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Academic Program Review Guidelines
for
Academic Support Units

Updated May 2023

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Purpose of Academic Program Review

As a Jesuit Catholic university, Marquette is committed to the pursuit of excellence in service of its educational mission. To ensure that its academic programs maintain the highest standards of excellence, the University employs a program review process that is data-driven, forward-looking, and outcomes-based. The process is also designed to help academic units align themselves with the University strategic plan.

Program reviews are designed to support long-term planning efforts, focus on areas that offer the potential for innovation, distinctiveness and preeminence, and assure the most efficient and effective use of resources. The process is designed to be institutionally consistent and yet flexible enough to accommodate the culture and goals of individual units and allow the University to adapt its review process over time.

Administration of the Program Review Process

The Vice Provost for Academic Affairs, Dr. John Su (john.su@marquette.edu) manages and supports the academic program review process. **All questions regarding the process should be directed to Dr. Su.**

During the program review process, units should involve faculty and students, particularly during the self-study and the visit stages. As appropriate, an academic unit 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 Program Review Council, which is chaired by Dr. John Su, and which reports to the Provost, has the responsibility for reviewing the self-study and related materials submitted by the academic unit, meeting with the external review team, and making recommendations to the Provost. The Provost, in consultation with the Dean/Vice Provost/Academic Vice President, makes all final decisions regarding recommendations and subsequent actions.

The Council's membership includes the Vice Provost for Graduate and Professional Studies and Dean of the Graduate School, two Deans, a faculty member chosen by the Academic Senate and at least one other faculty member appointed by the Provost. The normal term for a faculty appointee is three years. Faculty members, department chairs, and members of university leadership who have a specific expertise or experience may be asked to assist with the review process for a specific unit. A representative from the Office of Finance is also included on the Program Review Council.

Academic Programs Subject to Review

An academic program is defined as a unit or group of units dedicated to achieving research, education, and/or service goals that advance the university mission. The units of analysis for academic program review are typically departments, offices, or centers but could include clusters of programs across areas.

All academic programs are required to participate in program review. The Office of the Provost publishes a calendar of program reviews, which occur within a 7-year cycle.

Academic programs to be reviewed include all units reporting up to the Provost.

STEPS OF ACADEMIC PROGRAM REVIEW

An academic program review process typically spans 3 to 4 semesters. (See [Program Review Checklist and Timeline](#) on pages 7-8).

SEMESTER ONE

- The Provost's Summit initiates the academic program review process, although work by the unit has already begun. At the Summit, the academic unit's proposed strategic issues will be discussed as well as the unit's choice of 3 to 5 peer and aspirant programs which the external reviewers will use as a point of comparison in their review. See page 9 for [Peer and Aspirant Programs](#), page 10 for [Guiding Questions for Strategic Issues](#), and page 11 for [Strategic Issues Statement and Peer/Aspirant Programs](#).
- The chair of the Program Review Council and the Provost identify the reviewers. The review will be scheduled.
- The academic unit begins its self-study. See [Self-Study Template](#) on pages 12-15.
- Data needed to support the self-study are gathered by the academic unit from several units on campus, although much of the data are available from the [Office of Institutional Research and Analysis](#). The program review checklist and timeline explain where to get the data for the self-study.

SEMESTER TWO

Self-Study. The academic unit is responsible for compiling and writing the self-study. Unit faculty and staff should participate in the process as appropriate. The main purpose of the self-study is to assess program quality and effectiveness, and to set strategic goals and priorities that can guide future planning and budget decisions. Units being reviewed should use the self-study template provided on the Provost's Web site to help the university maintain consistency across program reviews. See [Self-Study Template](#) on pages 12-15. A draft of the self-study is submitted to the Dean/Vice Provost/Academic Vice President. After review and discussion, the unit will submit the self-study to the Chair of the Program Review Council, at least 4 weeks before the external reviewers' visit.

- External Reviewers' Virtual Campus Visit. Virtual visits typically last 1 to 1½ days, during which the external reviewers meet via Microsoft Teams with faculty and staff, undergraduate and graduate students, various administrators, the director or unit leader, the Academic Program Review Council and the Provost; if helpful, reviewers may also be asked to meet with alumni or community partners.
- After receipt of the external reviewers' report, the Program Review Council meets with the unit to discuss the external review and recommendations with the unit. The Council then formulates its own set of recommendations, which it forwards to the Provost, the Dean/Vice Provost/Academic Vice President, and the academic unit.

SEMESTER THREE

- Action Plan. Based on the external review and the Academic Program Review Council's recommendations, the academic unit creates a seven-year action plan, using the [Outcomes and Action Plan Template](#) on page 16. Please note that in year 3 the unit will meet again with the Vice Provost for Academic Affairs to discuss achievements, obstacles, etc. A draft Action Plan is submitted to the Dean/Vice Provost/Academic Vice President. After review and discussion, the unit will submit the action plan to the Chair of the Program Review Council.

SEMESTER THREE OR FOUR

The academic unit, Dean/Vice Provost/Academic Vice President, Vice Provost for Academic Affairs, and the Provost meet to discuss and solidify the action plan.

This discussion could result in a range of possible outcomes, including the following:

- If the review identifies opportunities for innovation that advance university priorities, are responsive to current students and market needs, and are financially viable and sustainable, the Provost will invite the unit to submit proposals for new programs or initiatives.
- If the Provost and the unit decide that new resources are needed to improve academic quality or competitiveness the unit head will be invited to include these requests in the usual annual academic planning and budgeting processes.
- If the review finds that a specific program is no longer viable in terms of student interest; no longer has the quality, relevance, or currency it once had; no longer serves the overarching mission of the university; or cannot be sustained at a level of academic excellence that the university can financially sustain, the Provost may recommend discontinuation.

ACTION PLAN FOLLOW UP

After the action plan is solidified, the Vice Provost for Academic Affairs will schedule a follow-up meeting with the academic unit to discuss the unit's progress towards its goals, etc.

This meeting will occur in year three of the action plan.

Units may schedule other follow-up meetings with the Vice Provost for Academic Affairs if the need arises – i.e., plans change, obstacles are encountered, etc.

Program Review Checklist and Timeline

(Note: Director = Director or Unit Leader)

Strategic Issues/Provost's Summit (Semester One)

Description	Attendees	Responsible Party	Due Date
Provost's Summit is scheduled	Provost, Vice Provost/ Dean/Academic Vice President, Director	Vice Provost Office	
Meet with faculty & students to develop a set of strategic issues and to identify peer and aspirant programs	Director and Unit	Director	
Prepare strategic issues statement	Director	Director	
Submit strategic issues statement and list of peers and aspirants, both of which have been reviewed by the Dean, to Office of the Provost	Director	Director	2 weeks prior to Summit
Submit the names of potential external reviewers to Office of the Provost	Director	Director	2 weeks prior to Summit
Provost Summit held	Provost, Vice Provost/ Dean/Academic Vice President, Director	Vice Provost Office	Semester preceding review
Date is determined for on-site Review		Vice Provost Office	As early in the process as possible
Start self-study		Unit	
Contact the Director of Institutional Research and Analysis for access to OIRA data related to the self-study		Unit	
Contact the Director of Assessment for access to Appendix IV, Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes		Unit	
Contact the Director of the Office of Financial Planning and Analysis for access to Appendix XI, Financial Data		Unit	

Self-Study/External Review (Semester Two)

Description	Attendees	Responsible Party	Due Date
Draft of self-study submitted to Dean/ Vice Provost/Academic Vice President		Director	4 weeks prior to visit
Schedule of visit is finalized		Vice Provost office and Director	4 weeks prior to visit

Office of the Provost and Dean/Vice Provost/Academic Vice President provide feedback on self-study		Vice Provost	3 weeks prior to visit
Self-study completed and submitted to Vice Provost		Director	2 weeks prior to visit
Self-study is distributed to Program Review Council (PRC) and external review team		Vice Provost Office	2 weeks prior to visit
External review team visit virtually via Teams		Vice Provost Office and Unit	
External review team submits recommendations to Office of the Provost		Review Team	2 weeks after visit
Report of review is shared with the Unit		Vice Provost	
Unit meets with the Program Review Council to review recommendations	Program Review Council, Director	Vice Provost Office	
Program Review Council makes recommendations to the Provost and recommendations sent to the Vice Provost/Dean/Academic Vice President and Unit		Vice Provost	

Outcomes/Action Plan (Semester Three/Four)

Description	Attendees	Responsible Party	Due Date
Unit meets to discuss and review the recommendations; establish goals for the Action Plan	Director and Unit	Director	
Unit develops an Action Plan and submits to the Dean	Director and Unit	Director	
Unit submits Action Plan to Office of the Provost	Director and Unit	Director	2 weeks prior to Action Plan Meeting
Action Plan meeting with Office of the Provost	Provost, Vice Provost/Dean/Academic Vice President, Director	Vice Provost Office	

Post Review Follow-Up

Description	Attendees	Responsible Party	Due Date
Meet three years after action plan to discuss progress of Action Plan	Provost, Vice Provost/Dean/Academic Vice President, Director	Vice Provost Office	

Peer and Aspirant Programs

Through the Strategic Planning process, the university has identified 22 peer and aspirant institutions. In identifying the 3-5 peer and aspirant programs which the unit wishes the external reviewers to consider while reviewing the unit, academic units are requested to consider the list below. However, most important is that the unit chooses peer and aspirant programs in the discipline.

Boston College (MA)
Case Western Reserve University (OH)
Creighton University (NE)
Emory University (GA)
Fordham University (NY)
Georgetown University (DC)
Gonzaga University (WA)
Lehigh University (PA)
Loyola Marymount University (CA)
Loyola University Chicago (IL)
Saint Louis University (MO)
Santa Clara University (CA)

Southern Methodist University (TX)
Texas Christian University (TX)
Tufts University (MA)
Tulane University of Louisiana (LA)
University of Dayton (OH)
University of Denver (CO)
University of Miami (FL)
University of Rochester (NY)
University of San Diego (CA)
Villanova University (PA)
Wake Forest University (NC)

Guiding Questions for Strategic Issues

These questions are designed to help units begin a productive internal discussion and to identify strategic issues. They should also be used by the Program Review Council and the external review team for their reviews.

1. How well does the program serve our students, faculty, or other constituencies?
 - a. Is utilization of services/offerings increasing or decreasing?
 - b. How well does the program prepare students to succeed after graduation?
 - c. Does the program meet a current or emerging need for Marquette, Milwaukee, the state, or the region?
2. Is this an area of distinctiveness, growth, or innovation for the university?
 - a. How does the program advance the university mission?
 - b. How does the program advance the university strategic plan?
 - c. How does the program rank nationally, particularly in regard to its peer and aspirant programs?
 - d. What is the impact of the program on the reputation of the university?
3. Is the program well-managed, properly marketed, and adequately resourced?
 - a. Is the program properly resourced with respect to students, faculty, staff, facilities, and technology?
 - b. Has the program implemented strategies for reallocating current resources to meet changes in the environment?
 - c. Does the program have a sufficient operating budget and other sources of support to meet the needs of students, or does it have excess capacity?
4. Is this program an effective and efficient use of resources?
 - a. Is this program cost effective?
 - b. Given this, and its quality, alignment with mission and strategic plan, and student demand, should we grow it, maintain it, or reduce it in size? If we were to grow or shrink the program, what would that look like and why?
5. How does this program compare to peer/aspirant programs in the nation?
 - a. What 3-5 programs in the nation should be considered our peer/aspirant programs? Why?
 - b. What things should we be doing to be more competitive with these peer/aspirant programs? What things might we discontinue?

Strategic Issues Statement and Peer/Aspirant Programs

To ensure that the program review process is focused on areas of opportunity and challenges, a small set of strategic issues, typically 3 or fewer, for the review will be established by the unit and the Provost. An initial version of this statement should be completed and submitted before the Provost's Summit. The strategic issues statement will be revised and finalized after the Summit and the unit will incorporate the issues into its self-study. Academic unit leaders are encouraged to engage faculty, administrators, and students in determining the strategic issues for the unit.

It may be helpful for the unit to provide some brief context for the presentation of its strategic issues – strengths, weaknesses, or opportunities or relevant trend data (e.g., changes in the field, external forces, resource challenges, etc.). Page 10 contains a set of guiding questions that might be used to identify these issues based on data and trends.

The strategic issues statement should be no longer than 2 pages, excluding appendices. Please include the following information as part of the Strategic Issues Statement:

- Unit of Analysis
- Dean/Vice Provost/Academic Vice President and Director/Unit Leader
- Semester of Review
- Date Submitted

- Strategic Issue 1
- Strategic Issue 2
- Strategic Issue 3

Also, to be submitted at this time is the unit's choice of 3-5 peer/aspirant programs (with a brief explanation of choices) which the reviewers will use to benchmark the MU unit (1 page).

Self-Study Template

NOTE: The self-study template references eleven appendices with various data about the unit. Please contact the Office of Institutional Research and Analysis for academic data, the Assessment Director for program assessment data, and the Director of Financial Planning and Analysis for financial data.

Instruction for the Self-Study

The self-study should not be longer than 30 pages, excluding appendices. Academic support units will include an analysis of support services of both undergraduate and graduate students, as relevant to their mission. The self-study will address the strategic issues identified at the Provost’s Summit as well as provide background and context for the academic support unit profile. The self-study will also provide the data and information needed by the reviewers to get a clear picture of the unit’s goals, priorities and achievements and alignment with the University Strategic Plan.

The self-study is due to the Office of the Provost four weeks before the scheduled visit and it will be given to the reviewers two weeks before their arrival on campus. Please indicate the members of the unit’s program review team on the first page under “Submitted by.” The self-study should include a table of contents, with page numbers. Questions can be directed to the Vice Provost for Academic Affairs.

The **Title Page** should include:

Academic Support Unit
Director/Unit Leader
Submitted by (Faculty and Staff on Review Team)
Semester and Year of Review
Date Submitted

Table of Contents for the Self-Study (including page numbers), divided into the following sections:

Section 1: Results of Previous Reviews
Section 2: Strategic Issues Statement
Section 3: Unit’s Priorities and Goals and Alignment with the University Strategic Plan
Section 4: Service to Constituencies
Section 5: Outcomes and Assessment
Section 6: Instructional and Capacity
Section 7: Staff Profile
Section 8: Financial Profile

SECTION 1: Results of Previous Review (2 pages)

- a. *Provide the dates of the most recent previous review and a brief summary (at most, 2 pages) of the review, including the names and home institutions of the reviewers, the outcomes of the review and any unresolved issues from the review. If the previous review is available, the unit may include it as an optional appendix.*

SECTION 2: Strategic Issues Statement (2 pages)

- a. *Include 1-2 pages summarizing the strategic issues identified at the Provost's Summit.*

SECTION 3: Unit Priorities and Goals and Alignment with University Strategic Plan (2 pages)

- a. *Describe the unit mission, purpose, strategic priorities, and goals.*
- b. *Discuss alignment of unit goals and priorities with Marquette's mission as a Jesuit Catholic university, and the University Strategic Plans.*
- c. *Provide highlights of unit accomplishments and distinctiveness among peers and aspirational institutions over the past 5 years, e.g., unit and individual awards and recognition, areas of excellence and distinction, innovative initiatives or practices, comparison with external benchmarks, comparison with comparable units at peer and inspirational institutions.*
- d. *Discuss any current or anticipated external or internal changes that may impact the unit, referring to the Strategic Issues Statement as appropriate.*

SECTION 4: Service to Constituencies (6 pages)

Part 1. Constituency Data, Benchmarks and Standards

- a. *Identify the major internal and external constituencies of the unit, that is, the groups that the unit serves.*
- b. *Describe major current cross-functional relationships and ways in which the unit partners with other units across the University, including Advisory Boards, cross-unit initiatives, support of academic programs and learning outcomes.*
- c. *Discuss the unit's community engagement, that is, how the unit serves the local, national, and global communities.*
- d. *Describe how the unit demonstrates accessibility to diverse populations.*
- e. *Identify any service benchmarks and standards for the unit's area or field that the unit uses as a performance indicator.*
- f. *Describe any trend data used by the unit that documents constituency satisfaction compared with goals.*

Part 2. Analysis of Constituency Data

Using the data and information provided in Part 1, items a-f, provide an analysis of the unit's service to constituencies including: assessment of outcomes for constituencies served compared to unit goals, external benchmark data, or peers, connections with and support of academic unit goals, service to external constituencies, accessibility to diverse student populations, and review of any student or faculty feedback data available.

SECTION 5: Outcomes and Assessment (4 pages)

Part 1: Student Outcomes and Assessment Data

- a. *Student outcomes that are supported by the unit (e.g., learning, co-curricular, high impact learning experiences).*
- b. *Data on achievement of student outcomes.*
- c. *Unit assessment plan including operational outcomes or program outcomes.*
- d. *Utilization data for the past 5 years, if applicable.*
- e. *Description of best practices in the field and discipline.*
- f. *Demonstration of equal access and inclusiveness with respect to programs, services, and facilities.*

Part 2: Analysis of Learning Outcomes and Assessment Data

Using the data in Part 1, items a-f, provide an assessment of the unit's achievement of and support of student learning outcomes. Show how the unit uses assessment data to make improvements in the delivery of services and student outcomes. Describe any best practices or innovations employed by the unit to improve student learning outcomes. Discuss how the unit demonstrates equal access and inclusiveness.

SECTION 6: Infrastructure and Capacity (4 pages)

Part 1: Infrastructure and Capacity Data

- a. *Briefly describe the academic support unit's environment including space for personnel, technology and equipment, and special facilities for services and activities.*
- b. *Describe any capacity constraints that limit the unit's ability to serve students and faculty currently or in the future including physical space, access to technology or staff.*

Part 2: Infrastructure and Capacity Analysis

Using the information provided in Part 1, items a-b, discuss any infrastructure issues related to delivering quality services to constituencies. Include any future plans to address capacity constraints if this is an issue for the unit.

SECTION 7: Staff Profile (4 pages)

Part 1. Staff Data and Information

- a. Provide an overview of the academic support unit staff including full time and part time staff, graduate assistants, student workers, and student interns.
- b. Describe any impending retirements or anticipated changes in staff.
- c. Discuss the diversity profile of staff members and plans to achieve diversity goals.
- d. Describe the professional development opportunities for staff with respect to multicultural competency.
- e. Describe opportunities for staff development and advancement.

Part 2. Analysis of Staff

Using the information from Part 1, items a-e, describe the general level of staff contributions to achieving unit goals and priorities. Identify any concerns regarding the staff's ability to serve constituencies or to meet any future challenges (e.g., a changing student population, serving additional student groups, incorporating new technologies, etc).

SECTION 8: Financial Profile (4 pages)

Part 1. Financial Data

- a. Five-year financial profile provided by the Office of Finance.
- b. Five-year history of external sources of funding (e.g., endowments, grants, gifts, etc.).

Part 2. Analysis of Unit Financial Data

Using the data from Part 1, items a-b, provide an overview of the financial profile of the academic unit including budget history and net revenue surplus by program, if available. Do the expenditures match with University and support unit priorities and goals? Are there any contingency plans in case grants or other sources of external funding are reduced? Using data peer or aspirational universities or benchmark data for the field or discipline, how does the unit compare with other units with respect to resource utilization?

Outcomes and Action Plan Template

The action plan will be created by the unit and approved by the Dean/Vice Provost/Academic Vice President and the Provost, and the recommendations will be integrated into the annual planning process, as appropriate. Please fill out one table for each strategic issue and the relevant recommendations.

Please include the following:

Cover Page:

Academic Unit or Academic Support Unit

Dean/Vice Provost/Academic Vice President and Director/Unit Leader

Semester and Year of Review

Date Submitted

- I. Strategic Issues Statement and list of peer/aspirant programs
- II. External Review Team Recommendations
- III. Program Review Council Recommendations
- IV. Outcomes and Action Plan (a narrative may also be included)

Strategic Issue:

Recommendation	Action	Responsible	Date Completed