



**United States University**

**Program Review**

**Manual**

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## Introduction

United States University (USU) is committed to academic quality. To this end, it has established a system of program review which includes assessment of learning outcomes at the program level. All programs offered by USU will be reviewed every five years, according to the program review schedule shown in Appendix A. A similar schedule of Program Learning Outcomes has been developed in which all PLOs are to be reviewed within a five-year cycle (see Appendix B).

The faculty of USU hold primary responsibility for assessing program quality, with assistance from academic administration. This manual has been internally reviewed and presented to the Faculty Senate. The manual is designed to provide direction to program self-study teams in the development of a program review document. Procedures for conducting the annual PLO assessment, a major element in program review, is available in *Learning Outcome Assessment Principles and Processes*.

At the conclusion of each cycle of program review and learning outcome assessment, the manual will be reviewed and changes made as appropriate to improve the quality and implementation of the program review/learning assessment process. This version of the *Program Review Manual* represents the first revision of the manual since its inception in 2014.

## Purpose and Principles of Program Review: Improving Quality and Currency

A program review is a cyclical process for evaluating and continuously enhancing the quality and currency of programs. The evaluation is conducted through a combination of self-evaluation and peer-evaluation by reviewers external to the program or department and, usually, also external to the organization. It is a comprehensive analysis of program quality and viability, analyzing a wide variety of data about the program. The results of this evaluation process are then used to inform follow-up planning and budgeting processes at various levels in the institution—program, college, university—and incorporated into the institution's overall quality assurance system. USU's program review process occurs on a regular five-year cycle, meaning that each program is reviewed every five years with learning outcomes assessed annually in a second five-year cycle, meaning that each program learning outcome is reviewed at least once every five years.

The foundational principle of the program review and learning outcome assessment processes is to provide faculty with the opportunity, time, and resources for thoughtful reflection and conversation about the quality and currency of their programs with the goal of continual improvement.

## USU Program Review Policy and Process

The primary utility of program review is to provide a structure to foster continual program improvement that is aligned with departmental, college, and institutional goals.

The program review process is designed to assess the academic quality and fiscal sustainability of each program offered at United States University. The timeline of program reviews is designed to provide information on resources required to implement recommendations for quality improvement in sufficient time for consideration in budget development<sup>1</sup>. The general timeline for program review is:

- Fall 1<sup>2</sup>: Preparation
  - Program Review Committee<sup>3</sup> notifies programs about upcoming review;
  - Provost creates self-study team and assigns team chair, who will be responsible for creating the program review self-study;
  - Preliminary meeting of program self-study team and representatives of Program Review Committee to confirm or adjust schedule; review Institutional Research needs;
  - Program Team assembles required program data on faculty, learning outcome assessment results, etc.
- Fall 2: Analysis
  - Institutional Research provides program with relevant/available program data for the last five years that will be analyzed in the self-study (e.g., enrollment and retention data, alumni and student satisfaction results, average class size, finance, etc.).
  - Program Team completes collection of data and commences analysis.
- Spring 1: Drafting the Self-Study
  - Program Team drafts the self-study, identifying program strengths and limitations and suggesting solutions for identified problems.
- Spring 2: Finalizing Self-Study and Planning External Review
  - Program Team completes self-study and improvement plans;
  - Program Team forwards self-study to Program Review Committee for approval and internal review;

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<sup>1</sup> As USU operates on a calendar year budget, budget development occurs in fall of the preceding year.

<sup>2</sup> USU's academic calendar is comprised of 3 semesters: Fall, Spring, and Summer. Each semester is composed of 2 consecutive sessions of 8 weeks: Fall 1, Fall2, etc.

<sup>3</sup> See Appendix C for details regarding responsible parties.

- Program Team provides a list of external reviewers to Program Review Committee; Program Review Committee and Program Team select external reviewers<sup>4</sup>;
- Program Review Committee organizes external review visit.
- Summer 1: External Review
  - External review conducted;
  - External report received by Program Review Committee and distributed to Program Team and administrators for factual inaccuracies and misperceptions corrections.
  - Program Review Committee examines all reports and writes a preliminary Findings and Recommendations report presenting a cohesive plan of action for program improvement; submits to Program Team and Provost for input.
- Summer 2: Institutional Actions
  - Program Team responds to preliminary Findings and Recommendations report, providing a preliminary Improvement Plan.
  - Program Review Committee incorporates this response and any feedback from Provost into final Findings and Recommendations report; forwards report to Provost.
  - Provost organizes meeting of program representative(s) and Leadership Group members with authority over campus resources to agree to a Memorandum of Understanding placing the Findings and Recommendations in the context of resource allocation decisions.
  - Program Team revises Improvement Plan according to MOU, including budgetary considerations, and submits to Program Review Committee for implementation tracking and archiving.

This suggested timeline has been designed with an early conclusion to permit reasonable extension of the process as needed, which will be addressed at the preliminary meeting of the program self-study team and representatives of the Program Review Committee. Resource recommendations must be made available by the end of August, to permit consideration in the following year's budget development.

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<sup>4</sup> External Review honoraria will be covered by the Provost's office.

## Specialized Accreditation Reviews

Discipline accreditation or certification reports may substitute for portions of the Academic Program Review if the provost or designee determines that they sufficiently address the elements considered under the program review process. In such instances, the accreditation or certification process will normally have included the assessment of learning outcomes and a site visit by one or more discipline expert(s). If the discipline accreditation does not include elements required for the Academic Program Review, however, they may be addressed in a supplemental report submitted with the discipline accreditation self-study to the Program Review Committee and considered in the department's Improvement Plan.

## Program Review Self Study Elements

### Introduction

Create an overview of the program, including the following:

1. Description of Program
  - College, Degrees Granted, Concentrations, Modalities in which the program is offered; Relationship to other USU programs if applicable.
  - How and when accreditor approval for this program was obtained
2. Program Mission and Learning Outcomes
  - List the program learning outcomes and describe how they were developed; include any alignment with related educational organizations (e.g., programmatic accreditors, other national/international organizations related to the course content area)
  - Relation to Institutional Mission, Vision, Values, and Outcomes (How does this program mission align with and further the mission and values of USU? How do Program Learning Outcomes align with USU's Institutional Learning Outcomes?)
  - If an undergraduate program, how do the program's learning outcomes align with the core competencies required by WSCUC?
3. Brief History of Program/Description of Changes since Last Review (if relevant); Document the approval of these changes.

### Analysis of Evidence about Program Academic Quality

Include in this section the following elements:

1. Students
  - Demographics: What is the demographic composition (gender, ethnicity, age) of students enrolled in this program in fall of the review year? How do these demographic characteristics align with the mission and values of USU?
  - Other indicators related to mission/vision/values.
2. Curriculum and Learning Environment

- Curriculum Map and description of how the curriculum addresses the learning outcomes; Describe the different levels of achievement expected at different levels of student progress through the program.
  - Comparison to curriculum of selected other institutions and/or disciplinary/professional standards as appropriate
  - Scaffolding: Describe how the program assures that student progress is sequential and cumulative. How does the program facilitate students enrolling in courses in which initial achievement in an outcome is expected prior to enrolling in courses in which higher levels of achievement are expected.
  - Integration: Describe how the courses in your program provide students with the opportunity to integrate knowledge and skills, and how achievement of integration is evaluated.
  - Pedagogical approach to addressing various learning modalities and learning preferences
  - Student Course Evaluations: How are student evaluations of courses used in assessing academic quality? What are the results of the most recent course evaluations in your program? (Use at least the previous term's data, but you may include additional information from prior terms.) Describe any changes made in your program as the result of these evaluations.
  - Description of co-curricular learning experiences and student participation in them (as applicable)
3. Student Learning and Success
- Annual results of direct and indirect outcomes assessment. Include annual assessment reports in appendix.
  - Assessment process: how are program learning outcomes assessed? Include a schedule showing which PLOs are scheduled for assessment in which year, which indicates review of all PLOs within a five-year cycle.
  - Ongoing efforts by department to respond to assessment results; what changes were made in the assessment process or in courses to improve results? (If results of any learning outcome assessment are completed prior to the final draft of this self-study, adjust this section to include those results as well.)
  - Student retention and graduation rate trends (disaggregated)
  - Student Satisfaction: Provide information here on the results of the most recent student satisfaction survey from students in your program. How have these results impacted program activity? Discuss results of graduating student satisfaction surveys and/or alumni satisfaction surveys as available.
  - Job placements (as available)
  - Student achievements
4. Faculty
- Terminal degree proportion
  - List of faculty specialties within discipline (and alignment to program curriculum)
  - Diversity of faculty: Include information on gender and ethnicity of faculty teaching in your program. Do the demographic characteristics of your core and

adjunct faculty align with USU's commitment to diversity and the demographic characteristics of the students in your program?

- Prospective faculty evaluation: what is the process of evaluating prospective core and adjunct faculty? How does the program assure that faculty assigned to courses are qualified by education and experience to provide quality instruction?
- Other academic quality indicators (e.g., external funding awarded to faculty, record of professional practice, service, awards and recognition, etc.)
- Include current vitae of core faculty in an appendix.

### Analysis of Evidence about Program Viability

Include in this section the following elements:

- Demand for the Program
  - Enrollment Trends
    - What are the total Fall I enrollment trends for the previous 5 years (including the present year)? Is enrollment increasing, decreasing, or holding steady?
    - What are the Fall I new enrollment trends for the previous 5 years (including the present year)? Is new enrollment increasing, decreasing, or holding steady?
    - What are the current first-year retention rates for the prior year? How does this compare to benchmark institutions' persistence rates? Are there major demographic differences between students who continue and those who do not?
    - What data are available for graduation rates? Do the graduate demographics align with program demographics?
    - How does the enrollment information provided above impact the program's ability to become/remain fiscally sustainable? What changes would be needed to improve the program's fiscal stability? What resources might be required to accomplish this?
    - How does the retention/graduation data provided above impact the program's academic quality, particularly in relation to student demographics? If applicable, what changes would be needed to improve the program's retention and graduation rates? What resources might be required to accomplish this.
  - Profession/Community/Society developments
    - How does the program maintain/improve its position in the current educational and societal environment? What changes might be necessary in order to improve the program's position in the educational marketplace? What resources might be required to accomplish this?
- Allocation of Resources
  - Faculty
    - Core faculty: How many core faculty does the program currently employ? (Give rank and full-part time level of employment.) What are the



- responsibilities of core faculty? What is the process by which additional core faculty can be added?
- Faculty workload, including sufficient time for course development, administrative duties, etc.
- Adjunct faculty: How many adjunct faculty currently teach in the program? What are the responsibilities of adjunct faculty? How are adjunct faculty incorporated into the program development and learning outcomes assessment processes?
- Core-adjunct ratio
- Student-faculty ratio
- Faculty review and evaluation process: What is the process by which core/adjunct faculty are evaluated? What are the results of the most recent evaluation process?
- Mentoring processes for new and/or continuing faculty
- Faculty Development: What resources are provided for faculty (core/adjunct) professional and pedagogical development?
- Student Support
  - Academic and career advising programs and resources
  - Tutoring, supplemental instruction
  - Basic skill remediation (if applicable)
  - Orientation
  - Financial support (scholarships, etc.)
  - Support for engagement in campus community
  - Support for research or for engagement in community beyond campus (fieldwork, internships) (if applicable)
- Information and Technology Resources
  - Library
  - Technology resources available to support the pedagogy in the program
  - Technology resources available to support students' needs
- Facilities
  - Classroom space/labs
  - Student study spaces
- Financial Resources
  - Operational budget (revenues and expenditures) and trends over a 3-5 year period

### Summary Reflection

Based on the information in this self-study, conduct an analysis of the program's academic quality and sustainability. In each of these two areas:

- What are this program's strengths? How can these be used to improve the program's position academically and fiscally?
- What are this program's weaknesses? How might these be converted to strengths?
- What are the program's opportunities? How can these opportunities be made realities?

- What are the program's threats? How can these be neutralized?
- What are the most important changes to be made? What are the resources required to implement change?

### Future Goals and Planning for Improvement

Include in this section the following elements:

- Evidence-based plan for strengthening the program
  - Goals for next few years
  - Plan: List deliverables/measures, target dates, and resources required (costs and personnel). As not all recommendations may be fundable in the next year, prioritize the recommendations in order of importance, demonstrating how certain activities have the greatest potential to create improvement and therefore should be accomplished and funded first. Update this section following the external review.

### External Review

In Spring of the review year, the program team will provide to the Program Review Committee 1-3 choices of external reviewer to review the self-study and accompanying appendices and conduct a one-day onsite program review and provide recommendations for program improvement. Indicate how these potential reviewers are qualified to conduct this review and include a recent vita. Include estimated cost of this external review and report.

The Program Review Committee will organize and oversee the external review visit in Summer 1 of the review year, including contacting the selected reviewer(s), distributing the self-study and review charge to them and campus participants, and receiving and distributing the external review report for factual inaccuracies and misperceptions corrections.

### Findings and Recommendations Report/Improvement Plan/MOU

After the self-study and external review processes are completed, the program team, the Program Review Committee, and Leadership Group members with authority over campus resources will engage in an evidence-based program improvement planning process. In Summer 1 of the review year, the Program Review Committee will draft a preliminary Findings and Recommendations Report including a cohesive plan of action for program improvement that builds upon the findings and recommendations of all review participants. This report will be submitted to the program team and to senior campus administrators.

In Summer 2 of the review year, the program team will use this report to create a preliminary formal Improvement Plan, which is submitted to the Program Review Committee. The Program Review Committee will incorporate this response and any feedback from campus

administrators into the final Findings and Recommendations report, which is then forwarded to the Provost.

The Provost will organize a meeting of program representative(s) and Leadership Group members with authority over campus resources. The purpose of this meeting is to agree to a Memorandum of Understanding between all campus stakeholders placing the Findings and Recommendations and the resulting Improvement Plan in the context of resource allocation decisions. The program team will then revise the Improvement Plan according to the MOU, including budgetary considerations, and submit that to the Program Review Committee for archiving and progress tracking.

## Appendix A: USU Program Review Five-Year Cycle

Academic Degree Programs			Year of Program Review					Accreditation Status			Comments		
College	Program Name	Most Recent Review	Year Program Started	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	Yes	In Progress		No	Next Visit Date
COBM	Bachelor of Arts in Management (BAM)	N/A	2011	x						x		TBD	IACBE
COBM	Master of Business Administration (MBA)	N/A	2011		x					x		TBD	IACBE
COE	Master of Arts in Education (MAED)	N/A	2011		x						x		Moved from 2015-16 due to CCTC report & visits
COHS	Bachelor of Science in Health Sciences (BSHS)	2014-15	2011				x				x		
COHS	Master of Science in Health Science (MSHS)	N/A	2011	x							x		
CON	Bachelor of Science in Nursing (RN to BSN, ABSN)	2015-16	2011					x	x			2017 CCNE	ABSN on hiatus
CON	Master of Science in Nursing, Family Nurse Practitioner (MSN-FNP)	2014-15	2009				x		x			2017 CCNE	
CON	Master of Science in Nursing (Specializations)	2014-15	2011				x		x			2017 CCNE	
COHS	General Education (non-degree program)	2010-11	N/A			x					x		
COE	Teaching Credential (non-degree program)	2015-16	2003					x	x				CCTC

## Appendix B: USU Student Learning Outcomes Five-Year Cycle of Review

Learning Outcomes				Year of Review					Comments
Core Competency	USU Institutional Learning Outcome (ILO)	Teaching Credential (TPE)*	Last Review	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	
Written Communication (WSCUC Undergraduate Core Competency)	1. Communicate clearly and effectively through writing, speaking, and using technology	TPE 3	2015-16					x	
Oral Communication (WSCUC Undergraduate Core Competency)	1. Communicate clearly and effectively through writing, speaking, and using technology		2015-16						x
Quantitative Reasoning (WSCUC Undergraduate Core Competency)	2. Apply quantitative reasoning to address complex challenges		2014-15				x		
Critical Thinking (WSCUC Undergraduate Core Competency)	3. Apply critical thinking in research and problem-solving processes	TPE 4 & 5	2013-14			x			
Information Literacy (WSCUC Undergraduate Core Competency)	4. Effectively gather, analyze, and integrate information from a variety of sources		2014-15				x		
Ethical Reasoning	5. Demonstrate ethical reasoning and actions to provide leadership as a socially responsible citizen	TPE 6	N/A		x				
Diversity	6. Work effectively across race, ethnicity, culture, religion, gender and sexual orientation	TPE 2	N/A	x					
Collaboration	7. Work collaboratively as members and leaders of diverse groups		N/A	x					
Mastery of Knowledge	8. Exhibit mastery of knowledge and skills within a discipline	TPE 1	N/A		x				moved from 2015-16

\* Teaching Credential TPE Assessment to begin 2017-18 with 2016-17 for TPE remapping and re-alignment.

## Appendix C: List of Responsible Parties

<b>Responsible Parties</b>	<b>Role</b>
Faculty Senate	Approves program review process/policy. Has indicated the program review committee should be housed external to Senate (6/14/2016). 2016 Revisions approved (1/3/2017).
Program Review Committee <i>Members are appointed by the provost, one per division or discipline: Business, Education, Health Sciences, and Nursing. Members also include administration representatives: Online Education, Institutional Research and Assessment (Provost is ex-officio).</i>	The body tasked with overseeing program reviews on campus: initiating, coordinating, organizing external review, receiving reports, writing Findings and Recommendations reports, archiving, tracking progress.
Institutional Research	Provides department relevant/available program data that will be analyzed in the self-study (e.g., enrollment and retention data, alumni and student satisfaction survey results, finance, etc.)
Provost	Selects Program Team and Chair. Receives and provides input regarding Findings and Recommendations reports. Organizes and chairs meeting between all campus stakeholders to reach a Memorandum of Understanding for program's Improvement Plan.
Program Team <i>Faculty members appointed by provost.</i>	Program faculty conduct a self-study within guidelines provided in the establish PR policy. The self-study identifies program strengths and limitations and suggests solutions for identified problems. Team also responds to recommendations from external reviewers, Program Review Committee, and senior campus administrators in creating final Improvement Plan.
External Reviewers <i>Nominated by Program Team, selected with assistance of Program Review Committee.</i>	Review all relevant documentation (self-study report; IR data; Survey results from faculty and students; course syllabi; course evaluations; student work; annual assessment reports; curriculum maps; faculty CVS, etc. Prepare a written report of the review, which may include recommendations not cited in the program faculty's own self-study process.
Leadership Group	Provides feedback to program's Improvement Plan. Agrees to Memorandum of Understanding regarding institutional resource allocation decisions, including budgetary support.

## Appendix D: Activity Checklist and Timeline

### Program Review Committee

- Notify programs about upcoming review [Fall 1]
- Host preliminary meetings [Fall 1]
- With program team, selects external reviewer(s) and organizes visit [Spring 2]
- Distributes self-study and charge to external reviewers and oversees visit [Summer 1]
- Receives external report for approval and distributes to program team for response [Summer 1]
- Examines all reports and response; writes preliminary Findings and Recommendations report, submits to program team and provost for input and planning [Summer 1]
- Final Findings and Recommendations Report forwarded to Provost [Summer 2]
- Receives final Improvement Plan from program, tracks progress of programs reviewed in previous years [Summer 2]
- Sends copies of program view documents to relevant parties (administration, Senate) and archives [Summer 2]

### Institutional Research

- Provides program team with relevant/available program data that will be analyzed in the self-study (e.g., enrollment and retention data, alumni and student satisfaction survey results, finance, etc.) [Fall 2]

### Program Team

- Program faculty conduct a self-study within guidelines provided in the establish PR policy, identifying program strengths and limitations and suggests solutions for identified problems. [Fall - Spring]
- With PRC selects external reviewers [Spring 2]
- Submits self-study to PRC [Spring 2]
- Participates in program review visit. [Summer 1]
- Receives external report from PRC and provides corrections of factual inaccuracies and misperceptions. [Summer 1]

- Receives preliminary Findings and Recommendations Report from PRC and provides preliminary Improvement Plan in response. [Summer 2]
- Receives final Findings and Recommendations Report and attends Memorandum of Understanding meeting with Provost and senior campus administrators. [Summer 2]
- Provides final Improvement Plan to PRC. [Summer 2]
- Implements final Improvement Plan. [Following Year(s)]

### External Reviewer(s)

- Review all relevant documentation (self-study report; IR data; Survey results from faculty and students; course syllabi; course evaluations; student work; annual assessment reports; curriculum maps; faculty CVS, etc. [Summer 1]
- Prepare a written report of the review, which may include recommendations not cited in the program faculty's own self-study process. [Summer 1]

### Provost

- Selects Program Team and Chair. [Fall 1]
- Receives Findings and Recommendations reports and provides input [Summer 1 & 2]
- Organizes meeting of program representative(s) and members of the Leadership Group with authority over campus resources to agree to a Memorandum of Understanding placing the Findings and Recommendations in the context of resource allocation decisions. [Summer 2]

## Appendix E: List of Documents/Forms

(Available at: <https://sites.google.com/a/usuniversity.edu/office-of-the-provost/program-review>)

Program Review Activity Checklist and Timeline (printable)

Self-Study Template

External Reviewer Nomination Form

External Review Rubric and Recommendations Form

Improvement Plan Template

WSCUC Program Review Rubric

WSCUC Program Learning Outcomes Quality Rubric