

	Policy Number: 720	
	Policy Category: Academic Policies	
	Academic Program Review	
	Policy Summary: <i>The intention of the Academic Program Review at Prescott College is to improve the quality of its academic programs. All degree and certificate-granting academic programs/majors will engage in program review every 5 years or in accordance with external accreditation requirements.</i>	
	Approval Date: 03/06/23	Effective Date: Upon approval
	Policy Owner: President	
	Scheduled for Review: Spring 2028	

Policy Statement

All degree and certificate-granting academic programs will engage in program review every 5 years (hereafter regular review) or on timelines in accordance with external accreditation requirements, and will follow explicitly the program review procedures accompanying this policy. Non-degree granting programs may go through program review at the request of the Dean or President (minors, concentrations, etc.). Externally accredited programs are required to address specific Prescott College program review questions in addition to their accreditors' requirements. Academic program reviews that are not part of the regular program review, but are at the prerogative of the Dean, should not be scheduled at the same time as the periodic academic program review.

Definitions

Academic Rigor: "Intentionally crafted and sequenced learning activities and interactions that are supported by research and provide students the opportunity to create and demonstrate their own understanding or interpretation of information and support it with evidence." Quality Matters, 2019
At the course level, evidence of academic rigor includes a combination of examples from the following: learning objectives; course assignments; exams; and/or descriptions of student activities appropriate to the discipline. "Courses that carry academic credit toward college-level credentials have content and rigor appropriate to higher education." HLC Policy CRRT.B.10.020

Conflict of Interest: A conflict of interest or appearance of a conflict of interest exists when an external reviewer:

- is a present or former employee, instructor, student, member of the governing board, or consultant to Prescott College;
- is a spouse, parent, child, or sibling of any of the individuals listed above;
- is seeking or being sought for employment or other relationship with the institution under review;

- has a relationship with the college or program faculty (i.e., thesis/dissertation committee member, recent co-author or collaborator) that might compromise objectivity (or may have had in the past); or
- expresses that providing a candid review would be problematic.

Credit Hour: Prescott College uses the semester credit hour for awarding of academic credit. The credit hour is defined by Prescott College in accordance with HLC Policy FDCR.A.10.020 11/2020) and with the Federal Policy as follows:

“A credit hour is an amount of work represented in intended learning outcomes and verified by evidence of student achievement that is an institutionally-established equivalency that reasonably approximates not less than: (1) one hour of classroom or direct faculty instruction and a minimum of two hours of out-of class student work each week for approximately fifteen weeks for one semester or trimester hour of credit, or ten to twelve weeks for one quarter hour of credit, or the equivalent amount of work over a different amount of time; or (2) at least an equivalent amount of work as required in paragraph (1) of this definition for other activities as established by an institution, including laboratory work, internships, practica, studio work, and other academic work leading toward to the award of credit hours.” 34 CFR 600.2

Distance Education: Prescott College delivers distance education in accordance with Federal Policy and the definition of distance education as follows:

“Education that uses one or more of the technologies listed in paragraphs (2)(i) through (iv) of this definition to deliver instruction to students who are separated from the instructor or instructors and to support regular and substantive interaction between the students and the instructor or instructors, either synchronously or asynchronously.” 34 CFR 600.2

“For purposes of this definition, substantive interaction is engaging students in teaching, learning, and assessment, consistent with the content under discussion, and also includes at least two of the following -

- (i) Providing direct instruction;
 - (ii) Assessing or providing feedback on a student's coursework;
 - (iii) Providing information or responding to questions about the content of a course or competency;
 - (iv) Facilitating a group discussion regarding the content of a course or competency; or
 - (v) Other instructional activities approved by the institution's or program's accrediting agency.”
- 34 CFR 600.2

“An institution ensures regular interaction between a student and an instructor or instructors by, prior to the student's completion of a course or competency -

- (i) Providing the opportunity for substantive interactions with the student on a predictable and scheduled basis commensurate with the length of time and the amount of content in the course or competency; and
- (ii) Monitoring the student's academic engagement and success and ensuring that an instructor is responsible for promptly and proactively engaging in substantive interaction with the

student when needed on the basis of such monitoring, or upon request by the student.” 34
CFR 600.2

External Reviewer/s: An external reviewer is a recognized expert in the field of the proposed program, as demonstrated by appropriate educational credentials, professional experience and academic teaching and/or administrative experience in similar programs. External reviewers will not have a conflict of interest or the appearance of a conflict of interest with the institution or program under review.

Reason for Policy

In accordance with the Higher Learning Commission accreditation criteria 4.A.1, all institutions of higher education shall engage in systematic review of their academic programs. The Higher Learning Commission accreditation criteria 4.A.4. states that the institution “...maintains and exercises authority over the prerequisites for courses, rigor of courses, expectations for student learning, access to learning resources, and faculty qualifications for all its programs, including dual credit programs.” At Prescott College this oversight occurs within the program review process.

Responsibilities

For following policy:	All academic departments
For enforcement of policy:	Dean of Academic Affairs
For oversight of policy:	Dean of Academic Affairs
For procedures implementing the policy:	Dean of Academic Affairs
For notification:	Policy Librarian

Procedures

RESPONSIBILITIES

Program Leader or Designee

- Submit plan for completing review to appropriate Dean (or equivalent).
- Propose potential external reviewers (at least three candidates’ CVs for consideration) for Dean (or equivalent) to select the external reviewers (two members, in general)
- Completion of self-study. General, minimum criteria provided in the Academic Program Review Template (See Annex 1).
- Organize On-Site or Remote Review of the program as agreed with the Dean (or equivalent)
- Share self-study and external report with program faculty so that the Program Leader (or equivalent) may develop an action plan
- Ensure Final Report submitted to Dean (or equivalent)

Dean (or designee)

- Review of plan submitted by Program Leader or Designee
- Identify the review team
- Ensures invitations are extended to external reviewers and contracting
- Reviews self-study and final program review for errors of fact

- Meet with program faculty following the review to discuss the Final Report and recommendation therewithin
- Prepare a report to the Leadership Team

External Reviewer/s

- Reviews self-study, which describes the curriculum
- Conducts interviews with Dean (or designee), faculty, staff and students (on-site or remote)
- Writes a final report
- When appropriate given program delivery, the external reviewers should conduct a site visit of 2 days in length. In the case of remote external reviews, it is important that the reviewers are provided opportunities to accurately understand lab and other physical and technological resources that may not be apparent in the self-study or remote interview process.

PROCEDURE

1. Planning for the Review

To begin the planning process the program leader or APR lead will submit a plan for completing the review to the appropriate Dean (or equivalent). The review plan will identify the faculty responsible for addressing each of the criteria, a schedule for completing activities, and a list of potential review team members with access to their CVs (Appendix 2).

The program leader, or APR lead and the Dean (or equivalent) review the plan and set the specific steps for completing the review, including organizing the review team. Review teams will generally consist of two external reviewers who are faculty members from the same discipline under review and from a different institution. Externally accredited programs may choose to include an individual from the authorizing or accrediting agency on the external review team if they have the other requisite credentials. During the planning process, the Dean (or equivalent) and the program leader or APR lead will discuss specific questions, expectations, and/or issues pertaining to the review process and establish a prioritized list of external review team members. The Dean (or equivalent) will approve and ensure invitations are extended to the potential reviewers and formalize the review team. The program leader or APR lead will submit the review plan to the Dean (or equivalent) for review and approval per section 4. Timeline. Feedback will be provided to the program leader or APR lead per the Timeline.

2. Self-Study

The program faculty will complete a comprehensive and evaluative self-study with information focusing on student learning data, alumni data, curriculum, faculty, and resources. Programs are also encouraged to engage in evidence-based long-range planning. Each self-study must address criteria in five areas: program information, student learning, curriculum, faculty, and future goals. The program leader or APR lead will submit the document per the Timeline.

All self-studies must include, at a minimum, the following information:

Program Information

- Specify the curriculum for the program (program of study), using the format of the catalog description of the program.
- Describe Admission Requirements.
- Describe Graduation Requirements.
- Refer to the program's Curriculum Matrix Appendix (all courses, including approved electives and requisites, mapped to Program Learning Outcomes and Course Learning Objectives differentiated by delivery modality, if they differ).
- Explain the alignment between course and curricular goals, courses, and prerequisites.
- Explain efforts to assure that required courses and electives are offered on a schedule to meet the needs of various student constituencies.
- Describe the methods used to ensure comparable learning objectives among multiple sections of a course, if applicable.
- Include five years of data on students including information on the number of majors, minors and graduates.
- Include five years of data on general education and service course enrollments.
- Describe the advisement procedures and the way the program assesses advisement effectiveness.
- Discuss the adequacy of the infrastructure supporting the program: physical facilities, technology, resources, general infrastructure.

Student Learning

- Describe the program's activities to enhance the success of first year students (undergraduate and graduate level) and the retention of students through graduation. Consider the roles of diversity, equity and inclusion; academic rigor; and also the accelerated programs. Use student data to support your results.
- Provide specific examples of student learning outcome assessments and results that provide evidence of student learning.
- Provide information regarding job and or graduate school placement, including the accelerated programs (master's and doctoral).
- Summarize assessment of student learning and alumni survey results and provide evidence that the information is being utilized by the program to make needed adjustments.

Curriculum

- Describe and evaluate program procedures for the development, review, and evaluation of courses.
- Describe the procedures, criteria, and methods used to analyze student learning outcome assessment data and subsequent improvements to the curriculum.
- Describe the procedures, criteria, and methods used to decolonize the curriculum.
- Describe how the program distributes its assessment responsibilities across faculty.
- Analyze the effectiveness of the program in achieving its goals and learning outcomes in the discipline, in decolonization of the curriculum, and in general education based on annual assessment report data.
- Describe the processes used to formulate and implement curricular changes based on yearly assessment of student learning data (e.g. addition or deletion of courses, change in prerequisites, etc.) and college-wide curricular priorities (e.g., decolonizing, anti-racist, culturally responsive curriculum).

- Include an assessment of the program's strengths and weaknesses making reference to assessment data as available. Explain plans to improve weaknesses.
- Include an assessment of the program's alignment with emerging trends within the discipline and career opportunities for students making reference to career and program data, as available. Identify strengths and explain plans to improve weaknesses.

Faculty

- Provide a list of Faculty and Associate Faculty, indicating rank and length of time at the institution. Faculty and Associate Faculty will provide updated CVs.
- Explain how the training and interests of the faculty contribute to the appropriate breadth of the program. Indicate areas, if any, in which greater strength would be beneficial and highlight particular strengths.
- Analyze the teaching and advising loads and how they are distributed among faculty by instructor categorization (faculty, associate faculty, adjunct, etc.) (number of courses/number of students).
- Highlight faculty innovations in teaching.
- Describe the recent scholarly and creative contributions of the program faculty that are important to the program learning outcomes.
- Describe the faculty members' service activities to the college, such as committee work, administrative work, public service, and other activities that contribute to the fulfillment of the program's goals in relation to the college and community. Include service to the profession and the community (boards, academic organizations, conference organization, editorships, etc.).
- Identify the steps taken to assure that faculty members maintain currency in their disciplines and the activities that result in the continuing growth of the faculty.

Future Goals

- Use the program review results to describe future goals for the program. Some questions for guidance:
 - What are the opportunities or emerging trends within the discipline of the program? What is being done to address and/or take advantage of these trends within the program?
 - What are the opportunities to deepen diversity, equity and inclusion in the curriculum?
 - Who are your benchmark peers and in which areas is the program stronger and weaker? How has this changed over time?
 - What are the key challenges that face the degree program? What are the program's current strengths and weaknesses in addressing these challenges? What is being or needs to be done to address these challenges?
- Propose a timeline for accomplishing the goals and measures to demonstrate that the goals are met.

Documents

Include the following documents in the self-study:

- Updated Program Information

- Most current curriculum concordance matrix to program learning outcomes and undergraduate learning outcomes (as applicable) and course learning objectives (template can be provided)
- Advising or Pathway Descriptions/ Document/s
- Annual program assessment reports
- Institutional Data
- Career Opportunities for Graduates (e.g., Lightcast, etc.).
- CVs for all Faculty and Associate Faculty

3. ON-SITE / REMOTE REVIEW OF THE PROGRAM

The on-site and/or remote review consists of one and one-half to two days of meetings (in on-site) or multiple meetings scheduled over a definitive timeframe with faculty, students, and/or program staff, and the Dean (or equivalent). The program review leader is responsible for working with the review team members, the Dean (or equivalent) and other stakeholders to set the dates for the on-site review and the review team agenda. The review team will evaluate the quality of the program and submit a report. The team looks to see that a critical inquiry was completed and that alignment exists between the evidence and the report findings. The review team will submit its report, written by the external reviewer/s and edited by the Program Leader (or designee), to the appropriate Dean (or equivalent) as noted in section 4. Timeline. The Dean (or equivalent) and the President will meet with the program faculty during the following fall term to discuss the report and to set the program agenda, including any resource adjustments, for the next several years (goals, problems to address, improvements and advancements desired, assessment measures, and timelines for each).

4. TIMELINE

Date, Activity, Responsible

- August - Orientation - Accreditation Liaison Officer, Dean
- October 15 - Submission of program review plan to the Dean (or equivalent) for review and approval - Program Leader or Designee (APR Lead)
- October 30 - Meet with Program representative to finalize review plan, including review team - Dean (or equivalent)
- Jan 31 - Submission of self-study to Dean (or equivalent) - Program Leader or Designee
- March – April - Remote visit - Program Leader or Designee
- No later than May 15 - Submission of final review report to Dean (or equivalent) - Program Leader or Designee
- Fall - Program meeting to discuss review report and multi-year action plan - Program Leader or Designee organizes and invites Dean (or equivalent) and President

Cross Referenced Policies

Academic Rigor Policy (under development)
 Credit Hour Policy (under development)
 Continuous Improvement & Assessment Policy 725
 Faculty Qualifications Policy 250

Higher Learning Commission:

<https://www.hlcommission.org/Policies/criteria-and-core-components.html>
<https://www.hlcommission.org/Policies/criteria-and-core-components.html>

Revision History

April 2024 – added procedures