

Guidelines for Academic Program Review



Academic Program Review at Stetson University is a collaborative, dynamic process designed to promote student learning and success.

GUIDELINES FOR ACADEMIC PROGRAM REVIEW

INTRODUCTION TO ACADEMIC PROGRAM REVIEW

Student learning is at the core of Stetson University's mission, and as part of our work to enhance and promote student learning, all academic programs will participate in ongoing program review. Program Review at Stetson University is a dynamic, collaborative process designed to create healthy academic programs that are mission-driven, dedicated to continuous self-assessment, analysis, and engaged in strategic planning. Healthy academic programs are built on a framework of inclusive excellence. Programs are designed to facilitate excellence in its many forms by all students. Programs also support values exploration in the areas of personal growth, intellectual development, and global citizenship. Stetson University strives to be an institution of choice for innovative approaches to tackling complex challenges. An academic program builds and supports healthy outcomes by examining its learning framework and engaging in continuous quality improvement, and welcoming reflection on critique.

Program review at Stetson places emphasis on (1) student learning and achievement; (2) teacher-scholar engagement and excellence; and (3) plans, efforts, and resources directed toward continuous development of the program's quality and reputation. These emphases ensure that the reviews to the attainment of the University mission and that warranted recommendations for improvement are thoroughly considered and implemented.

Program Review begins with a self-study led by program faculty who seek to assess and further develop the quality of their academic unit by determining how well program curriculum, faculty resources and activities, support services, and other program components work together to facilitate student academic success. To provide a broad perspective, the Program Review process involves students, faculty, appropriate external stakeholders, administrators, and external specialists in the discipline.

For the purpose of program review, a program is defined as a department, including all of its graduate and undergraduate majors and minors; interdisciplinary programs, such as Data Analytics, and Honors, are considered distinct programs.

STAKEHOLDERS

Program review at Stetson University increases the sense of shared purpose among its many diverse academic programs and reinforces the need for coordinated planning for the future by all academic units. In doing so, the program review process intentionally involves several key stakeholders.

1. **Faculty.** The involvement of teacher-scholar faculty in programs undergoing review fosters learning and the creation of a stimulating learning community that encourages a lifelong commitment to learning through continuous engagement in the assessment of program strengths and areas for improvement, academic program review provides teacher-scholars opportunities to facilitate learning. The involvement of teacher-scholars in the reviews enables further development of teach communities where scholarly and creative endeavors complement and enrich excellence in teaching and service to elevate integrative and experiential learning.
2. **Students.** The involvement of staff in programs undergoing review provides an opportunity for those directly involved in the program to assess its strengths and areas for improvement.
3. **Staff.** The involvement of staff in programs undergoing review provides an opportunity for those directly involved in the program to assess its strengths and areas for improvement.
4. **College/School and University Administrative Leaders.** The involvement of College/School and University administrative leaders in the reviews ensures that meaningful and effective follow-up for each review will occur and that academic programs have the resources necessary for follow-up to occur.
5. **External Specialists.** The involvement of external specialists from the discipline brings to bear peer review and input on strengthening the program's purpose, reputation, and future direction;
6. **External Stakeholders.** The involvement of external stakeholders who have an interest in the program emphasizes the importance of Stetson's connections with relevant professional communities. It should be noted that the term community may be construed broadly in this context; some programs may perceive their community to be DeLand and central Florida, others may wish to involve key stakeholders from throughout the State, while still others consider the region, the nation, or the world as their community.

RESPONSIBILITY FOR PROGRAM REVIEW and SUGGESTED SCHEDULE

All academic units will be scheduled for review over a five-year period. If a unit also experiences periodic peer review for purposes of accreditation, the internal and external review processes will be carefully coordinated to minimize duplication of faculty time and effort. The Dean of each college or school will be responsible for overseeing the reviews of programs within his or her school. The Assistant Vice President of Institutional Research and Effectiveness will develop and coordinate the overall review schedule and orient academic units using these *Guidelines*.

In most cases, the Program Review process will be carried out during one calendar year, following this series of steps:

1. Program Chair, Dean, and Assistant Vice President of Institutional Research and Effectiveness meet to review the process and determine needs for the review.



2. Program Chair and faculty gather data, conduct qualitative and quantitative assessments, analyze results, and write the self-study following the guidelines below.



3. Program Chair submits draft of self-study to Dean and names of 3 potential External Reviewers.



4. Dean returns self-study draft to Program Chair with suggestions for revision or approval for next step.



5. Upon self-study approval, Dean appoints External Reviewer and works with Program Chair for site visit by External Reviewer.



6. Program Chair sends self-study to External Reviewer.



7. External Reviewer visits campus.



8. External Reviewer submits report to Dean.



9. Dean sends External Reviewer Report to Program Chair.



10. Program Chair adds External Reviewer Report and Chair's Response to External Reviewer Report to the self-study.



11. Program Chair submits entire self-study, including items listed in #10 above, to Dean.



12. Dean sends Dean's Response to the Self-Study to the Program Chair and adds Response to the Self-Study.



13. Dean reports on all Academic Program Reviews in Dean's Annual Report.

In most cases, Academic Program Review will be a year-long process that involves the following key steps:

1. Gathering information about the program (i.e., a department, a school-wide unit such as the writing center, or a cross disciplinary program), including data provided by the Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness;
2. Developing an evidence-based self-study organized in a manner to aid in the continuous improvement of the program undergoing review;
3. Analyzing the program in the context of similar programs at peer institutions;
4. Identifying and engaging with an appropriate external reviewer;
5. Analyzing the external reviewer's report in the context of the self-study;
6. Synthesizing all available information and establishing goals and strategies to meet them during the next 5-year cycle;
7. Review and recommendations from the appropriate academic Dean;
8. Following up in the annual report to the Dean to ensure that the unit is fully supported in its efforts to address the outcomes of the review and other goals established.

THE SELF-STUDY

The self-study is a key element of the Program Review process. It is intended to give program faculty and staff an opportunity to conduct a critical evaluation of their current activities and the academic program. The self-study requires candid consideration of program strengths and opportunities for improvement, and calls for a plan for program strategic direction enhancement. Several campus offices, including Institutional Research, Student Success, and the University Library will assist faculty, staff, and students in the program undergoing review in assembling information for the self-study.

The Assistant Vice President of Institutional Research and Effectiveness is an integral part of the academic program review process. He/She will

1. Develop a comprehensive schedule for all academic program reviews;
2. Consult with the Dean of the College or School and the Program Chair to plan the self-study and review;
3. Assist the faculty developing the self-study with data collection and analysis.

The two approaches described below are viable options for completing the self-study. Either option should result in a self-study that includes the items indicated below. Each program will have additional information to include and may choose a different order for parts of the self-study.

STANDARD APPROACH: Programs that do not routinely engage in external accreditation by a disciplinary agency will follow the standard approach. This will include most programs at the University.

In some instances, the same information is listed in two or more places in the self-study guidelines. Programs may elect to provide this information once and refer to it thereafter as necessary.

Elements of the Standard approach include the following:

I. Executive Summary (1-2 pages)

II. History, Mission, Demand, Reputation. This section will begin with a narrative that summarizes the following and that emphasizes those items that are most important to the program's effectiveness.

1. About the Program

- Degrees offered
- External accreditation (yes/no)
- Date of last program review/external accreditation review
- Origin and significant events in development of the program
- Distinctive characteristics of the program

2. Mission and Goals

- Statement of mission, including relationship to school and [university](#) missions
- Account of past Program Review 5-year goals, including progress made, challenges, and additions and deletions to those goals. When conducting a program review for the first time, please include specific goals in the areas of teaching and learning; research, scholarship, and creative activity (attach planning documents and relevant policy statements)
- Discussion of how the program actively supports current University [strategic map](#) priorities

3. Demand

- Evidence of external demand for the program (in service region, state, southeast, etc.)
- Evidence of internal need for the program

4. Reputation

- Include evidence of the program's reputation, including external recognition of program, faculty, and students

III. Resources. This section should begin with a narrative that summarizes the information listed below, with a discussion of program strengths and needs related to resources.

1. Enrollment (Data for the past 5 years, if available)

- Average number of majors for the last three years
- Number of minors in Fall term (*applicable programs only*)
- Number of first time in college (FTIC) students in most recent Fall term
- Number of majors in Fall terms
- Percentage change in number of majors compared to prior Fall term
- Average number of student credit hours for the last three years
- Average program SCH as a percent of total undergraduate SCH
- Percentage change in SCH compared to prior year
- Average number of degrees awarded for the last three years
- Percentage change in number of degrees awarded compared to prior year
- Average time of graduates to complete a degree

2. Faculty

- Number of faculty (by gender, ethnicity, rank, tenure, highest degree, years of service, full-time/part-time status) (*SACS 6.1,6.2.b*)
- The role of service anchored within the mission of the university services in enhancing the student learning, professional scholarship and the future direction of the program.
- Course units taught by Full-time faculty; Percentage of reassigned time
- Average teaching evaluation scores (may be reported by course level, major courses, gen ed. courses, etc.)
- Description of criteria for evaluation/reward/recognition of faculty (*SACS 6.3*)
- Curriculum vitae for each faculty member, including list of courses taught, description of advising/mentoring activities, record of service, highest degree earned, research interests, publications, and sources of external support (*SACS 6.2.a.*)
- Evidence of ongoing professional development (*SACS 6.5*)

3. Finances

- Analysis of income and expenses associated with the program for the current (or most recently completed) academic/fiscal year
- Projected analysis for at least two successive years of program income and expenses with budgetary implications of any planned or anticipated changes in the program
- Program-specific fellowships and scholarships available to students (including travel funds for students to attend conferences)
- Number of external grants applied for and number awarded

4. Library (*SACS 11.1*)

- Description of relevant library holdings and resources
- Assessment of adequacy of current resources

5. Physical Facilities (*SACS 13.7*)

- Overview of the physical environment for the program, including facilities, instructional technologies, other equipment, and supplies

IV. Program Effectiveness. This section should begin with a narrative that reflects on the relation of curriculum and student support in relation to program learning outcomes.

1. Program Content (*SACS 9.1*)

- Program learning outcomes, including date of last review and revision
- Structure, breadth, and depth of curriculum
- Curriculum map
- Discussion of changes in department curriculum in response to new directions in the discipline.
- Evidence of faculty involvement in development of program content (*SACS 10.4, 9.1, 6.2.c.*)
- Graduate programs (if applicable)
- Evidence that the graduate program contains advanced academic content beyond the scope of the undergraduate program (*SACS 9.6*)
- Evidence of advanced student research/professional practice and immersion in the literature of the field (*SACS 9.6*)

2. Student Support ([SACS 12.1](#))

Description of existing student support provided by the program, including the following:

- Advising
- Out-of-classroom learning opportunities
- Student research
- Monitoring of student progress
- Assistance in placement of graduates

3. Program Effectiveness ([SACS 8.1](#), [8.2.a.](#))

Discussion of ongoing program effectiveness and assessment processes, to include:

- Outcomes, methods, measures, and benchmarks used
- Changes made as a results of assessment findings
- Evidence of student mastery of general education learning outcomes ([SACS 8.2.b.](#))
- Evidence of student achievement of specified learning outcomes in the major
- Evidence of faculty involvement in ensuring quality and effectiveness of program content ([SACS 10.4](#))

4. Student Learning & Outcomes

The section will begin with narrative describing indicators of program quality based on student achievements, including demonstrable student learning. ([SACS 8.1](#))

- Student retention in program
- Average GPA of students
- Number of graduates per year
- Placement of graduates in employment in the field or in further education.
- Evidence of program quality derived from surveys/interviews of current students, graduates, employers, community members or agencies
- External recognition of students, faculty, graduates, or alumni including awards or honors and research awards
- Publications by students in the program
- Summary of learning assessment since last Program Review

V. Comparison Schools. This section will begin with a narrative of the program's comparison to similar programs at other schools, particularly those on the University's list of comparison schools, and including the following comparative information:

1. Comparative ratios of faculty, courses, class sizes, student majors and minors;
2. National standards and norms for programs in discipline
3. Nationally recognized best practices in discipline
4. Student placement

VI. Goals for Next 7 Years.

1. Based on the self-study, determine highest priority goals for overall program improvement, to be accomplished in 7 years, and explain why these goals have been chosen.
2. Provide a timeline for completion of the goals (assuming goals will be addressed sequentially).
 - List indicators of success for each goal (what will success look like?).
 - List resources needed to accomplish goals.

DISCIPLINE-SPECIFIC APPROACH: Several programs at Stetson are accredited by discipline-specific accrediting agencies. This approach permits an accredited program to organize the self-study in a manner consistent with external self-study documents, thereby aligning the internal program review with external frameworks and reporting requirements to avoid unnecessary duplication of effort. It also provides programs undergoing external accreditation an opportunity to leverage the program review process to help make improvements in advance of such discipline-specific accreditation cycles. External discipline-specific accreditation inherently seeks to establish a program's level and nature of compliance with stated criteria, while Stetson's program review process actively promotes an improvement-oriented approach. Thus, for the purpose of program review, programs are encouraged to address in the self-study document both their compliance with externally-developed, discipline-specific criteria *and* areas identified for internal improvement. In doing so, the aims and purposes of both the internal and external reviews can be maximized. Please consult the discipline-specific accrediting agency for specific criteria used to evaluate program quality and effectiveness.

THE EXTERNAL REVIEW

The program chair will provide the Dean with names and supporting information of three (3) candidates, one of which will be invited to serve as the external reviewer. The candidates should be recognized within the appropriate discipline as teacher-scholars. Ideally, the candidates will have previous experience as program reviewers. Consulting with the program chair, the Dean will select a reviewer and make arrangements for the external review. The Dean will submit the self-study documents and appropriate information about the University to the external reviewer, and will establish a timetable for the external review. The external reviewer will visit the campus(es), meet with all appropriate stakeholders, and will then write a report based on evidence provided, observations and interviews conducted, and disciplinary standards and best practices. The external reviewer's report will summarize the strengths of the program and recommend changes if appropriate. Within a month of the site visit, the external reviewer will submit the report to the Dean, who will forward it to the program chair.

WRITING THE ACADEMIC PROGRAM REVIEW REPORT

Within six months following receipt of the reviewer's report, the program faculty will submit the comprehensive program review, which will include the entire self-study, the external reviewer's report, a response to the reviewer's report, and a plan for addressing issues raised in any part of this process. This will all be submitted to the Dean.

FOLLOW-UP

The Dean of the college/school will call a follow-up meeting or the purpose of discussing the comprehensive program review report. All appropriate representatives of the campus administration and the two internal reviewers will be invited to this meeting in order to bring to bear all the University resources that are needed to assist the unit in making and carrying out essential strategic plans. In subsequent years, the program's progress in each targeted improvement area should be addressed in its annual report to the Dean. The Dean will have follow up meetings to discuss short- and long-term strategies for achieving outcomes of the review.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR PROGRAM REVIEW

Although the process of academic program review provides notable professional development to faculty engaged in the process, targeted professional development in support of the review process ensures clarity in expectations, deliverables, and outcomes. More importantly, professional development helps departments focus on student learning and determine how quality is defined (reputational view, resources view, outcomes view, value-added view, etc.). In collaboration with the Brown Center for Faculty Innovation and Excellence, professional

development support will be available to assist in the preparation and implementation of the academic review process. Formalized support includes (but is not limited to) program learning outcomes development, curriculum mapping, planning workshops, assessment planning, and consultations. In addition, planning and development resources will be available at the academic program review website.

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS

Program Review at Stetson University is designed to help programs demonstrate their effectiveness and to aid in ongoing improvement efforts. Considerable university-level support is available to program stakeholders throughout the program review process. Questions concerning program review should be directed to the appropriate dean.

Appendix:
Sample Rubric for Evaluating Elements Common to All Self-Study Approaches

Stated goals and outcomes for the program:

- _____ Program has developed a set of specific goals that are clearly identified
 - _____ Program has developed a set of measurable outcomes that are linked to program goals
 - _____ Program has explained the purpose/significance and the linkages between goals and outcomes
 - _____ Program has described the processes used for establishing its goals and outcomes
- Comments:

Explicit connection between the program and Stetson mission, vision, values, and diversity statements

- _____ Program has specific mission, vision, and values statements
 - _____ Program has explained its commitment to diversity and inclusion
 - _____ Program indicates how its mission, vision, values, and diversity/inclusion efforts are both derived from and aligned with those of the school and campus
- Comments:

Evidence of program effectiveness, with a particular emphasis on assessment of student learning outcomes

- _____ Program identifies specific learning outcomes for students
 - _____ Program has a documented process for assessing learning outcomes
 - _____ Program provides evidence of its effectiveness, including student learning outcomes, using a variety of measures (relevant, direct, indirect, quantitative, and qualitative)
 - _____ Program incorporates findings from its assessment process in ongoing continuous improvement efforts
- Comments:

Critical questions to which the program is seeking answers or guidance from its program reviewers

- _____ Program has developed specific questions for its program reviewers
- _____ Program explains how these questions will facilitate improvement and planning efforts
- _____ Program questions are related to and draw from information contained in the self-study document
- _____ Program questions are written in a manner that can be understood and answered by members of the program review team

Comments:

Overall assessment of the program's strengths, areas for improvement, and plans for the future

- _____ Program identifies and describes its strengths
- _____ Program identifies and describes its areas for improvement
- _____ Program identifies and describes its plans for the future
- _____ Program establishes a linkage between information contained in the self-study document and its strengths, areas for improvement, and plans for the future

Comments:

Evidence-based information organized in a logical, well-written manner

- _____ Program provides appropriate evidence to substantiate claims made in the self-study
- _____ Program uses appropriate evidence in describing activities and accomplishments
- _____ Program self-study is organized in a logical manner
- _____ Program self-study is written in a manner free from major spelling, grammar, and organization errors

Comments: