Academic Program Review

Standards for
Graduate and Undergraduate
Programs

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Contents

Overview

McNeese State University seeks to maintain the highest academic program quality and ensure each program meets stated objectives and student learning outcomes. Academic Program Review is conducted to ensure that academic excellence and appropriate student achievement and success is maintained for each program offered. Programs accredited by professional accrediting agencies undergo thorough self-evaluation and external review periodically as required by the respective accrediting agency. Programs that are not professionally accredited or for which there is no professional accrediting agency conduct periodic self-evaluation and review according to MSU policy.

The purpose of academic program review is to take a comprehensive look at an academic program from the perspective of self-assessment, viability, needs, student learning outcomes, and adequacy of resources (funding, personnel, facilities, etc.). The process is intended to identify opportunities, understand weaknesses, and set a path for future improvements. The culmination of the review should produce a portfolio that is evaluative rather than merely descriptive. The APR should reflect the past and anticipate the future.

Candidates for Program Review

All academic programs are candidates for program review. For professionally accredited programs, the program review conducted during accreditation or reaffirmation processes serves as an appropriate academic program review.

Non-accredited undergraduate and graduate programs for which an accrediting agency exists may use respective program accreditation criteria outlined by the accrediting agency for the self-evaluation format.

Non-accredited undergraduate programs for which no accrediting agency exists use the MSU academic program self-evaluation format. A program review requires faculty to develop a formal document (not to exceed 75 pages). Guidelines for the document are indicated in this document.

Non-accredited graduate programs for which no accrediting agency exists use the MSU Graduate Program Standards, also outlined in this document.

In some circumstances, a review of the program by a person or persons external to the University may be requested of the program by the Provost upon the recommendation of the MAT reviewing team. Alternatively, program faculty may request an external reviewer upon conclusion of the MAT review. External reviewers may come from sister institutions and ought to be experts in the discipline. Undergraduate and graduate academic program coordinators are responsible for program development as well as coordinating the program review and evaluation and identifying appropriate external reviewers. The Office of Institutional Effectiveness will make arrangements for the external review should one be required.

Procedure for Review

The Program Coordinator, in collaboration with the Department Head, Dean, and teaching faculty, should prepare the APR portfolio. The Portfolio should contain all of the sections as outlined in these guidelines, along with any supplemental information deemed appropriate by program personnel. The McNeese Offices of Institutional Effectiveness and Institutional Research can provide guidance and assistance for creating a complete and meaningful APR portfolio.

Once the Program Coordinator completes the APR, the Department Head and Dean should review and approve it. Next, the Vice President of Academic Affairs should review and approve the APR. The Provost will submit the APR to the Office of Institutional Effectiveness which, in turn, will submit it to the McNeese Assessment Team (MAT) for review and comment. The Program Coordinator may make changes to the APR at any step in the process.

The final phase of the APR may call for an external review and evaluation of the APR. The Program Coordinator, Department Head, and/or Dean may suggest candidates to serve as external reviewers, or they may be selected by the Provost or IE Director. The Office of Institutional Effectiveness will liaise with the Academic Program and the chosen external reviewers.

Academic Program Review Cycle

In general, Academic Programs should conduct a review every seven years. Thus, the period under review for purposes of this document should reflect the seven complete previous academic years. The Office of Institutional Effectiveness will notify each Program Coordinator and respective Dean and Department Head of the upcoming review one year in advance. Program Coordinators should submit their APR portfolios to the Provost by December 15th of the year of the review (early submissions are acceptable). The MAT will complete their review during the spring semester following submission of the portfolio. Finally, if applicable, the external reviewers will evaluate the portfolio during the summer following the MAT review. The current APR cycle can be found at the end of this document.

Standards for Undergraduate Programs

Programs must show documented evidence of compliance with each of the standards.

1.0   Program Overview

    1.1   Program Background, Mission, and Goals

The program provides an executive summary that includes a brief program history and notable achievements; a clearly defined, comprehensive mission that includes measurable program goals.

    1.2   Institutional Mission Reference

The program's mission and goals are consistent with mission of the College and the University including, where applicable, contribution to strategic initiatives.

    1.3   Qualified Academic Program Coordinator

The program has a designated coordinator who has responsibility for curriculum development and review and is academically qualified in the field.

2.0   Curriculum & Assessment

    2.1   Curriculum Analysis

Program provides broad, well-integrated knowledge of the discipline, is responsive to changes in the field, and exhibits a curricular design that ensures graduates demonstrate disciplinary knowledge appropriate to a bachelor's degree.

    2.2   Assessment Analysis

The program has clearly stated leaning objectives; provides a map of courses (or appropriate activities) where learning outcomes are assessed; utilizes rigorous methods of measurement; and documents analysis of assessment and resulting changes and improvements.

    2.3   Learning Environment

The program engages in consistently rigorous levels of instruction that include an appropriate level of student-centered, active learning experiences.

    2.4   Continuous Improvement

The program engages in periodic self-review, has established evaluation procedures, and shows evidence of improvements based on these processes.

3.0   Academic Support

    3.1   Advising Program

The program has dedicated advisors and written practices for ensuring a consistently high level of advising for all students.

    3.2   Tracking

The program tracks the progress of all of its students and has in place remedies where necessary to ensure progression and completion.

    3.3   Effectiveness of Support

The program routinely evaluates the effectiveness of its support services, including advising, and makes appropriate adjustments necessary to support student achievement.

4.0   Student Achievement

    4.1   Enrollment & Retention

The program has an appropriate number of students to ensure viability and retains students at a sufficiently high rate to ensure viable completion numbers.

    4.2   Student Success

The program evaluates student achievement consistent through methods such as 3-year graduation averages; job placement; licensure exam results; alumni satisfaction; engagement in faculty-mentored research, service learning, study abroad, or other means of demonstrating achievement.

5.0   Faculty

    5.1   Faculty Qualifications

The program employs an adequate number of qualified faculty members who possess appropriate credentials in the discipline and/or a combination of education and professional experience.

    5.2   Faculty Development

The Program exhibits a climate of intellectual/professional curiosity and achievement (such as seminars, presentations, workshops, and so on).

    5.3   Faculty Evaluation

The program regularly evaluates the effectiveness of faculty with respect to departmental, college, and institutional criteria including evaluation of teaching effectiveness, evidence of research, scholarship and/or creative activity, and service to the institution.

6.0   Resources

    6.1   Library Resources

The program provides library resources adequate for a solid foundation in the discipline.

    6.2   Instructional Resources

The program provides resources, facilities, and equipment adequate to fulfill all instructional needs.

7.0   Summative Analysis and Conclusion

The program provides a general, current analysis of the state of the program that shows documented achievement of program goals, and an identification of program strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.

8.0   Signatures

Program review includes signatures of Program Coordinator, Department Head, and College Dean.

Standards for Graduate Programs

Programs must show documented evidence of compliance with each of the standards.

1.0   Program Overview

    1.1   Program Background, Mission, and Goals

The program provides an executive summary that includes a brief program history and notable achievements; a clearly defined, comprehensive mission that includes measurable program goals.

    1.2   Institutional Mission Reference

The program's mission and goals are consistent with mission of the College and the University including, where applicable, contribution to strategic initiatives.

    1.3   Qualified Academic Program Coordinator

The program has a designated coordinator who has responsibility for curriculum development and review and is academically qualified in the field.

2.0   Curriculum & Assessment

    2.1   Curriculum Analysis

Program provides a rigorous curriculum that is progressively more advanced than a similar undergraduate program, includes knowledge of the literature of the discipline, and ensures student engagement in research and/or appropriate professional practice and training experiences.

    2.2   Assessment Analysis

The program has clearly stated leaning objectives; provides a map of courses (or appropriate activities) where learning outcomes are assessed; utilizes rigorous methods of measurement; and documents analysis of assessment and resulting changes and improvements.

    2.3   Learning Environment

The program engages in consistently rigorous levels of instruction that include an appropriate level of student-centered, active learning experiences.

    2.4   Continuous Improvement

The program engages in periodic self-review, has established evaluation procedures, and shows evidence of improvements based on these processes.

3.0   Academic Support

    3.1   Advising Program

The program has dedicated advisors and written practices for ensuring a consistently high level of advising for all students.

    3.2   Tracking

The program tracks the progress of all of its students and has in place remedies where necessary to ensure progression and completion.

    3.3   Effectiveness of Support

The program routinely evaluates the effectiveness of its support services, including advising, and makes appropriate adjustments necessary to support student achievement.

4.0   Student Achievement
   4.1   Entry and Exit Requirements
The program has specific, published entry and exit requirements.

   4.2   Enrollment & Retention
The program has an appropriate number of students to ensure viability and retains students at a sufficiently high rate to ensure viable completion numbers.

   4.3   Rights and Responsibilities
The program provides to each student a clear statement of students' rights and responsibilities and other essential program information.

   4.4   Student Success
The program evaluates student achievement consistent through methods such as 3-year graduation averages; job placement; licensure exam results; alumni satisfaction; engagement in research; or other means of demonstrating achievement.

5.0   Faculty
   5.1   Faculty Qualifications
The program employs an adequate number of qualified faculty members who possess appropriate credentials in the discipline and/or a combination of education and professional experience.

   5.2   Faculty Development
The Program exhibits a climate of intellectual/professional curiosity and achievement (such as seminars, presentations, workshops, and so on).

   5.3   Faculty Evaluation
The program regularly evaluates the effectiveness of faculty with respect to departmental, college, and institutional criteria including evaluation of teaching effectiveness, evidence of research, scholarship and/or creative activity, and service to the institution.

6.0   Resources
   6.1   Library Resources
The program provides library resources adequate for graduate study.

   6.2   Instructional Resources
The program provides resources, facilities, and equipment adequate to fulfill instructional needs appropriate to graduate level study.

7.0   Summative Analysis and Conclusion
The program provides a general, current analysis of the state of the program that shows documented achievement of program goals, and an identification of program strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.

8.0 Signatures
Program review includes signatures of Program Coordinator, Department Head, and College Dean.

Guidelines for Completing Program Reviews: Undergraduate and Graduate

Program reviews should follow the format established by the above standards. The review should consist of a cover page identifying the program, department, college, and year of review; a table of contents; and sections corresponding to the standards with complete narratives. While undergraduate and graduate programs essentially respond to the same standards, it is understood Graduate programs should exhibit a level of rigor and complexity that clearly exceeds undergraduate programs. The following notes serve as guidance for responding to the standards. Appropriate and sufficient evidence should be presented to demonstrate compliance with each standard.

1.0	Program Overview
	1.1 Program Background, Mission, and Goals The program provides an executive summary that includes a brief program history and notable achievements; a clearly defined, comprehensive mission that includes measurable program goals.
Essential to compliance with this standard is a clear mission statement and program goals. Program goals are distinct from learning outcomes and speak to the direction and quality of the program as a whole. Some possible outcomes include such things as program retention rates, faculty scholarship or professional development productivity and participation, and so on.	
	1.2 Institutional Mission Reference The program's mission and goals are consistent with mission of the College and the University including, where applicable, contribution to strategic initiatives.
Provide an analysis of the program's alignment with college and university mission, including contribution to specific strategic initiatives or annual measures as reported in the Louisiana Grad Act: e.g. workforce alignment, degree productivity, special advising and/or retention programs.	
	1.3 Academic Program Coordinator The program has a designated coordinator who has responsibility for curriculum development and review and is academically qualified in the field.
The program coordinator possesses the proper qualifications in the discipline to bear the responsibility for curriculum review and development. (In alignment with SACS-COC CS 3.4.11.)	
2.0	Curriculum & Assessment
	2.1 Curriculum Analysis—Undergraduate Program provides broad, well-integrated knowledge of the discipline, is responsive to changes in the field, and exhibits a curricular design that ensures graduates demonstrate disciplinary knowledge appropriate to a bachelor's degree.
	2.1 Curriculum Analysis—Graduate Program provides a rigorous curriculum that is progressively more advanced than a similar undergraduate program, includes knowledge of the literature of the discipline, and ensures student engagement in research and/or appropriate professional practice and training experiences.
Both of these statements require a discussion of the rationale for curricular inputs—types of courses, concentrations, other learning experiences—and imply, but do not necessarily require, a discussion of the type of career or field available to graduates. Discussions may also include consultations with program external advisory boards and any systemic curriculum reviews based on surveys of discipline, workforce needs, or other source. The graduate program analysis includes language specific to SACS-COC Principles of Accreditation for Graduate Programs (CS 3.6.1 and 3.6.2).	
	2.2 Assessment Analysis The program has clearly stated leaning objectives; provides a map of courses (or appropriate activities) where learning outcomes are assessed; utilizes rigorous methods of measurement; and documents analysis of assessment and resulting changes and improvements.
Provide detailed information on program learning outcomes and the assessment plan for evaluating the "extent to which" students demonstrate achievement of these goals. This means outcomes have clear benchmarks and show a level of	

attainment measurable over time. The assessment plan should show at what points in the curriculum students are assessed for specific measures, the method(s) of assessment, and actions/decisions that impact curriculum or instruction as related to assessment results. In general, multiple types of assessment should be in place for each outcome.

2.3   Learning Environment

The program engages in consistently rigorous levels of instruction that include an appropriate level of student-centered, active learning experiences.

This discussion may focus on specific activities or experiences that students undergo that contribute to attainment of learning outcomes. Emphasis on experiences where students engage in research, service, internship, or course-level work (at any point in the program) where student-driven knowledge production is featured.

2.4   Continuous Improvement

The program engages in periodic self-review, has established evaluation procedures, and shows evidence of improvements based on these processes.

The program describes and documents periodic, systemic discussions among a quorum of program faculty and actions related to improving curriculum and instruction, attainment of program goals and learning outcomes.

3.0   Academic Support

3.1   Advising Program

The program has dedicated advisors and written practices for ensuring a consistently high level of advising for all students.

Identify program advisors and advising load. Describe advising requirements for students, frequency of interactions, and applicable program policies.

3.2   Tracking

The program tracks the progress of all of its students and has in place remedies where necessary to ensure progression and completion.

Discuss how the program tracks the progress of its students, how it identifies at-risk students, and what measures it takes to ensure progression and completion. Methods may be discussed in 3.1 generally but should be explained in more detail here. Any fluctuations in program enrollments or retention should also be discussed here in light of program changes made to minimize negative results.

3.3   Effectiveness of Support

The program routinely evaluates the effectiveness of its support services, including advising, and makes appropriate adjustments necessary to support student achievement.

Discuss the scheduled for evaluating student support efforts in the department, the department's use and advocacy of campus-based resources for student learning support. Emphasize any changes to support services as they relate to achievement of program goals or learning outcomes.

4.0   Student Achievement—Undergraduate Programs

4.1   Enrollment & Retention

The program has an appropriate number of students to ensure viability and retains students at a sufficiently high rate to ensure viable completion numbers.

Programs should show a minimum of three, and as many as five, years of enrollment and retention rates, discuss any fluctuations up or down, likely reasons, and changes in response to the numbers.

4.2   Student Success

The program evaluates student achievement consistent through methods such as 3-year graduation rates; job placement; licensure exam results; alumni satisfaction; engagement in faculty-mentored research, service learning, study abroad, or other means of demonstrating achievement.

The program should link student success measures with program mission and goals and/or learning outcomes, track the achievement of goals, and discuss any program changes made in response to goal or outcome attainment.

4.0   Student Achievement—Graduate Programs

4.1   Entry and Exit Requirements

The program has specific, published entry and exit requirements.

Identify entry and exit requirements for the program as published in university catalog, program materials, or where applicable. Include a rationale for any requirements that differ substantially from university guidelines or are in addition to those guidelines.

4.2   Enrollment & Retention

The program has an appropriate number of students to ensure viability and retains students at a sufficiently high rate to ensure viable completion numbers.

Programs should show a minimum of three, and as many as five, years of enrollment and retention rates, discuss any fluctuations up or down, likely reasons, and changes in response to the numbers.

4.3   Rights and Responsibilities

The program provides to each student a clear statement of students' rights and responsibilities and other essential program information.
Discuss any rights and responsibilities particular to graduate students; identify where and in what forms these items are made available to students.
4.4 Student Success The program evaluates student achievement consistent through methods such as 3-year graduation averages; job placement; licensure exam results; alumni satisfaction; engagement in research; or other means of demonstrating achievement.
The program should link student success measures with program mission and goals and/or learning outcomes, track the achievement of goals, and discuss any program changes made in response to goal or outcome attainment.
5.0 Faculty
5.1 Faculty Qualifications The program employs an adequate number of qualified faculty members who possess appropriate credentials in the discipline and/or a combination of education and professional experience.
Identify current program faculty by rank, degree, and courses taught over the last 3-5 years. Faculty should meet SACS-COC qualifications as determined by degree (terminal for graduate faculty) or number of graduate hours of coursework in the discipline and/or in combination with appropriate professional experience. Program must demonstrate that number of faculty is sufficient to ensure that 25% of program courses are taught by terminally degreed personnel.
5.2 Faculty Development The Program exhibits a climate of intellectual/professional curiosity and achievement (such as seminars, presentations, workshops, and so on).
The program engages in ongoing faculty development as appropriate to the teaching in the discipline and advancing disciplinary knowledge, program support through improved assessment of outcomes and goals, contribution to university initiatives or other relevant engagements that strengthen the effectiveness of faculty. Include, wherever possible, impacts of faculty professional development on student learning and/or program success.
5.3 Faculty Evaluation The program regularly evaluates the effectiveness of faculty with respect to departmental, College, and institutional criteria including evaluation of teaching effectiveness, evidence of research, scholarship and/or creative activity, and service to the institution.
Discuss faculty evaluation criteria and frequency of evaluation. Types of evidence to relevant to this standard include aggregated SEI scores for program faculty, research productivity, professional development activity, and/or service as benchmarked to program, department, and/or college-wide expectations and level of achievement.
6.0 Resources
6.1 Library Resources The program provides library resources adequate for a solid foundation in the discipline.
Provide a needs-analysis of library resources as they pertain to the program. Where materials run short, what remedies exist for the program to accommodate the deficiency?
6.2 Instructional Resources The program provides resources, facilities, and equipment adequate to fulfill all instructional needs.
Discuss equipment, facilities, services or other resources provided by the program or through the program that serve instructional purposes. Provide a needs-analysis to determine where there may be deficiencies or surpluses.
7.0 Summative Analysis and Conclusion
The program provides a general, current analysis of the state of the program that shows documented achievement of program goals, and an identification of program strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.
Even if achievement of program goals is discussed elsewhere, provide a clear table of goals and achievements in the conclusion. Looking forward, provide an objective assessment of program strengths, weaknesses, threats, and opportunities.
8.0 Signatures
Program review includes signatures of Program Coordinator, Department Head, and College Dean.

Academic Program Review Scoring and Evaluation Sheet

Reviewer: Provide a rationale for each area of partial or non-compliance.

Undergraduate Programs

Program Name/Degree:

Standard	Compliance	Partial Compliance	Non-Compliance
1.0 Program Overview			
1.1 Program Background, Mission, and Goals			
1.2 Institutional Mission Reference			
1.3 Qualified Academic Program Coordinator			
2.0 Curriculum & Assessment			
2.1 Curriculum Analysis			
2.2 Assessment Analysis			
2.3 Learning Environment			
2.4 Continuous Improvement			
3.0 Academic Support			
3.1 Advising Program			
3.2 Tracking			
3.3 Effectiveness of Support			
4.0 Student Achievement			
4.1 Enrollment and Retention			
4.2 Student Success			
5.0 Faculty			
5.1 Faculty Qualifications			
5.2 Faculty Development			
5.3 Faculty Evaluation			
6.0 Resources			
6.1 Library Resources			
6.2 Instructional Resources			
7.0 Summative Analysis and Conclusion			
8.0 Signatures			

Reviewer: Provide a rationale for each area of partial or non-compliance.

Graduate Programs

Program Name/ Degree:

Standard	Compliance	Partial Compliance	Non-Compliance
1.0 Program Overview			
1.1 Program Background, Mission, and Goals			
1.2 Institutional Mission Reference			
1.3 Qualified Academic Program Coordinator			
2.0 Curriculum & Assessment			
2.1 Curriculum Analysis			
2.2 Assessment Analysis			
2.3 Learning Environment			
2.4 Continuous Improvement			
3.0 Academic Support			
3.1 Advising Program			
3.2 Tracking			
3.3 Effectiveness of Support			
4.0 Student Achievement			
4.1 Entry and Exit Requirements			
4.2 Enrollment and Retention			
4.3 Rights and Responsibilities			
4.4 Student Success			
5.0 Faculty			
5.1 Faculty Qualifications			
5.2 Faculty Development			
5.3 Faculty Evaluation			
6.0 Resources			
6.1 Library Resources			
6.2 Instructional Resources			
7.0 Summative Analysis and Conclusion			
8.0 Signatures			

Reviewer: Provide a rationale for each area of partial or non-compliance.

Academic Program Review Cycle

In the fall 2010 semester, all McNeese State University academic programs—accredited and non-accredited—underwent an extensive program review that evaluated content and rigor of program, viability, and impact for strategic, long-term budgeting and institutional growth. The method of review used in 2010 differed from that presented here, which focuses more squarely on the question of program quality and continuous improvement and seeks to look at the merits of a program in its own right. This university-wide program review established a baseline review date for all programs (although many accredited programs have since been reviewed by their agencies). Thus, the cycle presented here applies to non-accredited programs with the understanding that 2010 was their last date of review. Given that, some programs will be reviewed prior to the seven year cycle noted in the opening sections of this document. From the point of next review, each program will resume a seven-year rotation for review.

College	Program	Next Reviews (Submit by Dec 15th of each year indicated)	
Graduate			
BCOE	Psychology (M.A.)	2013	2020
COS	Mathematical Sciences (M.S.)	2014	2021
COS	Environmental and Chemical Sciences (M.S.)	2014	2021
BCOE	Health and Human Performance (M.S.)	2015	2022
BCOE	Instructional Technology (M.S.)	2015	2022
CEET	Engineering (M.Eng.)	2016	2023
COLA	English (M.A.)	2017	2024
COLA	Creative Writing (M.F.A.)	2017	2024
COLA	Criminal Justice (M.A.)	2020	2027
Undergraduate			
BCOE	Psychology (B.S.)	2013	2020
EMGT	General Studies (B.G.S.)	2013	2020
COS	Natural Resource Conservation Management (B.S.)	2013	2020
COS	Mathematical Sciences (B.S.)	2014	2021
COS	Biological Science (B.S.)	2014	2021
COS	Nutrition and Food Science (B.S.)	2014	2021
COS	Agricultural Science (B.S.)	2014	2021
BCOE	Health and Human Performance, General (B.S.)	2015	2022
COLA	Government (B.A.)	2015	2022
COLA	Sociology (B.A.)	2015	2022
COLA	Criminal Justice (B.S.)	2015	2022
COLA	Liberal Studies (B.A.)	2016	2023
COLA	Theatre (Concentration in Liberal Studies)	2016	2023
COLA	History (B.A.)	2016	2023
COLA	Foreign Languages (B.A.)	2017	2024
COLA	Mass Communication (B.S.)	2017	2024
COLA	English (B.A.)	2017	2024
EMGT	Organizational Leadership (B.A.)	2020	2027