

Pratt Institute

Academic Program Review Guidelines

INTRODUCTION

The Academic Program Review consists of a systematic, in-depth appraisal of past achievements, current status, and future direction of academic programs and/or departments. The review identifies strengths and weaknesses in various areas within the context of the program's school, the Institute, similar programs in other institutions, and the discipline. The review will serve as the guide to future departmental planning.

All academic degree programs will be reviewed once every seven years on a rotating basis. The academic program review can be undertaken in conjunction with discipline-related accreditation process. Self-studies prepared for accreditation can be used. However, all topics covered in the academic program review must be addressed.

The Academic Program Review process comprises:

- **Departmental Self-Study:** each program conducts an in-depth review of its goals and activities and prepares
 - (a) a Self-Study Report that outlines the program's strengths and challenges, and
 - (b) an Academic Plan that presents the program's academic priorities for the future.
- **External Review:** a team of external scholars and/or professionals provide an outside perspective based on an examination of the self-study materials and on an onsite visit.
- **Implementation of the Academic Plan:** Faculty and administration, based on the self-study and the external review report, adjust the Academic Action Plan and devise specific strategies for implementing it.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The **Office of the Provost** coordinates program reviews in cooperation with the Deans. It specifies the annual review cycle in consultation with the Dean, approves the slate of external reviewers, reviews and approves the Self-Study Report, participates in external review entrance and exit interviews, and facilitates communications among participants.

The **department chairperson and faculty** are responsible for creating a committee of their choosing, headed by the department or program Chair. The tasks of the committee are to develop the Self-study Report and the Academic Plan and to respond to the External Review Report. The Chair is the contact person for the committee. The department is responsible for the day-to-day management of the review. This includes nominating and soliciting external review committee members, scheduling the external review committee meetings, and transmitting the Self-Study Report.

The **Dean** is responsible for maintaining the review schedule as set by the Office of the Provost, notifying the department, distributing the charge and self-study, approving external reviewers, and submitting comments.

The **Academic Senate** has the responsibilities of reviewing the External Review Report and providing the Senate's perspective with regard to the external reviewers' recommendations.

PROCEDURES

Semester I

- The Office of the Provost sets the review schedule in consultation with the Dean.
- The Dean notifies the department and distributes the charge.
- The department begins preparing for the self-study.

Semester II

- The department begins preparing the self-study.
- The department nominates an external review committee in consultation with the Dean and the Office of the Provost.
- The department develops a plan for the visit, which will ordinarily last two days, in consultation with the Dean and the Office of the Provost.
- The Office of the Provost sends a formal letter of invitation to the individuals selected to be external reviewers.

Semester III

- The department completes the self-study and prepares:
 1. a Self-study Report
 2. an Academic Plan.
- The department submits the Self-Study Report and Academic Plan to the Dean, who reviews and approves them and then forwards them to the Office of the Provost.
- The Office of the Provost reviews the Self-Study Report and Academic Plan and either approves or requests that changes be made. When approval is granted, the Office of the Provost notifies the Dean and the department Chair.
- The Office of the Provost mails a packet of materials to the external review team members. The packet contains at least the following: Institute Bulletins, copies of the mission statement; a copy of the Self-study Report, Academic Plan, and related documents; and a list of questions which the team should address.
- The external review team conducts an onsite visit and sends a written External Review Report within one month.

Semester IV

- The department reviews the external team's report. If it opts to reply, it sends its reply to the Dean who transmits it to the Office of the Provost.
- The department, Dean, Academic Senate, and Office of the Provost review the External Team Report and the departmental reply. The department, in consultation with the Dean and Office of the Provost, make adjustments to the Academic Plan and plan specific actions.
- The department begins implementing the Academic Plan action steps.

SELF-STUDY GUIDELINES

Each program undergoing Academic Program Review should conduct a self-evaluation and prepare two documents:

- a Self-Study Report, comprising a description of the program and an analysis of the program's strength and weaknesses;
- an Academic Action Plan that presents the program's future strategic directions and recommended action steps.

SELF-STUDY REPORT

The Self-study Report should be prepared by the chairperson or director and faculty of the program under review. It should present a succinct and thoughtful examination of the program. It should be constructive in tone and focus on successes, challenges, and realistic goals. To the extent possible, it should be data-based and present evidence to support points. Detailed information should be presented in appendices. The report should not exceed 15 pages, excluding appendices.

Suggested Self-Study Report Outline

The outline below is intended as a guide. To ensure consistency and comparability across all programs, it is recommended that departments adhere to it. However, departments may modify it to make a more coherent presentation of key points.

I. Executive Summary

An executive summary of the self-study findings including an overview of the major recommendations for future action should be provided. This summary should be no longer than three pages.

II. Review

1. Mission, Brief History, and Current Status

- A. Discuss the mission of the program and explain the program's educational intent. Provide a brief history and an overview of the program in its current form—program offerings, faculty, students served (majors and students of other departments), and organizational structure.
- B. Discuss how the program reflects and contributes to Pratt's mission and how it functions as a viable part of the Institute.
- C. Comment on what distinguishes the program from other programs in the field.
- D. Describe how the curriculum reflects the mission statement; how the knowledge and expertise of the faculty fit the needs of the mission; and how the mission reflects the needs of the students while at Pratt and when they enter their profession.

2. Curriculum

- A. Discuss what knowledge and skills the program expects students to have when they graduate. Describe how the program and curriculum is designed to provide the necessary knowledge and skills and how the program prepares students for professional practice or for graduate school. Please address the following:
 - coherence of the curriculum (degree requirements, specializations, sequencing of courses, breadth and depth, etc.)
 - balance between theory and practice
 - balance between courses in the major and in the liberal arts
 - rigor of the educational experience.

- B. Describe the instructional and teaching methods. Discuss how the methods and curriculum reflect current thinking and emerging directions in the discipline.
- C. Discuss how the program evaluates whether students acquire the expected knowledge, skills, and dispositions.
 - Describe what procedures are used for determining that the work produced by the students meets the demands of the profession they may be entering. Demonstrate through examples the quality of student work in terms of criteria relevant to the program.
 - Explain how the findings of the evaluation are used in improving the curriculum and teaching.
- D. Discuss the effectiveness of the department's or school's academic advisement and opportunities and advisement for internships and future career opportunities.

3. Faculty/Teaching

- A. Describe the composition of the faculty and describe its adequacy in effectively delivering the program's curriculum. Address:
 - full-time/part-time status, tenure status, rank
 - diversity in terms demographics such as gender, ethnicity, and age.
- B. Describe the specializations/areas of expertise of the faculty. Discuss how knowledgeable faculty are about current professional trends and how effectively they transmit their knowledge to students.
- C. Discuss faculty commitment to and accomplishments in teaching, scholarly or professional research and activities, and service (where appropriate). Describe the methods used by the department to evaluate the quality of teaching.
- D. Discuss departmental faculty support and professional and scholarly development efforts.

4. Students

- A. Describe the students, particularly the characteristics that affect their success in the program. Consider:
 - the quality of the academic and artistic preparation of incoming students. Do admission policies assure a well-qualified, diverse, and representative student group?
 - student demand for the program now and anticipated demand in the future. Explain how the program responds to student demand for the program and to societal need for graduates with the knowledge and skills of the program's graduates.

5. Staff Support, Space, Infrastructure, and Resources

- A. Describe the administrative and other staff support for the department. Evaluate its adequacy to carry out the goals of the program.
- B. Facilities and Other Resources: Comment on the physical and technological resources the program currently has at its disposal and how they are allocated to meet curricular and other needs. Evaluate the adequacy of the resources to achieve the program's mission and educational goals as well as their effective use. Address the following:
 - teaching space (general and dedicated) and studio, shops, etc. space for students
 - condition of facilities and equipment
 - library resources and support
 - computer technology and equipment

- C. Discuss the program's fiscal resources—operating budget, endowed or special funds, external grants, etc.—and their ability to meet the needs of the program.

6. Relation to Other Institute Departments or Schools

- A. Describe the program's interaction with other departments or schools at Pratt. Discuss:
- collaborations with other departments or schools
 - ability of students to take classes in other departments
 - how the program is represented and supported by various areas: Foundation, School of Liberal Arts and Sciences, and History of Art and Design.

7. Relation to External Environment

- A. Describe developments in the larger environment outside of Pratt that affect the program. These may include:
- demand for persons with particular knowledge and skills and professional opportunities for graduates based on local, regional, national and global trends and forecasts
 - benchmarks: how closely the program reflects “best practices” and how well the program compares to relevant performance measures from comparable other institutions and/or accrediting agencies.
 - changes in the discipline's content, areas of emphasis, and technology
 - the program's reputation outside of Pratt and competition from other schools.

III: Strengths and Challenges

Drawing on the findings in the previous section, provide an overall assessment of the program's strengths, areas for improvement, and immediate and future opportunities and challenges. The discussion should be framed not only within the context of Pratt, but in relation to the current state of the discipline, similar programs in other institutions, and national and international trends in student demand and labor force needs. It should address the questions below and include recommendations for the future.

- What are the program's major strengths and challenges?
- What characteristics of the program should be maintained?
- What characteristics of the program should be modified or terminated?
- Where are improvements most needed?
- What issues are in need of immediate intervention?

IV. Academic Plan

Based on the analysis strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats identified in the previous section, the program should develop an Academic Action Plan that presents the program's plans for the next seven years by completing the attached “Academic Plan Form.” The Plan should present a **prioritized** list of the major goals that the program or department will work toward and identify specific steps to be taken to reach these goals. The plan should relate to the strategic directions of the department's school and of the Institute. It should address the following questions:

- How does the program plan to build on current strengths and address areas of concerns?
- Where are long-range changes and improvements most needed? What issues are in need of immediate intervention?
- How will the program remain responsive to the changing needs of the students, the community, and the profession?
- What viable options is the Department considering? What minors, certificates, or concentrations might the department add or eliminate over the next seven years?

- What internal improvements are possible through reallocation of existing resources?
- What improvements can only be addressed through additional resources? From what sources, internal or external, would you expect funding to come?

EXTERNAL REVIEW

A team of scholars and/or professionals reviews the program's Self-Study Report, Academic Action Plan, and other materials and conducts its own assessment of the program through a site visit. The team evaluates the department's principal activities, compares it with leading departments in other institutions, assesses its future plans, and recommend whatever changes it believes are appropriate, under the assumption of constant resources. Faculty members and administration use the report's recommendations to validate strengths and establish priorities for improvement.

Process

The department constructs a tentative timeline for the external review and creates a list of external scholars and/or professionals who might serve on the review team. In nominating persons, the committee should specify in writing the persons' qualifications and provide clear reasons why they are appropriate choices. This list and statements are forwarded to the Dean and the Office of the Provost for approval. Generally, close associates of Pratt faculty members are not eligible to serve on the review team. The Provost's Office sends a formal letter of invitation to the individuals selected to be external reviewers.

Two months prior to the visit

The department or program mails a packet of materials to the team members. This packet contains at least the following: copies of the mission statement; copies of the Self-study Report, Academic Action Plan, and related documents; and a list of questions which the team should address. The department or program also develops a plan for the visit, which will typically last from one to two days.

The visit by the evaluation team

Ordinarily, the evaluation team meets with department or program members; students; the Dean; the Provost and the Associate Provost; and any other persons or groups whose work makes them particularly relevant to the evaluation. At or near the end of the visit the team meets with the academic leadership and program members to discuss its findings in a preliminary way.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ACADEMIC PLAN

After their visit, the external review team submits to the Provost a written report on their observations and recommendations.

The office of the Provost acknowledges receipt of the report and distributes it to the Dean and Department Chair for distribution to faculty in the department.

The department or program may choose to respond to the facts and recommendations made by the external reviewers within 30 days of receipt of their report. The Chairperson submits the response to the Dean and to the Office of the Provost. The office of the Provost forwards the External Review Report and any departmental reply to the Academic Senate for review and feedback.

The department or program, the Dean, and the Office of the Provost meet to discuss the External Review Report and the departmental responses and to make any necessary adjustments to the Academic Plan. Upon agreement, the department begins implementing the revised Academic Action Plan.

Appendix A: Timeline

Semester I	Deadlines
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Office of the Provost sets review schedule in consultation with the dean 	Spring I--March
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Dean notifies department and distributes charge 	Spring I--April
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The department begins preparing for self-study 	Spring I--April
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Semester II	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The department begins working on Self-Study 	Fall I
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The department nominates an external review committee in consultation with the Dean and the Office of the Provost. 	Fall I—October 15
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The department develops a plan for the visit in consultation with the Dean and the Office of the Provost, which lasts one to two days. 	Fall I—October 15
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Office of the Provost sends a formal letter of invitation to the individuals selected to be external reviewers. 	Fall I—November 1
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Semester III	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The department completes the self-study and prepares: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> --Self-study Report --Academic Action Plan 	Spring II—January 31
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The department submits the Self-Study Report and Academic Plan to Dean, who reviews and approves them and then forwards them to the Office of the Provost 	Spring II— January 31
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Office of the Provost reviews and approves the Self-Study Report and Academic Plan. 	Spring II—February 15
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Dean's Office mails a packet of materials to team members. The packet contains at least the following: Institute Bulletins, copies of the mission statement; a copy of the Self-study Report, Academic Plan and related documents; and a list of questions which the team should address. 	Spring II—March 1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • External review team visit 	Spring II—April
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • External review team report is sent to the Office of the Provost 	Spring II—May/June
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Semester IV	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The department, Dean, Academic Senate, and Office of the Provost review the external team report and any departmental reply. 	Fall II – October 1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow up to the visit--Adjustment of Academic Action Plan 	Fall II – November 1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of Academic Action Plan actions 	Fall II

Appendix B: Suggested Materials to Be Provided to the External Review Team

- Self-study for external review committee members, plus three additional copies
- Faculty curriculum vitae
- Course syllabi for all courses
- Statistics showing program trends (three to five years) number of students, number of FT and PT faculty, size of space, student/faculty ratios, full-time/part-time faculty ratio, course enrollments, and any other data you consider relevant.
- Examples of faculty research and professional work; books, articles, presentations, slides, CD's, DVD's, videos, websites, etc.
- Examples of student work: actual work, slides, CD's, DVD's, videos, websites, etc.

Academic Plan Form

Program priorities for the future/Planned changes/improvements

The purpose of this form is to identify and rank the unit’s priorities for the next seven years, based on your Academic Program Review.

Please list your program’s goals for the next five fiscal years in descending order of importance to the department. For each goal, describe the link to the Institute’s strategic plan goals. Also, list actions you anticipate taking in the next five years in order to achieve those goals.

Priority and ranking (one sentence description*)	Link to Institute's strategic plan (shown in Appendix XX)	Actions (brief description of actions to be taken to achieve this priority*)						
		Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7
1.								
2.								
3.								
4.								
5.								
6.								

*More extensive descriptions may be submitted in an attachment.