Curriculum Review Handbook

A Guide to the Curriculum Review Process

April 2014

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Purpose

Curriculum review is focused on institutional priorities and accreditation requirements related to:
1. Employment readiness
2. Transfer readiness
3. College readiness
4. Community need
5. Student interest

The review uses data and information relating to student learning, enrollment, completions, curriculum design, community need, student interest and past initiatives to inform the extent to which institutional priorities and accreditation requirements are supported in a program/discipline. This data and information is interpreted by program/discipline faculty and their academic dean. The lead faculty reviewer responds to the review questions, synthesizing input from the discipline faculty (adjuncts and full time) and the academic dean. Action strategies are created by the faculty and academic dean to address issues identified in the responses to the review questions.

Objectives

1. To ensure that curricula are meeting the requirements for accreditation.
2. To ensure that curricula are aligned with institutional priorities.
3. To provide an opportunity for programs to highlight their successes and create short- and long-term plans for improvement.

Guiding Principles

- Reviews are cyclical and required.
- The review process is flexible when necessary.
- The review process promotes collaboration between all discipline faculty and administration.
- Reviews result in action strategies aimed at improving the curricula, student learning and success.

Contents of the Review

The curriculum review report is comprised of 8 sections for programs and 6 sections for disciplines. Each section contains sets of questions, along with the information needed to provide an objective response. The sections of the report include:

1. Past & Present Initiatives
2. Program Student Learning Outcomes (programs only)
3. Common Course Outcomes
4. Enrollment
5. Completions (programs only)
6. Curriculum Design
7. Community Need & Student Interest
8. Strengths, Challenges & Conclusions

Below, we describe the purpose, data used, data source, benchmarks and typical questions for each section of the review report. Note that benchmarks are used to help prioritize improvement efforts in a program/discipline. When a course/program is below a benchmark, they are asked to consider factors affecting the course/programs' ability to meet the benchmark and create an action strategy for improvement. Benchmarks are typically established by examining the distribution of values for all programs/courses. The mean or median value may be selected as the benchmark, or a value slightly higher so that a gradual increase in the average will occur over time as those below average address challenges.

1. Past & Present Initiatives

- **Purpose-** Initiatives stemming from past reviews, accreditation reports, advisory committees and similar sources are listed and questions focus on whether these actions had the intended impact. This ultimately informs best practices and ensures that plans fare implemented. For example, a program may have added a student orientation session to improve student retention. If retention rates have in fact improved, the program might conclude that orientation is an effective strategy to improve student retention in similar programs. As another example, a program may indicate that a change was not implemented yet because additional support from the college is needed, in which case an action strategy requesting support is created.
- **Data-** Past action strategies presented with follow-up questions.
- **Data Source-** Action strategies from past reviews, accrediting agency recommendations, or advisory committee recommendations.
- **Benchmarks-** None.
- **Typical Questions-**
  - i. Comment on the status of each recommendation listed above. Indicate which of these items, if any, still need to be addressed.
  - ii. For those recommendations that have since been addressed, indicate the outcome of these strategies, in terms of their impact on student learning and success.

2. **Program Student Learning Outcomes (programs only)**
    - **Purpose-** The purpose of this section of the report is three-fold. First, programs are asked to reflect on the alignment of student learning outcomes with employer and other external expectations. Secondly, programs are asked to identify trends in student learning over time and consider the factors that impact these trends. Thirdly and similar to section 1 of the review report, programs reflect on past changes and the impact of these changes. For example, a program may have added an assignment to improve student learning and found that after implementation, the percent of students meeting the benchmark increased.
    - **Data-** Program learning outcomes, program description. Percent of students meeting benchmark, graph of past 5-10 years. Current and past benchmarks, summary table of findings and planned changes
    - **Data Source-** Outcomes, assessment plans, assessment data, findings and planned changes are submitted by the full time faculty. Program description comes from the current catalog.
    - **Benchmarks-** These benchmarks are created by the full time faculty within the discipline/program.
    - **Typical Questions-**
        i. What evidence demonstrates the alignment of this outcome with employer, transfer institutions, professional organization or accrediting agency expectations?
        ii. Is this outcome reflected in the program description in the college catalog?
        iii. Considering all years of assessment findings, what is the trend in students meeting the benchmark?
        iv. What factors may be contributing to this trend?
        v. Consider the number of students assessed in relation to the total number of students enrolled in that course collegewide. Are the findings reflective of student learning in all sections?
        vi. Considering the changes that have been made to improve student learning for this outcome and benchmark, what evidence can be provided to show the impact of these changes on student learning?

3. **Common Course Outcomes**
    - **Purpose-** As common course outcomes are established and assessed college-wide, this section will mirror section 2 of the review report in its structure and purpose.
    - **Data-** Established outcomes or list of courses needing outcomes
    - **Data Source-** Same source as described above for program outcomes.
    - **Benchmarks-** These benchmarks are created by the full time faculty within the discipline/program.
    - **Typical Questions-** In the following table, insert any previously established common course outcomes. If no common course outcomes have been established, describe the actions that will be taken to create common course outcomes.

4. **Enrollment**
    - **Purpose-** Factors that are limiting fill rates in a course are addressed. The percent of seats taken is shown for regular courses (i.e. excludes special topics and experiential learning courses). When courses are below the 80% benchmark, disciplines identify factors affecting fill rates and create action strategies for improvement when appropriate. For example, a discipline may indicate that enrollment is limited due to availability of equipment and may create an action strategy to request additional equipment to help improve course fill rates.
    - **Data-** Percent of seats taken (graph), number of seats taken, number of seats offered, number of sections, average section size.
    - **Data Source-** Enrollment data is pulled from Colleague by IT and sent to CSL. Percent of seats taken is computed by looking at the capacity for each section of a course and the total number of students who were enrolled in the course after the add/drop period (includes students who withdrawal from courses).
    - **Benchmarks-** The 80% benchmark used in review was established by the academic administration for use in the previous administrative review process. The benchmark allows faculty to focus improvements on courses with the lowest fill rates.
    - **Typical Questions-**
        i. What are the possible factors that prevented this course from meeting the benchmark? Consider the size of each section and the number of sections offered in an academic year.
        ii. What are the possible factors that helped this course meet the benchmark?

5. **Completions (programs only)**
    - The purpose of this section of the report is to identify any factors that are limiting the number of degrees awarded. The total completions for a three year period are shown. When programs are below the 20 completions/three years benchmark, action strategies are created to address the factors identified as affecting completion. For example, a program may find that while students complete all required courses in the program, they simply do not apply for the degree; programs may then create an action strategy that says they will have students fill out the application for graduation in a final course.
    - **Data-** Total number of completions (i.e. degrees granted) past three years
    - **Data Source-** Completions data is pulled from Colleague by IT and sent to CSL.
    - **Benchmarks-** he academic administration set the expectation that programs will graduate at least 20 students in a three year period (i.e. 6-7 students per year). Note that programs in their growth period are not expected to create action strategies to address low completion values. Growth periods are as follows:
        i. Extended Associate's = 7 years after start of program
        ii. Associate's = 6 years after start of program
        iii. Certificate = 4 years after start of program
        iv. Certificate of Achievement = 3 years after start of program
    - **Typical Questions-**
        i. What are the possible factors that prevented this program from meeting the benchmark?
        ii. What are the possible factors that helped this program meet the benchmark?

6. **Curriculum Design**
    - **Purpose-** Systematic reflection of the course titles, descriptions, sequencing, GE outcomes, prerequisites and other such course characteristics occurs in this section of the report. Disciplines may find that a course should have a GE outcome, or that the numbering of the courses does not reflect the sequence in which students take the courses. Action strategies can then be devised to address the needed changes.
    - **Data-** Course descriptions, prerequisites, sequencing and general education outcomes.
    - **Data Source-** Current catalog.
    - **Benchmarks-** None.
    - **Typical Questions-**
        i. Is the course title and description reflective of the material covered?
        ii. Is the course number reflective of the sequence in which students take this course?

7. **Community Need & Student Interest**
    - **Purpose-** In this section, the extent to which programs and disciplines are meeting the needs of the community is of interest. For programs, data such as the number of available jobs in the community are examined. For disciplines, data such as the extent to which the courses transfer as equivalent credit to popular four-year institutions is examined. Action strategies to improve the extent to which programs and disciplines are meeting community needs are then devised. For example, if the transferability rate is low for a particular course, the discipline may contact other institutions to find out what changes could be made to improve course transferability. As another example, a program may find that there are more job opportunities for students in this area if a particular skill is obtained and the program may then create an action strategy to include the new skill in an existing course.
    - **Data-**
        i. Programs only- shows assigned CIP*, SOC**, total regional jobs, total regional openings, total regional completions. May include market share, industry trends, job titles, etc. as requested.
            1. *CIP: Classification of Instructional Programs (U.S. Department of Education)
            2. **SOC: Standard Occupation Classification (U.S. Department of Labor)
        ii. Programs (as appropriate) & disciplines- Transferability details and overall rate (benchmark >50%; applicable only to courses expected to transfer).
        iii. Programs & disciplines- Overall transferability rate, courses required for a program, prerequisites and general education distribution list status
    - **Data Source-**
        i. CIP-assigned by college
        ii. SOC- linked by Bureau Labor Statistics (BLS)
        iii. Jobs data- Economic Modeling Specialists Intl.(ESMI) collects data from BLS.
        iv. Completions data- Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System.

v. CSL manually codes course transferability using institution's websites and the Michigan Transfer Network (MTN) website.
vi. Current catalog.

- **Benchmarks-** The final benchmark relates to transferability and applies only to those courses intended for transfer. The benchmark is set to the average transferability of the courses on the general education distribution list (i.e. 50%). The benchmark allows faculty to focus on the courses with the lowest transferability for improvement.
- **Typical Questions-**
  i. Review the accuracy of the assigned codes (CIP & SOC).
  ii. Considering the total number of regional completions for similar programs and the number of annual job openings, what level of competition for jobs will OCC graduates face in the region?
  iii. What licensing and degree requirements are needed for employment in these occupations? In what ways does the OCC program prepare students to meet these requirements?
  iv. What factors would indicate a future increase or decrease in the number of job openings in these occupations? How might these factors be systematically monitored?
  v. What advantages do students have by completing the program at OCC compared to another school? How is this information communicated to students?
  vi. For courses that transfer to less than half of the most popular transfer institutions, what actions would need to be taken to increase the transferability?
  vii. In what ways do faculty in the XXX discipline work with faculty from the programs that require XXX courses, in terms of the alignment of course outcomes with program outcomes?
  viii. In what ways do faculty in the XXX discipline work with faculty from the disciplines that use XXX courses as a prerequisite, in terms of the alignment of course outcomes between the two courses?

8. Strengths, Challenges & Conclusions

- **Purpose-** In this final section, programs and disciplines highlight strengths and identify any remaining challenges that were not addressed in other areas of the report. This section requests that disciplines describe long-term future directions for their curriculum.
- **Data-** None.
- **Data Source-** Not applicable.
- **Benchmarks-** Not applicable.
- **Typical Questions-**
  i. What are the major strengths of this discipline?
  ii. What are the major challenges of this discipline?
  iii. What is the future direction of this discipline?

Procedures

A. Supplemental Contract Posting

1. The Office of Curriculum and Student Learning (CSL) sends out postings in March. Contracts are awarded by April 1.
    a. In the event no one applies for the posting by April 1, the academic dean sends a reminder to those who full time faculty who teach within the discipline.
    b. If no full time faculty accepts the posting by April 30, the college will find a suitable alternative way of reviewing the curriculum.

B. Review Workshop

1. The Curriculum Review Committee (CRC) and CSL will hold annual workshops to education academic deans, lead faculty reviewers, and other interested persons on the review process. Tips for data interpretation and expectations for responses will be reviewed.

C. Pre-Review Meeting

1. Academic deans schedule a meeting with the lead reviewer, discipline faculty (full-time and adjuncts), Associate Vice-Chancellor, CRC chair or mentor, and CSL staff.
    a. Agenda for meeting
        1.Overview of review process and purpose
        2.Roles and responsibilities of those involved in the review
        3.Program/discipline history
        4.Draft review report (data/information and review questions)
        5.Key issues for further investigation and report changes
        6.Next steps
2. A meeting summary will be prepared by CSL and sent to those who attended the pre-review meeting.
3. The lead faculty reviewer sends any additional questions or concerns about the review report document to the academic dean and CSL within one week after the pre-review meeting.
4. CSL sends the revised review report to lead faculty reviewer.

D. Review

1. The lead reviewer solicits input from discipline faculty (full time and adjuncts) and synthesizes this input to formulate responses to the review questions. The lead reviewer submits a draft to the dean for review. Based on the dean's feedback, the lead reviewer finalizes the report.
2. The lead reviewer ballots full-time faculty in the discipline for approval until a majority agrees, sends an electronic copy of the final report to the academic dean, and completes the electronic signature form. The academic dean will forward the report and signature page to the CRC chair for further signature. The CRC chair forwards the report and signature page to the Executive Director of CSL.

E. Post-Review Meeting

1. The lead reviewer, academic dean and CSL meet to discuss action strategies as indicated in the final review report. Implementation and measurement of effectiveness will be discussed.

F. Action Strategies

1. The lead reviewer will pull the action strategies indicated in the final review report and complete an action strategy form for each action.
2. The lead reviewer ballots the discipline until majority approval is reached for each action strategy.
3. The lead reviewer electronically sends the final action strategies to the academic dean. The academic dean will forward the action strategies to the Associate Vice Chancellor for approval.

G. Post review follow-up

1. CSL will provide a database to track implementation of action strategies and will follow-up with academic deans regarding implementation according to the timeline indicated on the action strategy form.
2. The academic dean gathers information from appropriate faculty for follow-up on action strategies.

Standard Timeline

Curriculum Review Timeline												
Actions	**J**	**F**	**M**	**A**	**M**	**J**	**J**	**A**	**S**	**O**	**N**	**D**
Posting of supplemental contract												
Report preparation												
Workshop												
Pre-review meeting												
Review												
Post Review Meeting												
Action Strategies												

Review Cycle

Programs/disciplines are reviewed on a five year cycle. To establish this cycle, programs with external accreditation were placed into a cycle year that allows for completion of their review prior to their self-study for external accreditation. Next, programs and disciplines who had recently participated in the prior review process were slated into a later stage in the review cycle. Finally, the remaining programs and disciplines were sorted into the cycle based on their home divisions, so that academic deans will have an even distribution of reviews throughout the review year. The cycle is reviewed and updated annually as needed.

Roles and Responsibilities

Academic Dean

1. Work with faculty in discipline to identify a lead reviewer
2. Supply necessary information to CSL during report preparation
3. Attend review workshop
4. Set-up and attend pre-review meeting
5. Ensure lead reviewer meets with discipline faculty and adjuncts to generate responses to review questions
6. Review faculty responses to review questions, indicate any necessary revisions
7. Confirm that the discipline faculty have been balloted for approval of the final report
8. Sign the final report and send to the CRC Chair
9. Set-up and attend post-review meeting
10. Work with lead reviewer to formulate action strategies
11. Review drafted action strategies, indicate any necessary revisions
12. Confirm that the discipline faculty have been balloted for approval of the final action strategies
13. Sign the final action strategies and send to the Associate Vice Chancellor
14. Work with faculty to implement action strategies
15. Track faculty progress on implementation of action strategies

Lead Reviewer

1. Submit letter of interest to apply for lead faculty reviewer position
2. Supply necessary information to CSL during report preparation
3. Attend review workshop
4. Attend pre-review meeting
5. Meet with discipline faculty and adjuncts to respond to review questions
6. Provide drafted responses to academic dean for feedback, revise as necessary
7. Ballot full-time faculty for approval of the report, record the number of yay, nay and no response
8. Send academic dean electronic copy of final report and signature page
9. Attend post-review meeting
10. Meet with discipline faculty and academic dean to generate action strategies
11. Provide drafted action strategies to academic dean for feedback, revise as necessary
12. Ballot full-time faculty for approval of the action strategies, record the number of yay, nay and no response
13. Send academic dean electronic copy of final action strategies for signature

Discipline Faculty

1. Attend workshop (optional)
2. Attend pre-review meeting
3. Work with the lead reviewer to formulate responses to review questions
4. Vote on final report
5. Work with the lead reviewer to formulate action strategies
6. Vote on final action strategies

Curriculum Review Committee (chair, mentor, or other members)

1. Attend pre-review meeting
2. Provide support to lead reviewers upon request
3. Read final report, submit rubric scores and vote on final reports
4. Collect feedback from faculty regarding process and communicate issues to CSL and academic deans

Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs

1. Attend pre-review meeting
2. Read the final report
3. Read and sign the final action strategies

Office of Curriculum and Student Learning

1. Track progress of reviews through process
2. Post supplemental contracts
3. Prepare review reports
4. Attend pre-review meeting
5. Send meeting summary
6. Revise review report
7. Check-in with academic deans throughout process
8. Respond to questions during review
9. Conduct additional analyses as requested
10. Attend post-review meeting
11. Store final reports and action strategies
12. Track progress of implementation of action strategies