

Academic Program Review Process

Zeinab Amin

Associate Provost for Assessment and Accreditation

1. Overview

The academic program review is a process that ensures each degree program at AUC undergoes a comprehensive cyclic process of assessment of quality, potential and sustainability for the purpose of enhancing academic quality and students' experience, and ensuring resources are used efficiently and allocated to support AUC's mission and strategic plan.

The academic program review generates in-depth communication between the academic departments and the university administration which can be a central mechanism for advancing the university mission, setting priorities, allocating resources and identifying future areas of potential growth. The review plan can also be used to enhance the process of evaluating the feasibility of new programs by learning the key determinants to a successful program that provides an intellectually stimulating and enriching learning experience to students and is in line with AUC's mission.

The review is not only based on areas where there is a wealth of objective quantitative data available, which may represent a dangerous flaw in any academic review. Rather both qualitative and quantitative assessment methods are used to evaluate the overall academic program effectiveness. A variety of indicators are reviewed under the three broad parameters: Quality, potential and sustainability. Input will be sought from all stakeholders through self-study assessments, surveys, interviews and focus groups, etc. This includes faculty, students and alumni of the program under review.

Each degree program at AUC will undergo a comprehensive review on a regular schedule, typically every six years. Academic program reviews are overseen by the Associate Provost for Assessment and Accreditation (APAA) who is responsible for developing procedures for initiating and administering the review process, and providing the Provost with a report of the findings of the review committee. The School Dean is responsible for preparing an action plan and ensuring the recommendations adopted from the program review process are implemented. The administration is committed to providing sufficient support for the implementation of the recommendation plan.

2. The Review Committee

The process of academic program review is carried out by a review committee that is organized by the APAA, in consultation with the school dean, and approved by the Provost. Membership of the committee includes representation from the Senate, the school and the department offering the program under review. The review committee is comprised of seven members:

1. The APAA (Chair)
2. A representative of the University Senate.
3. The Associate Dean for Undergraduate/Graduate Studies of the school offering the program under review.
4. The chair of the academic affairs committee of the school offering the program under review or designee from the committee.
5. The chair of the department, program director, or chair of the academic affairs committee of the department offering the program under review.
6. Two external faculty members from other school(s) at AUC.

An external reviewer (renowned specialist in the field) may be included in the committee. The external reviewer should be a full-professor from a reputable institution who is active, respected member of the discipline and profession. The reviewer should not have any conflicts of interest that might prevent a candid and thorough evaluation.

To ensure representation of departments involved, in case of interdisciplinary programs, the chair of the department may be replaced by the chair of the steering committee of the program under review or program director.

The charge of the academic review committee is to review the academic profile of the program under review, compile and review other pertinent and related information and make recommendations to the Provost. The review committee exists until it submits its report and recommendations. The review process should be based on a wide variety of factors that goes beyond simple measures of current student demand or student contact hours. In its report the committee should provide its specific recommendations for action with timelines and an assessment of the impact of these recommendations on students, faculty and staff involved as well as its impact on the school or university as a whole. The review process should provide a developmental plan to enhance the program design and delivery and to help in developing short and long-term plans for how to best allocate resources to support quality enhancement and program effectiveness.

3. Schedule of Reviews

Responsibility for establishing a calendar for programs to be evaluated rests with the APAA in consultation with school deans. The annual review schedule is reported to the Provost Council. After the schedule is approved by the Provost, the APAA sends the framework and guidelines to deans who in turn will communicate these guidelines to department chairs and program directors. The APAA begins the review process by meeting with all relevant parties (deans, department chairs, program directors, etc.) to better communicate the evaluation process, its objectives, the information required from the department and the timeline for conducting the review.

The academic review of a program is conducted over a six-month span. Simultaneous program reviews will be conducted according to the schedule. To ensure an effective use of time and resources and reduce the chance of duplicating evaluation processes, we attempt to align the review schedule with external

accreditation cycles. However, there will be additional elements in the academic program review which are not included within the self-study materials required for external accreditation processes.

4. Key Indicators

The program review process is guided by three broad parameters: Quality, potential and sustainability. The review committee should cover these parameters by examining the following key indicators. Any other key distinguishing characteristic of the program can be added.

(1) Alignment with the Mission of AUC:

- The contribution of the program to AUC's commitment to offering liberal arts and professional education.
- The program's role in producing leaders to serve Egypt and the international community (alumni representation in leadership positions within business or academia).
- The program's research and scholarly publications and its creative productivity (faculty vitality including innovation, scholarship and creative activity).
- The program's commitment to fostering high-quality teaching (faculty participation in professional development programs on issues related to curriculum, teaching, learning and assessment, innovations in teaching practice, effective design of curriculum, project-based learning, new forms of peer assessments, embedding learning outcomes in assessment methods, etc.)

(2) Academic Quality:

- Published program educational objectives that are consistent with constituencies' needs (changes in these objectives during the past several years and responsiveness to changes in the direction of the discipline and the needs of the society, success of the program in achieving these goals, challenges facing the program in achieving these goals).
- The program has student outcomes that are documented, clearly defined, and adequate in breadth and depth to help graduates attain the program educational objectives.
- External validation, recent program review or accrediting agency recommendations.
- Experiential learning and career preparation embedded in the curriculum.
- The opportunity for awarding credit for work in lieu of courses (where applicable).
- Integration of teamwork, case studies and presentations within the curriculum.
- Connection to industry (student academic club with a robust program that provides career guidance, a variety of outside speakers integrated into events, industry advisory board involved in program development, ...) (where applicable).
- Availability of modern tools, equipment, computing resources, studios and laboratories appropriate to the program and to support program needs.
- Accomplishments and recognitions of students, faculty and alumni.
- Student satisfaction with their learning experience (student experience survey covers five aspects of the student experience: skills development, learner engagement, teaching quality, student support and learning resources).
- Graduate satisfaction and placement (graduate destination survey covers five aspects: Job search and transition period, full-time employment during the first three years after graduation, work content and use of knowledge, skills and values acquired in the program to evolve professionally, further academic or professional education/training, and career prospects).

(3) Enrollment and Retention:

- Average annual enrollment in the program over a 6-year period.
- Percentage change in enrollment over a 6-year period.
- Student attrition/retention rates.
- Student to faculty ratio (FTE students taught/FTE faculty).
- Average number of students who graduate from the program per year over a 6-year period.
- Student credit hours generated over the past six years classified by student's major (primary or secondary) as follows:
 - Total credit hours generated by students of the program under review.
 - Total credit hours generated by students from outside the program or undeclared students.¹
 - Total credit hours generated by the department offering the program.
- Frequency of course section offerings and section fill rates.

(4) Faculty Characteristics and Qualifications:

- Size and composition of the faculty sufficient to maintain continuity, stability, and to provide student interaction and advising.
- Full time equivalent faculty as opposed to actual headcounts (full-time and adjunct).
- Average annual faculty turnover rate over a 6-year period.
- Appropriate expertise and educational background.
- Professional credentials and certifications.
- Relevant industrial/professional experience.
- Consistency of the expertise and educational background of faculty teaching in the program with all curricular areas of the program, research profile, and plans for the future.
- Teaching effectiveness.
- Ongoing professional development.
- Contributions to the discipline (research productivity and other evidence of creative activities, external recognition of faculty, awards, ...).

(5) Assessment and Evaluation:

- A documented and appropriate student outcome assessment and evaluation process in place and functioning on a regular basis.
- Assessment results of program effectiveness (evaluation of student performance as measurement of the achievement of student outcomes).
- Student outcome evaluation results are used as input for continuous improvement of the program.
- Evaluation of effectiveness of instruction is periodically and systematically assessed using valid procedures, the use of results to improve instruction and support provided to accomplish this task.

(6) Competitiveness and Future Potential:

- Demand in the workforce or cyclic nature of the workforce (indicators of labor-market demand and community needs for the program).

¹ Courses of the program are taken by students from outside the program.

- Academic centrality and interdisciplinary focus (the extent to which the program under review provides core academic components or is a needed precursor to other programs, including courses required by majors in other units, core curriculum offerings, research collaboration, and core laboratory services).
- Comparative advantages or uniqueness of the program (availability of similar programs nearby, quality of similar programs nearby).
- Faculty vitality including innovation, scholarship and creative activity.
- Innovations employed by department or school that will have demonstrably positive impact on the program.
- Other future opportunities.

(7) Economic Viability:

- Tuition revenue of the program.
- Total tuition revenue of service courses provided to other students.
- Financial assistance and tuition remission.
- Total direct instructional cost of the program under review.
- Total direct instructional cost of service courses provided by the department offering the program to other students.
- Direct instructional cost covers:
 - Annual salaries and benefits for faculty and staff in the department offering the program under review.
 - Cost for equipment, supplies, etc. not included in the previous item for the academic year.
 - Operational expenditures of the department for the academic year.
- Estimated expenditures identified with cost units outside the academic area (IT, Finance, Facilities & Operations, HR, Utilities, etc.).

5. Review Outcomes

The Program Review Committee may make recommendations that include, but are not limited to the following:

1. Retain and possibly enhance the program.
 2. Revise the program and address critical issues.
 3. Restructure or consolidate the program.
- In Cases (1) and (2), a well-defined plan of action to enhance program effectiveness must be presented by the Program Review Committee along with the recommendation.
 - In Case (3), the report of the Program Review Committee should provide a clear vision of how restructuring would build on the program's strengths, lead to opportunities for shared courses and instructional labs, enhance the quality of teaching and research and hence better contribute to AUC's mission. The report of the review committee must include the effects of restructuring/consolidation on student success, faculty and staff. Provisions for any faculty or staff who will be negatively affected by the restructuring/consolidation must be made clear in the report.

The chair of the department offering the program is responsible for sharing the committee's report with his/her faculty. The review committee will make its recommendations to the Provost. The Provost in turn

will communicate his recommendations to the School Dean who is responsible for preparing an action plan and ensuring the recommendations adopted from the program review process are implemented. Proposals for revising, restructuring or consolidating programs will be presented to the Senate through the formal procedures. All Senate resolutions are transmitted to the President of the University/the Provost as the President's delegate for approval and the APAA reports back to the respective constituencies.

*Academic program review is an opportunity to **reflect, assess, and plan.***

*“The purpose of evaluation is to **improve, not prove**” Daniel Stufflebeam (1936-2017) one of the founding fathers of the field of evaluation.*