

Manual
For
Comprehensive
Academic
Program Reviews



Office of the Provost

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Manual for Comprehensive Program Reviews

THE ROLE OF PROGRAM REVIEWS

Program reviews are designed to enhance the educational mission of UAH. The review allows the program, Dean, and Provost to evaluate programs, address problems, and set goals. Done well, program reviews strengthen the university. The results of reviews will be taken seriously and used in planning and budgeting.

PROFESSIONAL ACCREDITATIONS AND THE PROGRAM REVIEW PROCESS

Some program reviews are required by external agencies such as the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business-International, the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology, the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education, the Alabama Board of Nursing, et cetera. Other reviews are conducted to satisfy the reporting requirements of agencies such as the Alabama Commission on Higher Education. When appropriate, external reviews required by external agencies may constitute the UAH program review.

THE PROGRAM REVIEW PROCESS

The Provost designates the units to be reviewed and requests the Deans of those colleges to develop a schedule for reviewing them. For reviews of degree-granting units (e.g., colleges, departments, interdisciplinary programs), the Provost will consult with the responsible college Dean(s) in setting the schedule.

Academic program reviews should be participatory, with input from faculty, students, and staff of the unit under review, as well as from persons in collaborating programs. In preparing the self-study, the program should work with the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment and the Provost's office, its Dean's office, and other units of UAH, as appropriate, in compiling and analyzing relevant data. The suggested steps of the review process are as follows:

- (1) **Initial Meeting.** The Dean or Associate Dean meets with the Chair/Program Director to establish a timetable and explain the review procedures. A representative from the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment may be present as well.
- (2) **Formation of Review Team.** For degree-granting academic units, the Chair/Program Director, Dean, and Provost appoint a review team consisting of at least four individuals outside the unit being evaluated, including at least one professional outside UAH, appropriate to the unit's scope and programs. The internal members of the review team for degree-granting academic units must be tenured, senior faculty members with distinguished credentials, and should usually be selected from disciplines related to the program under review. For degree-granting academic program reviews, at least one of the internal members of the review team should be in the same college as the unit being reviewed. If the unit being reviewed has a graduate program, the graduate Dean recommends an internal review team member. For non-degree-granting academic units, the Provost and the unit director appoint a team of internal reviewers.

The external review team members should normally be selected from a list submitted by the unit being reviewed. The list should indicate the professional qualifications of the individuals being recommended. They should normally be academic professionals, in the field being reviewed, from peer or comparable institutions. Reviewers should have administrative experience and should have significant achievements in teaching and research/creative activity. If a review of a graduate program is involved, the external reviewer should have experience with graduate education, unless a non-academic reviewer is chosen. In some cases, it may be desirable for an external reviewer to be a non-academic professional in order to bring a wider perspective to the review. In such cases, the reviewer must have outstanding qualifications and should have some understanding of a university with the scope of UAH.

The Dean submits the list (which may include additional names) with recommendations to the Provost. The Provost or Dean, as appropriate, will invite the review team members and handle all logistics, including the selection of dates for the campus visit of the review team. When contacting external review team members, the Provost or college Dean will inform them about the comprehensive program review process and the benefits to the academic program or department under review.

Although most costs of the self-study will be borne by the unit being reviewed, expenses associated with report production and those associated with the review team—travel expenses, meals, etc.—will be borne by the Office of the Provost. The review coordinator will establish a budget for each review.

(3) Creation of Self-Study. The program being reviewed prepares a self-study document. The self-study process should involve all members of the program or department, with the effort chaired by the Chair/Program Director, or her/his designee. The self-study should include data through the current calendar year. Once completed, the self-study is submitted to the Dean. UA System Board requirements on program reviews are provided in Appendix A.

Every academic unit must have a mission statement that is consistent with the university mission statement. The unit must have educational goals that can be objectively measured together with procedures for evaluating the extent to which those goals are being achieved. The self-study should be written in light of the mission statement, the unit's educational goals, and the procedures for assessment. Wherever possible, data should be provided for the previous five years, and, in cases where a previous review has been conducted, for the period since the previous review. Considerable data on programs may be obtained from the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment. Each unit should also have collected pertinent annual data that will be used for the self-study. Quantitative data should be provided where possible (e.g. on enrollments, graduation rates, faculty salaries, student-teacher ratios, etc.).

The self-study should contain the following sections (see Appendix C for details):

1. Program goals and directions
2. Students
3. Faculty

4. Curriculum and Outcomes
5. Resources and Physical Facilities
6. Overall Summary and Recommendations

(4) **Review of Self-Study.** The Chair/Program Director forwards the self-study to the Dean for review. Once satisfied, the Dean writes a very brief evaluation of the self-study, and forwards both the self-study and the evaluation to the Provost. The Dean also forwards the self-study to units on campus that collaborate with the unit being reviewed. The heads of those units, together with relevant persons in their units, review the self-study and forward their evaluations to the Provost, who may request revisions of the self-study.

(5) **Self-Study to Review Team.** Once the internal review and revision of the self-study are complete, the document will be sent to the review team before the campus visit.

(6) **Campus Visit Scheduled.** A schedule for the campus visit is developed by the Provost in consultation with the Dean and Chair/Program Director.

(7) **Campus Visit.** The review team reviews the self-study before the campus visit and prepares a list of questions and concerns to be addressed during the visit. The review coordinator usually conducts an orientation for the internal members of the review team prior to the campus visit. All members of the review team should participate fully throughout the review process. The Provost and review coordinator meet with the review team at the beginning of the visit. The team will normally have a full schedule of meetings with pertinent individuals and groups during the first day. The second morning will begin with a team meeting and discussion of findings. A final set of appointments and luncheon discussions will end the interactive part of the visit. The team will reconvene and draft its major findings prior to an exit interview with the Chair/Program Director, Dean, review coordinator, and Provost.

The external review team member submits a final written report to the review coordinator. The final report should address the following:

- a. Overall quality of the program self-study.
- b. Evidence of student learning in the program.
- c. Evidence of quality in students' work (such as portfolios or other projects).
- d. Demonstrated competency of faculty.
- e. Report from meetings with the Dean, groups of students, alumni, and faculty (without the program director or department head).
- f. Strengths and "best practices" evidenced in the program.
- g. Weaknesses/challenges identified in the program.
- h. Steps the program might take to address weaknesses/challenges.

(8) **Response to Review Team Report.** The review coordinator distributes the report to the Provost, Dean, and the Chair/Program Director. The Chair/Program Director provides a written response to the report to the Provost and/or Dean, and the review coordinator. For degree-granting academic units, the departmental faculty should be involved at each stage and should be

kept informed of progress by the chair (or, in the case of colleges that have no departments, the Dean).

(9) Meeting to Discuss Review Team Report. The Provost meets with the Dean and Department Chair/Program Director within two months after receiving the final report of the review team to discuss its recommendations and the steps that need to be taken in light of the review.

(10) Executive Summary of Review. Not later than one month after that meeting, the Dean or unit supervisor submits an executive summary of the review report to the Provost. The executive summary contains:

- An introduction written by the review coordinator
- A list of reviewers' recommendations, together with a list of the responses from the unit, college, and Provost, indicating plans for implementation

When graduate programs are involved, the Provost provides the Graduate Council a summary of findings and the recommended follow-up actions, which are placed in the Graduate Council minutes. When undergraduate programs are involved, the Provost provides the Faculty Senate Undergraduate Curriculum Committee a summary of findings and the recommended follow-up actions, which are placed in the Faculty Senate minutes.

The Provost or Dean, as appropriate, administers the follow-up planning and implementation, together with the Chair/Program Director, and uses the review findings in the annual planning and budgeting process.

(11) Follow-Up. A follow-up is conducted one year after the review to evaluate the changes made and results achieved.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: University of Alabama System Board of Trustees Manual

504. Review of Existing Academic Programs

I. Policy Statements

The Board of Trustees requires the institutions of The University of Alabama System periodically to review and evaluate all programs of instruction, research, and service.

The review and evaluation results must be submitted to the Chancellor's Office as an Executive Summary.

II. Guidelines for the Review of Existing Programs

A. Objectives

1. The major value of any program review process derives from the degree of self-evaluation, which a serious review catalyzes and promotes. The purpose of this process is to provide for a formal, systematic review of the many programs being offered under the auspices of the campuses. The intent is not to duplicate or supplant the program reviews conducted by various professional accrediting agencies (such as exist in Business, Education, and others), but rather to provide a means for internal review free from the specific goals and constraints of such external reviews. Every effort will be made, however, to coordinate internal and external reviews in order to avoid duplication of data collection.

2. More specifically, the aim of the review of existing programs is to raise the quality of education in The University of Alabama System through:
 - a) Acting as a catalyst for self-evaluation and self-improvement by the faculty in specific program areas;

 - b) Identifying concerns and problems common throughout the university and those unique to specific programs;

 - c) Identifying strengths and weaknesses in the University's overall programs, examining alternatives for correcting and eliminating deficiencies, and making recommendations to the appropriate campus and System authorities.

B. Review Procedures

1. The administrative responsibility for the review process on each campus shall be that of the Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs. The responsibility for coordinating the review process for the System is assigned to the Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs.

2. The review of programs will be guided by three major principles:
 - a) Improvement of education can be fostered most effectively by collecting and reviewing essential information about the program under review;

 - b) Similar disciplines on a campus should be reviewed at the same time whenever possible; and

 - c) All of the university's programs selected for review should be subject to comparable procedures, including a common format for the collection of information, and considered in accordance with the approved purposes of the program and the mission, role, and scope of the campus.

3. It is the responsibility of the Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs to provide the Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs a description of the academic program review process for his/her campus.

4. Upon completion of each program review, an Executive Summary shall be forwarded to the Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs by the Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs.

(Adopted September 17, 1980 as Rule 520; revised November 1, 1996; amended and renumbered December 5, 1997; amended November 14, 2008)

Appendix B: SACS Standards Addressed Through Program Review

Core Requirements:

2.5 The institution engages in ongoing, integrated, and institution-wide research-based planning and evaluation processes that (1) incorporate a systematic review of institutional mission, goals, and outcomes; (2) result in continuing improvement in institutional quality; and (3) demonstrate the institution is effectively accomplishing its mission. (Institutional Effectiveness)

2.7.2 The institution offers degree programs that embody a coherent course of study that is compatible with its stated mission and is based upon fields of study appropriate to higher education. (Program Content)

2.8 The number of full-time faculty members is adequate to support the mission of the institution and to ensure the quality and integrity of each of its academic programs.

2.11.2 The institution has adequate physical resources to support the mission of the institution and the scope of its programs and services. (Physical Resources)

Comprehensive Standards:

3.3.1 The institution identifies expected outcomes, assesses the extent to which it achieves these outcomes, and provides evidence of improvement based on analysis of the results in each of the following areas: (Institutional Effectiveness)

3.4.10 The institution places primary responsibility for the content, quality, and effectiveness of the curriculum with its faculty. (Responsibility for curriculum)

3.4.11 For each major in a degree program, the institution assigns responsibility for program coordination, as well as for curriculum development and review, to persons academically qualified in the field. In those degree programs for which the institution does not identify a major, this requirement applies to a curricular area or concentration. (Academic program coordination)

3.7.1 The institution employs competent faculty members qualified to accomplish the mission and goals of the institution.

3.7.2 The institution regularly evaluates the effectiveness of each faculty member in accord with published criteria, regardless of contractual or tenured status. (Faculty evaluation)

Federal Requirements:

4.1 The institution evaluates success with respect to student achievement consistent with its mission. Criteria may include: enrollment data; retention, graduation, course completion, and job placement rates; state licensing examinations; student portfolios; or other means of demonstrating achievement of goals. (Student achievement)

4.2 The institution's curriculum is directly related and appropriate to the mission and goals of the institution and the diplomas, certificates, or degrees awarded. (Program curriculum)

Appendix C: Outline of Suggested Components of a Self-Study Report

The self-study report should cover the years since the last program review. The narrative should be organized according to the following outline and be no longer than 25 single-spaced pages, excluding appendices. Respond to each question, using tables or bullets when appropriate, keeping in mind that the document's emphasis should be on analysis and evaluation rather than description.

1. **Introduction and brief history of unit.** Provide sufficient information so that an outsider will understand when the unit was formed and when its various programs and other major activities were initiated. It would also be useful to discuss briefly any critical events that have occurred in the recent history of the unit.
2. **Mission and goals.** Give the most current unit mission and goals. Describe how these have changed since the last review. Describe how the unit's mission and goals are related to the university's mission and goals. Discuss any plans that the unit has for future growth or program modifications.
3. **Students.** If applicable, provide tables with official data on student enrollment in the unit's courses, and/or participation in the unit's activities, and programs for the past five years. As a minimum, units that offer courses should include data that show total credit hour production by term or semester. Also, units that offer courses should list year-by-year (for the last five years) enrollments and graduation or completion rates in the programs of the unit. Discuss the quality of the students enrolled and provide data to support your conclusion. What measures does the unit have of the success of the program in meeting the needs of the students? Do the students persist at UAH through graduation? Do the students report satisfaction with their educational experiences and the quality of student life at UAH? Do they receive rewards and/or recognition for special achievements at UAH? Do they get jobs? Do they advance in their professions? Do they pursue graduate study? Where? Discuss the available facts relevant to the quality of students and to program effectiveness. Describe recruitment activities and student advising. Does the unit have an effective advising program? Does the department attract a diverse student population? What steps are being taken to assure that activities and programs accommodate a diverse student body?
4. **Faculty or Professional Staff.** Provide a brief overview of faculty or professional staff qualifications, curricular and research expertise, and contributions to the department, the college, the university, and the profession. Note especially faculty or professional staff strengths and weaknesses and relate these to the unit's mission and goals. If significant gains or losses have occurred since the last review, discuss how these have affected faculty or staff effectiveness. What changes are necessary, if any, in order for the unit's mission and goals to be achieved or sustained? In this section, if applicable, summarize appropriate data for the faculty to give a composite representation of the faculty. Include a summary of average teaching loads, credit hours generated per FTE (including part-time faculty in this calculation but deducting for research buy-outs), number of refereed publications and creative works,

and a summary of research activities. Also include a section on part-time faculty. Provide a summary showing how many part-time faculty were used each semester and summer term during the past five years. Include a brief vita for each part-time faculty member that includes, at a minimum, where they obtained their degrees, qualifications to teach, information on their professional competence in the field, and a list of courses they have taught and the courses they are approved to teach but have not yet taught. Is the faculty a diverse or homogeneous group? What steps are being taken to assure that students are being exposed to a faculty with diverse backgrounds and cultures? Append a vita for each faculty member, that includes a summary of the following information for the last five years:

- courses/sections taught each year with enrollments and course evaluation summaries
 - graduate students advised (include student's names and degrees awarded)
 - refereed papers
 - refereed creative works
 - published books
 - other publications or creative works
 - presentations at regional, national or international professional meetings
 - university service (university and committees, etc.)
 - community service
 - professional consulting activities
 - teaching, research or other professional awards or recognition
 - professional memberships
 - professional service activities (journal editorial boards, activities in professional organizations, etc.)
 - contracts and grants awarded by agency and amount
5. **Resources and Physical Facilities.** Provide an account and assessment of the physical facilities and of how they affect the effectiveness of the academic program. In particular, discuss the available classroom and laboratory space and available equipment.
6. **Curriculum and Outcomes.** For each degree, certificate program, or major administered by the unit, discuss the following in some depth:
- program goals and special features (include program options, etc.)
 - student recruitment and selection procedures
 - program description (courses required, qualifying exams, etc.)
 - operational features (e.g., Who makes up the exams? Who appoints the students committees? How do students select advisors? Who markets the program? How do students provide input on customer services and program activities? Etc.)
 - provide a self-assessment of the quality of the program keeping in mind that the review team will assess (i) program goals and objectives for instruction, research, public service, quality of student activities, and customer relations, (ii) suitability and quality of the faculty or professional staff, (iii) quality of services for students, (iv) suitability and quality of the curriculum or programming for constituents, (v) admission, instruction, examination procedures, if applicable, (vi) achievements of students and alumni

- summarize with recommendations for the program. Make recommendations that could enhance its effectiveness. In completing this section remember that there are never enough funds to do all things. This is your chance to provide justification for continuing this program. If the unit believes that the resources could be better spent on other programs within the unit such a recommendation would be valuable.
7. **Overall Summary and Recommendations.** Provide a summary of principal conclusions of the self-study and any recommendations for action. Recommendations for action should include suggested roles and responsibilities for implementation of the action, such as the department, the college, or the university.

Appendix D: SACS COC Standards Addressed Through Program Review.

SECTION 6: Faculty

2. For each of its educational programs, the institution
 - a. Justifies and documents the qualifications of its faculty members. (Faculty qualifications)
 - b. Employs a sufficient number of full-time faculty members to ensure curriculum and program quality, integrity, and review. (Program faculty)
 - c. Assigns appropriate responsibility for program coordination. (Program coordination)
3. The institution publishes and implements policies regarding the appointment, employment, and regular evaluation of faculty members, regardless of contract or tenure status. (Faculty appointment and evaluation)
5. The institution provides ongoing professional development opportunities for faculty members as teachers, scholars, and practitioners, consistent with the institutional mission. (Faculty development)

SECTION 7: Institutional Planning and Effectiveness

1. The institution engages in ongoing, comprehensive, and integrated research-based planning and evaluation processes that (a) focus on institutional quality and effectiveness and (b) incorporate a systematic review of institutional goals and outcomes consistent with its mission. (Institutional Planning) [CR]
3. The institution identifies expected outcomes of its administrative support services and demonstrates the extent to which the outcomes are achieved. (Administrative effectiveness)

SECTION 8: Student Achievement

1. The institution identifies, evaluates, and publishes goals and outcomes for student achievement appropriate to the institution's mission, the nature of the students it serves, and the kinds of programs offered. The institution uses multiple measures to document student success. (Student achievement) [CR]
2. The institution identifies expected outcomes, assesses the extent to which it achieves these outcomes, and provides evidence of seeking improvement based on analysis of the results in the areas below:
 - a. Student learning outcomes for each of its educational programs. (Student outcomes: educational programs)
 - b. Student learning outcomes for collegiate-level general education competencies of its undergraduate degree programs. (Student outcomes: general education)

SECTION 9: Educational Program Structure and Content

1. Educational programs (a) embody a coherent course of study, (b) are compatible with the stated mission and goals of the institution, and (c) are based on fields of study appropriate to higher education. (Program content) [CR]

SECTION 10: Educational Policies, Procedures, and Practices

4. The institution (a) publishes and implements policies on the authority of faculty in academic and governance matters, (b) demonstrates that educational programs for which academic credit is awarded are approved consistent with institutional policy, and (c) places primary responsibility for the content, quality, and effectiveness of the curriculum with its faculty. (Academic governance)

SECTION 13: Financial and Physical Resources

7. The institution ensures adequate physical facilities and resources, both on and off campus, that appropriately serve the needs of the institution's educational programs, support services, and other mission-related activities. (Physical resources)