

Academic Program Review

University of Oklahoma

Overview

Academic Program Review (APR) is a form of institutional self-study mandated for every degree-granting unit at the University of Oklahoma by the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education. The first cycle of program review at OU began in 1986-87 (For background, see OSRHE Policies & Procedures, 3.7 Academic Program Review, p. 64 [<https://www.okhighered.org/state-system/policy-procedures/2018/Chapter%203-%20August%202018.pdf>] and [OU Faculty Handbook § 5.37](#)). Academic units are reviewed every seven years.

The reviews are under the auspices of the Provost's office and are handled by the Vice Provost for Faculty. The reviews are characterized by several themes:

- 1) The reviews are meant to be collegial and are based on peer review.
- 2) The reviews should be forward-looking and directed toward improvement of the program.
- 3) The reviews should be scholarly, evaluative, and based on academic criteria. They should seek to define questions that will help increase the understanding of the unit.
- 4) Every attempt should be made to make the review an objective process.
- 5) The reviews are meant to be comprehensive in that they view the programs in terms of how they are connected to the university and to the intellectual discipline at large.
- 6) The reviews should be focused on how to improve the program without additional resources. The review should address if there are more efficient or economical ways to run the programs and the effectiveness of the program.
- 7) The review will address short and long term demand for the programs in each unit and direction of change in demand for each program.
- 8) The reviews should be dynamic and should lead to improvements in programs.

Objectives

The purpose of program review is to improve the quality of education at the University of Oklahoma. Academic programs require regular review and self-examination to improve and program review is a crucial part of this process.

The process should provide a useful academic review to the unit, Budget Dean, and Provost. From the administrative point of view, the review can be important for long range planning by providing data on the overall health of a unit, faculty resources, student demand, facilities, as

well as the strengths and weaknesses of the unit. For the unit, the review can provide a mechanism for improvement and change. The faculty should participate in the process and the review is important for faculty governance. Externally, the reviews provide the opportunity for the university to be accountable to the students, taxpayers, donors, funding agencies, accreditation organizations (Higher Learning Commission - North Central Association [HLC-NCA]), and state government (e.g., State Regents).

Questions that are commonly addressed during program review include the following:

- Is the teaching in the unit effective and useful?
- Is the curriculum appropriate, given the numbers and qualifications of the faculty?
- Are department resources sufficient to meet the student demand?
- Are the faculty's publication record and/or other indicators of creative activity indicative of high quality?
- Does the unit encourage faculty to seek external funding for their research/creative activity?
- Is this a unit that is recognized within its professional community for the quality of its contributions?
- What is the opinion of experts from outside the university?
- Does the unit have a forward-looking strategic plan?
- Is the unit successfully meeting its' own mission as well as the mission of the university?
- Does the unit have a plan to incorporate service learning into the curriculum?

PROGRAM REVIEW CYCLE 5

2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018
Architecture (Including Urban Design Studio – Tulsa)	Aerospace & Mechanical Engineering	Accounting	Microbiology & Plant Biology
Construction Science	Civil Engr & Environmental Science	Finance	Mathematics – postponed to 2018-2019
Interior Design	Chemical, Biological & Materials Engineering	Management & Entrepreneurship	Physics & Astronomy
Landscape Architecture	Computer Science	Management Information Systems	Zoology
Regional and City Planning	Electrical and Computer Engineering	Marketing & Supply Chain Management	Geography & Environmental Sustainability
Health & Exercise Science	Industrial & Systems Engineering	Journalism and Mass Communication	Geology & Geophysics
Human Relations	Petroleum & Geological Engineering	Dance – postponed to 2018-2019	Meteorology
Social Work	Anthropology	Drama	Aviation
	Library and Info Studies	Music	
	English	Musical Theater	
		Visual Arts	
2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022 - Cycle 6
Educational Leadership & Policy Studies – postponed to 2019-2020	Classics & Letters	African and African-American Studies	Architecture
Educational Psychology	Communication	Film and Media Studies	Construction Science
Instructional Leadership & Academic Curriculum	Economics	Modern Languages, Literatures & Linguistics	Interior Design
International and Area Studies	History	Political Science	Landscape Architecture
Administrative Leadership/Organizational Leadership (PCS)	History of Science	Psychology	Regional and City Planning
Chemistry and Biochemistry	Philosophy	Religious Studies	Health & Exercise Science
Mathematics	Native American Studies	Sociology	Human Relations
Women's and Gender Studies	Criminal Justice (PCS)	Honors College	Social Work
Native American Studies – postponed to 2019-2020	Educational Leadership & Policy Studies	Human & Health Services Cluster (PCS)	Cultural Studies Cluster (PCS)
Dance			
Law			

Procedures (See attached Timetable)

The APR Process is coordinated by the Vice Provost for Faculty (VPF) in the Office of the Senior Vice President and Provost. The two year review process consists of:

- 1) During the fall prior to the review, the VPF meets with the units to be reviewed to outline and discuss the APR process. The unit is asked to provide a list and contact information for at least six potential external reviewers. The external reviewers should not have connections to the unit unless approved by the Vice Provost. VPF recruits two external reviewers for each unit during the following spring semester for on-site reviews during the APR.
- 2) During the spring and summer, academic units prepare a self-study document which is supplemented by university generated quantitative departmental profile information as well as results from an online survey of the faculty and students. The self-study instructions document describes what should be included in the self-study. The self-studies are submitted to VPF in late August or early September.
- 3) In the late summer/fall of the first year the VPF forms the APR committee which consists of a representative from the office of Dean of the Graduate College, representatives from two dean's offices of colleges whose units are not under review, and faculty approved by the Faculty Senate.
- 4) At an organizational meeting of the APR committee, the VPF explains the APR process and the self-studies from the units are handed out. Each member will be responsible for writing a draft report for one unit although the reports are consensus documents.
- 5) The APR committee meets with the budget deans early in the process to get an overview of the units. These meetings can provide valuable information that can help to guide the review.
- 6) Each unit up for review will commonly require from 2-3 discussions, usually of an hour or more. During these discussions, it is assumed that each member of the committee has read the self-study document. The primary reviewer for the unit leads the discussion. It generally consists of moving carefully through the self-study report to ask and answer questions that arise. The committee may find that some questions cannot be answered by the information in the self-studies. These questions are drafted and sent to the unit. The chairs of the units are invited to come to a meeting to answer the questions.
- 7) On-site visit of the external reviewers take place during the fall or spring semester of the review depending on their availability and the unit's schedule. The external reviewers are given the self-study document along with institutional data provided to the units in preparation of the document. The 2-day visit starts with a breakfast meeting with the VPF and ends with an exit meeting with the APR committee. The units are responsible for creating an itinerary for the reviewers. The reviewers are provided with a suggested

template for their document but are not required to use it. They are given a month to complete and submit their team review report. VPF shares their report with the unit head and the APR committee.

- 8) When the APR committee feels comfortable, the draft report (see guidelines) is written based on their review and the review report of the external team. Some units will have as few as 3 drafts; some as many as 5-6; it depends on the complexity of the unit report, the skill of the draft writers, the degree of problems (if any) in the unit, and quite frankly, whether the committee has done a good job in the discussions.
- 9) When the APR committee feels that the draft report is ready, it is sent to the Provost along with the external review report for comments. The APR committee report is then shared by the unit for their review and as a check to correct any factual errors. A final meeting is scheduled with the APR committee, Provost, budget dean, and the unit. The purpose of the meeting is to discuss the report and generally provide a forum for the exchange of ideas.
- 10) Following the meeting, the committee discusses possible revisions. A final draft is prepared, and sent to the Provost with copies to the unit, the budget dean, and the State Regents.
- 11) During the semester after the final meeting, the budget dean and the unit chair/director prepare an action plan for the unit. A draft version of this action plan is shared with the academic unit at a meeting of the unit with the budget dean. After this meeting, a final version of the budget dean's action plan is shared with the unit and sent to the Provost.

OU (Norman) Academic Program Review (APR) Timetable (2 years)

Fall, Year 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vice Provost for Faculty (VPF) meets with units who will be reviewed the next year to discuss procedures. The key parts of the departmental profile are discussed. The units are asked to provide contact information for six external reviewers from peer institutions. • VPF conducts online survey of the faculty and students (via Office of Academic Assessment), requests departmental profile dataset from IRR and sends the survey result and the dataset to the unit. • Unit prepares self-study.
Spring/Summer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VPF forms external review committees and the internal APR committee and requests approval of the APR committee from the Faculty Senate.
Fall, Year 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Units submit self-studies to the VPF last week of August or first week of September. • VPF meets with APR committee to describe process and works with the external review teams and the units to schedule the on-site visits. • APR committee meets with Deans for an overview of the units. • APR committee discusses each self-study and develops a list of questions for the unit. • Questions are sent to the unit chairs and each chair is invited to meet with the APR Committee.
Fall/Spring, Year 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • External review teams conduct on-site visits. • External team reviews are received, and each unit is discussed by the committee. • The committee reaches consensus and a draft report for each unit is written by one member.
Spring, Year 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee members make revisions and shares both the internal and the external review reports with the Provost. • Draft report sent to unit to check for factual errors.
By December, Year 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final meeting with unit, APR committee, budget Dean, and Provost to discuss APR committee recommendations. • Budget Dean and unit address recommendations in an “Action Plan.” Should be completed by December.