

Western Illinois University

Academic Program Reviews: 2009 – 2010

Introduction, Purpose, and Guiding Principles

The periodic review of academic programs serves several purposes including the evaluation of quality and the improvement of programs. When program review is done well, faculty and administrators gain an understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of their academic programs; there is clear agreement on goals for the future; budget decisions are based on academic priorities; institutions are accountable to their students and other constituencies for the quality of their product; and finally, but most importantly, programs improve.

The review process will be determined by the individual academic department in concert with the Dean, and will follow the general guidelines set forth by the IBHE. To avoid redundancy, academic departments have the discretion to use current findings from specialized program accreditations and other reviews as the basis of the program review process, if they are not more than two years old.

Program Review allows academic units to thoroughly and candidly evaluate:

- the mission and goals of the program and its relation to those of the university
- the educational objectives, curriculum, and student-learning outcomes of undergraduate and graduate programs
- the quality and diversity of faculty and their contributions to the program
- resources (e.g., library, physical facilities)
- the reputation of the program among peers in the discipline

Guiding Principles for Review:

- the review should provide a candid assessment of program strengths and weaknesses and should result in program improvement
- the process should be broadly participatory involving faculty, students, administrators, and relevant constituents
- the process should facilitate short-term and long-term strategic planning

Program review is evaluative, not just descriptive. More than the compilation of data on a particular academic program, it requires academic judgments about the quality of the program and adequacy of its resources. Most important of all, program review should result in actions. Growing out of the review process, the department and college should develop a plan to implement the desired changes. This plan should be linked to the University's planning and budgeting processes to make certain that the desired changes are actually made, the resources are set aside, and that the program's goals fit into the University's strategic plan.

Delineation of Responsibilities

Academic Vice President: The University has an established program review schedule, which can be viewed at www.wiu.edu/Provost/calendar/aprschd.php. The program review process is initiated by the Associate Provost according to the University program review schedule. Guidelines for the academic program review process will be distributed to departments with programs under review. While general guidelines for the review process are established by the Academic Vice President, departments and colleges are encouraged to structure the review process to meet their individual needs.

Summary information obtained from program reviews will be used in the annual results report submitted to the IBHE by the Associate Provost.

College Dean: The College Dean, or designee, participates in the initial planning for the program review. Specific college guidelines/requirements for review, which may be in addition to those established by the Academic Vice President, should be presented to each department undergoing an academic program review process. Internal college deadlines for self-study submission will be established to coincide with timelines required by the Academic Vice President and University planning/budgeting schedules. The College Dean will conduct follow-up meetings with departments to incorporate the review findings into the College and University's long-term plans and has primary responsibility for implementing a plan of action resulting from the review.

Department Chair: The department chair shall plan the review process by conducting a thorough self-study review process. The chair oversees the self-study process and preparation of the self-study document. Final submission of the required program review documentation is the responsibility of the department chair.

Program Review Team: It is suggested that the department establish a program review team, consisting of faculty and other appropriate individuals, for the purpose of conducting the self-study. Program review teams should maintain close contact with the department chair and college dean.

External Reviewers: One external reviewer is required for each department undergoing the program review process. Additional reviewers may be necessary for departments with programs in multiple disciplines. See Guidelines for External Reviewers.

Program Review Self-Study Report Guidelines

While the individual departments and colleges are responsible for developing their own review procedures, it is expected that the review process will minimally include a departmental/program self-study, which is both descriptive and evaluative. **Programs offering courses and/or degrees in the Quad Cities should include relevant information in all areas of the self-study where applicable.**

Elements of the self-study should include, but are not limited to the following:

Section I: Description and Analysis of the Program

1. Overview of the academic unit
 - a. Mission of the academic unit
 - b. Centrality to the mission of the University
 - c. Programs offered
 - d. Outstanding characteristics of the unit
 - e. Academic Advisement and Career Counseling
 - f. Facilities (overview of space and equipment, maintenance plan if applicable)
 - g. Library (resources necessary for the unit, interaction/collaboration with the library, role of the unit in determination/selection of library resources)
 - h. Budget and planning process
 - i. Other
2. Overview of the degree program being reviewed
 - a. Program goals
 - b. Student demand (enrollment history, credit hours generated)
 - c. Profile of majors
 - d. Degrees conferred
 - e. Cost study information
 - f. Other
3. Relevant contextual information
 - a. Description and assessment of major changes in the program
 - b. Description and assessment of changes in the discipline or field
 - c. Student demand
 - d. Societal need
 - e. National trends in recruiting faculty
 - f. Other elements appropriate to the field
4. Curriculum of degree program being reviewed
 - a. Rationale for curriculum (major/minor, general education, service courses)
 - b. Desired student learning outcomes

- c. Coherence and overall design of curriculum and course offerings
 - d. Methods of course delivery, including improvements in technological innovation and comprehensive data systems
 - e. Measures used for assessment of student learning and assessment results (include department/program assessment plan)
 - f. Co-curricular and out-of-classroom academic experiences
 - g. Measures of curricular effectiveness (student/employer satisfaction, results of national certification tests, placement results, etc.)
 - h. Process for curriculum revision
 - i. Other
5. Faculty of degree program being reviewed
- a. Profile of faculty
 - b. Method of faculty evaluation (department criteria)
 - c. Indicators of faculty quality inherent to the discipline/field of study
 - d. National reputation of the program faculty
 - e. Scholarly/creative activities of program faculty
 - f. Faculty development opportunities
 - g. Other
6. Quality measures for the program
- a. Indicators of quality in the discipline/field and justification for these as the best measures of quality
 - b. Peer comparisons for each of these measures from established University benchmark institutions or other appropriate institutions based on specific programmatic uniqueness.
 - c. Other

Section II: Response to previous program review recommendations

1. Actions taken addressing the previous program review recommendations

Section III: Major Findings

1. Strengths identified from the review process
2. Weaknesses identified from the review process
3. Evidence of students meeting desired learning outcomes

Section IV: Recommendations and action plans

1. Recommendations identified from the review process
2. Initiatives and action plans for the program for the next three to five years to meet recommendations

Executive Summary Format to be submitted to the Office of the Provost and Academic Vice President

In addition to the self-study document, a program review summary report must be submitted for each degree offered. The report should consist entirely of concise statements in bullet form describing:

- **Program Goals**
- **Desired student-learning outcomes**
- **Relevant contextual information** – description and assessment of any major changes in the program (e.g., information specific to the discipline or the program's recent history; changes in the overall discipline or field; student demand; societal need; national trends in recruiting faculty, etc.)
- **Actions taken since last review**
- **Major findings (strengths and weaknesses)** from the current review process (to include evidence of achieving learning outcomes and identification of opportunities for program improvement)
- **Recommendations** identified from the review process
- **Actions planned** to meet recommendations from review process

Deadline for Program Review Self-Study and Summary Reports: June 5, 2010.
Please submit electronically in Word.

Guidelines for External Reviewers for Program Review

One external reviewer is required for each department undergoing the program review process. Additional reviewers may be necessary for departments with programs in multiple disciplines. The Provost's Office will provide funding for an \$800 stipend and up to \$1,200 to cover additional costs associated with the review (e.g., travel, lodging, meals).

Programs subject to accreditation review

Departments with programs subject to accreditation review may coordinate the cyclical review with an accreditation review. The timing of the cyclical review should be coordinated with the Associate Provost. An external review, as outlined in this document, will not be required. By June 5, the department should submit all accreditation materials (including the accreditation self-study and visiting team report) and the IBHE review summary to the Associate Provost, through the dean. All documents should be submitted electronically in Microsoft Word.

Guidelines for planning and conducting an external review

- The department usually coordinates the external review
- The campus visit should occur in February or March
- The external reviewer should use the preliminary self-study prepared by the department as a guide to the review
- Two weeks before the campus visit, the department should send the external reviewer:
 - the preliminary self-study (prepared by department; reviewed by dean and Associate Provost)
 - an itinerary of the campus visit
 - University catalog(s) and information folder (available in the Provost's Office)
 - other documents the faculty deem relevant or that the external reviewer may request. The list of documents sent should be cleared with the dean.

Campus Visit Itinerary

The campus visit should include meetings with faculty, students, and administration. The initial meeting should include only the Provost, Associate Provosts, and external reviewer. The last meeting (exit interview) should include only the chair, dean, Associate Provosts, and external reviewer. The schedule should include sufficient time for the reviewer to meet with faculty and students as deemed appropriate by the department.

External Reviewer written report

The external reviewer report should highlight program strengths, challenges, and recommendations for improvement as related to the self-study and any other areas they may wish to address. The written report will be submitted (electronically in Microsoft Word and hard copy) to the dean, copy to the department chair, within four weeks of the campus visit or by April 15 at the latest.

Program Review Timeline

April

- Associate Provost meets with department chair, dean, and faculty (if desired by department), to explain review process and requirements
- Department begins planning for the review process

May – July

- Pre-planning for review and self-study

August – January

- **August – December 1** – Department conducts and completes preliminary self-study
- **November 1** – Department submits at least three external reviewer names to the dean, providing vita and qualifications for each
- **November 15** – Dean submits three external reviewer names to the Associate Provost, providing vita and qualifications for each
- **December 1** – Department submits preliminary self-study, an executive summary (bulleted list of program strengths and potential concerns and remedies identified in the self-study) and proposed external reviewer campus visit itinerary to the dean
- **January 1** – Dean submits preliminary self-study, executive summary, and proposed campus visit itinerary to the Associate Provost

February – March

- External reviewers on campus

April – May

- Department finalizes self-study and the IBHE review summary
- Department submits (electronically in Microsoft Word) to the dean program review documents (final self-study, IBHE review summary, external reviewer report) (**Dean will establish due date**)

June – July

- **June 5** – Dean submits (electronically in Microsoft Word) to the Associate Provost program review documents (final self-study, IBHE review summary, external reviewer report)
- **July 1** – Provost and Associate Provost meet with department chair and dean to discuss review, recommendations, and action plans.

August

- **August 1** – Associate Provost submits all program review summaries to IBHE

June/July of the following year

- Associate Provost/Provost conducts one year follow-up meeting with department chair and dean to evaluate progress.