# **UNC CHARLOTTE ACADEMIC PROCEDURE: ACADEMIC SUPPORT REVIEW**

I. Introduction

*UNC Charlotte’s Academic, Student, and Administrative Support Program Review process is intended to:*

1. Assess quality and effectiveness of Academic, Student and Administrative support units
2. Support high quality planning for future improvements
3. Increase student success
4. Ensure services are consistent with University-wide strategic priorities

As an institution, UNC Charlotte is committed to continuous improvement. Program Review is an important mechanism towards that goal. Program Reviews provide external feedback about the strengths and weaknesses of units that will inform plans for future improvements.

II. Procedure Statement

Process

At minimum, the Academic, Student and Administrative support program review process should include: 1) examination of the function of the unit that leads to the identification of keys issues and areas for future improvements; 2) evaluation from individuals outside of the unit; and 3) a strategic plan based on the findings of the self-assessment. The cycle of review continues three years later with a mid-cycle report on actions taken as a result of the review and concludes with a final close-out report that summarizes accomplishments.

Academic, Student and Administrative support program reviews should be conducted every 5-7 years. Considerations that might lead to a delay beyond seven years include a recent transition to a new director, recent organizational change, or changes to compliance or certification schedules. The Office of Assessment and Accreditation offers consultation and support for all stages of the program review. The program review process will extend, at most, over one year (**see timeline in Appendix A)**.

Self-Study

The self-study is the unit’s narrative description of its strategy, strengths, opportunities, and challenges. The most useful self-studies are candid and thorough, yet succinct. The self-study should be informative to experts in the field, but also accessible to internal reviewers who may not have as much experience in the field. A strong self-study does the following:

* Provides a concise assessment of the unit’s strengths and opportunity areas
* Focuses on analysis of the identified key issues
* Utilizes data in support of analyses and recommendations
* Is forward looking
* Outlines recommended next steps

The self-study should be prepared by a team that includes broad representation of members of the unit (staff), but can include faculty and students. Possible guiding questions for conducting the self-study and examples of the types of data that can be analyzed are provided in the Appendices at the end of this document.

Sections of the Self-Study

An outline of the elements included in a self-study is provided below. More detailed questions to be addressed in each section can be found in **Appendix B.**

1. **Executive Summary** – Briefly summarize the types of data that were reviewed, the key issues identified, recommendations, and proposed action steps.
2. **Unit Overview and Governance** – Describe the unit’s:

* History, vision, and mission
* Primary purpose and key functions
* Administrative structure

1. **Brief Response to Previous Program Review Issues (if applicable)**
2. **Data Summary of Key Areas** – Obtain data from surveys, focus groups, the Office of Institutional Research, and other unit records. See **Appendix C** for sample types of data. Include data that will allow you to assess the unit’s functioning in the following areas:

* Organizational Structure
* Staff Composition
* Operations
* Relationships with Other Units
* Resources
* Peer/Industry Comparison

1. **Strategic Direction** – Identify strengths, weaknesses, threats, and opportunities. Describe how your area is expected to change and how the unit will respond to these changes.
2. **Identification of Key Issues and Areas of Improvement** **–** On the basis of your review of the data,identify 3-5 areas of improvement your unit should address.
3. **Notes** – Describe the process used to complete the Self-Study, including a list of who was responsible for the contents of the final report and how staff that were not on the self-study team provided feedback to the committee.
4. **Appendices** – Include information that will help the reviewers or is referenced in the Self-Study. This typically includes:

* Curricula vitae or resumes for all full-time senior staff members
* 1-2 sentence description of the role of each staff member
* Organizational chart
* Current Strategic Plan
* Sample Communication and Marketing Materials
* Peer Comparison Data

External Review

As part of the self-study process, units will include feedback from external reviewers. The external reviewers should be from outside the unit and include individuals who have the experience necessary to contribute meaningful feedback. **The reviewers can be from other units at UNC Charlotte or from other institutions.** The final selection of reviewers is the responsibility of the unit head, who will contact the external reviewers.

External Reviewers are expected to:

* Read the Self-Study
* Talk to members of the unit
* Provide a written report that includes an independent assessment of the unit’s functioning and offers recommendations for improvement (**see External Reviewer’s guiding questions in Appendix D)**

Strategic Plan

This section provides an opportunity for the unit to use the self-study process to inform a strategic plan for improvement (**See Appendix E**). The resulting unit strategic plan will maximize the benefits derived from the self-study by creating a plan to capitalize on unit strengths and minimize unit weaknesses. **This section of the report should be created in consultation with the supervisory unit responsible for budgetary decisions (Vice Chancellor, Associate or Assistant Provost, Dean, etc.).** The strategic plan will include:

1. Goals that are aligned with your mission and Academic Affairs Goals
2. Objectives the unit will pursue to achieve each goal
3. Actions or tactics that will be taken to achieve each objective
4. Measures used to determine the extent to which each objective has been achieved
5. Performance outcomes indicating who is expected to demonstrate each achievement, to what degree of completion, when, and under what conditions.
6. Budget requests
7. A timeline for implementation

The completed strategic plan should be uploaded into Compliance Assist. When Academic Affairs creates a new strategic plan, the unit plan should be updated to align with this plan. A detailed update on the strategic plan will be requested three years after the program review process is completed in the form of a mid-cycle report (**See Appendix F)**. Yearly reporting on the strategic plan will be completed as a part of the Annual Report in the Highlights template.

Supporting Documentation

A final copy of the unit’s Self-Study, reviewers’ feedback, and strategic plan should be submitted to the Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and the Office of Assessment and Accreditation.

Mid-Cycle Report

The mid-cycle report serves as a means of evaluating progress towards the achievement of strategic objectives. In the report outcome data is used to assess the extent to which performance outcomes have been met and plans are made for the completion of planned improvements.

Close-Out Report

The close-out report serves as a means of summarizing the progress towards the achievement of strategic objectives **(See Appendix G).** This can serve as a starting place for the next round of program review and strategic planning.

III. Definitions

* **Provost –**Reporting to the Chancellor, the Provost is the chief academic officer who oversees all academic affairs activities, including research and faculty.  The Deans of each College report to the Provost.

IV. Procedure Contact(s)

* **Authority**: [Office of the Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs](https://provost.uncc.edu/policies-procedures/academic-policies-and-procedures/academic-support-review)
* **Responsible Office**: [Office of the Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs](https://provost.uncc.edu/policies-procedures/academic-policies-and-procedures/academic-support-review)
* **Additional Contact(s)**: Karen Singer-Freeman, Director of Academic Planning and Assessment, Office of Assessment and Accreditation, 704.687.1692, [ksingerf@uncc.edu](mailto:ksingerf@uncc.edu)

V. History

* **Established:** March 15, 2013
* **Revised:** January 6, 2015 [added Faculty President consultation and distribution of recommendations]
* **Revised:** December 6, 2018 [integrated with strategic planning]

VI. Related Policies, Procedures, and Resources

Appendix A

**Timeline**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Step/Process** | **Month**  **1-12** | **Person(s) responsible** |
| **Confirm unit to be reviewed** | 1 | Dir. of Academic Planning |
| **Organize Process**  Notify unit, establish schedule, select self-study team and external reviewers | 1 | Unit head  Dir. of Academic Planning |
| **Planning Meeting**  Review guidelines and resources  Identify needed data  See Appendices B and C | 2 | Self-Study Team  Unit head  Dir. of Academic Planning  Institutional Research |
| **Gather Data** | 2-3 | Self-Study Team  Institutional Research  Unit head |
| **Review Data**  Identify issues and make recommendations | 3 | Self-Study Team  Unit head |
| **Write Self-Study**  Self-study team prepares report | 4-6 | Self-Study Team  Unit head |
| **External Review**  Reviewers read self-study, speak with stakeholders, and complete independent assessment  See Appendix D | 7 | External reviewers  Self-Study Team  Unit head |
| **External Reviewers Provide Report to Unit Head** | 8 | External reviewers |
| **Review External Reviewer Report**  Read and discuss report, develop action plan, and create strategic plan | 9-11 | Self-Study Team  Unit head  All Unit members |
| **Submit Documentation and Upload Strategic Plan into Compliance Assist** | 12 | Unit head |
| **Complete Mid-Cycle Report**  See Appendix F | + 3 years | Unit head |
| **Complete Close-Out Report**  See Appendix G | + 2 years | Unit head |

**Note:** Month refers to the month a task is accomplished given a 12-month period of work.

Appendix B

**Self-Study Guiding Questions**

Adapted from: https://www.adminplan.northwestern.edu/program-review/Documents/administrative-key-issues-and-self-study-guidance\_2018-19.pdf

Please address each key component written in bold below. The initial questions in each section ask you to describe your current situation. Select and answer the descriptive questions that you feel are appropriate. The final question(s) written in bold ask you to think about future directions. Please be sure to address each of these questions.

**Organizational Structure**

1. Describe the unit’s organizational structure and where it sits in the University structure.
2. What is the unit’s primary mission?
3. What programs and services are offered by the unit?
4. How does the current administrative structure support the unit’s goals?
5. How does the unit utilize assessment findings to direct plans for improvement?
6. **Would other organizational structures more effectively serve the unit?**

**Staff**

1. How does the unit recruit and retain quality staff?
2. Describe efforts to promote staff development.
3. How is staff performance tracked and evaluated?
4. Are criteria for promotion and raises clear?
5. How do staff provide feedback on the unit’s operation and mission?
6. Describe the unit’s diversity goals and how progress in meeting these goals is assessed.
7. How does the unit create time, space, and events for staff to interact in informal ways?
8. Describe how graduate students and student employees contribute to the unit’s services.
9. **Describe projections for change or growth in the unit.**

**Operations**

1. Describe the constituents who use the unit’s programs and services.
2. How does the unit communicate about its services to constituents?
3. How does the unit solicit and incorporate feedback from constituents?
4. How does the unit assess user satisfaction?
5. **How effectively does the unit serve its constituents?**
6. **What changes in operations would help the unit serve its constituents more effectively?**

**Relationships**

1. Who are the unit’s current collaborators and how does the unit engage with these groups?
2. **Who are the unit’s potential future collaborators, and how might these collaborations benefit the unit, other groups, and the University?**

**Resources**

1. Describe the space currently available to the unit and how it is allocated?
2. Describe the tools and technology the unit owns or for which the unit provides oversight.
3. How do these tools and technology serve the unit and its constituents?
4. How does the unit remain apprised of new technology in the field?
5. **Are there resources the unit should consider obtaining to improve functioning?**

**Peer Comparison**

1. How does the unit engage with peers at other institutions?
2. How does the unit benchmark against similar units at other universities?
3. How do the unit’s collaborations support the mission of the unit?
4. **Are there new collaborations the unit should pursue to improve functioning?**

**Unit’s Strengths, Challenges, and Threats**

1. **What does the unit do best?**
2. **What are the external threats to success?**
3. **What could be improved?**
4. **What are the most important areas for unit improvements?**

Appendix C

**Examples of Data that Could Be Used in Self-Study**

Adapted from: https://www.adminplan.northwestern.edu/program-review/Documents/administrative-data-profile-example\_2018-191.pdf

**Organizational Structure and Staff Composition**

* Number of employees by functional unit
* Employment changes (terminations, hires, promotions, transfers)
* Trainings completed by employees
* Workload by staff member
* Staff demographic data (education, experience, gender, race, ethnicity, years of service)

**Operations**

* Survey results or point-of-service feedback - Average satisfaction score
* Demand for service
* Service request completion
* Number of grants, projects, or other products completed
* Percentage on-time completion
* Variance to budget or actual to plan budget
* Percent of contracts that are compliant
* Growth in transactions
* Underutilized funds or amount of unapplied cash
* Amount of deficit accounts
* Time to approve new project
* Forecast to actual performance
* Days to close report or complete project
* Number of reported safety incidents

**Relationships with Other Units**

* Support requests
* Volume of transactions
* Number of joint projects

**Resources**

Space per staff member or customer

* Number of site licenses for software

**Peer Data**

* Comparison of peer data on similar unit metrics
  + Programs or services offered
  + Budget
  + Process time
  + Workload by role
  + External recognition
  + Grants received or submitted
* Assessment of peer and industry data to determine baseline metrics
  + Office size or demographics
  + Ratio of staff to projects

Appendix D

**Possible External Reviewer Guiding Questions**

The following questions are a guide for external reviewers. Select and answer the questions that you feel are appropriate.

**Organizational Structure**

1. Who does the unit serve? How does the unit define its mission?
2. Are current or emerging issues reflected in the mission statement?
3. How does the unit contribute to the mission of the department and University?
4. How effectively does the unit monitor and assess progress towards plans for improvement?
5. How effectively does the unit communicate improvements to stakeholders?
6. How effectively does the unit utilize previous assessment findings?

**Staff**

1. Does the unit have personnel with appropriate qualifications for the work they are doing?
2. What efforts have been made to diversify the staff?
3. How effectively does the unit evaluate performance?
4. How effectively does the unit support professional development?
5. How effectively does the unit document staff accomplishments?
6. Is the staff support available to the unit appropriate?

**Operations**

1. Does the unit maintain effective relationships with campus offices and external agencies?
2. How effectively does the unit deliver the services it offers?

**Relationships**

1. To what extent and how effectively does the unit collaborate with other units?

**Resources**

1. Is the equipment available to the unit adequate?
2. Is there sufficient operating support for the unit’s equipment?
3. Is the space currently available to the unit appropriately allocated?
4. Are unit resources (equipment, space, staff support) optimally allocated?

**Strengths, Challenges, and Threats**

1. What does the unit do best?
2. What could be improved?
3. What are the external threats to success?
4. What recommendations do you have for the unit?

Appendix E

**Strategic Plan Template**

**Department: Unit: Date:**

**Goals:** Describe the 3-5 improvements you envision for your unit over the next 5 years.

**Objectives:** For each goal identify measurable objectives that will support goal achievement.

**Actions and Tactics:**  Describe activities or tactics that will be undertaken to achieve each objective.

**Measures:** Describe the data that will be used to determine the extent to which each objective was met.

**Performance outcomes:** For each objective identify who is expected to demonstrate each achievement, to what degree of completion, when, and under what conditions. Example: The unit is expected to raise 80% of the funds in 2018, assuming continuing levels of state support.

**Costs:** List fiscal, human, or other resources needed to meet each objective. Provide a rationale for each.

**Person(s) Responsible:**

**Timeline:** Describe the steps that will be taken over the next five years to complete the improvements you proposed.

Appendix F

**Mid-Cycle Report to Strategic Plan Template**

**Department: Unit: Date:**

**Goals:** Restate the 3-5 improvements you proposed in your strategic plan.

**Objectives:** Restate the measurable objectives proposed in your strategic plan.

**Measures:** Describe the data used to determine the extent to which each objective was achieved.

**Performance outcomes:** Restate who was expected to demonstrate each achievement, to what degree of completion, when, and under what conditions. Example: The unit was expected to raise 80% of the funds in 2016, assuming continuing levels of state support.

**Assessment Findings and Results** – For each objective state findings and explain the extent to which performance outcomes have been met.

**Communicating Findings -** Describe how your findings will be shared with stakeholders.

**Costs -** List fiscal, human, or other resources needed to meet remaining goals.

**Person(s) Responsible:**

**Timeline:** Describe the steps that will be taken over the next two years to complete the improvements you proposed.

Appendix G

**Sample Close-Out Report**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Unit Goal** | **Unit Objective** | [**Complete**](file:///C:\Users\ksingerf\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\INetCache\Content.MSO\94E1A7D9.xls#Template!B79)  **(y/n)** | [**Status if not Complete**](file:///C:\Users\ksingerf\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\INetCache\Content.MSO\94E1A7D9.xls#Template!B79) |
| **1: Quality and affordable education that produces competitive workforce** | 1. Adopt academic plans and establish list of new program priorities for BOG. |  |  |
| 2. Examine use of technology to deliver academic programs and courses. |  |  |
| 3. Implement improved institutional effectiveness plans for divisions and colleges. |  |  |
| 4. Implement and evaluate the QEP. |  |  |
| **2: Research, activities, & engagement to address needs of the Charlotte region** | 1. Implement the 2013 "Strategic Plan for Research Growth at UNC Charlotte" to expand research to $50M per year by 2020. |  |  |
| 2. Implement Early College High School. |  |  |
| 3. Market PORTAL spaces to expand University-industry research and technology transfer partnerships. |  |  |
| 4. Support regional economic sustainability via Ventureprise. |  |  |
| 5. Identify programs to enhance the civic and cultural life of the Charlotte region. |  |  |

**Sources**

Hummingbird (2015). Nonacademic program review guide and forms. Southwestern

Indian Polytechnic Institute.

Hanover Research (2012).  Best Practices in Academic Program Review. Retrieved from http://www.asa.mnscu.edu/academicprograms/program\_planning/Hanover%20Research%20Best%20Practices%20in%20Academic%20Program%20Review%202012.pdf

James Madison (2017). Student Affairs Program Review Resources. Retrieved from

<https://www.jmu.edu/studentaffairs/program-review/index.shtml>

Northwestern University (2018). Administrative Program Review Resources. Retrieved from: https://www.adminplan.northwestern.edu/program-review/process.html

VII. Frequently Asked Questions

There are no Frequently Asked Questions for this procedure.