



Office of Institutional Effectiveness

# ACADEMIC PROGRAM REVIEW HANDBOOK

University of South Alabama

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Approval from Chair, Dean, and/or Provost/Sr. VPAA	

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# Introduction to the Handbook

This handbook was designed to be both a method of setting expectations for academic program review (APR) as well as a collection

# Academic Program Review Guidelines

## Introduction

Academic program review (APR) is an opportunity for faculty and staff of programs, without discipline-specific accreditation or approval, to have a clear picture of how their students are doing and what might improve their success. APR is a reflective study that outlines steps that can be taken to bolster a positive knowledge of existing strengths to support those steps.

### Additionally, APR:

- x Assesses student satisfaction
- x Provides a broad view of your program through the eyes of
  - x Students
  - x Faculty
  - x Staff
  - x Administrators
  - x Alumni
- x Allows for the establishment of long-term and short-term program goals
- x Contributes to planning at department and university levels
- x Supports completion of annual assessment reports

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These 5 C's will be reviewed as they relate to student achievement in your APR self-study.

- x **CHANGES** what changes can be made to positively impact student learning, achievement, and performance?
- x **CHAMPIONS**



## APR Self Study

### A. Suggestions for Organizing the Process

1. Appoint a committee of 3+ faculty (junior and senior level) from the unit under review. Also include students, advisers, alumni, and recruiters in periodic meetings. This should be at least a group of 5.
2. Create a detailed timeline for completing the self-study with responsibilities assigned. The timeline should include continued meeting times as this calls for feedback from faculty, students, advisers, and alumni.
3. Worksheets are provided to assist with reflection as you meet routinely. These worksheets are not submitted with the self-study. Review and study topic areas in order (students, faculty, curriculum, learning) but take all worksheets to meetings since all areas are associated with student achievement.
4. Recommended length of the narrative is 10 to 15 pages, excluding supporting tables and other relevant documentation.
5. If you have an assessment committee, they can coordinate the self-study if approved by the department head.

### B. Data for Self-study provided by OIE & IR

- x **Table 1:** Student Headcount Enrollment\*
- x **Table 2:** Student Credit Hours
- x **Table 3:** Number and Percent of Student Credit Hours Taught by Full-Time Faculty
- x **Table 4:** High Impact Practices – template provided but completed by program faculty
- x **Table 5:** Three-year Program-Level Aggregation of Student Mastery of Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) for the Last Three Years\*\*
  - x This report will be utilized by faculty to complete the SLO Rubric (Appendix C)
- x **Table 6:** Cumulative Course Success Rates
- x **Table 7:** Last Known Major Retention and Graduation Rates (Undergraduate & Graduate)
- x **Table 8:** Program Level Aggregation of Post-Graduation Outcomes Assessment for the Last Three Years. The program faculty prepares this information. This may include exit surveys, alumni surveys, employment rates, graduate school acceptance rates, etc.
- x **Table 9:** Annual Average New Enrollment Headcount
- x **Table 10:** Annual Average Number of Graduates (Degree Completion)
- x Student Perceptions of Instruction for the program in comparison to College and University
- x Report of findings from focus groups (if requested)

\*Enrollment data is reviewed over a five-year period

\*\*Annual assessment reports should be sufficient to identify three-year trend data

## External Review

- x While a site visit is optional, an external review is required for a complete APR.
- x The dean and department chair should meet to determine whether the external reviewer will conduct a site visit. At this meeting, expectations should be clarified for qualifications of the reviewer, for coordination of self-study, and for a site visit (if applicable).
  - x Minimum qualifications for the external reviewer:
    - x Certified reviewer from a professional association or a distinguished colleague in the discipline
    - x Must not have a conflict of interest (e.g., current/former USA faculty, family member, or business partner with any current departmental faculty, etc.).
- x

# Self-Study Template

## Outline for Self -Study

Below is the outline for your self-study that can be utilized to structure your writing. Each of these sections will be described in detail throughout this document.

1. **Program Overview** (no more than 2 pages)
- 2.



## Expected Content by Section

- ... changes in the student enrollment & progression section).

**CHANGES** For this section, think about changes that can be made that would have a positive impact on student learning, achievement, and/or performance. They can be changes that will take an extended period of time to implement or changes that could go into effect immediately.

- x Student Enrollment & Progression: what resources could we dedicate to specific efforts to improve student enrollment and progression?
- x Faculty: is there a change we can make to help faculty further foster student achievement?
- x Curriculum & Instruction: are there changes that can be made to curriculum or instruction that would improve student achievement in our program?
- x Student Learning & Assessment: what are some ways that we can improve the way we capture student performance and assessments?

**CHAMPIONS** For this section, discuss ideas that you can champion as they are already implemented in your program to positively impact student success. Provide information about the ideas themselves and any improvements you have noticed since they have been implemented.

- x Student Enrollment & Progression: what are the drivers of student enrollment and progression that we have implemented over the past several academic years?
- x Faculty: what efforts have we made in the past to increase the positive impact that faculty have on student achievement?
- x Curriculum & Instruction: what advances have we made in the past several academic years that have improved curriculum and instruction in our program?
- x Student Learning & Assessment: what efforts have we made to improve student learning and assessment in our program over the past several academic years?

**CHALLENGES** For this section, discuss challenges that you perceive as a barrier to the implementation of changes. These challenges should be **internal** to the program, department, or college and should be something you can exercise some control over.

- x Student Enrollment & Progression: are there any factors related to our program and/or its surrounding department/college that have presented complications related to student enrollment and progression?
- x Faculty: what challenges exist in terms of equipping faculty with the tools/knowledge to foster student achievement?
- x Curriculum & Instruction: what challenges have been identified within our program, department, or college that hinder the improvement of curriculum and instruction?
- x Student Learning & Assessment: what are some factors that hinder our ability to

**CONCERNS** For this section, discuss concerns that you perceive as a barrier to the implementation of changes. These concerns should be **external** to the program, department, or college and should be something that you have little to no control over.

List of Required Data/Evidence as Appendices for APR

## Data and Utilization by Section

### Student Enrollment and Progression

- x Compared to your listed peer institutions, discuss whether student enrollment and credit hours production are adequate to support the program and create an environment of continued success for students. If comparison data is unavailable, make that statement.
  - x Table 1: Student Credit Hours
  - x Table 2: Student Headcount Enrollment
  - x Table 7: Last Known Major Retention & Graduation Rates by program, college, and university
- x Describe results received from surveys and/or focus groups that are associated with student satisfaction with their learning experiences
  - x Quantitative and qualitative results of any student surveys including two of the following: exit surveys, graduating students.

### Faculty

- x Table 1: Student Credit Hours
- x Discuss the quality of instruction to include student perceptions of instruction and any other evidence of the quality of teaching. It is important that you discuss how feedback from course evaluations is used.
  - x Student Perceptions of Instruction for Program compared to College and University
  - x Quantitative and qualitative results of any surveys/focus groups if the information provided feedback relative to faculty.
- x If you have been asked to address insufficient full-time faculty ratios in the last three years, include your response here.
  - x Table 3: Number and Percent of Student Credit Hours Taught by Full-Time Faculty

### Curriculum & Instruction

- x Compared to peer institutions, evaluate and discuss the currency of the curriculum including inclusion or exclusion of program requirements.
  - x Curriculum plan
  - x Curriculum map (Instructions found in Nuventive).
  - x Table 4: Participation in high impact practices
- x Table 6: Cumulative course Success Rates
- x Quantitative and qualitative results of any surveys/focus groups (distributed by OIE/collected by the program) if the information provided feedback relative to the curriculum or instruction.

### Student Learning and Assessment

- x Consider and discuss the quality of assessment of program-level student learning outcomes.
  - x Table 5: Three-year, four-column assessment report created by OIE.
  - x Learning Outcomes Rubric found in Nuventive to be completed by faculty.
- x Quantitative and qualitative results of any surveys/focus groups if the information provided feedback relative to student learning and assessment.

## Conclusion: Call to Action

After reviewing the narrative you have written so far, you should be able to identify actions that will have a positive impact on student achievement and the assessment of it. These actions can, and should, be developed and implemented by the self-study committee and program faculty. These actions should be developed and implemented by the self-study committee and program faculty.

For this portion of your self-study, you must discuss **four** Calls to Action:

- x Two short-term calls that are
  - x More readily implemented
  - x Related to student performance, achievement, and/or learning
  - x Going to be incorporated in your annual assessment planning/reporting
- x Two long-term calls that are
  - x Implemented after long-term planning
  - x Related to student performance, achievement, and/or learning
  - x Followed-up on in your next APR self-study

For each of your calls to action, be sure to include detailed information about the steps you will be taking as well as a way to determine whether the implementation of your calls to action was successful. In other words, establish a threshold to reach for so that you are able to report data-based evidence of your success in your annual assessment report.

## Requirement of wide -spread program level participation

During this review of information and practices, it is imperative that the program faculty and staff consider perceptions from faculty, administrators (advisers, recruiters, support staff), students, alumni, and employers. Meeting regularly among faculty and staff, throughout the study, is critical to this process. Collecting information can be in the form of surveys or focus groups. Information from both students and employers is recommended but current student input is essential.

Approval from Chair, Dean, and/or Provost/Sr. VPAA that self-study is ready for external review

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## Final Steps

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These worksheets are designed for note taking as you meet to discuss each section (students, faculty, curriculum, and assessment) and the possible changes, champions, challenges, concerns, and call to action. Since a call to action is only requested as conclusion, notes for each section will help with that narrative. **These notes are not handed in but are intended to help you take notes and collect your thoughts during the recommended frequent meetings with faculty, staff, advisers, and students.**





## Challenges

The challenges that you identify should reflect issues that are internal to the program, department, or college that you perceive as a barrier to student enrollment and achievement and/or to implementing changes. Challenges are those things about which you could exercise some control or fix. **The following examples help to prompt thinking, but challenges are to be identified by your faculty, advisers, and stakeholders:** recruitment processes capturing entering students into the program, scholarship funding, issues identified from student input, competing internal programs/courses, resources, institutional policies and procedures, student affairs related/personal needs (housing, food, counseling), advising, and retention after pandemic.

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## Concerns

The concerns you identify should focus external issues that may be beyond your control and are likely implementing changes. Concerns are things about which you have no or little control and are likely unable to fix. The following examples help to prompt thinking: changes in high school graduation rates, preparedness of new students, changes in the field of study and job skills required, labor market need, external competition, availability of realistic training experiences in the community (internships, etc), and any other community/regional/national concerns.

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Calls to Action (used for your conclusion)

## Faculty

### Changes

Discuss what changes can be made relative to faculty that may positively impact student learning, achievement, and student performance. Consider this to be an idea-generating section to identify aspirational changes (over next seven years) and realistic changes (rapidly implemented). Examples include improvements and can include faculty development, additional faculty, additional non-instructional high-impact practices, increased use of feedback from course evaluations, and increased training on use of technology. These should be specific changes identified by faculty; rather than list the need for increased training on technology, state the specific technology training needed as indicated by faculty. If faculty development is needed, list specific type. If additional faculty are needed, list the specific area. **Reserve changes related to curriculum/instruction and assessment/student learning for the next section.**



## Calls to Action (used for your conclusion)

From the information gathered, what are steps for your faculty to take to have a positive impact on student achievement? It is recommended that both long-term and short-term actions be considered.

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# Curriculum and Instruction

## Changes

Discuss what changes can be made relative to the curriculum/instruction that are designed to positively



## **Calls to Action (used for your conclusion)**

From the information gathered, what could be steps relative to your curriculum and instruction to have a positive impact on student achievement? It is recommended that both long-term and short-



# Assessment and Learning

## Changes

Discuss what changes can be made relative to student learning and assessment that are designed to positively impact student achievement and performance. Consider this to be an idea-generating section to identify aspirational (over the next seven years) changes and realistic changes (rapidly implemented). Examples can include assuring that all faculty and your stakeholders/students are aware of your program level outcomes (buy-in throughout the department), posting program level outcomes online, increasing student awareness of expectations, developing new assessment measures that may better capture weaknesses in learning outcomes, and focusing instruction on intended outcomes with weakest performance. New or additional learning outcomes may be indicated based on evidence collected regarding what your students are, or are not, learning well.

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## Appendix B: Suggested Response from Reviewer (Provided to Reviewer)

### Academic Program Review Student Achievement

This outline is provided as a guide to you as a reviewer but is not considered a template. For instance, you may have found opportunities for improvement that were not addressed in this study through your interviews and contacts across campus. Additionally, you may wish to organize your response differently and integrate all areas of enrollment, faculty, curriculum, and assessment across your response.

Your response provides programmatic feedback on a reflective study, conducted with widespread participation, designed to show how students are doing and learning. The final product of the study is a call to action, including short-term student-centered learning outcomes and long-term intended outcomes, designed to impact student achievement and improve learning assessment. Your feedback may change or add to the call to action initiated in this study. In the end, program leadership will have steps to challenges is appreciated.

1. General Comments brief description and impression of the program, meetings held

4. Curriculum and Instruction

- x Review and discuss participation in high-impact practices, cumulative course success rates,

## Appendix C:

## Intended Outcome

Undeveloped 1	Developing 2	Good 3	Exemplary 4	Score with notes
A. Student-centered and Measurable				
<p>The outcome is <b>not</b> reported in terms of what students will know, be able to do, or demonstrate at the end of the degree program. It is <b>not</b> student-centered (i.e. <b>to enhance research skills</b>) and does <b>not</b> appear to be measurable (too broad and intangible).</p>	<p>The outcome <b>is</b> reported in terms of what students will know, be able to do, or demonstrate upon completion of the degree program. It is <b>not</b> student-centered (i.e. <b>to enhance research skills</b>) and does <b>not</b> appear to be measurable (too broad and intangible).</p>	<p>The outcome adequately identifies what students will know, be able to do, or demonstrate upon completion of the degree program. It <b>is</b> a student-centered statement but does <b>not</b> appear to be measurable (too broad and intangible).</p>	<p>The outcomes adequately identify what students will know, be able to do, or demonstrate upon completion of the degree program. It is a student-centered statement. The outcome appears to be measurable.</p>	





Assessment Method, Criterion for Success, Schedule

Undeveloped  
1

Developing  
2

Good  
3

Exemplary



## Presentation of Results

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Undeveloped 1	Developing 2	Good 3	Exemplary 4	Score
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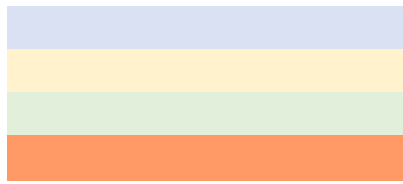


## Appendix D: Curriculum Mapping

When making decisions about their syllabi and course content, it sets the structure for degree progression, and it contributes significantly to annual assessment reporting. Curriculum mapping ensures that the courses in your program are directly contributing to the outcomes that you have set for your students to achieve through their studies. By linking courses to specific outcomes, you are setting benchmarks at which your students should be exposed to and/or applying their learning to ensure that they are progressing through the program at a rate that fosters their academic achievement.

To start, you need to compile a list of core and elective courses associated with your program as well as the key learning outcomes that you aim for your students to achieve. From there, you should be able to map, in relation to each course, whether each outcome is being introduced, reinforced, mastered, or assessed. An example of what a curriculum map can look like is provided below.

# Example Curriculum Map



Oral

Written

Course ID	Course Name	Assessment Type	Assessment Type	Assessment Type	Assessment Type
101	Course name	I		I	
102	Course name	I		I	
111	Course name	I	I	I	
112 (W)	Course name	I	I	R	
204	Course name	R	R	R	
205	Course name	R	R	R	
256	Course name	M	A	R	
332 (W)	Course name	M		A	
422	Course name	A	M	M	
302	Course name	R	R		
405	Course name	R		R	
411	Course name	M	Coursame	R	R

## Appendix E: Academic Program Review Checklist

Please utilize this checklist as a guide for submitting a complete APR self-study.

## Conclusion

At least two short-term calls to action

At least two long-term calls to action

## Appendices

Chair and program coordinator/chair curriculum vitae

Curriculum map

Degree plan

Table 1: Student Headcount Enrollment

Table 2: Student Credit Hours

Table 3: Number and Percent of Student Credit Hours Taught by Full-Time Faculty

Table 4: Participation in high-impact practices

Table 5: Program Evaluation Summary (Function) (EM 05 (no v) 6 (A) 05 5 4 (00) 1 (p) 23 (ly) 4 (D) 1 0 0 0 6 1 2 7