



**SAINT LOUIS  
UNIVERSITY.**

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**ACADEMIC PROGRAM REVIEW PROCESS**

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## Purpose for University Academic Program Review

Saint Louis University is committed to academic excellence in higher education and strives to provide high quality programs to its constituencies through periodic and ongoing evaluation of those programs. Academic program reviews ensure continuous quality improvement (i.e., enhancement of classroom and program-level practices) of all programs. Thorough, systematic review of academic programs demonstrate that they are in alignment with University mission and strategic initiatives and identifies program strengths and areas in need of improvement. The program review process should be congruent with established academic unit and university assessment efforts and should support long-term academic unit planning and strategic initiatives. Additionally, program reviews demonstrate the quality of academic programs and assessment efforts to key constituencies, including current and prospective students; current and prospective faculty and staff, the University's Board of Trustees, program- and University-level accrediting organizations, related academic units at other universities, state and federal departments of education, donors, alumni, and others.

In summary, academic program review is a process through which faculty, staff, and administrators collaborate to promote academic excellence, viability and accountability through:

- Identifying and prioritizing specific recommendations/actions needed for program improvement
- Identifying opportunities and rationales for program growth
- Identifying interdisciplinary collaborative opportunities
- Assessment of program strengths and opportunities in the context of program-defined, discipline or professional standards of quality, as well as alignment with goals and outcomes as defined by the respective academic unit and the University

The outcomes of program reviews should greatly inform strategic planning at the program, academic unit, and University levels.

## Academic Programs for Review

The unit of direct review in all Saint Louis University (SLU) academic program reviews will be the academic program; indirectly, critical elements of the administrative unit in which a program is housed (typically the department) will be reviewed, as well. All undergraduate- and post-baccalaureate-level academic programs at SLU are subject to the same program review requirement and process, regardless of campus or location at which the programs are offered, and regardless of the "delivery method" (campus-based, online, cohort model, etc.) including:

- Bachelor's, master's and doctoral degree programs
- Concentrations, certificates, and majors within degree programs
- Interdisciplinary majors and minors
- All co-curricular activities associated with an educational or degree program

For academic programs with disciplinary/specialized accreditation, the University will apply any reports, data, and disciplinary standards from the accreditation process toward the requirements of this process, as appropriate. When accreditation reviews overlap completely with APR requirements, the disciplinary/specialized accreditation report will fulfill the APR expectations for the university, following the accreditation review cycle. Only if gaps exist, will a supplemental APR report addressing these gaps be required in concert with the accreditation report to fulfill the APR expectations for the university.

The Program Review Council, in partnership with Provost's office staff overseeing accreditation university wide, will conduct a comparison of program accreditation criteria to the SLU Academic Program Review (APR) requirements for consistency, and make a recommendation to the committee co-chairs regarding what any supplemental report, if necessary, must contain.

### **Administration of Academic Program Review Process**

The Office of the Provost supports and insures a consistent and effective academic program review process that is faculty driven. The program review process ensures that all programs engage in reviews that incorporate, but do not duplicate, recent and concurrent assessment efforts. The process also respects disciplinary and programmatic distinctions throughout a relatively standardized process to ensure procedural equity.

Programs should involve faculty and students in the review process, particularly during the data gathering and self-study stage. As appropriate, the Program Review Council (PRC) may make use of the expertise of standing committees such as undergraduate and graduate curriculum committees, assessment committees, teaching and research committees as well as department chairs and program directors.

The Associate Provost for Graduate Education (APGE) is responsible for convening the academic program review process according to a pre-established timetable. Academic program review processes occur within a one-year timeframe and may be initiated in either the fall or the spring semester. The APGE will coordinate the program review process, the initial developmental workshop, coordinate and distribute materials to the PRC, and prepare materials for the Action Plan meeting.

The Program Review protocol consists of the following components:

- **Academic Program Review Workshop**

Twice a year, at the beginning of the fall and spring semesters, the Office of the Provost hosts an introductory workshop on the program review process and self-study guidelines for all chairs/directors of programs undergoing academic program review. Additional stakeholders may be invited.

- **Program Self-Study**

The self-study will be a constituent-conducted (faculty self-study team), data-informed analysis guided by an agreed-upon set of questions, disciplinary standards, and evaluation methods. See

Appendix A Self-study Topical Outline for the questions covered in the self-study and the data to be included. The self-study is designed to result in recommendations for improvement in program quality and viability. The evaluation is led by the chair/director and conducted in relation to program/academic unit defined educational and operational outcomes, as well as academic unit expectations for program quality. The program faculty self-study team includes the department chair/director or their designee and one or more faculty members of the department. The team is selected or elected according to the established governance process of the department or program. The APGE will notify the library liaisons of which programs are undergoing program review in a given academic year. The unit's library liaison will be responsible for the response to section 14.d., which will be developed in consultation with the program.

When the program self-study is complete, it will be submitted to the Dean for review prior to distribution to external reviewers and to the APGE.

#### ▪ **External Academic Program Review and Site Visit**

An on-site review will be conducted by a team of expert faculty colleagues (typically 2 members) external to the University incorporating multiple perspectives from key campus stakeholders into the program review. The external reviewers can identify and contextualize national and international environmental trends and future directions for the discipline (see Appendix B for Guiding Questions for External Reviewers). The external reviewers will prepare a summary report, to be submitted within 30 calendar days of the visit, addressing program strengths and areas for improvement derived from the site visit.

The department/program under review will nominate a minimum of five external consultants from peer or aspirational programs, based on discipline and faculty qualifications. The program should submit a summary of each external reviewer's qualifications, disclosures of any prior relationships, and rationale to the dean for review for final selection, in consultation with the APGE or APUE in the Office of Academic Affairs. The program will work in collaboration with the Office of the Dean to coordinate the on-site external reviewer visit. External reviewers should receive the program self-study document at least two weeks prior to their on-site visit and should submit their completed report to the chair/director within 30 days of the visit. Upon receipt, the chair/director should forward this report to the dean and APGE.

#### ▪ **Review Processes After Receiving the External Reviewers' Report**

Once the academic program director/chair and program faculty have reviewed the external reviewers' report, the chair/director forwards any department or chair/director responses and recommendations to the dean.

Once the dean has received and reviewed the department/chair/director response along with the other APR materials, they will meet with the chair/director to discuss the self-study, external reviewer report, and the dean's comments.

The dean then submits any department and/or chair responses and recommendations and the dean's conclusions to the co-chairs of the PRC, the APGE and APUE. In addition, the dean should share their final conclusions with the chair/director. This material should be submitted to the co-chairs of the PRC by April 1 for program reviews initiated in the fall semester and November 1 for program reviews initiated in the spring semester.

The Program Review Council (PRC), which reports to the provost, has the responsibility of reviewing all internal and external materials pertinent to the program review and making recommendations to the provost. The PRC is made up of the APGE and APUE as co-chairs of the committee, the University Assessment Director, and nine faculty members. These faculty are recommended by the Faculty Senate and appointed by the provost to serve staggered three-year terms with the option for re-appointment. Each program will be reviewed by a minimum of three faculty members from this nine-member pool. The provost, in consultation with the academic unit leadership, makes all final decisions regarding recommendations and subsequent actions. Additional faculty members, chairs/directors, and members of university leadership with a specific expertise or experience may be asked to assist with the review process for a specific unit.

PRC reviews will include the internal self-study, external reviewers' summary report, a holistic assessment rubric submitted by the University Director of Assessment, and feedback received from program faculty, directors/chairs, and deans. Based on the information provided, the PRC will prepare an overall academic program review summary report. This summary report will be sent to the APGE to distribute to the dean and program chair/director.

#### ▪ **Action Plan Implementation**

The provost will meet with the respective dean, chair/director, and APGE and APUE to discuss the content of the internal self-study and documents from all review groups. Their collective focus will be developing consensus on action plans, prioritizing chosen actions, and establishing a schedule for reviewing progress toward their accomplishment. After that meeting, the provost will provide a memo summarizing the conclusions from the APR and outlining action plans and the timeline for implementation by the chair/director and respective dean.

Formal review of program accomplishments will be through the submission of a three-year follow-up report to the dean and provost or at any point in the interim as determined by the provost.

The academic program review reports are considered confidential and are not to be distributed in paper or electronically outside of the academic program or current or potential interdisciplinary partners, Dean's Office, and the Office of Academic Affairs.

## Review Cycle

All academic programs shall undergo formal academic program review on a typical **7-year cycle**.  
*Additionally:*

- The initial formal review of new programs will occur in the third year of operation, and every seven years thereafter.
- “Related” undergraduate- and post-baccalaureate-level programs – for example, an undergraduate major and minor in English, an M.A., in English, and a Ph.D. in English – are to undergo review simultaneously unless circumstances dictate otherwise. Review may also include clusters of major concentrations or academic programs across academic units when interdisciplinary in nature.
- Programs on the Madrid campus will be included as part of an integrated review.

The Office of Academic Affairs will work with each college or school to develop and publish a rolling, academic program review schedule.

## Academic Program Review Oversight

Although most elements of the academic program review process are to be faculty-and program driven, there is a real need to dedicate administrative, fiscal, and human resources to support the reviews. Accordingly, the Office of Academic Affairs has the responsibility for supporting the academic program review process and will therefore:

- Fund external reviewers’ honoraria and travel expenses. Programs should notify the APGE when the external reviewers have submitted their final report, so compensation can be processed.
- Oversee and coordinate the APR process (including establishing the schedule of academic program reviews, communicating with departments/programs about the review, providing the orientation to the process, maintaining files/records of self-studies and related program review reports, etc.).
- Ensure that the Office of the Provost (including the APGE, APUE, Associate Provost of Administration), Office of Institutional Research, Office of Enrollment Management, and University Assessment Director provide all necessary data and guidance to support programs undergoing review.

## Appendix A Self-Study Topical Outline

The following list provides the arrangement of data and prompts that will guide you in the preparation of your self-study. Please be aware that these prompts are arranged in such a way to compel a formative self-assessment. Please also be aware that these prompts were developed in a manner that will provide insight into all your programs at both the graduate and undergraduate levels. Given this circumstance you may find that some of the questions do not apply very well to your own program undergoing the review process. In these instances, we ask you to simply skip over the non-relevant materials and/or questions.

In the preparation of your self-study, the prompts are arranged into three broad categories, which are more fully explained in the Table of Contents below:

- I. This is our program
- II. This is who we are
- III. This is what we think of our program

Responses to the first two categories could be written by a smaller subset of faculty. Responses to the third category of questions (a SWOT analysis) should be compiled after an orderly faculty retreat or workshop in which there is full participation by the entire faculty and the responses to the prompts are reflective of all faculty attitudes as uncovered by the workshop process. To facilitate this process, we recommend that the first two sections be completed and that responses to these sections are distributed to all faculty at least one week prior to the retreat.

### Table of Contents

#### I. Introductory Material

1. Cover Page: Use the standard SLU logo on your cover page available at the following website: <https://www.slu.edu/marcom/tools-downloads/logos.php>
2. Table of Contents
3. Executive Summary
  - a. Identify the program(s) within the agreed-upon curricular scope of this APR (associated GR degrees, UG majors and minors, and GR/UG certificates)
  - b. Summary of the self-study document (one page)
  - c. List of persons who were responsible for the preparation of the document



## I. This Is Our Program

### 1. Brief History of the Department or Program (one paragraph)

Address aspects of the program's context, history or character that helps reviewers understand and interpret this self-study.

### 2. Peer and aspirant benchmark programs: Identify the programs at other institutions you have designated as benchmarks that inform your program improvement efforts.

Describe key program characteristics or measures of performance that you "benchmark" against and the results of that benchmarking work.

### 3. Program Description (*repeat for multiple programs, i.e., UG major, minor, M.A., Ph.D., etc.*)

#### a. Curricular Offerings:

- Provide a short description of the academic program(s) offered.
- Provide links to the requirements page in the Academic Catalog for each of the programs under review.
- If the program is offered on the Madrid campus, describe and explain any differences in course offerings between the two locations if they exist.
- Explain the modality/modalities of the program design (See Distance Education Definitions in the University Policy for Distance Education if relevant.)
- Describe any [high impact learning practices](#) included in the curriculum and information on student participation in these learning experiences and any analysis of the impact of these practices on student learning and/or engagement.
- Describe any steps the program has taken to address academic quality, including a description of curricular changes, if any, since the last program review and their rationale.

#### b. Enrollments: Declared majors and graduates; class sizes (and impact on program delivery and quality).

In the self-study document, provide an analysis of the data on declared majors, graduates, and class sizes included in Appendix A; Program Data, Section 1.

- What are the enrollment patterns in the program? What external and internal factors have or may impact enrollment trends in these programs?
- How has the program utilized university resources to support diversity and inclusion efforts?
- Where and how does the program contribute to programs outside the major?

- How does enrollment, class size, frequency of dual-listing, and course hours taught impact program delivery and quality?

c. Student Support:

- How are students advised/mentored in the program?
- What co-curricular or extracurricular activities does the unit provide to support and engage students?
- Describe how faculty create an inclusive learning environment.
- For distance programs:
  - What academic student support is available remotely for online/distance students?
  - How do online/distance students access co-curricular or extracurricular activities?
  - How are online/distance students oriented to the program? To distance/online learning/

- d. If the program or courses from the program are offered in Madrid and St. Louis, address the nature of the relationship/collaborations between Madrid faculty and St. Louis faculty.

#### 4. Assessment and Curriculum

Please append to the self-study the following documents:

- The programs' current assessment plan, including all assessment tools (e.g., rubrics, checklists, assignment prompts).
- The assessment reports submitted for the last three years.
- Any feedback forms received from the University Assessment Committee or Assessment Director related to those reports.

Please answer the following prompts:

- If applicable, please address any facets of your program's assessment efforts that you feel need context or explanation in addition to the information shared in the plan and reports. Additionally, if any assessment reports are missing, please explain why.
- How do program faculty ensure that the curriculum is implemented in a way that supports the achievement of the program's student learning outcomes?
- How has your program's assessment of student learning informed your curriculum? Please share specific examples.
- How has your program's assessment of student learning led to improved or enhanced student learning? Please share specific examples.

## II. This Is Who We Are

### 1. Student Information

#### a. Student Success

Drawing on student success data provided in Appendix A: Program Data, Section 2, provide a brief narrative for each program addressing evidence of student success

b. Summarize Department's recruitment and retention efforts. Make a special effort to discuss any efforts that target enhancing student diversity within the program.

c. Identify any academic/professional awards or other accomplishments that current students or alumni have won in the past 7 years.

### 2. Faculty Information: Faculty Expectations, Quality, Size, Composition, and Distribution of Responsibilities. (Please append to the self-study the faculty workload document).

Faculty size, composition (Rank of Tenure Track/NTT, adjunct, grad assistant, etc.), and distribution of responsibilities.

- Discuss the program's faculty. Provide an overview and analysis of trends in the recruitment, retention, and departure/retirement of faculty over the last five years.
- Summarize notable professional honors and awards (List Faculty and Honor/Award)
- How does faculty expertise support program quality?
- How does the program interpret and define faculty diversity? How have you utilized university resources to increase diversity and inclusion efforts?

### 3. Response to the Recommendations from Previous Reviews

Summarize the recommendations from the last program review and any actions taken by the Department in response to this review.

### 4. Major Changes in the Program within the last five years and anticipated for the next five years.

Offer a narrative description of the program's assessment of changes in the discipline or field, student demand, professional requirements, and/or society need over the last five years or anticipated in the next five years that may affect your degree program(s) and how you have responded or plan to respond.

### 5. Resources Currently Available (Past Five Years). Reflect on the resources that are currently available to you and whether they are adequate for you to achieve your programmatic goals.

a. Personnel: Bulleted list of staff with brief description of duties. Bulleted list of GA lines with brief description of duties for each line. Include all faculty vitae in appendix.

- b. Facilities and major equipment (including start-up costs)
  - c. General expense budget
  - d. Adequacy and impact of library resources and services (e.g., research services, student referrals and consultations, library instruction services and course support).
  - e. Other resources
6. Plans to Modify Resources Over the Next Five Years (differentiate desired and necessary resources and include a plan for procuring funds for resources)
- a. Personnel
  - b. Facilities and equipment
  - c. Other resources, such as, clinical practice
  - d. Connection to departmental and program goals
  - e. Anticipated sources of resources

### **III. This Is What We Think of Our Program**

1. Current strengths that support the achievement of program goals  
List and describe
2. Current weaknesses that impede the achievement of program goals  
List and describe
3. Future opportunities to explore in the achievement of program goals  
Summarize any opportunities that remain unexplored in achievement of program goals.
4. Future threats to overcome in the achievement of program goals  
Summarize any areas of concern members of the faculty may have about a program.

### **IV. Self-Study Conclusion**

Offer a conclusion to the self-study (two paragraphs) that reflects on areas for potential improvement as well as key strengths to sustain.

## Self-Study Appendix A

### Program Data

Include the data outlined below in Appendix A: Program Data (\*indicates data provided by OIR; for programs also offered on the Madrid campus, data will be provided by the Madrid campus and should be reported separately in the same document):

1. Enrollments: Declared majors and graduates; class sizes (and impact on program delivery and quality)
  - Number of students in each program (include 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> majors for undergraduate majors) [5 years]\*
  - Gender, racial, and ethnic diversity of the student profile in undergraduate majors and graduate programs [5 years]\*
  - Average class size for undergraduate classes and graduate classes [5 years]\*
  - For graduate programs: number of graduate-only courses offered each year; number of dual-listed graduate courses offered each year [5 years]
  - Course hours taught for majors and non-majors\*
  
2. Student Success (relevant to section II.1)
  - Retention and graduation rates for undergraduate majors and graduate programs (not minors)\* (for last five years)
  - DFW rates should be reported for each course [5 years]
  - Time-to-degree, number of students on extensions, length of time, etc.
  - Post-graduate success (employment, graduate school enrollment, year of service, military etc.). This can be a bulleted list or a narrative summary.
  
3. Faculty size, composition (Rank of Tenure Track/NTT, adjunct, grad assistant, etc.), and distribution of responsibilities
  - Number of faculty in each category at each rank.
  - Student to faculty ratio\*
  - Number of theses and/or dissertations directed per graduate faculty member
  - Number of mentees/advisees per undergraduate faculty member
  - Average number of mentees/advisees per graduate faculty member

## **Appendix B**

### **Guiding Questions for On-Site External Reviewer**

#### **I. Programs and Curricula**

1. Does the program have a well-defined mission and an appropriate corresponding statement of goals?
2. Do the mission and goals shape and give direction to the program?
3. Are the curricular offerings adequate to justify the number of options within the programs in the department?
4. Are the program requirements appropriate?
5. Is there evidence of periodic curricular review, introduction of new courses, course syllabi?
6. Does the program have appropriate Student Learning Outcomes, assess these regularly, and use the results to make improvements?
7. Is there evidence that the courses of the program serve other departments and schools of the university?
8. Is there other evidence of interdepartmental cooperation?
9. Are the program's plans and/or goals appropriate given the external and internal environment?
10. Highlight the strengths and areas of improvement for each program undergoing review within the department.

#### **II. Faculty**

1. What is the morale of the faculty?
2. Is there evidence of faculty productivity, of standing nationally, of initiative in seeking support for research opportunities and/or undertaking service to the community?
3. Is the program's experience in recruiting and retaining faculty appropriate or successful? Is the faculty workload attractive? Are teaching/research resources suitable?
4. Is there effective leadership in the program?

#### **III. Students**

1. Is the program successful in the advising and counseling of students?
2. Does the program appropriately monitor the progress of students and assist students in job placement?
3. Is there evidence of student success in and satisfaction with the program?

#### **IV. Physical Facilities and Other Resources (library, institutional and research support)**

1. Are the computer facilities appropriate and adequate to faculty and student course usage and research?
2. Is the level of institutional support and research support adequate for programs in the Department?

**V. Areas of Excellence**

1. Are there areas of particular excellence or innovative program development?
2. To what extent have core library services (i.e., research services; student referrals and consultations; library instruction services; and course support) contributed to or been perceived to have contributed to the success of the program?

**VI. Areas of Concern**

1. Are there areas of concern?
2. What recommendations are appropriate for the program at this time?