Western Illinois University

Academic Program Reviews – Overview

Introduction, Purpose, and Guiding Principles

The periodic review of academic programs is a critical and constructive process whose essential elements are documentation of learning outcomes and identification of actions for program improvement. 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 program or school in concert with the Dean, and will follow the general guidelines set forth by the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE). To avoid redundancy, academic programs/schools 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 to support the program
- 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 a plan for 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 importantly, program review should result in actions. Growing out of the review process, the program/school and college should develop a plan to implement the desired changes. This plan should be linked to the University's mission, strategic plan, and budgeting processes to make certain that the desired changes are feasible, the resources can be allotted, and that the program's mission, goals, and objectives align with the University's strategic plan.

By **June 5,** the Program/School should ensure that final versions of all program review materials (including the self-study and external reviewer's report if appropriate) are uploaded to the Google Drive and that the IBHE review summary report form has been completed in the Google Drive. Programs/Schools should keep their Dean as well as the Provost's Office Office of Strategy and Institutional Effectiveness (OSIE) apprised of the status of documents in the Drive.

Delineation of Responsibilities

Office of Strategy and Institutional Effectiveness: The OSIE director facilitates the program review process by maintaining the program review schedule; sharing information and resources regarding University expectations, IBHE requirements, and deadlines; collecting and organizing documents and forms; and serving as liaison between the University and the Illinois Board of Higher Education. Summary reports obtained from program reviews will be used in the annual results report submitted to the IBHE by the OSIE director.

Office of the Provost: The University has an established program review schedule, which can be viewed at www.wiu.edu/provost/aprschd.php. The program review process is initiated by the Office of Assessment, Accreditation, and Strategic Planning in concert with the Office of the Provost. Guidelines for the academic program review process will be distributed to schools with programs under review. While general guidelines for the review process are established by the Provost, programs/schools and colleges are encouraged to structure the review process to meet their individual needs. Programs/schools and colleges are encouraged to work with the Associate Provost for Undergraduate Programs and/or the Assistant Vice President for Graduate, Online, and Outreach Programs, as appropriate.

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 Provost, should be presented to each program/school undergoing an academic program review process. Internal college deadlines for self-study submission will be established to coincide with timelines required by the Provost and University planning/budgeting schedules. The College Dean will conduct follow-up meetings with programs/schools 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.

Program Coordinator/School Director: The Program Coordinator/School Director plans the review process by conducting a thorough self-study review process. The Coordinator/Director 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 Coordinator/Director.

Program Review Team: It is suggested that the program/school 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 Coordinator/Director and Dean. Programs offering courses and/or degrees in the Quad Cities should include relevant information in all areas of the self-study where applicable.

External Reviewers: One External Reviewer is required for each program undergoing the program review process. In the case of a program undergoing review of both an undergraduate and graduate program, one external review may be used for both. See Guidelines for External Reviewers.