



Implementing Systematic Program Review | January 2018

Purpose

Program review is an essential process to engage faculty in a systematic evaluation process regarding Syracuse University's academic offerings. Program review contributes to the improvement of the University's academic programs and informs our planning of degree offerings based on principles of shared governance. Program review informs departmental, school/college, and University discussions, decisions, and recommendations. By giving increased attention to our existing academic offerings, faculty can teach the topics they love in the context of academic programs that are best structured to meet the learning goals of our students.

External groups have weighed in on the importance of program review. In a 2015 report, the Educational Advisory Board commented, "... the proliferation of courses, specializations, and programs spreads resources more thinly across a broader array of activities, reducing quality. . . while at the same time producing a level of complexity that creates barriers to student success." The University's regional accreditor, the Middle States Commission on Higher Education, comments that, "program review [is] used to change and improve educational programs, consistent with institutional values, purpose, and goals." Middle States expects the University to review every academic program on a four-year cycle, to use our feedback from program assessment to improve existing programs, and to merge or sunset programs that have reached the natural juncture for such changes.

The purpose of program review is to craft and maintain a set of high-quality academic programs that support our educational objectives for students while making effective use of our institutional resources. If we do this well, we will maintain a list of high-quality programs that are consistent with our mission, sought by students, and sustainable.

Consistent with Middle States and University expectations, academic programs are reviewed for their *quality, demand, cost-effectiveness, and centrality to mission*. Defined below, these four characteristics comprise the basis of Syracuse University's program review:

<i>Quality</i>	The quality of the program is demonstrable by the extent of student learning, student persistence, employment outcomes, or other markers appropriate to the discipline.
<i>Demand</i>	There is sufficient student demand, in the form of student enrollments and/or student majors, and sustenance or growth potential to warrant maintaining the program.
<i>Cost Effectiveness</i>	The value of the program to students and to the University warrants the resources required to maintain the program.
<i>Centrality to Mission</i>	The program is deeply connected to successful execution of our mission as a pre-eminent and inclusive student-focused research university as well as the specific mission of the school/college.

Process

Each school and college at Syracuse University reviews each academic program on a four-year cycle. Through the review process, faculty are asked to review common data sets along with other information to create an overview of a specific academic program. Syracuse University's program review process incorporates all of the following features:

- A fair and equitable, faculty-driven procedure for evaluating each program for which the school/college is responsible, using assessment outcomes, institutional data, and disciplinary norms to make recommendations;
- Collecting evidence for evaluation that address the four characteristics of quality, demand, cost-effectiveness, and centrality to mission;
- A schedule for program review that allows for each program in the school or college to be evaluated at least once every four years; for schools/colleges or programs with specialized accreditors, the specialized accreditation timelines should be factored into the program review calendar to minimize redundant work;
- A process of cross-college consultation on joint programs and other programs where modifications, mergers, or closures would affect the work of another school/college;
- An annual school-wide or college-wide review of the full portfolio of programs to act on recent recommendations and ensure fit with the mission of the school/college and the University. This review should consider program-specific assessment plans and annual assessment progress reports as one element of the evaluation process.
- Evaluation conclusions and recommended improvements identified in a review process should be included as success criteria in the next review cycle.

Steps to Undertake Systematic Program Review

1. *Appoint a Program Review Chair:* Each dean can appoint a faculty member or staff member to take responsibility for structuring the review process. This can be the same person who leads in the area of assessment or curriculum. Program review is an annual activity, so this responsibility would ideally be for a multi-year period. For school/colleges that have specialized accreditation, these processes may mesh with the existing assessment and compliance duties of a staff or faculty member who runs the specialized accreditation process. The Program Review chair will set the annual schedule for evaluation and provide the reporting deadlines for program representatives and others involved in the program review process.
2. *Appoint Program Representatives:* For each unit (e.g., an academic department) that "owns" a program or set of related programs, the dean appoints one or more faculty representatives who can gather data (see next item) about the programs under review in a given year. Depending upon local culture, this could be a faculty member, program director, a department chair, or an associate chair.
3. *Collect Data:* Data about a program should always contain the common data elements (below) plus any additional indicators the program representatives consider relevant in each of the four areas. The Office of Institutional Research and Assessment (OIRA) will provide the common data elements.
4. *Submit Program Reports to School/College Curriculum Committee:* Each school and college has at least one committee dedicated to curriculum management. This committee can obtain program reports from program representatives and evaluate them using a uniform set of judgment criteria that apply to all programs in the school or college. For each reviewed program, the committee should make an evaluative judgment and a recommendation: update the program with suggested improvements, maintain the program as is, merge the program with another related program, or close the program. The school/college committee then submits their report, along with recommendations, to the respective Dean.
5. *Provide Mechanisms for Faculty Appeal of Recommendations:* Program representatives should have an opportunity to consult with program faculty and, if necessary, appeal program recommendations by presenting additional program data to the school/college curriculum committee. Acting through the

program review chair, the dean of the school/college can apply a set of deadlines and adjudication procedures to ensure a fair and equitable final decision about the program(s) in question.

6. *Conduct Consultations and Program Actions:* Substantive modifications to a program’s academic content, a decision to merge, or a decision to close should be undertaken in consultation with other schools/colleges that may be affected by program changes. Most program and course changes require the approval of the Senate Committee on Curricula, and some program changes also involve communications with the New York State Department of Education and our regional accreditor, the Middle States Commission on Higher Education. The Office of the Provost and Vice Chancellor can provide guidance and support on all of these administrative steps.

The Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Assessment can provide assistance with the program review process.

Evidence for Program Evaluation

Evidence evaluated for program review is comprised of a core data set common across all program reviews, plus any additional data the school/college may deem appropriate for individual programs. A concise narrative should accompany the presentation of the data. Data elements should be referenced in the report’s appendices. Reports should be in the range of five pages. The table below lists the core data set, followed by examples of additional data schools and colleges may find valuable when examining individual programs. Additional data should be chosen with the aim of providing multiple types of evidence to provide a holistic view of the program.

Within broad disciplinary areas (such as STEM), it is valuable to use consistent criteria for programs in each area. Academic program leaders should not pick and choose what evidence to present, rather, the school/college curriculum committee should provide guidance and set expectations as to what evidence should be included in each program’s report.

Data Elements Common to Undergraduate, Masters and CAS Program Reviews

Quality	Centrality to mission	Demand	Cost-effectiveness
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student learning outcomes assessment results • Retention and graduation rates • Certification or licensing exam pass rates (if applicable) • Post-graduate outcomes (employment, graduate school) • External Rankings 	<p>Demonstration of tie to mission and strategic plan at institution and school/college levels</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Five-year trend of student majors • Five-year trend of degrees awarded • Five-year trend of applications to program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total cost of salary and benefits for faculty and staff supporting program • Faculty FTE per semester credit hour of instruction • Instructional cost per semester credit hours of instruction • Class size

Optional additional data elements list appears on the following page. Doctoral data elements appear on the page 5.

Optional Additional Data Elements for Undergraduate, Masters and CAS Program Reviews

Quality	Centrality to mission	Demand	Cost-effectiveness
Student engagement in curricular and co-curricular activities (e.g., internships, study abroad, service learning)	Donor attention and support with scholarships, named chairs, etc.	Enrollment is high relative to programs at peer schools	Faculty development expenses
Incoming student profiles: previous grades, rank in class, SAT/GRE scores, TOEFL scores (international students), advanced placement scores	Alumni and/or advisory board member rankings of program importance	Coursework includes graduation requirements for other programs	Travel costs associated with the program
Special honors, awards for the program or its constituent faculty	Faculty rankings of program importance	Program attracts and retains diverse student population	Capital equipment costs and maintenance costs
Proportion of students admitted to graduate schools	Mentions/Highlights in S/C strategic plan	Program is interdependent on or serves other programs at the University	Office supplies
Curriculum is regularly assessed, revised, and improved; results of previous evaluations	Faculty/student engagement activities (e.g., after-hours discussion)	Future outlooks, job trends for graduates in the program are clear	Laboratories
Measures of graduates' satisfaction	Visibility conferred by external rankings	There is a national demand for the program	Office space
Clearly stated and publicized program student learning outcomes	Program history; original motivation for opening the program	Ratio of IUT-In/IUT-Out	Total space costs
Technology is up-to-date and used to enhance student learning, reinforce computer skills and computer literacy	Operating context of program (e.g., requirements of the field or profession)	Additional evidence of external demand such as uniqueness/ centrality	Other costs
Curriculum is organized to facilitate learning, is free from academic gaps and repetitions; there is coherence between lessons, courses, subject areas	Reuse of teaching techniques, technology, or course content elsewhere in the University	Word of mouth referrals; Social Media Mentions; Press Mentions	Graduate Student financial aid rate
Internships, research opportunities, teaching associates	Proportion of instruction provided by full-time faculty	Employer, client, patron testimonials about graduates	Endowment per Student
Program accreditation, certification, or other professional recognition	Research projects related to program		Tech/Facility cost per student
External rankings			Cross subsidies

Data Elements Common to Doctoral Program Reviews

Centrally Prepared and Provided to Programs

Quality	Centrality to mission	Demand	Cost-effectiveness
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student learning outcomes assessment results • Retention and graduation rates • Reasons for attrition • Advisor loads • Doctoral Committee service • External Rankings • Aspirational Peers 	<p>Demonstration of tie to mission and strategic plan at institution and school/college levels</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Five years - ratio of part time to full time students (part time doctoral study permitted) • Total credit hours required • Year of Entry • Five years - Degree completion – degrees awarded per year • Time to Degree - Of those that were awarded degrees in July 1 2016 – June 30 2017 • Total Enrolled (by year) • Survey of Earned Doctorates (SED) • Five years - Applicants • Five years - Admits • Five years - Admit Rate • Five years - Yield • Five years - Matric Rate/ New Enrollments • Five years - GRE Profile (when program requires) (range, mean, std) • Five years - Ugrad GPA/ International GPA (when we have it) – how is GPA weighed in admission decision • Five years - Graduate GPA – if student has prior graduate degree • Five years - TOEFL (range, mean, std) • Five years - Gender • Five years - Ethnicity • Five years - Nationality (by the 8 global regions) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total cost of salary and benefits for faculty and staff supporting program • Faculty FTE per semester credit hour of instruction • Instructional cost per semester credit hours of instruction • Funding Status <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ TAships – static measure? – how many slots you have for students in the program ○ GAships ○ Externally sponsored funding ○ Unfunded ○ Scholarship (no stipend money attached) ○ Hourly funding – do you use hourly funding – please describe

Department/Program Data Additions (compiled by the Department/Program)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scholarly Production <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of publications annually appropriate to discipline • Abstracts • Conference proceedings • Peer refereed Journal • Total publications at graduation • Conference presentation (local, regional, national, international) 	<p>Placement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Percent/number going into academia (post-secondary, faculty position, tenure track, college, 4-year university) • Percent/number going into industry • Percent/number going into government • Percent/number going to post doc • Percent/number other
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exams <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Qualifying first exam pass rates • Timing of qualifying exams • Qualifying exam procedures and protocol • ABD status criteria 	<p>Annual review of doctoral students</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review process • Results summary
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faculty <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of faculty eligible to supervise • Number of doctoral students per eligible faculty member • Average number of students supervised as primary supervisor • Average number of committees served 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • External Rankings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retention <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reasons for leaving 	