



Marquette University
Academic Program Review
Guidelines

Updated May 2013

Contents

Purpose of Program Review.....	3
Administration of the Program Review Process.....	4
Academic Programs Subject to Review.....	4
Steps of Program Review.....	5
Outcomes and Follow-Up.....	7

Appendixes

Appendix I Program Review Checklist.....	9
Appendix II Strategic Issues Statement.....	11
Appendix III Self Study Guidelines.....	12
Appendix IV Guiding Questions.....	15
Appendix V Outcomes and Action Plan.....	17

Purpose of Academic Program Review

As a Jesuit Catholic university, Marquette University 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.

Every program review starts with a “Provost Summit”—a preliminary meeting between the provost office, department chair, selected faculty, and dean. The purpose of that summit is to identify key issues of quality and finances facing a program, and to establish the scope for any follow-up study. Most often the summit will lead to a focused self-study and internal review; where appropriate, it will include an external review. The process ends always ends with an action plan.

To prepare for program review, units will be provided with a set of exploratory questions and data related to strategic issues such as enrollment history and trends, student outcomes, diversity history, and the program’s standing within its discipline. For example, the issues to be discussed may be related to growing or declining enrollment, changes in the field or discipline, impending faculty retirements, trends in the teaching and learning environment or the implications of student outcomes data.

The department or college is encouraged to discuss the issues and related data with faculty and teaching and research committees within the unit in preparation for the Summit. Typically, the dean or department chair will attend the Summit and can bring college or department administrators to the Summit, especially if they have been involved in the preparation for the Summit. The dean or department with the dean will lead the review team and the unit is encouraged to identify a small group within the unit to facilitate the effort. In the case of a department under review, the dean will support the department chair’s efforts and both will represent the department.

Program reviews are designed to support long-term planning efforts for the unit, 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.

In summary, the academic program review process:

- Promotes academic excellence, continuous improvement, and innovation in departments, colleges, and schools.

- Helps align program goals and outcomes with university strategic priorities
- Provides a program with formative and evaluative feedback on its student outcomes, performance, and effectiveness.
- Supports external accreditation processes

Administration of the Program Review Process

The Office of the Provost manages and supports the academic program review process, and has the responsibility for insuring its consistency and effectiveness.

The Program Review Council, which reports to the Provost, has the responsibility for coordinating all details of the process, reviewing the self-study and related materials, meeting with the external review team, and making recommendations to the Provost. The Provost, in consultation with the unit head, makes all final decisions regarding recommendations and subsequent actions.

The Associate Provost for Academic Planning chairs the council. Its membership includes the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Programs, the Associate Dean of the Graduate School, the Assessment Director, 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 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. It is staffed by the Assistant Provost for Division Operations, the Director of Institutional Research and representative from the Office of Finance.

Programs should involve faculty and students in the review process, particularly during the data gathering and self-study stage. As appropriate, the council 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.

Academic Programs Subject to Review

An academic program is defined as a unit or group of units dedicated to achieving research, educational, or service goals that advance the university mission. The unit of analysis for program review is typically the supporting infrastructure such as the department or college but could include clusters of programs across colleges.

Programs to be reviewed include:

- Degree programs, including bachelor's, master's, and doctoral
- Concentrations or majors within degree programs
- Interdisciplinary majors and minors
- Centers, service activities or outreach initiatives associated with research or educational programs

Program reviews for units that are accredited by external bodies can vary in their scope and depth. For example, units may ask that for a program review that uses the approach and format established by its accrediting body, or may request a focused internal or external study on a more narrowly defined area of concern. At a minimum, the unit will be asked to participate in a Provost Summit, share its self-study, and will receive feedback from the Program Review Council and the Provost. The Provost reserves the right to ask for a fuller internal or external review if deemed necessary.

Some accredited programs may wish to use a Provost Summit to raise issues that they believe need to be addressed before their accreditation visit. They may wish to schedule a Provost Summit that gives them sufficient time to make changes before the accreditation visit. Others may wish to use the Provost Summit to prepare for their accreditation visit. The dean and the Provost can determine what strategy works best for the unit. In this case, the Provost Summit will be scheduled to accommodate the program need.

All non-accredited programs will be asked to participate in periodic program reviews. Those reviews can treat a college, department, center, or program as the relevant unit of analysis. The Office of the Provost publishes a calendar of required college and academic department program reviews to be completed within a 7- to 8-year cycle, or about two reviews per semester.

At any time, the Provost, dean or department chair may request a separate Provost Summit outside of the regular review cycle, in order to address an immediate challenge, discuss an opportunity for collaboration, or explore a cluster of related programs or interests.

Steps of Program Review

An academic program review typically spans two semesters. One semester, the Office of the Provost conducts a summit with the unit undergoing review, in order to identify key issues and establish the scope of review, and the program begins its self-study. In the next semester, the unit submits its self-study, meets with the internal and external review teams, and works with the Provost to develop an action plan. *Appendix I* provides a checklist and timeline for this work.

- Provost Summit

This preliminary meeting with the Provost and other selected administrators establishes the strategic focus for the review and identifies data that will be needed. The summit could consider a wide range of potential issues—for example, opportunities for innovation or distinction in an existing or new academic area; impediments to insuring quality or performances; changes in the academic discipline or external environment that require a strategic response; possible collaborations with internal or external partners to create an interdisciplinary program; or proposals to restructure student learning experiences inside or outside the classroom. Typically, the participants in the summit will agree upon about 3 areas of strategic focus. *Appendix II* contains a strategic issues statement that will be shared with the various review teams.

The unit then meets with members of the Program Review Council to establish the operational details: to confirm the steps in the review process, establish a timeline, and set preliminary agendas for the meetings with the council and the external review team. Soon after, the unit will provide a list of potential external review team members and possible times for the visit.

Once the focus of the self-study and the data needed to support it have been identified in these two preliminary meetings, Office of Institutional Research and Assessment, Finance, and the Office of the Provost will provide any data needed beyond that included in the college annual report or other existing sources. If surveys are warranted, the unit is responsible for developing the questions and collecting and evaluating the data. Both qualitative and quantitative measures are used with a focus on student learning outcomes and impact on academic reputation.

- Self-Study

The dean, department chair, center director, or other administrative head is responsible for compiling and writing the self-study. Others should be encouraged to participate in the process as appropriate—for example, department chairs, curriculum committees, program directors, faculty, and students. Although the self-study will include the unit's financial profile, its main purpose is to assess program quality and effectiveness, and to set strategic goals and priorities that can guide future planning and budget decisions.

Although the content of each self-study will vary slightly, units being reviewed should use the template in *Appendix III* to help the university maintain consistency in its program reviews. The template asks for background and descriptive data, analysis of the strategic issues and supporting data, and recommendations. The data items needed for the self-study will be decided upon at the Provost Summit. Normally, the self-study should be no longer than 25-30 pages, not including appendices.

- Internal and External Reviews

The Program Review Council conducts all internal reviews. After reading the self-study, the council meets with the unit to discuss the study's findings and recommendations.

Similarly, the council meets with the external review team and discusses its response to the self-study. The external review report should use address the strategic issues and may use the guiding questions to help with its assessment provided in *Appendix IV*. The council then formulates its own set of recommendations, which it forwards to the Provost.

The unit helps the council identify as many as five possible external reviewers—typically, deans or department chairs from peer or aspirational institutions, or someone with specific expertise related to the strategic issues. The Office of the Provosts selects reviewers from this list (typically two), sends the letter of invitation, and helps the council plan the site visit schedule. A site visit will typically last a day and a half, during which the external reviewers meet with faculty, undergraduate and graduate students, various administrators, the Dean or Department Chair, and the Provost; if helpful, reviewers may also be asked to meet with alumni or community partners.

- Action Plan

The final step of program review is a meeting with the Provost to discuss the recommendations made by the internal and external reviews. Following that meeting, the unit formulates an action plan that sets goals and priorities, and describes the actions needed to achieve those goals, the metrics or performance measures that will be used to assess progress toward those goals, and the overall timeline for implementation. Although program review is not itself a budget process, any operating or capital budget priorities that identified in the review process can be included as part of the unit's requests in the next university budget-planning cycle.

Outcomes and Follow-Up

Program review is one of several forms of institutional evaluation. It is designed to support and complement other processes of academic strategic planning, including external accreditation or reaccreditation processes, institutional assessment of learning outcomes, annual reports, and the annual review, planning, and budget prioritization process.

The purpose of program review is to promote academic excellence and continuous improvement in student learning, organizational effectiveness and fiscal sustainability. In the service of this goal, the action plan could imagine a range of possible outcomes, including the following:

- If the review identifies opportunities for innovation that advance university priorities, are responsive to current student and market needs, and are financially viable and

sustainable, the Provost may 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 dean or unit head can be invited to include these requests in the usual annual academic planning and budgeting processes.
- If the review finds that a specific program, major, or minor 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 could recommend discontinuation.

In order to guarantee follow-up on the program review process, the Provost will invite the unit to a conversation one year after the review, to discuss progress made toward goals and priorities.

Appendix I. Program Review Checklist

Step	Description	Responsible	Date
Provost Summit			
	Provost Summit is scheduled	Office of the Provost	
	Meet with faculty and students to plan for the summit, develop set of strategic issues, submit proposed issues to the Provost	Dean, department chair	
	Provost Summit is held, issues for self-study are established and a decision is made regarding the need for an external review	Unit, Office of the Provost	
	Meet with Associate Provost to review next steps and determine if assistance is needed for self-study	Unit, Associate Provost	
	Gather information for self-study from appropriate sources, e.g., Office of Institutional Research and Assessment, Finance, Provost's Office	Unit, OIRA, Finance, Provost's Office	
	Establish date for internal review, submit names for external review team, if applicable	Unit	
Self-Study			
	Complete a focused self-study following guidelines, include previous reviews and survey data	Unit	
	Submit draft self-study document to Provost's Office	Unit	
	Provide feedback on the self-study	Provost's Office	
	Finalize the self-study document and submit to Provost	Unit	
	Distribute self-study to Program Review Council and external team as appropriate	Provost's Office	
	Schedule meeting with the Program Review Council and develop agenda for external review team, if needed	Provost's Office	
Reviews / Recommendations			

	Meet with the Program Review Council	Unit, Program Review Council	
	Meet with external review team, if applicable	Unit, Office of the Provost, external review team	
	Program Review Council makes recommendations, shares with Provost and unit, unit responds	Program Review Council, Unit,	
	External review team makes recommendations, report distributed to the unit, unit responds, if applicable	External Review Team, Unit	
Outcomes			
	Provost meets with unit to discuss and review recommendations and establish goals for the action plan	Unit and the Provost	
	Unit develops an action plan for continuous improvement with goals, objectives, timeline and responsibilities and submits to the Provost	Unit	
Post-Review Follow-Up			
	Meet one year later to discuss progress on implementation of action plan	Unit and Provost	

Appendix II. Strategic Issues Statement

To insure 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 Summit. The strategic issues statement will be revised and finalized after the Summit and the unit will incorporate the issues into its self-study. Deans and department chairs are encouraged to engage faculty, administrators, and students in determining the strategic issues for the unit. For accredited units, these may differ from the focus of an accreditation visit, if the unit and the Provost agree on this approach.

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.). Appendix IV 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 5 pages, excluding appendixes.

Please include the following information as part of the Strategic Issues Statement:

Program or unit of analysis:

Dean / Department Chair:

Semester of Review:

Date Submitted:

Strategic Issues:

Appendix III. Self-Study Guidelines

The following guidelines are designed to assist units as they conduct the self-study and report on the results. The purpose of developing a set of guidelines is to insure a reasonable level of institutional consistency and yet allow for flexibility in the self-study process. While the self-study is intended to focus on a small number of strategic issues, it also provides an opportunity for the unit to examine its purpose within the context of university priorities, present an analysis of its programs of study, identify changes within its field or discipline and make recommendations for improvement. The format provided in these guidelines can be used for the self-study report or a different format can be used by mutual agreement between the unit head and the Provost. It is anticipated that the self-study report is no more than 25-30 pages excluding the data in the appendixes.

I. Executive Summary

Please include an executive summary that is 3-5 pages in length. Identify the strategic focus of the self-study, key points of the unit's analysis of the strategic issues, and a set of recommendations. Describe the process used, constituencies involved, and proposed action steps for program improvement, especially any opportunities for innovation and distinctiveness.

II. Results of Previous Reviews

Please include a brief description of the results of previous reviews (internal or external) and the resolution of any outstanding issues from the reviews. Provide any necessary documentation including the Action Plan from the previous review, if available.

III. Overview of the Unit and Programs

This section is intended to present information about the unit that will help the reviewers to position the unit within the university and among its peers outside the university. Some of the data is available in the data repository or, if necessary, may be obtained from OIRA, the Provost's office or the Office of Finance. The following suggested data items could be included in the self-study based on relevance to the strategic issues and should be included in an appendix.

1. Strategic Priorities and Goals

Brief description of the strategic priorities of the unit, its research, teaching, and outreach goals, distinctive programs and areas of excellence, outstanding faculty, or student achievements over the last three years, and emerging trends in its external environment.

- a. Unit mission, purpose, strategic priorities, and goals
- b. Support of and alignment with university mission and strategic priorities

- c. Unit accomplishments and distinctiveness among peers and aspirational institutions, e.g., academic reputation, rankings, research grants awarded, niche programs, faculty and student accomplishments, signature programs, high impact learning experiences.
- d. Current or anticipated external or internal changes that may impact the unit

2. Academic Programs

Description of undergraduate, graduate and PhD programs and/or majors – enrollment, student outcomes, courses taught, and high impact learning experiences.

- a. Name and number of degrees, majors, certificates, or other clinical experiences offered, number of enrolled students by program or department or degree over the past 5 years
- b. Graduates by degree, major or program over the past 5 years (undergraduate, graduate and PhD)
- c. Class size by lower and upper division undergraduate, graduate, PhD over the past 5 years
- d. Number of courses and credit hours taught in the college, the department, or major, fall and spring for past 5 years
- e. Percent of credit hours taught to majors or degree-seekers within the unit and outside the unit over the past 5 years
- f. High impact student learning experiences including courses that provide research experiences, internships, service learning opportunities or special programs offered by centers, institutes, clinics, or outreach programs

3. Student Enrollment, Outcomes and Assessment

Recruitment, retention and five year program enrollment history, measures of student success, and assessment of student learning outcomes. Results of surveys that assess other student outcomes.

- a. Recruitment, retention, and enrollment trends by college, major or degree, diversity history
- b. PhD placements (5 year history)
- c. Assessment of student learning outcomes (undergraduate and graduate) by major or degree
- d. Undergraduate and graduate student placement statistics, graduate schools attended, employer surveys, recruiter feedback on desirable skills
- e. Pass rates on graduate placement or professional exams compared with national norms
- f. Results of surveys of student satisfaction with teaching, advising, exit surveys, recruiter surveys, other internal or external benchmarks used by the unit

4. Faculty Recruitment, Profile, and Productivity

Faculty recruitment strategies, hiring and promotion, faculty diversity goals, faculty with nationally recognized expertise. Teaching and research productivity, faculty diversity, support of faculty including faculty development programs.

- a. Faculty diversity, status of recruitment and hiring in targeted fields, joint appointment or interdisciplinary hires over the past 5 years
- b. Teaching loads and faculty workloads (credit hours), average class sizes by faculty
- c. Percentage of students taught by tenure track faculty, by full time participating faculty, by part time faculty, percent of full time tenure track faculty, full-time adjuncts and part time adjuncts, participation of non-tenure track faculty in teaching, research and service
- d. Faculty development opportunities for tenure track full time and adjunct full time and part time faculty, incentives for innovation and new programs, support for research, teaching and service, faculty mentorship programs, faculty involvement in outreach and external activities

5. Infrastructure and Financial Profile

Issues related to the learning and teaching environment, infrastructure such as technology, lab and special facilities, research support, and process improvements

- a. Unit financial profile (5 years)
- b. Review of facilities, space, equipment, technology, and learning environment
- c. Research support (5 year history)
- d. Internal improvement in instructional or service delivery (e.g., internal reallocation of resources, technology improvements, changes in advising, staffing, or support services, etc.)

IV. Identification and Analysis of Strategic Issues

Please discuss the strategic issues for the unit, providing background information as necessary and referring to data in the previous section as needed. These issues are typically established through an assessment of the unit's strengths, weaknesses, threats, and opportunities and an analysis of these should be included in this section. Strategic issues might be motivated by internal or external trends or changes. These might include opportunities to advance university goals or strategic priorities, respond to enrollment trends, improve student outcomes, create interdisciplinary research initiatives, enhance faculty recruitment and retention strategies, or respond to a changing workplace environment. Please identify factors that may be causing the unit to face new challenges or opportunities in your discussion.

V. Recommendations

Please provide specific recommendations and steps that could be taken to address the strategic issues for the unit. Please include scenarios that resolve the issues with and without new resources. In the current environment, innovative and efficient use of existing resources typically provides the most feasible path forward. These recommendations will be shared with the internal and external review and will be used to create a proposed set of action steps.

Appendix IV. Guiding Questions

These questions are designed to be used by the units to help them identify strategic issues or challenges and generate a productive internal discussion. 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 enrollment increasing or decreasing?
 - b. How well does the program prepare students to succeed, that is, what are the student outcomes after graduation?
 - c. Is this an important area of research for faculty or faculty and students? If so, what evidence supports this?
 - d. Does the program meet a current or emerging need for Marquette, Milwaukee, the state, for 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 rank nationally using the unit's quality metrics?
 - c. Is there potential to grow the program within our current market or reach new markets?
 - d. Is there an opportunity to create an interdisciplinary program through collaboration with other units or external partners?
 - e. 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. Are we putting sufficient effort toward recruiting students for this program?
 - b. Is the program properly resourced with respect to faculty and staff, facilities, and technology?
 - c. Has the program implemented strategies for reallocating current resources to meet changes in the environment?
 - d. Does the program have 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. How does the program compare to other academic programs within the college with respect to its financial profile? How does it compare to other programs outside the college with respect to its financial profile?
 - b. Given its quality, alignment with mission, demand for the program, and operating surplus or loss, should we grow it, maintain it or reduce in size?

- c. Is there an opportunity to combine this program with others or merge its activities into other areas and continue to achieve its goals?

Appendix V. Outcomes and Action Plan

The following set of recommendations from the Program Review Council, the external review team, and actions steps from the Provost are agreed upon by the dean or department head and the Provost.

Program or unit of analysis:

Dean / Department Chair:

Semester of Review:

Date Submitted:

I. Program Review Council Recommendations

II. External Review Team Recommendations

III. Provost / Unit Outcome and Action Plan

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

Strategic Issue:

Recommendation	Action	Responsible	Date Completed