

University of Louisiana at Monroe Academic Program Review

Guidelines for Evaluating Existing Academic Programs &
New Academic Program Proposals

ACADEMIC PROGRAM REVIEW GUIDELINES

Philosophy:

In support of the University's mission of preparing students to compete, succeed, and contribute to society, all academic programs are reviewed on a regular basis to:

- Assess their quality and effectiveness;
- Ensure programs are aligned with the University's mission and strategic priorities;
- Determine program relevance to workforce needs;
- Stimulate program planning and improvement;
- Support the academic planning and budgeting processes of the University.

INTRODUCTION

These guidelines articulate the University of Louisiana at Monroe's policies and procedures for conducting regular reviews of its academic degree programs. To ensure continued program excellence, regular reviews of degree programs must be performed through an open process that supports continuous improvement. Given recent budget challenges, such program reviews should distinguish temporary variations from long-term trends that affect the quality of the education offered by the university and the mission of the institution.

The roles of faculty in a program review process are critical, especially in times of budgetary challenges. In this process, faculty should be included in the determination of evaluation criteria, discussions around the evaluations, and final recommendations based on the evaluations.

The principal vehicle for this faculty involvement is the Program Review Committee, a standing university committee. Membership on the Committee will consist of two faculty members from each college and one representative from Faculty Senate, with members serving a five-year term. The committee will also include three permanent members from Academic Affairs division including the University Curriculum Committee chair, the Southern Association for Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) Liaison, and the Director of Assessment and Evaluation. Deans of each College will forward two nominations for membership on the Committee to the Vice President of Academic Affairs. The President and Vice President of Academic Affairs will select the membership from the list of nominees.

REVIEW PROCESS FOR EXISTING ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

All programs that lead to a degree, including certificates, should be reviewed every five years. A schedule for reviews should be developed and maintained by the committee chair and provided to the Vice President of Academic Affairs. All programs will use the same report format.

The academic program review process will occur over an academic semester. The Program Review Committee will assist in this process. During the fall semester each year, the Vice President of Academic Affairs office will notify programs that will be reviewed during the academic year. Also during the fall semester, the Vice President of Academic Affairs or his/her designee will deliver a workshop on the review process that will detail the process, including timelines, criteria, and other requirements.

The program faculty will prepare a program review report which provides a candid assessment of the program, highlighting its strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and threats, and plans for improvement. University Planning and Analysis will provide data that will provide objective measures for each program.

Once the reports have been prepared, they are submitted to the Chair of the Program Review Committee who will make them available to the members of the Committee.

- *The Chair of the Program Review Committee will submit (a) the program review reports and (b) composite evaluations to the Office of the Vice President of Academic Affairs and the Deans at the end of the spring semester of the review year.*
- *The Dean will meet with the appropriate School Director/ Department Head to review the report and evaluation.*
- *The School Director/Department Head will meet with program faculty in early fall to develop a Program Improvement Plan (PIP) due to the Deans by November 15.*
- *Information concerning implementation of the PIP will be provided in the next program review following the initial review (see Item I of Program Review Criteria)*

Timeline:

Fall AY1	Program develops and submits initial report
Spring AY1	Report is reviewed by the Program Review Committee with composite evaluations and report going to the VPAA and Deans at the end of Spring AY1
Prior to Fall AY2	Deans meet with School Director/Department Head to review report and evaluation
Fall AY2	School Director/Department Head and faculty create Program Improvement Plan (PIP); implementation begins upon approval by Dean
Fall AY3 and AY4	Continue implementation of PIP
Fall AY5	Program develops and submits next report

PROGRAM REVIEW COMMITTEE

Each year, the program review committee will meet to discuss the program review reports. The committee will evaluate the reports and provide analysis and recommendations based upon their reviews. Members will complete a single, consolidated program review rubric that provides feedback to the faculty in the program. The rubric includes items directly corresponding to the program review criteria found in Section 1 of this document.

PROGRAM REVIEW CRITERIA AND REPORT OUTLINE

Program reports should concisely present the quality and the effectiveness of the program. As such, the reports should be limited to 5 pages, not including the data provided by the Computing Center. Specifically, the report should include three sections: 1) program review criteria, 2) analysis, and 3) recommendations and future plans.

I. Program Review Criteria

1. Program's relationship to ULM's mission, vision, and strategic plan
2. Program's contribution to general education requirements and/or support offered for other programs, including curricula in other programs and contractual obligations
3. Program's ability to recruit and retain high-quality professors and students
4. Program's promotion and enhancement of the educational and cultural level and the general health and well-being of the surrounding region that the university serves
5. Student placement into jobs and/or graduate and professional degree programs to meet critical workforce needs within the state and beyond
6. Longitudinal data and trends, number of students in a major and number of graduates over at least a five-year period, number of full-time faculty equivalents, SCH production per FTE (all data to be provided by ULM Computing Center)
7. Process followed that identifies needed curriculum improvements, including examples of improvements made; evidence provided that the program is participating in the ULM and evaluation processes; proof shown of "closing the loop" for curriculum improvement
8. Excellence in scholarship activities, including but not limited to, externally-funded research, performance, exhibition, and publication, which brings recognition to the ULM
9. Changes made based on previous review recommendations (excludes initial program reviews)

II. Analysis

Taking into consideration the responses to the program review criteria, please provide an analysis of the overall status of the program. Identify the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats from the analysis that might be useful in making future plans.

III. Recommendations and Future Plans

Identify specific recommendations and future plans related to the program that will show continuous improvement and program enhancement. Include opportunities for curriculum enhancement, collaboration, and/or efficiencies.

REVIEW PROCESS FOR NEW ACADEMIC PROGRAM PROPOSALS

The Louisiana Board of Regents uses a detailed process for submitting new academic program proposals for approval. The Board's formal Letter of Intent, which includes criteria such as

Program Objectives and Content, Program Need, Program Relevance, Students, and Cost, should be used once the new program concept has been approved through the Vice President of Academic Affairs office.

First, faculty proposing a new program should develop a one-page concept page that highlights the program need, demand for graduates, anticipated enrollment, and curriculum. This concept paper should be approved by the Dean and then submitted to the Vice President of Academic Affairs. The Vice President of Academic Affairs will submit the concept paper to the system office for feedback and discussion. Once the concept has received favorable feedback from the system office, the formal Letter of Intent should be completed.

The Board of Regents Letter of Intent should be presented along with the program proposal through the normal University curriculum process. Prior to being presented to the University Curriculum Committee, the proposal should be presented to the Dean's council either by the Dean of the College that will house the new program or by his or her designee. The purpose of the review at the Dean's level is to evaluate fit with University mission and availability of adequate resources to support the program.

When new program proposals include delivery by distance learning, the Director of ULM Online should be included in the Dean's evaluation of the program.