



Date: September 26, 2024

To: Xiaoxia Newton, Faculty Council

From: Jennifer Troyer, Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jennifer Troyer', is positioned to the right of the 'From:' line.

Cc: Matt Wyse, Faculty Governance Assistant  
Leslie Zenk, Associate Provost and Chief of Staff

Re: Academic Program Review Policy

---

I am requesting Faculty Council review, feedback, and approval of a time-sensitive policy to comply with recent policy changes from the UNC Board of Governors.

In May 2024 the UNC Board of Governors passed changes to [UNC System Policy 400.1, Policy on Academic Program Planning](#). These policy changes require institutions to “establish and publish clearly defined policies, procedures, and schedules for reviewing academic programs and for ensuring continuous program improvement”.

The attached proposed policy on Academic Program Review has been developed in consultation with the Office of Assessment and Accreditation, Graduate School, Deans, Associate Deans, Department Chairs and School Directors in addition to feedback received from the UNC System Faculty Assembly. The policy is largely an explicit articulation of existing campus processes regarding program review. Additional procedural documents are being developed by the Office of Assessment and Accreditation to assist with implementation.

The UNC System Policy requires that our campus policy be approved by our Board of Trustees this semester and submitted to the UNC System Office by January 1, 2025. As such, I am asking that the Faculty Executive Committee and Faculty Council review, provide feedback, and approve at the upcoming October meetings.

# UNC Charlotte Academic Policy: Academic Program Review

## I. Executive Summary

The purposes of Academic Program Review are to assess the quality, efficiency, and productivity of academic degree programs; stimulate planning and budgeting for and improvement of programs; maintain a sound and balanced portfolio of educational programs; enable student success; and ensure that program goals align with University and UNC System strategic priorities. [UNC System Policy 400.1, Policy on Academic Program Planning](#) requires that all academic degree programs be reviewed at least once every seven years at the campus level starting from the date of the preceding review for existing programs or from the date of the implementation for new programs unless specified otherwise, as noted in section II.D.

This policy provides an overview of the timeline, responsibilities, evaluation criteria, process and outcomes for Academic Program Review. Details regarding the review process and associated resources are available on the Office of Assessment and Accreditation's [website](#).

## II. Policy Statement

The primary purpose of the Academic Program Review process is to maintain and strengthen the quality of UNC Charlotte's academic programs by auditing the quality, rigor, and productivity of existing degree programs and developing strategies for ongoing improvement. Reviews are intended to be helpful and supportive in the following areas:

- a. recognizing strengths and achievements;
- b. identifying areas in need of attention; and
- c. promoting goal setting and planning.

Reviews should primarily provide perspectives useful to the academic units whose programs are under review and to their respective college deans. They should also give those outside the academic unit an informed overview of the strengths, challenges, and needs of academic units.

The Academic Program Review process has a direct relationship to other assessment and accreditation processes. Program accreditation and Academic Program Review reports and reviews will be combined as much as possible to create a unified process.

### A. Responsibilities

The Associate Provost for Institutional Effectiveness and Analytics will oversee the Academic Program Review process and may delegate duties. For instance, the Office of Assessment and Accreditation is typically responsible for providing guidance and training for academic units engaged in Academic Program Review and completing most of the facilitation of Academic Program Review. Facilitation of the Academic Program Review will include maintaining and publishing a schedule of all Academic Program Reviews; informing both the Dean and

Department Chair or School Director of the upcoming review a minimum of two semesters prior to the scheduled program review; providing consultation and support; archiving program review documents; facilitating the provision of key metrics to Department Chairs and School Directors; examining external review reports and internal responses, action plans, and summary reports for University accreditation purposes; sharing graduate program reviews with the Dean of the Graduate School; and tracking final actions related to the review process.

Deans are responsible for ensuring that every academic program within their college completes the program review process as identified in UNC Policy [400.1](#). In the case of programs that cross colleges, the Dean of the designated administrative home for the program will have primary responsibility but include the other Dean in the process. The Dean of the Graduate School should also be consulted for graduate programs undergoing review.

Department Chairs or School Directors are responsible for designating qualified faculty members to conduct reviews for each academic program. In the case of programs that cross department or school units but reside within a college, the Dean will designate a unit level leader with primary responsibility for designating qualified faculty members to conduct reviews for each academic program.

## **B. Programs Under Review**

The primary focus of the Academic Program Reviews described in this policy is on majors or degree programs as typically identified by the first four digits of the program CIP code at each level of instruction (i.e., bachelor's, master's, and doctoral) offered by separate academic units. However, during each Academic Program Review, relevant questions may also be asked about any minors, concentrations, or certificates offered in the academic unit, and about any significant course commitments of the unit that fall outside of the programmatic review process.

## **C. Evaluation Criteria**

Academic Program Reviews shall evaluate the following:

1. Student Demand: Current and projected student demand, as measured by enrollments in the majors and degrees produced.
2. Workforce Demand: Current and projected workforce demand, as indicated by projected job growth and existing data on student employment outcomes.
3. Student Outcomes: Metrics such as persistence, graduation rates, time to degree, and post-graduation success where possible.
4. Program Costs and Productivity: Includes research, scholarship, creative activity, and student credit hours produced compared to the number and cost of faculty and staff.
5. Contribution to Critical Professions: The program's contribution to professions vital to the health, educational attainment, and quality of life of North Carolinians.
6. Additional Considerations: Any other factors identified by the Chancellor, President, or program under review.

## **D. Review Schedule**

Each academic degree program will be reviewed on a predetermined seven-year cycle, except when extenuating circumstances necessitate a change in the schedule. Formal requests for exceptions to the scheduled review must be submitted from the college Dean to the Associate Provost for Institutional Effectiveness and Analytics who will confer with the Provost. In cases where an external accreditation process occurs less frequently than once every seven years, permission to follow the accreditation cycle of the external accreditor requires permission in advance from the UNC System President.

## **E. Procedures for Academic Program Review**

### **a. Programs Without Specialized Accreditation from an External Accreditation Body**

1. The Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Analytics will provide the following data on all undergraduate and graduate programs to be included in the self-study:
  - a. Student Demand: enrollments in the majors and degrees produced since the last review;
  - b. Workforce Demand: data, where available, on post-graduation student success and projected job growth;
  - c. Student Outcomes: persistence, graduation rates, time to degree, and post-graduation success since the last review; and
  - d. Program Costs and Productivity: research, scholarship, creative activity, and student credit hours produced compared to the number and cost of faculty and staff.
2. The unit housing the program being reviewed will participate in the initial planning and completion of the self-study and will identify a list of potential external reviewers. In addition to reflection on the metrics provided by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Analytics, the self-study must also include a reflection on the program's contribution to professions vital to the health, educational attainment, and quality of life of North Carolinians. The self-study must also include a reflection on any other factors identified by the Chancellor or the UNC System President. In advance of the external review, the self-study must be shared with the Dean and Provost.
3. The unit will engage in the external review process, which must include a debrief meeting that includes the Dean or designee, Provost or designee, and the external reviewers. The external reviewers must provide a written external review report of their findings.

4. After receiving the final external review report, the Department Chair or School Director, in consultation with the Dean, and, for graduate programs, the Graduate Dean, will develop a response and action plan for the program to include descriptions of actions planned and actions already taken in response to the conclusions from the self-study and external review report. The response and action plan should address each recommendation for improvement and should include a suggested timeline for each action step. The response and action plan should be considered and discussed with the academic unit's faculty.
5. A completed response and action plan shall be submitted to the Dean by the Department Chair or School Director for formal review. Deans will examine the academic program self-study, external review report, and response and action plan and submit those items and a one-page summary to the Provost, the Associate Provost for Institutional Effectiveness and Analytics, and the Director of Strategic Planning and Assessment in the Office of Assessment and Accreditation.
6. At the conclusion of the Academic Program Review process, Provost, and Chancellor will examine the review materials. The Chancellor, based on the results of the Academic Program Review, may take action to expand, contract, or eliminate an academic program based on the review. The Chancellor's action will include one of the following determinations:
  - a. Complete: No additional action required until next academic program review;
  - b. Monitoring: Monitoring required for progress on areas defined; or
  - c. Revisions Required: Programmatic revisions are required which may include program consolidation or discontinuation.

**b. Programs with Specialized Accreditation from an External Accreditation Body**

As noted above, programs with specialized accreditation will typically follow the accreditation cycle of the external accreditor.

1. The college, school, or department will work with the Director of Strategic Planning and Assessment in the Office of Assessment and Accreditation and other staff from the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Analytics in the period leading up to the self-study to identify the measures and analysis required by UNC Policy 400.1 but not by the specialized accreditor. The college, school, or department responsible for specialized accreditation must provide the Director of Strategic Planning and Assessment in the Office of Assessment and Accreditation with the

name of the accrediting organization and dates of prior and upcoming reviews.

2. If any of the following measures are not required by the specialized accreditor, the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Analytics will provide the following data on all undergraduate and graduate programs covered under the review by the specialized accreditor for a specialized self-study:
  - a. Student Demand: enrollments in the majors and degrees produced since the last review;
  - b. Workforce Demand: data, where available, on post-graduation student success and projected job growth;
  - c. Student Outcomes: persistence, graduation rates, time to degree, and post-graduation success since the last review; and
  - d. Program Costs and Productivity: research, scholarship, creative activity, and student credit hours produced compared to the number and cost of faculty and staff.
3. In addition to satisfying requirements by the specialized accreditor, the unit housing the program or programs being reviewed will produce an internal self-study that reflects upon the metrics not covered under the specialized accreditation process. If not included in the requirements by the specialized accreditor, the internal self-study must include a reflection on the program's contribution to professions vital to the health, educational attainment, and quality of life of North Carolinians and any other factors identified by the Chancellor or the UNC System President. The internal self-study must also include plans, if any, to address the findings of the reflection process.
4. The college, school, or department housing the program being reviewed will provide the final specialized accreditation documents (the self-study report as submitted to the specialized accrediting body, the specialized accrediting body's review committee report/findings, any response submitted by the school/college/program, and any negative actions/findings from the specialized accreditor) and the internal self-study to the Provost, for graduate programs, the Graduate Dean, the Associate Provost for Institutional Effectiveness and Analytics, and the Director of Strategic Planning and Assessment in the Office of Assessment and Accreditation.
5. The Provost and Chancellor will examine the final specialized accreditation documents and the internal self-study. The Chancellor, based on the results of the Academic Program Review, may take action to expand, contract, or eliminate an academic program covered under the

specialized accreditation review based on the review. The Chancellor's action will include one of the following determinations:

- a. Complete: No additional action required until next academic program review;
- b. Monitoring: Monitoring required for progress on areas defined; or
- c. Revisions Required: Programmatic revisions are required which may include program consolidation or discontinuation.

#### **F. Conclusion of the Academic Program Review Cycle**

The Associate Provost for Institutional Effectiveness and Analytics will oversee the preparation of a summary report of all Academic Program Reviews that shall be reviewed by the Board of Trustees and then submitted annually to the President.

Any response and action plan items should be integrated into the academic unit's strategic plan in accordance with the strategic planning calendar. Progress on the response and action plan items will be monitored as part of the regular strategic plan review process.

#### **History:**

Approved by Faculty Council: DATE

Approved by UNC Charlotte Board of Trustees: DATE

Transmitted to UNC System Office: DATE [must be by January 1, 2025]