

Working Guidelines for Academic Program Review¹

The 7-year program review presents an opportunity for departments to highlight their growth and achievement over the past seven years. It gives departments an additional forum in which to make their case for continued, or increased, institutional support to sustain what is working well, address weaknesses, and facilitate growth in new strategic directions. This vital component of the university's internal assessment process, however, represents a tremendous amount of work for department chairs and their faculty. To ensure that the hard work has tangible and realistic benefits to schools and departments, the following guidelines are given below, to ensure that program review findings are used to “inform planning and budgeting processes”²

Departments should plan to conduct the review after they have annually assessed their set of learning outcomes, usually every five to eight years. The program review is a systematic process that has six phases: 1) preparing for the review; 2) writing the self-study; 3) external reviewer visit and report, followed by response to that report by the department; 4) approving the program review documentation; 5) administrative response to program review, and 6) follow-up progress report and ongoing monitoring of implementation progress.

The program review schedule will be developed by the Assessment Committee, in consultation with the Deans from respective schools and the Provost. The Provost's office must approve any deviations from the schedule. The Program Review Master Calendar is maintained on the Assessment Webpage.

Phase One - Preparing for the Review:

At the beginning of the Fall quarter of the planning year, the Provost notifies Deans and departments that they must begin their program review during the Fall quarter of the following academic year. During this time Departments begin making preparations, such as collecting assessment reports from previous years and consulting with the Dean on possible external reviewers. Any necessary data from Institutional Research is requested and obtained. The Assessment Committee appoints one of its members as a Assessment Liaison to work as a resource person with the department undergoing review. The Assessment Liaison's responsibility during this phase is to explain processes and clarify requirements and timetable for completion.

Phase Two: Program Self-Study

By the beginning of the Fall quarter of year one, the department is writing the self-study. This reports the highlights of the program's achievements, its success in facilitating student learning outcomes, and weaknesses that need to be addressed, including an action plan for how those needs are to be met. This

¹This document is a revision to the 5 June 2014 (and 6 March 2018) Program Review Guidelines in order to accomplish the following: 1) update the document language for a 7-year Program Review cycle, and 2) extend the planning stage earlier into the planning year, and 3) increase internal consistency within the document.

² WASC Program Review Resource Guide, 2013

is a document that looks both at the past and future.³ See Appendix 1 for specific detailed guidelines on the content of the Self-Study.

By the end of Fall quarter of year one, the Chair presents a draft of the self-study to the Dean and Assessment Liaison. Chairs consult regularly with Deans during the writing of the self-study to ensure that preliminary concerns and resource issues are brought to their attention. The Assessment Liaison provides initial feedback on the self-study as well. During Winter quarter of year one, the self-study is reviewed by the department, Dean, and Assessment Liaison. The Chair submits a final draft by the end of Spring quarter of year one to the Dean, Provost, and Assessment Committee.

Phase Three: External review

The external review phase actually begins in Spring of year one of the program review, as departments begin a discussion about suitable external reviewers who will make a site visit to the campus. The external review team consists of two or more individuals primarily external to the university, acceptably unbiased in their association with the department under review (for example, no relationship with the department as adjunct faculty or Liaisons), and should be chosen jointly by the program and the Dean or Provost. Reviewers should be recognized in a related field or discipline; chosen from departments similar to that of the department under review; have experience in program administration; understand and be experienced in student learning outcomes assessment; and have the ability to review and analyze student learning results. The review team evaluates the self-study, makes a visit to the campus (visits may be completed in a single day, some will require longer) and provides timely feedback. The steps of the review process are detailed below:

1. Chairs or Deans submit a copy of their program's self-study to the reviewers in the summer or at the beginning of Fall quarter year two, at least four weeks prior to the scheduled visit.
2. During the site visit, reviewers meet with the program Chair, a majority of the faculty (all, if possible), the Dean or Provost, and others at the request of the reviewer. These appointments are scheduled by the program Chair or Dean, in consultation with the reviewers.
3. Within two weeks of the campus visit, reviewers provide a written draft of feedback (5-8 pages) to the program; this feedback focuses primarily on educational effectiveness, but may address other areas as well.
4. Programs have two weeks in which to respond to any issues of factual accuracy. The review team then submits, within two weeks, a final review to the program.
5. Upon receipt of the final report from the external reviewers, the department will respond to each recommendation. Responses may include agreement with the external reviewers' comments or addressing issues raised in the report, which the department is already working on. If the external reviewers offer recommendations outside the purview of the department's

³Some departments are required, by discipline-specific accrediting bodies, to submit reports in particular formats including specific types of information. For departments that are subject to such requirements, the program review format described above may be modified. More specifically, rather than creating a new program review document that conforms to the guidelines listed here, these departments may instead create a brief guide/reporting document and submit this, along with the relevant documents already created for the external, discipline-specific agency, in lieu of the program review detailed here. This guiding/reporting document should include: 1) All elements required for the LaSU program review not already included in the external agency document (narrative and supporting materials); 2) Clear guidance (page and paragraph numbers) on where, in the external agency document, each element required for LaSU's program review may be found.

program review or if the external reviewers offer what is perceived as unfair or irrelevant commentary, the department may use this response as an opportunity to address areas of disagreement with the external reviewers' final report.

Phase Four: Administrative Response to Program Review

The Program Review, which by now includes the self-study, external reviewer report, and department response to reviewer report, are submitted to the Provost, Dean (if the program is a Chaired department), and Assessment Committee. The Program Review provides an opportunity to address necessary curricular changes and possible capacity issues. Deans should not wait until all the final drafts are completed to begin responding to program issues as they are identified. However, the completed program review should be given a formal administrative response. This follows the principles outlined by WASC⁴ for best practices in program reviews-that results of program review "... be used as evidence to inform decision-making processes at various levels in the institution (i.e., from the program-level through the university-level, depending upon the nature of the recommendations)."

In order to achieve this best practices model of integrating program review findings into budgeting and planning, the Chair, the Dean, and the Provost will create a memorandum of understanding (MOU) that outlines specific action steps to be taken along with a timeline for accomplishment and resources that will be provided. The Chair or Dean may draft this document, but responsibility for its completion lies with the Dean. The MOU is endorsed by the Provost to ensure that budget requests get on the agenda for a fair hearing. The finalized MOU is given to the Chair, the Dean, the Provost, the Strategic Planning Committee, and Assessment Committee.

Phase Five: Assessment Committee Analysis of the Program Review

The Assessment Committee's role is essentially to verify the process is complete, inform of the next review cycle (with any suggestions to the program about preparing for that review, if needed). The Assessment Committee may also look back on the process of program review in order to advise on how to improve the program review process.

Phase Six: Follow-Up Progress Report and Continuous Assessments

In the following year the departments, with the requisite institutional supports outlined in the MOA, will implement recommendations arising from the program review. The Chair and Deans will draft a follow up report to the Assessment Committee and Provost approximately eighteen (18) months after review, due on December 15th. This gives programs one academic year to start implementing changes and six months to evaluate the effectiveness of those changes.

⁴ WASC Program Review Resource Guide, 2013.

Appendix 1 Guidelines for Content of Self Study⁵

1. Introduction to the department, including:
 - a. Program mission statement;
 - b. Program student learning outcomes and a description of how these align with university learning outcomes.
2. Capacity profile (program's capacity to meet its objectives), including:
 - a. Description of the program's ability to effectively cover the content area of the discipline, referring to specific faculty areas of specialty and noting under-developed areas;
 - b. Description of how the current curriculum accomplishes the aims of the program;
 - c. Resources available (i.e., budget, facilities, equipment, personnel), including a statement on the number of students the program can handle vs. the number it has presently, and what would be needed to grow the program (should be written as a narrative with supporting examples)
 - d. Description of how the program integrates with the campus as a whole (e.g., offering pre-foundational classes, service classes, etc.)
3. Educational effectiveness (outcomes of SLO assessment, demonstrating effectiveness), including:
 - a. More detail on specific curriculum issues, pedagogy
 - b. Program-level scholarship and its interface with delivery of program (connection to program's mission)
 - c. Evaluation of post-graduate outcomes (when available; CFR 4.8)
 - d. Evaluation with regard to other similar programs (benchmarking)
4. Summary evaluation – program's strengths and weaknesses (e.g., unique aspects of the program, potential competition from new programs in the geographic area, etc.)
5. Action plan – how the loop will be closed, what improvements will be made, future goals and long-term planning for the department
6. Queries for external reviewer (optional)
7. Attachments (CVs, syllabi, curriculum alignment matrix, etc.)

The report is expected to be 10-15 pages in length (plus supporting documents).

⁵ The guidelines presented in Appendix 1 are informed by the *WASC Resource Guide for 'Good Practices' in Academic Program Review* (WASC, 2009). A list of WASC's specific CFR, which provide more detailed guidance for programs that desire it, the '*Good Practices*' resource guide, can be found on the University Assessment website at www.lasierra.edu/assessment.

Appendix 2: Suggested Timeline for Program Review Process

Phase & Year	Due on or before	Task	Person (s) Responsible
Phase 1	Fall Quarter	Deans and Chair notified they are scheduled to begin program review in following academic year	Provost
		Collect data and previous reports	Chair, faculty, and IR
	Winter Quarter	Additional data requested from IR	Chair and IR
		Assessment Liaison appointed	Assessment Committee
		Assessment Liaison explains program review process, requirements, and timetable	Assessment Liaison (may request Assessment Committee Chair to attend meetings)
Phase 2, Year 1	September	Begin writing Self-Study	Chair and faculty
	End of Fall Quarter	Self-study draft submitted to Dean and Assessment Liaison	Chair and faculty
	Winter Quarter	Dean and Assessment Liaison give feedback to Department	Dean and Assessment Liaison
	End of Spring Quarter	Final draft completed and submitted to Dean, Provost, and Assessment Committee	Chair
	Spring Quarter	Consultations between department and Dean on selection of external reviewers	Chair, faculty, and Dean
Phase 3, Year 2	September 15	Self-study sent to external reviewer(s) and site visit scheduled	Chair
	Mid Fall Quarter	Site visit conducted	External reviewer(s)
	Two weeks after site visit	External reviewer(s) submit draft of report	External reviewer(s)
	Two weeks after receiving draft of report	Department responds to errors of fact in the draft, submitted to external reviewers	Chair & Dept
	End of Fall quarter	External reviewer(s) submit final report	External Reviewer(s)
Phase 4, Year 2	Jan 15	All Program Review documentation, including department responses to external reviewer(s) recommendations, submitted to	Chair

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		Assessment Committee, Dean, and Provost Dean and Chair begin work on memorandum of understanding (MOU)	
	Feb 15	Chair and Dean complete MOU	Dean
	March 1	Provost endorses MOU and ensures it is placed on Budget Committee agenda, copy sent to Chair, Dean, Provost, Strategic Planning Committee, and Assessment Committee	Provost
Phase 5, Year 2	April 15	Assessment Committee sends letter to department verifying process is complete and with next Program Review date	Assessment Committee
Phase 6, Year 3	Year following completion of program review	Implementation of MOU	Chair, Department, Dean
	First Monday in July	Follow up report on implementation of Program Review recommendations to be included as appendix to Annual Assessment Report	Chair