

NUMBER: ACAF 2.20
SECTION: Academic Affairs
SUBJECT: Academic Program Review
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Policy for: All Campuses
Procedure for: All Campuses
Authorized by: Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost and Vice
President for System Planning
Issued by: Office of the Provost

I. Policy

The University of South Carolina is committed to the comprehensive periodic review of all degree-granting academic programs (ACAF 2.00) as an essential part of ongoing strategic planning. There are two types of academic program review accepted by the university as fulfilling the periodic review requirement: professional program accreditation and external academic program review. Programs which undergo professional accreditation are exempted from external program review. Any degree program that is not evaluated by a professional accrediting agency must be reviewed externally.

External program review is a mechanism by which an academic unit may benefit from the assessment and advice of disciplinary peers from outside the institution, and assess how the program at the university compares with the best programs of its type. Costs of the review are the responsibility of the unit or college/school housing the academic program.

This policy sets forth the process to be used to conduct periodic external reviews of academic programs, which are to take place at least every ten (10) years.

II. Procedures

A. Comprehensive Campus Procedures

Comprehensive campuses will determine their own procedure for the formal review of programs. The responsibility for Self-Studies and External Review lies with the chancellor of each Comprehensive Campus. Program Review: Responsibility and Oversight

B. Columbia and Regional Palmetto College Campuses Procedures

1. Responsibility and Oversight

a. Provost

The provost notifies the dean annually regarding program reviews. Program reviews occur at least every 10 years and may take up to a year to complete. A table listing all programs by college, along with the timeframe for their reviews is maintained by the Provost's office, and can be found at www.sc.edu/provost/acadprog/progreview.

b. School/College Dean Oversight

- i. The Dean has the primary responsibility for overseeing and initiating
 - a) the review process,
 - b) the internal self-study (Appendix 1) and
 - c) the unit's response to the External Review Report.

In the case of a program or unit that is administered by more than one dean, the responsibility should be shared.

- ii. The dean, in collaboration with the faculty of the unit being reviewed, selects professionals and peers from outside USC to make up the External Review Team (2-5 members). External Review Team visits should take no longer than 2 days. Recommended External Review Team Report criteria can be found in Appendix 2.
- iii. The dean, in collaboration with the faculty of the unit being reviewed, may determine that the goals of the academic program review can be met by the external review team without an on-site visit, e.g., a virtual academic review. A virtual academic review may only be utilized for every other program review cycle, in between which an onsite review is required.

c. Unit Oversight

- i. The most common unit for review will be a single academic department, school, or a single interdisciplinary program. However, a separate review may be warranted for a sub-unit of a department. Alternatively, related programs that involve or affect more than one department, school or college may be reviewed together.

- ii. An entire college, including all of its programs, may be reviewed as a unit, if proposed by the college and approved by the provost. For college-wide reviews, the provost should select the members and chair of the External Review Team.

d. Faculty Oversight

- i. Faculty of the unit under review are responsible for producing the Self-Study. An outline for the Self-Study is provided in Appendix 1 of this policy. The relevant department/program chair or school director is responsible for completing the Self-Study in a timely manner. Program review is considered to be a collective responsibility of the faculty in the unit.
- ii. Faculty are responsible for producing a formal response to any suggestions or recommendations made in the External Review Team Report.
- iii. For programs that are not administered through a college, the administrator to whom the program reports should perform the responsibilities identified herein as those of the dean.

e.. Library Role in Program Review

The staff of the Thomas Cooper Library will provide each of the units undergoing review with a comprehensive report on the library collections and services that support the unit's instruction, research/creative activity, and service/outreach endeavors, to be incorporated into the Self-Study.

f. University Technology Services Role in Program Review

University Technology Services will provide information on university-wide computation facilities and services, which can be supplemented by relevant information on computation facilities and services available at the college, school, department, and program levels. This information should be incorporated into the Self-Study.

g. Office of Institutional Research, Assessment, and Analytics Role in Program Review

Guidance and assistance to the unit preparing the Self-Study should be provided, to the extent possible, by the Office of Institutional Research, Assessment, and Analytics. The unit will be provided with relevant data (e.g., Common Data Set <http://ipr.sc.edu/cds/>) or other information available at the department, school, college, or university levels and assistance in presenting, analyzing, and interpreting relevant data.

2. Self-Study Criteria

Preparing a Self-Study allows units to evaluate the status, effectiveness, and progress of academic programs; recognize and respond to program strengths and weaknesses; identify important directions in the disciplines or professions that need to be addressed; and assess the relationships among and contributions to other academic programs and the overall mission of the University. The Self-Study assesses how the unit fits within and contributes to the University of South Carolina.

All externally reviewed programs at the University will use the Self-Study criteria detailed in Appendix 1.

B. Additional Regional Palmetto College Campus Procedures

1. The Palmetto College Chancellor, in conjunction with deans of USC Lancaster, USC Salkehatchie, USC Sumter, and USC Union, may elect to review the programs of all four campuses together or separately.
2. The chancellor's office solicits campus reports from the four deans, to be compiled into a Palmetto College Self-Study.
3. The chancellor identifies External Reviewers from peer system campuses outside the state and coordinates the review process.

C. Additional Columbia Campus Procedures

1. A memo notifying the dean of the need to conduct a program review will be sent by the provost.
2. The dean will request that the department chair or program director initiate preparations for the Self-Study using the template in Appendix 1.
3. The dean, in consultation with faculty of the program to be reviewed, will identify External Reviewers from institutions outside South Carolina within 2-5 months after the initial memo from the provost to the dean has been received.
4. The faculty of the program under review will consult with the Thomas Cooper Library, University Technology Services, and the Office of Institutional Research, Assessment and Analytics in the compilation of the Self-Study. The Self-Study should be completed within 6 months.
5. The final Self-Study Report is to be submitted to the External Review Team at least one month prior to their visit.

6. The dean of the college is responsible for travel arrangements, scheduling meetings with faculty, staff, and students, and overseeing any other requirements the External Review Team may have. Information on organizing the External Review Team visit, along with a sample schedule, may be found in Appendix 2. Guidelines for the External Review Team Report, to be shared with the External Program Review Team, are presented in detail in Appendix 2. The External Review Team Report will be submitted to the dean within one month of the Review Team's visit.

7. The formal program faculty response to any suggestions or concerns in the External Review Team Report is due to the dean of the unit within one month of receipt of the Report. A copy of the response, along with the External Review Team Report, are then forwarded to the provost within two months of receipt of the External Review Team Report to the faculty of the unit under review.

III. Appendices

Appendix 1: Self-Study Report Criteria

Appendix 2: External Review Team Report

IV. Related Policies

University Policy ACAF 2.00 Creation, Revision and Termination of Academic Programs

APPENDIX 1: SELF-STUDY REPORT CRITERIA

The following outline indicates what the typical Self-Study should include and address. The outline is intended to fit a typical academic program which includes instruction (undergraduate and graduate), research/creative activity, and service/outreach endeavors. Appropriate modifications may be made for units whose activities diverge from the usual range of activities in academic units. These modifications should be shared with the college dean prior to submitting the report. The report should be finished within 6 months of the initial memo from the Provost requesting that program review occur. The final Self-Study is to be sent to all External Review Team members at least 2 months prior to their site visit.

A. Introduction

1. Identify unit which governs the program(s) being reviewed
2. Identify academic program to be reviewed.
2. Organization of the unit
3. Brief description of the self-study process
4. Brief history of the unit; development and progress during the past 5-10 years (or since the last program and/or accreditation review)

B. Mission

1. Mission of the unit; philosophy and focus of the instructional, research/creative activity, and service/outreach programs of the unit
2. Relationship of unit's mission to the college and university mission

C. Description of the program(s)

Include the descriptive information identified below for each of the areas listed. Also describe and document recent trends and changes. Where appropriate, discuss relevant policies (e.g., hiring, assignments and responsibilities, annual evaluation, promotion and tenure policies for faculty; admissions policies for students).

1. Program description:
 - a. Brief description of program under review
 - b. Organization of the program
 - c. Brief history of the unit
 - d. Development and progress of the program during the past 5-10 years (or since the last program and/or accreditation review)

2. Information regarding program majors:
 - a. Number of majors, in total and by classification, gender, ethnicity, age, state and nation of residency, enrollment in on- and off-campus credit and non-credit programs, full- or part-time status; number of applicants, number admitted, and number enrolled; number of degrees awarded annually.
 - b. For graduate programs, entering graduate student undergraduate quartile rank and summary listing of undergraduate institutions attended, student admission status, and performance on relevant graduate admission tests (e.g., GRE, GMAT).
3. Description of faculty resources (FTE by rank; headcount, in total and by gender, ethnicity, years of service, rank, tenure status, graduate faculty membership, and highest degree). This information should be provided separately for tenure-track faculty, adjunct faculty, and professional affiliate faculty.
4. Description of staff resources (FTE by category of position and funding source; headcount, in total and by gender, ethnicity, and categories of positions).
5. Description of the strategies employed to attract and retain a) quality faculty and staff and b) a diverse faculty and staff.
6. Description of graduate assistant resources (FTE by funding source; headcount, in total and by gender, ethnicity, and assistantship categories by teaching assistant, research assistant, and administrative assistant).
7. Describe advisement resources and other student support services.
8. Student credit hour production per year in total; SCH/FTE faculty member.
9. Description of instructional services provided by unit to other areas of the institution.
10. Description of facilities and equipment/instrumentation (available campus- or college-wide, as well as those dedicated to the program).
11. Description of information resources and services (relevant library collections and special facilities, staffing, and local on-line bibliographic access that support the program; computation facilities and services available for the program).
12. Financial resources and indicators (budget by funding source; expenditures by expenditure classification and funding source; sponsored funding received; subsidy generated by majors and by total SCH production; student scholarships and fellowships; and number and percentage of faculty with external funding).

D. **Self-evaluation of programs**

The program self-evaluation may address the criteria listed below as determined by the academic program to be relevant and pertinent. The review should include an explicit statement of program strengths and areas of concern/weakness. The emphasis of the evaluation should be on the assessment of quality, provided in narrative form. Included should be a discussion of the status of the program relative to similar programs at appropriate peer institutions.

1. **Quality**

a. Faculty quality and productivity

- i. Educational qualifications and relevant experience
- ii. Teaching, research/creative activity, and service awards given by national professional associations
- iii. Number and quality of refereed publications, citations, and patents
- iv. Number and quality of juried exhibitions, invited lectures, shows, and recitals
- v. Publications of textbooks and adoption by other universities of teaching innovations developed by USC faculty
- vi. Selection of faculty for prestigious invited memberships (e.g., the National Academy of Science)
- vii. Prestigious positions held in major national organizations, as members of review panels, and as editors of journals
- viii. Productivity indicators, such as SCH/FTE, publications/FTE, extramural funded grant awards

b. Student entry attributes

- i. SAT/ACT scores and high school rank of undergraduate majors
- ii. Scores of entering graduate students on relevant admissions tests (e.g., GRE, GMAT)
- iii. Numbers of national awards, fellowships, and scholarships (e.g., National Merit Scholars, NSF Fellowships)
- iv. Pre-admission portfolio analyses results related to the performing arts

c. The quality of the curriculum, instruction, and support services

- i. National ratings by academic peers
- ii. Relevant accreditation status
- iii. Results of student evaluations of instruction and advising including student self-assessment measures

d. Student outcomes assessment measures

- i. National student awards and honors
 - ii. Performance of students on state or national tests (e.g., GRE subject tests, MCAT, certification/licensure tests)
 - iii. Placement of graduates (jobs, graduate schools and professional programs, postdoctoral appointments)
 - iv. Student retention, average time to complete degree, and graduation rates
 - v. Grade point-average of students at time of graduation
 - vi. Results of student exit interviews, alumni surveys, and employer surveys
 - vii. Other student outcomes assessment measures
- e. Research/creative activity quality and focus of the unit
 - f. Quality and focus of the service component of the unit
 - i. Results of clientele surveys
 - ii. Evaluations by program participants

2. Demand (recent trends, current levels, and projections)

- a. Instructional demand, overall and by majors and non-majors
- b. Employment demand for program graduates
 - i. Placement of recent graduates
 - ii. Projections of labor market demand in areas relevant to the program

3. Centrality to the university mission

- a. Relationship of the program to USC's mission.
- b. Relationship of the program to other programs in the same department (e.g., graduate and undergraduate) and with other programs at USC
 - i. SCH to non-majors, by college and major served
 - ii. Courses taken by non-majors, by college and major
- c. Contributions toward providing a liberal education for USC students
- d. Interrelationships of research/creative activity programs with the unit's instructional programs and with other programs at USC
- e. Relationships of service programs with instructional programs and research/creative activity of the unit and with other programs at USC

4. Comparative advantage/uniqueness

- a. Program distinctiveness in terms of students served (geographic area, gender and minority status, non-traditional students, etc.)
- b. Program distinctiveness attributable to interrelationships with other USC programs
- c. Areas of focus and program uniqueness/differentiation from programs offered at other state-assisted universities; other colleges and universities in South Carolina; peer comparison universities; and other universities in the region and nation.
- d. Areas of duplication with other programs offered at USC

5. Assessment of student learning outcomes

- a. Program's student learning outcomes.
- b. Program's assessment methods.
- c. Inferences drawn from assessment.
- d. Actions taken and program changes/improvements resulting from assessment.

6. Financial considerations and adequacy of resources

- a. Financial considerations and efficiency
 - i. Direct personnel expenditures per SCH produced
 - ii. Direct operating expenditures per SCH produced
 - iii. Student-to faculty ratios
 - iv. Faculty salary comparisons to peer institutions
 - v. Description of programs's faculty workload policy
 - vi. Description of each faculty member's workload assignment during the last academic year
 - vii. Amount and use of external support received during the last academic year
- b. Adequacy of resources
 - i. Faculty
 - ii. Support staff
 - iii. Facilities
 - iv. Equipment/instrumentation
 - v. Supplies and services
 - vi. Information resources and services (Library, Computer Services)

E. Academic Program planning (next 5-10 years)

Describe the planning process within the academic program. Particular attention should be given to ways in which the academic program will be changed or improved within currently available university/academic unit resources and within additional resources that the unit will generate through its own activities. Requests for increased university funding must include detailed documentation of the need for additional funds and specify the program's priorities for additional funds.

1. Planning process
2. Goals and strategies
3. Timetable and implementation plan
4. Relationship to, and consistency with, college and university plans

F. Other issues or information deemed appropriate

Include a summary of the results of recent accreditation reviews or other external program reviews.

G. Appendices

1. Tables, charts, and graphs that are referred to in the body of the self-study, but are not included therein
2. Roster of current faculty and staff including rank and highest degree attained or one-page summary curriculum vitae for each faculty member
3. Relevant catalog materials describing the programs of the unit
4. Copies of other reviews, reports, policy documents, student recruiting brochures, and other items appropriate to the self-study

APPENDIX 2: EXTERNAL REVIEW TEAM REPORT

The following is a suggested outline for the External Review Team Report. This outline is intended as a guide only; units may have additional criteria or requirements to add. The criteria selected by the college should be sent to the External Review Team at least 2 months in advance of the Team's visit, along with the Self-Study (Appendix 1), information on travel arrangements, and a schedule for the visit.

Academic Program Review
Academic Unit [list name]
Review Date
Requested Program Review Completion Date

REPORT OUTLINE

A. Preface

Name of Academic Program
Date of submission
Review Team membership
Review timetable
Review procedures followed; methods of data collection

B. Body

The body of the Review Team's Report should follow the format and order of the Academic Program's Self-Study and should provide the following for each section that applies to the Academic Program:

1. Summary of Findings

Most readers of the report will not have access to the Academic Program's Self-Study, therefore in order to make the report self-contained; it is helpful to make a brief summary of the pertinent findings on which the evaluation and recommendations are based.

2. Evaluation

Questions to help guide the evaluation of each section are provided below

3. Recommendations

These are based on the Review Team's evaluation of the findings.

a. Summary of Recommendations

This should be a simple listing of each recommendation from the body of the report.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (maximum 2 pages)

The Review Team should provide an Executive Summary to act as a brief overview of the most compelling findings of the Review Team Report encapsulating what the Review Team believes administrators most need to know about the Academic Program under review. Since the report outline calls for a separate list of recommendations, there is no need to list them in the Executive Summary. It may be useful, however, to mention the most important ones.

SUGGESTED QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER FOR THE EVALUATION

The information sources serving as the basis for the report should include:

- I. Self-Study of the Academic Program under review;**
- II. Interview with Academic Program and Unit personnel and clients as appropriate;**
- III. Questionnaires/surveys from Academic Program and Unit personnel and clients as appropriate.**

Following are questions to help guide the Review Team's evaluation of the Academic Program. It is not expected that every question be answered as not all questions necessarily apply to every Academic Program's. The Review Team may also identify other questions and/or topics to be utilized.

I. ACADEMIC PROGRAM ANALYSIS

- A. NOTE: The Review Team should be able to address most of the following questions based on information in the Academic Program Analysis section of the Academic Program's Self-Study. However, to effectively address some questions, the Review Team will need to look in other sections of the Self-Study as well as to gather information from other sources.
 - 1. Are the mission, goals, objectives, and outcomes appropriate for the academic program? Comparable within its field? At a level to achieve/strive for excellence?
 - 2. Does this academic program adequately align with the mission and needs of the University of South Carolina?
 - 3. What is the current status of the academic program? Where does it stand relative to similar academic program in the region? In the nation?
 - 4. How well positioned is the academic program to take advantage of current and emerging areas of scholarship.
 - 5. Does the academic program have adequate resources to fulfill its mission? Achieve its goals?

6. Over the next 3-5 years, what five actions must be taken by the academic program?

II. SUPPORTING MATERIALS

A. Administrative Structure

1. How are decisions made to allocate Academic Program's resources?
2. Are reporting lines clearly communicated to those affected?
3. Does the administrative structure effectively support the Academic Program?

B. Staff

1. What strategies are employed to attract and retain quality staff?
2. What strategies are employed to attract and retain a diversity of staff?
3. Are criteria for promotion and merit raises clearly stated and equitably applied?
4. Presuming vacant positions were available in the Academic Program, how would positions best be reallocated to match changing priorities in the field and the needs of the Academic Program?

C. Facilities

1. What is the current status of the Academic Program's facilities?
2. Are the facilities adequate for the current activities? For future goals?