



Issued: October 12, 2016

Revised: October 14, 2024

SACSCOC Standard: 6.1 and 6.2b

SACSCOC Standard: 8.2 and 9.1 and 10

Academic Program Review Procedures and Guidelines

I. Purpose

The overriding purpose of program review is to identify the various strengths and weaknesses of academic programs and identify the degree to which the institution is using its resources effectively and efficiently to ensure the highest level of academic quality consistent with the University's mission.

This document describes a general program review procedure that will be followed by most programs offered at Athens State University. If, however, a program holds a national/professional accreditation, the program at the discretion of the Provost/Vice President of Academic Affairs and Student Services may substitute the accreditation external review requirements for the procedures described herein.

The two most important goals of program review are:

- 1) to examine the ways that the institution can maximize existing resources and,
- 2) to explore additional ways to increase efficiency while maintaining the highest level of quality in all academic programs.

II. Fundamentals of Program Review

The word "Program" as used in this document refers to a prescribed plan of study, within an academic department, characterized by a set of structured and coherent courses within a recognized field of study under a designated Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) Code. Accordingly, the scope of the program review function includes a thorough examination of all the specific degree options or CIP codes ascribed to each academic department. This is necessary to increase the validity and reliability of the review to accommodate all departments, whether they consist of one (i.e. Liberal Studies) or multiple degree options (i.e. Humanities and Social Sciences). This methodology reduces the risk of over-emphasizing weaknesses while failing to recognize important departmental strengths. By focusing the review on the whole department, the practical strengths and weaknesses of the program can be identified and, subsequently, can be used to make constructive recommendations for long-range academic master planning.



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The academic program review process is driven by the following guiding questions:

- How well does this program fit with the purpose and goals of the College and the mission of the University?
- Is the current curriculum relevant and timely?
- Is the program appropriate to job market needs for the graduates of the program?
- What is the competitive environment for this program?
- Are students meeting the program's learning outcomes? Does the program have adequate resources to ensure educational quality through learning and teaching effectiveness?
- What improvements are recommended for continuous quality improvement? What resources are required to implement these recommendations?

III. Program Review Criteria

Academic program review will include the evaluation of the following three types of criteria over the last four academic years:

- Cost-benefit criteria: direct program costs in reference to the estimated revenue generated by the program. Some of the specific quantitative criteria that are used to examine this cost-to-revenue ratio include FT and PT faculty and staff salaries, instructional support expenditures, tuition and fees, and the amount (or value) of other resources generated by the program such as grants, gifts, endowments, etc.
- Program Input and Outputs: include the number of courses and classes (sections) scheduled and offered, instructional delivery formats (i.e. DL), program credits, course demand evidenced by enrollment trends, credit hour production, and faculty workloads.
- Organizational Effectiveness: include metrics related to program and student achievement such as program completers, graduates' job placement and continuing education, program reputation and recognition, discipline-specific accreditation (national), student chapters of professional organizations, and faculty scholarly contributions.



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IV. Procedures for Program Review

Program reviews will follow the *Program Review Cycle* developed by the Provost/ Vice President of Academic Affairs and Student Services and the College Dean(s) as appropriate.

The College Deans where the program resides will notify the program faculty of the upcoming self-study and appoint an external reviewer. The review will usually be chaired by the Department Chair.

The general timetable for program review is outlined below:

In August of the designated year for program review, the program faculty and Dean will meet with the Provost to review the process and deadlines for the upcoming program review.

The program faculty should review the provided data since the last review if applicable. The Provost will notify the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment (OIRA) of the reviews that are underway.

During the Fall semester, the Dean will work with the Department Chair to review suggestions for External Reviewers. These reviewers should be from a similar program and not associated with Athens State University. The Dean will confirm the external reviewer during the Fall semester and send the Provost that name so that the honorarium and travel can be arranged.

The Provost will send aggregated data based on course evaluations in Component 4 of the Program Review Criteria to the review team by October 1.

Institutional Research will provide enrollment data for courses in Component 1 of the Program Review Criteria (Service to KSAs), enrollment, graduation, and alumni outcomes in Component 3, and Graduating Senior Exit Survey Results in Component 5 of the Program Review Criteria to the review team by October 15, 2024.

By December 1, the program will have completed the attached program review analysis, including an analysis using financial data provided by the Business Office and shared results with the entire program and with the appropriate College Dean.



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At the beginning of the spring semester, the External Reviewer will be sent the Internal Review by the Dean and will then come to campus to make their own assessment which will be due by mid-March. (This visit should normally occur between January 15 and March 1.)

The Dean will then share those recommendations with the faculty and ask for feedback.

In writing their own recommendations, the Dean will include recommendations from the self-study and the external reviewer, and will also include an analysis using financial data provided by the Business office about true program costs. This recommendation from the Dean will be forward along with the IPR and External Reviewer report to the Provost by the end of the first week of April.

By April 23 the Provost will review recommendations and meet with the Dean and program faculty to review the Provost's written response.

By May 1 the complete report will be submitted to the President for review.

V. Roles and Responsibilities throughout the Program Review Process

Pursuant to the Program Review Policy, Athens State University requires that all academic programs conduct a comprehensive review of all academic programs every five years. Upon completion of the review, each program is required to have a *Program Review Report* on file in the Office of Provost/Vice President of Academic Affairs and Student Services.

College Deans

College deans are responsible for identifying the academic programs due for program review during the 5-year program review schedule.

Department Chairs

Department Chairs usually provide leadership to the program faculty and are responsible for the timely completion of all activities of the review process. Department Chairs usually serve as the point person for all matters related to the ongoing program review.



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Faculty

The program faculty are responsible for scheduling and conducting all program review activities. Faculty will conduct a thorough analysis of the data provided (and any other information deemed relevant to the program) following the program review criteria shown in **Appendix A** and will write the *Program Review Report* on the findings of the review and will submit the report to the College Dean for approval.

Office of Institutional Research and Assessment (OIRA): OIRA's role is to provide program and institutional data and technical support as needed to facilitate the review process. OIRA, in coordination with the Business Office, also provides the financial information necessary to conduct a cost-benefit analysis of the program as described in **Appendix A**.

VI. Program Review Report Format (Template)

Among other sections, the report must include an Executive Summary, a statement of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) facing the program, and a set of recommendations aimed at program improvement. The report will be prepared using the *Program Review Report* template.



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APPENDIX A

PROGRAM REVIEW CRITERIA

For each program reviewed during the year, the program faculty will prepare a written report that summarizes the strengths and weaknesses of the academic department, and make recommendations for future improvements. This report will be based upon quantitative, qualitative, and organizational efficiency criteria. Some of the criteria that will be considered are listed below:

Component 1 -- Review of the Current Program: Curriculum

Student Learning Outcomes:

What are the program student learning outcomes? Program student learning outcomes (SLOs) are clear, concise statements that describe how students can demonstrate their mastery of program goals.

Assessment Narrative:

Outline what assessment methods are employed in measuring student attainment of program learning outcomes. Describe how assessment artifacts are collected and evaluated.

Discuss how the results of these assessment activities are used to evaluate the program's effectiveness.

Map of Curriculum and Program Learning Outcomes

Findings Related to Program Assessment

Service to Institutional Learning Goals – Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities (KSAs)



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Component 2 – Review of the Current Program: Faculty, Resources, and Cooperation

Faculty Qualifications and Activity

Faculty Roster

Human Resources

Having identified your program faculty, describe how each faculty member contributes to the mission of the program. What additional faculty resources are needed to keep the program current with significant developing trends and best practices in the field?

Course Scheduling

Are courses scheduled based on student need/interest? Does each program have a 2-year course schedule? Is this program maximizing enrollment? Are there efficiencies we can find?

Course Requirements

Are the courses current? Do we have too few/many courses? Do we offer too few/many electives?

Physical Resources

Evaluate current resources in terms of how well they serve the needs of the students and program.

- facilities (classrooms, labs, performing & rehearsal spaces, athletic spaces, etc.)
- equipment and technology
- academic resources (books, databases, etc.)
- internship opportunities
- program funding (monies available for field trips, conference/workshop attendance and other enrichment activities)

What new or additional resources are needed to keep the program current with significant developing trends and best practices in the field?



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Request for financial support

Based on the above review, what financial resources are needed to improve the program, both short-term and long-term. Provide cost estimates for all purchases, funding and investments required to achieve this.

Component 3 – Enrollment, Graduation, and Alumni Outcomes

Component 4 – Student Input

Component 5: Advising and Mentoring

Component 6: National trends

- Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) Analysis

Component 7: Action Plan

- Program Engagement with and Contributions to the University's Mission and Strategic Plan