

Policies and Procedures

SECTION: Academic Concerns	NO. 4.1.5.		
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PURPOSE

Program review enables the University to focus attention on academic programs and to ensure that its strengths and resources are used in alignment with the mission. During the program review process, faculty members have an opportunity to reflect on their work as teachers and scholars and to engage in deliberations about strategic planning, improvement, accountability measures, and resources. Thus, program review offers academic program personnel an opportunity to review and evaluate its program(s), reflect on and refine its vision, and exchange ideas and best practices with others in order to strengthen and improve existing programs. Furthermore, ideas for new programs or innovative solutions to long-standing problems may also emerge.

Creighton requires ongoing assessment of student learning as evidence of academic excellence. Annual evaluations of student learning, in both curricular and co-curricular educational endeavors, measure six common university-level outcomes. The University Learning Outcomes address cognitive, affective, and behavioral domains of learning. Therefore, each school and college uses existing assessments of student learning as they provide evidence for the following six common university-level outcomes:

All Creighton graduates will demonstrate

- (1) disciplinary competence and/or professional proficiency,
- (2) critical thinking skills,
- (3) Ignatian values, to include but not limited to a commitment to an exploration of faith and the promotion of justice,
- (4) the ability to communicate clearly and effectively,
- (5) deliberative reflection for personal and professional formation,
- (6) the ability to work effectively across race, ethnicity, culture, gender, religion, and sexual orientation.

The University Assessment Committee also recognizes the need to report student learning outcomes to a variety of internal and external (e.g., accreditation bodies, disciplinary groups) audiences. (University Policy 4.2.5 Annual Assessments) Creighton University embraces a culture of continuous improvement where an ongoing assessment process is not only focused on student learning and educational outcomes but also on ongoing improvement and institutional effectiveness. This requires reviews of programs using external judgments and consultation.

Creighton University's Academic Program Review Policy arises from the University's mission and University Learning Outcomes. *Creighton exists for students and learning.* Creighton University, as a Catholic, Jesuit University dedicated to excellence in undergraduate, graduate and professional programs, is committed to an ongoing process of program evaluation that includes assessment of student learning, reflection, and action that is consistent with the model of Ignatian teaching and learning. It is with a commitment to academic excellence and within an Ignatian tradition and a Jesuit, Catholic campus culture that the University fosters students' learning. Ignatian pedagogy "aims at formation which includes but goes beyond academic mastery." Creighton graduates will be persons for and with others.

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Program review assists in identifying strong programs that need to be maintained and may help identify programs that need modification, consolidation, or elimination from the University's academic portfolio.

POLICY

Program review is an evaluation process that allows an institution to review and ensure quality assurance for its academic programs. Creighton University is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association. An *assumed practice* for all institutions accredited by the Higher Learning Commission is a regular program review process.

DEFINITIONS

Programs are defined as all degree programs, majors and certificate programs. Program review is an evaluative process that is done through systematic review of degree programs that provide evidence that the program is educationally sound and economically viable. External program review shall be conducted every seven (7) years unless a different schedule is required by an external accrediting body. For those programs that are in units or disciplines that undergo specialized accreditation, the on-site evaluation report, accreditation commission decisions and changes made in response to the report will serve as the external evaluation process. New programs will be scheduled for an internal review when they have at least one cohort of graduates to evaluate progress and viability.

Department chairs and/or graduate program directors and their faculty colleagues will be responsible for drawing together preliminary data for review. Review shall include a determination of the objectives of the program and its relationship to the University and College or School mission, the human and material resources required for achievement of the program goals, a determination of faculty, administration and financial support for the program, the need for graduates of the program, and the prospect for attracting adequate numbers of promising students to the program, as well as available openings for students upon their graduation. Annual evaluation data will be gathered from each program that may include enrollment, credit hour production, in-program student progress and achievements, evidence of student learning, major curricular changes, and graduate placement. Non-periodic targeted program review may occur in response to a request from either the program, Dean, or Provost or (his or her designee). Final determination of the establishment and retention of each program will be made based on recommendations from the review, recommendations from an existing governing group (Graduate Board for the graduate programs), the University Program Review Committee and on the authority of the President in consultation with the Dean(s), Provost. (*Flowchart document provides an overview of the review process.*)

Systematic program review provides a vehicle for ensuring the following:

- Evidence of educational quality and consistency with national trends
- Documentation of student performance and achievement of stated program outcomes within the context of the University mission
- Evaluation of resources including student support, faculty, space

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- Improvement of educational quality and strategies for improvement
- An evaluative process which identifies strengths and weaknesses with a forward looking projection
- Program review results should result in action

PROCEDURE

Academic Program Review consists of five phases: (1) Planning and Preparation, (2) Self-study, (3) External Review, (4) Summary, (5) Recommendation and Action. (*refer to flow charts for guidance*) The Office of Academic Excellence and Assessment serves as the *coordinating unit* for this program review function.

Phase 1: Planning and Preparation

Notification Academic Unit

One year in advance of the review, the Associate Vice President for Academic Excellence and Evaluation will, after appropriate consultation with the lead/chair of the academic program/unit and the school/college dean(s), that a review has been scheduled.

Appointment of the Self-Study Committee

Eight months prior to the self-study submission date, the head of the academic program/unit should establish a self-study committee (size of this group will vary across programs).

Unit Planning Meetings with University Program Review Staff

At least six months prior to the self-study submission deadline, the academic program/unit should schedule a meeting with the Office for Academic Excellence and Assessment (AEA). The meeting will include representatives of the Office for AEA, representatives of the program, the supervising school/college dean, and other deans as applicable. The purpose of the meeting is to address the coordination and scheduling of the work associated with the program review.

Nomination/Selection of Reviewers

The head of the academic program/unit, in consultation with appropriate departmental committee and faculty and with supervising dean's approval, should submit a list of names and qualifications of six potential reviewers (two internal reviewers and four external reviewers).

Reviewers will be expected to conduct the review based on the self-study document and materials, and if necessary, a telephone and video conference with program representatives. There will not be an on-campus visit scheduled. At least two of the prospective reviewers should be from the relevant disciplinary area. The review team will include two external and one internal reviewer.

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In consultation with the school/college dean and the appropriate vice-president or provost, three reviewers will be selected and notification made by the Office for Academic Excellence and Assessment.

Phase 2: The Self Study Report Phase

Document Preparation

The Self-Study Report is an interpretive document that uses data to assess current program status and future direction. The university will provide to the unit a standard self-study document template and standard data set. Data should be analyzed and discussed in relation to the academic program/unit's mission and goals.

Document Distribution

The school/college dean will review the Self-Study Document and executive summary before the materials are forwarded to the Office for Academic Excellence and Assessment who will distribute the document to site visitors and appropriate university administrators.

Phase 3: Program Review Phase

External Review

The review team will analyze the program self-study document, and as necessary, collect additional relevant information, conduct telephone or video conferences with appropriate faculty, administrators, students, and community groups.

Report

The reviewers (external and internal) will prepare a report identifying program strengths, concerns, and recommendations. A recommendation will be made with a supporting rationale as to whether the program should be maintained, strengthened, monitored or discontinued. If the recommendation is to maintain, strengthen, or monitor the program, the review team also will be asked to provide an assessment of the future direction and strategic initiatives of the unit as they relate to the unit's mission and vision for its program. The reviewers will submit their report within three weeks of completing the interviews to the Office of Academic Excellence and Assessment for appropriate distribution.

Phase 4: The Summary Phase

Academic Program/Unit's Response Report to the Reviewer's Report

Once the reviewer's report is received, the head of the academic program/unit, the involved deans, and the Provost (or his or her designee) will review the report. The head of the academic program/unit should review and discuss the report with the faculty and prepare an Academic Program/Unit Response Report that addresses the reviewer's concerns and recommendations. The Academic Program/Unit Response Report will be shared with the involved dean(s) and the Provost (or his or her designee).

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Wrap-Up Phase

The unit head and the supervising dean summarize the final assessment in a joint wrap-up letter. This phase may also include a meeting of the academic program/unit, the Associate Vice President for Academic Excellence and Assessment, the supervising dean, other deans, and the provost or his or her designee, if there are concerns or if further clarification is deemed necessary before the final wrap-up letter is prepared. The supervising dean may invite others to participate in this meeting. The wrap-up letter, self-study document, and review report will be forwarded to the Office for Academic Excellence and Assessment for distribution to the Program Review Subcommittee of the University Assessment Committee.

Phase 5: The Recommendation and Action Phase

Program Review Subcommittee Assessment

The Program Review Subcommittee of the University Assessment Committee will review the Self-study report, Reviewer Report, Academic Program Response, and the Wrap-up letter to check for consistency of process. The Subcommittee will then re-affirm the recommendation being made or propose an alternative.

Permanent Record of the Program Review

The Self-Study Document, the Review Report, Academic Program/Unit Response Report, the Wrap-up letter and the Program Review Subcommittee Assessment will be considered as the permanent record of the review. These summary documents will be collated by the Office for Academic Excellence and Assessment and forwarded to the Provost. The Provost (or his or her designee) will provide a summary memo and distribute final materials to the Academic Unit/Dean(s) and the President.

The Academic Program/Unit head and supervising dean will establish a plan of action to strengthen, improve or discontinue the academic program. The plan of action will be submitted to the Provost within the timeframe specified in the summary memo. If the recommendation is for discontinuation, procedures are followed according to the Faculty Handbook.

SCOPE

- I. Key Features of Program Review: Key features of the program review include:
 - The review is evaluative in nature, not merely descriptive.
 - The review of programs is forward-looking.
 - The review must include academic strengths and weaknesses.
 - The review is objective and is based on the self-study document (specialized accreditation process may serve as program review with additional focused questions).
 - The review is an independent process.
 - The review findings should result in action.

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- II. **Key Questions in Program Review:** The program review will focus on the following questions:
1. Is the program advancing the state of the discipline or profession?
 2. Is the teaching and training of students effective?
 3. Does the program meet the institution's goals?
 4. Does the program respond to the profession's/discipline's needs?
 5. How is the program assessed by experts in the field?
- III. **Key Elements for Successful Program Review:** A successful program review is based on key elements including:
1. Clear, consistent guidelines
 2. Administrative support (e.g., accurate institutional data; resources for external reviewers)
 3. Departmental self-study
 4. Student participation
 5. Review committee
 6. Reviewers (internal and external)
 7. Final report and recommendations/actions
 8. Link program review process to outcomes-based assessment
- IV. The program review consists of three goals:
- Goal I: Recruitment and admission of a qualified and diverse applicant pool: Evaluation of success of recruitment activities should include the trends in:**
- Average admission profiles/entrance exams (e.g., GRE, ACT/SAT, GMAT, LSAT, MCAT, etc.) are within acceptable limits.
 - Admission records demonstrate adequate selectivity.
 - Assess the trends in credit hours generated over time (stable, increasing or decreasing).
 - Diversity of student by gender and ethnicity
 - Number of students admitted and credit hours generated in each graduate program is adequate to assure quality of education and opportunity for interaction.
- Goal II: Assure Quality of Programs: Evaluation of success in achieving quality of programs includes trends in:**
- Student quality:
 - All criteria considered in evaluating Goal I, plus, for doctoral programs, delivery of student papers at prestigious meetings.
 - Quality of comprehensive examinations or the program equivalent (e.g., capstones, theses, dissertations, portfolios upon graduation).

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- **Quality of Instruction/Faculty:**
 - Examination of Curriculum Vitae of existing faculty during cyclical review;
 - Examination of curriculum vitae of adjunct faculty hired to teach courses;
 - On-going evaluation of student satisfaction and student learning outcomes;
 - Evidence of rigor in expectations;
 - Scholarly productivity of faculty;
 - Extramural funding obtained in comparison to benchmark institutions;
 - Satisfaction surveys of graduates and alumni at specified intervals (e.g., every 3 or 5 years post graduation)
 - **Quality of resources available:**
 - Adequacy of laboratory and classroom space for program;
 - Adequacy of technology to support purposes of program;
 - Adequacy of library resources for supporting the program and the scholarly work of the faculty teaching in the program;
 - Revenue and expenditure history since last program review cycle
 - **Quality of outcomes**
 - **Assessment of formative and summative outcomes**
 - Programmatic goals and objectives, stated as learning outcomes, that are operational and specific;
 - Procedures to regularly evaluate the extent to which the goals and objectives are being achieved
 - Evidence that results of the assessment are used to improve the program
 - **Five-year evaluation**
 - Employment type and evaluation of appropriateness of education received in obtaining and performing well in this employment
 - Number of students obtaining a master's who are accepted into a doctoral program
 - Quality of doctoral/post-doctoral positions obtained
 - Alumni satisfaction
- Goal III: Promote Scholarship among Faculty: Evaluation of success in promoting scholarship among faculty can include trends in:**
- Self-report of number and quality of publications resulting from seed grants;
 - Self-report of activities and publications (number and quality) resulting from summer faculty fellowships;
 - Self-report of number of publications by faculty per calendar year;
 - Report of number of books published;
 - External reviews/awards of any faculty publications;
 - Evidence of dissemination of the results of faculty publications;
 - Evidence of increased grant funding;

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- Presentations at significant meetings of disciplinary/professional peers;
- Evidence of impact of scholarly activity on the discipline/profession;
- Development of collaborations in scholarly endeavors.

ADMINISTRATION AND INTERPRETATIONS

Glossary:

Academic Unit: An academic unit is a general term and refers to degrees, graduate level certificate programs, and majors within a college, school, or program. Each academic unit will have at least one assessment system.

Assessment: Assessment includes the collection and analysis of data with the intent of improving the delivery of educational programs, particularly in the areas of student learning outcomes. Assessment is not collecting and analyzing data to explicate only strengths of academic programs. Assessment should reveal areas targeted for improvement.

Assessment for Accountability: Assessment of some unit (e.g., department, program, university) to satisfy external stakeholders. Results are often compiled and compared across units. It is summative in nature to meet pre-identified criteria or thresholds.

Assessment for Improvement: Assessment that feeds directly, and sometimes immediately to a course, program or institution to improve student learning outcomes is assessment for improvement. Such data can be formative or summative.

Assessment of Individuals: Assessment of individual students and their learning is the level of analysis. The data can be quantitative or qualitative, formative or summative, standards-based or value added, and used for improvement. Such individual data would need to be aggregated for accountability purposes.

Assessment of Institutions: The level of analysis is the institution. Such data can be quantitative or qualitative, formative or summative, standards-based or value added, and used for improvement or for accountability. Ideally, institution-wide goals or outcomes serve as the basis for assessment.

Assessment Measures: Assessment measures are the tools that will be used to evaluate student learning. The measure addresses one or more of the performance indicators for a given learning outcomes, such as a project, writing sample, research report or clinical assessment form.

Assessment System/Plan: An assessment system is a detailed description of the process used to implement a cycle of assessment supporting continuous program or curricular improvement. This system consists of specified student learning outcomes, measurement tools/processes for the achievement of each learning outcome, and a structure for use of assessment results for curricular improvement.

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Co-Curricular: Co-curricular programs are planned activities and formal programs that add to and support the student learning offered by academic support units. Examples include, but are not limited to, Ratio Studiorum or similar programs, Migrant Journey and other Service Learning Programs, International Programs, Campus Ministry, Creighton Center for Service and Justice, Cortina Community and Freshman Leadership Program. Three styles of co-curricular experiences can occur:

- When embedded into the course, learning becomes part of the course or program requirements and is assessed as such.
- When the learning experience is associated with but not directed by the course's requirements, assessment will be most appropriate when the outcomes are created collaboratively to support both course and programmatic expectations.
- Learning initiatives coordinated outside of the classroom and not linked to an academic component should reflect outcomes that are aligned with overall University level learning outcomes and direct measures of assessment should be used.

Course: A term used to describe a structured and organized learning activity for academic credit or continuing education units.

Direct Measures: Data collected on students' actual performance of their learning to produce work so that faculty can assess how well students are meeting the intended learning outcomes. Examples include papers, exams, clinical performance, art work, recital, etc.

Educational Objectives: Educational objectives are expected learning outcomes for students that relate to knowledge, skills, abilities, capacities, attitudes or dispositions that result upon completion of a class session, course, program, etc. Objectives are often used synonymous with educational outcomes, though objectives are usually more detailed, behavioral in nature, and stated in precise operational terms (see Learning Outcomes).

Embedded Assessment: Embedded assessments gather information about student learning that is built into the teaching learning process. Embedded assessment are often course assignments, activities, or exercises that are completed as part of a class, but that are used to provide assessment data about a particular learning outcome. The course instructor and/or other evaluators evaluate the student work, often using a grading rubric.

Evaluation: The use of assessment findings (i.e., data/evidence) that is used to judge program effectiveness and used as a basis for making decisions about program changes or improvement.

External Assessment: Use of criteria (rubric) or an instrument developed by an individual or organization external to the one being assessed. External assessments are usually summative, quantitative, and often high-stakes. Examples include the Graduate Record Examination (GRE) or professional certification exams.

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Formative Assessment: Data that are collected and analyzed for purposes of change or improvement. Examples includes reading first drafts of papers and assessing which students need assistance to write more succinctly and informatively.

Goals: Goals are the general aims or purposes of a program and its curriculum. Effective goals are stated as meaningful, broad, achievable and measureable. Goals provide a framework for determining the more specific educational objectives of a program, and should be consistent with the program and institutional mission.

High Stakes Assessment: High stakes assessment is used to make a decision about progression. High stakes assessments can be externally developed to ensure that the assessment is valid and reliable. High stakes assessments include standards that must be met in order to progress in a program (e.g., GRE requirements for admission, successful completion of a clinical experience to proceed to the next clinical experience).

Indirect Measures: Data captured from students' perceptions of their learning and the educational environment that support that learning. Such data may or may not be completely accurate due to it being a secondary level of evidence. Examples include student satisfaction surveys, student self-assessment tools.

Learning Outcomes: Learning outcomes are operational statements that describe behaviors related to the achievement of desired knowledge, skills, abilities, capacities, attitudes or dispositions. Outcomes are often synonymously referred to as objectives, though outcomes are usually more generally stated.

Public: In phrases such as "makes available to the public" or "states publically" refer to people in general, including current and potential students.

Qualitative Assessment: Data that are collected and does not lend themselves to quantitative methods of analysis, but rather to interpretive criteria. Examples include transcriptions of a focus group or comments from employers about the performance of graduates.

Quantitative Assessment: Data that are collected and analyzed using quantitative methods or statistics.

Quality Assurance: Quality assurance is the hallmark of higher education in that it entails a systematic review of academic programs' evidence for purposes of educational and economic viability.

Standards: Standards set a level of accomplishment all students are expected to meet or exceed. Standards do not necessarily imply high quality of learning; rather, they may be minimal criteria for acceptable performance.

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Summative Assessment: Data that are collected and analyzed to provide evidence upon conclusion of an activity or program, usually for decision making purposes to improve or meet accountability demands.

Triangulation: Triangulating data is the collection of multiple data points in order to determine if the results show a consistent outcome.

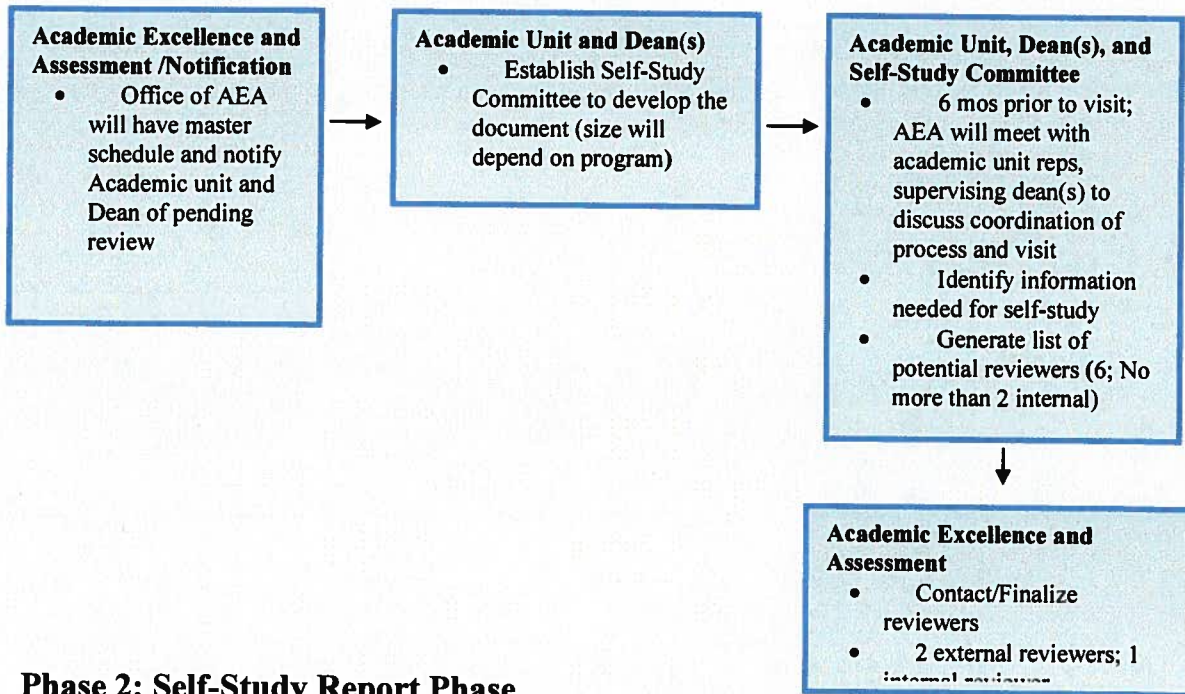
Value Added: Value added is the increase in learning that occurs during a course or program. It can either focus on individual students learning or a cohort of students. Assessing value added components requires a baseline measurement for comparison purposes.

AMENDMENTS OR TERMINATION OF POLICY

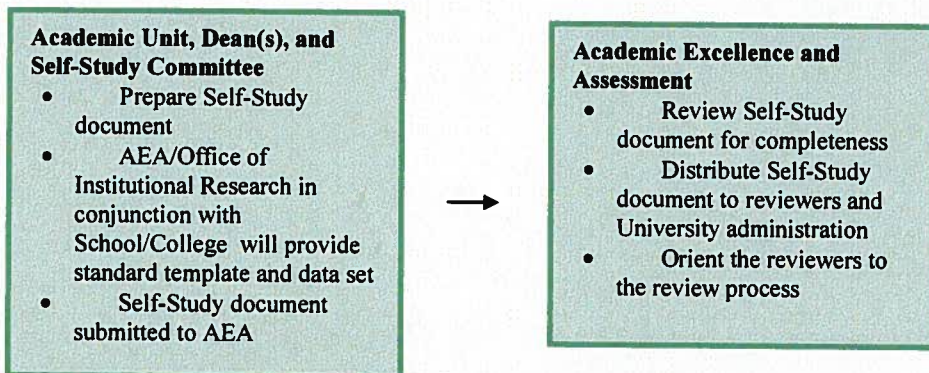
The University reserves the right to modify, amend or terminate this policy at any time.

Program Review Process

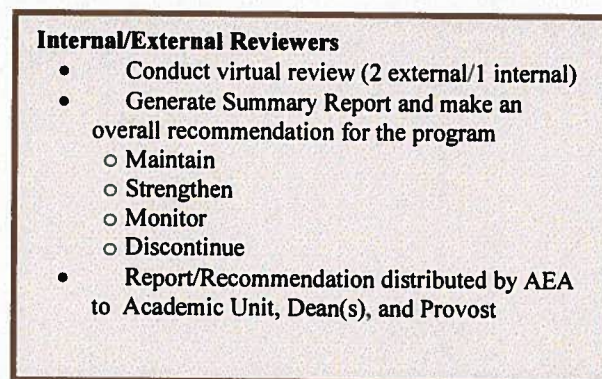
Phase 1: Planning and Preparation



Phase 2: Self-Study Report Phase

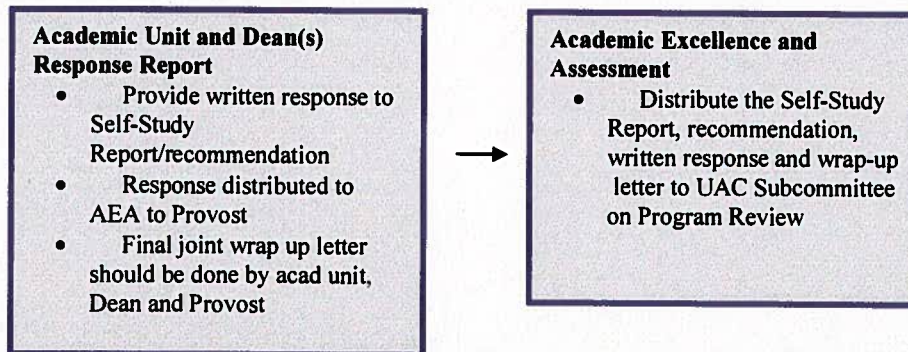


Phase 3: Program Review



Program Review Process

Phase 4: Summary Phase



Phase 5: Recommendation and Action Phase

