Academic Program Review – Full Review Template College of Liberal Arts

Through its Office of Institutional Effectiveness (OIE), Mercer University requires the regular review of all academic program or departments. In addition to University requirements, the CLA has additional standards for program review to ensure …

- Fit with the mission and strategic priorities of both the University and the College
- Programmatic quality
- Efficient use of resources

The CLA program review process includes four (4) elements:

1. Completion of a self-study, guided by the University’s CLA-specific “Full Program Review for Academic Programs Template”
2. A visit and written report by an external evaluator who reviews the self-study, evaluates the program’s goals and plan for assessing student learning outcomes, considers the curricular and academic resources, and interviews faculty, students and/or administrators
3. An action plan prepared by the program or department in response to the self-study and evaluator’s report with short-term (12-months) and long-term (1-3 years) goals
4. Review of the self-study, evaluator’s report and action plan by the Strategic Planning Committee and Executive Committee followed by approval of the action plan by the Dean

Full Review Process:

Complete process is for all academic programs/units that do not have external accreditors.

Review occurs every 7 years. Data collected should be from last 3 years (at least).

Self-Study → External Review → Action Plan → Dean Approval of Action Plan → Mid-Cycle Report

Schedule

Normally, program reviews are completed every 7 years. New programs have an initial review in year four. However, the Dean may request a program review (full or modified) outside the schedule for reasons including (a) significant changes in faculty, (b) patterns of low enrollment, (c) new opportunities or threats, (d) significant curriculum changes, (e) significant budget reduction, and/or (f) requests by the department or Strategic Planning Committee.

Time-Line During Review Years

- 18-month process
  January-April Chair/director begins data collection
  April-September External consultant scheduled
  April-October Self-study completed
October-November  Consultant visit
January       Consultant Report due
January-February  Department/program prepares action plan
March-April    Self Study and Action Plan reviewed by the Strategic Planning Committee with recommendations to the Dean
April-May      Plan reviewed by Executive Committee with recommendations to the Dean
May-June      Dean consults with department/program and issues response to action plan
June         Self-study, Consultant Report, and Action Plan filed with OIE

**External Evaluator**

The evaluator is selected by the program or department in consultation with the Dean. The evaluator should be external to the university and from a peer institution. In consultation with the Dean, programs or departments with external accreditation may use the accreditation visit as the external evaluation. Prior to selection, faculty of the department or program should disclose to the Dean any prior personal or professional relationship with the evaluator.

**Self-Study Template:**

I. **Introduction/Context**

Questions to address:

a. Internal context – What is the unit/program? Where does it reside? What degrees does it grant? What majors/minors are available?

b. What is the mission of the unit/program? What are the unit goals and outcomes (including student learning outcomes)? How do the unit mission and goals align with and support the University’s mission and strategic priorities (and those of the school/college, if applicable)? How do the unit’s student learning outcomes align with and support the University’s student learning outcomes? How does unit/program support the University’s Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP)?

c. External context: How is the unit responsive to the needs of the region or area in which it serves? Discuss program relevance and the degree to which community, student, and professional needs are served by the program.

d. Provide a brief history of the unit and, if relevant, discuss any changes made in the unit since the last review.

e. Peer institutions: Provide information on programs at other institutions needed to provide sufficient context for comparative data presented in the report. Comparative data can include information such as faculty size and composition; degree programs offered; number of students by degree program; student/faculty ratios, etc. Include a rationale for the choice of peer programs.

f. What are the unit’s goals for the review process?
II. Progress towards Goals and Objectives (if applicable)

Provide a brief description of the goals and objectives established by the unit during the most recent previous academic program review. Focus on how progress towards accomplishment of the goals and objectives guided the unit’s program activities and resource allocations since its last review. Where possible, indicate how these goals have complied with and contributed to the school/college and the University strategic plans.

III. Unit/Program Quality

a. Students: Summarize and evaluate the quality of incoming and graduating students for the review period. (Indicators of student quality will depend on the goals and discipline of the program.)

For undergraduate programs:
   i. What is the minimum GPA requirement, if applicable, for undergraduate majors?

All programs:
   ii. Provide evidence of the quality of the program’s graduates; possible metrics include the following:
       1. Retention/graduation rates (need some definition)
       2. Comparison of performance on standardized tests with students in peer programs at other universities (or at the state and national level)
       3. Job placements/acceptance in graduate or professional schools
       4. Student/alumni achievements (e.g., community service, research and publications, awards and recognition, professional accomplishments, etc.)

b. Curriculum: Evaluate the quality of the program requirements and curriculum.

   i. Provide the complete list of student learning outcomes, a curriculum map, and the program’s assessment plans. (from Compliance Assist)

   ii. Provide the degree requirements/program plans that outline the curriculum.

   iii. Consider the following questions (for those that could be answered yes/no, provide a discussion that includes the evidence on which you base your conclusions):
       1. How current is the program curriculum?
       2. Does it offer sufficient breadth and depth of learning for this particular degree/major?
       3. How well does it align with learning outcomes?
       4. Are the courses well-sequenced and reliably available in sequence?
       5. Is the program length appropriate for the discipline?
       6. Do upper division courses have prerequisites appropriate for advanced study?
       7. Do the faculty and curriculum offer a diversity of pedagogical approaches?
8. How does the program curriculum compare with similar programs at peer institutions?
9. What is the program’s reputation for academic quality?
   iv. Present a summary of the analyses of the assessment results from the review period and discuss how the faculty has used the results to improve the program.
   v. Evaluate the effectiveness of the assessment processes the program has used during the review period and discuss any improvements made or needed.
   vi. Provide and analyze feedback on the program from graduates (and employers, if appropriate).

c. Faculty: What are the qualifications and achievements of the faculty in the program? How do faculty members’ background, expertise, research and other professional work contribute to the quality of the program?
   i. Provide current c.v. for all full-time faculty.
   ii. Evaluate the following kinds of evidence of faculty quality (specific indicators may vary by program goals and/or discipline):
      1. Proportion of faculty with appropriate terminal degree (Do all faculty meet SACS minimum requirements for credentials? – for undergraduate teaching: master’s degree with at least 18 graduate credit hours in the area of teaching; for graduate teaching: terminal degree with at least 18 graduate credit hours in the area of teaching. Do all chairs, directors, program coordinators have the terminal degree in their areas?)
      2. Institutions from which faculty earned terminal degrees
      3. List of faculty specialties within discipline (and how those specialties align with the program curriculum)
      4. Teaching quality (e.g., peer evaluations, faculty self-review)
      5. Record of scholarship for faculty members consistent with Boyer’s categories. (What have been the accomplishments of tenured and tenure-track faculty over the review period and are reasonable expectations in this area being met? Consider such measures as the percentage of faculty who regularly published, displayed, or performed their work, the quality of the venues in which their work has appeared, recognition in the form of awards, prizes, editorial appointments, professional society involvement, etc. Provide a discipline-appropriate rationale and criteria to evaluate the quality of the unit’s scholarly and creative work.)
      6. Faculty participation in professional development opportunities related to teaching learning, and/or assessment
      7. External funding awarded to faculty (Does the unit have an appropriate level of external support via grants and contracts, given funding opportunities in the discipline and the accomplishments of the faculty? Are there unexplored avenues for external support that should be explored?)
8. Service for each faculty member
9. Distribution of faculty across ranks
10. Diversity of faculty
11. Faculty awards and recognition

IV. Unit/Program Viability and Sustainability
   a. Demand for the program
      i. What are the trends in numbers of student inquiries over the review period?
      ii. What is happening within the profession, local community or society generally that identifies an anticipated need for this program in the future (including market research)?
      iii. Provide and reflect upon the following kinds of data:
          1. number of majors and minors and cross-college enrollments (if applicable) for review period
          2. general contributions from the department faculty, including cross-departmental teaching assignments (if applicable)
          3. enrollment counts and SCHs generated over review period
          4. Enrollments in lower-level and upper-level courses (if applicable)
          5. Student retention in the unit or program
          6. National data (such as CIRP) indicating student demand for the program
          7. Economic and/or social trends that indicate ongoing or expanded student demand
   b. Allocation of Resources
      i. Faculty
          1. Are there sufficient numbers of faculty to maintain program quality?
          2. Are the unit’s/program’s FTE, SCHs and other measures of instructional productivity acceptable in comparison with other units in the University and with similar units elsewhere? (Can they get comparison data?)
          3. Does the distribution of class sizes make the most effective use of faculty resources, consistent with the demands of the discipline?
          4. Are there opportunities to adjust class sizes, eliminate unproductive offerings, or achieve other economies while maintaining academic quality?
          5. What percentage of SCHs are generated by adjunct faculty?
          6. Do program faculty have the support they need to do their work?
          7. Provide and reflect upon the following kinds of data and information
             a. Program teaching load data
             b. SCH/faculty members
             c. SCH/faculty FTE
             d. Cost per credit hour (Delaware study)
             e. Faculty/student ratio (definition)
             f. Ratio of full-time faculty to adjuncts
             g. Faculty review and evaluation processes
h. Mentoring processes/program for faculty
i. Professional development opportunities/resources (including travel and research funds)
j. Time for course development, research, etc.

ii. Student Support: Evaluate the following:
   1. Student advising
      a. How is advising of students handled in your program?
      b. Do you assess your advising process? If so, how?
      c. How is advising figured into faculty teaching loads?
   2. Orientation programs
   3. Opportunities for engaged learning beyond the classroom

iii. Information and Technology Resources:
   1. In consultation with the Library’s collection staff, specify how your program library needs have been assessed and addressed.
   2. Evaluate the following:
      a. Library print and electronic holdings in the teaching and research areas of the program
      b. Information literacy outcomes for graduates
      c. Technology resources available to support the pedagogy and research in the program
      d. Technology resources available to support students’ needs
      e. If the program includes online courses, how are faculty supported in learning to teach online and how are students supported in how to learn online?

iv. Facilities
   1. Are the unit’s/program’s facilities adequate to support its essential operations? If not, what modifications or additions should be considered?
   2. Evaluate the following (if relevant):
      a. Classroom space
      b. Instructional laboratories
      c. Research laboratories
      d. Office space
      e. Student study spaces
      f. Access to classrooms suited for instructional technology

v. Staff: Evaluate clerical and technical staff FTE supporting unit/program operations

vi. Financial Resources: Is the operating budget of the unit sufficient to support its essential activities? If not, what are the highest priorities for an increase in operating funds? (Discuss operational budget (revenues and expenditures) and trends over a 3-5 year period.)
V. **Unit/Program Assessment of Strengths and Weaknesses (Executive Summary):** Summarize the strengths and weaknesses discovered through the self-study process, including implications for the program. Organize this section by the following categories:
   a. Quality of the instruction, research, and service associated with the unit/program(s)
   b. Centrality of the program(s) to the university: Alignment with and contributions to achieving the mission and goals of Mercer and the school/college.
   c. Viability of programs: Degree to which the programs are viable with respect to enrollments, graduates, and continuing availability of resources to support them.
   d. Strategic focus: Rationales for the choices of subject areas and degree levels in terms of the disciplines and the programs’ distinctiveness, demands for graduates, and contributions in the context of the university’s reach into local, state, national, and international communities.
   e. Financial resource analysis: An analysis of the resources expended in terms of the quality and quantity of instruction, research, and service contributions. When a self-study and an action plan exist for a prior cycle, the effects of changes in strategy and investments should be explained and analyzed.

VI. **Future Goals and Plans for Improvement**
   a. What are the program’s goals for the next few years?
   b. How will the program specifically address any weaknesses identified in the self-study?
   c. How will the program build on existing strengths?
   d. What internal improvements are possible with existing resources (through reallocation)?
   e. What improvements can only be addressed through additional resources?
   f. Where can the formation of collaborations improve program quality?

**Appendices (at a minimum)**

- Student Learning Outcomes
- Curriculum Maps
- Assessment Plans/Reports from Compliance Assist
- Program Plans
- Major/Minor Requirements
- Faculty CVs
**Program Review Metrics**

The following metrics are either suggested or required in the program review template. Relevance of specific metrics will vary by program.

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<th>Program Level</th>
<th>Metric or Evidence</th>
<th>Sources of Data</th>
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<td>SAT scores for majors (mean and range)</td>
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*Updated 1/22/18*