

Academic Affairs Policy #8

Title: Academic Program Reviews

Date of Current Revision: August 2011

Primary Responsible Officer: Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs

1.PURPOSE

This policy establishes the procedures required of annual program reviews for units within the Division of Academic Affairs.

2.AUTHORITY

The Board of Visitors is authorized to set rules for the university, and where it has not acted, it has delegated authority to the president. In matters concerning the Division of Academic Affairs, the president has delegated authority to the Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs ("provost").

3.DEFINITIONS

Academic Administrative Area:

A unit within academic affairs that supports academic programs but does not grant degrees and is not driven by student outcomes (i.e., Office of the Registrar).

APR:

Academic program review.

Degree Granting and Academic Support Area:

A unit within academic affairs that offers an academic program resulting in a degree (i.e., the Department of English), or that provides services closely linked to student learning outcomes (i.e., the Honors Program).

External Accreditation:

Certification of competency as defined by an outside governing body. Evaluations conducted by external accreditation agencies may be substituted for APRs for units within academic affairs with the approval of the provost.

External Team:

Reviewers selected from outside of an academic unit. The external team may include employees of JMU.

Internal Review:

An evaluation of the unit conducted by the Division of Academic Affairs, utilizing an internal team and potentially utilizing an external team approved by the provost.

Internal Team:

Reviewers selected from within an academic unit.

4.APPLICABILITY

This policy applies to all units within the Division of Academic Affairs.

5.POLICY

5.1 Degree Granting and Academic Support Areas

Degree Granting and Academic Support APRs are conducted internally by the area. Degree Granting and Academic Support APRs follow the guidelines in the Internal Self-Study Report. This comprehensive review seeks assessment and/or evaluative information about the entire program or unit. Degree Granting and Academic Support APRs must be conducted every eight years with an interim report due every four years. The intent of this report is to update program status and examine programmatic issues as outlined in the Internal Self-Study Report.

5.2 External Accreditation

External Accreditation APRs are conducted by outside agencies. A review by an accrediting agency may be substituted for the Degree Granting and Academic Support Areas APR if it is outcome-based, demonstrates substantial JMU faculty involvement and includes an on-campus visit from the accrediting agency. Student learning outcomes and assessment must be part of the External Accreditation APR. Use of an external accreditation review (in place of a Degree Granting and Academic Support Area APR) must be approved by the Provost.

The External Accreditation APR must meet all the requirements for a Degree Granting and Academic Support Area APR to be used in place of the traditional comprehensive APR. For requirements not covered in an accreditation report, the program will provide supplemental documentation.

5.3 Academic Administrative Areas

Academic Administrative Area APRs are internal evaluations of the unit conducted by the Division of Academic Affairs. These guidelines are negotiated prior to the start of the self-study by the involved administrative unit and representatives approved by the provost from the supervising vice provost, director and appropriate others. Recommendations by national organizations/professional bodies should be considered in developing the guidelines for the review. The schedule for Academic Administrative Area APRs is determined by the Division of Academic Affairs and the individual administrative unit, and they must be conducted on a five-year cycle.

6.PROCEDURES

6.1 Degree Granting and Academic Support Areas

The APR Internal Self-Study committee develops a written *Internal Self-Study Report* (ISSR) at the program level. The development of this report should involve program faculty as well as support staff. The ISSR is submitted to the Office of the Provost.

The completed ISSR is reviewed by representatives chosen by the Vice Provost for Academic Programs. After reviewing the ISSR, these representatives identify specific areas to be addressed and the makeup of the external team.

The external team reviews the ISSR and any supporting documents provided by the university, conducts an on-site visit and submits a written *External Team Report* (ETR) to the Office of the Provost.

Within four weeks of receiving the ETR, the academic unit head and program faculty develop a formal plan for integrating the results of the APR. The plan is submitted to the dean for review and input. When approved, it is submitted to the Office of the Provost.

After approval by the provost, the action plan must be added as an objective into JMU-STAR and reinforced in the program's annual report. Integration is an ongoing process, and the results should continue to be included in the annual report until recommendations have been fully addressed.

6.1.A Four Year Interim Report

The academic unit head or designee(s) develops a written *Four Year Interim Report (4YIR)* addressing issues related to the previous APR. The 4YIR is submitted to the Office of the Provost.

The completed 4YIR is reviewed by representatives chosen by the Vice Provost for Academic Programs. After reviewing the 4YIR, these representatives will recommend further action(s) as needed.

If further actions are recommended, an external team reviews the documents provided by the university, conducts an on-site visit and submits a written *External Interim Team Report (EITR)*.

Within four weeks of receiving the EITR, the academic unit head and program faculty develop an action plan for integrating the results of the 4YIR. The plan is submitted to the dean for review and input. When approved, it is submitted to the Office of the Provost.

After approval by the provost, the action plan must be added as an objective into JMU-STAR and reinforced in the program's annual report. Integration is an ongoing process, and the results should continue to be included in the annual report until recommendations have been fully addressed.

6.2 External Accreditation

The academic program participates in its scheduled external accreditation as specified by its external accrediting body (self-study, site visit and response) through completion.

Using the *Academic Program Review Checklist (Checklist)*, the academic unit self-study committee verifies that all aspects of academic program review required by JMU have been met. If any conditions on the Checklist are not met, the academic unit self-study committee will create a supplemental document addressing those specific areas that were not addressed in the initial external review.

The self-study committee must submit all materials – including the Checklist – within four weeks to the Office of the Provost. The external accreditation report, the Checklist and the supplemental document with other information required by JMU (if necessary) are reviewed by the provost's office.

The provost's office has the option to recommend review of a specific area(s) of need. If consultation is required, the reviewer(s) submits a written report addressing the charge issued by the provost's office.

Within four weeks, the academic unit head and program faculty develop a formal plan for integrating the results of the accreditation external team report, APR supplement and, if applicable, a consultation report. The plan is submitted to the dean for review and input. When approved, it is submitted to the Office of the Provost.

After approval by the provost, the action plan must be added as an objective into JMU-STAR and reinforced in the program's annual report. Integration is an ongoing process, and the results should continue to be included in the annual report until recommendations have been fully addressed.

6.3 Academic Administrative Areas

The academic support area APR Internal Self-Study committee develops a written ISSR based on consultation between the office of the Vice Provost for Academic Programs and the administrative area.

Recommendations by national organizations/professional bodies should be considered in developing guidelines. The ISSR is submitted to the Office of the Provost.

The completed ISSR is reviewed by representatives chosen by the Vice Provost for Academic Programs. After reviewing the ISSR, these representatives identify specific areas to be addressed and the makeup of the external team.

The external team reviews the documents provided by the university, conducts an on-site visit and submits a written ETR.

Within four weeks of receiving the ETR, the head of the administrative area develops an action plan for integrating the results of the ETR and, if applicable, a consultation report.

After approval by the provost, the action plan must be added as an objective into JMU-STAR and reinforced in the program's annual report. Integration is an ongoing process, and the results should continue to be included in the annual report until recommendations have been fully addressed.

7. RESPONSIBILITIES

Provost or Provost's Designee:

- Meets with the External Team during the on-site review if necessary.
- Approves the academic unit's formal plan for integrating the APR results.
- Sets the APR schedule.
- Approves changes to the Academic Program Review guidelines.
- Determines if an external accreditation will adequately substitute for a JMU Degree Granting and Academic Support APR.

Vice Provost for Academic Programs or Designee:

- Convenes a Provost Internal Review Team to review an academic program's initial *Internal Self Study*.
- Determines the scope of the External Program Review.
- After determining the scope of the external review, may consult with the appropriate program heads to provide final approval to persons nominated to serve on the External Review Team.
- Reviews the *Academic Program Review Checklist* for accreditation reviews.
- After the scope of the external review is determined, consults with the appropriate program heads to provide final approval to persons nominated to serve on the external team.
- Oversees the APR process through the Academic Program Review Coordinator and with the cooperation of the colleges and academic programs.
- May assist the dean of a college in the preparation of a response to the recommendations of the report written by an external accrediting agency.
- Attends the exit interview conducted by the External Review Team.
- Provides confirmation of new program approval and placement on the APR schedule.

Coordinator of Academic Program Review

- Maintains APR schedule and notifies departments and academic unit heads of upcoming program reviews.
- Monitors progress of the APR and enforces deadlines from the *ISSR* through entry into JMU-STAR.
- Provides orientation and consultation to the self-study teams, both internal and external, involved in the APR.

- Develops a schedule for the visit of the external team with the executive secretary in academic affairs and chair of the Internal Self Study committee.
- Informs external team of all logistical details.
- Contacts the JMU external team chairperson and program coordinator to review questions and concerns.
- Attends meetings of the external team as needed.

College Dean

- Manages and monitors APR schedule for units within the college
- Participates in the planning and implementation of internal self-studies.
- Approves the selection of the APR Internal Self-Study committee.
- Nominates, in consultation with the AUH, the membership of the external team.
- Identifies questions and focus areas to be addressed in the internal self-study in conjunction with the academic unit head.
- Reviews and approves the ISSR that is submitted to the Office of the Provost.
- Develops, with the academic unit head and program faculty, a formal plan that describes the implementation of the APR recommendations.
- Verifies progress in meeting recommendations derived from the APR process through documentation in JMU-STAR and annual reports.

Academic Unit Head

- Names the chairperson and members for the APR Internal Self-Study Committee.
- Nominates, in consultation with the dean and program faculty, the membership of the external team.
- Initiates first contact with external team nominees after final approval to determine their availability.
- Coordinates the preparation of the ISSR.
- Develops, with the dean and program faculty, a formal plan that describes the implementation of the APR recommendations.
- Incorporates the plan through JMU-STAR.
- Communicates progress regarding these recommendations to the dean as part of the annual reports.

Administrative Program Head for Academic Support Areas

- Names the chairperson and members for the APR Internal Self-Study Committee.
- Nominates, in consultation with the appropriate division head and program staff, the membership of the external team.
- Initiates first contact with external team nominees after final approval to determine their availability.
- Coordinates the preparation of the ISSR.
- Approves and forwards the ISSR to the Office of the Provost.
- If applicable, reviews and approves the APR Internal Self-Study committee's response to the ETR. Submits the response to the Office of the Provost.
- Develops, with appropriate administrators and program staff, a formal plan for integrating the results of the APR.
- Incorporates the plan through JMU-STAR.
- Communicates progress regarding these recommendations to the appropriate administrator as part of the annual reports.

8.SANCTIONS

Failure to follow the provisions of this policy may subject the violator to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

9.EXCLUSIONS

None.

10.INTERPRETATION

Generally, this policy is interpreted by the Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs.

Approved by the Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs: August 16, 2011