



Helena College Internal Program Review Process

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Introduction

Internal program reviews provide a periodic and comprehensive evaluation of all academic programs and support services offered to students to ensure continuous improvement and to aid in institutional planning and budget allocation. The purpose of an internal program review is to direct decision making regarding the development, approval, and management of programs and services to meet Helena College's educational needs and to ensure alignment with the College's mission, core themes and identified strategic objectives. To achieve this purpose, these internal program review procedures encourage self-study and purposeful planning within programs and services. In addition, an essential element of the internal program review is the identification and evaluation of student learning outcomes as key indicators of effectiveness. Finally, internal reviews of all academic programs at least once every seven years are a Montana University System (MUS) requirement subject to the criteria set forth in [Montana Board of Regents of Higher Education Policy 303.3](#).

Roles and Responsibilities

The *College's senior administrators*, the Associate Dean/Chief Academic Officer, Assistant Dean/Chief Student Affairs Officer, and the Assistant Dean/Chief Fiscal Officer manage the internal program review process on behalf of the Dean/CEO and work closely with division chairs, program directors, faculty and staff to ensure that (a) a meaningful and thorough review is conducted for each program; (b) self-study reports, recommendations, and implementation plans are completed in a timely manner; (c) outcomes of the review are communicated to the campus community and the Board of Regents as necessary; and (d) outcomes of the review are linked to decision making processes for program development, outcomes assessment and strategic planning.

Each program has identified *faculty or staff members* who are responsible for overseeing the program. It is expected that all full-time faculty and staff participate in the preparation of the program's internal program review. Where possible and as appropriate to each program, it is desirable to involve adjunct faculty or part-time staff as well. Program faculty and directors are responsible for developing expected student learning or performance outcomes for each program and for employing methods annually to evaluate program effectiveness in achieving these outcomes. Continuous systematic assessment of these outcomes forms the core of the internal program review.

The *Office of Institutional Research* supports the internal program review process by maintaining and publishing the internal program review schedule and by providing a Program Review Data Summary. The program faculty or staff member responsible for preparation of the internal program review should submit the Program Review Data Request form via email at the outset of the review process to aid in the compilation of the self-study document.

The *Strategic Planning and Assessment Committee (SPA)*, as the body responsible for advancing the strategic direction of the college through assessment and planning, reviews final program self-studies, implementation plans and recommendations to assure alignment with the College's mission, core themes and strategic goals.

Definitions

Program

A program is a cohesive arrangement of college-level credit courses, services, and/or experiences designed to accomplish predetermined objectives that may lead to the awarding of a degree, diploma, or certificate, provide access to educational opportunities or support the learning environment. The purpose of a program is to:

1. Increase students' knowledge and understanding in a field of study or discipline,
2. Qualify students for employment in an occupation or range of occupations, and/or
3. Prepare students for advanced study, and
4. Support students' educational objectives by providing resources and/or an environment that increases their engagement and enhances academic and personal development.

Internal Program Review

The internal program review process provides a comprehensive, candid, and reflective self-study that focuses on future planning to enhance student learning and program quality. Programs with multi-level credentials (e.g. CAS and AAS in Welding) provide either a separate or integrated review for each degree level, including comprehensive assessments of student learning and program functioning at both levels. Where possible, programs with an application process for admission should include both pre- and admitted students in data provided for the self-study.

The review is comprised of multiple parts. These include the appropriate cover pages, the self-study narrative, program data summary, and other materials as deemed appropriate by the program or division. The responsible senior administrator or SPA may also request specific information or materials not explicitly identified in the internal program review criteria section. Such requests will be made well in advance of the deadline so as to not burden the faculty and staff completing the document.

The basic components of internal program review process include the following:

1. A self-study, recommendations, and preliminary implementation plan completed by the faculty or staff associated with the program;
2. Review, recommendations and approval by the appropriate senior administrator (Chief Academic Officer, Chief Student Affairs Officer, Chief Financial Officer) of all elements of the internal program review documents;
3. Revision of the self-study, recommendations, and preliminary implementation plan in response to the administrative review;
4. Review by the Strategic Planning and Assessment Committee
5. Final approval Implementation of actions to improve program effectiveness and quality as needed.

Program Review Schedule

The Montana Board of Regents of Higher Education requires that each campus review all of its academic programs at least once every seven years. All Helena College programs are internally reviewed on a five-year cycle. One fifth of all College programs will be reviewed each year according to an established schedule made available in advance. This schedule may be accelerated in individual cases either at the discretion of the appropriate division chair or senior administrative officer. Programs accredited by an



outside accrediting agency are reviewed in accordance with the review cycle established by the agency, not to exceed seven years.

Requests for delaying a review are initiated by the program faculty or director to the division chair or senior administrator. The decision to delay a review rests with the appropriate division chair or senior administrator and is granted only in rare circumstances (e.g., normally to coordinate with a professional accreditation review process or to allow a new program sufficient time to conduct a review). Delays are granted for one year only.

Process Overview and Timeframe

The process follows a timeline established to ensure a meaningful review, allowing for feedback and timely submission of internal program reviews to the Peer Program Review Committee, College Council and the appropriate senior administrator. In general, that time line will be as follows with specific annual dates assigned as per the calendar of the review year:

Notification of Internal Program Review	September 1st
Self-study draft submitted to senior administrator for review, feedback and approval	March 1st
Final self-study submitted to Strategic Planning & Assessment Committee for review	April 1st
Annual Academic Program Review Report Submitted to MUS Board of Regents	October 1st

Accredited Programs

For programs subject to professional, disciplinary, or specialized accreditation, the internal program review is coordinated with the accreditation or re-accreditation review cycle. The self-study developed for professional or specialized accreditation reviews normally provides the essential requirements of internal program review; however, the college protocol must be followed.

Internal Program Review Self-Study Criteria

A. Introduction

Provide an overall description of the program. For academic programs, this can be a copy of the appropriate Helena College Catalog page with comments as appropriate. Where suitable, include program mission statements, application/admission processes and criteria, design of program, accreditation oversight, and other pertinent information. In addition, describe actions taken in response to the recommendations made in the previous internal program review. Briefly describe program and field changes over the past five years and how the curriculum was revised to address these changes. Accredited programs should list their professional accreditation agency and current accreditation status.

B. Alignment with Mission, Strategic Goals and Core Themes

Demonstrate how the program's mission, design, objectives and outcomes are informed by and support the College's overall mission, strategic goals and core themes

C. Alignment with Community Needs (Academic Programs Only)

Applied Academic Programs (AAS/CAS):

Using the program data summary, provide the job placement statistics for all graduates. In addition, provide labor market statistics showing a need for workers in occupations related to this program. Also

provide average wages of those occupations for either the community or state. Within the self-study narrative, describe the types and number of partnerships or affiliations the program has with business and industry. Finally, provide a listing of the program's advisory board members and the minutes from advisory board meetings occurring since the last program review where the curriculum was discussed.

General Education/Transfer Programs (AA/AS):

Using the program data summary, provide the transfer rates for students. Within the self-study narrative, describe the types and number of formal or informal articulations, partnerships or affiliations the program has with other colleges and universities.

D. Student Participation and Success

From the program data summary provide the program's enrollment trends, demographic data, retention and graduation rates, degree production rate, and if applicable, pass rates on licensure and certification exams. For non-academic programs/services provide comparable data that demonstrates service levels and impact on student engagement and success.

E. Student Learning Outcomes

List the student learning outcomes and goals for the program. Describe how achievement of each of these learning outcomes at the program and college level (*Institutional Competencies*) is assessed and documented through both indirect and direct methods. Summarize, with adequate evidence, the program's effectiveness with achievement of learning outcomes for students over the past five years. Non-academic programs should provide evidence of the evaluation and effectiveness of program goals/objectives over the past five years.

F. Curriculum and Instruction (Academic Programs Only)

Provide the current curriculum for the program, including suggested program sequence, course numbers, titles, credits and descriptions. Describe the program's primary modes of instructional delivery (e.g., face-to-face, cohort, etc.) and why that mode is the proper fit to facilitate student learning outcomes. Describe innovations in program delivery, such as; if the program is offered online or in mixed-mode format, has evening, weekend or compressed courses/schedules to accommodate student needs, uses web supported tools as resources, etc. Describe the number of dual credit, tech prep, or other early college opportunities exist in the program for high school students. Provide a sampling of course evaluations for each instructor teaching in the program as well as the results of course level assessments. Include samples of student work such as assignments, projects, and internships or service-learning that demonstrate achievement of program learning outcomes. List required courses taken outside of the program. Describe future curricular plans and their alignment with the College's mission, core themes and strategic plan.

G. Faculty or Staff Profile

Provide a list of all faculty teaching or staff employed in the program. Include title, credentials, certifications, and status. Describe and evaluate faculty/staff expertise for covering the breadth of the program's curriculum or services. Summarize and evaluate data regarding faculty/staff and their professional development -- sufficiency of full and part-time faculty/staff, release time, anticipated retirements, and other human resource issues important to the program. Describe how faculty/staff members are engaged in college and community/civic activities. Describe program support for and involvement in faculty/staff development, especially new and non-tenured faculty or new staff members.

H. Fiscal and Physical Resources

In the narrative portion of the self-study, describe the adequacy of both fiscal and physical resources, highlighting those areas of the program well supported and explain any areas of resource needs. Using the program data summary, provide the program's five-year average annual cost per student FTE, calculated from dividing the program's total annual budget by the average annual student FTE enrolled in or served by program. Academic programs should also calculate the program's five-year average annual cost per graduate using the same calculation approach as cost per FTE.

I. Recommendations and Preliminary Implementation Plan

As a result of the self-study, the program faculty or director develops a preliminary implementation plan that reflects the view of the program faculty or staff and addresses areas identified for quality improvement or innovation. The recommendations and preliminary implementation plan includes the following elements:

1. Key recommendations resulting from the self-study
2. Anticipated student participation and success targets over the next five-year period
3. Strategies to be employed to achieve recommendations and targets.
4. Human, fiscal and physical resources needed to implement recommendations

Mid-Cycle Progress Report

A new mid-cycle progress report has been incorporated into the 2017-2021 program review cycle. The report consists of a brief two-page form that will be completed by all academic and non-instructional programs between the 2nd and 3rd year following the initial self-study. The purpose of the form is to evaluate progress on recommendations and implementation plans arising from program review, achievement of student/program outcomes, fiscal trends, emerging challenges and opportunities, and other information relevant to program development occurring during the five-year cycle. The report includes the following reporting elements:

- Progress on recommendations and implementation plan
- Professional development activity
- Fiscal trends
- Student learning outcomes/program goals
- Challenges and opportunities
- Best practices and/or research questions

The completed report is submitted to the appropriate senior administrator and to the Strategic Planning & Assessment Committee for review and feedback.

Update of Internal Program Review Procedures

Internal program review procedures are updated as necessary for currency and consistency with institutional changes in structure, institutional data, and academic programs. Draft changes are submitted by the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs to Division Chairs, and the Strategic Planning and Assessment Committee, as necessary.