



## Southern Methodist University

### Academic Program Review: Program Self-Study 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).

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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 as much supporting data as possible and share this with academic programs.

## SECTION ONE: PROGRAM INTRODUCTION

### MISSION & OVERVIEW

1. What is the program's mission? (This mission should match or complement those stated in annual Institutional Effectiveness Reports.)
2. Provide a brief overview of the department and each academic program offered. For each program, describe the strengths, distinctions, obstacles and opportunities. Be explicit in addressing the following:
  - Strengths/ successes of each program and distinctiveness in comparison to peer and aspirant peer departments/programs
  - Challenges each program or the department has faced or faces
  - Obstacles or barriers to program continuity and/ or improvement
  - Opportunities for improvements and change, including a timeline for such improvements
3. Please describe any actions taken or improvements made as a result of the previous Academic Program Review.

## SECTION TWO: CREDENTIALS OFFERED

### UNDERGRADUATE DEGREE PROGRAMS (*applicable sections only*)

1. **OUTCOMES:** Please list and describe the student learning outcomes for each program (majors and minors).
2. **MAPPING:** Please describe the way the curriculum of each academic program scaffolds student learning towards these outcomes.
3. **ASSESSMENT:** Please describe the assessment process for each academic program, including a description of the measures used and the targets set for each outcome.
4. **ASSESSMENT-BASED IMPROVEMENT:** Please describe the processes used by the program to analyze the assessment of student learning and seek improvement based on the results of those assessments. Please also detail the improvements that have been made as a result of annual program assessment (this should be supported by annual assessment reporting in WEAVE/Planning).
5. **OTHER IMPROVEMENTS:** Please describe any improvements to the academic program(s) or department that were motivated by something other than annual program assessment. Please describe the rationale and impetus for these improvements and the methods and measures are used to gauge success.
6. **ENROLLMENT:** Please describe the methods used to monitor and analyze enrollments on a regular basis. Please detail any strategic planning for growth or reduction that has been done based on analysis of enrollments.
7. **MAJORS/MINORS:** Please describe any distinctive educational experiences for majors and minors. Please also describe departmental efforts to ensure that the program is achievable in a reasonable amount of time and that students graduate in four years.
8. **DEGREES/TIME TO DEGREE:** What is the four-year and six-year graduation rate for each program? How does it compare to SMU goals of 74% of students graduating in four year and 82% graduating in six years?

9. PLACEMENT: What is the placement rate for jobs and graduate school admission for each academic program? What efforts have been made to ensure that at least 70% of students have either a job or graduate school placement at the time of graduation?

#### **GRADUATE DEGREE PROGRAMS (*applicable sections only*)**

1. OUTCOMES: Please list and describe the student learning outcomes for each program.
2. MAPPING: Please describe the way the curriculum of each academic program scaffolds student learning towards these outcomes.
3. ASSESSMENT: Please describe the assessment process for each academic program, including a description of the measures used and the targets set for each outcome.
4. ASSESSMENT-BASED IMPROVEMENT: Please describe the processes used by the program to analyze the assessment of student learning and seek improvement based on the results of those assessments. Please also detail the improvements that have been made as a result of annual program assessment (this should be supported by annual assessment reporting in WEAVE/Planning).
5. OTHER IMPROVEMENTS: Please describe any improvements to the academic program(s) or department that were motivated by something other than annual program assessment. Please describe the rationale and impetus for these improvements and the methods and measures are used to gauge success.
6. REVENUE: For graduate programs that are revenue streams, please describe the process for managing budgets and ensuring that they provide additional funds for graduate student and adjunct faculty hires and/or other necessary program functions.
7. GRADUATE ASSISTANTS: (TA, GA, RA, GI positions) Please describe the number of graduate assistants and/or research assistants for each program as well as the resources available to support these assistants. Please describe the work and responsibilities assigned to graduate assistants as well as the structures for mentoring and supervising these assistants.
8. GRADUATE ENROLLMENT: Please describe the current graduate enrollment trends for each academic program. Describe also the recruitment strategies and processes and that exist as well as the processes used to monitor and evaluate graduate enrollments. Please detail the strategic planning process that is used to adjust for growth or reduction in enrollments.
9. ADMISSION QUALITY: Please describe the admission process and standards that are used to evaluate and admit students.
10. DEGREES/TIME TO DEGREE: Please give the graduation rate for each academic program.
11. PLACEMENT: Please give the job placement rate for each academic program. Please describe the efforts made by the program or department to ensure that at least 70% of students have employment or admission to a higher level graduate program at the time of graduation.

#### **SECTION THREE: OVERALL PROGRAM/DEPARTMENT HEALTH**

1. LIBRARY HOLDINGS: Please describe and characterize the library holdings for each academic program. Are these holdings sufficient to the needs of program faculty?

2. **FACULTY HIRING DIVERSITY:** Please describe the processes used by the department or program to ensure diverse candidate pools during faculty hiring.
3. **FACULTY DEVELOPMENT:** Please describe the departmental process/ program for mentoring of junior faculty and continued growth for senior faculty. Please describe the process for monitoring, supporting, and mentoring teaching and professional faculty, adjuncts and graduate students.
4. **TEACHING:** Please describe the methods of evaluation used to assess the quality of teaching in the program. Please describe efforts that have been made to improve teaching in the program/ department, and give examples of successes in this area.
5. **RESEARCH/CREATIVE OUTPUT:** Please describe the research / creative productivity of program faculty. Please detail efforts made to improve research / creative productivity and give examples of any successes in this area. Please also describe the relationship between research/ creative output in the department and efforts to improve student learning in the program.
6. **EXTERNAL FUNDING:** Please describe and characterize the level and types of external funding brought in by faculty in the department.
7. **SERVICE:** Please give a brief summary description of faculty service activities in the department/program. Please describe the evaluation mechanisms that are used to ensure that all tenured faculty have appropriate levels of service and that service is evenly distributed across the tenured ranks. Please also describe efforts made to improve the volume, quality, and fairness of faculty service contributions and give examples of any successes in this area.
8. **FACILITIES AND RESOURCES:** Please give a brief description of the facilities and resources (space) allocated to each program or department for teaching and research/ creative output.
9. **GENERAL EDUCATION:** Please describe the ways in which undergraduate programs contribute to and support SMU's Common Curriculum. Please describe any efforts made to improve either support of or student learning in general education and detail any successes in this area.
10. **CONTINUING EDUCATION:** Please describe any contributions the program/department makes to continuing education programs at SMU.
11. **USE OF RESOURCES:** Please describe the processes used to ensure strategic deployment of existing resources, including regular evaluation of resources relative to the program's mission and goals. Please describe efforts to make improvements the efficient use of resources and describe any successes in this area.

#### **SECTION FOUR: FUTURE DIRECTION**

1. **OVERVIEW:** Please describe the goals for the department/program and the plan for achieving these goals over the next 5-7 years. Please ensure this plan assumes only current resources, or those resources the department / program can generate on its own. If there are plans to close any existing programs, please describe the teachout plan that would be put in place and describe plans for reallocation of program faculty.

2. QUESTIONS FOR EXTERNAL EVALUATORS: Please detail any specific questions the department/ program has for the evaluators. Please also detail any areas of concern where the department/program would particularly like the input of reviewers.

## APPENDICES

The following is a list of the types of supporting data/ information that is provided to departments/programs in support of the Academic Program Review Process as well as the unit responsible for providing this information. Departments/ Programs need not request this information, as it will be provided to them directly.

| 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   | Institutional Planning and Effectiveness |