East Carolina University Academic Program Review Guidelines

Office of the Provost

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I. Purpose of Academic Program Review

The purpose of the seven-year Academic Program Review (APR) of all undergraduate and graduate programs is to engage program faculty in a reflective evaluation of program quality and alignment to the pedagogical standards within their discipline as well as East Carolina University's values, mission, and commitments . Program review is an integral part of the university's ongoing assessment and strategic planning processes, designed to enhance the quality of all educational programs. Programs that are formally reviewed by an external accrediting body are not included in the formal APR process described in these guidelines. Rather, reports from these external accreditations satisfy program review reporting requirements and are archived by the SACSCOC liaison in Institutional Planning, Assessment, and Research (IPAR). Programs housed in the same department (or in some cases the same school or college) may combine their APRs into a single process and address all programs in a single written report.

The review of programs, concentrations and certificates without external accreditation is intended to help faculty and administrators gain a better understanding of the following:
- Purpose and outcomes for each degree program, concentration and certificates associated with a program being reviewed;
- Each program's effectiveness in achieving its purpose and outcomes, along with overall program quality;
- The faculty's vision for their program and potential improvements that can be made based on the results of institutional and assessment data; and
- Future programmatic improvements to the recruitment and advancement of students, curriculum, pedagogy, and/or operational functions of the program.

APR at ECU consists of two interrelated activities: a n on-site program review which occurs approximately every seven years for each program and a student learning outcomes assessment which is conducted on an ongoing basis. As externally accredited programs are exempted from this process, an APR is not to be considered a departmental, school, or college review. The focus of an APR is on the specific program(s) being reviewed. Subsequently, data from faculty members who are not substantial contributors to a program should not be included in a program's APR.

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II. Academic Program Review Process

The APR process is conducted in three primary phases: 1) an internal self-study of the program by its faculty, 2) an on-site review conducted by an External Review Committee, and 3) a final action plan produced by faculty and supported by the relevant Dean and the Academic Council.

The major steps in planning and conducting a formal review are outlined below:

1. **Orientation to Academic Program Review**
   a. One year prior to the review, the program faculty and program administrator (i.e., the department chair, school director, or other immediate administrator of the program) will be notified of the upcoming review.
   b. One semester prior to the scheduled academic program review, the program faculty and program administrator attend an orientation led by the Director of Institutional Assessment to go through the review processes and resources.
   c. The program faculty consult with the program administrator and select possible dates for the on-site review and propose names of external and internal reviewers.
   d. One external reviewer must be faculty from ECU's official peer institutions who are familiar with the discipline; another external reviewer could either be from an official peer institution or a regional peer institution; internal reviewers are ECU faculty from a related campus-based discipline who are external to the program under review and in a related campus-based discipline.
   e. The Director of Institutional Assessment, in consultation with the Internal Review Committee (see 3 below), selects two external and one internal reviewer and invites them to serve on the upcoming External Review Committee. The Director of Institutional Assessment works with the program administrator to develop the 2–3-day itinerary for the on-site review meetings, which include meetings of the External Review Committee with the program administrators, program faculty, students, relevant university administrators, relevant university and community constituents, and members of the Academic Council.

2. **Program Self-Study**
   The program faculty prepares a Self-Study according to the APR Guidelines. Unless otherwise codified by either the program's faculty coordinating committee or the code of the program's home unit, the program director/coordinator, and program administrator coordinate the preparation of the Self-Study, but it is important to have broad-based input from the program faculty. An electronic copy should be sent to the Director of Institutional Assessment for distribution to the Internal Review Committee <u>eight</u> weeks before the on-site review.

3. **Internal Review Committee**
   The Internal Review Committee reviews the self-study for **accuracy, clarity, consistency, and completeness**. The Director of Institutional Assessment chairs the Internal Review Committee; members include the dean of the home college or school of the program(s) under review, a representative of the Educational Policies and Planning Committee (EPPC) of the Faculty Senate, and the Dean of the Graduate School if graduate programs are under review. A liaison to APR from Institutional Research also reviews the self-study for data accuracy.

4. **Revision of Self-Study**
    Program faculty revise the Self-Study based on input from the Internal Review Committee. The Director of Institutional Assessment distributes the revised Self-Study and supporting documents to the External Review Committee (one month prior to on-site review).

5. **External Review Committee**
    The External Review Committee, whose members are identified in 1.e above, conducts its review of the undergraduate and graduate programs. A summary of major findings is presented to program faculty, program administrator, Dean, and the Academic Council on the second day of the review. Within 30 days of the completion of the on-site review, the External Review Committee sends an electronic copy and a signed hard copy of the final Review Committee Report to the Director of Institutional Assessment, who will distribute to the program faculty, program administrator, the Internal Review Committee, and the Academic Council.

6. **Program Response Report**
    In a Program Response Report, the program faculty respond to each of the recommendations in the Review Committee Report, describing actions they will/will not take to implement the recommendations, who is responsible for the actions, and when they will occur. Program faculty also prioritize the resource needs that emerge from the recommendations.

7. **Review of Program Response Report**
    Program faculty and college/school administrators meet to review the Program Response Report and discuss the program's top priorities, needs that can be addressed by the college or school, and issues for discussion with the Academic Council. After this meeting, the program faculty revise the Program Response Report to reflect actions to be taken by the program, program administrator, college/school, and those needing institutional support.

8. **Program Response Report to EPPC**
    Each Program Response Report will be sent to EPPC for their review and approval. The self-study, external review committee report, and program response will be sent to the Chair of EPPC and the review will be placed on an EPPC agenda. The program administrator attends the EPPC meeting to answer any questions and hear the committee's decision on whether the program response is approved or not. If the program response is not approved, the EPPC Chair will write a memo with concrete recommendations for improvement within ten days. The program response is to be edited and resubmitted to the Chair of EPPC for the next committee meeting. Programs should consult the EPPC "Criteria for Reviewing Academic Program Reviews" document (located under EPPC "Committee Resources" on the Faculty Senate website) as the program response is written.

J. **Final Action Plan with the Academic Council**
    Academic Council leads a Final Action Plan meeting with program faculty, the program administrators and Internal Review Committee. In this meeting, the program administrator summarizes the program faculty's responses and action plan; the college/school dean summarizes actions to be taken by the college/school; and the Academic Council provides further recommendations on the actions planned. The Director of Institutional Assessment records major decisions made at the meeting, to include revisions made or new actions added to

the Program Response Report. The Director of Institutional Assessment distributes the major decisions in the form of a memorandum to program faculty, program administrator, Dean, the Internal Review Committee and the Academic Council. All program review related documentations are maintained by the Office of Institutional Planning, Assessment, and Research.

K. **Ongoing Program Review and Enhancement**
The program administrator and program faculty report on progress three years after the Final Action Plan meeting and summarize the status of the action plan. This progress report will be sent to the APR Director of Institutional Assessment, College/School Dean, and the Dean of the Graduate School if graduate programs are involved. As designated in the 7-year APR cycle, programs will again complete a comprehensive periodic review. IA Staff will review and monitor recommendations related to assessment, curriculum, and student learning. Faculty are encouraged to report on progress through their annual assessment reports.

III. Roles and Responsibilities

A. Program Faculty (including program director/coordinator)
1. Propose dates for the on-site visit and names of internal and external reviewers and participate in onsite review
2. Collaborate in writing the Self-Study, analyzing data, and reflecting on the strengths and weakness of the program
3. Revise the Self-Study after internal review
4. Address each recommendation in the External Review Report and develop Program Response Report with an action plan
5. Work with the Dean and the Academic Council to refine and finalize the action plan, implement the plan, and report progress 3 years after the Final Action Plan meeting

B. Program Administrator (i.e., the chair of the home department or the relevant direct administrator of the program
1. Coordinate the activities of the program faculty
2. Coordinate faculty and IPAR activities
3. Assist with data collection

C. Dean of the College or Director of the School Housing the Program Under Review
1. Serve on the Internal Review Committee
2. During on-site review
   a. Participate in dinner meeting with the External Review Committee
   b. Participate in faculty/staff debriefing with External Review Committee
   c. Participate in Exit Meeting with External Review Committee and Academic Council
3. Lead meeting of college/school and program administrator and faculty to revise Program Response Report to identify actions to be taken at the college level
4. Participate in Final Action Plan meeting with Academic Council

D. Internal Review Committee
1. Includes the following people:
   a. Director of Institutional Assessment, (chair)
   b. Dean of the college or director of the school that houses the program under review
   c. Dean of the graduate school
   d. Educational Policies and Planning Committee (EPPC) Representative
2. Select the External Review Committee members
3. Review the Self-Study and appendices for accuracy, clarity, consistency, and completeness
4. Meet with program faculty and Academic Council to finalize action plans and resource priorities

E. External Review Committee
1. Review the Self-Study prior to arrival on campus
2. Meet with program faculty, staff, students, and other constituencies
3. Prepare a written report within 30 days of the on-site visit which is then shared with the college/school, program faculty, graduate school, and division administrators

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F. The Academic Council

1. Meet with External Review Committee on the first day of the on-site review to give the formal charge and on the second day to review major findings
2. Lead the Final Action Plan meeting that includes the Internal Review Committee

G. The Educational Policies and Planning Committee (EPPC) Representative

1. Serve on the Internal Review Committee
2. Provide EPPC with a timely update regarding the quality of self-study and major recommendations found in the External Review Committee Report
2. Provide feedback to the program administrator and dean on the program response
3. Report the final EPPC recommendation decision to the Director of Institutional Assessment

Note: If the Program Response is not accepted by EPPC, the Chair of EPPC will provide concrete recommendations for improvement to the program administrator within 10 days.

H. Institutional Research

1. Maintain the Academic Program Profile desktop located in the ECU Analytics Portal
2. Meet with program faculty to review data and resources during the orientation meeting
3. Serve on the Internal Review Committee (as needed) in order to review the self-study data for accuracy

I. Director, Institutional Assessment and/or Designee

1. Coordinate the review process, establish the review schedule and facilitate all logistical arrangements
2. Chair the Internal Review Committee
3. Receive and distribute all documents
4. Record the Final Action Plan and monitor the three-year progress report
5. Provide a repository for self-studies, external review reports, program response plans, final action plan memoranda, and progress reports

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IV. Components of the Self Study (Limit to 50 pages, excluding appendices)

Executive Summary (3-5 pages): Based on the information presented in the self-study, prepare an executive summary describing:
a. the overall quality of each program that is included in the review and the indicators used to assess the quality;
b. strengths and weaknesses of the program (e.g., How effectively do faculty contribute to teaching and student mentoring, scholarship and creative activity, and clinical activities of the program? What is the diversity of faculty, students, and staff? Does curricular content represent a variety of cultural and other diverse perspectives as evidenced by curricular content and/or the authors of texts and other curricular resources? How effective are the support staff?);
c. major findings that resulted from the self-study; and
d. significant actions or changes that have been planned as a result of the self-study.

1. Program Purpose

For each program included in the review:
    1.1   Provide a clear and concise statement of the program's purpose;
    1.2   Describe how the program's purpose aligns to its unit's mission and the University's mission and strategic initiatives;
    1.3   Articulate any specific or unique features of the program;
    1.4   Describe the external factors that impact the program's enrollment and market demand of its graduates based on statewide, national and/or professional studies *(e.g., enrollment growth or decline of major competitors as reported by IPEDS, market demand as determined by Bureau of Labor Statistics or NC Department of Commerce occupation projections, market forecast by professional organizations, etc. See APR Resources for potential data sources on the IPAR website)*.

2. Enrollment, Degrees and Student Success

IPAR has provided an Academic Program Profile desktop within the ECU Analytics Portal with information for each degree/certificate program without specialized accreditation. Review the data, collect additional data/information, and respond to the following questions for each program.

NOTE: Programs may need to collect additional data on job placement and licensure exam pass rates.

    Enrollment and Degrees Analysis
    2.1   Describe the program's enrollment trend over the last seven years to include:
- headcount enrollment (FT/PT ratio),
- student diversity,
- characteristics of incoming graduate students (in terms of undergraduate GPAs, admission test scores, number of complete applications, selectivity, and yield rates),
- characteristics of undergraduate majors (in terms of high school GPAs, SAT/ACT scores, undergraduate GPAs).

    2.2   Describe the trend regarding the number of degrees conferred each year.

2.3 For graduate programs, describe the trend regarding completion rates and time-to-degree of the students. What actions have been taken to improve degree completion and time-to-degree?

2.4 Describe actions taken that implement the University's/College's strategic initiatives regarding enrollment management such as program expansion or contraction.

NOTE: For certificate programs degrees awarded, rather than enrollment, may be more accurate and can be used for this section.

Student Success

2.5 What is the 3-year trend regarding D/F/W rates in courses? Where appropriate, how do the D/F/W rates in face-to-face courses compare to those in online courses? What has the program done to address the courses with high D/F/W rates?

2.6 What are the job placements and graduate/professional school enrollments of recent program graduates? Does it meet faculty expectations?

NOTE: For some programs many students are currently employed so discuss their employment status.

2.7 If applicable, what is the licensure pass rate of the graduates? Does it meet faculty expectations?

2.8 What actions has the program taken over the past seven years to improve student success?

Action Plans

2.9 What actions does the program plan to take in the next seven years to increase enrollment and student success? What resources are needed to implement these plans?

3. Curriculum, Learning Outcomes and Student Satisfaction:

Provide an interpretation of assessment findings and other relevant data about the curriculum and quality of student learning in each program being reviewed. Focus on interpretation of data, use of results, and program improvements.

Curriculum Analysis

To support this section, a link to the degree requirements as published in the Catalog should be provided. Also include in an Appendix an updated curriculum map from Nuventive Improve that illustrates alignment of student learning outcomes to courses in the curriculum.

3.1 Based on degree requirements and the updated curriculum map, describe how course sequences, including prerequisites, are used to introduce and reinforce student learning prior to students being assessed.

3.2 Describe the process the program uses to ensure the curriculum is up-to-date. Describe any innovative approaches in the curriculum, including innovations in diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Student Learning Outcomes Assessment

To support this section, review program assessment reports from Nuventive Improve as well as other relevant data obtained since the last program review.

3.3 Based on learning outcomes assessment reports/data, what are the identified strengths and weaknesses in student learning outcomes? Does curricular content align to assist graduates to engage a diverse and global society?

3.4 Where applicable, are there any significant differences in student outcomes in face-to-face and online programs?

3.5 What decisions have been made and what changes have been instituted on the basis of on- going assessments (e.g., curricular or pedagogical changes, faculty, instructional facilities, student support, funding priorities, the assessment procedure – including objectives and outcomes and methods of gathering and analyzing data, etc.)?

3.6 How effective were the changes?

Student Satisfaction

To support this section, review the student survey data such as the Graduating Senior Survey, Graduate Student Exit Survey, and program-level employer/alumni surveys.

NOTE: The Graduate Student Exit Survey is not administered to certificate students so the program can use their own data or consider this section as optional for certificate reviews.

3.7 How satisfied are graduating students with the program? Are there practically significant variations in student satisfaction by race/ethnicity/national origin, gender/gender identity, geographic region, first generation college student status or other relevant demographics?

3.8 How do graduating students and program alumni evaluate the knowledge and skills they have acquired in the program?

3.9 How do employers evaluate the graduates' knowledge and skills?

3.10 What actions has the program taken to improve student support, services, and satisfaction?

Action Plans

3.11 Are there new curricular and pedagogical changes that the program plans to implement in the next seven years to improve student learning?

3.12 What will the program do to improve students' educational experience and overall satisfaction?

3.13 What resources are needed to implement these plans.

4. Strength of Faculty: Teaching, Research and Scholarship

To support this section, include faculty bio sketches in an Appendix (1-2 pages per faculty).

Faculty Resources

Review program faculty data provided by IPAR and respond to the following:

4.1 Faculty Profile: Describe the current faculty affiliated with the program (e.g., percent full- versus part-time, diversity, percent with terminal degree, tenure status, etc.).

4.2 Faculty Resources: Does the program have the number and type of faculty to achieve its goals?

4.3 What actions has the program administrator taken to recruit, retain, and advance highly qualified, diverse faculty?

Analysis of Teaching Productivity

4.4 Based on the Student Credit Hours and Generated FTE report, describe the trend in student credit hour production in the program over the past seven years, for both Distance Education and campus courses, highlighting the program's contribution to the General Education Curriculum and other degree programs. Consider the trend of average credit hour production per instructional faculty FTE.

4.5 Based on the Delaware Study data, what is the general teaching load of the program faculty? Is the teaching load equitably distributed among faculty by race/ethnicity, gender and other faculty characteristics? What has the program administrator done to adjust teaching load for faculty members of this program?

4.6 Describe the direct contributions (course sections taught) and indirect contributions (grading, tutoring, etc.) of graduate teaching assistants to the program's teaching mission?

4.7 What are the major achievements of program faculty regarding teaching? What has the program administrator done to support faculty teaching?

Analysis of Research, Scholarship and Creative Activities
NOTE: The Graduate School will provide links to graduate program theses and dissertations to reviewers.

4.8 What are the major achievements of the program faculty and students regarding research, scholarship and creative activities?

4.9 Describe the strengths and weaknesses regarding research, scholarship, and creative activities.

4.10 What has the program administrator done to support the research, scholarship and creative activities of program faculty and students?

Analysis of Service and Outreach activities

4.11 What major service and outreach initiatives have program faculty and students engaged in? What has the program administrator done to support program faculty and student service/outreach activities?

Action Plans:

4.12 What does the program administrator plan to do to support the teaching, research, and service activities of program faculty and students? What resources are needed to implement these plans?

5. **Regional Transformation – Economic Development/Public Service**

5.1 As applicable, provide a summary of major activities the program faculty and students have participated in to support regional transformation over the last seven years.

5.2   As applicable, what does the program plan to do to support regional transformation? What resources will it need to implement these plans?

6. Resources
6.1   Based on analysis of the home unit's operating budget and revenue sources supporting the unit as well as annual expenditures, discuss the adequacy of the resources provided and required for maintaining program quality.

6.2 Describe the quality, scope, and projected needs for space to support the program.

7. Other Operational or Programmatic Outcomes
7.1   Describe other assessed outcomes that enable the program to achieve its objectives, e.g., academic advising, number and diversity of faculty, graduate student support, operational efficiency, structural re-organization, etc. Summarize strengths and weaknesses identified in the assessment and actions taken to improve these outcomes.

7.2   Action Plans: What does the program plan to do to improve these outcomes? What resources are needed to implement these plans?

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V.   Selecting the External Review Team

An important task is for the program to develop a list of five potential external reviewers from ECU peer institutions, three from regional peer institutions (optional) and three internal reviewers. These external reviewers are to be nominated from institutions identified as official peers of East Carolina University and should be professionally prominent individuals, usually nationally recognized in their discipline or field. The potential internal reviewers are ECU faculty from a related campus-based discipline or field. Diversity and inclusion should be considered as the program seeks potential reviewers. The Director of Institutional Assessment can assist in identifying internal reviewers. The program should forward the list of potential reviewers to the Director of Institutional Assessment, and then the Project Manager will contact each reviewer to ascertain availability and interest in serving as an academic program reviewer.

The list of potential reviewers is submitted to the Director of Institutional Assessment containing the following information:
- Name of reviewer
- Name of university
- Complete job title/rank and name of a reviewer's program
- Primary area of scholarly activity (related to program being reviewed)
- Rationale for selection
- Contact information (full mailing address, e-mail, and telephone number)

Nominees from the list provided by the program will be discussed by the Internal Review Committee and the official team members will be selected according to the following criteria:
- Two reviewers external to East Carolina University with preference being at least one serving from an ECU official peer institution;
- One internal reviewer from a related campus-based discipline outside of the program;
- External reviewers must be part of a program that is recognized for excellence in the discipline and able to benchmark the programs based on discipline-specific rankings and other publicly available comparisons;
- External Review Committee is a diverse group with experience in both undergraduate and graduate programs as well as with the appropriate teaching, research and service components of the discipline; and
- Reviewers must affirm that there exists no conflict of interest related to the program under review.

VI. Charge to the External Review Team

The purpose of Academic Program Review (APR) at East Carolina University is to engage faculty in a reflective process of thoughtful study and evaluation of program quality and alignment to East Carolina University's value, mission, and commitments in support of our students and the region. APR is an integral part of the university's on-going assessment and strategic planning processes designed to enhance the quality of all educational programs and we sincerely thank you for assisting us. This letter provides you with the charge to the external review team.

External Review Committee Charge

Please make an objective evaluation of the program's efficiency and effectiveness in achieving its program's purpose and make recommendations that will help in planning improvements. Your resources are the APR Guidelines, a Self-Study report prepared by the program, copies of the Final Action Plan and Progress Reports from the previous review (if applicable), information you gain through interactions while onsite at ECU, and any additional information requested by you. Within the broad charge of recommending ways that the program can continue to improve, here are some overarching questions that we would like you to address:

- Based on the information/data provided in the Self-Study or gathered by the external review committee, what are the program's overall strengths and weaknesses?
- How does the program foster diversity, equity, and inclusion among students, faculty, and staff? Is the curriculum broadly inclusive?
- What major improvements (including student learning and faculty development) has the program made since the previous program review or within the last seven years?
- What is the professional benchmark and how does this program compare?
- What specific recommendations could improve the program's performance?
- In addition, you may be asked to focus on program-specific questions during your on-site review of the program.

We look forward to meeting you during your time on campus. If you have any questions or require additional information prior to your visit, contact the Director of Institutional Assessment or the Executive Assistant to IPAR.

VII. ECU Peer Institutions

Approved by the UNC-BOG October, 2020 (https://ipar.ecu.edu/research/rsrch-peer-institutions/):

- **Ball State University**
- **Central Michigan University**
- **Florida Atlantic University**
- **Illinois State University**
- **Kent State University at Kent**
- **Northern Arizona University**
- **Ohio University.**
- **University of Nevada –Las Vegas**
- **Utah State University**
- **Washington State University**
- **Western Michigan University**

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