

**State University of New York at Fredonia
Guide for Periodic Evaluation of
Academic Programs**

Updated Spring 2015

**Associate Provost for Curriculum, Assessment and Academic
Support**

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SUNY Fredonia

Guide for Periodic Evaluation of Academic Programs

Purpose

SUNY Fredonia is committed to providing excellence in education. To this end, the Faculty, both as individual educators and corporately as members of departments/schools, is continually evaluating academic programs as part of an ongoing review of their effectiveness in delivering the best educational opportunities for our students. As an integral part of this process, each department/school takes the opportunity every five years to reflect on the current state of its programs. In cooperation with Administration, and with the aid of external colleagues, the department/school assesses the strengths and challenges of its programs, and engages in long-term planning for the future. Together with Administration, they formulate an action plan designed to improve program effectiveness, with the commitment of the necessary resources as budgetary constraints will allow, and in congruence with University strategic planning. A summary report of the findings and actions of this periodic review is presented to the University Senate.

Alignment with SUNY Program Review

The Provost's Office of the State University of New York requires constituent Universities to report on assessments of individual programs carried out by means of a periodic (at least every 7 years) self-study and external evaluation. Annually, the Provost/VPAA reports to the SUNY Provost's Office that the reviews have been undertaken, and on any outcomes of the assessments. The procedures outlined in this document satisfy the SUNY mandate for periodic review of undergraduate programs.

Alignment with Accreditation

The Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE) regards assessment of institutional goals as central to accreditation expectations.

Standard 7: Assessment of Institutional Effectiveness:

Assessment may be characterized as the third element of a four-step planning-assessment cycle:

- 1. Defining clearly articulated institutional and unit-level goals;*
- 2. Implementing strategies to achieve those goals;*
- 3. Assessing achievement of those goals; and*
- 4. Using the results of those assessments to improve programs and services and inform planning and resource allocation decisions.*

The Periodic Evaluation of Academic Programs process explicitly addresses each one of the four components of the above planning-assessment model of decision-making.

MSCHE also recognizes the central importance of the Assessment of Student Learning and addresses it in Standard 14.

Standard 14: Assessment of Student Learning:

Assessment of student learning may be characterized as the third element of a four-step teaching-learning-assessment cycle that parallels the planning-assessment cycle described above:

- 1. Developing clearly articulated learning outcomes: the knowledge, skills and competencies that students are expected to exhibit upon successful completion of the course, academic program, co-curricular program, general education requirement, or other specific set of experiences;*
- 2. Offering courses, programs, and experiences that provide purposeful opportunities for students to achieve those learning outcomes;*
- 3. Assessing student achievement of those learning outcomes; and*
- 4. Using the results of those assessments to improve teaching and learning and inform planning and resource allocation decisions.*

The Periodic Evaluation of Academic Programs process explicitly examines and assesses student achievement of articulated learning outcomes specific to a given major program. The purpose of a review is to use the results of these assessments to identify areas of strength and areas of challenge, to formulate a joint plan of action to enable improvements to student learning, and to allocate resources based on these planned actions.

Other Accreditations

A number of academic programs are accredited by program-specific accreditation bodies (e.g. CAEP/NCATE, CSWE, etc.). Assessment of student learning and institutional effectiveness is a common theme seen in all accreditation efforts. Ideally, the Periodic Evaluation of Academic Programs process and any program-specific accreditation review should not result in any extra burden on departments/programs and any such efforts should be coordinated to reduce redundancy in data gathering, analysis, etc.

For departments in College of Liberal Arts & Sciences:

- If a department with program-specific accreditation is not required to complete a self-study by the outside accrediting body (e.g., ACS: Chemistry), they will be required to complete a periodic self-study using the guidelines here.
- If a department is required to do a periodic self-study by their accrediting body, they will be asked to submit a 2-page report to the appropriate academic dean that addresses the following: evaluator's recommendations, department response to recommendations, specific goals for addressing issues raised, and action plans for reaching stated goals.

Relationship to Comprehensive Assessment Plan

SUNY Fredonia's Comprehensive Assessment Plan outlines the rationale, strategies and procedures for achieving a University-wide assessment effort that addresses Standards 7 and 14 of the MSCHE expectations. Specifically, the plan describes ways and means for:

1. Identifying, collecting, and analyzing aggregated outcome measures of student achievement of learning goals (Assessment of Student Learning) and outcome measures of activities performed by non-academic units in providing services to the university community (Institutional Assessment), each contributing to the fulfillment of Fredonia's Mission;
2. Utilizing these assessment data to inform programs so that they can modify activities to improve student learning or institutional effectiveness;
3. Reporting the results of the analysis to appropriate decision-makers in all the areas of this university;
4. Using this information for essential decisions about academic programs, teaching, student services, university services and resource allocation and planning.

The Periodic Evaluation of Undergraduate Programs process explicitly addresses each one of these steps, and is an integrated component of the Comprehensive Assessment Plan.

2015-2016 Timeline

Fall 2015	The Department (or faculty responsible for the program) prepares a self-study document using the format outlined in the "Review of Academic Programs" guide. The Assistant Director of IRPA and others involved with academic program assessment are available to assist by helping to provide and interpret summative assessment data.
October 2015	After consultation with the department and the dean, the Provost/VPAA selects and engages an external reviewer, who will read the self-study document, hold an on-site visit, and submit a report of their findings. It is also recommended that, when feasible, an internal reviewer (perhaps a faculty member from a related program area) is appointed to act as a resource person for, and assist, the external reviewers.
December 2015	Program self-study submitted to appropriate academic dean and Associate Provost for Curriculum, Assessment, and Academic Support.
January 2016	Dean's and Associate Provost's comments and suggestions regarding the self-study are communicated to the department; the department considers these in preparing a final draft of the self-study.
February 2016	Final draft of the self-study, along with other relevant documents (e.g., university catalog, Report of Campus Indicators) is sent to the reviewer. The final draft of the self-study is also copied to the dean, as well as to the Associate Provost.
End of February 2016	On-site visit.
End of March 2016	Draft Report by reviewers completed and received by the department. The department reviews the draft report and communicates any factual errors to the reviewers.
Early April 2016	Final report by reviewers received by the department and the dean.

Early May 2016	Department comments on reviewer’s report through memo to dean.
June 2016	Program annual reports reflect the recommendations and action plans resulting from the program review process. These are summarized and distilled by the deans and the Provost/VPAA, and reported to President in such a way that the university can demonstrate compliance with the four-step planning/assessment cycle required by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education; in particular, the fourth step, which requires the university to use “the results of those assessments to improve programs and services and inform planning and resource allocation decisions.”
August-September 2016	Dean meets with the department to discuss recommendations from the self-study and the report by the reviewers. This will result in a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the department/program faculty and the dean indicating an action plan (including curricular changes, facilities upgrades, line allocations, and other action items), with a timeline for implementation, and an agreement on resource needs. This MOU is forwarded to the Provost/VPAA and Associate Provost.
End of Fall Semester 2016	Provost/VPAA reports on program reviews conducted during the academic year to the Academic Affairs Committee (e.g., curricular recommendations) and the Planning and Budget Committee (e.g., line allocations and other resource issues). The Provost/VPAA also makes a report to the University Senate, highlighting the key initiatives resulting from the program review process.

SUNY Fredonia Periodic Evaluation of Academic Programs
Components of the Self Study Document

1. Department

- 1.1 Departmental snapshot/summary.
- 1.2 Mission Statement.
- 1.3 Goals and Current Objectives.

2. Program

- 2.1 Learning Outcomes
- 2.2 Description, Curriculum and Distinguishing Characteristics
- 2.3 Review of courses, assigned credit hours, and curriculum offerings
- 2.3 Rationale for Program Design

3. Assessment

- 3.1 Assessment Process
- 3.2 Recent Assessment Results
- 3.3 Program Changes and Improvements
- 3.4 Evidence of Effective Change

4. Faculty and Staff

- 4.1 Faculty Profile
- 4.2 Teaching
- 4.3 Advising
- 4.4 Scholarly and Creative Contributions
- 4.5 External Fundraising
- 4.6 Service
- 4.7 Recruitment, Retention, Evaluation and Recognition
- 4.8 Support Staff

5. Students

- 5.1 Student Profile
- 5.2 Recruitment, Retention, and Graduation Rates
- 5.3 Accomplishments
- 5.4 Graduate Placement
- 5.5 Alumni Relations

6. Resources

- 6.1 Physical Plant
- 6.2 Equipment/Computers
- 6.3 Informal Space
- 6.4 Virtual Space
- 6.5 Library
- 6.6 Budget
- 6.7 Other

7. Summative Findings and Recommendations

- 7.1 Program Strengths, Opportunities, and Challenges
- 7.2 Recommendations

8. Appendices

- 8.1 Program Data (from Fact Book and other relevant sources)
- 8.2 Course Syllabi
- 8.3 Vitae of Faculty
- 8.4 Recent Course Schedules
- 8.5 Recent Annual Reports
- 8.6 Other (e.g. Newsletters, Policy Manuals, etc.)

The final self-study document should be available in an electronic format and correspondence throughout the process will occur via email.

1. Department

1.1 Departmental snapshot/summary: This is an opportunity to provide a brief description of your department, setting the context for your self-study. This is particularly useful for your external reviewer, who may or may not have an awareness of what distinguishes your program.

1.2 Mission Statement: Present and review the department mission statement. Point out alignment with SUNY Fredonia Mission Statement.

1.3 Goals and Current Objectives: List the department's major goals. Include current objectives that indicate specific actions currently taken to address those goals.

2. Program

2.1 Learning Outcomes: List the learning outcomes for the program(s) under review. These learning outcomes (or learning goals) are those presented in the program's comprehensive assessment plan.

2.2 Description, Curriculum, and Distinguishing Characteristics: Describe the program. Specify the degree requirements for the program, using the format of the university catalog. As appropriate, describe the congruence between course and program goals and national standards and expectations in the discipline or profession. In addition, show how curricular goals mesh with individual courses, and justify the pattern of prerequisites. Explain the balance between breadth and depth designed in the program. Finally, describe any distinguishing features of the program, e.g., uniqueness of the major, specific opportunities for students, professional accreditation, etc.

2.3 Rationale for Program Design: Why is the program designed in this manner? What is the broad picture of curricular organization? How does new disciplinary knowledge get incorporated into the program?

3. Assessment

3.1 Assessment Process: Describe the process for assessment of student learning. Include assessment methodologies for each of the learning outcomes (goals) mentioned in 2.1.

3.2 Recent Assessment Results: Report on results of systematic assessment over the past five years. Report summary data and any analysis used. Indicate areas of achievement and areas of concern. Include a summary of recommendations resulting from the previous program review and indicate what progress has been made on these.

3.3 Program Changes and Improvements: Report on program changes instituted, or planned, as a result of the assessment process.

3.4 Evidence of Effective Change: For those changes already implemented, provide evidence of their effectiveness.

4. Faculty and Staff

4.1 Faculty Profile: Provide summary data on the faculty in your program. Include: highest degree earned, specialty areas, rank, whether tenured/tenure-track or non-tenure-track, gender, ethnicity, years of service.

4.2 Teaching: Report on the teaching loads and how they are determined. A good way to do this is to show the teaching schedules for several recent semesters, organized by instructor. Include information on course enrollments. Highlight faculty innovations in teaching. Describe the program's procedures for evaluating effectiveness in teaching.

4.3 Advising: Report on student advising procedures and distribution of responsibilities among the faculty.

4.4 Scholarly and Creative Contributions: Summarize the recent scholarly and creative contributions of the program faculty.

4.5 External Fundraising: Report on external grants, external contracts, and solicitation of gifts that directly affect the program's effectiveness.

4.6 Service: Describe the faculty's service to the university, such as committee work, administrative work, public service, and other activities that contribute to the fulfillment of the program's mission in relation to the university and the community.

4.7 Recruitment, Retention, Evaluation, and Recognition: Describe the department's procedures for faculty recruitment and retention. Outline criteria used in evaluation of

faculty, for reappointment, tenure, and promotion, and processes for recognition of special effort and accomplishments. Include any policy and procedures documents in the appendix.

4.8 Support Staff: List the (instructional, secretarial) support staff and describe their responsibilities. Indicate the number of work-study students assigned to the program.

5. Students

5.1 Student Profile: Refer to the Fact Book: for the last five years, show number of majors, number of graduates, admission profiles for freshmen and transfers [number, mean HS average, Mean SAT, entering GPA (for transfers)], gender, ethnicity, etc.; compare to university-wide profile.

5.2 Recruitment, Retention, and Graduation Rates: For the last five years, analyze recruitment trends into the program, both external (freshman/transfer) and internal. Indicate retention in the program by year, and show 4-year and 6-year graduation rates. Describe departmental strategies for enhancing recruitment and retention.

5.3 Accomplishments: Indicate any recent special accomplishment of students (university-wide awards, fellowships, scholarships, etc.).

5.4 Graduate Placement: Provide data on placement of graduates over the past five years, including numbers in graduate school, professional programs, and employment.

5.5 Alumni Relations: Describe the ways in which the program encourages and supports alumni success and how it maintains relationships with its graduates.

6. Resources

6.1 Physical Plant: Describe the physical spaces used by the program (offices, classrooms, laboratories, studios, etc.) their attributes, and evaluate their adequacy in terms of the program's needs.

6.2 Equipment/Computers: Describe the major pieces of equipment used by faculty and students in the program. Evaluate the current state of equipment as it impacts the ability of the faculty to teach their courses, perform their research/creative endeavors, and other duties related to their positions. Assess future needs and outline strategies to acquire new or replacement equipment.

6.3 Informal Space: Describe and evaluate the amount and quality of informal space used by students and faculty. This includes reading rooms, study areas, commons areas, etc. Also, describe any significant off-campus facilities used by the program.

6.4 Virtual Space: Describe and evaluate virtual space resources and their utilization within the program. Include here on-line courses, extent of utilization of web-based course management resources, communications, etc.

6.5 Library: Provide data on library holdings related to the program: number of monographs, current periodicals (paper and electronic), electronic journal stores, and other information storage facilities. Assess the access students and faculty have to current and relevant information related to the discipline itself, and to teaching in the discipline. Evaluate adequacy of the periodicals and monographs holdings, the ease of access to relevant information, the importance of library staff, and other aspects of information technology and delivery on campus (e.g. inter-library loan; electronic access to other library holdings, etc.). Comment on other means of support for faculty and student research in the discipline.

6.6 Budget: Provide data on budget by category (e.g., supplies, equipment, travel). Assess the adequacy of the budget for delivery of the program, and for support of faculty and student research, creative endeavors, etc.

6.7 Other: Discuss any other resource issues.

7. Summative Findings and Recommendations

7.1 Strengths, Challenges, and Opportunities: Based on assessment findings, along with an evaluation of current and future enrollment trends, changes in the discipline and any other relevant, data-supported factors, candidly evaluate your program's major strengths, opportunities, and challenges as they relate to the departmental and program mission.

7.2 Recommendations: As a consequence of an in-depth analysis of assessment findings, anticipated trends in the program, and an evaluation of current resources, what are the recommendations for program change? Indicate a time-line for implementation and discuss any significant resource implications.

Resources

- Digital Measures/Activity Insight
- ANGEL
- University Fact Book
- Annual Reports
- Assessment Reports
- Campus Assessment website: www.fredonia.edu/campusassessment/
- Assistant Director, Institutional Research, Planning & Assessment
- Associate Provost for Curriculum, Assessment, and Academic Support
- Associate Dean, College of Education (education programs, CAEP accreditation)
- Associate Dean, College of Liberal Arts & Sciences (CLAS programs)
- Provost's and Dean's Dashboards

SUNY Fredonia Periodic Evaluation of Academic Programs

Guidelines for Evaluators

Thank you for agreeing to be part of our ongoing assessment of academic programs. It would help those involved with the program if you could organize your evaluation report using the following structure:

I. Program

1. Assess program purpose, structure, and requirements as well as formal mechanisms for program administration and monitoring.
2. Comment on any distinguishing characteristics of this program as they relate to the discipline. What are plans and expectations for continuing program development and self-assessment?
3. Is there evidence that the program has an effective assessment system and uses the results of assessment for program improvement?
4. Assess the breadth and depth of coverage in terms of faculty availability and expertise, regular course offerings and directed study, and available support from related programs. What evidence is there of program flexibility and innovation?
5. Discuss the relationship of this program to other programs of the institution. Consider interdisciplinary programs, service courses (e.g. CCC), joint research projects, support programs, etc.
6. What evidence is there of need and demand for the program locally, in the state, and in the field at large? What is the extent of occupational demand for graduates? What evidence is there that it will continue?

II. Faculty

1. Assess the quality of the faculty, both individually and collectively, in terms of qualifications, teaching performance, research/scholarly/creative attainments, and service to the institution.
2. Considering the mission of the program, comment on the primary areas of interest and expertise of the faculty. Discuss any critical deficiencies.
3. Assess the composition of faculty in terms of diversity (age, rank, race,

gender, seniority).

4. Evaluate activity in generating external funds for research, creative endeavors, professional development, facilities, equipment, etc.
5. Discuss and comment on faculty workload (to include, but not be limited to teaching, advising, service, scholarship/creative endeavors, etc.) in relation to the mission of the institution and program.
6. Discuss the use of adjunct faculty within the program.

III. Students

1. Comment on the student profile (selectivity, diversity, geographic region served, etc.).
2. Assess plans and projections for student recruitment (freshman, internal/external transfers), retention and graduation rates.
3. Comment on provisions for encouraging participation of persons from underrepresented groups.
4. Assess the system for monitoring students' progress and performance and for advising students regarding academic and career matters.
5. Comment on student accomplishment, student involvement and engagement within the program.
6. Discuss the relationship the program maintains with its alumni.

IV. Resources

1. What is the institution's commitment to the program as demonstrated by the operating budget, faculty salaries and research support, the number of faculty lines relative to student numbers and workload, support for faculty by non-academic personnel, and funds provided for faculty professional development and activities (colloquia, visiting lecturers, etc.).
2. Discuss the adequacy of physical resources and facilities, e.g., library, computer, and laboratory facilities, internship sites, and other support services for the program, including use of resources outside the University.

V. Comments and Recommendations

1. Summarize the major strengths and weaknesses of the program.
2. Include any further observations important to the evaluation of this program and provide any recommendations for the program.

The evaluator(s) should submit electronic copies of a draft report of their findings, within three weeks of the site visit, addressed to the department chairperson. The department will review the draft report and communicate any factual errors that may be in the report back to the evaluator(s). The evaluator(s) will then submit a revised (if necessary) report to the department/program and the dean with a copy also sent to the Associate Provost for Curriculum, Assessment, and Academic Support.

Suggested itinerary/format for the on-site visit.

It is the responsibility of the appropriate Dean/AVPAA to arrange the travel, itinerary and accommodations for the visiting evaluation team, with the cooperation of the Program/Department faculty and staff. A faculty/staff member from another department should be assigned as a “resource person” to assist the evaluators during their on-site visit (escorting evaluators, providing contextual information, arranging for changes in itinerary, etc.).

The evaluator(s) should have the opportunity to interview the following individuals/groups:

- Chair/Coordinator of the program
- Dean, Assoc Provost as appropriate
- Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs
- President of the University
- Faculty/Staff – Program faculty and staff as well as faculty providing important service/cognate courses for the program.
- Alumni
- Students

The first formal meeting should be an Entrance Interview with the Dean, where the Dean should elucidate the institutional vision for the program under review, and discuss the program in the context of the College and the University.

The evaluator(s) should have an opportunity to tour the facilities, including studios, laboratories, teaching spaces, theaters, recital halls, office spaces, etc., and also have the opportunity to interview, or have questions answered from relevant University officers not listed above, such as Library staff, Research Office staff, Information Technology staff, Budget and Accounting staff, etc.

The last formal meeting should be an exit interview with the Dean and the Program Chair/Coordinator, where last minute questions can be addressed and initial impressions of the evaluators may be discussed. The Institutional Effectiveness Committee (?) will administer a survey instrument to both the evaluation team and the program chair/coordinator to assess the effectiveness of the visit itself.

- Day 1** Travel day, evening social event with Program faculty/staff (optional).
- Day 2** Formal Entrance Interview and other interviews with stakeholders and administrators (see above for list).
- Day 3** Flexible time for other meetings, include time for evaluators to discuss findings with each other. Formal Exit Interview, followed by travel home.