



UNC CHARLOTTE
Office of Assessment and Accreditation

Academic Program Review Process

Guidelines

June 16, 2017

Academic Program Review Process

UNC Charlotte's Program Review process is intended to:

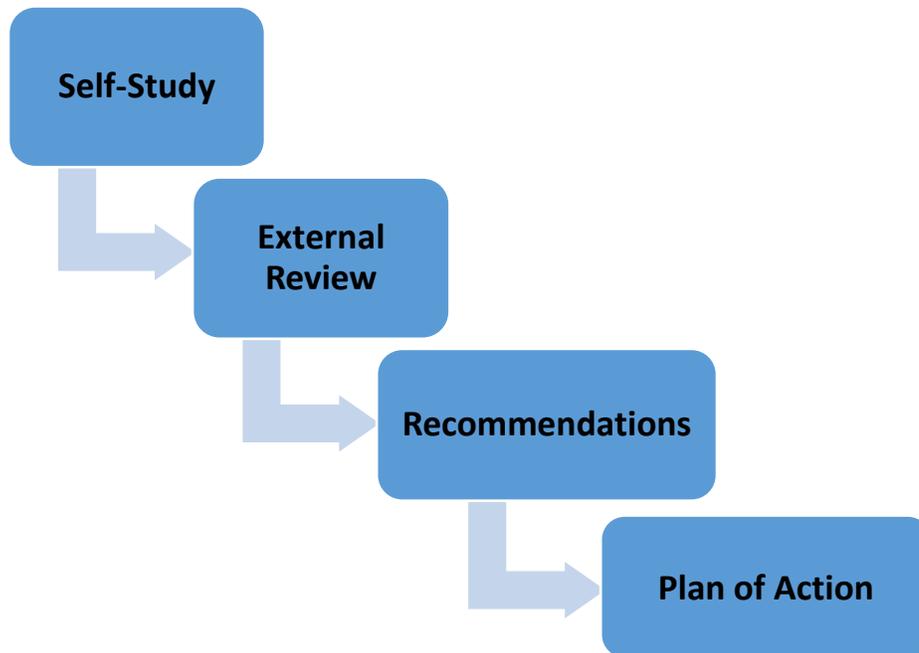
- assess the quality and effectiveness of academic programs and units;
- stimulate program planning and improvement;
- ensure that current and proposed programs are consistent with University-wide strategic priorities;
- promote fairness and efficiency in the allocation of academic resources in response to the needs of UNC Charlotte;
- support the planning and budgeting processes of the University;
- respond systematically and efficiently to requirements for self-assessment from SACSCOC and other accrediting agencies.

At minimum, the academic program review process should include: 1) an examination of the function of the program, department, or unit; 2) a self-assessment; 3) an evaluation from key stakeholders, most often obtained through surveys of key constituents; and 4) a final report including an overview of the review process and major findings and recommendations. The cycle of review concludes with a report on actions taken as a result of the review.

Academic program reviews should be conducted every 5-7 years. Considerations for a review period longer than seven years is based on the longevity of director (e.g., not during first year or two), significant organizational change (i.e., not immediately following such), and compliance or other certification schedules. Every unit reporting to the Provost should define a plan for the Academic program review for their area(s), specifying timeline(s), process(es), level of review(s), and participants (internal/external). The Office of Assessment and Accreditation will offer consultation and support on the development of the program review.

The academic program review process will extend over two academic semesters. Some departments will begin the review process in the fall semester and complete the process in the spring; other departments will begin in the spring semester and finish the following fall semester (**see timeline in Appendix A**). The process is the same for both start times, and comprises the phases described below.

Process



Self-study

The department's self-study should provide an assessment of the quality and effectiveness of its programs, with attention to recent improvements of student learning outcomes, strategic plans, and analyses of the department's teaching, research, and service activities. How each department approaches these analyses will vary, but the department should strive to provide a comprehensive review of all of the descriptive information discussed above. The self-study should identify strengths, weaknesses, emerging opportunities, and the impact of trends and economic forces that support or impede achievement of the program's mission, vision, goals, and objectives. Descriptions for each of the self-study components are provided on pages 4-6.

In general, the self-study will include the following:

- Description of the department: size, scope of teaching and learning, research, and service activities; departmental operations and resources;
- Analysis of the academic programs: student enrollment, instructional methods, faculty preparation and development; scope of scholarly activities, publications, and external funding, academic support services, and an assessment of quality and effectiveness demonstrated by student-learning outcomes;
- Recommendations and action plans that are clear and specific with recommendations for the department to take to capitalize on its strengths and minimize its weaknesses. Including goals and priorities for the department for the next five years, a rationale for the recommendations; and an analysis of projected risks, benefits, and outcomes.

Preparing for the Self-Study

The introduction to the self-study should give an overview of the self-study contents, the external reviewers, and a timeframe in which the study was conducted. The introduction may also include information about any previous reviews and discuss the department's response to the recommendations emerging from the last review. If there have been significant curricular changes since the last review, those may be discussed here or in the body of the report.

An outline of the elements that are generally included in a self-study report is provided below. **Although this is not a prescribed format, departments are strongly urged to adopt this structure or develop a similar structure that will organize the report in a way that best communicates the results of the self-study.**

I. Description

The department's self-study should begin with a description of the department. The purpose of the descriptive part of the self-study is to give the reader an introduction to the department and its programs. This section is descriptive, rather than analytical. It should convey a sense of the size, quality, and scope of the department's activities, including teaching and learning, research, and service. The description should also include a discussion of current departmental resources (support personnel, annual budget, space, special equipment, etc.) and their allocation. The program should state the primary purpose, key functions, and its impact. This portion of the report will generally include:

An overview of the department:

- The departmental mission statement (reference relationship to college & Institutional mission, state priorities & Board of Governors strategic plan as appropriate)
- The department's current short-term and long-term goals, as well as any specific objectives relating to those goals
- A description of any measures, metrics, or indicators that the department uses to assess its progress toward those goals
- A description of departmental resources:
 - A description of departmental structure and administration
 - General information about faculty and support personnel
 - Information about infrastructure, such as the annual budget, space utilization, special equipment, library holdings, etc.
 - A description of departmental expenditures and allocations during the relevant period of time
 - Statement on how the program would look in five years (assuming no additional state resources)

Description of undergraduate, graduate, and continuing education programs, including:

- Number of students enrolled by race and gender

- Number of students who received honors, awards, recognitions, student publications
- Retention and graduation rates, job placement rates, licensure rates, certification exams, and number of degrees awarded
- Description of program level outcomes
- Results of any surveys assessing student satisfaction, student experience, alumni, and employers.

Description of teaching, advising, and mentoring activities, including:

- High impact practices (e-portfolios, learning communities, diversity/global learning, service learning, and community based learning) - list the percent of faculty participating
- Teaching loads, by professional rank and type of appointment (full-time/part-time)
- Summary of the department's approach to advising
- Description of the department's undergraduate and graduate research opportunities with students
- Departmental participation in faculty mentoring (% of faculty participating in mentoring or collaborative efforts with colleagues)

Description of the department's research and scholarship activities, including:

- Summary of current research and scholarship accomplishments by the department's faculty (patents, publications, honors, presentations, and scholarly work)
- Summary of external funding efforts by the department's faculty (applied & awarded, gifts and donations)
- Discussion of any interdisciplinary research projects with faculty in other departments/colleges or other universities

Description of service activities by the department's faculty, including:

- Service to the department and the University (partnership/sponsorship)
- Service to the profession (new teaching methods & curriculum design, curriculum review)
- Other external service

Some of these data elements may be provided through the Office of Institutional Research. Other information will need to be collected by the department. Departments are encouraged to elicit participation from a wide range of stakeholders during this phase. Information collected from faculty, staff, graduate students, and undergraduate majors will contribute to a rich description of the department, and will help focus the department's analysis.

II. *External Review (outside of the department/college)*

As part of the self-study process, it's highly recommended that departments include feedback from external reviewers. The external reviewers should be outside constituencies including faculty, staff, students, and where appropriate alumni and community members who the department believes would contribute significant feedback (see **External Reviewer's guiding questions in Appendix B**). The final selection

is the responsibility of the department head/Dean, who will contact the external reviewers. The external review report will include (1) program strengths, (2) areas for improvement, and (3) recommendations.

The self-study report should conclude with clear and specific recommendations for actions the department could take to capitalize on its strengths and minimize its weaknesses. This section provides an opportunity for the department to use the information gathered and the analyses conducted in the self-study process to think strategically about its goals and the specific steps needed to reach those goals. The recommendations should encompass the [short-term, (one year), the intermediate-term, (5 years), and the long-term, (10 years)] and include:

- Actions which need to occur in terms of the program, students, faculty, facilities, and resources (financial and personnel)
- Benchmarks that can be used to gauge departmental performance, effectiveness, and efficiency
- Identifying recommendations within the control of the program and those that require action from Dean, Provost or higher levels

Each recommendation should be made in two possible scenarios:

- With existing resources, including the possibility of reallocating resources within the department
- With one time funding resources

III. ***Plan of Action***

The academic program review process concludes with the development of an action plan. The action plan will include: (1) recommendations, (2) improvement strategies, (3) timeline for implementation, (4) specific actions for the department to take to achieve the goals, (5) person(s) responsible, (6) resources needed, and (7) evidence of impact -- requested two years after the program review (**See academic program review template**).

IV. **Supporting Documentation**

To conduct a thorough self-study, the department will need to obtain data from the University's data systems, the Office of Institutional Research, and other departmental records or files. Not all of the data relied upon during the process of the self-study will need to be included in the self-study report, but it is expected that certain data elements will be appended to the report. The data collected should be the last five years. (e.g. Undergraduate and graduate student headcounts, undergraduate and graduate student profile, faculty rank, graduate student persistence rates, retention and graduation rates, licensure rates, certification exams, job placement rates, number of degrees awarded, and results of any surveys assessing student satisfaction, student experience, alumni, and employers).

A final copy of the department's self-study will be submitted to the Provost and the Office of Assessment and Accreditation.

Appendix A

Timeline for Academic Program Review

Step/Process	*Fall Start	*Spring Start	Person(s) responsible	Comments/Specific Tasks
1. Confirm departments to be reviewed	Ongoing	Ongoing	Director of Program Review	Director of Program Review will send notification by email
2. Notify department and establish schedule for completion	September	February	Director of Program Review Department/Dean	The dean and the department will agree on a plan to schedule the review, based on the department's particular demands and circumstances.
3. Initial departmental meeting	September	February	Director of Program Review/ Departmental Self-Study Team / Institutional Research	Discuss the process in greater detail, review the self-study guidelines, survey resources and tools, and identify specific needs.
4. Department gathers department-specific information	September-October	February-March	Department	Use the template provided (see the program review guide, appendix c)
5. Follow-up departmental meeting	October	March	Director of Program Review/ Departmental Self-Study Team	Review departmental data and discuss additional elements that the department may wish to collect.
6. Conduct the self-study	October-January	March-April	Department	Director of Program Review will meet periodically with the self-study team and advise the team and answer questions as they arise.

Phase I - Self Study

*The academic program review process will extend over two academic semesters. Some departments will begin the review process in the fall semester and complete the process in the spring; other departments will begin in the spring semester and finish the following fall semester.

Step/Process	Fall Start	Spring Start	Person(s) responsible	Comments/Specific Tasks
7. Obtain feedback from External reviewers	February	September	Dean/Department head	During this time collect feedback from external reviewers.
8. Schedule a priorities and recommendations meeting 9. Development of an action plan 10. Submit completed self-study with recommendations and action plan to the Provost and the Director of Program Review in the Office of Assessment and Accreditation	March- One month after the external reviewers' feedback, and the priorities & recommendations' meeting	October- One month after the external reviewers' feedback, and the priorities & recommendations' meeting	Dean/Department head	Depending on the contents of the report and the recommendations, this step may involve a series of individual or group conversations among members of the unit and administration. The action plan includes: (1) recommendations, (2) improvement strategies, (3) timeline for implementation, (4) specific actions for the department to take to achieve the goals, (5) person responsible, (6) resources needed, (7) evidence of impact- two years after the program review.

Appendix B

External Reviewer's Guiding Questions

The following questions are a guide for the external reviewers to address the key components of a program review. (Select and answer the questions that you feel are appropriate for your self-study.)

Questions to guide analysis of the department's overview

1. How does the department define its mission? (What is its scholarly focus? Who does the department serve, and who benefits from the department's activities?)
2. Does the department's written mission statement reflect the department's purpose, primary activities, and stakeholders?
3. What are the current, relevant critical issues and approaches in the field, and how are they reflected or addressed in the department's mission statement?
4. How do the department's short and long-term goals support the department's mission?
5. How does the department evaluate its progress in meeting its short and long-term goals? What measures does the department use? How is the progress communicated or recorded?
6. How does the department contribute to the mission of the college and the mission of the University?
7. How are the department's mission and goals communicated to faculty, staff, and students?

Questions to guide the analysis of department resources

1. Is the equipment available to the department adequate for the current state of the department? Is there sufficient operating support (maintenance contracts, technical staff, etc.)?
2. In light of the data presented on library holdings, are appropriate library resources available to the department?
3. In light of the data presented on department space, is the space currently available to the department appropriately allocated?
4. Is faculty and staff support now available to the department appropriate?
5. What are the department's current hiring plans for the next five years?
6. What efforts have been made to diversity faculty and staff?
7. How does the department support and mentor junior faculty? How is the review of junior faculty conducted?

8. How does the department evaluate senior faculty members?
9. How are department resources (equipment, space, staff support) allocated? How could they be reallocated?

Questions to guide the analysis of undergraduate, graduate, and continuing education programs

1. How does the department assess student learning outcomes for its majors and minors? Assessment of student learning involves: a) making the department's expectations explicit; b) setting appropriate criteria by which to rate achievement of expectations; c) gathering, analyzing, and interpreting evidence to determine how well student performance matches expectations; and, d) using the resulting information to document and improve the department's programs.
2. How are student learning outcomes communicated to faculty, staff, and students?
3. On the basis of available data measuring student satisfaction and student learning outcomes, what does the department judge to be the main successes and shortcomings of its undergraduate and graduate programs?
4. How does the department integrate diversity and inclusion in the curriculum?
5. What does the department do to increase its visibility?
6. What changes have been made in the undergraduate and graduate curriculum in the past five years? Why did the department make these changes—on the basis of what evidence? (student, alumni, and employer survey results)

Questions to guide the analysis of teaching, advising, and mentoring

1. What is the standard teaching load of faculty by rank and status, and what is the basis on which reductions occur?
2. How have student course evaluations been used to improve teaching? What specific improvements have been made on the basis of course evaluations?
3. What effort is made by the department to stay apprised of pedagogical best practices in the discipline or field?
4. What are the goals of the department's advising of its majors? Undergraduate and Master's degree students? Doctoral students?
5. How are advising programs organized? How are the advising responsibilities distributed among the faculty?
6. What training of faculty advisors does the department do? How is the effectiveness of faculty advising evaluated and rewarded?

7. Has the department conducted studies of undergraduate students' satisfaction with departmental advisement? Graduate students' satisfaction?

Questions to guide the analysis of research and scholarship

1. What provisions are made in the department or program to support faculty to engage in scholarship/research?
2. What external level of support (to the department/program) exists to assist faculty in their scholarship/research? Does the department have plans to try to increase this level of support? If so, describe how.
3. What are the research strengths of the department?
4. Do members of the department engage in interdisciplinary research projects with faculty in other departments?

Questions to guide the analysis of faculty service

1. In light of the data presented on faculty service, are the department faculty sufficiently engaged in the work of the department? Is the work evenly spread among faculty?
2. Are the department faculty sufficiently represented on College and University committees and task forces?
3. Do the department faculty demonstrate a commitment to the community outside the University?
4. Do the department faculty adequately serve, and lead, their professional organizations?

Sources

Hanover Research (2012). Best Practices in Academic Program Review. Retrieved from http://www.asa.mnscu.edu/academicprograms/program_planning/Hanover%20Research%20Best%20Practices%20in%20Academic%20Program%20Review%202012.pdf

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