Internal Planning Timeline

Academic Program Review (APR) at A-State is a structured, multi-month process. This guide walks departments through each stage of preparation, consultant coordination, and post-review response, organized by timeframe, to help departments stay on track and meet Arkansas Division of Higher Education (ADHE) requirements.

Communication Process

The Office of Accreditation and Assessment provides guidance and resources to support departments through the external review process. The following documents outline the communication protocols and planning tools used to coordinate programmatic accreditation and consultant reviews:

See: **Communication Protocols for Accredited Programs**

Tips for Success

The Office of Academic Affairs recommends program leaders do the following to have a successful program review:

- Begin planning at least one year before their scheduled site visit.
- Build in buffer time for delays and proofreading.
- Recruit or appoint a program review steering committee of three to five faculty and the department chair
  - Having the department chair and a few key faculty collaborate to write the self-study report helps to share the work load, inform the department about the discoveries made during the self-study analysis, and prepare for the forthcoming site visit
  - Assign a steering committee member to manage website updates.
- Establish an internal timeline by setting the approximate date for the site visit and working backwards.
  - Use the **Program Review Timeline Worksheet** to customize your department's calendar.
  - Faculty and department chairs are busy people and ADHE expects all documents to be submitted by within six weeks of the completed process or by June 1, whichever comes first

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Timeline Overview

Use the timeline below to work backward from your anticipated site visit date.

> **Note:** This timeline applies to both non-accredited programs and those with specialized accreditation, licensure, or state certification. Accredited programs follow the review schedule and procedures of their accrediting body but must still submit their self-study, evaluation, and response to ADHE within six weeks of receiving the final report.

One Year Before the Site Visit

Establish the Site Visit Date and Form Your Team

Checklist:

- Choose an approximate date for the site visit, ideally in the spring semester.
- Form a steering committee of 3–5 faculty members plus the department chair.
- Assign roles for writing, scheduling, and updating the department website.
- Review the previous APR and share it with the committee and potential consultants.

See: Data Request Form (DOCX)

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150 Days Before the Site Visit

Submit Consultant Recommendations

Checklist:

- Complete the Consultant Recommendation Form and submit it to the Office of Accreditation and Assessment.
- Recommend four qualified out-of-state reviewers with disciplinary expertise.
- Avoid selecting close colleagues or collaborators to ensure objectivity.

See: Program Consultants Recommendation Form

See: Reimbursement Policy

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120 Days Before the Site Visit

Secure Consultants

Hiring the program consultants is a critical step in the review process. These individuals provide expert feedback that informs the program's strategic goals and continuous improvement efforts. Consultant selection is a collaborative process involving the program faculty, department chair, dean, Office of Accreditation and Assessment, and Office of Academic Affairs.

Arkansas Code §6-61-214 requires institutions to select a minimum of **two out-of-state reviewers** affiliated with programs similar in mission and scope to the one under review. The **lead consultant** will conduct the site visit, while the **second consultant** serves as a reader. The second consultant may participate in key meetings virtually if all parties agree.

The **steering committee must recommend four consultants** 150 days prior to the anticipated site visit. Recommendations should be based on academic credentials and higher education experience. A mix of peer and aspirant institutions, and both faculty and administrators, is highly encouraged.

During the site visit, the lead consultant should meet with:

- Dean and associate dean
- Department chair
- Faculty (without administration)
- Students
- External constituents (e.g., advisory council, alumni, employers)
- Office of Academic Affairs (including the Provost and AVC responsible for program review)

Checklist:

- ☐ Confirm participation of two reviewers:
  - One will conduct the site visit.
  - The second may serve as a reader and participate virtually.
- ☐ Coordinate with Academic Affairs to finalize consultant agreements.

See: Suggested Program Review Site Visit Schedule/Agenda

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60 Days Before the Site Visit

Submit Draft Self-Study Report

Checklist:

- Send a draft of the self-study to the Office of Academic Affairs for feedback.
- Use the A-State template to ensure alignment with ADHE expectations.

See: **Guide to Writing the Self-Study Report**

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30 Days Before the Site Visit

Send Final Self-Study to Consultants

Checklist:

- Finalize the report and send it to both consultants.
- Include the previous APR as an appendix.
- Ensure the department website is up to date.

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14 Days Before the Site Visit

Finalize Site Visit Itinerary

Checklist:

- Coordinate meetings for the lead consultant with:
  - Faculty (without administration)
  - Students
  - Department chair and dean
  - External stakeholders (e.g., alumni, advisory council)
  - Office of Academic Affairs

Site Visit

Host the Consultant

Checklist:

- Ensure all scheduled meetings occur smoothly.
- Provide access to relevant documents and facilities.
- Gather informal feedback from participants.

See: ADHE External Reviewers Template (DOCX)

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30 Days After the Site Visit

Receive Consultants' Report

Checklist:

- Consultants submit a written evaluation with findings and recommendations.

    - The findings will include key information for continued program improvement. These findings should be the basis for the program leaders' (dean, associate dean, department chair, and program faculty) response letter that includes a timeline and improvement plan.
- Share the report with the steering committee and begin drafting the institutional response.

See: Post Review Planning Document

Within 30 Days of Receiving the Report

Submit Institutional Response and Improvement Plan to the Office of Academic Affairs

Checklist:

- Collaborate with the dean, chair, and faculty to develop a strategic response.
- Include a timeline for implementation and address all consultant recommendations.

See: 1-Year Progress Report Template

Final Submission to ADHE

Deliver All Documents

Checklist:

- Submit the self-study, consultants' report, and institutional response to ADHE within six weeks of the site visit or by **June 1**, whichever comes first.

Follow-Up Reporting

The Office of Academic Affairs expects the following progress reports:

- **1 Year Later**: Submit a progress report by **May 15**.
- **3 Years Later**: Submit additional report if requested.
- **5 Years Later**: Submit final report if required.

Resources

- **Example Planning Documents**

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