

University of Louisiana at Monroe

Academic Program Review

Guidelines for Evaluating Existing Academic
Programs & New Academic Program Proposals

DRAFT

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 one tenured representative from each academic college and the library, with members serving a five-year term. 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. The Vice President of Academic Affairs, or his/her designee, and one Dean, appointed by the Vice President of Academic Affairs, will also serve on the Committee. The Vice President of Academic Affairs will ensure the ULM faculty senate is represented on the Committee.

REVIEW PROCESS FOR EXISTING ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

All programs that lead to a degree, including certificates, should be reviewed every four years. A schedule for reviews should be developed and maintained in the Vice President of Academic Affairs office. Programs that have accreditation need only to provide their accreditation report and results from their external evaluation; they do not need to prepare a separate report as described in these guidelines. However, if their reports do not cover all of the material required for this review, they must provide the additional information.

The academic program review process will occur over an academic semester. 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 office 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. The Computing Center will provide data that will provide objective measures for each program.

Once the reports have been prepared, they are submitted to the Vice President of Academic Affairs office during the semester in which they are to be evaluated, at which time the Vice President of Academic Affairs convenes the Program Review Committee who evaluates the reports.

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 will include items such as 1) program's fit with the University's mission, 2) general health of the program (enrollment, graduation, retention rates, FTE faculty), 3) quality of program outcomes, 4) faculty reputation and successes, and 5) opportunities for growth and innovation.

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

- A. the program's relationship to the University's mission, vision, and strategic plan
- B. a program's contribution to general education requirements or support offered for other programs
- C. its ability to recruit and retain high-quality professors and students
- D. its promotion and enhancement of the educational and cultural level and the general health and well-being of the surrounding region that the university serves
- E. student placement into jobs and/or graduate and professional degree programs to meet critical workforce needs within the state and beyond
- F. 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 the ULM Computing Center)
- G. the process followed that identifies needed curriculum improvements, as well as examples of improvements made; evidence should be provided that the program is participating in the ULM Assurance of Learning Plan and show proof of "closing the loop" for curriculum improvement
- H. excellence in scholarship activities, including, but not limited to, externally-funded research, performance, exhibition, and publication, which bring recognition to the University.
- I. for non-initial reviews, changes made based on previous review recommendations

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 utilizes 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 eULM should be included in the Dean's evaluation of the program.