



**Academic Program Review Guidelines**  
**for**  
**Academic Departments/Academic Programs**

**Updated May 2023**

## **Contents**

Purpose of Academic Program Review .....	3
Administration of the Program Review Process .....	3
Academic Programs Subject to Review .....	4
Steps of Program Review .....	5
Outcomes and Follow-Up .....	6
Program Review Checklist and Timeline .....	7
Peer and Aspirant Programs .....	9
Guiding Questions for Strategic Issues .....	10
Strategic Issues Statement and Peer/Aspirant Programs .....	11
Self-Study Template .....	12
Outcomes and Action Plan Template .....	16

### ***Purpose of Academic Program Review***

As a Jesuit Catholic university, Marquette is committed to the pursuit of excellence in service of its educational mission. To ensure that its academic programs maintain the highest standards of excellence, the University employs a program review process that is data-driven, forward-looking, and outcomes-based. The process is also designed to help academic units align themselves with the University strategic plan.

Program reviews are designed to support long-term planning efforts, focus on areas that offer the potential for innovation, distinctiveness and preeminence, and assure the most efficient and effective use of resources. The process is designed to be institutionally consistent and yet flexible enough to accommodate the culture and goals of individual units and allow the University to adapt its review process over time.

### ***Administration of the Program Review Process***

The Vice Provost for Academic Affairs, Dr. John Su ([john.su@marquette.edu](mailto:john.su@marquette.edu)) manages and supports the academic program review process. **All questions regarding the process should be directed to Dr. Su.**

During the program review process, units should involve faculty and students, particularly during the self-study and the visit stages. As appropriate, a department may make use of the expertise of standing committees such as undergraduate and graduate curriculum committees, assessment committees, teaching and research committees as well as department chairs and program directors.

The Program Review Council, which is chaired by Dr. John Su, and which reports to the Provost, has the responsibility for reviewing the self-study and related materials submitted by the academic unit, meeting with the external review team, and making recommendations to the Provost. The Provost, in consultation with the Dean and Department Chair, makes all final decisions regarding recommendations and subsequent actions.

The Council's membership includes the Vice Provost for Graduate and Professional Studies and Dean of the Graduate School, two Deans, a faculty member chosen by the Academic Senate and at least one other faculty member appointed by the Provost. The normal term for a faculty appointee is three years. Faculty members, department chairs, and members of university leadership who have a specific expertise or experience may be asked to assist with the review process for a specific unit. A representative from the Office of Finance is also included on the Program Review Council.

### *Academic Programs Subject to Review*

An academic program is defined as a unit or group of units dedicated to achieving research, education, and/or service goals that advance the university mission (academic support units follow a separate review process). The units of analysis for academic program review are typically departments but could include clusters of programs across departments or colleges (interdisciplinary programs).

All academic programs are required to participate in program review. The Office of the Provost publishes a calendar of program reviews, which occur within a 7 year cycle.

Academic programs to be reviewed include:

- Degree programs, including bachelor's, master's, and doctoral
- Concentrations or majors within degree programs
- Interdisciplinary majors and minors

Accredited academic programs:

Accredited academic programs also must go through the program review process, but materials from accreditation may be used so that the process is not cumbersome. Some accredited programs use the program review to raise issues that they believe need to be addressed before their accreditation visit. Others may wish to use the review as a run through for their accreditation visit. And yet others use the review as a follow up to an accreditation visit. The Dean and the Provost can determine what strategy works best for each individual unit. In any case, an action plan for the next 7 years will be developed.

At any time, the Provost, Dean or Department Chair may request a separate Provost's Summit outside of the regular review cycle, in order to address an immediate challenge, discuss an opportunity for collaboration, or explore a cluster of related programs or interests.

## **STEPS OF ACADEMIC PROGRAM REVIEW**

An academic program review process typically spans 3 to 4 semesters. (See [Program Review Checklist and Timeline](#) on pages 7-8).

### **SEMESTER ONE**

- The Provost's Summit initiates the academic program review process, although work by the unit has already begun. At the Summit, the academic unit's proposed strategic issues will be discussed as well as the unit's choice of 3 to 5 peer and aspirant programs which the external reviewers will use as a point of comparison in their review. See page 9 for [Peer and Aspirant Programs](#), page 10 for [Guiding Questions for Strategic Issues](#), and page 11 for [Strategic Issues Statement and Peer/Aspirant Programs](#).
- The chair of the Program Review Council and the Provost identify the reviewers. The review will be scheduled.
- The academic unit begins its self-study. See [Self-Study Template](#) on pages 12-15.
- Data needed to support the self-study are gathered by the academic unit from several units on campus, although much of the data are available from the [Office of Institutional Research and Analysis](#). The program review checklist and timeline explain where to get the data for the self-study.

### **SEMESTER TWO**

Self-Study. The academic unit is responsible for compiling and writing the self-study. Unit faculty and staff should participate in the process as appropriate. The main purpose of the self-study is to assess program quality and effectiveness, and to set strategic goals and priorities that can guide future planning and budget decisions. Units being reviewed should use the self-study template provided on the Provost's Web site to help the university maintain consistency across program reviews. See [Self-Study Template](#) on pages 12-15. A draft of the self-study is submitted to the Dean. After review and discussion, the unit will submit the self-study to the Chair of the Program Review Council, at least 4 weeks before the external reviewers' visit.

- External Reviewers' Virtual Campus Visit. Virtual visits typically last 1 to 1½ days, during which the external reviewers meet via Microsoft Teams with faculty and staff, undergraduate and graduate students, various administrators, the Dean or Department Chair, the Academic Program Review Council and the Provost; if helpful, reviewers may also be asked to meet with alumni or community partners.
- After receipt of the external reviewers' report, the Program Review Council meets with the unit to discuss the external review and recommendations with the unit. The Council then formulates its own set of recommendations, which it forwards to the Provost, the Dean and the academic unit.

## **SEMESTER THREE**

- Action Plan. Based on the external review and the Academic Program Review Council's recommendations, the academic unit creates a seven-year action plan, using the [Outcomes and Action Plan Template](#) on page 16. Please note that in year 3 the unit will meet again with the Vice Provost for Academic Planning and Dean to discuss achievements, obstacles, etc. A draft Action Plan is submitted to the Dean. After review and discussion, the unit will submit the action plan to the Chair of the Program Review Council.

## **SEMESTER THREE OR FOUR**

The academic unit, Dean, Vice Provost for Academic Affairs and the Provost meet to discuss and solidify the action plan.

This discussion could result in a range of possible outcomes, including the following:

- If the review identifies opportunities for innovation that advance university priorities, are responsive to current students and market needs, and are financially viable and sustainable, the Provost will invite the unit to submit proposals for new programs or initiatives.
- If the Provost and the unit decide that new resources are needed to improve academic quality or competitiveness, the dean or unit head will be invited to include these requests in the usual annual academic planning and budgeting processes.
- If the review finds that a specific program, major, or minor is no longer viable in terms of student interest; no longer has the quality, relevance, or currency it once had; no longer serves the overarching mission of the university; or cannot be sustained at a level of academic excellence that the university can financially sustain, the Provost may recommend discontinuation.

## **ACTION PLAN FOLLOW UP**

After the action plan is solidified, the Vice Provost for Academic Affairs will schedule a follow-up meeting with the academic unit and Dean to discuss the unit's progress towards its goals, etc. This meeting will occur in year three of the action plan.

Units may schedule other follow-up meetings with the Dean and Vice Provost for Academic Affairs if the need arises, i.e. plans change, obstacles are encountered, etc.

## Program Review Checklist and Timeline

### Strategic Issues/Provost's Summit (Semester One)

Description	Attendees	Responsible Party	Due Date
Provost's Summit is scheduled	Provost, Vice Provost, Dean, Chair	Vice Provost Office	
Meet with faculty & students to develop a set of strategic issues and to identify peer and aspirant programs	Chair and Unit	Chair	
Prepare strategic issues statement	Chair	Chair	
Submit strategic issues statement and list of peers and aspirants, both of which have been reviewed by the Dean, to Office of the Provost	Chair	Chair	2 weeks prior to Summit
Submit the names of potential external reviewers to Office of the Provost	Chair	Chair	2 weeks prior to Summit
Provost Summit held	Provost, Vice Provost, Dean, Chair	Vice Provost Office	Semester preceding review
Date is determined for on-site Review		Vice Provost Office	As early in the process as possible
Start self-study		Unit	
Contact the Director of Institutional Research and Analysis for access to OIRA data related to the self-study		Unit	
Contact the Director of Assessment for access to Appendix IV, Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes		Unit	
Contact the Director of the Office of Financial Planning and Analysis for access to Appendix XI, Financial Data		Unit	

### Self-Study/External Review (Semester Two)

Description	Attendees	Responsible Party	Due Date
Draft of self-study submitted to Dean and Vice Provost		Chair	4 weeks prior to visit
Schedule of visit is finalized		Vice Provost office and Chair	4 weeks prior to visit

Office of the Provost and Dean provide feedback on self-study		Vice Provost	3 weeks prior to visit
Self-study completed and submitted to Vice Provost		Chair	2 weeks prior to visit

Self-study is distributed to Program Review Council (PRC) and external review team		Vice Provost Office	2 weeks prior to visit
External review team visit virtually via Teams		Vice Provost Office and Unit	
External review team submits recommendations to Office of the Provost		Review Team	2 weeks after visit
Report of review is shared with the Unit		Vice Provost	
Unit meets with the PRC to review recommendations	PRC, Chair	Vice Provost Office	
PRC makes recommendations to the Provost and recommendations sent to the Dean and Unit		Vice Provost	

### **Outcomes/Action Plan (Semester Three/Four)**

Description	Attendees	Responsible Party	Due Date
Unit meets to discuss and review the recommendations; establish goals for the Action Plan	Chair and Unit	Chair	
Unit develops an Action Plan and submits to the Dean	Chair and Unit	Chair	
Unit submits Action Plan to Office of the Provost	Chair and Unit	Chair	2 weeks prior to Action Plan Meeting
Action Plan meeting with Office of the Provost	Provost, Vice Provost, Dean, Chair	Vice Provost Office	

### **Post Review Follow-Up**

Description	Attendees	Responsible Party	Due Date
Meet three years after action plan to discuss progress of Action Plan	Provost, Vice Provost, Dean, Chair	Vice Provost Office	



## Peer and Aspirant Programs

Through the Strategic Planning process, the university has identified 22 peer and aspirant institutions. In identifying the 3-5 peer and aspirant programs which the unit wishes the external reviewers to consider while reviewing the unit, academic units are requested to consider the list below. However, most important is that the unit chooses peer and aspirant programs in the discipline.

Boston College (MA)  
Case Western Reserve University (OH)  
Creighton University (NE)  
Emory University (GA)  
Fordham University (NY)  
Georgetown University (DC)  
Gonzaga University (WA)  
Lehigh University (PA)  
Loyola Marymount University (CA)  
Loyola University Chicago (IL)  
Saint Louis University (MO)  
Santa Clara University (CA)

Southern Methodist University (TX)  
Texas Christian University (TX)  
Tufts University (MA)  
Tulane University of Louisiana (LA)  
University of Dayton (OH)  
University of Denver (CO)  
University of Miami (FL)  
University of Rochester (NY)  
University of San Diego (CA)  
Villanova University (PA)  
Wake Forest University (NC)

## Guiding Questions for Strategic Issues

These questions are designed to help units begin a productive internal discussion and to identify strategic issues. They should also be used by the Program Review Council and the external review team for their reviews.

1. How well does the program serve our students, faculty, or other constituencies?
  - a. Is enrollment increasing or decreasing?
  - b. How well does the program prepare students to succeed—that is, what are the students doing after graduation?
  - c. Does the program meet a current or emerging need for Marquette, Milwaukee, the state, or the region?
2. Is this an area of distinctiveness, growth, or innovation for the university?
  - a. How does the program advance the university mission?
  - b. How does the program advance the university strategic plan?
  - c. How does the program rank nationally, particularly in regard to its peer and aspirant programs?
  - d. Is there potential to grow the program within our current market or reach new markets?
  - e. Is there an opportunity to create an interdisciplinary program through collaboration with other units or external partners?
  - f. What is the impact of the program on the reputation of the university?
3. Is the program well-managed, properly marketed, and adequately resourced?
  - a. Are we putting sufficient effort toward recruiting students for this program?
  - b. Is the program properly resourced with respect to faculty and staff, facilities, and technology?
  - c. Has the program implemented strategies for reallocating current resources to meet changes in the environment?
  - d. Does the program have sufficient operating budget and other sources of support to meet the needs of students or does it have excess capacity?
4. Is this program an effective and efficient use of resources?
  - a. Is this program cost effective?
  - b. Given this, and its quality, alignment with mission and strategic plan, and student demand, should we grow it, maintain it or reduce in size? If we were to grow or shrink the program, what would that look like and why?
5. How does this program compare to peer/aspirant programs in the nation?
  - a. What 3-5 programs in the nation should be considered our peer/aspirant programs? Why?
  - b. What things should we be doing to be more competitive with these peer/aspirant programs? What things might we discontinue?

## **Strategic Issues Statement and Peer/Aspirant Programs**

To ensure that the program review process is focused on areas of opportunity and challenges, a small set of strategic issues, typically 3 or fewer, for the review will be established by the unit and the Provost. An initial version of this statement should be completed and submitted before the Provost's Summit. The strategic issues statement will be revised and finalized after the Summit and the unit will incorporate the issues into its self-study. Deans and department chairs are encouraged to engage faculty, administrators, and students in determining the strategic issues for the unit. For accredited units, these may differ from the focus of an accreditation visit, if the unit and the Provost agree on this approach.

It may be helpful for the unit to provide some brief context for the presentation of its strategic issues – strengths, weaknesses, or opportunities or relevant trend data (e.g., changes in the field, external forces, resource challenges, etc.). Page 10 contains a set of guiding questions that might be used to identify these issues based on data and trends.

The strategic issues statement should be no longer than 2 pages, excluding appendices. Please include the following information as part of the Strategic Issues Statement:

- Unit of Analysis
- Dean/Department Chair
- Semester of Review
- Date Submitted

- Strategic Issue 1
- Strategic Issue 2
- Strategic Issue 3

Also to be submitted at this time is the unit's choice of 3-5 peer/aspirant programs (with a brief explanation of choices) which the reviewers will use to benchmark the MU unit (1 page).

## Self-Study Template

**NOTE: The self-study template references eleven appendices with various data about the unit. Please contact the Office of Institutional Research and Analysis for academic data, the Assessment Director for program assessment data, and the Director of Financial Planning and Analysis for financial data.**

### Instruction for the Self-Study

The self-study should respond to the following questions directly and succinctly, so the report is no longer than 30 pages plus the data in the appendixes. Departments with graduate programs must specifically address the graduate program(s) in each of the sections outlined in the self-study. The self-study should address the strategic issues identified at the Provost's Summit as well as provide background and context for the department profile. The self-study will also provide the data needed by the reviewers to get a clear picture of the unit's goals, priorities, and achievements. In addition, the self-study should provide the background needed for the reviewers and the Program Review Council to make recommendations regarding the strategic issues as well as providing any additional insights.

The self-study is due to the Office of the Provost four weeks before the scheduled visit and it will be given to the reviewers two weeks before their arrival on campus. Please indicate the members of the unit's program review team on the first page under "Submitted by." The self-study should include a table of contents, with page numbers. Questions can be directed to the Vice Provost for Academic Affairs.

The **Title Page** should include:

Academic Unit  
Dean  
Department Chair  
Submitted by (faculty and Staff on Review Team)  
Semester and Year of Review  
Date Submitted

### **Table of Contents for the Self-Study with guidelines for number of pages per section**

Table of Contents Page, including page numbers  
Section 1: Results of Previous Reviews  
Section 2: Strategic Issues Statement, and list of peer and aspirational programs  
Section 3: Unit's Alignment with College Strategic Plan  
Section 4: Academic Programs – Enrollment, Student Diversity, and Degrees Conferred  
Section 5: Student Outcomes  
Section 6: Teaching an Instructional Capacity  
Section 7: Faculty Profile  
Section 8: Financial Data

### **SECTION 1: Results of Previous Review (2 pages)**

- a. *Provide the dates of the most recent previous review and a brief summary (at most, 2 pages) of the review, including the names and home institutions of the reviewers, the outcomes of the review and any unresolved issues from the review. If the previous review is available, the unit may include it as an optional appendix.*

### **SECTION 2: Strategic Issues Statement (2 pages) and Peer/Aspirant Programs (1 page)**

- a. *Include 1-2 pages summarizing the strategic issues identified at the Provost's Summit.*
- b. *Include a list of aspirant/peer programs which you wish the external reviewers to benchmark your program against (please include a brief explanation of choices).*

### **SECTION 3: Unit Alignment with Marquette's Mission, and University and College/School Strategic Plans (2 pages)**

- a. *Describe the unit mission, purpose, strategic priorities, and goals.*
- b. *Discuss alignment of unit mission, goals and priorities with Marquette's mission as a Jesuit Catholic university, and the University and the College/School Strategic Plans.*
- c. *Discuss any current or anticipated external or internal changes that may impact the unit, referring to the Strategic Issues Statement as appropriate.*

### **SECTION 4: Academic Programs (2 pages)**

- a. Student Enrollment
  1. *Discuss and analyze the data in **Appendix I, Student Enrollment**. Using Tables 1-3, identify undergraduate and graduate programs for which enrollment has experienced significant changes (increases or declines). Identify any internal or external factors (e.g., program quality and reputation, employment outlook, competition, etc.) that have or will impact enrollment trends, and any distinctive features of your program that might impact enrollment.*
  2. *Review the graduate student data in **Appendix I, Tables 4 & 5**. Assess the quality and quantity of the applicants and the program selectivity with respect to department research and academic goals.*
- b. Student Diversity Profile
  1. *Discuss and analyze the data in **Appendix II, Student Diversity Profile**. If appropriate, include secondary majors for undergraduate programs as well as primary majors.*
  2. *Address strategies to meet the university's student diversity goals (undergraduate and graduate).*
- c. Degrees Awarded
  1. *Discuss and analyze the data in **Appendix III, Degrees Awarded**, Tables 1-2.*
  2. *Discuss recent trends in degrees awarded, possibly relative to other programs, internal or external*

- d. Time to Degree
  - a. *Review the data in **Appendix III, Time to Degree** in Undergraduate and Graduate Programs, Tables 3-5. Comment on the graduation rates and the time to degree. Are these in alignment with respect to department student outcome goals?*

## **SECTION 5: Student Outcomes (2 pages)**

- a. Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes
  - 1. *Describe your processes for obtaining information about student learning in your programs. Refer to the Assessment Process Rating Guide provided by the University Assessment Committee in **Appendix IV, Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes**, and add any clarifying information.*
  - 2. *Give examples of how you have used evidence of student learning to improve teaching, curriculum, and decision-making in your program.*
- b. High Impact Learning Experiences
  - 1. *Please identify signature high impact learning experiences (as defined by AACU) available to undergraduates in the department and participation rates in **Appendix V, High Impact Learning Experiences**, if available.*
  - 2. *Please highlight any other unique pedagogical practices available to undergraduates in the department and participation rates, if available.*
- c. Post-Graduation Student Outcomes
  - 1. *Briefly analyze post-graduation outcomes for undergraduate and graduate students. Please reference the data in **Appendix VI, Post-Graduation Student Outcomes**.*
  - 2. *For graduate students, discuss post-graduation outcomes (e.g., academic appointments, post-doctoral appointment, industry positions, community service, etc.) compared with departmental goals for graduates of the program.*
- d. Student and/or Employer Feedback
  - 1. *Discuss and analyze the data in **Appendix VII, Student and or Employer Feedback**. If you wish to add any additional student survey data or employer feedback, please include and discuss the results here.*

## **SECTION 6: Teaching and Instructional Capacity (1 page)**

- a. Teaching and Instruction
  - 1. *Briefly discuss the unit's teaching and instructional capacity. This might include faculty teaching load, sections taught, student credit hours by major and non-majors, percent of courses taught by tenure track faculty, and trends in class size. Please reference the data in **Appendix VIII, Teaching and Instructional Capacity**.*
- b. Instructional Facilities and Technology
  - 1. *For current and for planned or potential new programs, briefly discuss the capacity and condition of the teaching and learning environment, including classrooms, labs, and technology.*

## **SECTION 7: Faculty Profile (2 pages)**

### a. Faculty Profile

1. *Provide an overview of the faculty, including current number of faculty by rank and type (full-time tenure track by rank, full-time adjunct, teaching assistants, etc.). Note any impending retirements and strategies for new hires and the use of graduate students in the classroom. Address the size of the faculty given enrollment trends. Discuss diversity profile and departmental diversity goals and strategies. For this section, please reference the data in **Appendix IX, Faculty Profile**.*

### b. Research Productivity

1. *Using **Appendix X, Research Productivity**, and supplementing it with any other relevant information, provide an analysis of research productivity, identifying opportunities for improvement and alignment and support of university research goal.*

## **SECTION 8: Financial Data (1 page)**

- a. Provide an overview of the financial profile of the academic unit including budget history and net revenue surplus by program, if available. Please reference the data in **Appendix XI, Financial Data**.
  1. *Please discuss your operating budget and other funds you have in your unit (i.e., lab fees, endowed funds, etc.)*
  2. *Is there an opportunity to combine this program with others or merge its activities into other areas and continue to achieve its goals?*

# Outcomes and Action Plan Template

The action plan will be created by the unit and approved by the Dean and the Provost and the recommendations will be integrated into the annual planning process, as appropriate. Please fill out one table for each strategic issue and the relevant recommendations.

Please include the following:

- Cover Page:
- Academic Unit or Academic Support Unit
- Dean / Department Chair or Director
- Semester and Year of Review
- Date Submitted

- I. Strategic Issues Statement and list of peer/aspirant programs
- II. External Review Team Recommendations
- III. Program Review Council Recommendations
- IV. Outcomes and Action Plan (a narrative may also be included)

## Strategic Issue:

Recommendation	Action	Responsible	Date Completed