Academic Program Review

Academics & Research – Academics & Instruction

Academic Policy 303-40	**Authority: University President**
Effective: May 25, 2022	**Proponent: Academic Senate**

Summary: This policy prescribes requirements and standards for academic program review at Eastern Washington University.

History: This policy revises and supersedes a previous version of the policy dated May 21, 2014. It was recommended for approval by the Academic Senate on May 9, 2022, and approved by the University President on May 25, 2022.

CONTENTS

Chapter 1 - Introduction

Role of Departments and Programs, Colleges, and University

The Washington Student Achievement Council (WSAC) requires that all academic programs be reviewed on a regular basis. The primary purpose of the program review process is to foster reflection on the part of the faculty about how they can best serve our students, their discipline, and our region. The program review process should also encourage faculty to evaluate the status, effectiveness, and progress of their academic programs. In particular, the process should help faculty reflect and re-assess the purpose and direction of their academic programs as well as how it might best serve their students. Program review encourages program self- evaluation and curricular revitalization to allow each program to assess and to plan for the future. The goal of program review should be the articulation of agreed upon action plans for further development of academic programs furthering the mission of the University. The review focus should be on improvements which could be implemented using currently available resources.   However, consideration may also be given to proposed program improvements and expansions that would require additional resources. In such cases, the need and priority for additional resources should be clearly specified. A successful program review depends upon faculty willingness to engage in an intensive and comprehensive self-study and program plan using both qualitative and quantitative data. It provides an opportunity for all   department/program faculty members to share opinions and to discuss ideas. Professional discourse among colleagues about the educational needs of students, the program and society at-large is essential.

For the purposes of Academic Program Review, a program is a major, an option under a major, a master's degree, or an approved certificate program. Program review is required for all majors and approved certificate programs within a department or school. While generally the most common unit for review will be a single program, for various reasons, an entire department, including all of its programs, may be reviewed as a unit if proposed by the department chair and approved by the college Dean and Provost.

The purpose of academic program review at EWU relates to three primary functions:

   1. Accountability: Academic program review is one way to ensure to students, Board of Trustees, NWCCU, and the public that EWU is providing high quality academic programs.

   2. Program Improvement: The academic program review process provides a continuing cycle for department/program faculty, staff, and administrators to receive timely information and a forum for providing feedback, ensuring an institutional commitment to the highest academic and professional standards.

   3. Program and Resource Alignment: Academic Program Review provides the means to ensure that EWU will offer a full and comprehensive array of academic programs and that the institutional resources will be effectively aligned with the institution's mission to serve as a comprehensive, regional university.

Chapter 2 – Review Cycle

Programs should have planned review at least once every 10 years, or as outlined by an accredited program's external review process. If extensions are granted, this should not increase the time between reviews to more than 12 years.

The review calendar will be developed by the Provost. To the extent possible, the review cycle will be coordinated with other review processes including leadership reviews and/or reviews by external accrediting bodies.

The Provost's office will regularly review institutional research data and will communicate with appropriate Deans and the Faculty Organization (PRC) the review calendar for

the following academic year. The Program Review Schedule will be updated annually and posted on the University Provost's website.

Deans and Department Chairs will perform data reviews on degree programs to examine trends regarding key data at least once every three years. The data review calendar will be set and maintained by each Dean or their designee working in conjunction with program directors and chairs.

A program may request a full PRC review the following academic year through discussions with the Dean and the Provost's office based on any self-identified trend concerns or problematic trends in order to collaboratively seek solutions and to create a program success plan.

The Vice Provost (or Provost's designee) and the Program Review Committee (PRC) will provide support to departments or programs undergoing review. This may include presentations or workshops on the requirements, timelines, required statistical data, and any other element of the program review process that is needed or requested. Each program under review will be assigned a liaison from the PRC to assist the program with its process.

Self-Study

All reviews must include a self-study that describes and evaluates how well the unit fulfills its strategic or operational mission and contributes to the overall mission of the University, an external review, and a follow-up plan that establishes priorities for action.

The self-study provides the foundation for the review. Programs in the review cycle are expected to use the template and reporting model provided by the Program Review Committee.

SELF STUDY TEMPLATE LINK (pending)

Chapter 3 – Academic Performance Review Data

The intention of the program review is to assist programs in maintaining the high academic standards as well as to identify areas of needed support for the program. The timely review of relevant data is essential to the process. The types of data used in university program review relate to student growth and success, the relation of the program to the university mission, program effectiveness, and program resources. These data include both quantitative and qualitative aspects obtained from both the Office of Institutional Research as well as that provided by the program itself.

Examples of data may include:

3-1. Student Growth and Success

- Number of degrees awarded and graduation rates (mean time to degree completion)
- Assessment data
- Student progress over degree period
- Graduate placement and post-degree experiences

Relation to University Mission

- Student demographics including number and percentage of first generation undergraduate and graduate students as well as those who were minorities or women
- Academic centrality and contribution to other programs, services, and needs
- Co-curricular highlights and contribution to campus culture

Effectiveness

- Positive impact on key stakeholders
- Productivity in faculty and student research, scholarship, and public works
- Local, regional, national, and international recognition of program
- Faculty and student recognition

Resources

- Description of staff and work environment
- Total cost including faculty, support staff, and operations
- Expenditures and budgetary deficits including use of PTOL
- Revenue generating activities including grant awards and donations
- FTE and FTES

3-2. External Review

It is policy at Eastern Washington University that all reviews of existing programs will include an evaluation by appropriate individuals external to the department and the institution. Accordingly, the college Dean with final approval of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs (or designee) will designate an External Reviewer to conduct an independent evaluation of each program.

The college Dean of non-externally accredited programs can select the reviewer from a list of candidates supplied by the departments concerned or recruit their own reviewer. The college Dean will select an external reviewer to review the undergraduate program(s) and a different reviewer to review the graduate program(s). For program suggested reviewers a current résumé or CV must be supplied. This individual must be an established professional in the relevant discipline, with appropriate academic experience at a peer institution. The department chair may appeal to the Dean regarding any external reviewer who, in the judgment of its faculty, is unqualified or otherwise unsuitable for the task.

The college Dean, in consultation with the Office of Academic Affairs, will appoint the External Reviewer(s) from among the candidates. The college Dean will then notify the department of the appointment. The department makes the arrangements for the External Reviewer(s) to undertake his/her evaluation of the program.

To assist the review process, the External Reviewer will receive at minimum:

- The most recent five-year Academic Performance Review Statistics from Institutional Research;
- The Self-Study, including all attachments;

- A copy of the last completed review, including any plans for changes needed in the program;
- The Mission Statement of the University, the College, and the Program; and
- Any additional documents the program deems helpful.

The External Reviewer will meet with the Dean, the program Chair/Director, faculty, students, staff, Library liaison, and other during the on-site visit.

The External Reviewer's Report shall address the program's strengths as well as weaknesses, and offer suggestions for improvement of the program, fulfillment of its mission and enhancement of its position with respect to system-wide and national trends.

3-3. Program's Response

Upon receiving the External Reviewer's Report, the faculty of the program will respond in writing. Recommendations, concerns, and issues raised by the External Reviewer will be addressed in light of the Mission Statement, program need, fiscal limitations, and logistical issues.

The Program's Response to the External Reviewer's Report will be forwarded with the rest of the review materials electronically to the Vice Provost for Academic Planning and to the Faculty Organization Office by the first Friday of October of the review year. The PRC review will not be held until all documents are in place.

Chapter 4 – Programs with External Accreditation

4-1. Procedures

Programs that must complete an accreditation will, as soon as possible after their external accreditation is complete, submit to the PRC evidence of the positive outcome of this review in order to be granted continuation status by the PRC. However, should they fail to receive outside accreditation, they must comply in full with the non-accredited reporting requirements within the current or subsequent academic year, as arranged with the PRC Chair.

4-2. Review Documents - Contents

Contents of Academic Program Reviews for Programs *with* external accreditation. Programs that must complete an accreditation review shall submit to PRC the following items:

1. Appropriate documentation (e.g. a confirmation letter) from its outside accreditation authorities (e.g. AACSB) indicating that it has been granted accredited status in its particular field of instruction, along with a brief summary of the main findings of its outside accrediting body.

2. A copy of the outside accreditation review documentation and a copy of the guidelines, criteria or other requirements of the outside accrediting body.

3. An annotated completion of the Program Review Self Study Template. Accredited programs will provide an index showing where the answers to each of the questions on the Review Template can be found in their report. If a question is not answered in the program's accreditation report, then the program should complete that question(s) on the template.

4. Included in the report to the PRC, the accredited program should include their continued development plan (either indexed from accreditation report or created for PRC). In order to maintain excellence in the respective fields each accredited program will develop a plan for the next five years of their accreditation cycle. Development of this plan should benefit departments applying for new tenure-track positions by providing information to support and justify these requests. In forming this plan, if not included in the accreditation process, the department shall address the following areas (these questions provide guidelines):

- Summary of Program Changes. A brief memo summarizing the main program changes that have been made since the last review and those that are planned over the period until the next scheduled accreditation.
- Summary of potential barriers to maintaining accreditation and/or ability to maintain EWU's expected high level of academic programming, as well as what resources the program needs to meet the changing requirements.

Chapter 5 – Monitoring of the Program Review Process

The Faculty Organization Office will provide assistance to the PRC and the Departments/Colleges in tracking the Program Review Process and implementation of the PRC recommendations for review dates and approved postponements.

The Department Chair or Program Director is responsible for carrying out the curricular, structural and assessment recommendations specified in the PRC Program Review document and noting progress on these changes in the subsequent reports. The College Dean or Dean's appointee will monitor implementation of the PRC recommendations in said Program Review documents.

Chapter 6 - Requests for Delay or Extension of Academic Program Reviews

a. Minor procedural delays within the academic year are generally granted with the expectation that the program will adhere to the timeline as closely as possible. Requests for such delays are made to the PRC in writing through the Faculty Organization Office, with written approval from the Dean.

b. Programs with external accreditation are granted an automatic date change on the Program Review

c. Schedule to coincide with the receipt of the approved external accreditation. The need for such change is made to the PRC in writing through the Faculty Organization Office, with written concurrence

from the Dean.

d. Programs without external accreditation requesting a one-year extension (postponement) of their scheduled Academic Program Review (APR) must use the following process:

(1) The request for extension shall provide a detailed explanation of the extraordinary circumstances motivating the request. Approval by the Dean of the program's college shall accompany the written request, addressed to the Chair of the PRC and delivered to the Faculty Organization Office. The request for a one-year extension from the PRC shall be submitted no later than the first PRC meeting of May (and must be signed by the Dean) during the year prior to the year in which the review is originally scheduled. In extraordinary circumstances, the PRC has approved two-year extensions.

(2) If an extension is approved, in order to prepare for the following year's review, the program shall submit a progress report (or draft submission) by May 1 of the academic year in which the APR was originally scheduled, indicating the state of data collection and preparation of the APR document. The department/program shall schedule the outside review during the Summer or Fall Quarter of the extension year, to occur as early as possible. The PRC will receive the completed program review no later than January 31st of the extension year.

Chapter 7 - Missing or Incomplete Submissions

When the PRC cannot resolve submission difficulties, the Chair of the PRC may notify the Dean and Associate Dean, as well as the Vice Provost and Senate Chair, with requests for additional information.

7-1. Program Review Reports

As part of its Program Review Report the Program Review Committee (PRC) will submit a report including its recommendations regarding the program, and the summary provided in the Program's Self-Study to the program, to GAC or UAC where appropriate as an informational item, and the Faculty Academic Senate.

The Senate reviews the report submitted by the PRC.

1. If the report is approved, it is sent to the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs.

2. If the report is not approved, it is returned to the PRC for reconsideration based on the Senate input. The revised report is submitted to the Senate, who will vote to approve or disapprove it. In either case, the report is forwarded to the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs with the Senate's vote results and any additional notes from the Senate.

The Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs will

review the report.

If the program report is approved by Senate and there are no significant changes or recommendations, the Provost (or designee) will inform the Dean and Department Chair of the successful review process.

If there are significant concerns or recommendations for significant program change, the Provost (or designee) will meet with the Dean (or designee), and Department Chair and/or Program Director to discuss the recommendations for program change. Within 10 working days after the conclusion of the meeting, the Provost (or designee) will, in consultation with the Dean and Department Chair, prepare a memorandum of understanding (MOU) identifying the agreed upon recommendations to be implemented and identifying the resources needed to support the recommendations.

Chapter 8 – Program Review Committee Composition

In September 1984 the Council for Postsecondary Education (CPE), which has evolved into the Washington Student Achievement Council (WSAC), adopted a policy requiring all programs at state four-year institutions of higher education to undergo periodic review following specific guidelines. Summaries of the results of those reviews are reported to the WSAC which, in turn, reports to the governor and the legislature.

The Program Review Committee (PRC), a committee of the Academic Senate, was established to coordinate the Academic Program Review process. The membership of the PRC consists of:

- Representatives of each college as well as 5 at-large members and up to three students appointed by ASEWU.
- The Provost (or designee); and
- The chair of the PRC is elected from the faculty membership.