Academic Program Review Process & Guidelines

Academic Program Review

Framingham State University has developed the following process and guidelines for Academic Program Reviews for those academic programs that are not accredited by professional associations or government organizations.

I. Goals of Academic Program Review

The primary goal of the program review process at Framingham State University is to improve teaching and learning and to enhance the success of our students through employability or preparation for graduate study. Through a reflective process that is data-informed, the review process provides faculty and the administration the opportunity to periodically examine: (1) the extent to which programs are achieving their mission and student learning objectives, (2) the relationship of program mission and objectives to FSU's mission and strategic priorities (3) program quality, and (4) the effectiveness of how the department uses University resources.

II. Elements and Timeline for Academic Program Review

Academic programs are typically reviewed following the completion of a five-year period* (a sixth-year review based on five years of information and data). Programs accredited or approved by an outside agency will not be required to submit a separate self-study as part of the University-wide review cycle but will instead follow the review cycle dictated by the outside agency.

Programs to be reviewed each academic year will be selected by the Provost. Department chairs/program coordinators for those programs will be notified prior to the start of the academic year in which the self-study will take place.

Elements of Academic Program Review	Timeline (One Academic Year)	Activities
The Self-Study: This is the core of the review process. The narrative for the self-study is framed around a set of guidelines and data followed by appendices that include the evidence used to support the narrative of the self-study.	The self-study should be completed no later than **March 15** of the review year	Academic Deans will coordinate the review process for programs in their colleges. Guidelines for the self-study are contained in the next section of this document. Typically, the department/program will form a subcommittee to conduct the self-study. Upon its completion, the self-study will be provided to the external reviewer, Dean, AVPAA, and Provost

Elements of Academic Program Review	Timeline (One Academic Year)	Activities
External Reviewer Selection: The Dean, in consultation with the Chair, Faculty, and AVPAA, selects at least one reviewer selected from peer or aspirational peer institutions with administrative experience at the chair level or higher.	**End of December**	The Department Chair/Program Coordinator will submit the names and credentials of at least two potential reviewers to the Dean and AVPAA.
	End of January	An external reviewer will be selected/approved by the Dean and the AVPAA.
External Reviewer Campus Visit: The selected external reviewer visits the FSU campus	**Late March/Early April**	The reviewer visits program facilities and interacts with stakeholders, including faculty, staff, students, the Department Chair, and the Dean.
The External Reviewer Report: The external reviewer submits a written report containing observations and recommendations that emerged from both a review of the self-study report and the information collected during the campus visit. The report will use the template provided by FSU.	**No later than April 30**	A stipend of $1000 is paid to the external reviewer *only* after the report is received.
The Action Plan Response: The Department Chair, faculty, and the Dean respond to the self-study and external reviewer report by developing an action plan based upon the identification of strengths, weaknesses, and recommendations that emerged from the overall review.	**End of May**	This response forms the basis of the concluding meeting with the Provost, in which the action plan is discussed and finalized.
Post Review Follow-up: During the years leading up to the next review, the department will seek to address the recommendations contained in the Summary Report using the Recommendations and Actions Form.	Ongoing	The template will be provided to the program.

* Special circumstances may require more frequent review for specific programs.

II. Guidelines for Developing the Self-Study for Academic Program Review

A. **Introduction**:
   1. Briefly introduce your department and its degree-granting programs.
   2. List the action items/recommendations that emerged from the last self-study and provide a brief summary of progress made for each action item.

B. **Mission, Objectives & Relevance**

   3. What is the program's mission and purpose? (Standard 1.1)
   4. Explain whether and how the department reevaluated its current mission since the last self-study.
   5. List the program learning objectives - including knowledge, intellectual/academic skills, methods of inquiry, creative abilities, and values? (Standards 4.2)
   6. How does the program's mission and learning objectives align with Framingham State University's and your college's current mission and strategic priorities? (Standard 1.1)
   7. How does the program examine its relevance using internal and external perspectives, including employers, alumni, advisory boards, peer comparisons, external specialists, corporate partners, community members, graduate schools? (Standard 8.5)
   8. Self-Appraisal of Section B

C. **Curriculum, Rigor & Coherence**: *Using the program curriculum map and the four-year/two-year completion plan as the basis, reflect on the following prompts*:
   9. How do the goals, structure, and content of the program, as well as instructional methods, demonstrate the coherence of the program and assure breadth, depth, and synthesis of learning? (Standards 4.3 and 4.13)
   10. How are students provided with(a) opportunities to develop a solid foundation in a discipline or clearly articulated interdisciplinary program, (b) an understanding of theory and methods, and (c) in-depth study in one or more areas of specialization? (Standard 4.13)
   11. How are students in the program provided sequential opportunities to learn important skills and understandings? (Standards 4.12 and 4.14)
   12. Specifically, how does the program curriculum integrate with the general education curriculum? (Standards 4.16 and 4.17)
   13. Does the number of courses in the four-year/two-year completion map require substantial work at the advanced undergraduate levels (300-400 level), with appropriate prerequisites? (Standard 4.14)
   14. Reflect on how the program curriculum is inclusive to ensure students (Standard 5.12):
       a. Learn diverse perspectives and are able to see diverse voices in the curriculum.
       b. Utilizes open educational resources.
       c. Will be exposed to multiple and varying perspectives.
   15. How do program course requirements align with mission and articulated program learning objectives? (Standard 4.19)
   16. How does the program afford students adequate opportunities to pursue areas of interest through unrestricted electives? (Standard 4.14)
   17. For a program providing professional training: discuss how the program assures an effective relationship between the curriculum and good practice in the field. (Standard 4.19)
   18. Self-Appraisal of Section C

D. **Student Success**: *Using the program enrollment, retention, and graduation rates for the past five years, reflect on the following prompts*:
19. How are students provided with the information and guidance they need to attain degree completion in four/two years? (Standards 4.31, 5.2, and 5.3)
20. Provide a brief analysis of the enrollment, retention, licensure pass rates, and graduation rate trends since your last self-study.
21. What has/can your program do to increase (a) recruitment and (b) retention of first-time, full-time students and (c) graduation of students?
22. How does the program disaggregate and analyze data points, in questions 11 and 12 above, with an eye toward equity and inclusion?
23. What do you know about how students from your program utilize support services like CASA, Counselling, and Career Services to promote their own success?
24. Describe the opportunities the department/program provides to students for:
    a. Engaging with faculty in research and creative activities. (Standard 6.20)
    b. Exploring regional career paths and opportunities and making graduate program decisions. (Standard 6.19)
    c. Civic engagement, service learning, internships, or other professional engagement or community involvement. (Standards 6.17 and 6.20)
25. **Self-Appraisal of Section D**

E. **Assessment & Planning:** *Using the annual program assessment reports and results from the undergraduate exit, academic advising, and alumni surveys, reflect on the following prompts*:

26. How are the quality of student learning and creative achievement systematically assessed at the program level? (Standards 4.3, 4.45, 4.46, 4.49, 6.10, 6.11, 6.15, 6.16, 8.3, 8.4)
27. Summarize and analyze the results from the direct assessment of student learning (classroom assignments, tests, etc.) conducted since the last self-study.
28. Summarize and analyze the results from the indirect assessment of student learning (including surveys, focus group discussions) conducted since the last self-study.
29. How do faculty systematically participate in the regular assessment cycle of student learning objectives at both the course and programmatic levels?
30. How does the department systematically utilize the results from direct and indirect assessments and program review to (a) improve the program and render it more relevant to students' needs and (b) improve teaching and learning? (Standards 5.8, 5.20, 8.1, 8.4, 8.5) (Standards 2.6, 4.6)
31. **Self-Appraisal of Section E**

F. **Faculty Quality & Productivity:** *Using faculty CVs, teaching, research and creative work, and service productivity, grants and awards, professional certifications, professional development, UG Student Exit Surveys, reflect on the following prompts:*

32. To what extent are faculty numbers sufficient to fulfill the program's mission, to avoid overreliance on part-time faculty?
33. How are faculty qualifications (e.g., advanced degrees, scholarly or creative work, quality of teaching, professional experience) aligned with the nature of their responsibilities? (Standards 6.3 and 6.8)

34. How is the quality of teaching systematically assessed, and how are results used to improve teaching and learning and for program improvement? (Standards 6.10, 6.11, 6.14)
35. What scholarly and creative work do faculty undertake to ensure currency in theory, knowledge, and pedagogy in their fields? (Standard 6.11)
36. How well are scholarly and creative work supported with financial, technological, and other resources, including faculty workload adjustments? (Standards 6.7 and 6.20)
37. How do faculty provide service to their departments, the University, and the larger community, and how is this service encouraged and rewarded? (Standard 6.7 and 6.20)
38. What efforts has the program undertaken to recruit/retain/support the success of faculty from minoritized and underrepresented groups? (Standard Standards 6.2, 6.5, and 6.18)
39. Reflect on the diversity among faculty and how the program ensures students will be exposed to different points of view and teaching methods. (Standards 6.2, 6.5, and 6.18)
40. How are pedagogical innovations that faculty members undertake encouraged or rewarded? (Standards 6.12, 6.17, and 6.20)
41. How are faculty prepared to advise and mentor students effectively, and whether resources for effective advising are adequate? (Standards 6.7, 6.17, 6.19, and 6.20)
42. What mentorship processes does the department/ program offer for new faculty, including part-time faculty? (Standards 6.1 and 6.6)
43. **Self-Appraisal of Section F**

G. **Resources & Planning:** *Using the department budget, library resources, classroom/lab space, and other resources, reflect on the following prompts*:
44. What process does the department use to allocate its resources?
45. In what ways does the department maximize the use of its human resources?
46. In what ways does the department maximize the use of material resources such as space, equipment, operating funds, etc.?
47. Describe the process by which department faculty communicate research and resource needs with the department library liaison and in turn with the library.
48. How are results of program review used systematically for improvement and planning as it relates to student achievement?
49. **Self-Appraisal of Section G**

H. **Future Goals & Areas of Focus:** *Using the self-study as the basis for evaluation, discuss the following prompts:*

50. List specific strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats that emerged from this self-study?
51. Examine the self-appraisal for each section together with the response to Q50, and discuss with department faculty to prioritize areas that need focus over the next 5 years

I. **Conclusions**
52. List specific areas for emphasis/benchmarks with a timeline for each of the areas that the department prioritized as needing focus on over the next 5 years
J. **Appendices**