Purpose

The academic program review (APR) process provides a cyclical, comprehensive assessment of an academic unit’s strengths, challenges, and opportunities for improvement. The primary focus of the academic program review considers factors associated with achieving and maintaining high quality degree programs, including stand-alone certificates. In addition, the review takes into account related departmental/academic unit factors (e.g., climate, communications, facilities, technology, staffing, advising).

The APR is an improvement-oriented process that provides the unit, the college, and the university with an evidence-based foundation to support decision-making and to enhance academic excellence. The APR is also an essential component in demonstrating the university’s compliance with SACSCOC (Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges) accreditation standards including the following:

Core Requirement 7.1. The institution engages in ongoing, comprehensive, and integrated research-based planning and evaluation processes that (a) focus on institutional quality and effectiveness and (b) incorporate a systemic review of institutional goals and outcomes consistent with its mission. (Institutional Planning)
8.2.a The institution identifies expected outcomes, assesses the extent to which it achieves these outcomes, and provides evidence of seeking improvement based on analysis of the results... [for its] student learning outcomes for each of its educational programs.

The value of the APR rests on its process, its outcomes, and its usefulness. Because the process and outcomes are developed for purposes of improving educational opportunities, curriculum quality, and program relevance, it is essential that the university make appropriate use of the results.

Process

The program review process is based on a seven-year cycle or, whenever possible, conducted in conjunction with other timely reviews by discipline-specific accrediting agencies or the Louisiana Board of Regents. Each academic unit is responsible for notifying the Office of Institutional Effectiveness of such external reviews.

Among the individuals and groups involved in the process are the following:
- Executive Vice President and Provost or the provost’s representative;
- Office of Institutional Effectiveness (OIE);
- dean;
- unit’s chair/director and faculty;
- unit’s staff, as appropriate;
- undergraduate and/or graduate students in the program(s);
- external reviewer(s);
- internal review panel; and
- other key constituents, as appropriate.

The results are reported to the executive vice president and provost, the dean, the director/chair, and the unit’s faculty. In addition, the results may be made available to university committees involved in planning, assessment, and budgeting processes.

Self-Study Report. The academic unit must prepare a self-study report that addresses the following components for each academic degree program and stand-alone certificate: previous program review actions; self-study development process; overview of the academic unit and program(s); strategic planning; curriculum and assessment; faculty and student information; research productivity; outreach and partnerships; supporting resources; and current overall analysis. Accompanying appendices include the following: action plan (formerly memorandum of agreement) from the previous program review; organizational chart; current unit strategic plan; three most recent Strategic Planning Annual Reports (SPAR); current assessment plan for each program, Program Impact Reports (PIRs), and curriculum map, if applicable; General Education/Integrated Learning Core assessment reports for the last three years, if applicable; and other documentation, as needed.
External Reviewers. Input from an external reviewer is a critical aspect of program review, because it provides an evaluative opinion from a recognized expert in the field, ensures objectivity, helps provide perspectives concerning the program's relationship to the discipline, and lends credibility to the process. The academic unit must provide the names of at least five proposed external reviewers in rank order (with “1” as the unit's top choice), approved by the dean, from peer or similar institutions. The unit should also provide contact information and a brief rationale stating the significance of each reviewer's potential contribution to the review process. The list of external reviewers is reviewed and approved by the Institutional Effectiveness Council (IEC). The OIE is responsible for contacting the (top-ranked) external reviewer, procuring his/her consultant services, and facilitating a $1,000 stipend for the off-site review of the unit's self-study materials.

Internal Panels. Program review internal panels are selected for each academic unit reviewed. Recommendations for panel members are provided by the deans with the concurrence of the executive vice president and provost or the provost's representative. Internal panels are typically composed of three tenured faculty members who are not in the same unit undergoing APR: (1) a panel chair, who is a senior, experienced faculty member and who serves on the IEC, or has previously served on the IEC and/or an internal panel; (2) a faculty member from the same college as the unit; and (3) a faculty member outside of the college of the unit. At least one of the panel members must have graduate faculty status for review of academic units with graduate programs. Additional panel members may be added, as needed.

The panels are responsible for carrying out the program review and for making recommendations to the executive vice president and provost in a formal report. This review consists of the following:
- an examination of the unit’s self-study report, including any accompanying materials, and the external reviewer’s report;
- a tour of facilities, when appropriate;
- meetings with the unit’s administration, faculty, staff, and students;
- an exit meeting with the unit’s chair/director, the dean, the associate vice provost for institutional effectiveness, and the executive vice president and provost or the provost's representative; and
- a final, 10-page report outlining the panel’s findings and recommendations.

Action Plans. The program review process concludes with an action plan, comprised of recommendations based on the internal panel and external reviewer’s reports, proposed actions by the responding unit with input from the faculty, and a timeline for completing those actions. Progress toward accomplishing the action plan is documented in the unit’s Strategic Planning Annual Report (SPAR) and considered in the unit’s next program review. The status updates should clearly document the steps taken to implement the action plan, including use of relevant data for seeking improvement.

External Specialized Accreditation. A review by an external accrediting agency may be substituted for the internal review process if the external review includes an on-site visit and sufficiently addresses the primary required elements of the university’s self-study report. Colleges/academic units must provide the on-site visit report and all relevant correspondence to and from the external accreditor with the OIE.
Upon review of the materials attained from the external review, the college/academic unit will be notified if supplemental documentation is needed to fulfill the university’s requirements. An action plan will be developed based on the findings of the external accrediting agency and any supplemental information, as needed. Units will provide action plan updates in the Strategic Planning Annual Report (SPAR). The status updates should clearly document the steps taken to implement the action plan, including use of relevant data for seeking improvement.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>REVIEW</th>
<th>ACTIVITY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>September 18, 2020</td>
<td>Units submit to OIE five names of potential external reviewers (in rank order, with “1” being their top choice), approved by the college dean.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 9, 2020</td>
<td>Units submit Self-Study Report; OIE to finalize external reviewers and internal panels.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 25, 2021</td>
<td>External reviewers' reports due. Distribute reports to panels, unit chairs/directors, and deans.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 1 – March 31, 2021</td>
<td>Internal panel review to include: interviews with the dean, chair, faculty, students and/or staff. Exit interview with dean, chair, OIE, and OAA to provide preliminary findings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 2021</td>
<td>Panel Reports due two weeks following exit interview. OIE to send panel reports and draft of action plan to units.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 10, 2021</td>
<td>Units submit responses to Action Plan to OIE for final review and signatures</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Note: “Program” is defined as an academic credential, which includes all degree programs and stand-alone certificates offered within the academic unit.

PREVIOUS PROGRAM REVIEW ACTIONS
- Summarize recommendations from the previous program review’s Action Plan (formerly Memorandum of Agreement) and related actions taken.

SELF-STUDY DEVELOPMENT PROCESS
- Discuss the collaborative process undertaken by the unit/program(s) in developing the self-study document and supporting materials.

OVERVIEW OF THE ACADEMIC UNIT AND PROGRAM(S)
- Organizational Structure. Briefly describe the current organizational structure of the academic unit. Discuss any significant changes (e.g., organization, leadership, personnel, programs) since the previous program review.

STRATEGIC PLANNING
- Mission Alignment. Provide the current mission of the academic unit. Discuss how the mission of the academic unit supports the mission of the college and the university.
- Accomplishments. Discuss major accomplishments and progress in achieving the unit’s strategic goals, including supporting data, since the previous program review.
- Improvements. Provide a few representative examples of improvements sought based on the assessment findings since the previous program review. Indicate the applicable objective, measure, data, and planned or implemented change for improvement.
- Current Actions. Indicate priorities related to the strategic plan that will be implemented within the next two years.
CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT

- **Program Requirements.** Describe the current program requirements and modes of delivery for each program (i.e., face-to-face, hybrid, fully online). Include information from the catalog and/or links to other applicable websites.

- **Assessment of Student Learning.** List each program’s current student learning outcomes. Include a discussion of any changes made to each program assessment plan (i.e., mission, student learning outcomes, cycle, methods) since the previous program review. If the program is offered via multiple delivery modes (e.g., campus-based, hybrid, fully online), compare student learning outcome performances across these modalities for the last three years.

- **Curricular and Programmatic Changes.** Provide a summary, including dates, of any curricular or programmatic changes since the previous program review and any planned changes. Describe how the use of the assessment findings influenced the curricular or programmatic changes.

- **General Education/Integrated Learning Courses (ILC).** If the academic unit offers general education/ILC courses, list the courses offered and course enrollment information for the last five years, and discuss any trends. [Data Source: Distributed by OIE / EIS]

- **Dual Enrollment Courses.** If the academic unit offers dual enrollment courses, provide the number of courses offered and course enrollment information for the last five years, and discuss any trends. [Data Source: Distributed by OIE / EIS]

- **Teaching Enhancements.** For the last five years, provide number of sections/students for any service-learning, CxC, or distance education (50% or more of course delivered via distance) courses offered. Discuss any recently implemented or planned innovative teaching enhancements, including fully online programs. [Data Source: EIS Department – Teaching Enhancements]

FACULTY

- **Awards and Recognitions.** List significant external and internal faculty awards and recognitions since the previous program review.

- **Faculty Composition.** Provide a list of all faculty employed during the last five years, including name, start date, rank, area of specialization, new faculty line or replacement, and, if applicable, departure date. What has been the impact of new hires/departures over the last five years on teaching quality and research productivity? Are faculty retirements or changes in faculty lines anticipated over the next five years? Are there sufficient (at least 60%) full-time faculty to ensure curriculum and program quality?

- **Diversity.** Provide data regarding faculty gender and race/ethnicity for the last five years. Discuss any trends in minority and gender representation and efforts made to enhance faculty diversity. [Data Source: Department Metrics – Fall Full-Time Faculty Diversity]

- **Recruitment and Retention.** Discuss any current or planned initiatives that promote faculty recruitment and retention efforts.

- **Teaching Load.** Discuss faculty teaching load and expectations by rank. Include supporting data.

- **Teaching Effectiveness.** Discuss approaches taken to assess teaching effectiveness, including all delivery modes.

STUDENTS

- **Awards and Recognitions.** List significant external and internal student awards and recognitions since the previous program review.
Advising. Discuss how the unit supports and enhances the quality of advising, including such considerations as assignment of advisors, advisor/student ratio, and communications.

Departmental Student Credit Hours (SCH). Provide departmental SCHs for lower division, upper division, and graduate courses over the last five years, and discuss any trends. [Data Source: Department Metrics – Annual Credit Hours]

Enrollment Trends. Provide per program per year over the last five years: the total number of students enrolled; number and diversity of students; and gender and race/ethnicity of students. Include a comparison of enrollment by program delivery mode, if applicable. Discuss any enrollment trends and anticipated enrollment changes in the next five years; efforts made to enhance student diversity; and recruitment initiatives. [Date Source: EIS - Program Review Enrollment Summary]

Retention and Graduation Rates. Provide per program per year over the last five years the first-year retention rate and graduation rate, and discuss any trends. What initiatives are in place or planned to promote student retention and timely degree completion? [Date Source: Department Metrics – Freshman Retention and Graduation Rates]

Degrees Awarded Annually. Provide data for degrees conferred by program over the last five years, and discuss any trends. Include a comparison of degrees awarded by program delivery mode, if applicable. [Date Source: Department Metrics – Annual Degrees Awarded]

Post-Graduation Outcomes. Discuss job placement and further pursuit of educational experiences for undergraduate students and graduate students, as available data permits.

RESEARCH

Faculty. Discuss faculty research productivity trends within the academic unit. Provide for the last five years and by faculty rank, if possible, supporting aggregate data: total number of refereed journal articles, technical/research reports, books, research presentations, and grants and contracts awarded from sponsored programs. [Data Sources: Department Metrics – Sponsored Programs]

Student. Discuss student research opportunities provided by the unit/program(s). Provide data as available.

OUTREACH AND PARTNERSHIPS

External/Internal. List engagement/outreach activities, ongoing and new partnerships, and/or funding commitments (expenditures or income). [Note: Do not include service learning linked to courses.]

Alumni and Other Stakeholder Engagement. Describe the role of alumni with the unit/program(s). Describe how employers and other stakeholders interact with the unit/program(s).

SUPPORTING RESOURCES

Staffing. Provide staffing data over the last five years and discuss the level of support for the academic unit and program(s). [Data Source: EIS – Total Headcount Employees]

Facilities and Equipment. Discuss the adequacy of the facilities and equipment in the academic unit and program(s), including classrooms, labs, other instructional facilities, and office space.

Library. Discuss the adequacy of library resources in meeting faculty and student needs for campus-based programs, hybrid, and/or fully online programs.

Technology. Discuss the adequacy of technology resources in supporting teaching and learning, research, and other needs for campus-based programs, hybrid, and/or fully online programs.
- **Student Fees.** In accordance with [Policy Statement 42: Student Fees](#), provide the following information regarding any course/program fee(s) assessed for any courses in the degree program(s): accounting program used to record and expend the course fees; course number and name; carryforward balance; semester; enrollment; fee amount charged to each student; total fees collected; total expenses for the course; balance at year end. In addition, a journal line detail report for each Workday program number for each fiscal year should be submitted, and each report should be labeled with the associated course number, name and semester. [Note: For internal use only – to be reviewed by Accounting Services.]

**CURRENT OVERALL ANALYSIS**
- **Strengths.** Briefly summarize the strengths of the unit/program(s).
- **Challenges.** Briefly summarize the greatest challenges faced by the unit/program(s).

**APPENDICES: REQUIRED SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION**
- Memorandum of Agreement/Action Plan from the previous Program Review
- Organizational Chart
- Strategic Planning – current unit strategic plan and three most recent Strategic Planning Annual Reports (SPARs)
- Assessment of Student Learning – current assessment plan for each program, Program Impact Reports (PIRs) completed since the previous program review, and curriculum map, if applicable
- General Education/ILC assessment reports for the last three years.
- Other as determined by the unit

**Data Sources:** The Department Metrics are prepared and distributed annually by the Office of Budget & Planning. Additional program- and department-level data are available via the Enterprise Information System (EIS) by accessing MyLSU – Planning Resources or as provided by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness. Other data sources, such as those maintained by the unit, may also be used in the development of the self-study document.
EXTERNAL REVIEWER’S GUIDELINES

Thank you for agreeing to serve as an off-site external evaluator of the degree programs and/or stand-alone certificates for an academic unit at Louisiana State University (LSU). Your external review will provide useful feedback to the Institutional Effectiveness Council, an internal faculty panel, the provost, the dean, and the unit’s chair/director, thus helping to improve the quality of our programs in teaching, research, and service. As an external reviewer, you will receive the unit’s self-study report and accompanying materials, including the following:

- Memorandum of Agreement/Action Plan from the previous Program Review;
- Organizational Chart;
- Strategic Planning – current unit strategic plan and three most recent Strategic Planning Annual Reports (SPARs);
- Assessment of Student Learning – current assessment plan for each program, Program Impact Reports (PIRs) completed since the previous program review, and curriculum map, if applicable;
- General Education/ILC assessment reports for the last three years; and
- Any other information, as determined by the unit.

In reviewing and evaluating the self-study materials, you are also encouraged to review material presented on the departmental and college webpages. Attached to this document is an outline for your review. Please include the major categories in your report and address the specific questions, as appropriate, within each category. If you identify other issues or concerns during your review, please note those in the corresponding categories or as a separate entry.

Finally, a conference call(s) will be scheduled, if needed, with the internal review panel to discuss your report and/or any other related questions. The purpose of this call is to provide an opportunity for the internal review panel to gain insight into discipline-specific issues about which you would be most knowledgeable.

For any questions or if additional information is needed to provide an effective and meaningful review, please contact Stephenie Franks (sfrank4@lsu.edu), Assistant Director for Institutional Effectiveness.
EXTERNAL REVIEW FOR EVALUATION OF AN ACADEMIC UNIT

Unit Name
College/School
Program Review
2020 – 2021
Date of Report Submission

Prepared by: (Name, Institution)
Date of Submission:

External Reviewer’s Summary – Please provide a short (one-page) statement that identifies the major strengths and challenges for the unit’s teaching, research, and service programs.

Major Categories for the Evaluation:

PREVIOUS PROGRAM REVIEW ACTIONS
- Did the unit indicate how the recommendations from the last Action Plan (formerly Memorandum of Agreement) were addressed?
- Did the unit provide evidence that it was successful in using the recommendations to make improvements?

OVERVIEW OF THE ACADEMIC UNIT AND PROGRAM(S)
- Is the organizational structure of the academic unit appropriate and/or consistent with other similar academic units?
- For any significant changes identified since the last program, what impact have these changes had, or the potential to have, on the academic unit and program(s)?

STRATEGIC PLANNING
- Does the unit’s strategic plan contribute to the goals of the University Strategic Plan?
- In reviewing the priorities identified in the most recent strategic planning annual report, are there additional priorities or opportunities for improvement that may be appropriate to consider?

CURRICULUM & ASSESSMENT
- Do the assessment reports provide meaningful and useful analyses of student learning?
- If the unit offers online degree programs, does the unit provide evidence of assessing the student learning outcomes for the program? Are comparative analyses provided to examine the learning outcomes from the online program to its counterpart in the traditional face-to-face program?
- Has the unit used the annual assessment reports to improve its undergraduate and/or graduate program(s)?
- What suggestions can be offered to improve the assessment of student learning or the unit’s use of the assessment data?
- Does the unit provide general education courses? If so, does the unit provide evidence of assessing the student learning outcomes for the program? Are their opportunities to enhance assessment?
- Are there other curricula offerings that the unit should consider to pursue?
What are any noteworthy innovations in teaching and learning that the unit has adopted?
Should the unit consider initiating or expanding distance education courses or programs (distance education programs are those for which 50% or more of course work is delivered via distance)?

FACULTY
- Are the faculty recognized by associations or societies for their contributions to their discipline(s)?
- Does the unit’s faculty receive recognition on campus (unit, college, university awards)?
- Does the unit have appropriate faculty to support its areas of specialization in the degree program(s) and research area(s)?
- Compared to other similar academic units, is the number and diversity of faculty consistent with, below expected, or better than expected?
- Has the unit been successful in replacing departed faculty or filling vacant faculty lines?
- Are faculty teaching loads and expectations appropriate in comparison to similar academic units?
- Are the approaches the unit has undertaken to assess teaching effectiveness appropriate and/or sufficient?

STUDENTS
- Do students in the unit receive external and/or internal recognition from associations and/or societies?
- Are the unit’s efforts to support and enhance student advising adequate?
- Has the unit made progress in increasing student diversity in the undergraduate and/or graduate program(s)?
- Has the unit increased retention and graduation rates? Degrees awarded annually?
- Is enrollment sufficient to justify continued offering of the program(s)?
- If there are any anticipated changes in program size, are they justified?
- Based on undergraduate and/or graduate enrollment, which program(s) have capacity to increase enrollment and graduation rates?
- Is there an appropriate placement record for the program(s)? Is there a mechanism for tracking placement of graduates?

RESEARCH
- For similar academic disciplines, is the number of publications per faculty member acceptable, below expectations, or outstanding?
- For similar academic disciplines, are the number of faculty grants and contracts awarded, and total restricted expenditures from sponsored programs (organized by source of funding) per year acceptable, below expectations, or outstanding?
- What suggestions can be offered for improving faculty productivity in terms to research and grants?
- Does the unit provide students with sufficient and/or appropriate research opportunities?

OUTREACH & PARTNERSHIPS
- Is the level of engagement similar to, below, or greater than that for units with similar academic programs?
- Is the level of partnerships similar to, below, or greater than that for units with similar academic programs?
• Has the unit developed new or expanded existing partnerships?
• Do the partnerships contribute to the mission/vision of the unit? Do they provide additional revenue streams to support the unit’s teaching and research?

SUPPORTING RESOURCES
• Is the level of staff support sufficient for the size of the academic unit and program(s)?
• Are current facilities and capital equipment sufficient for program needs?
• Are the unit’s library resources adequate for meeting faculty and student needs?
• Are the unit’s technology resources adequate for supporting teaching and learning, research, and other needs?

CURRENT OVERALL ANALYSIS
• Has the unit provided an analytical statement of the challenges and barriers experienced in the last five years?
• Has the unit identified meaningful and realistic actions to take to address the challenges and barriers?
• Are there other actions that the unit should consider in addressing the challenges and barriers?

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on your review and evaluation of the teaching, research, and service programs in the unit, provide specific recommendations that would improve these programs if adopted by the administration and faculty at LSU. Please consider and organize your recommendations into two broad categories: (1) Revenue Demanding Recommendations; and (2) Revenue Neutral Recommendations.

[Note: These should be concise statements (it’s not necessary to elaborate the recommendation because it should be based on information provided in the report). For example, each recommendation could be a focused, one-sentence statement (e.g., “It is recommended that…”).]
INTERNAL PANEL REPORT TEMPLATE

Name of Academic Unit

Date of Report

List names and units of review team members

Narrative:

A. **INTRODUCTION:** Short introductory paragraph – indicate resources reviewed and individuals or groups interviewed and dates of those interviews.

B. **PROGRAM STRENGTHS:** Identify strengths of the unit/program (considering strategic planning, curriculum and assessment, faculty, students, diversity, research productivity, outreach and partnerships, supporting resources, and programs of teaching, research and service).

C. **PROGRAM CHALLENGES:** Identify challenges facing the unit/program (considering all of the above-noted areas, as appropriate).

D. **RECOMMENDATIONS:** Provide recommendations to resolve the challenges and/or to strengthen the unit/program(s). Please consider and organize your recommendations into two broad categories: (1) Revenue Demanding Recommendations; and (2) Revenue Neutral Recommendations. Each recommendation should be a focused, one-sentence statement (e.g., “It is recommended that...”); elaboration of recommendations is not needed, because they should be based on information already provided in the report.

E. **INTERVIEW PROTOCOLS:** Provide as an appendix the list of interview questions the panel may have used in the review.

The report should specifically address the external reviewer’s report and/or recommendations. A conference call with the external reviewer will be scheduled, if needed, prior to and/or following your on-site review.

*The report should be double-spaced and limited to 10 pages (excluding any appendices).* In the first page header, include date of report and in subsequent headers include date of report and name of unit. Insert the page number at the bottom, center of all pages.
This Action Plan brings closure to the program review process. This plan identifies recommendations for action that were noted by the most recent program review panel for your unit. Please respond to each item below. Your responses should provide additional information to clarify the situation and/or propose specific actions that the unit will take to address the recommendation. When proposing a specific action, please indicate a timeline for implementation and completion of the proposed action. Once finalized, the unit should incorporate the recommendations into its strategic planning and provide summary progress each year in the unit’s annual report.

Recommendation 1.

Action Item:

Timeline for Completion:

Recommendation 2:

Action Item:

Timeline for Completion:

(Continues until all Action Plan recommendations are included.)

We, the undersigned, have read and agree with this Plan of Action.

_________________________________________________________  ________________
Executive Vice President & Provost  Date

_________________________________________________________  ________________
Dean, College of ***  Date

_________________________________________________________  ________________
Chair/Director, Department/School of ***  Date