

UNC Program Review Policy

Program review at the University of Northern Colorado is intended to support, develop, and maintain high quality academic programs. It is a collaborative process involving faculty, administrators, and students that respects the diversity of disciplinary missions and cultures while also recognizing the primacy of institutional mission. The program review process involves collecting and synthesizing program information to evaluate quality, identify opportunities, and make recommendations on actions and resources necessary to realize desired levels of excellence. Program review outcomes are used by faculty and administrators to promote campus goals and objectives, support strategic planning and decision-making, and inform budget and resource allocation.

UNC Program Review Guidelines

The primary process through which program review is conducted at UNC is the comprehensive self study. The self study provides program faculty, college administrators, and the provost an opportunity to reflect on the historical role and outcomes of the program, evaluate the current program strengths and weaknesses, and strategically plan for the future of the program. These guidelines are intended to provide a consistent framework for conducting the self study and presenting the findings. While the process through which programs conduct the self study are left to the discretion of the program faculty working in consultation with the unit leader¹ and Dean, programs should address each of the topics identified within the guidelines following the report format described herein. These guidelines represent the institutional requirements for program review. Individual colleges may expand on these requirements as recommended by the college's faculty.

Definition of a Program

A program is an organizational and budgetary unit that is responsible for delivering an approved plan of study leading to completion of any one or more of the following: undergraduate minor, undergraduate degree, graduate degree, and/or licensure or certification. For purposes of program review, faculty within each college, working collaboratively with department chairs, school directors, and the dean, identify what programs exist within their respective colleges. This collaborative process provides flexibility for faculty and college administrators to organize the review process so that it produces meaningful contributions to budget and strategic planning decisions.

Timeline

Each program should be reviewed at least once between ten-year regional accreditation visits. Faculty, department chairs, school directors, and the dean should prepare a review schedule for each ten-year period that aligns UNC program review to disciplinary and professional accreditation timelines.

Substitution of External Accreditation Report

Programs subject to external accreditation may elect to substitute the accreditation report for the self-study report. Programs selecting this option should provide an executive summary and outline directing reviewers to the appropriate sections of the accreditation report that address UNC's program review requirements. In the event that the accreditation report does not address all of the required elements for UNC's comprehensive program review, programs should attach an appendix providing any missing information.

¹ Unit leader refers to Department Chair or School Director

Program Review Team

Each College should appoint a Program Review Team comprised of faculty from across the College. The chair of the Program Review Team will be selected by the members of the team. The Program Review Team is responsible for reviewing the initial draft of the comprehensive review self study and providing written feedback to the College Dean and to the program.

External Review

External review of programs is expected and may be fulfilled through any of the following options:

- External accreditation site visit/review;
- Discipline/content expert external to the University;
- Individual or review team comprised of industry experts and/or employers;
- Review team comprised of faculty and staff external to the program but internal to UNC.

Programs should consult with the Dean to determine the appropriate option for conducting the external review. After selecting a review option and reviewer(s), programs should provide the Dean with a list of the proposed reviewers, including the reviewers' current affiliation(s), qualifications for conducting the review, and estimated costs. It is the responsibility of all involved to avoid conflicts of interest that would prevent an objective review of the program. The Dean will review the list to identify any budget limitations or conflict of interest issues. Upon approval of the list, programs should contract with a reviewer using the University's Independent Contractor Procedures.

Reviewers should provide the program with a written evaluation of the program's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities for improvement, and threats within 30 days of completion of the review.

CDHE Policy for Low Demand Programs

The Colorado Department of Higher Education (CDHE) has statutory authority for defining criteria for low demand programs (CDHE, [Policies and Procedures, Section 1, Part G](#), March 4, 2004). CDHE has established minimum thresholds for undergraduate and graduate degrees awarded and outlined the actions institutions of higher education must take when a low demand program is identified. The CDHE policies will be applied through the annual and comprehensive program review processes.

Annual Progress Report

The annual progress report supports the comprehensive review process by documenting progress toward program goals, evidence of student learning, program-defined quality measures, key performance indicators, and resource needs. Programs should use the same criteria as required by the comprehensive review when preparing their reports. The annual progress report provides an explanation for any significant changes in the status of program-defined quality measures, program review data, a concise summary of the actions taken during the previous year in support of program goals, and a discussion of any resource needs or issues relevant to the program's ability to maintain progress toward its goals.

The Office of Budgets and Institutional Analysis will provide program review data to each program by August 15 of each year. The deadline for submitting the annual progress report will be established by each College. Because the information provided from the annual progress report is intended to assist in developing College budgets, Colleges should consider budget timelines when establishing deadlines. Programs should provide a copy of the annual progress report to the Dean. Program faculty and the unit leader should meet to identify any resource needs and to assess progress toward the goals

established in the most recent comprehensive review. The Dean should consider the results reported in the annual progress reports when developing the annual budget.

TracDat

UNC has selected a web-based assessment management system, TracDat, to support the program review process. In addition to supporting program review, TracDat also offers a systematic process for documenting the results of the university's assessment activities and, as such, supports regional and professional accreditation. Programs seeking to opt out of using TracDat may do so under the following conditions:

1. The decision to opt out is supported by the Dean of the College.
2. The program can demonstrate that it has a comparable alternative system for electronically documenting its assessment activities.
3. The program can demonstrate that opting out of TracDat will not negatively impact other programs or units within the University (e.g., TracDat is currently used for NCATE accreditation, so programs subject to NCATE would not be able to opt out).

In the event that a program does opt out of using TracDat, the program will be responsible for assuming all costs (including technical support) associated with any alternate assessment software adopted by the program to document its assessment activities.

Comprehensive Program Review Documentation

The final Comprehensive Program Review self-study report consists of a narrative report, data tables, and supporting documentation. The narrative report should be no more than 25 pages and is comprised of the following sections:

1. Program's role, mission, and relationship to the University's mission
2. Program's alignment to the goals identified in the University's [Academic Plan](#)
3. Outcomes for the goals identified in the prior comprehensive review
4. Program's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats based on all of the following:
 - a. Evidence of student learning outcomes
 - b. Program-defined measures of quality
 - c. Performance on institutionally-defined program review data
 - d. External review
5. Future goals identified through analysis of the program's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats
6. Resources necessary to support future goals and program improvement

In addition to the narrative report and data tables, programs should provide the following supporting documents:

1. External reviewer report
2. College's Program Review Team recommendations
3. Dean's recommendations and those of School Director for programs housed within a school²
4. Graduate Council and Graduate Dean's recommendations (for graduate programs only)

² Unless the Director is the self study author.

Program Review Data

The Provost and Deans identified essential program review data related to program quality that are included in the annual and comprehensive review processes. These data will form the basis of the data tables to be included in the self-study report. Program review data will be provided by the Office of Institutional Analysis and the Office of Assessment by August 15 of each year. Programs should report data for each academic year since the last comprehensive review.

Program review data to be reported include the following:

Required (undergraduate and graduate programs)

Data will be provided by Institutional Analysis by August 15 each year

- Number and percent of full-time, part-time, and total faculty by rank and tenure
- Student credit hours taught by the program (upper and lower division undergraduate and graduate)
- Student/faculty FTE
- Average class size
- Demographic diversity of students by race/ethnicity and gender
- Number and FTE of majors (undergraduate, master's and doctoral)
- Retention and graduation rates (total and by race/ethnicity and gender)
- Number and type of degrees awarded
- Internship placement (OBIA will provide data on all credit-bearing internships. Programs will need to track and document any non-credit internships if they wish to include these in their reports.)
- Number and percent of students entering graduate school (undergraduate only)
- Number and percent of courses delivered by adjunct faculty and teaching assistants

Data will be provided by the Office of Assessment by August 15 each year

- Student satisfaction³
- Alumni satisfaction
- Student placement one year following graduation
- Number and amount of extramural research awards⁴

Data to be collected and maintained by the program each year

- Faculty academic credentials – number and percent with doctorate, terminal degree, master's, etc.
- Number of books, creative works, juried publications, and professional presentations
- Awards for excellence (student, faculty, and staff)

Additional required data for graduate programs

- Average entering test scores (GRE, GMAT, etc. IA will provide GRE scores. Programs requiring other admission tests will need to track and document scores for these tests.)
- Acceptance ratios
- Funding support for graduate students (number and percent receiving funding and average amount)

³ Based on results from the College Senior Survey. Programs with fewer than 5 respondents will not receive data for that year.

⁴ Based on data collected and reported by the Office of Sponsored Programs.

Recommended Data

Although not required, programs may want to consider also reporting on the following data:

- Average entering ACT/SAT scores
- Acceptance ratios for undergraduate programs with selective admission
- Performance on licensure/certification exams
- Professional accreditation(s)
- Number and percent of faculty holding graduate faculty status
- Number and percent of students involved in service learning, civic engagement, undergraduate research, and/or study abroad
- Average GPA

Comprehensive Program Review Process

The annual progress reports compiled by programs should be used to document progress toward program goals, evidence of student learning, program-defined quality measures, program review data, and resource needs. These annual reports should assist programs in their preparation of the comprehensive program review self-study report. The comprehensive review process involves review by the following individuals and bodies: (1) School Director (for programs housed within a school); (2) College Dean; (3) College Program Review Team; and (4) Provost. Graduate programs are also reviewed by the Dean of the Graduate School and the Graduate Council.

The steps for completing the comprehensive review process are as follows:

Step 1. Initial meeting with program faculty, unit leader, College Dean, and Director of Assessment.⁵

The purpose of this meeting is to clarify the process and establish a schedule for completing the remaining activities associated with the comprehensive review (this meeting should be held during fall semester of the academic year prior to the year in which the comprehensive program review is due).

Step 2. Select and schedule the external reviewer(s). Limited funding for external review is available from the Office of Assessment. Funds will be made available July 1 each year and be distributed based upon the order in which applications for funding are received. The application for funding is available at www.unco.edu/assessment/programReview.

Step 3. Complete first draft of the self-study document. The unit leader is responsible for electronically distributing the self-study draft to the following individuals: the College Dean, the chair of the College's Program Review Team, and, for graduate programs, the Dean of the Graduate School. Hard copies of any supporting documents not available electronically should be provided to the unit leader, who will distribute these materials to the aforementioned individuals.

Step 4. Review of the self-study document. The self-study document will be reviewed by the School Director for programs housed in a school (unless the Director is the author), the College's Program Review Team, and the College Dean. The Dean of the Graduate School and the Graduate Council will also review the self-study document for graduate programs. Reviewers will provide written feedback to the College Dean and to the program with recommendations for improvement and commendations for program strengths.

⁵ Programs are also encouraged to meet with the office of Institutional Analysis regarding program review data reports and/or any additional data needs they may have.

Step 5. Meeting with program faculty, unit leader, Program Review Team Chair, and Dean. Prior to completing the final comprehensive program review report, program faculty and the unit leader will meet with the Program Review Team Chair and Dean to discuss the recommendations from the reviewers, agree upon goals for the next review period, and identify any resources needed to improve and/or maintain program quality. The Dean should provide written feedback to the program no later than one week prior to this meeting.

Step 6. Submission of comprehensive program review report to the Office of Assessment. Programs should submit a hard copy of the comprehensive program review (including any supplemental materials) to the Office of Assessment no later than February 28.

Step 7: Meeting with the Provost. The Provost will review the comprehensive program review report and meet with the Dean, unit leader, faculty representative(s) from the program, and the Director of Assessment to discuss the comprehensive review. The Director of Assessment will provide a summary agenda to all meeting participants no later than one week prior to this meeting. Following the meeting, the Provost will prepare a memorandum of understanding that will delineate the specific actions the program will take as a result of the program review and establish a timeline for completion. This meeting will occur by June 30.

Step 8. Using the results. Deans, unit leaders, and program faculty are expected to use the results of the comprehensive review to guide program planning, decision making, and requests for resources. During the fall of the year following the comprehensive review, the program should meet with the Office of Assessment to update the program's assessment plan. The Office of Assessment will provide the results of the program review to the Office of Institutional Analysis by December 31 each year to assist with data collection and reporting.

Approved March 25, 2009
Provost Abe Harraf

Revised August 18, 2010, to reflect changes in organizational structure