

PERIODIC PROGRAM REVIEW POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Program & Curriculum Office

2013

Overview

Describes the requirements for cyclical review of all academic programs offered at UAEU.

Scope

Applies to undergraduate and graduate programs at UAEU and their host Departments and Colleges.

Objective

Promotes institutional accountability and effectiveness in securing academic programs that:

1. are student centered;
2. meet national needs;
3. meet international standards for the qualification and the discipline;
4. have the curricula, pedagogy and resources required for students to succeed;
5. are regularly evaluated and adapted; and,
6. give enduring academic credential to the graduate.

Policy

1. All academic programs are reviewed once every 4-6 years; where possible, similar programs in a Department should be reviewed together.
2. Program reviews include a comprehensive check on the academic programs' conformance to the requirements of the UAE Qualifications Framework and the extent they follow the descriptive criteria associated with the appropriate level of Framework.
3. Periodic Program Review is faculty-led, evidence-based, student-focused and based on peer-review. It generates a plan of action to develop the academic program, which is linked to the College and UAEU planning and budgeting processes. Progress against the action plan is monitored periodically at College and UAEU levels.
4. Students are included at each stage of the Periodic Program Review process, including production of the self-study, site visits, and action planning. Each academic Department determines how best to fulfil this policy requirement.
5. The budget for the Periodic Program Review is held and administered by the Deputy Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs. The procedures for the Periodic Program Review apply to both undergraduate and graduate programs and are maintained and administered by the Deputy Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs in coordination with the Deputy Vice Chancellor for Research and Graduate Studies.
6. The retention and graduation rates of students in a program are considered as key performance measures of its success and shall be included, among others, in any program review, and in any proposal to modify or cease offering a program.

Procedures - Periodic Program Review

1) Principles of Periodic Program Review

- a) Periodic Program Review (PPR) at UAEU is a process that allows the university to assess the well-being of an academic program, the academic development of the program, and strategic issues affecting the program. Assessments include how well the program aligns to the mission and goals of the UAEU, the College and the Department responsible for coordinating the program.
- b) PPR is a faculty-led and collegiate process, involving academic peer reviewers internal and external to the university. It is evidenced-based, drawing on multiple forms of data and input provided by a critical Self-Study and observations made in a site visit.
- c) PPR is formative. It leads to recommendations to develop the program and an action plan listing responsibilities at program, Department, College and senior administration levels.
- d) The UAEU requirements for Periodic Program Review may be satisfied by the initial and continuing requirements of accreditation agencies. The University may require supplementary reviews consistent with the principles of Periodic Program Review of the University.

2) Self- Study

The preparation of the Self-Study for an academic program, or group of similar programs, should be a collaborative activity. The Self-Study should include in the following three sections:

- a) Program well-being: This section presents data-sets in at least the following areas, and provides an analytic narrative for each, in which the implications of conclusions drawn from data-analysis form the major part. Data presented should be longitudinal, covering the time since the last PPR.
 - (i) Students
 - Student profile, admission, progression, withdrawal and transfer, and graduation rates.
 - Student-faculty ratio and patterns of change / required change. This section might comment on CH generated by each full time faculty and instructor, and use made of the program elements (courses) by students from outside the program/Department/College.
 - Student engagement in internship, research, volunteering and other program-relevant activity outside the campus.
 - (ii) Faculty

- Faculty expertise and relation to current academic program / anticipated academic program change.
- Faculty profile (turnover, qualifications, research activity, secondment) and faculty development activities (in administration, teaching and research). Trends and difficulties in faculty recruitment.

(iii) Surveys

- Alumni profile: e.g. rates of employment (in areas relating to the program / not relating to the program), progression to further study, not seeking employment.
- Surveys of students, alumni, employer satisfaction.
- Reports of Advisory Boards (internal, external).
- Results of benchmarking activities (in the form of action known to be required to shift the profile/standards of the program).

(iv) Resources

- Administrative support to the program/Department. Staff development activities or requirements.
- Adequacy of library, laboratory, classroom, technical resources and support available to the program, faculty and students.

b) Assessment and development of the academic program: This section contains:

- (i) A mapping of the alignment of courses to program goals and institutional learning outcomes.
- (ii) A description of the methodologies used by program teams to evaluate student achievements against learning outcomes at course, program and institutional levels.
- (iii) Results since the date of the last PPR of annual assessments of program learning outcomes.
- (iv) Results of annual assessments of institutional learning outcome standards.
- (v) Presentation of the action plans developed on the basis of the results of the assessment activities, and evidence of action taken and its impact.
- (vi) Critical evaluation of the effectiveness of the assessment methodology, with discussion of various options to improve the process (validity, impact etc).

c) Strategic Questions: This section must include an evidence-based analysis of the relationship between the program and the mission and goals of the Department, College and the UAEU. It must discuss how students have been involved in the Self Study process. It may also include analytical discussion of strategic issues affecting academic standards, the operation of the program or its future development.

Submission of the Self-Study:

- (i) Visit minus 10 weeks: Self Study submitted to College Dean for feedback (and revision).
- (ii) Visit minus 6 weeks: Finalized Self Study is received by the Deputy Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and sent to the Deputy Vice Chancellor for Research and Graduate Studies.
- (iii) The Offices of the Deputy Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and the Deputy Vice Chancellor for Research and Graduate Studies will audit the study to check compliance with university policy requirements.
- (iv) Visit minus 4 weeks: Self-Study sent to Review Panel. The Review Panel may request additional information through the Chair, prior to or in the process of their review visit.

3) Composition and Responsibilities of Review Panels

- a) Program Review Panel: Where there is no external accreditation process for a program, the UAEU Program Review Panel will be composed of individuals both internal and external to UAEU.
- b) Chair: The Program Review Panel is chaired by one of the external members. The Chair is responsible for the management of meetings and other activities of the Review Panel. S/he coordinates review panel input into the report and recommendations and is responsible for filing the agreed report within four weeks of the date of the Review Panel visit.
- c) External members of the Review Panel: The Dean is responsible for recommending up to three reviewers for approval by the Deputy Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and the Deputy Vice Chancellor for Research and Graduate Studies, at least six months in advance of the site visit.

The criteria for selection as external reviewer are:

- (i) Distinguished scholars/teachers/practitioners in the disciplinary field.
- (ii) Hold a terminal degree in the appropriate discipline.
- (iii) Experience with program administration and/or significant leadership role in higher education.
- (iv) Experience with student learning assessment, institutional accreditation, and/or professional accreditation.
- (v) Employed at an academic institution outside the UAEU; preferably appointment at an institution which the College identifies as a peer or benchmark institution.
- (vi) No conflict of interest such as recent employment or consultation with UAEU.

- d) Internal members of the Program Review Panel: The internal members of the Review

Panel are selected by the Deputy Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs in coordination with the Deputy Vice Chancellor for Research and Graduate Studies, and will normally be:

- (i) Two faculty external to the Department hosting the academic program. These faculty would normally hold the rank of Professor and/or have held senior responsibility within a College.
- (ii) A Dean of another College.

The internal members of the Review Panel participate in the full range of Review Panel activities, and lend to discussions their experience of the UAEU context. They participate fully in meetings, discussions and observation activities, and can access and request the full range of information/meetings. The internal members of the Review Panel have particular responsibility for ensuring recommendations are contextualized, and take account of the university mission and strategic plan.

- e) **Administrative Support:** The administration of the PPR is led by the Office of the Deputy Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs in coordination with the Office of the Deputy Vice Chancellor for Research and Graduate Studies.
- f) **Confidentiality:** All members of the Review Panel are contractually obliged to preserve confidentiality of findings if these do not form part of the formal report. In exceptional cases the Chair of the Review Panel may designate a section of the report as confidential to a specified and restricted audience.

4) Program Review Panel Visit

- a) Visit minus 2 weeks: Review Panel conference call to hear individual readings of the self-study and confirm Discussion agenda for visit. The Review Panel Chair may assign responsibilities to the Panel members. The PPR Manager coordinates to ensure that the program of activities planned by the Review Panel Chair is scheduled by the College (appointments, rooms, catering).
- b) A Review Panel will meet with:
 - i) Senior UAEU and College administrators or their designates.
 - ii) Faculty members and instructors in the Department.
 - iii) Program Chair/teams for each program review.
 - iv) Chairs of the Department's Curriculum and Assessment committees.
 - v) Students.
 - vi) Employers / Professional Advisory Boards.
 - vii) Alumni.
 - viii) Faculty members to review and discuss examples of student work, graded at the lowest, average and highest marks.

- c) The site visit should also include visits to classrooms to observe student learning, the opportunity to talk with faculty individually, and a tour of relevant facilities (library, laboratory, etc.).
- d) The visit should enable the Review Panel members to address the following issues within their report, and to make recommendations in their range of focus (but not restricted to them).

(i) Standards

- Are the course content and the programs of study of sufficient academic rigor, addressing the outcome standards of the Qualification Framework Emirates for the qualification?
- Are the students meeting the programs' student learning outcomes and demonstrating success?
- Do the curriculum and courses support student learning outcomes?
- Are program curricula based upon a solid core of knowledge with clearly articulated educational objectives and learning outcome standards?
- Do the programs engage students in the discipline(s)?

(ii) Assessment

- Do the programs assess student learning adequately?
- What changes have been made in the programs as a result of assessment results?
- Are the changes appropriate to reflect continuous improvement?
- Are students successful (e.g., retention and graduation rate, alumni results)?

(iii) Resources

- Does the university environment support student learning outcomes?
- Is there sufficient institutional support for the learning environment (e.g., library, tutoring and/or academic assistance, technology)?
- Do the programs provide adequate mentoring/advising for students?

(iv) Strategic issues affecting the programs

- What recommended action steps should be taken to address the strategic questions raised by the Department?
- How are students involved in assessment and review of the program? Have they played a full role in the PPR?

5) Programs with External Accreditation Process

- a) A modification to Sections 3 and 4, above, is applied when an academic program is being reviewed as part of a professional accreditation process, which includes

international reviewers and a site visit.

- b) The Deputy Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, in consultation with the Deputy Vice Chancellor for Research & Graduate Studies, will establish an Internal Review Committee (according to Section 3 d), above.
- c) The Internal Review Committee will review the program review standards of the external accreditation body against Sections 2) a), b) and c), above, and inform the Department of additional information and/or procedures needed to satisfy all UAEU PPR requirements.
- d) After the completion of the professional accreditation process, the Internal Review Committee will review the accreditation report and recommendations, the Self Study, and additional information provided by the Department. The Internal Review Committee will prepare a supplementary report, covering any additional recommendations that might be needed to satisfy UAEU PPR requirements.

6) Post Visit Reporting and Action Planning

- a) Visit + 4weeks: The Chair of the Program Review Panel forwards the finalized report to the Department Chair and College Dean for review and to the Deputy Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and Deputy Vice Chancellor for Research and Graduate Studies for information. Where there is a program review by an external accreditation body, the Chair of the Internal Review Panel will forward its supplementary report at the same time.
- b) Visit + 10 weeks: College Council revises/approves a Department action plan (action plan gives timed, budgeted and measurable steps taking forward recommendations, or a narrative justifying why action will not be taken on a specific recommendation).
- c) Visit + 12 weeks: College Dean submits action plan to the Deputy Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and the Deputy Vice Chancellor for Research and Graduate Studies.
- d) Visit + One year: Dean of College reports to the Deputy Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and the Deputy Vice Chancellor for Research and Graduate Studies on progress against action plan. The Academic Council is notified of progress by the Deputy Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and the Deputy Vice Chancellor for Research and Graduate Studies, as appropriate to the focus (e.g. undergraduate program, graduate program, Department or College responsibility, University responsibility, etc.).
- e) The Graduate Studies Council and the University Programs and Curriculum Committee will make regular analyses of the external review reports, action plans and progress reports, and will submit reports to the Academic Council on generic issues arising,

particularly where these relate to the university strategic plan and learning outcome standards.