

2016-2017 Academic Program Review Self-Study Report

Introduction

Virginia Tech's Academic Program Review process provides a mechanism for ongoing, systematic review of academic departments with the explicit purpose of fostering continuous improvement. Unlike other reporting and review processes that focus on what departments have already accomplished (e.g., annual departmental reports) and/or meeting external standards (e.g., discipline-specific accreditation processes), Academic Program Review provides departments with an opportunity to develop a strong vision for where the department wishes to be in the future and how it will get there. This process is designed to complement existing improvement processes.

Each academic department at Virginia Tech will conduct a comprehensive evaluation of its activities approximately every five years. The review schedule is set by the college deans and may vary slightly so as not to conflict with other processes such as discipline-specific accreditations. The standard timeframe for data included in the self-study is the past five years.

The focus of this review is the academic department inclusive of all degree and certificate programs, intercollege programs, online programs, etc. Results will be archived by the Office of Assessment and Evaluation. Administrative support for this process will be provided by the Office of Assessment and Evaluation, the Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness, and other appropriate university offices.

Virginia Tech's Academic Program Review process is designed to be:

- Meaningful
- Functional
- Flexible
- Not duplicate other processes

The process emphasizes:

- Reflection
- Conversation
- Feedback
- Improvement

The process facilitates:

- A strong vision for the future
- An honest assessment of program strengths/weaknesses/opportunities for improvement
- Documentation of resource needs

Procedures

As part of the Academic Program Review process, departments will complete a self-study report that is reviewed and evaluated by a team of internal reviewers. [Note: A department may decide

(at the department or college's discretion and expense) to also include external reviewers on its review team.] This self-study report is designed to encourage departments to reflect on their current operations, develop a vision for the future, and create and implement a plan for continuous improvement. By providing an analysis of how the department is exceeding, meeting, or not meeting expectations in core areas, this report goes beyond describing departmental and program activities. The analysis included in the report should be informed by data provided to the department from the Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness, Academic Analytics, and other sources, current trends in the field, and faculty interests.

The self-study report is not only designed to foster analysis and reflection, but discussion – discussion within the department, with the review team, and with the department's respective dean. Discussion within the department refers to conversations among instructional faculty, research faculty, administrative staff, representative students (e.g., majors and minors, undergraduate and graduate, full-time and part-time), and other stakeholders (e.g., alumni, industry) as appropriate. The final written report is expected to be approximately 20-25 pages (not including data tables or other appendices).

Report Components

The Virginia Tech Academic Program Review self-study report has three major sections that correspond to the following three overarching questions:

1. Where is the department now?
2. Where does the department hope to be in five years?
3. How will the department get there?

Executive Summary

The self-study report should begin with a brief, two-page synopsis of the analysis presented in Part I, Part II, and Part III of the report.

Part I: Where is the department now?

A. Department Overview

This section of the report should provide an overview of the department and include the following information:

1. A brief history of the department.
2. Mission, goals, and strategic priorities of the department.
3. Alignment of the department's goals and priorities with college and institutional goals and priorities.
4. A summary of recommendations from previous reviews, internal and/or external, and any changes made in response.
5. Significant accomplishments, challenges, and major changes (e.g., curricular) that have occurred in the most recent 5 years.

6. What are the emerging trends in your discipline? Based on these trends, how is the department responding or how does it propose to respond?

B. Academic Program Information

The narrative for this section should provide reviewers with an understanding of the department's academic programs and certificates, recent trends in enrollment, and challenges or opportunities related to program sustainability. This section should include the following information:

1. A brief summary of each program or certificate offered by the department, including any concentrations or specializations offered. Also, what online, alternative site, and/or hybrid programs does the department offer? For each program or certificate offered by the department, include the following information as an appendix:
 - Program or certificate mission
 - Location (e.g., Blacksburg, National Capital Region)
 - Format (e.g., face-to-face, online, hybrid program)
 - Student learning outcomes and program outcomes
 - External program accreditations and most recent review dates (if applicable)
2. A description of the curriculum for each program or certificate, including required courses and additional electives.
3. How does the program contribute to general education (both the CLE and the Pathways general education curriculum if applicable) or other service teaching areas (if applicable)?
4. Based on the data compiled by the Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness and other sources, summarize successes and challenges the department has encountered in terms of student recruitment (including recruitment of diverse populations), enrollment, retention, progression to degree, and graduation rates/number of degrees conferred at each level.
 - How well does the department attract and retain high quality students in each of its programs?
 - What is the five-year trend in terms of enrollment and degrees conferred?
 - How is the department responding to these trends?
 - What potential external events could affect the number of students in the department?

C. Student Learning and Support

The narrative for this section should provide an analysis of student learning, assessment processes for each program within the department, recent changes/improvements that programs have made to enhance student learning, and student support services offered by the department. The following information should be included:

1. How do program curricula reflect identified student learning outcomes?
2. In what ways are students exceeding, meeting, or not meeting expectations?
3. What changes have been implemented based on assessment of student learning outcomes and what is currently in process? Describe changes/improvements made as a result of student learning assessment data.

4. In what ways is the department exceeding, meeting, or not meeting students' expectations?
5. How does the collection of departmental services (e.g., advising and mentoring), activities (e.g., student organizations), and education (e.g., internships, study abroad, undergraduate research) foster student success and prepare students for their chosen careers?
6. What other initiatives has the program undertaken to enhance the student experience?

D. Faculty and Staff Profile, including Research / Creative Activity / Scholarly Work, Teaching, Outreach, and International Involvement

This section should provide information on expectations for faculty members within the department as well as faculty expertise. The following information should be included:

1. How is success/productivity defined and communicated to faculty members?
2. In what ways are departmental faculty exceeding, meeting, or not meeting expectations for research, creative activity, and/or scholarly work?
3. In what ways are departmental faculty exceeding, meeting, or not meeting expectations for teaching/pedagogical competency?
4. What has been the impact of new hires and departures over the past five years on program quality (e.g., research productivity, teaching quality) and diversity? Is there a trend? [Note: Departures include faculty who retired, resigned, or were not awarded promotion and tenure.]
5. How well does the department support the professional growth of its faculty members?
6. How well does faculty expertise support the strategic direction of the department?
7. What has resulted from collaborative or interdisciplinary work (e.g., projects, research programs, publications)?
8. In what specific ways does the department engage in outreach and contribute to the university's land-grant mission? [Note: This question encompasses both local and international work.]

E. Inclusion and Diversity

This section should address the department's work in relation to Virginia Tech's goals for inclusion and diversity, and include the following information:

1. In what specific ways does the department contribute to the college's and university's strategic plans for inclusion and diversity?
2. Are the department's efforts to recruit and retain underrepresented students and faculty advancing the university's commitment to inclusion and diversity?
3. How does the department create and sustain an organizational environment that acknowledges and celebrates diversity and employs inclusive practices throughout daily operations in classrooms, labs, and other department spaces?
4. How does the department create and sustain an infrastructure that effectively supports progress in achieving the goals of the college's and university's strategic plans for inclusion and diversity?

Part II: Where does the department hope to be in five years?

Part II and Part III of the self-study report are forward-looking and designed to provide the department with a concrete plan for continuous improvement.

1. Based on the analysis reported in the previous section, discuss your vision for where your department will be five years from now. Consider all relevant aspects, including academic programs, student learning and support, faculty and staff, research, teaching, outreach and international involvement, and diversity and inclusion. Are there particular metrics that would help you to track and evaluate these areas?
2. What are the gaps (if any) between where your programs are now and where you would like them to be?
3. Describe the extent to which available resources reflect the department's capacity to achieve its desired goals. Consider the following types of resources in your analysis:
 - Personnel (e.g., T/R faculty, A/P faculty, support staff)
 - Financial (e.g., salaries, educational and general program budgets)
 - Facilities (e.g., classrooms, office space, lab space, equipment)
 - Technology and technology support
 - Other resources needed to accomplish the department's goals

Part III: How will the department get there?

As part of the Academic Program Review process, departments are required to create and submit an improvement strategy that includes specific implementation items (see below for details).

Based on the vision for the department described in Part II, what steps will the department take to turn this vision into a reality?

Improvement Strategy

The improvement strategy describes the department's overarching plans for continuous improvement over the next five years. One important component of the improvement strategy is the creation of 3 to 5 high-priority actionable items that the department believes will lead to improvement in academic program quality. These implementation items should be informed by the data presented in this report and any internal or external challenges facing the department. Implementation items may include new initiatives, modification of current initiatives, or elimination of current initiatives.

Considerations for a department's Academic Program Review improvement strategy include:

1. What does the data analyzed during the program review process suggest in terms of departmental strengths, weaknesses, needs, and opportunities for improvement?
2. What can the department accomplish using existing resources?
3. What additional resources (if any) are required?

Implementation Items

Implementation items should be detailed enough to allow departmental faculty and staff to enact the implementation items in subsequent years. In the table below, please provide detailed information on each action that the department plans to take within the next five years to achieve its goals. Table 2 (below) has been created to help you think through implementation items for your department. Please use this table format when submitting your implementation items. For each implementation item, describe the following:

1. specific area where improvement is needed,
2. evidence supporting the recommended change(s),
3. the specific person(s) responsible for implementing the change(s),
4. the proposed timeline for implementing the change(s),
5. the resources you will need to successfully implement the change(s) (e.g., personnel, financial, facilities, etc.), and
6. your plan to assess change(s) after implementation.

Table 2. Implementation Items

1. Specific area where improvement is needed	2. Evidence to support the recommended change(s)	3. Person(s) responsible for implementing the change(s)	4. Timeline for implementing the change(s)	5. Resources needed to implement the change(s)	6. Plan to assess change(s) after implementation
Item #1					
Item #2					
Item #3					
Etc.					