Procedure Statement

Academic Program Review (APR) has as its primary goal enhancing the quality of academic programs. The APR is a comprehensive and periodic review of academic departments, the degree programs offered by the university, the University Studies Program, and academic centers and institutes.

Reason for Procedure

The goal of academic program review is to improve the quality of the program for its majors as well as the university community it serves. Academic program review serves to encourage self-study, and is a time to reflect on the direction of the discipline or practice and those implications for the future of the degree program.

Procedures and Responsibilities

1. GENERAL

1.1 Academic Program Review is a function of the provost and vice president for academic affairs (provost), in conjunction with the college and is managed by the Office of the Associate Provost for Institutional Effectiveness and Planning (AVP-IEP).

1.2 At A&M-Commerce, programs will be reviewed on a five- to seven-year cycle. This schedule may be accelerated in individual cases either at the discretion of the provost, college dean, or in compliance with recommendations from prior program reviews. Wherever possible, APR’s will be coordinated with specialized accreditation reviews.

1.3 The provost or designee, working closely with the college deans, is responsible for insuring that each degree program as well as all centers or institutes conduct a meaningful and thorough review and that all reports, recommendations, and implementation plans are finalized in a timely manner.
1.4 Each academic department will conduct a review of all degree programs for which it is responsible. All undergraduate and graduate degree programs fall within this procedure. Interdisciplinary program minors also fall within the purview of this procedure and will be reviewed as part of the academic department with which it is formally associated. For departments with both a major at undergraduate and graduate programs, separate reviews of each of degree level, including assessments of student learning and program functioning, is required.

1.5 Centers and institutes are subject to the same five-year periodic review cycle and use the same format as instructional programs outlined in this policy.

1.6 The procedure for delaying a review will be initiated by the department to the college dean who will determine whether or not to advance the recommendation forward. The decision for delaying a review rests with the provost (or designee) but will only be granted under these circumstances:

1.6.1 To coordinate with a professional accreditation process, and

1.6.2 Where a new program has not had sufficient time elapsed to justify a review.

Delays shall not be granted for more than one year.

2. DEFINITIONS

The following definitions help in distinguishing terms used throughout this document:

2.1 An academic program is a structured grouping of course work designed to meet an educational objective leading to a baccalaureate or post-baccalaureate degree. For purposes of this procedure, generally, only approved degree programs which the university is authorized by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board to offer are required to submit a review. The exception is University Studies which will also be reviewed under this policy. The official listing of programs required to be reviewed under this policy is provided as Appendix 3.

2.2 Other academic programs such as interdisciplinary minors, centers, institutes, or similar organizations subject may be subject to institutional review as needed and determined by the provost and the college dean.

2.3 Department is an administrative unit which may manage one or more academic degree program(s), center(s), institute(s), or similar organizations.

3. REQUESTING SUBSTITUTION FOR ACADEMIC PROGRAM REVIEW DOCUMENT

3.1 The department chair requests of the college dean a substitution for the academic program review document. The following materials accompany the request:

3.1.1 the accreditation standards & procedures,
3.1.2 the accreditation self-study report,

3.1.3 the team’s findings, and

3.1.4 the accrediting agency’s final report of the accreditation decision.

3.2 The provost (or designee) determines whether standards submitted by the department’s accreditation, taken as a whole, provide a level of quality comparable to the program review criteria.

3.3 The college dean and the provost may take one of the following actions in response to the petition:

3.3.1 The substitution is approved. A copy of the accreditation self-study report, the team findings, and the accrediting agency’s final report is submitted according to the Academic Program Review procedures and follows the same process for review and commentary.

3.3.2 A partial substitution is approved. The accreditation self-study report, the team findings, and the accrediting agency’s final report is submitted according to the Academic Program Review procedures and follows the same process for review and commentary. Additional information will be supplied and subsequently follows the same process for review and commentary as other reviews.

3.3.3 The substitution is not approved. The program is reviewed in accordance with the academic program review procedures.

4. PROCESS OVERVIEW

The academic program review process is intended to close the cycle of self-inquiry, review, and improvement. The basic components of APR are:

4.1 A self-study, recommendations, and implementation plans completed by the faculty associated with the Program.

4.2 Review and recommendations by the college when appropriate.

4.3 Development of an action plan to implement recommendations including recommendations to relevant planning and budgeting committees the university.

4.4 Final approval by the college dean, AVP-IEP, and provost of all elements of the program review documents.

5. TIMELINE

The process shall follow this timeline to ensure timely submission of reports to the provost and budgeting and other planning bodies at the university.
5.1 MARCH. The Associate Vice Provost Institutional Effectiveness and Planning announces the programs to be reviewed one year prior to the completion date of the self-study, recommendations, and implementation plan.

5.2 MARCH. The program representative(s), program administrator, college dean, AVP-IEP and provost establish a schedule for completion of the review within the university’s timeline for review.

5.3 MARCH. For accredited programs, the provost (or designee), in consultation with the college dean, and the program administrator, will determine whether the accreditation review process covers the essential elements of APR in accordance with this program review procedure. At this time, the college may also recommend that the program be subject to an independent evaluation.

5.4 APRIL-AUGUST. The program representative(s) and the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Planning compile sections of the statistical profile for the department.

5.5 SEPTEMBER-DECEMBER. The college, using appropriately participative processes including departmental faculty committees, reviews the self-study, requesting additional materials as needed, and makes recommendations to the review. The dean of The Graduate School will be an integral part of the review of the graduate program sections of the review. Once the review is complete, it is forwarded to the AVP-IEP and the provost.

5.6 JANUARY-FEBRUARY. The program representative(s), the department chair/program administrator, the college dean, the AVP-IEP, and Provost meet to discuss the review and recommendations. After this discussion, the dean submits to the provost a final implementation plan which identifies resource needs consistent with the recommendations of reviewing committees, and consistent with the college mission and strategic plan.

5.7 MARCH. At the conclusion of the review cycle, the AVP-IEP will develop a matrix of recommendations of all academic program reviews and submit these to the Budget Review and Development Council and the vice president for business and administration for information and appropriate action.

6. ELEMENTS OF THE SELF-STUDY

6.1 Introduction to department an update since last review.

6.1.1 Describe actions taken in response to recommendations made in the previous five-year review. Include copies of implementation plans and annual reports, if available.

6.1.2 Describe enrollment trends in the program for the past five years. Provide analysis of how successful the program is in recruiting and graduating students. Include information about how the department meets the needs of students in service courses (for other majors, general education, remediation), if appropriate.
6.1.3 How has the program and field changed over the past five years and how has the curriculum changed to address developments?

6.2 Department Planning and Structure

6.2.1 What are the goals and priorities of the department over the next five years? How do these goals support the college and the university plans and mission?

6.2.2 Briefly describe the strengths and weaknesses of the department in terms of faculty numbers, use of part time instructors, staff support, equipment, instructional equipment, facilities, etc.

6.2.3 Does faculty expertise cover the breadth of the program? Please report how faculty members are engaged and supported in scholarship, research, and/or creative activity.

6.2.4 Do all faculty meet the SACS requirements? Provide qualifications for full time and part time faculty for all faculty teaching courses in the last academic year. (See template for required items.)

6.2.5 Describe faculty productivity in terms of SCH generation, research, creative and scholarly activities, departmental and university service, community service, and support of service courses, etc.

6.2.6 Describe the quality of the management and communications in the department, including information on the collegial environment, management of staff and part time faculty, mentoring of new faculty, clarity of internal procedures for acquiring clerical support, travel, supplies, etc.

6.2.7 What are the procedures for handling student advising and mentoring? Provide an assessment of the quality of student advising and involvement with student majors and other academic student activities.

6.2.8 For programs with substantial online course offerings or off-campus program offerings, please describe how the quality of the program, including access to faculty, faculty qualifications, student advising, library resources, etc., is assured.

6.3 Commitment to Student Learning

6.3.1 Provide the learning goals and assessment program that is in place for students majoring in your program and your assessment program for collecting information regarding student learning. Other than grades, how do you document students are achieving these goals? Does the program have a capstone or culminating experience? How do you gather and use data collected in your assessments?

6.3.2 Provide a summary analysis of the results of your assessment program. Give examples of changes that have been initiated due to these analyses over the past five
years. Include examples from the undergraduate and graduate programs in the department.

6.3.3 For undergraduate programs, describe the program’s role in providing service programs to the core curriculum/general education program. How successful are these programs in supporting the University Studies’ goals? Please provide the information on which you base your analysis.

6.3.4 For graduate programs, describe how you gather and use information derived from the assessment of the learning for graduate students to improve your graduate program and student learning. Provide data on learning outcomes of graduate students.

6.4 Recommendations and Implementation Plan

6.4.1 What are the recommendations of the program in response to this review? Provide the plan that shows implementation of these recommendations and projections for the program for the next five years.

In the course of your plan, please address the following: What student profile is anticipated, both in number and type of students? What curricular changes are planned? What scheduling changes are planned?

6.4.2 What types of human, fiscal, and physical resources are needed to implement your enrollment projections and recommendations?

A preliminary draft of the implementation plan should be included with the self-study; however, the final draft should reflect not only the views of the program faculty but also recommendations by the college deans and other members of the review process.

The final implementation plan will result from discussion and consultation among the self-study coordinator, the department chair, the dean of the college, and the provost. The implementation plan will link the program plans and goals to those of the college and university and will guide the activities of the program for the subsequent five years.

7. EXTERNAL REVIEW

In addition to the normal program review procedures, programs may be subject to an independent evaluation by at least two external evaluators. External program review will only occur in those instances where thorough review of a program’s self-study has been done, and the department or college/school dean and/or university levels indicate the efficacy of an external review. The external evaluators will be individuals of significant professional reputation in the field who will report their findings to the college, department chair, AVP-IEP, and provost. One of the evaluators can be from a system campus of comparable size, while the other evaluator may be from a non-system institution, preferably within Texas. The external evaluators’ report will become part of the permanent program review file.
The provost/AVP-IEP or designee will be responsible for the overall coordination of the external review. Nominations for evaluators will be solicited from the chair of the department being reviewed, dean of the college/school, and from other institutions, higher education associations and professional organizations. These nominees will be reviewed by the departmental faculty, who may reject any of the nominees for cause.

8. RESULTS OF THE REVIEW PROCESS

It is anticipated that the results of each review will be:

8.1 A candid self-study which examines departmental operations and the infrastructure necessary to support the program,

8.2 A thorough evaluation of the impact of the program on its students and graduates through reviewing both the structure of the curriculum and information gathered to assess student learning, and

8.3 A realistic set of recommendations and action plan to implement the recommendations of the review.

It is by feeding recommendations from the program reviews back to the academic leadership of the university that bottoms-up planning can occur. The development of meaningful short and long term goals as well as recommendations for remedying concerns, and plans for future development of the program are essential components of the program review process. Implementation plans, developed in conjunction with the department faculty, the college dean, the provost are essential to ensuring that the energy invested in the reviews inform policy decisions, priority setting, and budget decisions.

Related Statutes, Policies, or Requirements

Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) Chapter 4, Subchapter O: Approval of Off-Campus and Self-Supporting Courses and Programs for Public Institutions
Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission of Colleges (SACSCOC) Principles of Accreditation
System Policy Section 11: Centers, Degrees, and Programs

Contact Office

Office of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs
903-886-5410
Appendix

- Appendix 1. Suggested Data to be Supplied
- Appendix 2. Required Timeline
- Appendix 3. Degree Program Inventory & Programs with 50% or more Online

Appendix 1.
Suggested Data to be Supplied
Information provided by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Planning

STUDENT DATA (Five-Year History)
Student Enrollment (major, minor, concentration, options, emphases)
Student/Ethnicity/Gender/Age
Student grade distribution; GPA
Student retention rates, completion rates, degrees awarded

FACULTY AND FACULTY WORKLOADS (Five-Year History)
Faculty Credentials (full-and part-time) (from the department)
Faculty Reassigned Time
Student Faculty Ratios
Course History (Tenured, Tenure-Track, Visiting Lecturer, Part-Time)

CURRICULUM DATA (Five-Year History)
Course Enrollment History
Student credit hour generation (major, general education, online, etc.)

OTHER
Student and Alumni Surveys
# Appendix 2.
## Required Timeline

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<tr>
<th><strong>Target Date</strong></th>
<th><strong>Activity</strong></th>
<th><strong>Responsible Party</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>Departments are notified of upcoming program review</td>
<td>College dean/Institutional Effectiveness and Planning</td>
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<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>Schedule for completion of review established</td>
<td>Program department chair/college dean/ AVP-IEP/ provost</td>
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<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>(For accredited programs) Determine whether accreditation review process covers APR elements and needed supplements</td>
<td>Provost (or designee)/college dean/program administrator</td>
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<tr>
<td>April-August</td>
<td>Self-Study, recommendations, implementation plan submitted to college</td>
<td>Department chair/program representative(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November-December</td>
<td>College reviews self-study; recommendations to college/ university planning groups</td>
<td>College dean with graduate dean</td>
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<tr>
<td>January-February</td>
<td>Program meets with dean, AVP-IEP, provost to discuss findings and finalize implementation plan.</td>
<td>Program representative(s)/ program administrator/college dean/provost/ AVP-IEP</td>
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<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>Final implementation plan submitted to provost and AVP-IEP for prioritization in academic affairs planning</td>
<td>Provost/ AVP-IEP</td>
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<tr>
<td>March-April</td>
<td>Recommendations synthesized and presented to Strategic Planning Steering Committee for distribution to appropriate planning and budgeting groups</td>
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[See Appendix 3. in separate document: 11.99.99.R0.04 Academic Program Review Appendix 3. Programs by CIP]