Office of the Chancellor
Pennsylvania's State System of Higher Education
Procedures and Standards for University Operations

Procedure/Standard Number 2024-58
Review of Academic Programs and Programs in Support of the Student Experience

Approved: _____   **Date:** ___6-25-24___

Chancellor

History: Replaces Administrative Procedure for Board of Governors' Policy 1986-04-R: *Program Review* (which was rescinded by the Board of Governors on January 25, 2018). Replaces System Procedure/Standard Number 2018-35 (which was temporarily suspended by the Board of Governors on October 17, 2019)

Related Policies, Procedures or Standards:

Board of Governors' Policy 1990-06-A *Academic Degrees*; Board of Governors' Policy 1986-04-A *Program Review*

I.   Introduction

Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education Board Policy 1986-04-A Program Review requires that each university establish a local 5-year review process for review of individual academic degree programs (frequently not the same as 'academic department') and programs in support of the student experience and, further, that universities are expected to use standards and criteria developed in consultation with State System universities and set forth in this Procedure & Standard. Universities may at their discretion establish additional standards and criteria.

Each program review will entail a program self-study in which the program analyzes appropriate data and evidence (see as an example MSCHE Evidence Expectations by Standards Guidelines) to document that it meets or is making appropriate progress toward meeting all standards and criteria, to identify specific actions to be implemented to drive improvement, and to recommend future direction, in keeping with the vision and strategic plan of the university. University procedures shall provide clear guidance about specific evidence expectations for program review. Program self-studies should consist of approximately 5,000 words/10 single-spaced pages, not including appendices.

II.   Standards and Criteria for Program Review

A.   Standards and Criteria for Academic Program Review

Standard I: Design and Delivery of the Academic Program - The program is properly staffed, resourced, and the curriculum designed and implemented consistent with disciplinary best practices. The quality of the program is demonstrated and ensured by:

Criteria:

1) Faculty. Program faculty are highly qualified to teach the curriculum, as indicated by earned academic degrees and professional certifications. The program regularly invests in the professional and scholarly development of its faculty, including the mentoring and guidance of junior faculty members through review, promotion and tenure processes in accordance with the CBA;

2) Curriculum. The program curriculum is suitable in terms of disciplinary breadth and depth; the program can be completed in an appropriate length of time; the curriculum is current with industry/disciplinary standards and is oriented to innovation and future directions; the curriculum complies with Board Policy 1990-06-A (e.g., limits to the number of credits for academic degree and major/cognate totals as well as the range of credits permitted for general education coursework) unless the chancellor has granted an exception; the curriculum is integrated with the university's general education program, if applicable;

3) Faculty performance. Faculty demonstrate effectiveness in teaching and student advising, scholarship, and service, as evidenced by evaluations in accordance with the CBA, awards, honors, grants, research contributions, publications, citations, service endeavors, and student achievement;

4) Advising. Program faculty provide excellent academic advising, per student feedback and other appropriate indicators;

5) Resources. The program has adequate faculty, support staff, library resources, equipment, technology, and facilities to accomplish its purpose;

6) Reputation. The program is highly regarded, as evidenced by rankings and assessments by external reviewers of student success, faculty, resources, and productivity. The program attracts and retains excellent students as evidenced by admission practices and student success measures;

7) Extramural funding (if applicable). There is evidence of success in attracting extramural funding that contributes to the program's long-term stability and reputation;

8) External Benchmarks. The program reflects "best practices" and compares well to relevant performance standards from comparable institutions and/or accrediting agencies and/or other authoritative sources. The program demonstrates leadership in its performances relative to appropriate external benchmarks;

9) Collaboration. The program enhances the faculty expertise, course selection, and learning opportunities available to students through collaboration with other State System universities and/or industry, government, and community organizations.

9) Additional factors, as appropriate to the program.

Standard II: Effectiveness - Using an identified plan for systematic evaluation and regular assessment of goals and purposes, the program accomplishes effectively its educational and related objectives. The effectiveness of the program is demonstrated and ensured by:

Criteria:

1) Systematic assessment and use of data to inform continual improvement. This includes but is not limited to direct and indirect assessments of student learning at the course level. The program has a sustainable cyclical assessment plan in place to evaluate students' achievement of each learning outcome, as well as a process for using assessment data to inform specific changes that are intended to improve student and program outcomes;

2) Student success. The program regularly evaluates student performance in the field, professional achievements, and performance on professional licensure exams. Program graduates succeed in finding jobs and progress well in their chosen careers. Alumni express satisfaction with the program and their experience. Undergraduate and graduate students produce creative works, publications, and receive grant awards;

3) Curriculum. There are regular improvements in the design and delivery of curricula based on assessment of student achievement of program learning outcomes, new knowledge in the discipline, societal need, and demand for the program;

4) Advising. There are measures in place to maintain or improve high quality student advising and mentoring, including advising for career preparation;

5) Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. There are programmatic features that foster an appreciation of cultural difference and diversity of perspectives;

6) Inclusive Practices. There is evidence of measures to reduce access and achievement gaps (e.g., by employing best practices in inclusive teaching and curriculum design, equity-minded and equity-centered assessment, etc.);

7) Additional factors, as appropriate to the program.

Standard III: Demand - There is sufficient demand for the program to ensure its growth and workforce relevance in concert with the vision and strategic plan of the university. There is demand for the program as demonstrated by:

1) Workforce Demand. There is evidence of demand based on local, regional, national, and global labor market trends and forecasts for persons with particular types and levels of education;

2) Student Demand. There is evidence of demand as reflected by student enrollment in the program as well as the volume of students from other programs (e.g., taking courses to satisfy general education requirements, free electives, etc.). If the undergraduate degree program does not meet the CPP benchmark of 90 majors and/or 15 completions a year, describe how the program contributes to program array metrics and sustainability.

3) Additional factors, as appropriate to the program.

B.   **Standards and Criteria For General Education**

A general education program "offers sufficient scope to draw students into new areas of intellectual experience" and a "curriculum designed so that students acquire and demonstrate essential skills including at least oral and written communication, scientific and quantitative reasoning, critical analysis and reasoning, technological competency, information literacy. . . . [and] the study of values, ethics, and diverse perspectives." (MSCHE Standard III). Board Policy 1993-10-A General Education in the State System requires that general education at State System universities be aligned with the PA Statewide Transfer Credit Framework.

Standard I: Design and Delivery of the Academic Program - The program is properly staffed, resourced, and the curriculum designed and implemented consistent with disciplinary best practices. The quality of the program is demonstrated and ensured by:

Criteria:

1) Breadth. The general education program "offers sufficient scope to draw students into new areas of intellectual experience." (MSCHE Standard III);

2) Curriculum. The general education program offers a "curriculum designed so that students acquire and demonstrate essential skills including at least oral and written communication, scientific and quantitative reasoning, critical analysis and reasoning, technological competency, information literacy. . . . [and] the study of values, ethics, and diverse perspectives." (MSCHE Standard III);

3) Student Transfer. The general education requirements are aligned with the Pa Statewide Transfer Framework;

4) Faculty. Program faculty are highly qualified to teach the curriculum, as indicated by earned academic degrees and professional certifications. The university regularly invests in the professional and pedagogical development of general education faculty;

5) Resources. The program has adequate faculty, support staff, library resources, equipment, technology, and facilities to accomplish its purpose;

6) External Benchmarks. The program reflects "best practices" and compares well to relevant performance standards from comparable institutions and/or other authoritative sources. The program demonstrates leadership in its performances relative to appropriate external benchmarks;

7) Additional factors, as appropriate to the program.

Standard II: Effectiveness - Using an approved plan for systematic evaluation and regular assessment of goals and student outcomes, the program accomplishes effectively its educational and related objectives and engages in continual improvement. The effectiveness of the program is demonstrated and ensured by:

Criteria:

1) Systematic assessment and use of data to inform continual improvement. The program has a sustainable and organized assessment plan to evaluate students' achievement of learning and

program outcomes, as well as a process for using assessment data to inform specific changes that are intended to improve student outcomes. The program assessment plan includes but is not limited to direct and indirect assessment of student learning at the course level.

2) Curriculum. There are regular improvements in the design and delivery of curriculum based on assessment of student achievement of program learning outcomes, new knowledge, and societal need;

3) Advising. There are measures in place to maintain or improve high quality student advising, including advising for education in the liberal arts and sciences and mentoring for career preparation;

4) Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. There are programmatic features that foster belonging and value of cultural difference and diversity of perspectives;

5) Inclusive Practices. There is evidence of measures to reduce access and achievement gaps (e.g., by employing best practices in inclusive teaching and curriculum design, equity-minded and equity-centered assessment, etc.);

6) Additional factors, as appropriate to the program.

Standard III: Demand

Criteria:

1) Relevance to university-wide goals. The general education program maps learning outcomes to university goals and/or stated institutional student outcomes.

2) Relevance to Careers. The general education program maps learning outcomes to essential competencies in demand in the workforce.

C. **Suggested standards for Review of Programs in Support of the Student Experience**

It is suggested that Review of Programs in Support of the Student Learning Experience make use of the standards provided by Council for Advancement of Standards (CAS) or an equivalent set of quality assurance standards provided by another professional association appropriate to the program. If using CAS, each program shall be driven by the following five guiding principles (Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education – *Guiding Principles*):

1) Maximizing the Potential of **Students and Their Environments**: CAS Standards 1 – 4
   - Mission
   - Program and Services
   - Student Learning, Development, and Success
   - Assessment

2) Advocating for **Diverse, Equitable, and Inclusive Communities**: CAS Standard 5
   - Access, Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Justice

3) Responsible **Organization, Leadership, and Human Resources**: CAS Standards 6 – 8
   - Leadership

- Human Resources
- Collaboration and Communication

4) Demonstrated *Ethical Considerations*: CAS Standard 9
   - Ethics, Law, and Policy

5) Proven *Learning-Conducive Structures, Resources, and Systems*: CAS Standards 10 – 12
   - Financial Resources
   - Technology
   - Facilities and Infrastructure

A selection of resources may be found in the Academic and Student Affairs Workspace in Sharepoint.

For programs following CAS Standards and Guidelines, it is suggested you use the guidance provided in the Self-Assessment Guide (SAG) corresponding with your particular program. Programs not corresponding to a program specific SAG may consider using the CAS SAG for General Standards.

**Please note that an entity must be a purchaser or authorized recipient in order to have permission to use CAS materials, and that permission is contingent upon appropriate credit being given to CAS.

The purpose of presenting suggested standards for review of programs in support of the student experience is to provide direction to the self-study review team on the types of categories and measures expected to be included in their submitted program review. While CAS covers a wide range of program areas, it is recognized that specific programs might find more targeted direction from a professional association with an industry recognized, equivalent quality set of standards. Examples of such associations include the National Association for Behavioral Intervention and Threat Assessment (NABITA), National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA), National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE), and the Association of Fraternity/Sorority Advisors (AFA).

**For programs not covered by CAS or an applicable professional association, it is suggested you refer to your university's review process as determined at the local level.

Programs connected with and/or conforming to a CAS-level equivalent quality set of standards provided by another professional association may employ recommended program review templates more conducive to the program specific standards as set by the applicable professional association.

Consistent with MSCHE Standard IV, state-system institutions are required to provide evidence (see for example MSCHE Evidence Expectations by Standards Guidelines) of their commitment "to student retention, persistence, completion, and success through a coherent and effective support system sustained by qualified professionals, which enhances the quality of the learning environment, contributes to the educational experience, and foster's student success." Program review is an important vehicle to demonstrate, ensure, and showcase that commitment.

III.   Reporting

Board Policy 1986-04-A Program Review requires universities to close the assessment loop by reporting back to the programs under review and engaging the program in discussion about the review, and, further, to submit to Academic and Student Affairs in the Office of the Chancellor an annual report of academic programs and programs in support of the student experience that were reviewed that year, together with an executive summary of each review (no more than one page). Executive summaries should be completed and signed by the university vice president responsible for the program and submitted by August 15, together with the list of programs reviewed, by the office responsible for assessment and institutional effectiveness. A template for the executive summary of program reviews may be found in Appendix A of this Procedure & Standard; a fillable PDF may also be found in the Academic and Student Affairs Workspace in Sharepoint.

Appendix A

PROGRAM REVIEW EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

University:	Submission Date:
Program Name:	
Program Description:	
Three to Five Program Strengths Documented in the Review:	
Three to Five Program Opportunities for Improvement Documented in the Review:	
If an external evaluator was utilized, summarize the key takeaways of the evaluator's report.	
What, if any, actions did or will the university take in relation to the program in response to the review?	
Department Chair/Director and Department Name: Department:	Signature of Department Chair,signifying that they have seen this Executive Summary
Name and Title of Vice President Name: Title:	Signature of Vice President, signifying authorization of this Executive Summary