TEXAS A&M
UNIVERSITY
CENTRAL TEXAS

Academic Program Review Guidelines

Office of the Associate Provost

March 6, 2019

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INTRODUCTION

The Academic Program Review (APR) process at Texas A&M University-Central Texas (A&M-Central Texas) is an integral component of institutional effectiveness, which is defined as "ongoing, comprehensive, and integrated research-based planning and evaluation processes that focus on institutional quality and effectiveness and incorporate a systematic review of institutional goals and outcomes consistent with its mission. (Institutional Planning), *Principles of Accreditation*).

The Office of the Associate Provost coordinates the APR process. All graduate and undergraduate programs are externally reviewed on a 10-year cycle to comply with Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) Rule 5.52.[1] Programs periodically reviewed by an external accrediting body may use that body's report to satisfy the State's reporting requirements. The Provost's office maintains files of external review reports.

APR reinforces the university's goal of continuously improving the quality of all academic programs in the pursuit of excellence by strengthening existing assessment measures and quality enhancement practices. It facilitates discussion about change and strategies for improvement, and it provides the basis for data-informed decision making. APR provides an opportunity to realign actions with the current priorities of the university, colleges, departments, and programs as articulated in mission statements and strategic plans.

This document provides a guide to completing the review process. The Office of the Associate Provost looks forward to assisting program faculty with the APR process.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Office of the Associate Provost

The AP holds ultimate authority over the APR process and provides a university perspective for reviewers and programs undergoing review. Responsibilities include:

- Coordinating the 10-year review cycle
- Establishing annual program review milestones and deadlines in consultation with departments
- Approving nominations of external reviewers
- Coordinating contracting and payment of external reviewers
- Approving departmental response to the reviewer's final report
- Approving and distributing second-year status reports
- Communicating results of each review to the President and THECB
- Overseeing implementation of review recommendations and planned actions
- Refining the APR process (as needed)

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[1] Texas Administrative Code Title 19, Part 1, Chapter 5, Subchapter C, Rule §5.52.

APR Coordinator

The APR coordinator reports to the Office of the AP and works with academic program faculty undergoing review, serving as a primary point of contact for all review activities, assisting with preparations for the review, and monitoring progress throughout the entire review cycle. Responsibilities include:

- Scheduling annual program reviews
- Organizing meetings to initiate the review process
- Organizing monthly APR status meetings
- Providing background materials to deans, department chairs, and reviewers
- Compiling and distributing external review materials
- Maintaining all official review files
- Tracking and distributing review documents

The College

The dean, assisted by the APR coordinator, supports college program reviews, approves the list of programs to be reviewed, approves the department's nomination of peer reviewers, attends the post-review meeting, provides input on any follow-up correspondence from the department, and monitors strategies and outcomes in response to APR.

Program Faculty

The principal effort and responsibility for APR resides with the Program Coordinator (PC). The PC is strongly encouraged to communicate and coordinate with their dean and department chair for continual input on all aspects of the review. Responsibilities include:

- Attend AP meeting to plan the year's external APRs
- Attend coordination meetings (September through December)
- Nominate potential external reviewers (September). Follow the guidelines in THECB Rule §5.52 to identify no fewer than two potential external reviewers and submit full contact information (name, title, university, mailing address, telephone number, and email) to the APR coordinator
- Conduct the self-study (October and November) defined in the Self-Study sections
- Submit the self-study to external reviewer (December). The PC is responsible for distributing the self-study to the college dean, faculty, APR coordinator, and external reviewer.

External Reviewer

The external reviewer conducts an external desktop review, which provides valid feedback regarding the status of the program and makes recommendations for improvement. The external reviewer receives a professional service fee covered by the college. Responsibilities include:

- Conduct a thorough review of the program, its students, and its teaching, research, and service or engagement activities, as appropriate
- Submit a report of findings to the PC *within 30 days of receipt of the self-study*.

The APR coordinator contacts programs scheduled for review approximately one year in advance to allow ample time to prepare for the review. An introductory meeting initiates the process and includes the PC, the department chair, and interested department/college representatives. The meeting will establish expectations and share tools to prepare for the review. The review process involves the completion of a self-study, an external desktop review and a final report, a program response letter including action items, an institutional response letter, and second-year status report that document actions and results. In addition to these activities, the process includes two preparatory activities. Program faculty conduct a mid-point fifth-year data review and an eighth-year external scan.

Self-Study

- The PC (faculty) prepares a descriptive and evaluative self-study prior to review. The PC's self-evaluation provides information about the program and an assessment of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats to the program. The self-study includes program data for the past five years. A final version must be completed and submitted to the APR coordinator by the end of November. The APR coordinator submits the self-study as required to the THECB.
- PCs may outline and organize the self-study to best reflect the intricacies of their programs *provided that key elements required by the THECB are addressed.* The APR coordinator can provide previous self-study documents, which may be helpful examples. The APR coordinator may assist in the self-study process, and the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment (IRA) will compile data to be utilized in the self-study (see the Review Data section).
- The review uses reflective elements, but is primarily forward-looking to focus efforts on program improvement. PCs are encouraged to commit themselves to specific, long-range planning in the self-study.

External Reviewers

The task of developing a list of potential reviewers is an essential task for PCs. Select professionally prominent individuals who are nationally recognized in their field. These are typically from academia, but occasionally can be drawn from business or government. The department should initially contact potential external reviewers and ascertain availability and interest before forwarding the nominations to the APR coordinator (after coordinating through the college dean).

Include the following when forwarding the memorandum of potential reviewers (see Invitation Letter to External Reviewer):
- Preferred potential reviewer and alternates (ranked in order of preference)
- Job title and rank, and name of the reviewer's department
- Nominee's principal area of scholarly activity (related to program being reviewed)
- Name of university or organization
- Contact information (full mailing address, email, and telephone number)

Nominations from schools identified as either peers or aspirant peers of A&M-Central Texas, the college, the department, or the program are preferred. These individuals should have experience with undergraduate and graduate programs, and with the teaching, research, and engagement or service components of the discipline as appropriate.
- External reviewers must affirm that there exists no conflict of interest related to the program under review

External Review Report

The external reviewer has *30 days* to transmit the final report to the Provost and AP. The following suggested format is prescriptive, but not restrictive:
- Preamble
- Status of the Program
- Strengths and Weaknesses of the Program
- Opportunities for and Threats to the Program
- Evaluation of Learning Outcomes Assessment Plans
- Recommendations

The final report should answer the following questions at a minimum:
- Is the program advancing the discipline or profession?
- Based upon the evidence provided, is the student-learning effective?
- Does the program meet the goals of the university?
- Does the program respond to the needs of the profession?
- How is the program viewed by experts in the field?

The APR coordinator submits the External Review as required to the THECB.

Academic Program Faculty Response

The APR coordinator will forward the external reviewer's final report to the PC, the college, and other relevant parties. The PC will share the report with faculty and provide an opportunity for discussion. The college dean has *14 days* to develop a written response to the Provost. In responding, the PC must identify actions to address the report's findings.

Post-Review Reporting

The goal of the post-review process is continuing institutional improvement as a result of APR. Post-review consists of a post-review meeting, submission of a post-review summary, and submission of a second-year status report.

The Post-Review Meeting

The APR coordinator will schedule a post-review meeting *approximately 30 days after receipt of the final report* to be attended by the Provost, AP, the college dean, the department chair, and PC. The PC may invite other department or college personnel as appropriate. The post-review meeting provides the PC the opportunity to present and discuss the PC response and the proposed actions based on the external review. The group will reach consensus on the actions to be taken, by whom, and at what time.

Administrative Response

The Administrative Response (Memorandum) outlines the outcomes of the post-review meeting from the Provost to the dean, chair, and PC. The Provost's Office submits the Administrative Response to the THECB, as required. The memorandum includes actions to be taken and discussion of any resources necessary for implementing the plan.

Second-Year Status Report

Approximately two years after the review, the PC submits to the Provost through the dean a second-year status report addressing actions taken as discussed in the post-review meeting and summary.

Additionally, the summary report includes:
1. A map of program-level student learning outcomes mapped to course-level student learning outcomes to course assignments to ensure courses adequately support the program.
2. A second-year course schedule to ensure courses are offered on a reoccurring basis in support of timely graduation.
3. A list of the marketable skills students possess upon graduating from the program. Unlike competencies or learning outcomes, these are items a graduate can confidently list on a resume when applying for a position in or out of the degree field. This objective is listed in support of the *60x30TX* plan.

Fifth-Year Mid-Point Data Review

Approximately five years after the review, the PC conducts a data review by analyzing the data for the program for the previous five years and providing narrative on program strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. The completed narrative is presented to the Provost.

Eighth-Year External Scan

Approximately eight years after the review, the PC conducts an external scan of the program by surveying potential, current, and past students; area employers; full-time and adjunct faculty. The scan will include a review of available employment data. The completed narrative is presented to the Provost and incorporated into the next ten-year review.

College Dean	[Name, Title]	
Program(s)	[Name]	
Academic Program Review Coordinator	[Name , Title]	
	[Email]	
	[Phone]	
External Reviewer	[Name, Title]	
Phone	(XXX) XXX-XXXX	
Mailing Address	XXXX Street, City, State Zip	
Invitation Letter	MM/DD/YYYY	
Payment	[Account Number]	$XXX.00
Contract to Reviewer	MM/DD/YYYY	
Returned Signed	MM/DD/YYYY	
Self-Study		
Complete	MM/DD/YYYY	
To Reviewer	MM/DD/YYYY	
To THECB	MM/DD/YYYY	
External Review		
From Reviewer	MM/DD/YYYY	
To Program Faculty	MM/DD/YYYY	
To THECB	MM/DD/YYYY	
Response		
To Department Chair	MM/DD/YYYY	
To College Dean	MM/DD/YYYY	
To Provost	MM/DD/YYYY	
To THECB	MM/DD/YYYY	

INVITATION LETTER TO EXTERNAL REVIEWER

Date

Reviewer Name

Address

Dear [*Name*]:

Thank you for agreeing to conduct a peer review on the [*insert program name here*] academic program for the [*insert college name here*] at Texas A&M University-Central Texas. Each degree program at Texas A&M University-Central Texas undergoes a comprehensive review every ten years. This letter confirms the timeframe and some of the arrangements for the review. In addition, a charge is enclosed. The charge elaborates on our expectations for the review.

As an external reviewer, you will receive a professional service fee. No federal funds will be expended on the review or your fee.

Dr. [*Academic Program Faculty*], as the Program Faculty, will plan the logistics of the review and will communicate with you directly. All review materials, as well as contact information and our internal guidelines, will be provided to you.

I am grateful to you for your willingness to help with this important review. Please do not hesitate to contact me at [*phone*]; the academic Program Faculty at [*email*] or [*phone*], or the APR Program Faculty at [*email*] or [*phone*] if you have any questions or need further information. I look forward to reading your review.

Sincerely,

Provost

Enclosures

cc:
Dean
Department Chair
Program Faculty
APR Coordinator

Texas A&M University-Central Texas (A&M- A&M-Central Texas)

Academic Program Review

Charge to the External Reviewer

The Academic Program Review (APR) process at A&M-Central Texas provides the occasion for academic units to plan strategically, assess the quality and efficacy of their programs, and determine the best courses of action for ongoing improvement. APR is at the heart of our institutional commitment to excellence, and we sincerely thank you for assisting us. This charge provides you with directions for the review and a brief overview of the program.

Directions

Please examine the program and make recommendations that will help in planning improvements. Your resources are a self-study report prepared by the Program Faculty, copies of materials from the program's last review, copies of strategic plans and goal-setting documents at the department, college, and university level, and any additional information requested by you or by the department. Within the broad task of recommending ways the program can continue to improve, there are some specific questions that we would like you to address:

- Based on the information provided in the self-study report, what are the department's overall strengths and weaknesses?
- How well do the program's goals align with those of its college and with those of A&M-Central Texas?
- How would you compare this program with its peers?
- What improvements (including student learning and faculty development) has the department made since the previous program review?
- With only current resources or a modest infusion of new ones, what specific recommendations could improve the program's performance, marginally or significantly?

Program Name	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
BA in English	10		2			5	8		10		2
BBA in Management	10		2			5			8		10
MEd in Curriculum and Instruction	10		2			5			8		10
BS in Exercise Physiology and Human Performance			2			5			8		10
Bachelor of Social Work		10		2			5			8	
BBA in Marketing		10		2			5			8	
BBA in Human Resource Management		10		2			5			8	
MS in Educational Psychology		10		2			5			8	
MS in Clinical Mental Health Counseling		10		2			5			8	
MS in Marriage and Family Therapy		10		2			5			8	
BS in Mathematics	8		10		2			5			8
MS in Information Systems	8		10		2			5			8
Master of Business Administration	8		10		2			5			8
BA in History		8		10		2			5		
MA in History		8		10		2			5		
MS in Mathematics		8		10		2			5		
BS in Sociology		8		10		2			5		
BAAS in Business Management		8		10		2			5		
BS in Nursing			8		10		2			5	
BS in Interdisciplinary Studies			8		10		2			5	
BS in Psychology			8		10		2			5	
BA in Political Science (Suspended 2017)				8		10		2			5
BS in Political Science				8		10		2			5
BS in Computer Information Systems	5			8		10		2			5
MS in One Planet Leadership	5			8		10		2			5
MS in Human Resource Management (Suspended 2016)	5			8		10		2			5
MEd in Educational Leadership	5			8		10		2			5
BS in Liberal Studies		5			8		10		2		
MS in Liberal Studies		5			8		10		2		
BS in Biology		5			8		10		2		

Program Name	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
BAAS in Criminal Justice		5			8		10		2		
BS in Criminal Justice		5			8		10		2		
BS in Aviation Science-Aviation Management		5			8		10		2		
BS in Aviation Science-Professional Pilot		5			8		10		2		
BBA in Computer Information Systems		5			8		10		2		
MS in Homeland Security			5			8		10		2	
MS in Accounting			5			8		10		2	
BS in Computer Science			5			8		10		2	
Specialist in School Psychology			5			8		10		2	
MEd in Counseling (Suspended 2018)			5			8		10		2	
MA in English				5			8		10		2
Bachelor of Music				5			8		10		2
BBA Accounting				5			8		10		2
BAAS in Information Technology				5			8		10		2
MEd in Higher Education Leadership				5			8		10		2
BS in Mechanical Engineering Technology					5			8		10	
Master of Criminal Justice		2			5			8		10	
MA in Political Science (Suspended 2017)		2			5			8		10	
BBA in Finance		2			5			8		10	
MA in Teaching					5			8		10	

Notes:

1) Programs discontinued with a teach-out plan, and scheduled to be phased-out. Review programs until no program enrollments persist.
2) The THECB prescribes a ten-year cycle for graduate program reviews.
3) The Provost's Office prescribes a ten-year cycle for undergraduate program reviews. Undergraduate and graduate program review in the same CIP group should be scheduled for the same year when possible.