



ACADEMIC PROGRAM REVIEW GUIDELINES

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Rationale: Departmental planning and review is a continuous and systematic process that builds on the regular academic and administrative activities of a department. During the review process, a department successively assesses and recasts goals and objectives, courses, programs, and procedures. The reasons for program review are:

1. To ensure that the degrees and programs offered carry out the mission of the University and the department.
2. To ensure the excellent quality of our General Education, degree, and program offerings.
3. To ensure truth in advertising for our students- that courses and programs listed in the catalog are actually available during their University careers.
4. To aid the Curriculum Committee in carrying out its charge to review periodically the entire University curriculum and make recommendations concerning revisions. (Faculty Bylaws, XI. F. 11. b. 6.)
5. To aid the General Education Committee in carrying out its charge to “regularly evaluate the program and make recommendations for improvement”. (Faculty Bylaws, XI. F. 16. b. 8.)
6. To implement the USNH Board of Trustees goal that program review be done regularly on each campus.
7. To comply with the requirement of the New England Association of Schools and Colleges that PSU monitor “academic program expansion to ensure that the University’s limited resources are not diluted and that continuing programs are not made less effective.”

B. Who Will Do Program Review: Program review will be done by academic departments and by extra-departmental councils which offer academic programs, such as the Humanities Council and the Medieval Studies Council. In this document, “department” is used for any entity which is responsible for an academic program.

II. TIMETABLE

Departments will carry out a full review of degree offerings, programs and courses every six years.

III. PROCESS

A. Self-Study: A department should prepare for a program review by completing a self-study which includes the following:

1. Department plan. Included in the department plan should be a statement of how each degree/program area fits with the mission and goals of the department and University. The service component of the department (general education, requirements for other departments’ majors and minors, etc.) should be included. All General Education courses shall be evaluated according to procedures developed by the General Education Committee as described below. Outreach activities (where applicable) should also be included.

2. List of all degree programs and all program areas within degrees, with course requirements.
3. Number of graduates in each degree/program area for the last 6 years.
4. List of all courses offered by the department with enrollments in these courses over the last 6 years.
5. Number of faculty, full-time and part-time, for past 6 years. Projected needs.
6. Resources (e.g., faculty, staff, equipment, supplies, space) needed to carry out departmental mission and goals.

Release time to do departmental self-studies will be provided as needed.

B. Outside Consultants

1. One or more outside consultants will be retained to help in the departmental program review. The department will have the option to submit a list of possible consultants to the Vice President for Academic Affairs. The VPAA will research possible consultants for the review, and in conjunction with the department, will agree on the consultant/s to be employed and the length of the visit. The decision on the consultant to be used will be based upon review of cv, recommendations, and other relevant material. The consultant must be considered an impartial reviewer who is able to provide unbiased observations, comments, and suggestions related to the review of the program. The Vice President for Academic Affairs' Office will be responsible for consultants' fees and expenses.
2. Before the consultants' visit, the Vice President for Academic Affairs and the Department Chair will agree on a list of questions, answers to which will form the basis of the consultants' written report. Consultants will also receive copies of the department self-study.
3. Consultants must have the opportunity to meet with all faculty members and with student representatives selected by the department.
4. The consultant shall present his/her report to the Vice President for Academic Affairs who will provide copies to the Department Chair and to the Curriculum Committee.

C. Results of the Program Review

The reviewers' comments will be shared with the department. Discussions on improving courses and programs, building on strengths, and addressing weaknesses will be held between the Vice President for Academic Affairs and the department. Departments will make proposals (e.g., for curriculum changes or budget alterations) through the usual University procedures. Program review results will be forwarded to the Curriculum Committee and to the General Education Committee. Results of each department's review will vary. In some cases, courses or degree programs or other department activities may be altered, augmented or phased out; in others only minor adjustments may occur. **In any case, changes in curriculum must be approved by the Curriculum Committee and, if major, by the Faculty and the Board of Trustees.**

IV. GUIDELINES

The following principles are intended to guide departments to areas that must be considered during program review. However, action on each item is within the discretion of the department.

A. Course Scheduling

1. During the initial program review for each department, any course not taught any time in

the last 4 years should be reviewed for possible deletion from the catalog. (Graduate courses on a summer rotation or other courses on a special schedule may be exempt.

2. Thereafter, any course not taught every 3 years should be reviewed for possible deletion from the catalog. (Exemptions are possible for special scheduling.)

B. Program Enrollment

Programs (e.g., degrees, options, minors) with a history of seriously declining enrollments should be considered for phasing out, unless they are central to the mission of PSU. (Note: this is programs, not departments)

C. Guidelines for Degree Programs

1. During the program review process, departments shall review similar program and degree offerings from all institutions on the Board of Trustees-approved List of Comparative Institutions for PSU. Programs at PSU should not normally exceed the size of programs (number of courses/credits) at Comparative Institutions. Departments may justify exceptional program designs. Program review results will be forwarded to the Curriculum Committee.
2. All System Academic Planning Council (SAPC) guidelines must be followed.
3. Every major is expected to have a minimum of 50% of credits required in the major at the 300-level or above.

D. Guidelines for Review of General Education Courses

1. As part of the program review process, the department shall revisit each course it offers which is part of the General Education program and will present an argument that the course still addresses the General Education component it represents and still is taught (in all its sections) in such a way as to have the qualities required of General Education courses (as described in the *General Education Handbook*).
2. For each General Education course, the department shall provide a summary of student responses to whatever General Education Course Influence Inventories have been administered since the last program review, and of any other student evaluation that may be relevant, or devise a system of its own which demonstrates that all sections of all relevant courses taught in the department have been examined for the qualities required of General Education courses (as described in the *General Education Handbook*).

V. REVIEW OF PROGRAM REVIEW POLICY

This policy on program review will be reviewed by the Curriculum Committee three years after it has been passed and put into operation.

[Amended by the Curriculum Committee on March 18, 1988, and April 21, 1989; amended by the Executive Council on May 12, 1989. Further amended by the Curriculum Committee, October 20, 1989. Amended by the Executive Council on December 8, 1989. Adopted by the faculty on February 7, 1990. Revised by the Faculty (regarding General Education evaluation) on May 6, 1998. Amended by the VPAA August 12, 2005.]