Overview of Program Review

Academic Program Review (APR) at Arkansas State University is a collaborative process led by faculty and supported by the Office of Academic Affairs and the Office of Accreditation and Assessment. It is designed to help departments reflect on program strengths, identify areas for improvement, and plan strategically for the future.

This chapter provides practical guidance for completing each stage of the review, including preparing the self-study, selecting external consultants, responding to feedback, and submitting materials to the Arkansas Division of Higher Education (ADHE).

What to Expect

- A steering committee of faculty and the department chair will lead the review.
- The department will prepare a comprehensive self-study report using A-State templates.
- Two external consultants will review the report and conduct a site visit.
- The department will submit a response and improvement plan to ADHE.
- Progress reports may be required in the years following the review.

Recommendations

There are excellent recommendations in the article “Avoiding the Potholes of Program Review” written by Halonen and Dunn (2017). It is recommended everyone on the steering committee read the article. The article can be found here:

> **Avoiding the Potholes of Program Review**
> By Jane S. Halonen and Dana S. Dunn | February 27, 2017
>
> Most departments undergo periodic assessment. Here’s how to make it useful.
>
> **https://www.chronicle.com/article/avoiding-the-potholes-of-program-review/**

Some of the recommendations for a successful APR from Halonen and Dunn’s (2017) article are summarized here for your convenience:

- **Number 1: You need a village.**
  Deans, department chairs, and faculty need to participate in the self-study report writing. Creating a steering committee with key faculty who will direct and write the report will help share the responsibility and show a cohesive faculty cohort that is ready to tackle the program's challenges. After the consultants have reviewed the report and conducted the site visit, the dean, department chair, and faculty should collaborate to develop a strategy for moving forward based on the consultants recommendations.
- **Number 2: The past is history but it's important**
  The steering committee should find and distribute the previous APR to the department. The information in the past APR should also be shared with the upcoming consultant as part of the self-study report. The self-study report template includes a synopsis of the previous APR in the first section and the previous APR could be included as an appendix to the new report.
- **Number 3: Set a timeline and stick to it**
  There are a minimum number of days to hire the consultant, create the self-study report, conduct the site visit, and develop a strategic plan established on the APR website. The steering committee should set dates for each milestone and allow some extra time for delays and proofreading.
- **Number 4: Don't hire your buddy**
  The consultants should be experts in the program's discipline and the two consultants together should provide a combination of perspectives for the program's future. However, hiring a close friend will not provide the objectivity and analysis needed for a thorough review.
- **Number 5: Last but probably should be done first—Update the website**
  The consultant is going to read the department and program's website as soon as they are hired. Dedicate a person on the steering committee who will work with the administrative assistant and IT to update the department and program's website.

How to Use This Chapter

This chapter guides departments through the **process of preparing for and completing an Academic Program Review (APR)**. Each page focuses on a key stage in the review cycle, which will help you with the following tasks.

- **Timeline and Scheduling**: Plan ahead using A-State's internal calendar and ADHE's review schedule.
- **Self-Study Preparation**: Use templates and examples to organize your report.
- **Consultant Selection**: Follow best practices for choosing qualified reviewers.
- **Response and Follow-Up**: Learn how to write your institutional response and track progress.
- **Resources and Rubrics**: Access downloadable forms and evaluation tools.

For site visit schedules, communication protocols, and specialized accreditation timelines, see the **External Academic Reviews** chapter in the Accreditation Book.

Faculty are also encouraged to read “Avoiding the Potholes of Program Review” by Halonen and Dunn (2017), which offers practical advice for managing the process effectively.

Revision #2
Created 2025-09-23 16:05:01 UTC by William Murry
Updated 2025-09-23 22:28:14 UTC by William Murry