

Academic Program Review Guide

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1. Introduction

An effective academic program review process is essential for the health of Shawnee State University's academic programs. The academic program review process strives to ensure the quality and academic integrity of all programs through continuous program improvement. At its most basic, the program review process is simply a review of the good works, processes, procedures, and measured learning outcome results that programs develop as they strive for continuous improvement.

Regular academic program review fulfills one of the criteria that the University must meet for regional accreditation by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC). Core Component 4.A and Subcomponent 4.A.1 of Criterion Four (Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement) state: "The institution ensures the quality of its educational offerings. (And) The institution maintains a practice of regular program reviews and acts upon the findings."

As part of a larger institutional system that collects, disseminates, and evaluates institutional information, an effective academic program review process thus provides evidence that the University meets the criterion. Academic program review processes across the United States are administered by both administration and faculty. At Shawnee State University, program review is a faculty-led process conducted with administrative input and support.

Any complex organization such as a university is composed of a number of constituencies with different responsibilities and perspectives. Three major constituencies in any university are the students, the faculty, and the administration. The primary responsibility of students is to obtain an education. The faculty facilitates instruction and guides the learning of those students. The administration is responsible for the management of the university and for providing an environment and the resources necessary for the faculty to carry out their responsibilities to students. Clear and continuing communication among these constituencies is essential for optimal function of the university and for an effective academic program review process.

The academic program review process provides an opportunity for program faculty and administration to evaluate the goals and effectiveness of a program and make appropriate changes that will lead to improvement in the quality of instruction and curricular requirements, improved career and life preparation for students, and effective and efficient use of University resources.

2. Goals of Academic Program Review

The goals of academic program review include:

- 1. Assist programs in the identification, evaluation and assessment of their mission and goals and the development of short and long-term strategic plans.
- 2. Assist programs in the determination of their relationship to the Mission of the University, College, and department.
- 3. Assist programs in assessing the quality of instruction, instructional methodology, student learning, and the strengths and challenges in their curriculum.
- 4. Provide programs the opportunity to compare their curriculum, resources, and facilities with those at peer institutions.
- 5. Assist programs in the identification of existing resources and determination of the resources needed to carry out identified mission and goals.
- 6. Assist the University in the evaluation of the value, quality, effectiveness and efficient use of resources for the academic programs.
- 7. Provide direction and priorities for the University that can be used for needs assessment, resource allocation, and planning.
- 8. Provide structure, a plan of action, and information for continuous program improvement.
- 9. Academic Program Review is not intended to place a program under discontinuation or warehousing (or a "watch list") as a result of the review. Rather, program review is intended to provide a constructive and formative review to the program. In the event discontinuation or warehousing of a program is needed, it is to occur via a separate Program Closure process.

3. Overview of the Program Review Process

The program review process described in this document requires the following steps:

1) Appointment of a Program Review Committee (PRC) and Chair; 2) Creation of a Program Review Budget; 3) Selection of External Reviewers; 4) Completion of a Preliminary Self-Study; 5) Completion of External Reviewer Reports; 6) Completion of a final Program Review Report (PRP), including a response to external reviews and a list of recommendations for program improvements; 7) PRC meeting with the Dean and Provost to discuss the findings; and 8) Planning for implementation of recommendations.

Overseeing the review is the Program Review Committee, which is charged with aggregating and analyzing data concerning the program, evaluation of those data, and making recommendations with regard to future direction of the program based on its findings. Once the Program Review Committee and Chair have been chosen, a Program Review Budget shall be established. The Program Review Committee then begins work on the Preliminary Self-Study.

The Preliminary Self-Study becomes the core component of the final Program Review Report, which will be submitted to the respective College Dean. In the case of non-degree curricular entities, such as the Honors or General Education programs and similar non-departmental academic programs, final reports will be submitted to the Office of the Provost.

Final Program Review Reports shall consist of:

- 1. Preliminary Self-Study
- 2. External Reviewer Reports
- 3. Program Review Committee's Response to External Reviewer Reports
- 4. Program Review Committee's Recommendations for Continuous Improvement

The Dean and the Provost will then complete the review process by making their own final recommendations for program improvements, based upon the final Program Review Report. The administration's final recommendations will be discussed with the Program Review Committee. Progress towards meeting the recommendations will then be subject to evaluation during the program's next review.

During the process of preparing the Preliminary Self-Study, the Chair of the Program Review Committee and its members will solicit input from interested parties, such as current students, alumni, employers of graduates, applicable advisory committee members, full and part-time faculty who teach in the program, the Department Chair/School Director, the Program Director/Coordinator, and the respective College Dean. Data on the program, its faculty, and students shall be aggregated and evaluated in consultation with the Office of Institutional Research, Reporting, and Analytics.

4. Program Definitions, Requirements & Review Schedule

Degree programs and non-degree curricular entities (hereafter referred to as 'programs') must submit a Program Review Report on a regularly scheduled basis.

When deemed appropriate by their College Dean, programs with curricular links (for example, associate and baccalaureate programs in the same area or programs with concentrations, minors, or associated certificates) will be combined into a single review.

Programs will be scheduled to undergo review on a recurring five-year cycle. Program Reviews shall be scheduled so that no department shall have to conduct more than one program review per academic year, except in cases when departments are home to more than five programs or when a previous review requires a more frequent program review. Reviews, when possible, should be spread out along the five-year cycle to evenly distribute a department's program review efforts.

Whenever possible, programs with outside accreditation will be put on a program review schedule that will allow those programs to complete review and analysis for the accreditation self-study with a timeline for submission that corresponds with the university's program review cycle.

Programs that are accredited by an outside body may submit their most recent self-study produced to satisfy accreditation in place of the Final Program Review Report. The Dean of the program's college may require a supplemental report, providing data or material required in the standard review (as outlined in this guide) if such information is not sufficiently up-to-date or not found in their accreditation study.

5. Creating the Program Review Committee

Each program that is scheduled for review must form a Program Review Committee (PRC). For programs housed in academic departments, membership of PRCs shall be selected according to Departmental Bylaws.

In the case of non-degree curricular entities, such as the Honors or General Education programs, the associated administrator from the Office of the Provost shall select the Program Director as the Chair of the PRC, who shall then meet with the program's advisory committee or board to determine the membership for the PRC.

The Program Review Committee shall consist of the following:

- 1. A program faculty member Chair. The PRC Chair shall be chosen according to Departmental Bylaws and shall be a tenured faculty member, except in situations when there are no tenured program faculty members. The Chair of the PRC has principal responsibility for writing the Preliminary Self-Study and final report.
- 2. The Department Chair/School Director in which the program is located.
- 3. Two additional departmental faculty (with preference given to program faculty). The Department Chair/School Director can be counted as one of these two additional faculty members.
- 4. An individual with special interest in the program. This person could be an alumnus/ na, a program advisory committee member, an adjunct faculty member, or an interested Shawnee State University faculty member from outside the program.

6. Program Review Budget

The PRC Chair will submit a Program Review Budget containing all anticipated expenses the committee may incur in the process of preparing the preliminary and final report to the Department Chair/School Director for approval. In accordance with Program Fees Procedure (4.90:2), program review expenses are to be covered by Program Fees. In cases where no Program Fees exist, the Department Chair/School Director, in consultation with the Dean, will determine how the expense will be covered.

7. Selection of External Reviewers

To ensure the maintenance of high-quality programs and to secure objective perspectives from experts in a program's field or discipline, each program review shall include reports by two external reviewers. External reviewers shall not be associated with Shawnee State University and must have faculty experience and expertise in the discipline and area of the program under review. Preference shall be given to external reviewers from what are considered to be peer institutions of Shawnee State University.

The PRC shall propose and forward three names, with short biographies of each, to the respective College Dean, who shall then select the two external reviewers. The department's Academic Administrative Assistant will complete a contract for each reviewer using EZ forms and notify the selected external reviewers that a contract will be forthcoming through DocuSign. Once agreements are secured, the PRC Chair shall be notified as to who will be serving as the external reviewers.

8. Preparing the Preliminary Self-Study

Programs should prepare a Preliminary Self-Study using aggregated data they have determined important in the monitoring of program progress and for use in identifying program strengths and challenges that aid faculty and administration in continuous program improvement. Data shall be aggregated from data supplied by the Office of Institutional Research, Reporting, and Analytics.

8.1. Program Profile: Five-Year Statistical Analysis of Program

A critical component of the Preliminary Self-Study is a program profile based on the compilation and statistical analysis of institutional data associated with the program. Once the PRC has been formed and elects its chair, the chair will send a list of all courses in the program (required for Items 1 and 5 below) to the Director of Institutional Research, Reporting, and Analytics. The Chair of the PRC shall work with the Office of Institutional Research, Reporting, and Analytics and their Department Chair/School Director to obtain the needed data. (If five years of data are unavailable, as in the case of a newly-created, never-reviewed program, the analysis can be based upon the available data.)

When conducting the analysis and program profile, the following topics should be examined for each of the previous five years:

- 1. Enrollment in program courses, according to level (if applicable)
- 2. Number of declared majors
- 3. Number of majors graduated
- 4. Average number of student credit hours achieved for a graduate
- 5. Average number of students per class per academic year by course level
- 6. Number & type of faculty teaching courses in the program

- 7. Average number of course credits taught per academic year by course level
- 8. Assessment of Program's Student Learning Outcomes
- 9. Use of assessment information for program change/improvement

8.2. Contents of the Preliminary Self-Study

The following recommendations for a minimum level of information and rigor are made to aid programs in the development of a thorough, well-rounded review. It is up to individual programs to focus on those areas they deem most valuable to continued program improvement.

The Preliminary Self-Study should address the following:

- 1. Program Name and History
- 2. Program Mission
- 3. Role of Program in the Larger College & University Missions
- 4. Progress on Past Recommendations
- 5. Program Profile: Five Year Statistical Analysis of Program
- 6. Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes
- 7. Use of assessment information for program change/improvement (summary highlights of the previous five years)
- 8. Program Visibility and Distinctiveness
- 9. Faculty Accomplishments and Professional Development Activities
- 10. Program Faculty CVs (in summary fashion, with one table carrying names, degrees, hire date, areas of teaching and research, etc.)
- 11. Current Program Curriculum & Changes Since Last Review
- 12. On-Line, Dual-Credit, and College Credit Plus Course Offerings
- 13. Program Administration, Staff, and Support
- 14. Facilities, Equipment, and Resources
- 15. Program Outreach and Engagement
- 16. Qualitative Analysis of Overall Quality
- 17. Peer Program Comparisons
- 18. Strengths of Program
- 19. Weaknesses of Program
- 20. Future Program Plans

9. Preparing the Final Program Review Report

The final Program Review Report shall include: the Preliminary Self-Study, the reports of the External Reviewers, the PRC's Response to External Reviewer Reports, and the PRC's Recommendations for Continuous Improvement.

9.1. On-Site Visits & External Reviewer Reports

On-site visits by the external reviewers are not mandatory, but generally recommended, and ought to be considered a justifiable expense in conducting a proper program review. The decision as to whether on-site visits are needed will be made by the PRC, in consultation with the respective College Dean or the Provost. This decision must be made during the preparation of the Program Review Budget to ensure proper budgeting and planning.

At least two weeks prior to an on-site visit, the External Reviewers shall receive a copy of the Preliminary Self-Study. On-site visits allow the Reviewers to place the content of the self-study and review in context and meet with faculty and students to discuss and clarify the strengths and weaknesses of the program. The PRC Chair shall be the primary contact and host of the Reviewers while they are on campus. The External Reviewers are to provide the discipline-related expertise, and the PRC Chair is expected to provide the needed information about Shawnee State University.

The PRC Chair and External Reviewers must build an onsite visit schedule that includes the following:

- 1. Opportunities for all faculty members to meet with the Reviewers. This can take the form of one-on-one meetings, meetings with small groups, or a general faculty meeting.
- 2. An opportunity for students to meet with the reviewers without faculty present.
- 3. An opportunity for all probationary faculty members to meet with the reviewers without tenured faculty present. This can take the form of one-on-one meetings, meetings with small groups, or a general meeting of the probationary faculty.
- 4. Meetings with the Department Chair/School Director, Graduate Chair/Coordinator, and Undergraduate Chair/Coordinator.
- 5. An opportunity, when appropriate, to meet with program stakeholders.
- 6. An opportunity to meet with the College Dean, or their designee.
- 7. A tour of the facilities.
- 8. An opportunity to meet separately, individually or in small groups, with faculty having different levels of participation in interdisciplinary programs.
- 9. Sufficient time for the review. Programs typically require one to two days for a complete site visit with larger programs requiring longer visits.

External Review Reports are due in electronic form no later than two weeks from the date of a site visit. In such instances when no site visit is required, External Review Reports shall be due no later than three weeks following the Reviewers' reception of program review materials.

The External Reviewer Report, in the form of a 2-3-page letter, shall address the following:

- 1. Overall Program Quality
- 2. Strengths of Program
- 3. Weaknesses of Program
- 4. Appraisal of Faculty and Curriculum
- 5. Appraisal of Facilities and Equipment (if applicable)
- 6. Adequacy of Administrative Support and Resource Allocation
- 7. Evaluation of the Preliminary Self-Study
- 8. Recommendations for Continuous Improvement

9.2. Committee Response to External Reviewer Reports

The PRC shall include a response addressing any concerns or disagreements it has with the contents of the External Reviewer Reports. If applicable, substantiating data should be included to support the response.

9.3. Committee Recommendations for Continuous Improvement

Upon review of the Administrative Review and External Reviewer Reports, the PRC shall develop and adopt its own Recommendations for Continuous Improvement, including a proposed timeline for implementation of recommendations. Any recommendations that impact allocation of university resources should include projected costs or savings.

10. Writing the Reports

It is recommended that Program Review Committees adhere to the following in the development and writing of their Preliminary Self-Study and the final Program Review Report:

- 1. PRC Chair will coordinate the development of a schedule that delineates responsibility and deadlines for completion of the report.
- 2. After data are aggregated for analysis, the PRC Chair will provide the information to the members of the committee.
- 3. The PRC chair will invite the Dean to attend a meeting with the PRC in which the results of data collection and analyses are discussed and input is solicited from all individuals

- in attendance regarding the general health of the program, future goals, and processes and procedures recommended to reach the identified goals. The data analysis should identify variables impacting data trends and include explanations for fluctuations.
- 4. The PRC Chair will call meetings, as needed, during the report writing phase to provide members of the PRC an opportunity to critically discuss and edit the draft. The Chair of the Program Review Committee and its members will solicit input from interested parties, such as current students, alumni, employers of graduates, applicable advisory committee members, full and part-time faculty who teach in the program, the Department Chair/School Director, the Program Director/Coordinator, and the respective College Dean. Documentation of these data should be retained by the Chair of the PRC.
- 5. Once the Preliminary Self-Study is complete and has been reviewed by the Dean, the Chair of the PRC will forward these materials to the External Reviewers.
- 6. Once the External Reviewers have submitted their specific analyses of the program and made their recommendations for improvements, the Chair of the PRC will share the External Reviewer Reports with the members of the PRC and solicit input on the final report's Recommendations for Continuous Improvement.
- 7. The PRC chair will present a draft of the final report, including the Committee's Response, the External Reviewer Reports, and Recommendations for Continuous Improvement to all faculty members of the program and solicit suggestions for revisions.
- 8. The PRC Chair will submit a final draft of the report to the full PRC for its consideration and approval.

11. Submitting the Final Program Review Report

All final reports are to be submitted electronically in PDF format to the appropriate College Dean and the Office of the Provost. Reports should be numbered consecutively. The first page of the report (whether a cover page or not) should be labeled page number one. It is acceptable to break the report into section headings (with hyperlinks from a table of contents) but the pages must begin with page one and continue straight through to the last page.

12. Implementation of Recommendations

The academic program review process should be seen as one action in a program's drive for continuous improvement. The final Program Review Report shall include a list of Recommendations for Continuous Improvement, which have the endorsement of the PRC. The final recommendations of the PRC, the College Dean, and the Provost should be addressed in a timely manner. How the program, department, and college address the recommendations will be taken into consideration when the program undergoes its next program review. Recommendations not addressed will have to be explained by faculty and administration responsible for program oversight.

12.1. Special Review & Interim Progress Report

In certain rare and unusual instances (i.e., dramatic declines in program enrollment, course completion, or graduation rates, or as the result of mandated changes by the state government, professional organizations, accrediting bodies, or licensing agencies), the Provost can require a special review and Interim Progress Report. Unless mandated by state law, regulation, or an accreditor, such a report would be due two years from the date of the Provost's notification and shall be conducted according to the regular guidelines, as outlined herein.

13. Program Review Timeline

Each academic year, the University's program review process will follow the general schedule and procedures outlined below:

- 1. By the end of Week 3 of the Fall semester of the program review year, PRC formed and (optional) introduction meeting with the College Dean to discuss the procedures of their programmatic reviews, as outlined in this guide.
- 2. By the end of Week 5 of Fall semester, Program Review Budget sent to Department Chair/School Director for approval and external reviewers identified, approved by the Dean, and under contract.
- 3. By last day in Fall semester, self-study completed and submitted to the Dean.
- 4. By first day of the following Spring semester, the Dean issues approval to send program review to external reviewers.
- 5. By the end of Week 5 of Spring semester, external reviewers visit.
- 6. By the end of Week 7 of Spring semester, external reviews due.
- 7. By the end of Week 10 of Spring semester, final revisions/responses to reviewers completed and final document submitted to the Dean and the Provost.
- 8. By last day of Spring semester, PRC meeting with the Dean and the Provost.