



# **GUIDELINES FOR ACADEMIC PROGRAM REVIEW**

[Revised Spring 2022 by the Standards & Assessment Review Committee]

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# [A] OVERVIEW OF TIMELINE & PROCESS\*

*This timeline is provided as an adaptable recommendation to facilitate process.*

**2 YEARS** Prior to StAR Committee Review

Department and/or Program gathers and analyses assessment data, conducts self-study, and prepares self-study report.

**1 YEAR** Prior to StAR Committee Review

Department and/or Program identifies 5-6 potential external reviewers for Office of Provost/Vice President of Academic Affairs.

**6 MONTHS** Prior to StAR Committee Review

Office of Provost/Vice President of Academic Affairs finalizes external reviewers, schedules and coordinate the site visit.

**3 MONTHS** Prior to StAR Committee Review

Department and/or Program submit self-study report to the external reviewers, and appropriate Dean.

Office of Provost/Vice President of Academic Affairs finalizes site visit schedule.

**2 MONTHS** Prior to StAR Committee Review

External Reviewers conduct site visit, including meeting with the StAR Committee.

**1 MONTH** Prior to StAR Committee Review

External Reviewers submit their report to the Office of Provost/Vice President of Academic Affairs to be disseminated to the Department and/or Program.

Department and/or Program may provide an optional written response to the External Reviewers' report, to be included in the self-study package of materials.

**10 DAYS** Prior to StAR Committee Review

Department and/or Program submits self-study package of materials to the StAR Committee to be disseminated to members for review.

**StAR COMMITTEE REVIEW**



StAR Committee meets to discuss self-study package of materials.

Department and/or Program meets with StAR Committee to discuss the self-study process, and outcomes. Highlighting three action items.

StAR Committee votes to approve, or accept with revisions. Results of vote are shared with the Graduate Council and Undergraduate Curriculum Forum for a final vote to certify the process.

StAR Committee notifies Department and/or Program of results of vote, and any recommendations.

**APPROVED**

Department and/or Program meets with administration to discuss the self-study process, outcomes, and to develop a plan for program improvement which includes three action items.

Three action items are shared with the StAR Committee.

Department and/or Program continues work in preparation for next self-study cycle.

**ACCEPTED WITH REVISIONS**

Department and/or Program meets with administration to discuss the self-study process, outcomes, and to develop an action plan to address conditions, and recommendations for improvement.

Department and/or Program prepares an interim report that addresses recommendations which is due 1-2 years from the original StAR Committee review date. The interim report will be evaluated in accordance with the same process outlined for initial reports.

If the interim report is not approved, another interim report must be written with a new action plan and timeline established for submission of that report.

\* Academic programs that receive external accreditation are exempt from this process, and submit their external accreditation report to the StAR Committee in lieu of a self-study package of materials, as outlined in this document.

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# **[B] ACADEMIC PROGRAM REVIEW**

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## **[B1] RATIONALE FOR ACADEMIC PROGRAM REVIEW**

To promote academic excellence and the continuous improvement of academic program quality, Southern Connecticut State University reviews all academic programs that are not externally accredited on a 7-year cycle.

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## **[B2] RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO SUPPORT ACADEMIC PROGRAM REVIEW**

Southern Connecticut State University is committed to academic excellence and student success. Academic program review is an important means of assessing the quality and continuous improvement of programs. The university recognizes that resources are necessary for the completion of meaningful academic program reviews. These resources include:

- Reassigned time for the person who coordinates the academic program's self-study
- Reassigned time for the StAR Committee Co-Chairs
- Funding for external reviewer(s)
- Administrative coordination of logistics (e.g., scheduling and notification to departments regarding reviews, travel plans for external reviewer)

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## **[B3] STANDARDS & ASSESSMENT REVIEW (StAR) COMMITTEE**

The committee charged with the academic program review process is the Standards and Assessment Review (StAR) Committee. The StAR Committee is a joint committee of the Graduate Council and Undergraduate Curriculum Forum . The membership of the StAR Committee should consist of a minimum of 10-14 members, with efforts to have representation from each academic school and equal representation from the Graduate Council and Undergraduate Curriculum Forum. Efforts should be made to ensure continuity on the committee and to select members with interest and experience with assessment, program evaluation, and/or accreditation.

Due to the responsibilities of the StAR Committee Co-Chairs, as found in the StAR Committee by-laws, there shall be one credit of reassigned time per semester for each Co-Chair. There will be two Co-Chairs for the StAR Committee. One Co-Chair representing Graduate Council, and one Co-Chair representing the Undergraduate Curriculum Forum, voted on by the entire StAR Committee.

The purposes of this committee are to:

- Develop and/or enhance the culture of self-assessment and reflective practices within academic units, encouraging them to continuously evaluate the quality of their programs in relation to current trends and best practices within their disciplines, and
- Produce documentation for university-wide external accreditation bodies that reflect this review process.

The StAR Committee does not judge academic program viability. The academic program review process is designed to help departments and/or programs determine strengths and areas for improvement that may contribute to the overall quality of student learning within each academic program. Paths to submission for each program are determined by multiple factors, including existing accreditation schedules and the organizational structure within each unit (e.g. their number of certificates, concentrations, majors, and minors).

The goal of the StAR Committee is to support and streamline continuous improvement efforts, and foster a university-wide culture of assessment.

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## **[B4] ACADEMIC PROGRAMS SCHEDULED FOR REVIEW**

The following academic programs are subject to review:

- Undergraduate academic programs without external accreditation based in academic departments for which degrees or certificates are granted;
- Graduate programs without external accreditation, including certifications
- Other programs without external accreditation, including:
  - Minors housed in academic departments;
  - Honors College program;
  - General Education programs;
  - Cross-disciplinary, interdisciplinary, or multidisciplinary programs.

Program reviews should not take place for new programs until the program has been in existence for five years or has at least two years of graduates coming out of the program.

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## **[B5] ACADEMIC PROGRAMS REVIEW EXTENSION POLICY**

Under extenuating circumstances, the StAR Committee will consider requests from the college/school/department/program, with prior consultation with the respective Dean, and Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs, to postpone program reviews. Such requests must be submitted in writing at least two semesters prior to the semester of review on the StAR calendar.

The ultimate decision to approve or deny an extension for an academic program review rests with the StAR Committee.

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## [B6] OVERVIEW OF ACADEMIC PROGRAM REVIEW PROCESS, ROLES, AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The centerpiece of the academic program review process is a self-study report completed by the department(s) responsible for each academic program. The academic program review process occurs in one of the following ways:

- **Departments with Full External Accreditation** – Departments that receive external accreditation for all programs in the department within the current 7-year cycle will submit that external accreditation self-study report (and supporting documents) to the StAR Committee to be archived, satisfying the university’s academic program review requirements.
- **Departments with Partial External Accreditation** – Departments with a combination of accredited and non-accredited programs will develop a self-study, based on these guidelines, for programs that are not externally accredited. Documentation of external accreditation should be provided for the programs within the department that are externally accredited.
- **Departments without External Accreditation** – Departments whose programs do not receive any external accreditation will develop a self-study report for their academic undergraduate and graduate programs, based on these guidelines.

Academic program reviews should include an overview of the program’s mission and activities, assessment of student learning outcomes and other indicators of quality and productivity, and changes in the program(s) that result from this assessment.

Decisions made by the StAR Committee regarding an academic program review are recommendations only. The StAR Committee simply evaluates whether departments have established an assessment process for their program and have engaged in meaningful and candid self-reflection about their programs’ quality. During the self-study process, the department engages in a thoughtful and in-depth self-evaluation of its programs on a common set of questions discussed later in this document. The self-study package of materials is forwarded to the appropriate Dean, the StAR Committee, Graduate Council , Undergraduate Curriculum Forum, and Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs.

The academic program review process also meets expectations of the New England Commission of Higher Education (NECHE), our regional accreditation body, the Board of Regents of the Connecticut State Colleges and Universities System, and the Connecticut General Assembly. To that end, the necessary goals of the self-study report should be to:

- Identify learning outcomes, and
- Use data collected in systematic ways through appropriate instruments that track student performance to make improvements to programs and guide decision-making.

Department-level and program-level assessment is intended to benefit academic programs in multiple ways by helping them to:

- Identify potential strengths and weaknesses of their programs,
- Modify pedagogical practices to enhance student learning,
- Petition for necessary support from Deans and Provost, and
- Develop plans for ongoing evaluation and improvement.

The University has departments and academic programs of all kinds—fine arts, applied sciences, social sciences, humanities, interdisciplinary minors, and programs that emphasize clinics and fieldwork. The self-study process is adaptable to each type of program. In addition to data supplied by the University, departments are encouraged to gather data unique to their needs and include this data and analysis in their self-study report.

As part of the program assessment process, examiners external to the University review the self-study report and complete a site visit. For departments whose programs are fully accredited by external accrediting bodies, the report of the accrediting agency fulfills this requirement and is submitted to satisfy the internal review process. For departments whose programs do not have external accreditation, an external reviewer is required. For departments with some externally accredited programs and some programs without external accreditation, the self-study report will only focus on the programs in the department without external accreditation. An external reviewer will complete a site visit to review those particular programs without external accreditation. (See Appendix C for procedures regarding external reviewers).

For departments with programs that do not have external accreditation, the StAR Committee reviews each of these undergraduate and graduate programs based upon the self-study report and the report from the external reviewer and makes a recommendation to the Undergraduate Curriculum Forum and Graduate Council regarding the status of the programs. The Undergraduate Curriculum Forum and Graduate Council communicate their recommendations to the department, appropriate Dean, and Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs.

Following this recommendation, the department will meet with the appropriate Dean to collaboratively develop a plan to address recommendations from the external reviewers, and other outcomes of this process.

Specific procedures for the review process are described later in this document. Procedures and standards for the review of undergraduate and graduate academic programs are implemented and monitored by the StAR Committee of the Undergraduate Curriculum Forum and Graduate Council, with the approval of the full Undergraduate Curriculum Forum and the full Graduate Council.



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# [C] CONTENTS OF SELF-STUDY PACKAGE OF MATERIALS

All reports and accompanying documents must be submitted electronically to the StAR Committee, in PDF format. Please contact the StAR Committee Co-Chairs for specific instructions on digital submission. Please paginate the document for ease of reference.

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## [C1] SELF-STUDY PACKAGE OF MATERIALS REQUIREMENTS

### **Requirements for Departments and/or Programs with Full External Accreditation**

The most recent accreditation site visit report and the self-study report used for that accreditation will serve as the documentation needed for the internal academic program review process. Fully accredited departments are not required to gather data beyond that expected or required for their external accrediting agency, and therefore are exempt from submitting an additional self-study report to the StAR Committee. Their accreditation self-study report will satisfy these departments' internal StAR Committee review requirements.

### **Requirements for Departments and/or Programs without External Accreditation of One or More Programs**

The self-study package of materials shall include:

- **Identification Page** – Name of department and/or program, school, chairperson, coordinator(s), as well as academic program(s) under review.
- **Brief Summary** – Provide a brief summary of how the self-study was conducted, who was responsible, etc.
- **Self-Study Report** – The self-study should be guided by the following questions:
  - Who are you and what do you do?
  - What are your goals and how do you know you are achieving them?
  - How do you use data to improve student performance and guide decision-making?
- **Appendices**
- **External Reviewer's Report** – Departments must supply the Office of the Provost/Vice President of Academic Affairs with the names of five to six potential external reviewers. (See Appendix C for more information)
- **Response to External Reviewer's Report** – *Optional* – A one-page response to/reflection on the external reviewer's report may be included in the self-study package of materials submitted to the StAR Committee.

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## [C2] SELF-STUDY QUESTIONS WITH DETAILED DESCRIPTIONS

These questions are intended to be guidelines, flexible and adaptable to the needs of each academic program under review. Departments are not required to address every suggestion, except those that are required items (designated with \*) but should include any additional items that are relevant to the academic program review process.

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### QUESTION 1: Who are you and what do you do?

[Approximately 5-7 pages, excluding appendices]

Departments may consider the following examples to include in the self-study report, in addition to the required items \* identified below. Specific details about curriculum and learning outcomes are discussed in the Question 2, so reports should only discuss curriculum-related issues here at the macro-level and save the micro-level examples for Question 2.

- **Mission**
  - Provide a statement of the department and/or programs' mission or goals as applicable.\*
  - Provide specific information regarding degrees, tracks, certificates and concentrations offered by your department and/or program.\* [Explain how these complement each other and intersect, where applicable.]
- **Demographics**
  - List the names, degrees, licenses, certifications and tenure status of all current full-time faculty in the department and/or program. \*
  - Mention special responsibilities undertaken by faculty such as coordinator or director.\* [This can be an appendix.]
  - List adjunct faculty and degrees, licenses, and certifications for the past three years. \* [This can be in an appendix.]
  - Include full-time faculty CV's as an appendix.\* [Required for graduate faculty, strongly recommended for undergraduate faculty.]
  - Discuss student demographics for the past five years.\* [Data provided by the Office of Institutional Research should go in the appendix, but can be discussed here. Departments and/or programs may wish to provide additional demographic information regarding students within their programs as available.]
- **Resources**
  - Provide a description of classrooms, technology, library support, etc. that are used for teaching and learning for all programs.
  - Identify faculty/student ratios for programs offered.
  - Include other external resources necessary to meet program outcomes including community resources, such as clinical units, etc.

- Describe admission, orientation and advising process specific to each program.
- Include overview of faculty Creative Activity, Professional Engagement, University and Community Service, and Outreach
- Provide examples of how department / program supports student involvement in creative activity, community service, and outreach appropriate to the mission of the department/program. Suggestions include, but are not limited to:
  - Ways in which students are involved in research, scholarly and creative projects.
  - Ways in which students engage in community service and professional collaboration (e.g. major-specific clubs, professional organizations, etc.).
  - Activities which foster an intellectual environment involving students (e.g. brown bag lunches, speakers, etc.).
  - Examples of students' theses or special projects.
  - Examples of types of student projects completed, particularly indicating those that were published and those that were collaborative efforts of students and faculty (e.g. joint presentations, publications, exhibits, conference attendance / presentations, etc.).
  - Alliances, partnerships, collaborations with community (could include information about service learning projects, internships, etc.).

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**QUESTION 2: What are your goals and objectives for student learning and how do you know you are achieving them?**

[10 page maximum, excluding appendices]

Departments and/or programs may consider the following examples to include in the self-study report, as appropriate, in addition to the required items\* identified below.

- What are your goals for student learning? What are your learning outcomes or objectives (that is, what skills, knowledge, and attitudes do you want students to acquire due to having gone through your program)?\*
  - How do the courses in your program link together?\* Are there gaps in coverage of learning outcomes?\*
  - Provide a curriculum map, program of study document, summary of program requirements or matrix demonstrating how the curriculum introduces and reinforces the skills, knowledge, and attitudes that students are expected to master.\*
- Discuss innovations, changes, improvements in your curriculum or curriculum mapping of skills, knowledge, and/or attitudes.
- Provide samples of course syllabi. See Appendix F3 for minimum elements of a syllabus.

- Describe how undergraduate programs support the Liberal Education Program (LEP).
  - Describe how LEP courses are assessed as part of your programs and how they are embedded in the LEP.\*
  - If your department and/or program offers a significant number of LEP classes to students outside of your programs, you are encouraged to highlight this particular strength of your department but are not required to do so.
- What, if any, professional standards and expected outcomes are used to guide program curricula? Note these and provide copies as an appendix.
- What are the graduation requirements? Describe how your department and/or program consistently and equitably applies these in the awarding of degrees? If exceptions occur, describe type, frequency, and rationale.
- How do you assess student learning and performance? Discuss strategies and methods for assessing student learning and/or performance.\* What methods are you using, or planning to use, to determine whether students are making satisfactory progress?\* How do you know your goals for student learning are achieved?\* What direct and indirect methods do you use?\*
  - Examples of direct evidence of student learning may include:
    - Locally developed tests administered by program or by the university
    - Standardized tests
    - Pre- and post-tests
    - Essay tests scored across courses
    - Internally or externally juried review of student projects, internships
    - Professional certification and performance on national licensure examinations
    - Collections of student work (e.g., portfolios)
    - Course-embedded assessment
  - Examples of indirect evidence of student learning may include:
    - Alumni and employer surveys
    - Student surveys, focus groups
    - Exit interviews with graduates
    - Participation rates in internships, study abroad, other enrichment programs
    - Graduate follow-up studies

- Percentage of students who go on to graduate school
- Admission rates to selective academic or professional programs following program completion
- Student performance in disciplinary and professional competitions
- Retention and transfer studies; job placement statistics

Some programs might be undergoing extensive curricular innovations; therefore, the majority of evidence for student learning may fall under “indirect evidence.” In this case, the StAR Committee would require a detailed plan for collecting direct evidence in the next assessment cycle to be included along with any relevant indirect evidence.

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**QUESTION 3: How are you using data to improve student performance and guide decision-making?**

[5 page maximum, excluding appendices]

Upon request, the Office of Assessment & Planning (OA&P) and the Office of Institutional Research (OIR) will supply data to the academic programs under review. However, departments may collect data of their own or ask OA&P to conduct custom surveys for them.

- Provide a description of the process your department and/or program uses for making decisions based on data.\*
  - How are data analyzed and evaluated?\*
  - Who is involved in decision-making processes involving various programs?\*
  - Is there a defined organizational structure for decision-making?\*
  - Include results of data collected (in appendix as appropriate).
  - Briefly discuss areas of strength and areas for growth.
  - Discuss how your department has used the data collected to benefit your program.
- Use data discussed in Question 2 and elsewhere to describe how data are used to improve student performance and how data are used to inform departmental and/or programmatic discussions and/or initiate changes to your program(s).\* Discussions would typically include the following:
  - Identify patterns within the data that signify barriers and opportunities that impact achieving program goals, objectives and student outcomes.
  - Given the nature of your programs, do you have the appropriate number of degree programs, concentrations, or tracks?
  - Are students able to complete your programs in a timely fashion? Why or why not?
  - What steps are or could be taken by the department to improve the number of students who complete their programs?

- Reflecting back on Question 1, what is your vision for academic program improvement?\*  
Topics typically include:
  - A description of the adequacy and condition of space, technology (e.g. computers, access to high tech classrooms) and unique program components (e.g. practica/ internships).
  - Clear descriptions of the circumstances and procedures for the use of such resources readily available to students who require them.
  - Additional resources crucial to achieving long and short-term goals.
  - Support needed by department to fulfill vision for program(s).
  - Opportunities for faculty development to address any identified areas of need.

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## [D] PROCEDURES FOR ACADEMIC PROGRAM REVIEW

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### [D1] PROCEDURAL STEPS

Each academic program will be evaluated by the StAR Committee once every seven years on a rotating schedule presented in writing by the Co-Chairs of the StAR Committee. Each year, the StAR Committee Co-Chairs will disseminate this schedule to deans, department chairpersons, graduate program coordinators/directors, and the Office of Provost/Vice President of Academic Affairs.

The department and/or program to be evaluated will prepare the written self-study report of the academic program(s) that addresses each of the three questions listed under [B2] *Self-Study Questions with Detailed Descriptions*. Representatives of academic programs up for review will contact the Office of Assessment & Planning (OA&P) at least four semesters prior to the review year to discuss customizing and conducting surveys of department faculty, current students, and alumni/ae. Surveys go out in February for all reports that will be due the following academic year, therefore the OA&P consults with departments to customize surveys late in the fall semester or early in the spring semester prior to the academic year in which their reports are due.

Representatives of the program(s) under review identify 5-6 potential external reviewers and submit their names to the Office of Provost/Vice President of Academic Affairs at least one year before their visit.

The coordinator(s) of the self-study and academic program review will provide the self-study report to external reviewer(s) (see Appendix F2 for information on selection of external reviewers) at least one month in advance of the external reviewer's site visit. While not required, a one-page response to/ reflection on the external reviewer's report may be included in the self-study package of materials submitted to the StAR Committee.

The coordinator(s) of the self-study and academic program review will submit the self-study package of materials to the StAR Committee at least 10-days prior to the program review meeting with the StAR Committee.

The StAR Committee will evaluate academic programs under review based on the provided self-study package of materials.

Representatives of the academic program(s) under review will meet with the StAR Committee to discuss and respond to questions about the self-study report, and package of materials.

Representatives should expect to spend approximately 60-minutes with the members of the StAR Committee. StAR Committee Co-Chairs are charged with conducting the meeting and are responsible for moving the agenda. At the discretion of the Co-Chairs, or StAR Committee members, it may be necessary to limit questions and responses so that a thorough academic program review can be completed within the scheduled time.

Representatives are encouraged to prepare a brief presentation on the self-study process, and will have the opportunity to respond to questions raised by StAR Committee members about the self-study report and the academic programs under review. It is strongly recommended that the chairperson and/or writer(s) of the self-study report be present during the review. In general, academic programs send three to four representatives, but more may attend as necessary based on the size of the academic program.

The self-study report is the focus of the StAR Committee's evaluation and is considered a stand-alone document. Therefore, it is not expected that substantial new information will be presented to the StAR Committee at the time of the representatives' appearance.

Following this meeting, the StAR Committee will go into closed executive session to deliberate before making a recommendation of "full approval" or "accepted with revisions". If a quorum is met, a simple majority carries the vote. Upon the request of any member, voting shall be by secret ballot.

**Full Approval** – This recommendation and its acceptance by a majority vote of the Graduate Council and/or Undergraduate Curriculum Forum signal that the department's program(s) under review will continue to receive the University's support and to appear in the subsequent undergraduate and graduate catalogs. No further action is needed until the next scheduled review comes due in seven years; however, data should continue to be collected according to the assessment plans set forth in the self-study report.

**Accepted with Revisions** – This recommendation and its acceptance by a majority vote of the Graduate Council and/or Undergraduate Curriculum Forum indicate that the report has identified areas in need of improvement significant enough to warrant an interim report. The interim report shall address the conditions cited in the StAR Committee's summary report and be due 1-2 years from the published due date for the initial report in the "Seven-Year Department Review Schedule." At any point during this 1-2 year period, the StAR Committee shall consult with the affected department (if asked to do so by the department), the Associate Vice President for Academic

Affairs, and the appropriate Dean(s). The interim report addressing the cited conditions with a clear action plan and timeline will be evaluated by the StAR Committee in accordance with the same process outlined above for initial reports.

If the interim report does not receive “full approval” and instead is “accepted with revisions,” another interim report must be written by the department and/or program and a new action plan and timeline will be established for submission of that report. The Office of Provost/Vice President of Academic Affairs and the appropriate Dean(s) will be notified. Departments whose interim reports receive full approval from the Graduate Council and Undergraduate Curriculum Forum will next be evaluated by the StAR Committee seven years from the date that they submitted their initial (full) report.

Within one week after having completed its evaluation, the StAR Committee will submit a summary report to the academic program under review, indicating its upcoming recommendation to the full Graduate Council and the Undergraduate Curriculum Forum. If necessary, the StAR Committee will suggest areas needing improvement, along with any additional recommendations.

Any concerns of the StAR Committee shall be addressed at least one week prior to the vote of the entire Graduate Council and Undergraduate Curriculum Forum (see schedule for dates). If, in the opinion of the StAR Committee, those concerns have/have not been addressed satisfactorily, the StAR Committee may, at its discretion, modify its original evaluation and recommendation to the Graduate Council and Undergraduate Curriculum Forum.

At the meetings of the Graduate Council and Undergraduate Curriculum Forum immediately following the program representatives’ meeting with the StAR Committee, the Co-Chairs of the StAR Committee will report the recommendation of the StAR Committee to the Graduate Council and Undergraduate Curriculum Forum. Recommendations concerning programs with only undergraduate programs will only be reported to the Undergraduate Curriculum Forum for a vote; recommendations regarding departments with only graduate programs will only be reported to the Graduate Council for a vote. Possible recommendations include full approval or accepted with revisions. The factors leading to the StAR Committee’s recommendation shall already have been communicated by the Co-Chairs of the StAR Committee to the respective representatives of the academic programs under review. The Chair of the Graduate Council and Undergraduate Curriculum Forum will call for votes regarding the StAR Committee’s recommendations.

By a majority vote, the Graduate Council and Undergraduate Curriculum Forum will accept, reject, or table the recommendation of the StAR Committee. If one or both of the two bodies (Graduate Council and Undergraduate Curriculum Forum) votes to accept the recommendation the recommendation stands. Only if both bodies reject the recommendation, will the recommendation be overruled. Recommendations of the Graduate Council and Undergraduate Curriculum Forum are forwarded to the Provost and Academic Vice President for review and approval. The minutes of the Graduate Council and Undergraduate Curriculum Forum meetings shall serve as a written record of the votes of the Graduate Council and Undergraduate Curriculum Forum.



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## [D2] PROCEDURES FOR NON-COMPLIANCE

If an academic program does not submit the required written report – whether the initial self-study report, revision, or interim report – according to the timeline, the StAR Committee will so advise the Graduate Council and Undergraduate Curriculum Forum. The Co-Chairs of the StAR Committee will provide written notification to the Office of Provost/Vice President of Academic Affairs, appropriate Dean(s), chairperson of the department, program coordinator(s)/director(s), and assessment coordinator(s) to request a meeting to outline a timeline and target dates for and aid in the successful completion of the review process.

Following that meeting, the Dean(s) and the Office of Provost/Vice President of Academic Affairs will be requested to report their actions regarding the affected academic programs to the full Undergraduate Curriculum Forum and Graduate Council within four academic weeks.

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## [D3] ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

### **Role of the StAR Committee in the Academic Program Review Process**

The StAR Committee defines and oversees the academic program review process, ensuring the promotion of academic excellence and the continuous improvement of academic program quality.

### **Role of the Department and/or Program in the Academic Program Review Process**

Establish an assessment committee that includes at least one tenured faculty member (except in cases where the department has no tenured faculty) and is chaired by the assessment coordinator. The StAR Committee strongly recommends that the assessment coordinator be a tenured faculty member in order to have the historical knowledge necessary for writing the self-study report and the standing within the department to encourage full participation in the assessment process.

Meet with the Office of Assessment and Planning (OA&P) at least 4 semesters prior to submitting the self-study report to establish or update direct measures, learning outcomes, and surveys. The OA&P can also collect other data if given adequate time in which to do so.

Create/update a curriculum map.

Receive and analyze data from the OA&P and the Office of Institutional Research (OIR).

Submit names of potential external reviewers to the Provost's office two semesters before the self-study report is due.

Write and submit the self-study report.

Provide the self-study report to external reviewer.

Host the external reviewer's visit and receive the reviewer's report.

Collect and communicate any additional data requested by the external reviewer prior to the submission of their final report.

At its discretion, write a one-page response to/reflection on the external reviewer's report and include it in self-study package of materials.

Meet with StAR Committee to discuss the self-study.

Meet with the appropriate Dean(s) and Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs to establish a plan to address support for program improvement.

### **Role of the Office of the Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs in the Academic Program Review Process**

In the self-assessment process, departments identify strengths and areas needing improvement, needed resources, and a vision for the future of their program(s). The StAR Committee makes recommendations for approval to Graduate Council and Undergraduate Curriculum Forum, but neither body controls resources for program improvement. The Office of the Provost/Vice President of Academic Affairs, however, is in the position to help departments resolve self-identified issues and plans for improvement. The Office of the Provost/Vice President of Academic Affairs is also in a unique position to gain broader overview across departments and schools, as well as to identify common areas of concern.

Thus, the University administration will provide timely and substantive written responses to departments and/or programs that have completed academic program reviews. These responses should advance action plans for the program(s) and be reflected in the University strategic plan.

The StAR Committee recommends that the written response from the Office of the Provost/Vice President of Academic Affairs be sent to the department chairperson and assessment coordinator. (See Appendix B for the administrative follow-up template.)

### **Role of the Office of Assessment and Planning in the Academic Program Review Process**

The Office of Assessment & Planning (OA&P) provides assistance in the identification and measurement (direct and indirect) of student outcomes; data from student, faculty, and alumni surveys; and other information that the department may wish to include in the appendices and refer to in the narrative.

As an integral part of academic department review, departments administer surveys to current students, alumni, and faculty. The OA&P configures the surveys, prints paper surveys, provides departments with a link to online surveys, and generates reports. The reports are included as an appendix of the self-study report and the findings are discussed in the narrative.

Surveys include:

**Alumni Survey** – The alumni survey is conducted once a year, typically in March. Departments participate in the alumni survey at least a year prior to working on the self-study. In order for the Office of Assessment and Planning (OA&P) to configure and launch the online alumni survey, departments need to send the OA&P each program's learner outcomes. Departments looking to revise or refine their learner outcomes may consult with the OA&P. On behalf of the departments, the OA&P obtains email addresses of alumni from the Alumni Affairs Office. An invitation email to alumni that asks them to complete the survey will be sent by the OA&P. To promote response rate, departments are to send follow-up reminder email a few weeks later.

**Student Surveys** – While standardized, departments should let the OA&P know if they would like to customize the background questions.

**Faculty Survey** – The faculty survey is a standard, online survey; the OA&P will provide a link to this survey, which departments will then forward to all the faculty in the department. The faculty survey is the same for both undergraduate and graduate faculty.

### **Role of the Office of Institutional Research in the Academic Program Review Process**

The Office of Institutional Research (OIR) provides access to published documents and institutional data (e.g., university mission/ vision/ strategic plan; data re: department demographics such as number of majors, number of degrees awarded, course enrollments).

Data provided by OIR comes from the course and student census files, created at the end of the 3rd week of the fall and spring semesters. The Demographic report includes counts of majors broken down by gender, ethnicity, and enrollment status. In addition, the report provides overall term GPA, the number of students who self-identified themselves to the Disability Resource Center as needing assistance, and the number of degrees conferred.

The Graduation and Persistence report tracks first-time, full-time freshmen and full-time transfer students over a ten-year period and calculates their one-year retention rate, four-year graduation rate, and six year-graduation rate. These rates are further broken down by whether students stayed in their original major or changed to a different major.

The Summary by Course Type report breaks down the program's section data into three categories: Online, Independent Study/Internship/Thesis, and Regular (all the other section types are aggregated in this category).

The Summary by Course report breaks down the program's section data by individual course.

The Course Information Report (CIS, also known as the Student Opinion Survey Analysis) analyzes by year the last five years of available student opinion data.

### **Role of the External Reviewers in the Academic Program Review Process**

Identified by the academic program under review, and coordinated through the Office of the Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs, external reviewers will:

Conduct a site visit, including:

- A meeting with the department and/or program, and identified stakeholders
- A meeting with the StAR Committee
- An Exit meeting with administrative personnel (including appropriate Dean(s) – Members of the department, the departmental assessment coordinator, the relevant Dean, and representatives from Academic Affairs, the StAR Committee, and the Office of the Provost/Vice President of Academic Affairs are invited to attend the exitmeeting.

- Write an external reviewers' report – A subsequent written joint report that documents all findings, including:
  - Overview of, and response to self-study report and site visit
  - Areas of achievement and success
  - Areas of concern and improvement
  - At least three recommendations for improvement
  - Anything else deemed necessary to discuss by external reviewers

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## **[E] AMENDMENTS TO GUIDELINES**

Any changes to this document will be made following the policies and procedures of the Graduate Council and Undergraduate Curriculum Forum.



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## [F] APPENDICES

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[F1] Template for Continued Quality Improvement

# Template for Continued Quality Improvement

This document will be utilized for the meeting between the Provost, Dean, Chair, and Assessment Coordinator once the StAR Committee and UCF or the Graduate Council has completed a department review. Based on the finding, the areas for improvement will be listed below. An annual update of this should be included in the Department's Annual Report.

Department Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Action Item: 1.

<b>Current Resources (what can be accomplished with current resources)</b>	<b>Additional Resources needed:</b>	<b>Timeline</b> - approx. date	<b>Communication Plan</b> who is involved; how often	<b>Follow up</b>	<b>Place on Hold</b> -reason	<b>Responsibilities</b> – who will do it?

Action Item: 2.

<b>Current Resources (what can be accomplished with current resources)</b>	<b>Additional Resources needed:</b>	<b>Timeline</b> - approx. date	<b>Communication Plan</b> who is involved; how often	<b>Follow up</b>	<b>Place on Hold</b> -reason	<b>Responsibilities</b> – who will do it?

Action Item: 3.

<b>Current Resources (what can be accomplished with current resources)</b>	<b>Additional Resources needed:</b>	<b>Timeline - approx. date</b>	<b>Communication Plan who is involved; how often</b>	<b>Follow up</b>	<b>Place on Hold -reason</b>	<b>Responsibilities – who will do it?</b>

\_\_\_\_\_

Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs Date

\_\_\_\_\_

Dean Date

\_\_\_\_\_

Chairperson of Department Date



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## [F] APPENDICES

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### [F2] Selection of External Reviewers



## **Selection of external reviewer(s).**

The department/program will submit the names of at least 5-6 potential external reviewers to the Office of the Provost/Vice President of Academic Affairs.

Any relationship between a potential reviewer and a department member must be clearly stated.

The Office of the Provost/Vice President of Academic Affairs will contact nominees to negotiate contract terms, including an honorarium and expenses, determine availability, and will make the ultimate selection of one or two reviewer(s) from the approved list.

Examiners will conduct a site visit, tour all relevant facilities, and meet with constituencies associated with the department/program. A site visit will also include:

- Meeting with the StAR Committee
- Exit meeting with administrative personnel (including Dean). Members of the department, the departmental assessment coordinator, the relevant Dean, and representatives from Academic Affairs, the StAR Committee, and the Office of the Provost/Vice President of Academic Affairs are invited to attend the exit meeting.

A subsequent written joint report will document all findings. Departments are responsible for collecting and communicating any additional data requested by the external examiner prior to the submission of the final report.

Sources of external perspectives include feedback from a variety of constituencies, which include, but are not restricted to:

- Members of other departments within the institution
- Qualified representatives of other universities
- Members of accrediting agencies and other professional associations
- Advisory boards
- Relevant government agencies
- Benchmarking data on regional or national performance in applicable areas
- Survey data from alumni, employers, and other external constituencies



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## [F] APPENDICES

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### [F3] Minimum Elements of a Syllabus

## Minimum Elements of a Syllabus

No.	Element	Notes
1	Instructor's name, contact information	Office hours must be convenient for students
2	Course number and title	Must match course catalog or course approval form
3	Prerequisite requirements	May include courses, experiences, skills, permission of instructor or chair
4	Course description	Must match course catalog or course approval form
5	Course objectives / learner outcomes	Stated in terms of what students will know and/or be able to do by the end of the class
6	Programmatic objectives/learner outcomes	Stated in terms of what students will know and/or be able to do by the end of the program
7	Modes of instruction	May include lecture, discussion, laboratory instruction, workshops, field work
8	Course requirements	May include required text(s), attendance and class participation policies, reading and writing assignments (i.e. papers, projects, reports, lab work, technological competencies) and any other expectations. Requirements must be clearly related to the objectives/learner outcomes described in element 5.
9	Evaluation/methods of assessment	Frequency and types of examinations, written work, and/or other assessment instruments that will be the basis for the final course grade. Weight assigned to each element.
10	Accommodation Statement	The Disability Resources Office provides the following sample, while encouraging instructors and departments to modify it as necessary: "Southern Connecticut State University provides reasonable accommodations in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, for students with documented disabilities on an individualized basis. If you are a student with a documented disability, the University's Disability Resource Center (DRC) can work with you to determine appropriate accommodations. Before you receive accommodations in this class, you will need to make an appointment with the Disability Resource Center located at EN C-105A. To discuss your approved accommodations with me or other concerns, such as medical emergencies or arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment to meet as soon as possible."

11	Sexual Misconduct Statement	A statement such as: "Southern Connecticut State University is highly committed to providing you with an educational experience that is academically and socially enriching. In line with this mission, we enforce Title IX of the Education
		Amendment of 1972, which prohibits acts of sexual misconduct (sexual harassment, sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence and stalking) at educational institutions. To report sexual misconduct students should contact University Police at (203) 392-5375 or 911, and/or Pamela Lassiter, Office of Diversity and Equity, at (203) 392-5491 and/or Christopher Piscitelli, Office of Student Misconduct, at (203) 392-7220. For advocacy and further information including your Title IX rights and reporting procedures visit the Sexual Assault Resource Team (S.A.R.T.) website at <a href="http://www.southernct.edu/SART/">www.southernct.edu/SART/</a> . Please contact Catherine Christy, Women's Center and S.A.R.T. Coordinator, at (203) 392-6946 for assistance or with any questions regarding support and advocacy."
12	Academic Honesty Statement	A statement that addresses the instructor's/department's policy regarding plagiarism, cheating on examinations, etc. and the consequences these actions will entail.



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## [F] APPENDICES

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[F4] Template (Sample) to Represent Academic Program Data



**Question 2. What are your goals and how do you know you are achieving them?**

**Student Learning Outcomes**

Student Outcomes	Methods of Measurement	Where in the Department's Programs the Outcome is Assessed

**Question 3. How do you use data to improve student performance and guided decision-making?**

**Graduation Data**

Undergraduate Program Completion Data	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Students graduating with a Traditional Bachelor's degree			
Students graduating with an Accelerated Bachelor's Degree			
Students graduating with other Degrees			
Students completing post-Bachelor's degree certificates			

Graduate Program Completion Data	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Students graduating with a Master's degree			
Students graduating with a 6 <sup>th</sup> Year degree			
Students graduating with an Ed.D. degree			
Students completing post-degree certificates			

**Action Plan for Improvement**

Actions the department will take to improve itself	Timeframe for this action