended to be a branch campus;
4. clarification of the educational program(s) offered at the site;
5. the projected number of students for the first year of operation;
6. the projected life of the change;
7. a description of how the institution approved the implementation of the site;
8. documentation of faculty involvement in planning and approving the site;
9. whether site approval was required by the institution's governing board or the state, and if so, approval documentation;
10. an updated faculty roster beginning the term that the site will reach or reached 50%;
11. the adequacy of the number of full-time faculty members to support the site;
12. the impact of the implementation of the site on faculty workload;



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13. the discipline-specific materials available to students at the site;
14. how students at the site will be informed of the library and learning/information resources available to them, how they will learn to access the resources, and how they will be instructed in using the resources;
15. the equipment available at the site to support the programs offered there;
16. resources to be directed to institutions or organizations for contractual or support services for the site;
17. a contingency plan should the expected revenue not materialize or should costs exceed estimates; and
18. a description of the University of South Carolina – Columbia assessment procedure.

We requested the following additional information on January 17, 2023; the institution responded on March 6, 2023:

1. whether the institution offered 50% or more of the degrees at the site as anticipated in fall 2022;
2. an updated faculty roster for River Bluff High School for the first year of operation; and
3. additional information regarding the qualifications of seven faculty members. The institution's responses have been added to the record and are reflected in the narrative below.

The University of South Carolina – Columbia implemented the River Bluff High School off-campus instructional site (OCIS) that offers 50% or more of the approved Associate of Arts (AA) and Associate of Science (AS) degree programs. The institution affirmed that the site reached the 50% threshold for these programs in fall 2022. River Bluff High School is in the same state as the institution's main campus and will not be a branch campus. The site is expected to be ongoing and had an enrollment of 169 students in fall 2022. Instruction will be offered through traditional in-class, onsite, and distance education delivery. The institution is approved for distance education. The target audience will be constituents in adjacent communities in Lexington County. The course schedule and course descriptions to be taught during the first year of operation were provided and appeared to be appropriate.

The rationale for the site was based on data indicating that only 20% of South Carolinians between the ages of 25-34 earn a bachelor's, graduate, or professional degree and United States Census Bureau data indicating population growth and demographic changes within the target population. The proposed site appears to be consistent with the institution's mission. Administrators from the USC Sumter off-campus instructional site branch campus and the Lexington One School District, with consultation/approval from USC Sumter branch campus faculty, determined that general education courses offered as part of the associate degree requirements would serve students best as dual enrollment courses by satisfying high school graduation requirements and maintaining the highest rate of transferability beyond high school.



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Approval to implement the site was documented through correspondence from the University of South Carolina Board of Trustees and the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education.

An updated faculty roster was provided. Faculty members appeared to have appropriate credentials for the assigned courses. A combination of full- and part-time faculty members will provide instruction at the site. The institution has hired a full-time instructor to teach at the site and anticipates hiring another. The adequacy of the full-time faculty assigned to the site was described and appeared to be sufficient. There will be no impact on faculty workload. Keep in mind that the ultimate determination of faculty qualifications and faculty adequacy is the responsibility of the peer review team who will assess the site as part of the institution's next SACSCOC accreditation review.

The library and learning resources supporting the site will be provided through the Anderson Library at the USC Sumter branch campus. The resources were described and appeared to be sufficient. These include databases such as JSTOR, PsycARTICLES, and World Cat OCLC. Students enrolled at the site will access the discipline-specific learning resources in person or online. They may access the electronic card catalog and databases remotely, place physical items on reserve, and pick them up at the Anderson Library using their Carolina Card. Students will be informed of the library and learning resources and how they can be accessed and used through orientation sessions, course syllabi, and individual course orientation. Resources to support students in accessing and using learning resources include the availability of librarians and the ability to request resources through PASCAL and interlibrary loans.

Student support services were described and appeared to be adequate. The services will be provided at the site as needed, including admissions, disability services, financial aid, personal counseling, and veterans support. Students may pre-order textbooks online to be delivered to River Bluff High School. They can access tutoring in person at USC Sumter or via the Brainfuse online tutoring service. Personal counseling is provided by River Bluff High School and USC Sumter.

The physical resources available to support the site were described and appeared to be sufficient. The resources include classrooms equipped with technology to facilitate instruction. Classroom equipment includes a computer, projector, screen, speakers, document camera, and smart board. Students have district-issued computers, which can integrate with classroom technology. All basic infrastructure needs have been met, and no major equipment purchases are expected to be necessary to implement the site. The River Bluff High School site will not have a substantive impact on existing programs and services.

A budget was provided, and the institution appeared to have adequate resources to support the site. Funding will be generated by tuition; expenditures include the salaries of program administration and faculty and staff members. Revenue is expected to exceed expenditures in the first year. The institution affirmed that no resources are going to institutions or organizations



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for contractual or support services for the site. A contingency plan was provided should the required resources not materialize.

The institutional assessment process was described and appeared to be sufficient. A copy of the *Assessment of Student Learning* policy was provided. The institution requires every degree program to develop student learning outcomes and establish ways to evaluate student performance on the outcomes. Assessment implementation is the responsibility of program faculty, with administrative oversight provided by the Office of Institutional Research, Assessment, and Analytics (OIRAA). Reporting is done by program faculty through the Assessment Plan Composer report and is evaluated by the department chair or school director and the OIRAA. Learning outcomes for students who take courses at the River Bluff High School site are included in the annual assessment reports for the associate degree programs. The institution's Director of Institutional Effectiveness and Accreditation collects and reviews the academic program assessment plan documentation for all campuses.

After initial approval, an off-campus instructional site may be reviewed again in conjunction with the fifth-year and/or decennial reaffirmation reviews.

Once an institution is approved to offer 50% or more of a program at a specific off-campus site, neither notification nor approval is necessary when any percentage of an additional approved program is offered at that site.

In the future, please submit a single PDF document with embedded links to the addendum and additional information contained in the document. Do not include links to external sites.

Because the site has been in operation since August 1, 2022, without approval, the institution appears to be non-compliant with Standard 14.2 (substantive change). **You will receive an email with instructions for uploading your institution's substantive change policy and procedure document(s) demonstrating compliance with Standard 14.2. Please upload your document(s) by September 1, 2023. Include evidence the policy and procedure is written, approved through institutional processes, published in institutional documents accessible to those affected, and implemented and enforced by the institution.** In developing the document, consult *Developing Policy and Procedure Documents – Good Practices*, available on the SACSCOC website. The SACSCOC Board of Trustees will review the document at its December 2023 meeting. **Upload the document(s) as instructed in the email: do not mail the document(s) or include them with other submissions or correspondence.**

**The Board of Trustees of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges reviewed the materials seeking approval of the River Bluff High School off-campus instructional site (OCIS). It was the decision of the Board to approve the site and include it in the scope of accreditation.**



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Enclosed is an invoice for \$500 to help defray the cost of reviewing the prospectus.

Should you need assistance, please contact Dr. Linda Thomas-Glover at (404) 994-6557 or via email at [lthomas-glover@sacscoc.org](mailto:lthomas-glover@sacscoc.org).

Please include the Case ID number above in all submissions or correspondence about this substantive change.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Belle S. Wheelan".

Belle S. Wheelan, Ph.D.  
President

BSW/TDB:LP

Enclosure (invoice with liaison's copy only)

cc: Mr. Donald Miles, Executive Director Institutional Research, Assessment, and Analytics,  
University of South Carolina - Columbia  
Dr. Linda Thomas-Glover, Vice President, SACSCOC