



**ACADEMIC PROGRAM REVIEWS**  
*GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES*

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## INTRODUCTION

The systematic assessment of an institution's academic programs is essential for ensuring that a quality educational experience is provided to all students. Internal Academic Program Review (APRs) is a central component of institutional effectiveness, strategic planning, assessment of student learning outcomes and in achieving organizational goals and objectives. The APRs standards and requirements are in alignment with regional and other specialized accreditation bodies like the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on College (SACSCOC), internal academic program review at Clark Atlanta University (CAU) is recognized as a core component of the institutional mission.

The impetus for APRs at CAU is faculty driven and is guided by Section 2.13 Academic Program Reviews of the Faculty Handbook (Approved by the CAU Board of Trustees, May 17, 2013). This section guides the purpose of determining, at a minimum, the "quality of academic curricula, the utilization of existing resources, the research and service activities, long-range plans and objectives, adequacy of financial support and the physical facilities, and the appropriateness of the departmental or program structure." The Academic Program Review will determine the effectiveness of each academic program.

Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) is a key component of Academic Program Review (APR). Expected educational outcomes must be established for each undergraduate and graduate degree program offered by the University. Respective faculties within the academic departments should identify what students should know (cognition), think (attitude) and be able to do (behavior) upon completion of their degree programs inclusive of outcomes specifically for the general education curriculum. Moreover, the respective faculties are expected to assess the extent to which established educational outcomes are achieved by their students. Further, results of assessment must be used to enhance curricula and instructional strategies as well as improve the administration of the academic programs.

These regulations establish procedures that are to be followed in implementing Section 2.13 of the Faculty Handbook and were informed by the work of the *University Effectiveness Committee* on Academic Program Reviews and the Committee on Student Learning Outcomes, two of the Ground Work Committees, established as a part of our Institutional Effectiveness process. The Committees' recommendations are codified in these regulations.

## TIME LINES AND PROCEDURES

Each academic program will complete an Academic Program Review (APR) every **five- (5) year cycle**. If a school, department or program is scheduled for review by an external specialized, professional or licensing agency **in the same year as the internal assessment is scheduled**, it may request a modification of the five-year review cycle from the Office of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs. ***The request must be made in writing.***

The APR Process consist of revisiting prior assessments/evaluations within the 5-year cycle to assess the program's status of improvement according to findings and recommendations:

- Academic Strategic Plan Reports
- Annual Assessment and Improvement Plans
- Prior Academic Program Reviews
- Performance Evaluations

## **CONDUCTING THE ACADEMIC PROGRAM REVIEW**

The APR report must be completed in the fall semester of the academic year immediately following the official notification that the unit is scheduled for review. The period of assessment is the prior academic year. The responsibility for completing the APR will rest with the School Dean, Department Chair degree Program Coordinator and the program faculty following the guidelines set for in the Standards for Internal Academic Program Reviews.

## **APPOINTMENT AND ROLE OF AN INTERNAL REVIEW TEAM (IRT)**

The Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs in collaboration with the School Dean and Department Chair (or degree program coordinator), will appoint a 3-5-member team to review the APR report.

## **PROGRAM DATA**

Data for the review should cover that from the previous academic year. The Office of Planning, Assessment and Institutional Research (OPAR) will provide data needed for the APR. The use of data developed by the school, department, or the degree program coordinator is permissible, as long as the validity of such data is documented. *Units planning to conduct APR should consult with the OPAR regarding data requirements in the year prior to the actual report.*

## **SUBMISSION OF THE SELF-STUDY REPORT**

A draft report will be submitted to the University Effectiveness Committee (UEC) no later than April 30th. The report will be reviewed by the UEC in conjunction with the IRT. The Internal Review Team will conduct a series of activities designed to review and evaluate the report between May and June. This will include (1) evaluation of the report, (2) interviews with faculty, students and staff, and (3) a review of additional data as needed. An original and three (3) electronic copies (Flash Drives) of the APR report should be submitted to the Office of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs no later than July 31st. A copy should also be provided to the school dean.

## **ASSESSMENT AND IMPROVEMENT PLAN (AIP):**

The Annual Assessment and Improvement Plan (AIP) will be developed by the Department Chair or Degree Program Coordinator for each degree- program. It should identify plans to address those findings in the APR report and recommendations in the report of the Internal Review Team. This plan should be submitted to the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs by June 30 following the self-study year.

## **DOCUMENTATION OF ACADEMIC ASSESSMENT PROCESS**

An electronic copy of the APR report of the Internal Review Team, and Assessment and Improvement Plan should be provided to the Office of Planning, Assessment and Institutional Research (OPAR) and the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs by June 30<sup>th</sup>.

## **THE ACADEMIC PROGRAM REVIEW REPORT**

The assessment of any degree program must flow from its mission, major goals, objectives, and student learning outcomes as well as benchmarking of best practices at peer and aspirant institutions. Therefore, the process should identify peer and aspirant institutions, expected outcome measures, the collection and analysis of valid, relevant, and timely data, and a set of actions to improve the quality and competitiveness of the degree program based on the assessment results.

Such assessment requires feedback to the respective department and school and to the university. The APR process flow is shown below.



Program reviews are conducted against sets of *standards*, including regional SACSCOC accreditation standards and in some cases, professional accreditation standards as they affect the evaluation of degree program quality and *benchmarks of best practices* at peer and aspirant institutions. The department chair or degree program coordinator in coordination with the faculty, school dean, and the OPAR should identify at least two peer and two aspirant institutions with a similar degree program as the one scheduled for self-study. OPAR will assist the faculty, department chair or program coordinator in identifying appropriate data points to be used in benchmarking the degree program with that at peer and aspirant institutions. Standards and benchmarks frame the essential processes used by educational institutions in determining the quality of academic programs and should form the basis for the APR report. The standards and benchmarks should be applied to the following:

- The APR Report is a written evaluation addressing recommendations of priorities for the Academic Program’s continued improvement.
- The APR Report should be concise, focus on the key issues and include an overall review of the Academic Programs’ reviewed.

The report provides an opportunity for an academic department to present a comprehensive assessment of the academic degree programs under review. As the APR Report is prepared, areas of concerns and issues developed from the review process should be addressed. The completed report should be presented to the Provost and Vice President and/or Dean as well as the academic department.

## ACADEMIC PROGRAM REVIEW STANDARDS

**Standard A: Program Mission, Goals and Objectives/Learning Outcomes** - The program should have a mission that is current and comprehensive. It must provide an educational philosophy that links the program to the University's mission. The program mission should clearly distinguish it from all other programs as a unique entity. It defines and justifies the program's purpose and function, identifies stakeholders, and gives meaning to all aspects of the program. Program goals are intended general outcomes of the program. A learning outcome is a statement of one of several specific performances, the achievement of which contributes to the attainment of the goal.

- A1. Provide a brief history and philosophy of the academic program(s)
- A2. Describe the inception of the program.
- A3. Explain the educational philosophy of the academic department.
- A4. Explain the affiliation of the program with other programs.
- A5. Program Goals and Objectives/Learning Outcomes
- A6. Describe the criteria of success used to determine if the program's expected outcomes achieved these outcomes; and provides evidence of improvement based on analysis of those results **(Documentation: Catalog, Website, and Course Syllabi)**
- A7. Explain any significant additions or major changes to the program since its inception.
- A8. Explain the alignment of the program to CAU's mission/purpose.

**Standard B: Organization, Governance, and Resources** - The program should have practices and policies that assign faculty the rights and responsibilities necessary to achieve high quality academic education. It also should establish governance and administrative structure that dictates authority and responsibility for decision making in goal setting, program planning, goal achievement, evaluation process for faculty and staff (including guidelines used for tenure and promotion decisions). Recognizing the wide variations in structure that exist as CAU, the intent of this guideline is to achieve an appropriate focus of accountability for the program. Within the organizational structure, the administration and faculty should exercise substantial influence with respect to:

- General program policy and planning degree requirements
- New courses and curriculum changes
- Admissions
- Certification of degree candidates
- Course scheduling and teaching assignment
- Appointment, promotion and tenure of program faculty

**B1.** Describe the program's practices and policies that assign faculty the rights and responsibilities necessary to achieve a high quality academic/professional education. The academic unit should describe the particular organizational structure that exists. **(Documentation: Faculty Handbook)**

**B2.** Describe the program's governance and administrative structure that dictates authority and responsibility for decision making in goal setting, program planning, goal

achievement, evaluation process for faculty and staff (including guidelines used for tenure and promotion decisions). Within the framework of the University's organization, responsibility for the academic/ professional program should rest with the faculty and an administrator within a school or department who have the responsibility of conducting the program effectively. **(Documentation: University's Organizational Chart, School Organizational Chart, and Departmental Organizational Chart)**

**B3.** The school, department, or program must have financial resources sufficient to support its stated goals and objectives/learning outcomes. **(Documentation: Budget Procedures, Departmental Budgets and Faculty Handbook)**

**Standard C: Faculty** - The program must have adequate full-time faculty in number, qualifications, competence, and range of expertise to achieve its stated goals. The core full-time faculty should consist of sufficient number faculty members who are significantly involved with the program to support the teaching, research, and service responsibilities appropriate to size and structure of the program. When determining acceptable qualifications of its faculty, a program should give primary consideration to the highest earned degree in the discipline. For each major in a degree program, the program should place primary responsibility for the content, quality, and effectiveness of its curriculum with its faculty. The program considers competence, effectiveness, and capacity, including as appropriate, undergraduate and graduate degrees, related work experiences in the field, professional licensure and certifications, honors and awards, continuous documented excellence in teaching, or other demonstrated competencies and achievements that contribute to effective teaching and student learning outcomes. For all cases, the program is responsible for justifying and documenting the qualifications of its faculty. Faculty quality should be addressed through demonstrated productivity in:

- Efforts to improve the instructional program, including students advisement, teaching methods, course content and innovative curricula development;
- Research/Scholarship: research, writing, and publications;
- Service to the University, school, department, program; program committees; special assigned or volunteer projects; public service with government, nonprofit agencies or consulting assignments, and other supporting activities.

**C1.** Explain how the program employs competent faculty members qualified to accomplish the mission and goals of the program. **(Documentation: Faculty Handbook, and Faculty Human Resources Files)**

**C2.** Provide evidence that the Graduate and undergraduate faculty have the appropriate experience, educational background, and other credentials necessary to offer primary responsibility for quality teaching and program development for the program. **(Documentation: Faculty Handbook, and Faculty Human Resources Files)**

**C3.** Describe how the program regularly evaluates the effectiveness of each faculty member in accordance with published criteria, regardless of contractual or tenured status. **(Documentation: Faculty Handbook, and Faculty Evaluations)**

**C4.** Explain how the program provides evidence of ongoing professional development of faculty as teachers, scholars, and practitioners. *(Documentation: Faculty Handbook, Departmental Budget, Faculty Evaluations, and Center for Excellence in Teaching Course Rosters)*

**C5.** Explain how the program demonstrates that each educational program for which academic credit is awarded is: (a) Approved by the faculty and the administration (b) Establish and evaluate the program learning outcomes. *(Documentation: Faculty handbook, Academic Council Minutes, Other Academic Committee Minutes, and Program Reviews and/or Proposals)*

**C6.** Specify how each faculty member is involved in teaching, related research and service. *(Documentation: Faculty Handbook, and Banner Web Reports)*

**C7.** Explain how the Faculty workload allows faculty members to carry out other responsibilities including: pedagogy practices, student advisement, evaluation of student performance, thesis/dissertation advisement, administrative tasks, engagement in research, publication, and other scholarly production, professional development; community obligations related to the purposes of the school, department, program, and participation in professional organizations. *(Documentation: Faculty Evaluations, Course Schedules, and Teaching Loads/Faculty Utilization Ratio)*

**C8.** Provide evidence that specific plans are being implemented to assure faculty diversity with respect to race, culture, age, gender, religion, persons with disabilities. Plans to ensure ongoing diversity must be current. *(Documentation: Faculty Handbook)*

**Standard D: Strategic Plan/Annual Review-** The program must have both a strategic plan and an annual review report.

**D1.** The program must have a strategic plan that relates to the University's strategic plan and that shows current goals and priorities in instruction, research, and service. *(Documentation: Annual Assessment and Improvement Plan)*

**D2.** The program goals must be evaluated annually to determine progress made in the evaluation process and is properly documented. *(Documentation: Annual Assessment Impact Report of Strategic Plan, and Strategic/Academic Program Annual Plans for respective school)*

**Standard E: Curriculum** – The curriculum must be developed and organized as a coherent and integrated whole that evidences horizontal and vertical integration. This should include consistency throughout a student's matriculation through the program, across and within departmental school lines and sequentially from year to year. The curriculum should show evidence of a logical rationale for requisite course work within each school and department.

The curriculum framework should specify the knowledge and skills to be acquired with related goals linked to general instructional processes and assessment techniques.

**E1.** The methods of instruction must be clearly explicated and relative to the learning domains (cognitive, affective, and psychomotor) to determine the skills, abilities, knowledge, or values that students should be able to do or demonstrate as a result of the course or program instruction. *(Documentation: Course Syllabi)*

**E2.** Describe the program's continuing education, outreach, and services efforts which should be consistent with the program's mission. *(Documentation: Faculty Handbook, and Student Handbook)*

**E3.** The program must ensure the quality of educational programs/courses offered through consortial relationships of contractual agreements, ensures ongoing compliance with the comprehensive requirements, and evaluates the consortial relationship and/or agreement against the purpose of the institution. *(Documentation: Assessment Plan, Contractual Agreements, and Relationship Agreements)*

**E4.** The program must define and publish general education requirements for its undergraduate and major requirements for all its programs. These requirements conform to commonly accepted standards and practices for degree programs. *(Documentation: Catalog, and Website)*

**E5.** The school, department, or program must identify college-level competencies with the general education core and provides evidence that graduates have attained those competencies. (Only for the general education core courses that are taught by the specific program.) *(Documentation: Catalog, and Website)*

**E6.** The program post-baccalaureate professional degree programs, and its master's and doctoral degree programs, should be progressively more advanced in academic content than undergraduate programs. *(Documentation: Catalog, Website, and Course Description)*

**E7.** Describes how the program ensures that its graduate instruction and resources foster independent learning, enabling the graduate to contribute to a profession or field of study. *(Documentation: Course Descriptions, and Course Syllabi)*

**E8.** When evaluating success with respect to student achievement in relation to the program's mission, the program should include, as appropriate, consideration of course completion, state licensing examinations, and job placement rates. *(Documentation: Survey – Career Planning & Placement, Student Evaluations, and Course Enrollment and Course Completion Statistics)*

**E9.** Describe how the program maintains a curriculum that is directly, related, and appropriate to its purpose and goals and to diplomas, certificates, or degrees awarded. **(Documentation: Catalog, and Website)**

**E10.** Describe how the program demonstrates that the program length is appropriate for each of the degrees offered. Documentation: Catalog, and Website

5k. Where there are specializations or concentrations, objectives and a rationale for these specializations or concentrations should be spelled out.

- The program must explain how the curriculum is designed to achieve the objectives set forth for the specialization or concentration.
- There should be evidence that the key courses for the specialization or concentration are offered on a regular basis by qualified faculty.
- Specialization and concentration courses shall not be substitutes for the common curriculum components. **(Documentation: Academic Catalog, Website, and Course Schedule)**

**E11.** When there is a field practicum, internship or other experiential activity (whether required or optional), the program must provide clearly designed standards for all students.

- The program must provide standards for the selection of practicum/internship sites, clearly defined expectations for field sites and supervisory credentials, with specific descriptions of the roles of the school, department or program personnel and students to ensure quality.
- There must also be clearly defined evaluative instruments for assessing student progress, the field site, and field supervisors. **(Documentation: Catalog, and Student Evaluation)**

**E12.** Describe the results of student learning outcomes for each program over the 5-year time period, and explain how these results were used to make continuous improvement to identify what students should know (cognition), think (attitude), and be able to do upon completion of the program, as well as the general education curriculum. **(Documentation: Academic Program Reviews, Annual Assessment and Improvement Plans, and Student Evaluations)**

**Standard F: Student Services** - The program must have clearly articulated policies regarding student admissions, advising, evaluation of academic performance, and students' rights and responsibilities to secretarial, clerical and administrative personnel that are adequate to meet the program goals and objectives.

**F1.** The program must use technology to enhance student learning and ensure that students have access to and training in the use of the required technology. **(Documentation: Student handbook, student satisfaction surveys (technology), course descriptions, and program course outline)**

**F2.** The school, department, or program must clearly articulate and make compulsory the requirements and processes of student admission to the undergraduate and graduate programs. Admission policy and standards, including academic requirements, GPA, standardized tests and scores, should be clearly and publicly stated in catalogues, brochures, handbooks, university/school/department/program web page, and other official documents. *(Documentation: Catalog, and Website)*

**F3.** Provide the written policies and procedures concerning transfer credit and the use of proficiency examinations. *(Documentation: Academic Catalog, and Website)*

**F4.** Provide the written policies and procedures concerning withdrawal, leaves of absences, and sick leaves, as well as policies regarding re-entrance to a school, department or program. *(Documentation: Academic Catalog, and Website)*

**F5.** Provide the written policies and procedures regarding students' rights and responsibilities. *(Documentation: Student Handbook, and Academic Catalog)*

**F6.** The school, department, or program must provide opportunities for and encourage students to organize in their interests as students. *(Documentation: Student Handbook)*

**F7.** The school, department, or program must have clear criteria for evaluating students' academic and field performance, to include procedures for terminating a student's environment in a particular school, program or department. These documents may be University-wide publications but must be available to students and other interested parties. *(If Applicable) (Documentation: Catalog, Student Handbook, and Course Syllabi)*

**F8.** Provide evidence of strong and continuous program advisement for all students from the joint of admission through graduation. *(Documentation: Policy Regarding Student Advising, Student Handbook, Student Advising Records)*

**Standard G: Support Staff-** The school, department, or program should have support staff to assist in the functions of the unit.

**G1.** Provide the school, department, or program must be able to verify that it has secretarial, clerical, and administrative personnel that are adequate to meet the program goals and objectives. *(Documentation: Departmental Organizational Charts, and Departmental Budgets)*

**Standard H: Support Services and Facilities** - The school, department, or program must have library, technological, and physical resources that are adequate to meet the program goals and objectives.

**H1.** Provide evidence that the Library facilities and services have adequate access to the library facilities for undergraduate and graduate programs

- The library acquisitions must be adequate for student and faculty learning, teaching, and research. (**Documentation: Student Satisfaction Surveys (Library), Course Syllabi**)

**H2.** Provide evidence that there are adequate number classrooms for the courses offered, and faculty offices should be appropriate for course preparation, student advisement, and other faculty responsibilities. (**Documentation: Classroom Assignments, Physical Inspection**)

**H3.** Provide evidence of Program faculty and students having access to appropriate equipment for coursework and research, including computer facilities, visual devices, and audio/videos. (**Documentation: Space Allocation, Physical Inspection, Departmental Budget**)

### **Standard I: Distance Learning Courses**

**I1.** Authorization for off-campus programs must be obtained through the appropriate University structure and accrediting body as warranted, needed, required, etc.  
Documentation: Evidence of Authorization from Appropriate Accreditation Body

**I2.** The full-time faculty of the parent program must be continuously involved in and committed to the off-campus program. This involvement must be spelled out with respect to planning, teaching, advising, admissions and other elements of the academic department.  
Documentation: Faculty Handbook, Faculty Evaluations