

# Academic Program Review

## **I. Governance**

### **A. Purpose Statement**

The primary purpose of a review of all graduate and undergraduate academic programs at the University of New Orleans is to pinpoint the intrinsic strengths and weaknesses of every academic program on a regular basis, with the ultimate goal of strengthening and/or sustaining each program's quality. As a year-long procedure resulting in a final report, each program review is to be not only descriptive, but also evaluative and formative. It will be descriptive in presenting the status of the current program under review; it will be evaluative in assessing the quality of the program and the ability of its resources to meet its demands; and it will be formative by being directed towards the improvement of the program. The main mission of the Academic Program Review is to make detailed recommendations to this end.

### **B. Academic Program Review Council**

The Academic Program Review Council (APRC) is comprised of a university-wide faculty committee that assists the Office of Academic Affairs with the oversight and coordination of the academic program review process. The responsibilities of the APRC include the establishment of criteria and procedures for Academic Program Review and the selection of a Program Review Panel (PRP) for each review.

Normally, the APRC consists of nine senior faculty members, with at least one representative from each college. After requesting nominations from academic deans, the Provost appoints APRC members to serve staggered three-year terms. APRC chairs are elected by Council members and serve one-year terms. Eligible candidates for chair are usually those members who have already served two years on the APRC.

### **C. Program Review Panels**

For each academic program review to be conducted, a faculty Program Review Panel (PRP) consisting of three members will be appointed by the APRC, with the concurrence of the Provost and the Dean of the Graduate School. This panel will act as a subcommittee of the APRC. Members of the PRP will be responsible for carrying out the Academic Program Review and for filing a Final Report with the Provost.

The three members of each PRP will consist of two UNO faculty members and one external reviewer. The UNO faculty members will include Full Members of the UNO Graduate Faculty for graduate programs and/or Associate Members of the UNO Graduate Faculty for undergraduate programs; one member, who serves as PRP chair, will be from

a different academic department within the College or School where the program under review is located and, if possible, from one that offers the same level of program (e.g., M.A., Ph.D.); the other member will be from an academic department outside the same College or School. The external reviewer will be from the same discipline of the program under review; this reviewer will be invited to serve by the APRC, after consulting the unit Chair (or Director), the Dean of the College, and/or other appropriate sources for recommendations.

## **II. Procedure**

### **A. Timetable for an Individual Academic Program Review**

1. **Notification:** One year in advance, the Office of Academic Affairs will notify each unit of a forthcoming Academic Program Review. Individual units may request that their review be scheduled to precede or to coincide with other reviews (See Part III.A. below).
2. **Appointment of self-study committee:** Once a review is scheduled, the unit should select or appoint a self-study committee and coordinate the committee's schedule with the APRC timetable.
3. **Unit orientation for self-study:** If requested by the unit, the APRC will arrange an orientation with the self-study committee and interested faculty members of the unit under review to provide an overview of the process, the materials and information requested, and expected outcomes.
4. **Preparation and submission of the self-study:** Within twelve months, the unit should complete a draft of the self-study (according to Directions in Part II.B. below).
5. **College, School and Graduate School Review:** The appropriate Deans of Colleges/Schools (including the Dean of the Graduate School, in the case of graduate programs) will have an opportunity to review the draft of the unit's self-study and prepare comments. These comments will be shared with the unit prior to submission of a final version of the self-study to the PRP.
6. **Site visit and external reviewer's evaluation:** The Unit chair, with the assistance of the Office of Academic Affairs, will arrange for the external reviewer's site visit after receiving the self-study. The external reviewer's written evaluation of the site visit (as described in Part II.C. below) will be included in the review documents.
7. **Program Review Panel's report:** After receiving the external reviewer's evaluation, the PRP will meet to prepare a written report that summarizes its findings and recommendations for possible future action. Copies of this report will be provided to the Chair of the unit, as well as to the appropriate Dean(s), for the purposes of accuracy and preparation of a final written response.

8. **Unit and Deans' responses:** Within one month, the Unit and the Dean(s) may respond in writing to the Program Review Coordinator, who will forward the responses to the PRP. Individual faculty comments should be invited and included as a part of the unit's response.
9. **Final Report with recommendations to the Provost:** The PRP will submit to the Provost a Final Report and its recommendations as a package, according to the format indicated in Part II.D below.
10. **Provost's response to recommendations:** After reviewing the Final Report, the Provost will arrange to meet with the unit representative(s) and the Dean(s) to determine any future action(s) in response to the PRP's recommendations.
11. **Follow-up:** At the point of the completion of the review, comments from the unit on all or any part of the process will be invited. If agreements between the Provost and the unit representative(s) require action that is extended or ongoing, a follow-up session will be arranged within 18 months of the completion of the review to assess progress.
12. **Permanent record:** The Office of Academic Affairs will keep a permanent record of the Academic Program Review Final Report and any agreements.
13. **Use of Academic Program Review:** The results of both the Final Report and any agreements will be reported to the Chancellor, the Provost, the appropriate Vice Chancellors and/or Dean(s), and the unit. They may also be made available to the university bodies involved in the planning, assessment, and budgeting processes.

## **B. Self-Study**

After notification, each unit under review will electronically submit a self-study in coordination with the APRC timetable and with the university. After a draft of this document is reviewed and evaluated by the appropriate Dean(s) of Colleges/Schools (including the Dean of the Graduate School, in the case of graduate programs), it will be submitted to the PRP, prior to the external reviewer's campus visit.

**Note:** Although all programs are subject to the review process, it is recognized that some programs and/or academic units hold accreditation reviews that include a thorough external review. These units may choose to submit the accreditation review in lieu of the self-study, provided that the review addresses the questions listed below. If not, the unit shall submit a supplemental document addressing any unanswered questions. The APRC may determine that the findings of the accreditation review will suffice completely for the Academic Program Review.

**Directions for Self-Study:** For units under review, provide information for each of the items listed below. To minimize duplication of effort, both graduate and undergraduate programs within a unit should be reviewed simultaneously. Therefore, if more than one degree is offered in the unit, when appropriate, a single self-study is required. In this case, for each item listed below, the self-study should list information relevant to each degree. If more than one unit offers a degree, a single self-study listing the contributions of each unit should be provided. If degree programs include Options or Concentrations (as defined by the LSU Board of Regents Academic Affairs Policy 2.11), when appropriate, a single self-study is required that provides information for each option or concentration. The self-study should generally cover the period since the most recent program review or the preceding ten years.

## **Self-Study Format**

### **Program Description and Current Status**

1. Describe the degree program(s) offered by the unit. Include the following information:
  - (a) A short narrative history of the degree program at UNO;
  - (b) The current UNO catalog description of the degree program;
  - (c) A listing of the courses required for the degree;
  - (d) A description of degree requirements beyond courses required (comprehensive examinations, field experiences, projects, dissertations, etc.).
2. Provide a brief rationale for the degree requirements.
3. List the names, ranks, and tenure status of full-time faculty members who advise and teach in the degree program; include their curriculum vitae in an appendix.
4. List the names of adjunct faculty members who have taught in the degree program in the last two years; include their curriculum vitae in an appendix.
5. List the names of UNO full-time or part-time professional staff members (non-faculty) assigned to any academic aspect of the degree program; include their curriculum vitae in an appendix.
6. Provide an inventory and, when appropriate, a description of equipment, laboratory space, office space, computer equipment, and other resources utilized by the program.
7. Provide the number of currently enrolled majors.
8. a. Provide the number of credit hours being generated by the currently enrolled majors.  
**And/or**  
b. Provide the number of credit hours being generated by the courses offered by the program.
9. Provide the number of graduates from the program since the most recent review or the preceding 10 years listed for each academic year (fall, spring, and summer).
10. List and describe similar degree programs offered in New Orleans and the state of Louisiana.

## **Program Self-Evaluation**

11. Describe the program's mission and its alignment with the university mission.
12. Describe the means by which the program ensures that the curriculum is relevant and current.
13. Describe any general strengths and/or unique features of the degree program.
14. Show that the program is advancing the discipline by listing any notable scholarship accomplishments, teaching activities, or service activities of full-time faculty members since the most recent program review or the preceding 10 years.
15. List notable external funding, grants, projects, contracts, etc., associated with the degree program. Include funding periods, amounts, and other relevant information.
16. List any awards or special recognitions received by the degree program, faculty, staff, students, or graduates.
17. Describe interest in the degree program from entities outside UNO: local groups, industry, research centers, other educational institutions, state agencies, etc. Describe program or faculty relationships with these entities.
18. Specify city, area, state, or national need for graduates. Cite any pertinent studies or data.
19. Describe any degree program weaknesses or deficiencies.
20. Describe any evaluations of the degree program completed by the unit (exiting graduate surveys, alumni surveys, advisory board input, etc.) and provide results of the most recent evaluations.

## **Formative Plans and Proposals for Program Improvement**

21. Include the degree program's current UNO institutional effectiveness plan.
22. Provide a proposal for eliminating weaknesses or deficiencies and a timetable for that process.
23. Comment on whether the unit has the capacity to increase enrollment of degree-seeking students and to produce additional graduates without adding full-time faculty or making additional expenditures.
24. Describe any anticipated changes in the degree program or faculty, reasons for the changes, and when such changes are anticipated to occur.
25. Describe any other plans, proposals or activities the unit is engaged in or will be engaged in as a way to strengthen its academic excellence or public visibility.

## **C. External Review**

After reviewing the self-study and visiting the campus, the external reviewer will submit a written evaluation of the program to be included as part of the PRP's Final Report. The evaluation may take the form of a general account and/or an assessment of the unit on a point-by-point basis. The unit (including individual faculty members) and Deans will have an opportunity to respond in writing to the external reviewer's evaluation when it responds to the PRP's statement that summarizes its findings and recommendations.

## **D. Final Report**

Once the PRP receives the external reviewer's evaluation, it will prepare a summary of its findings and recommendations for possible future action. Both this summary and the external reviewer's evaluation will then be submitted to the unit Chair and to appropriate Dean(s) for a written response. Individual faculty comments should be invited and included as a part of the unit's response.

After receiving the written responses, the PRP will compile a Final Report of the following:

1. Self-study
2. PRP Report, including
  - (a) Summary of findings and recommendations for future action
  - (b) External reviewer's evaluation
3. Unit's written response to PRP Report, including faculty members' responses
4. Deans' responses
5. PRP's written evaluation of the unit's and any faculty's responses, as well as the deans' comments

Copies of this Final Report will be submitted to the unit, the appropriate Dean(s) and Provost. After reviewing the Final Report, the Chair of the unit, the Dean(s), and Provost will meet to discuss its findings and determine any future actions to be taken.

The Final Report and any follow-up plans determined by the Chair, Dean(s), and Provost will be submitted to the Chancellor and any other interested parties.

The APRC has drafted a [Final Report Format](#) document to guide Program Review Panel members in the preparation of the Report.

## **III. Review Schedule**

### **A. Principles for Academic Review Schedule of Individual Programs**

The guiding principles for the schedule of program reviews are the following:

1. Programs scheduled for accreditation or board reviews will nominally be reviewed in the year that their external review is due. Units may request that their review be scheduled to precede, coincide, or follow other reviews.
2. Programs not subject to accreditation or board review are to be rotated for review such that programs with the oldest reviews are the next scheduled for review.
3. Once reviewed, all programs will be on a 10-year review schedule, except for those on different accreditation or board review cycles. In these cases, the accreditation or board review cycles will govern their review schedules.

**Rationale:** The purpose of Principle 1 is to obtain the greatest efficiency possible in the use of resources such that the review coincides with the accreditation or board review. Principle 2 assures the most contemporary review possible of all programs, including those not subject to accreditation or board review. The purpose of Principle 3 is to maintain a contemporary review of all programs, by scheduling predictable and timely review cycles.

## **B. Interdisciplinary Programs**

The joint interest of two (or more) colleges or departments in an interdisciplinary program is evident given the program's existence. The Academic Program Review Council therefore will allow considerable latitude and discretion concerning how the review is managed between the interdisciplinary partners. Formally, however, the college, department of record, or program coordinator will ultimately be responsible for producing the self-study and response documents for these programs. The APRC suggests that the Dean(s) of the Colleges/Schools and Department Chairs for these programs coordinate the self-study and response, with an interdisciplinary committee of faculty assigned to the actual review.

## **C. Schedule of Reviews**

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