

Revised WSU Regulation 3-26 (DRAFT)

January 30, 2014

1. Introduction

A. Purpose and Definition

The purpose of this regulation is to ensure that all academic programs, including undergraduate major and minor programs and graduate certificate and degree programs, are reviewed on a regular basis.

A program review is a cyclical and collaborative process for evaluating and enhancing the quality and currency of academic programs at Winona State University. The review is conducted through a combination of internal and external evaluations with the goal of identifying pedagogical strengths and weakness of programs for our students, our accrediting agencies, and the various communities that we serve.

**Commented [FE1]:** • “Purpose” and “Definitions” in the current regulation are addressed together rather than separately.  
• The emphasis in this section is less on the external needs of program review and more on the internal needs and uses of program review.  
• Program review is defined. Definitions for “program,” “assessment”, and “student learning outcomes” offered in the current regulation are eliminated from this section. These definitions may be addressed in the glossary when we create a companion guide to the program review.

B. Objectives of Program Review

The program review addresses three categories of objectives.

1. Internal to the program:

- a. To maintain high quality academic programs
- b. To promote excellence in teaching, research and scholarship, and service
- c. To provide accountability
- d. To promote professional growth and development
- e. To promote excellence in the support of student growth
- f. To monitor and enhance the quality of the learning experience
- g. To assist the program in decision making and planning

**Commented [FE2]:** The objectives in the proposed document address objectives in the same format as in the current document. Specific changes are indicated in the comments below.

**Commented [FE3]:** This is a new objective that provides an overarching rationale for the program review.

**Commented [FE4]:** This objective combines the second, fourth, and seventh objectives in the current regulation, i.e., “promote excellence in teaching;” and “promote excellence in research and scholarship”.

**Commented [FE5]:** This objective rewords the seventh objective in the current regulation, i.e., “provide internal accountability;”

**Commented [FE6]:** This objective rewords the fifth objective in the current regulation, i.e., “promote excellence in professional growth and development”.

**Commented [FE7]:** This objective rewords the third objective in the current regulation, i.e., “improve the quality of the learning experience”.

**Commented [FE8]:** This objective replaces the first objective in the current regulation ““encourage civil interaction among faculty, staff, and students”.

**Commented [FE9]:** This is a new objective added to address the need for institutional assessment required by HLC.

**Commented [FE10]:** Reworded from “provide internal accountability”.

**Commented [FE11]:** This objective expands the constituencies to inform in addition to prospective students.

2. Internal to the university:

- a. To monitor and enhance the quality of the learning experience
- b. To provide accountability
- c. To assist University decision making and planning
- d. To inform students about program quality

3. External to the university:

- a. To inform prospective students, parents, prospective employees, and employers about program quality
- b. To benchmark performance measures and standards in all areas of academic activity against appropriate external bodies
- c. To provide external accountability to accrediting bodies, the Minnesota State College & Universities system, and the State of Minnesota

2. Process and Procedures of a Program Review

A. Overview of Process

The Office of Academic Affairs develops a five-year review schedule for all academic programs. The schedule is updated annually and distributed to all academic programs and the Faculty Senate.

The program review has the following five components.

1. Evidence Portfolio

The evidence portfolio includes a common data set that will be defined by the administration and supplied by the Office of Institutional Planning, Assessment, and Research (IPAR). The program augments this data set with other data and information that is relevant to understanding the past and projected performance of the program.

2. Self-Study Report

The program self-study report is a structured, evidence-based, comprehensive analysis of a program accompanied by a strategic plan. The details are found in Section 3 of this regulation.

3. External Review

The goal of the external review is to offer the University with independent perspectives on the quality of the program. The process and procedure of external review is discussed in detail in Section 4 of this regulation.

4. Program Response to the External Review

The purpose of the program response is to ensure that the program "closes the review loop" by responding to the external program review. The program faculty submit a written response to the external reviewer's report. This may include a revised strategic plan.

5. Administrative Response to the Review Process and Strategic Plan

The purpose of the administrative response is to provide feedback to the program in a timely manner. This process is discussed in detail in Section 5 of this regulation.

B. Timeline

The following timeline is set to assure the timely completion of the program review.

By March 30	Programs to be reviewed in following academic year are notified. Dean meets with program to discuss process, including any changes to the timeline.
By July 15	IPAR supplies the program with a common data set.
By October 1	The program submits to the dean: 1) the first draft of the self-study report accompanied by the evidence portfolio; 2) a list of possible external reviewers accompanied by their current curriculum vita.

**Commented [FE12]:** This is new to the proposed regulation.

**Commented [FE13]:** This section replaces "5. Process & Procedures for Program Review – a) Schedule of reviews" in the current regulation. Instead of months, specific deadlines are provided. The timeline itself has been modified for more timely facilitation of the process.

By October 15	External reviewer identified and external review scheduled. Dean provides feedback on first draft of evidence portfolio and self-study.
By November 1	Program completes any revisions that respond to dean’s feedback and submits the final self-study report to the dean and the external reviewer.
November 15 to February 15	The external reviewer conducts a site visit.
By March 1	The external reviewer submits the report to the dean. The dean distributes the report to each of the program faculty, the Provost & Vice President of Academic Affairs (Provost/VPAA), and the President.
By April 1	The program submits a written response to the external review report to the dean.
By May 1	Dean meets with the program faculty to discuss the external review and program responses.
By June 1	Dean submits a written response to the Provost/VPAA.
By October 1	The Provost/VPAA takes an action. The review process concludes.

Programs, specifically those with external accreditation, may consult with the dean regarding an alternative schedule.

C. Accredited Programs

For accredited programs, the program review is conducted concurrently with accreditation reviews. The dean will meet with accredited programs to specify how the accreditation process will be coordinated with internal program review requirements to ensure that the objectives of both are met. The self-study and external review processes and timelines are typically defined by the accreditation body. Nonetheless, the purpose of the internal review is not limited to obtaining accreditation. The internal review is intended to provide the program and administration with information pertaining to the future of the program. For that reason, the program review must include steps that guide the response of the program and administration to the information generated by the internal review.

**Commented [FE14]:** This section addresses the issue addressed in the second paragraph (after the bullet points) in “4. Elements of Program Review” in the current regulation.

3. An Overview of the Program Self-Study Report

The program self-study report is a structured, evidence-based, comprehensive analysis of a program. To inform the program self-study, IPAR provides each program with a common data set. Additional data, as determined by the program, can also be made available from IPAR upon request and can be used as further evidence to the self-study report. All data used should be appended to the self-study report under the title “Evidence Portfolio.”

**Commented [FE15]:** This section replaces “4. Elements of Program Review – b) The Program Self Study Report” in the current regulation. The structure of the self-study report is substantively changed in alignment with the objectives for program review, rather than in alignment with the HLC criteria.

The self-study includes the following components.

- A. A general description of the program. Include a brief history of the program, the program’s mission and goals, and the program content and organization
- B. A discussion of student success. Include general characteristics of the program’s student body, recruitment practices, retention and completion rates, assessment of student learning outcomes, distinguished student achievements, and post-graduate activities

- C. A discussion of faculty qualifications, contributions, and achievements. Include general characteristics of the program’s faculty, evidence of effective governance, evidence of effective teaching and other activities involving students, service to the University, and scholarly and other professional achievements
- D. A discussion of program resources. Include instructional technologies, equipment, supplies, building space, library services, and cost-revenue balance.
- E. Strategic plan for improvement. Include an analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats/challenges, identification of up to five areas for improvement, a plan of action to realize the improvement in these areas, and a discussion of the budgetary implications during the next two years.

4. **External Review**

The goal of the external review is to offer the University with independent perspectives on the quality of the program. The following procedure applies to programs that are not accredited. Programs with accreditation may seek the dean’s agreement to substitute the external review process specified by accreditation agencies.

A. **Selection of an External Reviewer**

The person chosen to review the program shall have sufficient professional experiences or backgrounds to review the program. If available, consult the list of reviewers provided by professional organizations and societies. The chosen reviewer shall have no conflict of interests or other direct links either to the program or to the faculty being reviewed.

Program faculty will compile a list of three potential reviewers and forward those names to the appropriate dean along with a current curriculum vita for each potential reviewer. The list should identify any relationships to the program or to the program faculty. The dean will rank the reviewers in order of preference and forward the recommendation to the Provost/VPAA. The Provost/VPAA will determine the external reviewer; the Provost/VPAA may select an external reviewer other than those on the submitted list.

The dean and chair will coordinate the hiring and scheduling of the external reviewer.

B. **The External Review Report**

The reviewer will provide written comments and recommendations to improve the quality of the program, in the context of the criteria described in Section 3. Items to be addressed include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Current state of program
2. Program effectiveness
3. Assessment of student learning outcomes
4. Overall strengths and weaknesses of the program

**Commented [FE16]:** This section revises “4. Elements of Program Review - c) The External Reviewer Site Visit and Report” and “5. Process & Procedures for Program Review – b) Selecting and Scheduling one or more External Consultants” in the current regulation. “5. Process & Procedures for Program Review – d) Site Visit Interviews” is not addressed in the proposed document.

**Commented [FE17]:** This section revises “5. Process & Procedures for Program Review – b) Selecting and Scheduling one or more External Consultants”.

**Commented [FE18]:** This section revises “4. Elements of Program Review – c) The External Reviewer Site Visit and Report” in the current regulation.

5. Recommendations for program improvement
6. Additional comments

The reviewer submits a final report to the dean, who distributes copies to: (1) each of the program's faculty and staff, (2) the Provost/VPAA, and (3) the President.

5. **Program Response and Administrative Response**

The purpose of the program response and administrative response is to ensure that: (a) the program "closes the review loop" by responding to the external program review; and (b) the dean and the Provost/VPAA provide feedback to the program in a timely manner.

- A. By April 1, the program submits to the dean a written response by the program faculty to the external review and, if appropriate, a revised program strategic plan.
- B. By May 1, the dean meets the program faculty for the following purposes.
  1. To identify and prioritize issues that the program has identified as requiring action and to identify steps to address those issues
  2. For the program to explain differences that may exist between the external review and the program faculty's perspective
- C. By June 1, the dean submits a written recommendation to the Provost/VPAA, along with the program self-study report, the external review report, and the program faculty's response.
- D. By October 1, the Provost/VPAA takes one of the following actions:
  1. Meet with the dean, the department chair, and the appropriate program faculty to discuss the overall outcome of the internal and external program review with the objective of identifying a jointly agreed strategy that addresses issues raised by the review and improves the program. After this meeting, the Provost/VPAA provides a written response to the external review.
  2. Approve outright (without detailed discussion) the dean's recommendations.
  3. Require the program faculty and the dean to reconsider the recommendations proposed and to submit a new response to the External Review within 30 days of notification by the Provost/VPAA. Upon receipt of the new response, the Provost/VPAA responds with one of the 3 steps in this sub-section.

**Commented [FE19]:** This section significantly expands on "4. Elements of Program Review – d) The Strategic Plan" in the current regulation.