Six-Year Review of Academic Programs

Program Audit and Review: 2015-16

University of Wisconsin – River Falls
OVERVIEW
ACADEMIC PROGRAM REVIEW PROCESS

- All academic programs (i.e. entitled majors and graduate programs and associated sub-majors) must complete an approved program audit and review process each six years.

- New programs must complete a special review in the 5th year subsequent to their entitlement (see guidelines for “Joint Program Review” as specified in UW System ACIS 1.0). Following this, subsequent reviews take place every six years.

- External reviewer reports are an optional part of the program review process. External reviews may be requested following the processes in Appendix A.

- **Format:** The completed self-study and accompanying documents must be submitted electronically. The report should not exceed 18 pages and should be single-spaced. The 18 page limit does not include appendices (e.g. the survey information, CVs, and other data). All information must be placed into a single document.

**Fall Semester**
- Initial notification and information about the program review process sent to programs that are scheduled for review in the spring of the next academic year no later than October 1.
- Second notification sent to programs that are scheduled for review in spring of the current academic year no later than October 1.

**Spring Semester**
- Program submits final copy of program review self-study document to the Office of the Provost & Vice-Chancellor by February 1.
- Program Audit and Review Committee schedules visitation.
- The program prepares a presentation based on the requirements in Appendix B.
- University Program Audit and Review Committee prepares a report for the Provost with recommendations by June 1.

**July 1st**
- Provost communicates to the program.
- Review recommendations communicated to UW System
- Program review information will be included in the University long range planning process and in determining resource allocations.

For both programs subject to either an initial, five-year program audit and review or a six-year program audit and review, the program prioritization processes will be used. Please provide the information and data as indicated below for your program.
Process:

1. Complete the steps in the program prioritization process requiring your contributions of information and data.
2. For those items in the program prioritization document/process that do not currently ask for a narrative, provide supplemental discussions. These are noted below, within this document. You are not being asked to conduct additional research, beyond using the data compiled for the other steps in the program prioritization process, such as the enrollment and financial strength categories. The data for program prioritization will be made available through a secure folder on the T drive, within the collaboration folder: T drive > Collaboration > Program Prioritization-Audit-Review-Assessment > Program Review > Program Review 2015-16.
3. External reviews are an optional part of the program review process. External reviews may be requested following the processes in Appendix A.
4. Alumni, student, and faculty surveys beyond those required for assessment are optional.
5. The final report is due February 1, 2016, submitted to wes.chapin@uwrf.edu.
SECTION ONE

A. General Information:

1. Provide the title of the academic program (i.e. major or graduate program) under review. Include the original UW System entitlement and the date when it was approved, if it is available, and any subsequent revisions of the title and associated dates.

2. Provide the program’s curriculum.

3. Provide active links to the program’s website and any other social or web-based media affiliated with the program.

4. Identify sub-majors, options, or emphases associated with the entitled program.

5. Identify minor(s) associated with the entitled program.

6. Identify the name of the department responsible for the program and the college(s) or administrative unit where the program is housed.

7. Identify the names of additional departments and/or programs that offer either required or elective courses in the program. Identify the courses, and provide a clear indication of the relative importance of these courses for the program.

8. Identify all other programs, such as general education, liberal arts, foundation courses in agriculture, other majors and minors (including minors affiliated with the program), university requirements, and so on that are supported by the program under review. Include in your narrative a description of the specific role that each of these plays in course offerings, faculty and resource allocation, and so on.

9. Include the Provost’s Program Review report from the previous review.

10. Describe significant changes in the program since the previous review, identifying any that were the result of observations or recommendations expressed in the previous review. Include a discussion detailing the rationale and outcome for each action. If recommendations from the previous review were not implemented, identify these and explain the rationale behind the inaction.

11. Optional: Include faculty, student, alumni, and other survey results if available to the program as an appendix, and incorporate relevant observations from these into the narrative statements for appropriate sections below.

12. Optional: Include a discussion about any unique challenges or developments that should be considered that are not included in other sections of the report.
SECTION TWO

**Intellectual Strength**

A. The extent to which the program meets University Assessment plan and report expectations.

For PAR purposes, attach an electronic version of both the assessment plan and the assessment report to the program review report document (i.e. the same assessment document submitted to the Assessment Committee). Provide additional narrative that explains how your program utilizes assessment processes to improve student learning.

B. The extent to which the needs of graduates are being met by program learning outcomes.

For PAR purposes, include your program’s data in your report and discuss how your program uses this to improve student learning.

C. The five-year trend in percentage of employed and continuing education of graduates by major.

Provide a narrative that discusses the information available to the program, if available, regarding the employment and continuing education activities of graduates of the program. If no information is available, please indicate this.

D. The extent to which tenure-track faculty have remained actively engaged and up-to-date in their discipline.

Final details regarding the engagement exercise will be provided early during fall semester.

E. Strategic Planning Goals: the extent to which a program supports the strategic planning goals of the university.

The 2,500 character summary should be included in this PAR report. Additional narrative may be included that helps explain or support the strategic planning statement.

**Enrollment Strength (combined with market strength)**

Provide a narrative that discusses each of the factors in Enrollment Strength (i.e. A, B, C, D, E, & F) as they relate to your program. The narrative must include a discussion of the steps being taken by the program to address any significant accomplishments, concerns, and/or issues that exist in regard to each of these factors, as well as some discussion regarding the goals that the program has set for itself on each factor and the steps necessary to achieve these goals.

A. Five-year trend of number of majors in a program divided by total majors on campus, reported as a percentage.
B. Five-year trend of the change in the number of majors in a program, reported as a percentage.
C. Five-year trend of number of program graduates within a specific program divided by total program graduates for the university, reported as a percentage.
D. Five-year trend of median total credits to degree for academic program degree completers.
E. Five-year trend of median time to degree for academic program degree completers.
F. Five-year trend of retention rate by program.

**Financial Strength**

The UWRF is using a more comprehensive cost accounting that calculates revenue (e.g. GPR and non-GPR tuition, fees, donations, grants, and other revenues) and costs (e.g. human resources, S&E, major equipment costs, and physical costs). Program information for each factor is available for representational and informational purposes.

For program review purposes, provide a narrative that discusses the costs and revenues (as provided in the PP-PAR data). The report **must** discuss significant trends, opportunities, and challenges that confront the program. If the program is experiencing significant revenues and/or costs due to servicing other programs, include appropriate narrative about this as well.
Appendix A: External Reviews of Academic Programs

Explanation/rationale

Academic programs benefit from periodic review by external experts. In the past this process has been required as part of the internal program audit and review process. The use of external reviewers is now optional. Because program audit and review is tied to program prioritization, programs that desire to utilize an external reviewer must be willing to ensure that assessment plans and reports, engagement documents, strategic planning statements, and so on, are prepared in a timely manner for the external reviewer, notwithstanding the deadlines provided for program prioritization. They must also be cognizant of the fact that the external reviewer might in some cases rely upon data that is from the previous cycle (e.g. financial strength data might be available for the previous three years leading up to the review, but not for the most recent year). This document provides directions and a timeline.

External Program Review Process Overview

- External reviews may be requested by the program chair (in consultation with her/his dean) no later than November 1 of the year preceding the review (e.g. November 1, 2018 for a review occurring during the 2019-20 academic year), subject to approval by the Office of the Provost & Vice Chancellor. Requests should be made by emailing the Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs (i.e. wes.chapin@uwrf.edu).
- The Office of the Provost & Vice Chancellor will consider requests and communicate decisions to programs by December 1 of the year preceding the review.
- By February 1 of the academic year preceding the review year, the chair, in consultation with her/his dean, will submit the names and CVs of three potential reviewers to the Office of the Provost & Vice Chancellor (four if more than one external reviewer is requested) by emailing the Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs (i.e. wes.chapin@uwrf.edu). Potential reviewers from similarly organized programs will be identified, and they should be selected based on their reputation, credentials, and qualifications as relevant to the program. Appropriate reviewers may come from other campuses (public or private) in or out of the state; from business or industry, if appropriate; from professional associations or from accrediting bodies if available. Typically one external reviewer is sufficient to meet the requirement, but on occasion a program may desire or need two external reviewers. If more than one external reviewer is needed, the stipend will be divided between the two external reviewers. It is appropriate, though not required, to use an internal reviewer from another discipline on campus in addition to the external reviewer, if the program desires. If two external reviewers are needed, the program should consult directly with the College Dean and the Office of the Provost & Vice Chancellor. The written request will indicate whether a one-day or two-day review is appropriate, and whether one or two external reviewers will be utilized.
- By April 1, the Office of the Provost & Vice Chancellor will provide a decision, including the selection of the external reviewer(s).
- By June 1 the program will schedule the external reviewer’s visit, providing appropriate guidelines (see below).
- By October 1 the external reviewer’s visit will be completed.
- By December 15 the external reviewer’s report will be submitted to the program chair, dean (or deans for program serving multiple colleges), and the Office of the Provost & Vice Chancellor.
• The Office of the Provost & Vice Chancellor provides up to $750 toward the cost of bringing the external evaluator to campus ($500 for a one-day visit, or $750 if a two-day visit is necessary), including honorarium; other expenses or expenses in excess of $750 are the responsibility of the individual/program unit. In the event that the reviewer comes from one of the University of Wisconsin System’s other campuses, the honorarium to the reviewer can only be paid if the Provost of the reviewer’s home campus agrees. In some past instances the honorarium went to the campus, not the individual reviewer. If a UW-System reviewer is chosen, an inter-institutional agreement form, obtained from Accounts Payable office, must be filed.

General Guidelines

The principal focus of this external review is to gauge the quality of the program. Though there is no one measurement of quality, attention should be directed to indicators of the qualifications and performance of the program’s faculty, the success of the program’s graduates, and the nature of the curriculum (e.g. depth, breadth, and currency) offered by the program as it relates to the mission of the University. As evaluations of these areas are made, the evaluator should provide appropriate objective comparisons with other similar programs (e.g. three), and national accreditation standards governing such programs if they are available. Appropriate reviews must include

• an assessment of the qualifications and performance of the program’s faculty,
• a discussion regarding the success of the program’s graduates (to the extent that data is available).
• an analysis of the program’s curriculum (e.g. depth, breadth, and currency) and a discussion regarding the extent to which it is or could be linked to the university’s mission,
• an analysis of the program’s assessment plan and report,
• a comparison of the program to several similar programs (e.g. three) in terms of faculty, staff, curriculum, assessment plan and reports, state of the art pedagogical practices, employee training and support, and so on,
• a discussion regarding the major trends in the discipline (e.g. national or regional enrollment trends, employment prospects, recruitment and retention strategies relevant to the discipline, and so on), and
• an evaluation of the communication and marketing tools utilized by the program (e.g. website, social communication, alumni contacts, and so on).

Other areas for review include the use and availability of supplies and equipment, library resources, clerical and other technological support, adequacy of space and facilities, adequacy of budget and salaries, existing or potential reliance on faculty and courses from other programs and whether this is desirable or not, and the degree of future planning undertaken by the program. The reviewer(s) should be both critical and complimentary in their analysis of the program. Recommendations for changes and improvements are especially encouraged.

In gathering information during the visit, the external reviewer should supplement reading of the materials provided by the program and the University catalog by interviewing a number of individuals and groups on campus. The reviewer’s schedule should be worked out in advance. The program should arrange for the reviewer to meet with the program’s faculty, with a group of its student majors, with faculty from other related programs, with the Dean of the college, and with the Provost. Before
the reviewer leaves campus, there should be a debriefing in which the general observations and likely conclusions of the visit are conveyed to the program faculty. This exit interview provides an excellent opportunity to question and gain additional insight into the program. The program may also clarify its expectations for the final report.

The external reviewer’s report must provide specific recommendations regarding how the program can be strengthened. In addition, the report must also provide specific recommendations regarding how the program can be fixed – if problems are identified.
Appendix B: Guidelines for Presentations

The faculty and staff for each program will meet with the Program Audit and Review (PAR) Committee to discuss the report. The structure of the meeting is as follows:

- Meetings will be scheduled early during spring semester by the Office of the Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs. The USPA will contact the chair to schedule this after the office receives your report.
- Meetings should be scheduled in a location that is appropriate for the purposes of the review (e.g. a meeting in the UC might be appropriate. If a tour of the program’s facilities is appropriate – see below – it is preferable to schedule the meeting in a location that is in close proximity to those facilities).
- Meeting duration is approximately 90 minutes. If a department has more than one similar program (e.g. an undergraduate and graduate program in the same disciplinary field), a longer meeting may be scheduled.
- PowerPoint or similar presentations are encouraged.
- The first approximately one-third of the meeting (e.g. 30 minutes) is intended to be an opportunity for a presentation that provides overviews of
  - the staff (e.g. who they are, what special roles they play, etc.), **this should be brief**,
  - the program’s history (e.g. when was it created, changed, etc.), **this should be brief**,
  - the key points in the report (e.g. positive highlights, issues of concerns),
  - the program’s plans for the future, including plans to address concerns, and
  - other key relevant issues that the program wants to discuss with the PAR Committee.
- The second approximately one-third of the meeting (e.g. 30 minutes) is intended to be an opportunity for the PAR Committee members to raise questions and engage in a dialogue with the program’s staff.
- The third approximately one-third of the meeting (e.g. 30 minutes) is reserved for the PAR Committee’s confidential discussions about the program’s report, presentation, and dialogue with the PAR Committee.

Facility tours

In some cases it might be helpful for a program to provide a tour of its facilities for the PAR Committee. These can be scheduled when such a tour will add beneficial information that helps to significantly inform the PAR Committee members about key issues and considerations that are directly relevant to the program’s report and/or the program’s presentation. There are two standard ways to do this:

1. Provide a virtual tour as part of the program’s presentation, include a visual tour (e.g. PowerPoint tour) of the key facilities, equipment, and so on that are relevant to the program review report.
2. Provide an approximately 30-minute tour immediately preceding the meeting with the program review presentation. Members of the PAR Committee will be invited to this tour and will participate, depending on scheduling considerations. Please note that the presentation must be scheduled in a location that is in close proximity to the facilities that are the subject of the tour. Be certain to inform the Office of the Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs about this need when the review meeting is scheduled.