A GUIDE TO
ACADEMIC PROGRAM REVIEW
for Accredited Programs

Office of the Provost
Spring 2017
## Table of Contents

Preface ............................................................................................................................................. 3

Purpose of Academic Program Review ......................................................................................... 3

The Self-Study ................................................................................................................................. 4

Timeline and Activities ...................................................................................................................... 5

Appendix A: Primary Roles ............................................................................................................ 6

Appendix B: Guidelines for Preparation of a Self-Study Report .................................................. 7

Frequently Asked Questions ........................................................................................................... 13

Contacts and Additional Information ............................................................................................. 15
Preface

Academic program review is a cyclical process for evaluating and continuously enhancing the quality and currency of academic programs. The evaluation is conducted through a process of self-evaluation, followed by peer evaluation via reviewers external to the program or department, usually also external to the organization. It is a comprehensive analysis of program quality, utilizing a wide variety of data about the program. Program review operates on a nominal eight-year cycle, meaning that each program is reviewed every eight years. In general, reviews of accredited programs will be scheduled to synchronize with the accreditation reviews of the various professional programs. Academic Program Reviews are conducted through the Faculty Senate’s Curricular Affairs Committee (CAC) in partnership with the Office of the Provost.

To be effective, the system of academic program review must be straightforward, objective, and transparent. It must be carried out in a timely manner and implemented deliberately.

The result of the academic program review process is a clear picture of the program’s strengths, challenges, and opportunities. These outcomes are used to inform strategic planning and resource allocation at program, department, college, and university levels.

Purpose of an Academic Program Review

The purposes of academic program review are to:

- Ensure that academic programs are maintained at the highest possible level of quality.
- Provide a basis for continuous quality improvement of academic programs.
- Help ensure the viability of academic programs.
- Guide strategic planning and decision-making regarding academic programs.
- Ensure that academic programs serve the mission and vision of the university.
The Self-Study

The standard academic program review process is streamlined for programs that undergo reaccreditation review by their professional organizations. A comprehensive self-study report is not required. The Faculty Senate Curricular Affairs Committee internal review subcommittee (IRS) works with the materials prepared by the program for the reaccreditation body. The program is only responsible for providing additional information if there are elements of a self-study report that are not addressed in the materials assembled for the accreditation process. To the extent possible, APR reviews will be synchronized with the accreditation reviews of the various professional programs to provide a measure of efficiency.

In addition to the accreditation materials, the program is responsible for providing:

- An executive summary
- An index that identifies the location of the relevant data that directly applies to the seven standards\(^1\) in the accreditation materials:
  I. Contribution to Mission
  II. Program Quality
  III. Demand
  IV. Societal Need
  V. Quality Control Mechanisms
  VI. Effectiveness
- Supplemental materials addressing anything that is not addressed in the accreditation self-study
- A summary of any planned, in-progress or completed actions that have been undertaken in response to the recommendation of the accrediting body.

When required, the Graduate Executive Committee provides a written assessment to the graduate program(s).

---

\(^1\) The *Guidelines for Preparation of a Self-Study Report for Program Review* (Appendix B) have been included in its entirety. The Standards and Criteria section is located on pages 10 - 12.
## SAMPLE
Cycle 10 Timeline and Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Approximate Time Frame</th>
<th>Responsibilities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Spring 2017**                                    | — Provost’s Office sends notification letter to program chair/director.  
                                          | — APR Coordinator creates Sharepoint site for program.                                                                                       |
| **Spring and Fall 2017**                           | — Program chair/director meets with OIR Director to discuss data for the accredited program self-study report if needed.  
                                          | — The chair/director organizes and initiates the accredited program self-study report.                                                        |
| **Spring 2018 – 6 weeks prior to end of semester** | — Program chair/director posts final self-study report to program APR Sharepoint site. APR Coordinator notifies internal reviewers the self-study report is available for review.  
                                          | — When required, the Graduate Executive Committee provides a written assessment to the graduate program(s).                                   |
| **Within 6 weeks of self-study completion**        | — Internal Review Subcommittee (IRS) meets with authors of the self-study report.  
                                          | — IRS prepares report, and submits to full Curricular Affairs Committee (CAC) for vote.                                                       |
| **Within 6 months after CAC vote**                 | — Provost, Associate Provost, relevant dean(s), program chair/director, CAC Chair, internal review subcommittee, and APR Coordinator meet to discuss internal reviewers reports and develop a summary memo. |
| **Within 1 month of summary meeting**              | — APR Coordinator drafts the APR Summary Memo for review and signature by Provost, Associate Provost, and CAC chair. APR Coordinator distributes signed report. |
| **Two years following summary meeting**            | — Provost, Associate Provost, relevant dean(s), program chair/director, CAC Chair, and APR Coordinator meet to review findings and recommendations in the APR Summary Memo. |
| **Within 1 month of two-year follow-up meeting**   | — APR Coordinator drafts two-year follow-up report for review and signature by Provost, Associate Provost, and CAC Chair. APR Coordinator distributes signed memo to meeting participants. |
APPENDIX A: Primary Roles: Provost’s Office, Faculty Senate, and Program

Provost’s Office
- Establish and maintain a long-term schedule of program reviews
- Manage the academic program review budget
- Establish and maintain a Sharepoint site for each program review
- Move reports through the final stages of the process
- Oversee summary meeting and report process
- Oversee two-year follow-up review

Faculty Senate Curricular Affairs Committee (CAC)
- Assign committee members to serve on internal review subcommittee
  - Read and thoroughly understand the Program’s accreditation self-study
  - Prepare written report and present to full CAC
- Receive the report from the internal review subcommittee
- Vote to accept or reject the report of the internal review subcommittee
- Participate in the summary and two-year follow-up meetings
- Provide an annual report on APR activities

Program Chair/Director
- Prepare accreditation self-study and related materials according to the Guidelines.
  (See Appendix B)

College/School Dean(s)
- Participate in summary and two-year follow-up meetings
APPENDIX B: Guidelines for Preparation of a Self-Study Report
For Program Review

Introduction:

This document is a companion to the document *System for Academic Program Review at The University of Vermont*. The latter document describes the policies and procedures for a review of an academic program as well as the standards and criteria for review. The document can be reviewed in its entirety at the Provost’s Office website [http://www.uvm.edu/~provost/](http://www.uvm.edu/~provost/)

Purpose of the Self-Study Report:

The self-study report of an academic program describes an academic program using a common set of institutionally determined standards and criteria. It is a systematic approach to data collection that provides a basis for identifying the strengths of the program, describing difficulties in the program, and making decisions about the direction for needed improvement and opportunities for growth. The report is based upon the stated criteria and agreed-upon unit-specific indicators. Evidence that clearly indicates how these criteria are being met is the basis for the written report. The self-study report, along with the report of the external reviewers, will be the basis for the program review; the review is carried out by the Faculty Senate’s Curricular Affairs Committee and a team of external reviewers with disciplinary expertise in comparable academic programs.

A program review establishes a baseline understanding of opportunities and challenges in academic programs. All academic programs will engage in the UVM review process to ensure that programs are maintained at the highest level of quality possible; the review will contribute to an institutional perspective for planning and budgetary decision-making.

Guidelines for Writing the Self-Study Report

The self-study report is prepared by the responsible faculty and department chairperson or director of the program under review. The self-study addresses the process used to develop the report and describes what constituencies participated in its formulation. The self-study report includes relevant data supplied by the Office of Institutional Studies (enrollments, FTE ratios, performance of graduates, etc.). The report addresses a review of such data and is used to explain the status of the program with respect to the standards and criteria included in these guidelines. Evaluation data from existing reviews of the program such as accreditation reports should be incorporated into this self-study report wherever appropriate. The body of the report is to be approximately twelve pages in length; appropriate appendices should be attached.

The self-study report concludes with a narrative, integrative summary and a prospective that addresses the meaning and implications of the evidence presented and describes the manner in which the program meets each criterion. The narrative should specifically identify the program’s strengths and challenges as well as directions for needed improvement, opportunities, and other plans.
There are six sections to the self-study report:

- Section One: General Information
- Section Two: Introduction/Overview
- Section Three: Standards and Criteria
- Section Four: Analysis
- Section Five: Prospective
- Section Six: Appendices

Section One: General Information

General information provides factual data about the program, including name of the program, program type, college or school in which the program is located, name of the chairperson/director of the program, name of the dean of the academic unit, names of faculty writing the report, and date of the report.

Section Two: Introduction/Overview

The Introduction/Overview establishes the background and context for the review. It should include a brief history of the program, a brief description of its present status, the goals and mission of its graduate and undergraduate programs, unique and distinguishing characteristics, and links with other units such as joint faculty appointments, cross-listed courses, shared undergraduate and graduate service courses, and research collaborations.

Section Three: Standards and Criteria

In this section the self-study demonstrates the extent to which the program meets each standard and criterion. The standards are contribution to mission, program quality, demand, societal need, quality control mechanisms, and efficiency. The narrative should be supported by evidence from the data provided by the Office of Institutional Research and/or other credible sources.

Section Four: Analysis

This section should present a brief summary of the teaching, research, and scholarly enterprise and review how the program meets each criterion. The meaning and implications of the evidence presented should be explained. The narrative should specifically identify the program’s progress since its last review, its strengths, difficulties, directions for needed improvement, and opportunities.

Section Five: Prospective

The prospectus should present a vision for the Program grounded in the Program’s strategic goals and a balanced assessment of opportunities and available resources. It should include a discussion of new
scholarly directions, research plans, curricular or degree program changes, and plans for maintaining and enhancing excellence and diversity of faculty and students over the next eight years. Given the persistence of budgetary constraints, the discussion should include ways in which the unit can be strengthened without receiving additional resources.

Section Six: Appendices

Supporting data and materials may be appended to the main body of the report.
Standards and Criteria.

Standard I: The program has a clear and publicly stated purpose that contributes to the mission of the University.

Criterion 1: The program contributes to the mission of the University, the College/School, and department by:

a) Having an active strategic plan that is aligned with the vision, mission, and strategic plan of the University.

b) Supporting research and creative activities that generate new knowledge and understanding and enrich the intellectual environment for students, staff, and faculty.

c) Engaging in relevant application of new knowledge to contemporary problems through teaching, scholarship, creative activities, and service and outreach.

d) Preparing students for productive, responsible, and creative lives.

e) Encouraging students to use their knowledge and skills for the benefit of society.

f) Promoting global perspective and appreciation of cultural and intellectual diversity.

g) Fostering an enduring commitment to learning.

h) Fostering the qualities of integrity, accountability, and leadership.

i) Additional unit-specific indicators.

Standard II: The program is of high quality

Criterion 2: The program quality is evidenced by:

a) Faculty – The Program faculty are qualified to teach the curriculum, as indicated by earned academic degrees and professional certifications. The program invests in the professional and scholarly development of its faculty, including the mentoring and guidance of junior faculty members through the RPT process.

b) Resources – The program has adequate faculty, support staff, library resources, equipment, and facilities to accomplish its purpose.

c) Reputation – The program is well regarded, as evidenced by external rankings and assessments by external reviewers of students, faculty, resources, and productivity. The program attracts and retains excellent students as evidenced by admission qualifications, performance on standardized examinations, etc.
d) Faculty performance – Faculty demonstrate effectiveness in teaching and student advising, scholarship, and service, as evidenced by evaluations, awards, honors, grants, research contributions, publications, citations, and service endeavors.

e) Student performance – Students demonstrate mastery of knowledge by means of formative and summative assessments, performance in the field, professional achievements, and performance on professional licensure exams. Program graduates succeed in finding jobs and progress well in their chosen careers; alumni are satisfied with the program. Undergraduate and graduate students produce creative works, publications, and receive grant awards. Graduate students are awarded post-doctoral fellowships.

f) Benchmarks – The program reflects “best practices” and compares well to relevant performance standards from comparable institutions and/or accrediting agencies and/or other authoritative sources. The program demonstrates leadership in its performances relative to appropriate external benchmarks.

g) Advising – Program faculty provide excellent academic advising, per student evaluations and other appropriate indicators.

h) Extramural Funding (for programs where such funding is critical) – Success in attracting extramural funding that contributes to the Program’s long-term stability.

Standard III: There is demand for the program.

Criterion 3. There is demand for the program as evidenced by:

   a) external demand based on local, regional, national, and global trends and forecasts for persons with particular types and levels of education.

   b) internal demand as reflected by both student enrollment in the program and the scope of service teaching for students from other programs.

Standard IV: The program provides graduates who contribute to social institutions.

Criterion 4: Societal need for the program is reflected by:

   a) evidence for private, public and/or not-for-profit sector needs for persons with particular knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values required to make social institutions work.

   b) evidence of the need at national, state, and local levels for persons who can be informed and responsible citizens.

Standard V: The program uses an identified plan for systematic evaluation and assessment of goals and purposes.

Criterion 5: The program has quality control processes that are used:
a) to evaluate how well the program is achieving its strategic goals.

b) to monitor on an ongoing basis the design and delivery of the curriculum/curricula as informed by student outcomes.

c) for ongoing evaluation of student outcomes. This includes but is not limited to formative and summative assessments of student learning. As appropriate, other outcomes should include academic or professional achievements; job placement and career progression; alumni satisfaction with the program; employer satisfaction with program graduates' performance; graduates' performance on professional licensure exams; post-doctoral placement of graduate students; publications, grant awards, and creative works of undergraduate and graduate students, etc.

d) to monitor the quality of student advising.

e) to determine needed changes in tactics, policies, curriculum, and course contents.

f) to implement the self-determined changes in a timely manner.

Standard VI: The program accomplishes effectively its educational and related purposes

Criterion 6: The effectiveness of the program is reflected by:

a) improvements in the design and delivery of the curriculum based on assessments of new knowledge in the discipline, student outcomes, societal need, and demand for the program.

b) measures to maintain or improve high quality student advising.

c) programmatic features that foster an appreciation of cultural and intellectual diversity.

d) linkages with other programs, including articulation agreements, co-sponsored academic majors, minors, or concentrations, joint appointments of faculty members, cross-listed courses, student internships, practica, or field-based projects with organizations outside the University, resources shared with other academic units, dual degrees, and 3-2, 4-1, or other undergraduate + graduate degree arrangements.

January 2012
Frequently Asked Questions:

**What is an appropriate length for an accredited program self-study report?**

It depends on the number of programs being included in the review, and the degree to which the APR standards are addressed in the accreditation materials. At the very least, a detailed cover letter or executive summary indicating where each of the standards are addressed in the accreditation report should be provided. Appendices may be attached to the report or submitted separately.

**What is the process for gathering data?**

Should the program require additional data specific to the Standards and Criteria, the Director of Office of Institutional Research (see page 15) should be contacted for assistance. Refer to the Guidelines for Preparation of a Self-Study Report for suggested data to be included.

**What do I do with the self-study report and accompanying documents when completed?**

The report and accompanying documents are to be uploaded to the program’s Sharepoint site by either the program or the APR Coordinator. In either case, the APR Coordinator (see page 15) should be notified when the self-study report is completed.

**What happens after the self-study report is posted?**

After receiving the program’s input, the internal review subcommittee will draft a report and present their findings and recommendation to the full Curricular Affairs Committee (CAC). Following the vote of the CAC, the APR Coordinator schedules a summary meeting. The purpose of the meeting is to review and discuss the key findings of the program review. A summary memo is then drafted to document the main findings of the meeting, and to set expectations for follow-up in two years.

**What is the process for selecting internal reviewers?**

The Internal Review Subcommittee consists of two CAC members appointed by the Chair of the CAC. For reviews that include a significant number of programs and/or require a member of the graduate faculty, a third member may be appointed.

**What is the department/program responsible for?**

The department/program is responsible for preparing the self-study report and participating in the summary and two-year follow-up meetings.
**What happens with the APR Summary Memo?**

The APR Summary Memo is signed by the Provost, the Associate Provost for Teaching and Learning, and the Chair of the Curricular Affairs Committee. Signed copies are distributed to the summary meeting participants, and uploaded to the program's SharePoint site.

**What is the purpose of the two-year follow-up meeting?**

A follow-up meeting will be scheduled two years from the summary meeting. The purpose of the two-year follow-up meeting is to review the findings and recommendations in the APR Summary Memo and to discuss the current status of the program and progress on identified goals and objectives. A second report will be drafted, signed and distributed. Upon completion and distribution of the second report, the APR will be considered closed with the next review to occur in approximately six years (eight-year cycle).
Contacts

For matters of policy and procedure:
  Brian Reed
  Associate Provost for Teaching and Learning
  352 Waterman Bldg.
  Phone: 656-2232
  Brian.reed@uvm.edu

For questions about metrics and data:
  Alex Yin
  Director, Office of Institutional Research
  440 College Street
  Phone: 656-4418
  Alexander.yin@uvm.edu

For logistical/coordination matters:
  Catherine Symans
  Academic Program Review Coordinator
  348 Waterman Bldg.
  Phone: 656-0903
  Catherine.symans@uvm.edu

For Faculty Senate curricular affairs matters:
  Laura Almstead
  Chair, Curricular Affairs Committee
  Department of Plant Biology
  307 Jeffords Hall
  Phone: 656-2919
  Laura Almstead

Academic Program Review Web site:
http://www.uvm.edu/~provost/?Page=academicprogramreview.html