



UNC CHARLOTTE
Office of Assessment and Accreditation

**Academic, Student, and Administrative Support Program Review Process
Guidelines**

July 18, 2017

Academic Support Program Review Process

UNC Charlotte's Academic Support Program Review process is intended to:

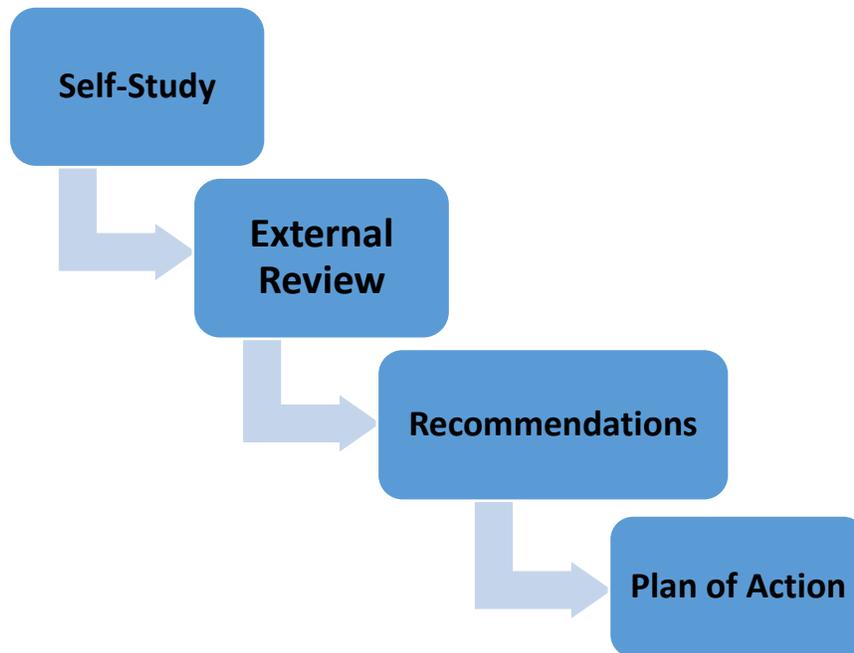
- assess the quality and effectiveness of the academic support units;
- stimulate unit planning and improvement;
- impact student success;
- ensure that current and proposed programs/services are consistent with University-wide strategic priorities;
- promote fairness and efficiency in the allocation of 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 support program review process should include: 1) an examination of the function of the program, 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 support program reviews should be conducted every 5-7 years. Consideration for a review period longer than seven years is based on the longevity of the unit leaders (e.g., not during the first year or two), significant organizational change (i.e., not immediately following such), and/or completing compliance or certification schedules. Every unit reporting to the Provost should define a plan for the Academic support program review process 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 program review process will extend, at most, over two academic semesters. Some units will begin the review process in the fall semester and complete the process in the spring; other units 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 unit's self-study should provide an assessment of the quality and effectiveness of its unit, with attention to analysis and recent improvements of the unit's assessment plan, and analyses of the unit's service activities. How each unit approaches these analyses will vary, but the unit should strive to provide comprehensive analyses of all of the descriptive information discussed above. Identify strengths, weaknesses, and emerging opportunities and the impact of trends and economic forces that support or impede achievement of the unit's mission, vision, goals, and objectives. Specific guiding questions for conducting the self-study are provided on pages 9-10 in the description section.

In general, the self-study include the following:

- Description of the unit's: size, service activities; unit's operations and resources;
- scope of scholarly activities; (if applicable), publications, and external funding, academic support services, and an assessment of quality and effectiveness demonstrated by stakeholder's satisfaction;
- Recommendations and action plans that are clear and specific with recommendations for the unit 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 unit's response to the recommendations emerging from the last review. If there have been significant 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, units 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 unit's self-study should begin with a description of the unit. The purpose of the descriptive part of the self-study is to give the reader an introduction to the unit and its programs and services. This section is descriptive, rather than analytical. It should convey a sense of the size, quality, and scope of the unit's activities and services. The description should also include a discussion of the unit's current resources (support personnel, annual budget, space, special equipment, etc.) and their allocation. This portion of the report will generally include:

An overview of the unit:

- the unit's mission statement, (reference relationship to College & Institutional mission, state priorities and Board of Governors strategic plan as appropriate)
- the unit'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 unit uses to assess its progress toward those goals
- a description of the unit's resources:
 - Information about infrastructure, such as the annual budget, space utilization, special equipment, etc.
 - A description of unit's structure and administration (organization chart may be helpful)
 - A description of how the unit encourages and provides opportunities for ongoing professional development for its personnel?
 - A description of unit's expenditures and allocations during the relevant period of time
 - A brief description of emerging issues and trends
 - Statement on how the unit would look in five years (assuming no additional state resources)

Description of effectiveness

- Describe key accomplishments in the unit's last strategic plan.
- To what degree is the unit achieving its current goals and objectives with respect to established benchmarks and baselines?
- Describe the practices the unit has taken to improve its efficiency and effectiveness.
- Describe the impact of these changes.
- Describe how the annual report results are related to the unit's budget.

Description of compliance with policies and procedures

- What are the legal, policy and governance practices of the unit, and how are they addressed and monitored?
- How are personnel instructed, advised, or assisted with legal, policy, and governance concerns?
- How does the unit engage the college community in regard to its policy and procedures?

Description of the relationships with other units/departments

- With which relevant individuals, campus offices, and external agencies must the unit maintain effective relations? Why are these relationships important, and how are they mutually beneficial?
- Describe how the unit assess the effectiveness of its relations with faculty, students, individuals, campus offices and external agencies?
- Describe how the printed and digital information you provide to users meet their needs.

Description of the unit's strengths, challenges, and threats?

- What are the unit's strengths?
- What are the unit's challenges?
- What are the external threats to success?
- What could be improved?

The majority of the information included in the self-study will be collected by the unit. Units 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 unit and will help focus the unit's analysis.

II. External Review (outside of the unit)

As part of the self-study process, it's highly recommended that units include feedback from external reviewers. The external reviewers should be outside of the unit, and include individuals who the unit believes would contribute significant feedback to the department (**see External Reviewer's guiding questions in Appendix B**). The final selection is the responsibility of the unit head, who will contact the external reviewers.

Recommendations

The self-study report should conclude with clear and specific recommendations for actions the unit could take to capitalize on its strengths and minimize its weaknesses. This section provides an opportunity for the unit 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 services/programs that are offered, students, staff, faculty, facilities, and resources (financial and personnel)
- Benchmarks that can be used to gauge unit's performance, effectiveness, and efficiency
- Identifying recommendations within the control of the unit 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 unit
- 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 support program review template**).

IV. Supporting Documentation

To conduct a thorough self-study, the unit will need to obtain data from surveys, focus groups, the University's data systems, the Office of Institutional Research, and other unit 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.

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

Timeline for Academic Support Units Program Review

Phase I - Self Study	Step/Process	*Fall Start	*Spring Start	Person(s) responsible	Comments/Specific Tasks
	1. Confirm unit to be reviewed	Ongoing	Ongoing	Director of Program Review	Director of Program Review will send notification by email
	2. Notify unit and establish schedule for completion	September	February	Director of Program Review/ Unit head	The dean and the unit will agree on a plan to schedule the review based on the unit particular demands and circumstances.
	3. Initial unit meeting	September	February	Director of Program Review/ Unit head, 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. Unit gathers specific information about the unit	September-October	February-March	Unit head/department	Use the template provided (see the program review guide, appendix c)
	5. Follow-up unit meeting	October	April	Director of Program Review/ Unit head, Self-Study Team	Review unit data and discuss additional elements that the unit may wish to collect.
	6. Conduct the self-study	October-January	April-May	Unit head/department	Director of Program Review will meet periodically with the self-study team and advise the team and answer questions as they arise.

*The academic support unit 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	Unit 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 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	Unit head/department	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's 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.

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 unit's mission and goals

1. How does the unit define its mission? Who does the unit serve, and who benefits from the unit's activities?
2. What are the current or emerging issues and trends? How are they reflected or addressed in the unit's mission statement?
3. How do the unit's short and long-term goals support the department's mission?
4. How does the unit evaluate its progress in meeting its short and long-term goals? What measures does the unit use? How is the progress communicated or recorded?
5. How does the unit contribute to the mission of the department and the mission of the University?
6. How are the unit's mission and goals communicated to faculty, staff, and students?

Questions to guide analysis of planning/assessment

1. How does the unit highlight improvement?
2. How does the unit address previous assessment activities?
3. How does the unit monitor and assess their plans?

Questions to guide assessment of the unit's qualified and appropriate personnel

1. How does the unit describe qualified personnel?
2. What efforts have been made to diversify the staff?
3. How does the unit evaluate performance?
4. How does the unit support professional development efforts for staff?
5. How does the unit document staff accomplishments?

Questions to guide the analysis of services delivered

1. How does the unit maintain effective relationships with campus offices and external agencies?
2. How does the unit assess the effectiveness of these relationships?

Questions to guide the analysis of the department resources

1. Is the equipment available to the unit adequate for the current state of the unit? Is there sufficient operating support (maintenance contracts, technical staff, etc.) for the unit's equipment?
2. Is the space currently available to the unit appropriately allocated?
3. Is the staff support (administrative, clerical, technical, etc.) now available to the unit appropriate?
4. How are unit resources (equipment, space, staff support) allocated? How could they be reallocated?

Questions to guide the analysis of the unit's strengths, challenges, and threats

1. What does the unit do best?
2. What could be improved?
3. What are the external threats to success?

Sources

Hummingbird (2015). Nonacademic program review guide and forms. Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute.

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

James Madison (2017). Student Affairs Program Review Resources. Retrieved from <https://www.jmu.edu/studentaffairs/program-review/index.shtml>

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