**Office of Institutional Planning and Effectiveness**

**Southern Methodist University**

**Academic Program Review: Evaluator Report Template**

*\*(This template may be modified to suit the particular composition of a program).*

Mission Statement: ***The purpose of Academic Program Review is to evaluate an academic program’s strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities, to review its alignment with and contribution to SMU’s Strategic goals and learning, and to support the program’s efforts to practice responsible fiscal stewardship.***

Academic program reviews (APRs) are comprehensive reviews of an academic program that occur every seven to ten years. An academic program is defined as a credit-bearing credential, including certificates and degrees. The focus of the APR is the academic program, but for purposes of organization, the APR process works through the department or unit that delivers each academic program, and all academic programs delivered by a given department or unit will be reviewed at the same time. The APR involves both a self-study conducted by the faculty and staff of the department delivering the program, and an on-site review conducted by expert, external evaluators. The end result is a memo from the Provost to the Dean of the College or School in which the program is housed detailing the success and strengths of the program and outlining a discrete number of opportunities for improvement.

Both the self-study and the external review are supported by university-provided data about enrollments, time to graduation, employment outcomes for students, program learning outcomes, assessments of student learning, faculty productivity, and other measures relevant to the teaching and research activity of an academic program. A central component of the review process is the on-site review, during which external evaluators meet and speak with all faculty and staff in the academic program, as well as students in the program, and any other key stakeholders. The purpose of the APR is to present, to academic program, the Provost and the Dean, a clear picture of the mission, goals, and outcomes for a given academic program, as well as the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats that exist for that program.

For departments, the APR process offers an opportunity to reflect on the academic composition, goals, successes, and challenges of the program while evaluating the goals and the future direction of that program. It also provides an opportunity for getting expert advice on opportunities for improvements and finding efficiencies. The APR process also offers the opportunity to convey to senior Academic Leadership at SMU both the successes of a program and the challenges it faces. While resources are not allocated directly as the result of an APR, findings from the APR could be used as supporting evidence for resources through the SMU budget request process.

For the university, the APR is an opportunity for a detailed look at each academic program, its contributions to the overall university mission and strategic goals, its strengths, its challenges, and the opportunities to help the program continue to advance. It also offers an opportunity to review the student learning outcomes and assessments of student learning in the program.

During the APR process, external reviewers will read the program self-study, will review institutional data for the program, and will interview faculty, staff, and students from the program. The review team will then write a summary APR report that includes recommendations for improvements. The APR evaluators report will be provided to the Deans, Vice Presidents, and the Provost to assist them in strategic decision making. Upon receipt of the APR Evaluator’s report, the Provost will draft a summary memo to the Dean of the school in which the program resides summarizing finds and detailing actions toward improvement. The memo will request action and follow-up by the program within a specific timeframe (typically one year).

Each academic program/department will prepare the report in four sections as outlined below. Submission as .pdf files is best for review across all platforms. To assist departments and programs in writing the self-study, the Office of Institutional Planning and Effectiveness will work with academic and administrative support offices to generate ample supporting data and share this with academic programs.

**DEPARTMENT AND PROGRAM SELF STUDY: TABLE OF CONTENTS**

***Please make sure there is a table of contents attached to your report that mirrors the Table of Contents below; please include page numbers for each section.***

1. **INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT**
   1. Describe the strengths, distinctions, obstacles, and opportunities. Be explicit in addressing the following:
      * Strengths/ successes of each program
      * Opportunities for improvements and change, including potential timelines for such improvements
   2. Does the program show evidence of excellence when considered against national or international competitor programs?
   3. What steps could the unit or department take to make the programs more competitive?
2. **MISSION & GOALS** 
   1. What are the program’s mission and goals?
   2. Are these goals clearly stated and regularly reviewed to ensure that the program(s) remain current and effective?
   3. Are the mission and goals aligned with SMU’s mission and strategic goals?
   4. Did you find evidence that the mission and goals of the program(s) reviewed are being met?
   5. Do you have any recommendations for improving the mission and goals of the unit or the programs it offers?
3. **PROGRAM OUTCOMES**
   1. Are the learning outcomes for each program relevant and appropriate to the program and its mission and goals?
   2. Are these learning outcomes appropriate relative to the discipline or field?
   3. Is there evidence that the faculty involved in the program regularly evaluate the effectiveness and appropriateness of the program outcomes?
   4. Are the strategic objectives/operational goals for the program meaningful and appropriate?
   5. Is there evidence the strategic/operational goals for the program are regularly reviewed and revised, when appropriate?
   6. Do you have any recommendations for improving the learning outcomes or operational goals of the unit or the programs it offers?
4. **PROGRAM CURRICULUM**
   1. Please evaluate the coherence of the curriculum for each program. Does the structure of the curriculum reflect and deliver the stated outcomes and operational goals for that program?
   2. Is there evidence the curriculum for each program reflects the current state of the field or discipline?
   3. If these are relevant, are there appropriate research opportunities for undergraduates and graduate students in each program?
   4. Does each program effectively leverage appropriate high-impact practices (i.e. study abroad opportunities, internships, community engagement or public service opportunities)?
   5. Does each program leverage relevant partnerships or collaborations that support the program, including partnerships across the institution, within the city of Dallas, or with other institutions?
   6. Is there evidence that the department or unit regularly evaluates and updates the curriculum to ensure it reflects best practices and the current state of the field or discipline and/or to optimize student success?
   7. Do you have any recommendations for the department/unit with respect to the content or structure of the curriculum of their programs?
   8. Do you have any recommendations for the department/unit with respect to the process for evaluating and updating their curriculum?
5. **PROGRAM ASSESSMENT**
   1. Is there evidence that the program regularly and meaningfully assesses the degree to which students are attaining these outcomes?
   2. Are the assessments used to evaluate student attainment in each program appropriate to the outcomes and curriculum of the program?
   3. Is there evidence that the faculty involved in delivering the program regularly and meaningfully review the results of assessments and use that information to seek to improve the program?
   4. Is there an appropriate process in the department/unit for ensuring that all faculty involved in teaching in a program review and evaluate the results of these assessments and are involved in conversations and decisions that arise from assessment?
   5. Do you have any recommendations for improving the assessment of these learning outcomes or operational goals?
6. **STUDENTS**

*Admissions and Enrollment*

* 1. Are the admissions policies for each program appropriate to the level and discipline of the program?
  2. Based on admission patterns, does each program appear to be healthy and sustainable?
  3. Do you have any recommendations to improve recruitment or retention of students into the programs offered by the department/unit?

*Student Experience*

* 1. Do the support services and resources offered to students enrolled in each program appear to be adequate, with respect to the curriculum, mission, and goals of the program?
  2. Based on your experience, are the resources and support services offered to students consistent with those offered at competitor programs?
  3. Are the student teaching and research opportunities offered to students appropriate to the field and discipline and consistent with best practices and on par with those offered by competitor programs? (for graduate programs only)
  4. Do you have any recommendations for the department/unit with regard to student support services or resources?

*Student Success*

* 1. Are the retention and graduation rates and time to degree for each program consistent with expectations for the field or discipline?
  2. Are student employment outcomes consistent with expectations for the field or discipline and on par with competitor programs?
  3. Are student publication rates and patterns consistent with expectations for the field or discipline and consistent with those at competitor programs? (for graduate programs only)
  4. Do you have any recommendations for the department/unit with regard to improving student retention, graduation rates, or time to completion rates?
  5. Do you have any recommendations for the department/unit with regard to improving student employment outcomes?

1. **FACULTY**

*Faculty Composition and Policies*

* 1. Is faculty workload in the department/unit consistent with the department/unit’s workload policy?
  2. Is the faculty workload articulated in the workload policy consistent with the mission and goals of the department/unit?
  3. Are policies for assigning teaching, including the policy governing reductions or increases in teaching load and/or granting release clear, transparent, and fair?
  4. Are policies for assigning mentoring and thesis supervision and support transparent and fair, and consistent with the mission and goals of the program(s)?
  5. Please detail current faculty capacity for mentoring and thesis supervision.
  6. Is the balance of full-time to part-time faculty appropriate to the mission and goals of the program(s)?
  7. Are recruitment and promotion policies (including policies for teaching and professional and tenure-line faculty) transparent and fair and consistent with the mission and goals of the department/unit?
  8. Do you have any recommendations for the department/unit regarding faculty workload, workload policies, or recruitment and promotion of faculty?

*Faculty Teaching and Service*

* 1. Are faculty/student ratios in the department/unit appropriate to the mission and goals of the program(s) offered?
  2. Is there clear evidence of instructional effectiveness in the academic program(s) offered?
  3. Is there evidence that faculty in the department/unit engage in appropriate levels of service to the department and the institution?
  4. Do you have any recommendations for the department/unit about faculty/student ratios, instructional effectiveness, or service?

*Faculty Development*

* 1. Is there clear evidence of a faculty mentoring strategy and process in the department/unit?
  2. Is there clear evidence that the faculty mentoring strategy and process is effective?
  3. Do you have any recommendations regarding faculty mentoring?

*Faculty Research and Scholarly Activities:*

* 1. Is there clear evidence that faculty research, scholarly, and/or creative activities are consistent with the expectations for a top-tier program in the discipline or field?
  2. Do you have any recommendations regarding faculty research, scholarly, and/or creative activities?

1. **RESOURCES**
   1. Are available library resources appropriate and sufficient for the program(s) offered?
   2. Are available instructional resources appropriate and sufficient for the program(s) offered?
   3. Are available facilities and equipment appropriate and sufficient for the program(s) offered?
   4. Are available and assigned academic, office, and lab space sufficient for the program(s) offered and the creative and/or research goals of the department/unit?
   5. Is there clear evidence of effective leadership in the department or unit?
   6. Are faculty and faculty lines appropriate and sufficient to support the mission and goals of the program(s) offered? Please consider, in responding, whether there are sufficient faculty to offer core courses on a regular basis, so as to ensure effective student throughput.
   7. Is the available staff and administrative support appropriate and sufficient for the program(s) offered?
   8. Are available scholarships and student support funding sufficient for the mission and goals of the program(s) offered?
   9. Are collaborations other units appropriate and sufficient to support the mission and goals of the program(s) offered?
   10. Is the level of external research funding appropriate and consistent with that of top-tier programs in the discipline or field?
   11. Do you have any recommendations regarding resources for the program(s) offered?

**APPENDICES**

The following is a list of the types of supporting data/ information that is provided to departments/programs and evaluators in support of the Academic Program Review Process as well as the unit responsible for providing this information.

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| DATA OR SUPPORTING INFORMATION | OFFICE RESPONSIBLE FOR PROVIDING DATA |
| ·       Enrollments | University Decision Support |
| ·       Numbers of majors and minors, time to degree,  placement (as available) | University Decision Support |
| ·       Numbers of masters, placement, revenue (as available) | University Decision Support |
| ·     SAT/ACT/GRE scores of admits (as available), number of publications, placement | University Decision Support |
| ·       Hiring diversity | University Decision Support |
| ·       Faculty size at each rank; position type | University Decision Support |
| ·       External funding | Office of Research |
| ·       Program strategic plan, if available | Department/Program |
| ·       Budget(s) for all programs and instructional activities | College or School Financial Officer |
| ·       Faculty Current CVs | Department/Program |
| * Faculty Workload and Promotion Policies | Department/Program |