

Western Illinois University

Academic Program Reviews: 2024 2025

Introduction, Purpose, and Guiding Principles

The periodic review of academic programs serves several purposes including the evaluation of quality and the improvement of programs. When program review is done well, faculty and administrators gain an understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of their academic programs; there is clear agreement on goals for the future; budget decisions are based on academic priorities; institutions are accountable to their students and other constituencies for the quality of their product; and finally, but most importantly, programs improve.

The review process will be determined by the individual academic department in concert with the Dean, and will follow the general guidelines set forth by the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE). To avoid redundancy, academic departments have the discretion to use current findings from specialized program accreditations and other reviews as the basis of the program review process, if they are not more than two years old.

Program Review allows academic units to thoroughly and candidly evaluate:

- the mission and goals of the program and its relation to those of the University
- the educational objectives, curriculum, and student learning outcomes of undergraduate and graduate programs
- the quality and diversity of faculty and their contributions to the program
- resources (e.g., library, physical facilities)
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Delineation of Responsibilities

Academic Vice President: The University has an established program review schedule, which can be viewed at www.wiu.edu/provost/aprschd.php. The program review process is initiated by the Associate Provost for academic programs according to the University program review schedule. Guidelines for the academic program review process will be distributed to departments with programs under review. While general guidelines for the review process are established by the Academic Vice President, departments and colleges are encouraged to structure the review process to meet their individual needs.

Summary information obtained from program reviews will be used in the annual results report submitted to the IBHE by the Associate Provost for academic programs.

College Dean: The College Dean, or designee, participates in the initial planning for the program review. Specific college guidelines/requirements for review, which may be in addition to those established by the Academic Vice President, should be presented to each department undergoing an academic program review process. Internal college deadlines for self-study submission will be established to coincide with timelines required by the Academic Vice President and University planning/budgeting schedules. The College Dean will conduct follow-up meetings with departments to incorporate the

Program Review Self-Study Report Guidelines

January 1: Department/School submits preliminary self-study to Dean (to be submitted with executive summary—see page 6)

Section III: Major Findings

1. Strengths identified from the review process
2. Weaknesses identified from the review process
3. Evidence of students meeting desired learning outcomes

Section IV: Recommendations and action plans

1. Recommendations identified from the review process
2. Initiatives and action plans for the program for the next three to five years to meet recommendations

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Guidelines for External Reviewers for Program Review

One External Reviewer is required for each department undergoing the program review process. Additional reviewers may be necessary for departments with programs in multiple disciplines. \$800 stipend and up to \$1,200 to cover additional costs associated with the review (e.g., travel, lodging, meals). Reviewing multiple programs during the same visit could qualify for negotiation of a higher stipend.

Programs subject to accreditation review

Departments with programs subject to accreditation review may coordinate the cyclical review with an accreditation review. The timing of the cyclical review should be coordinated with the Associate Provost for academic programs. An external review, as outlined in this document, may not be required. By **June 5**, the Department/School should submit all program review materials (including the self-study and external report) and the IBHE review summary to the Associate Provost for academic programs, through the Dean. All documents should be submitted electronically in Microsoft Word.

Guidelines for planning and conducting an external review

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