

UNC Program Review: Accredited Programs

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.

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 unit leaders 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 (HLC) accreditation visits. Faculty, unit leaders, and the dean should prepare a review schedule for each ten-year period that aligns UNC program review to disciplinary and professional accreditation timelines. Program review for accredited programs should be completed within six (6) months following the accreditation site visit.

Substitution of External Accreditation Report

Programs subject to external accreditation may elect to substitute the accreditation self-study report. Programs selecting this option should prepare a supplemental summary document addressing specific criteria relevant to UNC's internal program review requirements (see Program Review Supplemental Report and Documentation on page 2 of this document).

Program Review Committee

Colleges may appoint a Program Review Committee comprised of faculty from across the College. The committee is responsible for reviewing the initial draft of the comprehensive review self-study and providing

¹ Department chairs, school directors, or program coordinators
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written feedback to the College Dean and to the program.

External Review

External review of programs is expected for all UNC programs. For professionally accredited programs, the site-team visit meets this requirement. The team's report and findings should be included in the final documents submitted to the Provost.

Program Review Supplemental Report and Documentation

The Comprehensive Program Review self-study report for professionally accredited programs consists of the following sections:

Supplemental Report

1. Program description (mission, degree programs offered, number and rank of faculty, unique program features, significant changes since the last program review)
2. Outcomes for the goals/action plan identified in the last program review
3. Quality indicators for graduate programs – programs offering graduate degrees should include a section that addresses the following questions:
 - a. What aspects of the graduate program make it unique when compared to similar programs at other institutions?
 - b. How do the graduate program's required coursework, experiential activities, and mentorship support students on their career paths?
 - c. What steps are being taken to evaluate and maintain or improve the quality of the graduate program?
 - d. How do graduate students demonstrate professionalism through participation in professional activities and/or professional organizations/societies?
4. Action plan for next review cycle. The plan should address the following:
 - a. Future actions the program will pursue within the resource structure at UNC and external funding opportunities;
 - b. How the program's action plan supports [Rowing, Not Drifting 2030](#), specifically in the areas of new and transfer student enrollment, retention, completion, and closing equity gaps;
 - c. Curriculum revisions/enhancements and pedagogical strategies to improve learning and student success; and
 - d. Goals for faculty and staff and action steps to achieve these goals.

Documentation

1. The accreditation self-study report (narrative report only)
2. Accreditation site-team report and results
3. Faculty evaluation criteria²
4. College's Program Review Committee recommendations (if applicable)
5. Graduate Council's and Graduate Dean's recommendations (for graduate programs only)
6. Dean's recommendations and those of School Director for programs housed within a School
7. Program's assessment plan, curriculum map, and assessment results from the review period (if not included in the accreditation self-study report)

² See Board Policy 2-3-801 (3)(a)

Program Review Data

Institutional data for program review are provided by Business Intelligence and Data Engineering and the Office Institutional Research and Effectiveness. Programs should review and analyze data trends for the years since the last comprehensive review. BIDE has developed a program review report in Insight that is updated annually. Programs may access the report on their college-view tab. The report includes data that is useful for understanding enrollment and completion trends, student demographics, contributions to student credit hour generation, and use of instructional resources (e.g., trends in the number of course sections and average class size over time). BIDE and OIRE provide a variety of reports and dashboards online at www.unco.edu/data/. Anyone having issues accessing the dashboards can contact the Technical Support Center for assistance.

Institutional Research and Effectiveness administers an annual first destination survey to recent program graduates. Results are provided to programs as long as there is a sufficient response rate. OIRE also administers annual surveys to graduating seniors, including the National Survey of Student Engagement (first administered in 2018-2019). In some cases, program-level results may be available from these surveys. Contact OIRE for additional information.

Comprehensive Program Review Process

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; (4) Assistant Provost for Academic Effectiveness; and (5) 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. Complete accreditation self-study document. The program completes the accreditation self-study as per the requirements of its accrediting body.

Step 2. Accreditation review. The accreditation review is completed, and the review team prepares its written report. The accrediting body issues a decision.

Step 3. Meeting with unit leader, College Dean, and Assistant Provost. The purpose of this meeting is to clarify the process and establish a schedule for completing the remaining activities associated with the comprehensive review.

Step 4. Preparation of supplemental summary report. Complete the supplemental summary report described herein. Programs should use information from the accreditation self-study, the review team's report, and program review data to develop an action plan for the next review period.

Step 5. Internal review of the program review documents. The program review report should be submitted to the College Dean and, if applicable, the Dean of the Graduate School. The report will be reviewed by the School Director for programs housed in a school (unless the Director is the author), the College's Program Review Committee (if applicable), and the College Dean. The Dean of the Graduate School and the Graduate Council will also review the report for graduate programs.

Step 6. Meeting with unit leader, Program Review Committee Chair, Dean, and Graduate Dean (graduate programs only). Prior to completing the final comprehensive program review report, program faculty and the unit leader will meet with the Program Review Committee Chair and Dean to discuss the recommendations from the reviewers. The Program Review Committee and the Dean should provide written feedback to the program no later than two weeks following this meeting.

Step 7. Submission of comprehensive program review report to Academic Effectiveness. Programs should submit a copy of the comprehensive program review report to Academic Effectiveness by the agreed-upon deadline (6 months following the accreditation site team visit).

Step 8: Meeting with the Provost. The Assistant Provost, Associate Provost and/or AVP for Research and Dean of the Graduate School, and Provost will review the comprehensive program review report and meet with the Dean and program's unit leader to discuss the comprehensive review. Following the meeting, the Assistant Provost will prepare a memorandum that documents the outcomes of this meeting. This meeting will occur within 30 workdays upon receipt of the report or as soon as possible.

Step 9. Using the results. Deans, unit leaders, and program faculty are expected to implement the action plan developed through the program review self-study process and report on results at the end of the next review cycle.

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