

Academic Program Review

GUIDELINES

Purpose. Program development and improvement should result from a thorough assessment of a program's strengths and weaknesses and its intended direction. Program review is intended to assist the unit in its' data-driven, decision-making processes. Also, it should present answers to the following questions:

- Are there areas of the program that exemplify the University mission and goals and can serve as models for others?
- Does the program have a curriculum that is intellectually and creatively challenging and that offers an opportunity for students to realize a high quality education?
- Do faculty teaching, research, and service activities adequately sustain a vital, effective program?
- Are University resources sufficient to support continued delivery of the program?
- Are any existing programs and services no longer required at current levels?
- Which current programs and services need to be improved and how can improvement be accomplished?
- Are any additional programs needed?

The value of the program review rests on its process, its outcomes, and its usefulness. Because the process and outcomes are developed to improve educational opportunities, curriculum quality, and program relevance, it is essential that the University make appropriate use of the results.

Participation. The Chief Academic Officer (CAO), Council of Academic Officers, Department Heads, Graduate Dean (if appropriate), faculty, students in the program, and other key constituents (business, industry, or other representatives) have varying degrees of involvement in the process. The results are reported to the President, CAO, Council of Academic Officers, and the unit, and are made available to the University bodies involved in planning, assessment, and budgeting.

Procedure. Department-level program review occurs according to a rotating schedule prepared by the CAO and Executive Director of Institutional Effectiveness & Human Resources. The review consists of a self-study prepared by the unit and a site visit conducted by an external reviewer.

1. One year before the scheduled site visit, the Executive Director of Institutional Effectiveness & Human Resources will provide the format and deadlines to the unit who will participate in the review process. The Executive Director conducts a unit orientation to provide information regarding the process, materials, and expected outcomes. The Office of Institutional Research will be an integral part of this meeting, as they will work with the unit to discuss their needs regarding data. Information will be provided on the *Data Reporting Forms* documents (attached).
2. The unit completes the self-study by providing General Information and responding to a common set of Core Items found in the *Academic Program Review Self-Study* document (attachment). To save time and minimize duplication of efforts, units with both graduate and undergraduate programs are assessed during the same review period.
3. The CAO, Executive Director of Institutional Effectiveness & Human Resources, and the Dean (Graduate Dean is included when appropriate) review the report. The CAO provides feedback to the unit and approve the process to continue.
4. The unit uses the Criteria for Selecting a Consultant, provided by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness & Human Resources in compiling a list of potential consultants to conduct the external review. The Office of Institutional Effectiveness & Human Resources contacts these individuals to provide process details and request resumes. The CAO review the names and resumes and determines who will be selected. This is a desirable aspect of program review, in that it provides an evaluation from recognized experts in the field, ensures objectivity, provides perspectives concerning the program's relationship to the discipline, and lends credibility to the process.
5. Once the external reviewer is selected, the Office of Institutional Effectiveness & Human Resources assists the unit in coordinating the visit to campus. The external reviewer conducts the program review and summarizes the findings and recommendations in a written report to the Office of Institutional Effectiveness & Human Resources. This report is copied and provided to the CAO, Dean, and unit, which review it for accuracy.
6. The unit responds in writing to the external reviewer's report. Individual faculty comments are invited and included in the unit response.
7. The President, CAO, the Executive Director of Institutional Effectiveness & Human Resources, appropriate dean(s), and department head meet to review the unit's response to the external reviewer's report and determine an action plan in response to the findings.
8. The Office of Institutional Effectiveness & Human Resources and University Archives, located in Watson Library, keep a permanent record of the program review report and associated documents.
9. The final results are reported to the President. Also, these results are made available to University bodies involved in planning, assessment, and budgeting processes.