

Academic Program Review At WOU Frequently Asked Questions

What is a program?

- Programs include majors, minors and certificates at the undergraduate and graduate levels; all undergraduate general education options; co-curricular and academic support services within Academic Affairs.
- For review purposes, programs will be organized into “clusters” of related programs (majors, minors, certificates), with most clusters representing the programs in a department. Interdisciplinary minors will be assigned to a cluster for review purposes, a decision that will be made in consultation with division chairs and department heads.

What is a program leader?

- At WOU, nomenclature varies by college. “Program leader” refers to the department head, program coordinator or division chair, whichever is appropriate.

What is the purpose of Academic Program Review?

- While required by NWCCU, academic program review is, first and foremost, for the benefit of WOU programs and the students we serve, ensuring that we engage in systematic inquiry into the effectiveness of our academic programs and use findings to improve.

How often are programs reviewed?

- We have proposed a review cycle where each program is reviewed at least *once every seven years*.
- Programs with external accreditation would have Academic Program Review aligned to their accreditation cycles.
- We will develop a schedule of Academic Program Reviews in consultation with deans, division chairs and department heads. We seek volunteers to go early, in 2017-18 or 2018-19.

What are the phases of program review?

- *Pre-planning*: Departments are notified of review, oriented to academic program review, provided institutional research data, and supported in conceptualizing self-study and review visit.
- *Self-study*: Program faculty describe of program's context and its changes, assess program strengths and areas for improvement, explain alignment with WOU strategic plan and core themes, analyze contributions to institutional priorities, reflect on program sustainability and future potential, and establish goals and plans for the future.
- *Review Visit*: Review includes campus visit by *internal/external reviewers*, and evaluation and recommendations to the program. The review visit may happen in the spring of the year of the self-study or in the following fall.
- *Planning for the future*: The Action Plan is very much like a strategic plan for the department and its programs. It includes: (1) goals for the department and its programs, (2) specific actions for the department to take to achieve the goals, (3) metrics or performance measures used to ascertain whether -- and to what extent -- the goals have been met, and (4) an overall timeline for implementation.

What support will be provided for program review?

- The Provost's Office will notify departments of upcoming reviews and provide guidelines, workshops and consultations on preparing the self-study and planning the review visit.
- The program leader will receive a one-course release in the year of the program review to prepare, in consultation with program faculty, the self-study report and associated review activities.
- WOU's Institutional Research Office will provide longitudinal data to programs for use in the self-study report.

Who will see the self-study and external review?

- The self-study and external review will be available to the program, dean and provost, as well as other authorized parties (e.g. NWCCU reviewers). An executive summary of the review will be posted on the Academic Effectiveness website.

Questions or comments: email Sue Monahan (smonahan@wou.edu)