

Key Questions to Answer through Comprehensive Program Assessment: Academic Programs

The primary purpose of academic Comprehensive Program Assessment is to enhance the quality of the academic program and improve student learning within context of institutional enhancement. Comprehensive Program Assessment provides an opportunity to do the following: examine the program/departmental curricula, instructional strategies, assessment strategies, and administrative efficiency and resources; reflect on the role and priority status of the program within the institution; assess the overall effectiveness of the program(s) offered and of the department/school; assess whether the program outcomes and annual assessment processes are appropriate; identify program/departmental strengths and challenges; and use the information to engage in short-term and long-term planning. Below is a recommended outline for the organization of self-study reports and key questions that must be answered in each section. [Additional guidance for Academic Programs on ways to approach or answer questions in each section is also provided.](#)

ORGANIZATION OF SELF-STUDY REPORTS

- A. Mission and Outcomes
- B. Assessment (organized around outcomes)
- C. Department/Program Content and Effectiveness (organized around outcomes)
- D. Operations and Resource Management
- E. Collaboration in Support of the College
- F. Strengths and Challenges
- G. Actions to Improve Programs and Operations (organized around outcomes)

Self-study report written in preparation for the visit:

- A. **Mission and Outcomes:** What is the mission of your department/program? How does it link to the mission of the College? What are the student learning outcomes of the program? How do they link to your mission? What other program outcomes do you have that are not student learning outcomes (e.g., outcomes for the campus or community)?
- B. **Assessment:** What process do you use for regularly reviewing your outcomes? When has each of your outcomes last been reviewed/updated? What assessment methods (quantitative and/or qualitative) are used to determine the extent to which you are achieving your outcomes? How useful is this process for decision making?
- C. **Program Content and Effectiveness:** How do you ensure that the curriculum is appropriate and up to current disciplinary and pedagogical expectations for each academic program offered? How do you ensure that requirements are clearly understood and course sequencing is appropriate? How do you integrate assessment data into your decisions to make changes in program content or effectiveness? Be sure to organize this section around your outcomes.
- D. **Operations and Resource Management:** How are financial and human resources allocated to accomplish the mission and outcomes? What data do you use to make decisions about resource allocations?
- E. **Collaboration in Support of the College:** How do you collaborate with other programs within and outside of the institution in order to help strengthen the College? What other collaborative

relationships within and outside of the institution might you explore further? Consider looking at other institutions and/or professional standards for alternative models.

- F. **Strengths and Challenges:** What are the areas of greatest strength and challenge for your department/program? How can your department/program build on these strengths and minimize these challenges?
- G. **Actions to Improve Programs and Operations:** What steps to improve programs and operations (if any) have you already taken or do you plan to take as a result of the current self-study? Be sure to organize this section around your outcomes.