

**Office of the Chancellor  
Pennsylvania's State System of Higher Education  
Procedures and Standards for University Operations**

**Procedure/Standard Number 2018-35  
Review of Academic Programs and Programs in Support of the Student Experience**

Approved by:   
Chancellor

Date: 7-3-18

**History:** Replaces Administrative Procedure for Board of Governors' Policy 1986-04-R: *Program Review* (which was rescinded by the Board of Governors on January 25, 2018)

**Revised:**

**Additional History:**

**Related Policies, Procedures or Standards:**

[Board of Governors' Policy 1990-06-A: \*Academic Degrees\*](#); [Board of Governors' Policy 1986-04-A: \*Program Review\*](#)

**Additional References:**

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**I. Introduction**

The high-value and relevant academic programs of the Pennsylvania's State System of Higher Education universities prepare our students for success in their lives and careers in our global society. Periodic program review is a best practice in American higher education that involves stakeholders in the continuous improvement of existing academic programs and programs in support of the student experience. The purpose of this procedure is to communicate the instructions, processes, and standards regarding review of academic programs and programs in support of the student experience within Pennsylvania's State System of Higher Education (State System) as required in [Board of Governors' Policy 1986-04-A: \*Program Review\*](#)

**II. Definitions**

**A. Academic Programs:** All programs defined in Board of Governor's Policy 1985-01-A: *Requirements for Initiation or Change of Credit-Based Academic Programs*. This includes all undergraduate and graduate academic degree programs (academic majors) along with all tracks/concentrations, academic minors, and certificates (undergraduate and graduate).

**B. Programs in Support of the Student Experience:** A broad network of programs and services delivered either in-person or virtually that directly contributes to students' educational experiences and fosters student success. Examples of such programs may include the library, student life, enrollment services (e.g. undergraduate admissions, graduate admissions, bursar, and registrar), public safety, judicial affairs, financial aid, counseling, athletics, residence life, Greek life, student union and student activities, health and wellness programs, career services, academic support services, diversity and inclusion programs, tutoring, advising, and disability services.

Each university shall determine which programs in support of the student experience should perform a program review.

### III. Procedure/Standard

#### A. Types of Reviews

1. Full Review: A full review is for academic programs not subject to specialized accreditation to include the criteria outlined below.
2. Modified Review: A modified review is for academic programs subject to specialized accreditation consisting of the accreditation review, the accreditor's recommendations/suggestions, and criteria for the full review not addressed in the accreditation review. Exceptions to the modified review will be given on a case-by-case basis by approval from the chancellor or designee.

#### B. Criteria for Review of Academic Programs

A self-study shall be conducted for all academic programs scheduled for review. Full reviews of academic programs shall include, but not be limited to, the criteria listed in Appendix A. Modified reviews of academic programs shall be determined at each university to meet the needs of programs that have specialized accreditation. At a minimum, a modified review must contain all criteria outlined in Appendix A for full program review.

#### C. Criteria for Review of Programs in Support of the Student Experience

Each university should identify all programs in support of the student experience they wish to review and develop criteria that meet the needs of the university. These criteria should promote institutional effectiveness by ensuring program and service quality, integrity, continuous improvement, and include the alignment of planning, resources, and assessment to support the university's mission.

#### D. University Processes

Ensuring timely reporting to the Office of the Chancellor, each university will create their own processes and associated timeline for academic program review.

#### E. Academic Program Review Schedule

1. Full Program Review: In accordance with [Policy 1986-04-A: Program Review](#) and in consultation with each university, the Office of the Chancellor-Academic and Student Affairs shall create a schedule for each academic program's full review that will occur on a 5 year cycle. The university president (or designee) or the chancellor (or designee) may require a shorter review interval for a given programs. If a full program review is required that is less than five year cycle, the next full program review for that program will occur five years from submission of the last report.
2. Modified Program Review: Modified program reviews will be performed on a schedule determined by the specialized accreditation organization. If the review cycle for a program with specialized accreditation is every ten years or longer, the academic program will need to conduct a full-program review every five years between the review for specialized accreditation. (e.g., full program review year five, modified review year ten, full program review year 15, modified review year 20, etc.).

Exceptions to the modified review will be given on a case-by-case basis. University presidents (or designee) may request an exception (to include rationale and latest accreditation review) to the chancellor (or designee).

#### F. **Evaluation for Academic Program Review**

1. **Internal Evaluators:** Committees appointed or designated to review self-study documents and make recommendations about the program in question should include at least two people not directly responsible for the program; these may include faculty or administrators from other units, students, and/or alumni.
2. **External Evaluators:** External review of existing academic programs and programs in support of the student experience is a standard practice in higher education. The purpose of external review is to garner additional perspectives on program strengths and weaknesses from individuals in the field, or a closely related field, who are affiliated with other institutions. Except under special circumstances, external evaluations are to be from outside the State System.

#### G. **Reporting**

By August 15, each university president or designee shall submit to the State System Office of Academic and Student Affairs the complete program review for each academic program review completed during the year.

#### IV. **Attachments**

Appendix A: Five-Year Academic Program Criteria for Full Program Review

Appendix B: Program Completion Metrics

Appendix C: Curriculum Overview

Appendix D: Example Academic Map

- V. **Implementation:** Immediately for programs in support of the student experience. The Office of the Chancellor will work with each university to create a calendar detailing when each existing academic program's five-year review is required. New academic programs will be required to undergo a five-year program review five years after implementation. After a new program's first five year review, the program's cycle can be aligned with the other (previous) degree programs within the academic department if the University so chooses. Academic program reviews due August 15, 2018, may use the new processes and criteria established in this State System Standard/Procedure for Program Review. Academic program reviews due August 15, 2019, will be required to use the new processes and criteria established in this State System Standard/Procedure for Program Review.



## Appendix A Five-Year Academic Program Review Criteria

1. List the name of each program offered within the department, this should include all degree programs (along with all concentrations), minors, and certificates. With each program, include the award (B.A., B.S., B.S.Ed, M.S., M.B.A., Ed.D, Ph.D., D.Ed., Sub-Baccalaureate Certificate, Post-Baccalaureate, Post-Masters Certificate, etc.) along with the number of credits required for completion, the CIP code, and all delivery methods (face-to-face, online, blended, or ITV).
2. Program description from the university catalog.
3. Description of how the program is aligned with the department, college, and university's mission and vision.
4. A curriculum overview for the degree program being reviewed. An example can be found in Appendix C.
5. An academic map that outlines the course sequence as appropriate for full-time students and if applicable, a course sequence if the program is designed as a degree completion program. A sample academic map for a baccalaureate program can be found in Appendix D.
6. List of all courses (required and electives) for the program. Include the course label and number (i.e., BIO 101), course title, delivery method (face-to-face, online, blended, ITV), and if the course is required or is an elective.
7. Official master course syllabus for each required and elective course should be attached as an appendix.
8. All Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) for the program. Along with a listing of all SLOs, each SLO should include:
  - a. how each SLO was measured;
  - b. when each SLO was measured (e.g., year 1, year 2, year 3, year 4, and/or year 5);
  - c. the results from each SLO assessment; and
  - d. any actions taken based on the results from the assessment.
9. For concepts, theories, and skills introduced, reinforced, or applied in each required or elective course, indicate:
  - a. which SLO(s) is/are *introduced* in the course;
  - b. which SLO(s) is/are *reinforced* in the course;
  - c. which SLO(s) is/are *applied* in the course; and
  - d. which courses had data collected for program assessment.
10. Curriculum changes occurring over the review period. Include the semester and year the change took effect, a description of the change, and the rationale for the change.
11. Overview of the plan for assessing student learning and the results. Include how the department has incorporated the results of the assessment back into the curriculum or department, i.e., closing the loop on identified issues. At a minimum, the following questions should be answered:

- a. Are students meeting the program's learning outcomes at the planned level?
    - i. If not, what should be changed to achieve the desired results?
    - ii. If the learning outcomes are met, are there specific efforts that can be attributed to the students' success?
12. Support for the SLOs supported by departments other than the department hosting the program. Please include:
  - a. department name that provides support for the program;
  - b. course name and identifier, if applicable; and
  - c. description of the support provided.
13. Summary of full-time and adjunct faculty scholarly or creative activity during the review period, indicating which faculty are tenured and tenure track and which are adjunct.
14. Current resume/CV for all full-time and adjunct faculty, indicating which faculty are tenured and tenure track and which are adjunct.
15. Summary of notable student achievement during the review period.
16. Overview and analysis of the five-year budget for the review cycle. If some aspects of the budget are shared among several programs (departmental budget), please list budget components that are shared, and explain how the costs are proportioned among all programs. If expenditures were made that benefited the program but were not departmental/program expenditures (i.e., Technology Tuition Fee Funds, university renewal/replacement funds etc.), please identify these program investments. Describe any budgetary challenges that have impacted achieving program goals and overall program performance. Include all capital investments that have been made for the program/department over the review period. This list should include some or all of the following, as applicable:
  - a. new positions;
  - b. educational/instructional technology enhancements;
  - c. educational/instructional equipment and/or supplies;
  - d. facilities/remodeling;
  - e. travel;
  - f. faculty (conferences, professional development); and
  - g. expenditures for undergraduate and graduate students (conferences, professional development, competitions, etc.).
17. Overview and analysis of any results from previous program goals (goals established in the previous review). If there were challenges in working toward the goal(s), detail these challenges. Specifically note to how the department has incorporated the results from the assessment process into the curriculum or department/program efforts (i.e. closing the loop). Please include charts or data as supporting evidence, if applicable.
18. Data relevant to the performance of the program, at a minimum, include the following:
  - a. enrollment data;
  - b. completion data;
  - c. student credit hours;
  - d. four-year and six-year graduation rates; and

- e. second-year, third-year, and fourth-year retention rates.
19. Provide an analysis of all data provided. If the previous program review identified goals associated with any metric, indicate if the goal was met, and if not, what challenges or external factors existed that prevented the goal from being met.
  20. Incorporate results from the Program Completion Metrics report provided by the Office of the Chancellor (as outlined in Appendix B). If the program is not meeting the criteria or is a program of concern, in addition to the analysis, the program review must include one of the following recommendations:
    - a. The university may determine the program is meeting the mission and goals of the university and State System as currently offered and recommend no changes occur.
    - b. The university may recommend a reorganization or other modification with the intent of increasing the program's long-term sustainability. This could include curricular modifications and or changes in the promotion and recruitment for the program. The university will determine if a program will be placed into moratorium during this process.
    - c. The university may recommend a program be placed into moratorium and initiate the moratorium using established curriculum processes and subsequently discontinue the program.
    - d. In consultation with other universities, a collaborative approach may be recommended for similar programs across multiple universities.
  21. Describe any development within the profession, region being served, or the commonwealth that identifies an anticipated need, or lack thereof, for the program in the future. Include market research, if applicable.
  22. Provide an analysis of the program's personnel resources. Are the resources meeting the needs of the program's goals and objectives? Are there factors that are contributing to some of the program goals or objectives not being met?
  23. Provide an analysis of the program's physical resources. Are they meeting the needs of the program's goals and objectives? Are there factors that are contributing to some program goals or objectives not being met? Are the physical resources sufficient to successfully operate the program?
  24. Provide an analysis of the program's financial resources. Are they meeting the needs of the program's goals and objectives? Are there factors that are contributing to some program goals or objectives not being met? Are the financial resources sufficient to successfully operate the program? Are there sources of funding being used other than regular university funds, e.g., grant funds?
  25. Describe any notable trends in student characteristics or demographics.
  26. Describe the extent to which graduates of the program demonstrate success in their chosen careers. Include any evidence such as certification exams, employer surveys, alumni surveys, etc.
  27. Describe any trends in technology or how technology is used that have, or will have, an impact on the program.

28. What are the top trends in the discipline/field or related discipline/field; and how do they relate to the existing curriculum and co-curricular experiences? If appropriate, include the following: online delivery, experiential learning, internships, research or service opportunities, external advisory boards, collaborative program delivery, and partnerships.
29. Describe any collaboration or coordination that has occurred either with other State System universities or external to the State System. If appropriate, include any articulation agreements, memorandums of understandings, affiliation agreements, instructional locations, preferential admissions (if graduate program), advisory councils, shared courses, exchange programs, interdisciplinary programs, etc.
30. Provide any areas of improvement where previous program goals were not met or new priorities for the program.
31. List all program goals for the next review cycle. At a minimum, include the following:
  - a. action plan on how the goal will be achieved;
  - b. any milestones and expected dates;
  - c. anticipated resources; and
  - d. description on how progress will be measured (for each goal) using direct and indirect measures where applicable.
32. If applicable, the external reviewer's report.

## Appendix B Program Completion Metrics

The academic degree program Completion Metrics Reports are intended to provide university and System stakeholders a snapshot of completions over the most recent five years in order to highlight trends and/or potential issues. Along with other qualitative and quantitative metrics available to the university, this report is one of many tools available to System universities in developing their academic program reviews.

### I. Background

Inclusion of program completion metrics as part of an overall program assessment strategy is best practice in American higher education. Historically the System evaluated program completion and/or enrollment metrics on an informal and infrequent basis. In January 2017, the System formalized this process with the adoption of a procedure/standard, *Procedures and Guidelines for Program Sustainability Process*. Upon further consideration, the independent procedure/standard was incorporated into the more comprehensive procedure/standard, *Review of Academic Programs and Programs in Support of the Student Experience*.

### II. Definitions

- A. **Active Academic Program:** Active Academic Programs refers to those programs which are listed in the State System's Academic Program Inventory and are open to accepting new students. This does not include programs in moratorium where students are enrolled but no new students are being accepted.
- B. **Completion:** Completion refers to students meeting the program and degree requirements and the degree being conferred.

### III. Report Generation

- A. University report generation will be initiated by the Academic and Student Affairs office within the Office of the Chancellor every year. All active academic degree programs will be included in the process. Recently approved programs will be included based upon the timelines listed below.
- B. Single programs that are jointly offered by more than one State System university will be treated as a single degree. Regardless of university, all completions will be summed as a single degree for purposes of this policy.
- C. Programs that do not admit students every year will be handled on a pro-rated basis related to completion such as programs that admit students every other year. Academic degree programs will be included in the report based on degree level and year of the first student enrollment as follows:
  - 1. Associates degree programs—five years after first enrollment
  - 2. Baccalaureate degree programs—seven years after first enrollment
  - 3. Master's degree programs:
    - a. Less than 36 credits—five years after first enrollment
    - b. Greater than 36 credits—six years after first enrollment



4. Doctorate degree programs—nine years after first enrollment

**D. Quantitative Completion Minimums**

1. Minimum number of completions:
  - a. Associate degree programs—30 over the most recent five year period
  - b. Baccalaureate degree programs—30 over the most recent five year period
  - c. Master's degree programs—20 over the most recent five year period
  - d. Doctoral degree programs—10 over the most recent five year period

**E. Office of the Chancellor Responsibilities**

1. Academic and Student Affairs will review completion data submitted to the Office of the Chancellor by each university and produce a report, placing each academic program into one of four categories:
  - a. Any academic degree program meeting or exceeding the minimum number of completions with exceptions for programs exceeding the minimum number of completions by only five completions and demonstrating a five-year downward trend.
  - b. Any academic degree program not meeting the minimum number of completions with exceptions for programs needing five or less completions to reach the goal and demonstrating a five-year upward trend.
  - c. Any academic degree program meeting or exceeding the minimum number of completions by only five completions and demonstrating a five-year downward trend.
  - d. Any academic degree program not meeting the minimum number of completions but needing five or less completions to reach the goal and demonstrating a five-year upward trend.
2. Academic and Student Affairs will forward the report (to be used in criteria 20 in Appendix A) to each university chief academic officer.

**Appendix C**  
**Curriculum Overview**

**SAMPLE TO ILLUSTRATE CURRICULUM FORMAT**

**BS Degree**

Major and major-related courses (60 credits)

100/200 level prerequisites and requirements	15 credits
300/400 level requirements	27 credits
Specialization courses	12 credits
Major electives	3 credits
Seminar	<u>3 credits</u>
Total	60 credits

General education courses (42 credits)

Wellness	3 credits
Composition, math, and speech skills	9 credits
Science distribution	6 credits
Social sciences distribution	12 credits
Humanities distribution	<u>12 credits</u>
Total	42 credits

Free Electives 18 credits

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Total 120 credits

Include all major and major-related courses. If concentrations are offered, please list all courses associated with each concentration.

## Appendix D Example Academic Map

Freshman Year					
Fall			Spring		
	4	BIO 120 General Zoology		4	BIO 125 General Botany
		OR			OR
		BIO 125 General Botany			BIO 120 General Zoology
	4	CHE 101 General Chemistry I		4	CHE 102 General Chemistry II
	3	ENG 101 English Composition I		3	ENG 102 English Composition II
	1	UNI 100 First-Year Seminar		3	General Education Course
	3	General Education Course			
Total	15		Total	14	

Sophomore Year					
Fall			Spring		
	4	BIO 215 Cellular and Molecular Biology		4	BIO 248 General Ecology
		OR			OR
		BIO 248 General Ecology			BIO 215 Cellular and Molecular Biology
	3	Basic Calculus OR		4	CHE Organic Chemistry I
		Calculus I			
	3	General Education Course		3	General Education Course
	3	General Education Course		3	General Education Course
	3	General Education Course			
Total	16		Total	14	

Junior Year					
Fall			Spring		
	4	BIO 3XX Plant or Animal Physiology OR BIO 3XX Plant or Animal Anatomy		4	BIO 3XX Plan or Animal Physiology OR BIO 3XX Plan or Animal Anatomy
	3	CHE 341 Organic Chemistry II Lecture		4	BIO 318 Genetics
	1	CHE 342 Organic Chemistry II Lab		3	Unrestricted Elective
	3	MAT 215 Statistics		3	*General Education
	3	*General Education Course			
	3	*General Education Course			
Total	17		Total	14	

Senior Year					
Fall			Spring		
	3	BIO 478 Evolution		4	PHY 122 General Physics II
	3	ENS 495 Design & Analysis		4	Related Elective
	4	General Physics I		3	Related Elective
	4	Related Elective		3	Unrestricted Elective
Total	14		Total	14	

### Notes:

- This academic map is a suggested four-year schedule of courses based on degree requirements in the undergraduate catalog. This sample schedule serves as a general guideline to help build a full schedule each term. Milestones, courses, and special requirements necessary for timely progress to complete a major are designed to keep students on track. This program is designed for students who desire a strong, diverse background in the sciences.
- A grade of "C" or better in 31 hours of biology courses used for the major **AND** in all courses required in non-Biology area
- BIO 120 and 125 are prerequisites to all upper level BIO courses
- Elective Requirements: A total of 11 credits of electives must be BIO courses
- Specific concentrations are available within the biology major