Eastern Washington University
Program Review Handbook
Program Review Overview

What is Program Review?
Program review is a formal process for evaluating and enhancing the quality and currency of Eastern Washington University’s (EWU’s) academic programs. By having programs engage in in-depth self-study, undergo external review, and create a program development plan, the process is designed to foster academic excellence in the context of EWU's mission as a regional comprehensive university.

The process affords departments the opportunity to conduct a candid appraisal of their programs, develop a seven-year plan to build on their programs’ strengths and address weaknesses, and request resources. Because it places particular emphasis on educational effectiveness, critical evaluation of student learning evidence is a central component.

Program review not only entails self-study; it is also a peer review process. EWU faculty outside the department, namely, those who serve on the university’s Program Review Committee (PRC), and an external reviewer from the discipline at another institution provide the PRC with the program’s commendations and recommendations. Reflecting the university’s commitment to shared governance and transparency, the PRC shares the external reviewer’s and its own commendations and recommendations with the department chair, dean, Faculty Organization, and provost.

To support programs to discover, identify, and report on their shortcomings, which is necessary for the process to be valuable and have integrity, the EWU administration will not use program review or any information gleaned from it to cut programs or reduce resources. Rather, it will only use the information to support programs to accomplish their aims.

Why Does EWU Have a Program Review Process?
EWU's institutional accrediting body, the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU), requires that all academic programs be reviewed on a regular basis. The Faculty Organization established the Program Review Committee to design and oversee the process. The PRC develops the guidelines, facilitates the process, and conducts a review after the self-study report and external review report have been submitted.

Program review provides a means for EWU to be accountable to our students, the institutions in NWCCU’s region, and the public we serve. It does this by demonstrating our commitment to rigorous self-assessment, continual improvement, and ongoing planning efforts in order to ensure that we deliver high-quality academic programs.

What is the Program Review Process?
The PRC will review all of a department’s programs simultaneously every seven years. The committee will inform department chairs one year in advance and invite program faculty to participate in a PRC orientation workshop at the start of the process’s first fall quarter.

The PRC chair, department chair, and if necessary, college dean will come to consensus on how many “programs” and “academic disciplines” a department houses. Departments will
submit one self-study report for each “program” and engage one external reviewer for each “discipline.”

**Programs Accredited Exclusively by NWCCU.** Programs that are exclusively accredited by NWCCU will conduct a self-study in which they gather evidence from multiple sources (e.g., student, alumni, and employer interviews; institutional research data from APS; program learning outcome assessment results; environmental scan of workforce predictions) and report on their strengths and weaknesses. Based on their analysis, they are to develop a plan for where they want to be in seven years and identify the action steps and resources needed to get there.

An external reviewer from the program’s discipline who is a faculty member at another institution will review the program’s self-study report and conduct Zoom interviews with program stakeholder groups.

The PRC will review the program’s and external reviewer’s reports and provide feedback to the department in the form of a PRC report. All three reports will be disseminated to the department chair, dean, UAC/GAC chair(s), and provost.

The department, dean, and provost will enter into a memorandum of understanding (MOU) of what action steps the program intends to undertake during the upcoming seven-year cycle to enhance its quality and currency.

Last, the department will submit a short report to the PRC three years after the start of the program review indicating its accomplishments in relation to the goals established in the MOU.

**Programs with Specialized Accreditation.** A department’s programs that are accredited through a professional accrediting body do not need to undertake a self-study or engage an external reviewer for the EWU program review process. Rather, they will submit to the PRC an executive summary of their most recent accreditation self-study; their student learning development research plan and findings, including their curriculum map, course and program learning outcomes (or competencies), and assessment plan; the visiting team’s report; the accrediting commission’s decision letter; and a short memo describing the program’s action plan to address the recommendations put forth by its accrediting body. The PRC will draft a short feedback memo about the action plan that it will distribute to the department chair, dean, UAC/GAC, and provost.
What are the Main Components of the Review Process and the Timeline?

- **Fall Quarter 1**
  - **Orientation**: Workshop at the start of the first fall quarter to inform faculty about the program review process
  - **Self-Study Preparation Report**: Short report due to the PRC at the end of the first fall quarter that describes the program and self-study research plan
  - **Document Submission by Programs with Specialized Accreditation**: The department’s programs that are accredited through a specialized accrediting body are to submit the following documents to the PRC chair: an executive summary of their most recent accreditation self-study; their student learning development research plan and findings, including their curriculum map, course and program learning outcomes (or competencies), and assessment plan; the visiting team’s report; the accrediting commission’s decision letter; and a short memo describing the program’s action plan to address the recommendations put forth by its accrediting body

- **Winter Quarter 1**
  - **Data Collection**: Period for gathering information about the program from multiple sources

- **Spring Quarter 1**
  - **Analysis**: Program faculty get together to reflect on the findings early in the quarter
  - **Report**: Self-study report is written and submitted to the PRC by the end of the quarter

- **Fall Quarter 2**
  - **External Reviewer Selection**: The department chair submits a list of potential external reviewers, and the department chair, PRC chair, and dean agree on the selection
  - **External Reviewer Contact**: The PRC chair writes a letter inviting the candidate to serve as the external reviewer. Upon his or her agreement, the PRC chair sends the reviewer the self-study plan, self-study report, PRC feedback, and any necessary additional data
  - **External Review**: The external reviewer reads the documents sent to him or her, conducts interviews with key stakeholder groups via Zoom, and submits a report to the PRC chair and department chair

- **Winter Quarter 2**
  - **Feedback**: The PRC reviews the self-study report and external reviewer report and provides a PRC report, which is the committee’s written feedback, to the department chair
  - **Department Response**: The department may correct any errors of fact in the PRC report
  - **Results Dissemination**: The PRC chair sends the self-study report, external reviewer’s report, and PRC report to the dean, UAC/GAC chair(s), and provost

- **Spring Quarter 2**
  - **Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)**: The program chair and dean draft a MOU that spells out the program’s action plan for the next seven years. The provost adds any resources that he or she is willing to commit to the program. The chair, dean, and provost sign the MOU

- **Spring Quarter 4**
  - **Mid-Cycle Report**: The program submits a short report to the PRC describing which
aspects of its action plan have been put in place, which still need to be accomplished, and what changes, if any, it has made or intends to make to the plan.

Please note: Upon the department chair’s request and the college dean’s consent, the PRC may grant the department one one-quarter extension during the program review process (typically taken in spring quarter 1 to extend the data collection process or fall quarter 2 to extend the data analysis and report writing phase). Any delays beyond this may result in the Office of Academic Affairs temporarily withholding resources from the department until the process is complete.

What Resources Are Available to Help Departments with Program Review?

- **The Program Review Committee**: All questions about the program review process should be directed to PRC chair. The chair’s name can be found in the list of PRC committee members at the following URL: https://sites.ewu.edu/universitycollege/policies-procedures/academic-program-review/.

- **The Office of Institutional Research**: The Office of Institutional Research will provide programs with a standard set of institutional data generated by our Academic Performance Solutions (APS) software. The office can be reached at the following URL: https://sites.ewu.edu/institutional-research/contact/.

- **The Office of Assessment and Accreditation**: The Office of Assessment and Accreditation is available to help faculty identify evidence needed for the self-study, develop surveys or other methods for collecting information, develop assessment plans, and evaluate evidence. The office can be reached at assessment@ewu.edu.

- **The Office of Academic Affairs**: The Office of Academic Affairs will provide an honorarium for external reviewers. The office can be reached at tmoses@ewu.edu.
The Self-Study Preparation Report

By the end of the first fall quarter, the department’s NWCCU-exclusively-accredited programs are to submit a self-study preparation report of no more than five pages to the PRC chair. The document should have two sections:

- **Program Description.** The first section, which should be no more than three pages, should describe the program for the PRC and external reviewer. The description should tell the program’s story by providing all of the information that the program believes the PRC and external reviewer need to know about it in order to conduct a thoughtful review.

  Information to consider including are such things as the program’s history at EWU; distinguishing features; mission, goals, and strategic priorities; number of faculty and their ranks; number of students, student demographics, retention and graduation rates, and student trends over time; culture and philosophy; accomplishments; response to emerging trends or impactful developments at EWU or in the academic discipline, job market for its graduates, or Eastern Washington region; any other information about the program that the faculty deem important.

- **Self-Study Plan.** The second section of the self-study preparation report, which should be no more than three pages, will indicate which of two options the program wants to select for its self-study and the evidence it will use in its analyses.

  Programs have a choice of two options for the self-study: a SWOT or reflective essay option. Because a program’s educational effectiveness is a necessary part of what program review evaluates, a reflective essay focusing on the program’s student learning development research (“assessment”) is a required component of both options.

  - **SWOT Option:** In addition to writing a reflective essay on its student learning development research, programs who select the SWOT option will address in the self-study report the following four questions, with particular emphasis on the first two: What Are the Program’s Strengths?; What Are the Program’s Weaknesses?; What Are the Program’s Opportunities?; and What Are the Program’s Threats? Strengths and weaknesses pertain to the attributes of the program as it currently exists or recently did; opportunities and threats are developments in the program’s external environment (e.g., the college, university, discipline, higher education sector, geographic region, economy, job market for program graduates, academic job market to recruit new faculty) that may affect its future.

  - **Reflective Essay Option:** Programs who select the reflective essay option will write three reflective essays in the self-study report, each of which will result in a list of program strengths and weaknesses. One of the three essays will focus on the program’s student learning development research (“assessment”). The other two essays will each focus on a topic—or, better yet, a question—that the program chooses. Examples of topics include, but are not limited to, resource allocation, demographic composition of students in program, student research, faculty development, student success, advising, curriculum, retention, mentoring, diversity, high-impact practices, faculty scholarly productivity, recruitment, graduate employment, capstone, general education,
relationships with community colleges, or faculty job satisfaction. Examples of questions are as follows: What research opportunities is the program affording our students and what can we do to expand these? What is the impact of faculty development opportunities on faculty’s teaching and scholarship? Why is our program having difficulty recruiting and retaining majors? What is working well with how we advise our students and what could we improve?

What is key for the self-study to be valuable to the program is that the program choose two pressing matters that it wants to investigate in order to improve its understanding of itself.

Evidence. The program should examine a variety of evidence sources to answer each of its questions. What is important is that the evidence bear logically on the question being posed. Examples of evidence the faculty could collect and reflect on includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Interviews, surveys, or focus groups on topics such as one or more of the following:
  - Program faculty’s views on the program’s strength and weaknesses
  - Students’ areas of satisfaction and dissatisfaction with the program
  - Employers’ assessment of the program’s graduates’ skills
  - Leaders in the field’s predictions about academic discipline’s emerging development
  - Faculty at other institutions’ views on the program’s reputation
- Institutional research data on the following:
  - Student demographics
  - Trends in number of majors or students enrolling in the program’s different tracks/concentrations/options
  - Trends in student recruitment, retention, and graduation
  - Trends in number of faculty and faculty ranks
  - Trends in number of staff
  - Course enrollment patterns
  - Curricular bottlenecks
  - Trends in departmental budgets or funding

Other potential data sources include:

- Curriculum comparison with benchmark or aspirational peer programs
- Review of syllabi
- Review of quality or quantity of faculty scholarship and artistic achievements
- Review of student work
- Review of the minutes from faculty meetings
- Bureau of Labor statistics on emerging developments in the discipline’s job market (to identify potential threats and opportunities)
- Eastern Washington regional economic outlook published by EWU’s Institute for Public Policy and Economic Analysis (to identify potential threats and opportunities)

Where the Program Description should constitute the first section of the self-study preparation report, the second section, namely, the Self-Study Plan, should do the following:

1. Indicate whether the program will select the SWOT or reflective essays option for its self-study. If it chooses the reflective essays, it also needs to state the topics or
research questions it intends to examine.

1. Specify the evidence the faculty will collect to address each of the self-study questions. For example, for those doing the SWOT analysis, the evidence listed in the “What Are the Program’s Strengths?” subsection of the Self-Study Preparation Report’s Self-Study Plan section might include focus group information on faculty members’ views on the program’s strengths; interview data on students’ areas of satisfaction with the program; survey data on employers’ appraisals on which of program alums’ skills are well developed. Those selecting the reflective essay option should likewise have a subheading corresponding to their themes/reflective questions and list below each the evidence they plan to examine.

Department chairs and program directors are strongly encouraged to set up a meeting with the Director of Assessment and Accreditation to discuss their self-study plans.

The PRC will provide feedback to the program on the Self-Study Preparation Report to ensure that the program will undertake a robust examination of its strengths and weaknesses.

The Self-Study Preparation Report will comprise the introduction to the program’s Self-Study Report in much the same way that a dissertation proposal is transformed into the first three dissertation chapters.
The Self-Study Report

The self-study report, which is due at the end of the first spring quarter, should be about 20 pages in length, excluding the Executive Summary, Action Steps Table, and appendices.

Section 1: Executive Summary (1 - 2 pages)
The first part of the self-study report should be a one-to-two page synopsis of what you learned in the self-study and what the highlights are of your seven-year plan. This synopsis will be included in the PRC Report that will go to the college dean, UAC/GAC chair(s), and provost.

Section 2: Program Description (1 – 3 pages)
The second section of the document should be the program description taken from the Self-Study Preparation Report. The self-study report authors should revise the program description if the PRC raised any questions about or provided any critical feedback on this section of the Self-Study Preparation Report. The program description will be included in the PRC Report that will go to the college dean, UAC/GAC chair(s), and provost.

Section 3: Self-Study Plan (1 – 3 pages)
The third section of the document should be a modified version of the self-study plan taken from the Self-Study Preparation Report. Just as one switches the tense from future to past when revising the methods section of a proposal to that of the research report, the authors should change the tense of the text to indicate that the investigation has been done. Also, the self-study plan section of the Self-Study Report should specify what data was actually collected and examined, rather than what the Self-Study Preparation Report anticipated would be collected and examined.

Section 4: Student Learning Development Research (2 – 4 pages)
The fourth section should provide a reflective essay focusing on the program’s student learning development research (SDLR aka “assessment”) efforts during the last program review cycle (i.e., seven years). The report should provide the following in appendices: (a) a curriculum matrix showing how the program’s major CLOs map onto the PLOs; (b) the program student learning development research plan; and (c) the student development research results for as many of the past seven years for which the program has data. Templates to furnish this information can be found in Appendix A, B, and D of this document. Examples of how to complete the tables can be found in Appendix C and E.

Programs that have collected student learning development research results should discuss on which of their Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) students are faring best and on which they are faring least well. They should also reflect on why that may be. Further, they should note and reflect on any interesting trends in the data. In addition, they should say what they have learned through the student learning development research process.

Programs that have collected data should state how, if at all, they have “closed the loop”—that is, used assessment results to improve teaching and learning in the program—and whether subsequent assessment efforts have suggested the interventions were effective. If they have not yet closed the loop, they should indicate what loop closure activities they plan to implement, including any changes to how they plan to teach content areas or skills that have proved more difficult for students to learn.
Finally, those who have three years or more of data collection under their belt are invited to revise their program learning outcomes if they have found that one or more PLOs are not serving them well. Along with the revised PLOs, they should include in appendices a new curriculum map and student development research plan that they will implement during the next seven-year cycle.

Programs that have not yet collected student learning development research evidence should devote Section 4 of the self-study report to what they have accomplished so far in creating their SLDR plan, what other steps they need to undertake to be ready to collect student learning development data, their time-table, and what they have learned through this process to date. The culminating student activities that the program will use to assess students’ grasp of the PLOs should be discussed and, when possible, included in an appendix.

**Section 5: Self-Study Results (5 – 10 pages)**

In combination with Section Four, Section Five provides the core of the program’s self-study analysis.

- **SWOT Analysis Option.** Programs who select the SWOT option will address the following four questions in the self-study report:
  - What Are the Program’s Strengths?
  - What Are the Program’s Weaknesses?
  - What Are the Program’s Opportunities?
  - What Are the Program’s Threats?

  The first two of the four questions are more important than the last two and should, therefore, receive more attention. Strengths and weaknesses pertain to the attributes of the program as it currently exists or recently did; opportunities and threats are developments in the program’s external environment (e.g., the college, university, discipline, higher education sector, geographic region, economy, job market for program graduates, academic job market to recruit new faculty) that may affect its future.

  The program’s responses to each question need to be explicitly grounded in evidence that they’ve collected and reflected on. The evidence should be cited in the report.

- **Reflective Essay Option:** Programs who select the reflective essay option will write a reflective essay on two topics or questions that the program has sought to understand about itself. Each essay should start with the topic or question and describe how the program collected evidence to answer the question. It should present the results of what it found, the evidence on which the results are based, and faculty members’ reflections on those results. Each essay should conclude with a discussion of what the inquiry illuminated about the program’s strengths and weaknesses with regard to that topic or question.

**Section 6: Seven-Year Plan (2 – 3 pages)**

Drawing on what you learned from your self-study about your program’s strengths and weaknesses (and for those who selected option 1, opportunities and threats), discuss your vision for what you want your program to look like in seven years in terms of student learning, curriculum, students, faculty, and staff. Also, you may consider facilities, relationships with
stakeholders, potential for collaboration with other EWU programs or other types of collaborations, or other matters important to you. Assuming stable levels of funding and resources, list up to five top priorities to improve your program and student learning. List extra resources (physical, technological, or personnel) that would be required to address your most pressing needs.

Section 7: Action Steps Table
The action steps table should flow logically from the seven-year plan. The table, which you will find in the appendix to this document and which you should insert as an appendix to the Self-Study Report, should list the steps that the program will take to fulfill its seven-year plan. The table, along with the PRC Report, will form the foundation of the MOU between the program faculty, college dean, and provost. Insert the table into an appendix, rather than the body of the document, add rows as needed, and use landscape orientation on the page so that the table can be wider.

Section 8: Conclusion (1 – 2 pages)
In the conclusion, share your thoughts about the self-study review process. Which parts were valuable and which need improvement? Also, please list any specific areas that you would like the Program Review Committee to address or comment on.

Section 9: Required Appendices
The following appendices are required components of the self-study report:
- Printed names, signatures, and dates of all faculty who teach in the program signifying that they participated in the self-study review and endorse the self-study report
- Curriculum map with PLOs and CLOs
- Student Development Research Plan
- Student Development Research Results (for as many of the last seven years for which the program has data)
- Action Steps Table
- A revised curriculum map with PLOs and CLOs for next review cycle (optional)
- A revised Student Development Research Plan for next review cycle (optional)
- Any other pertinent documents (e.g., APS data, surveys used, interview questions)

Appendix A:
Curriculum Map Template

Students who earn a ________ in
________________________________________________ at EWU should be able do the
following:

[degree] [program]

PLO-1:
PLO-2:

PLO-3:

PLO-4:

PLO-5:

PLO-6:

PLO-7:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Required Course</th>
<th>Major CLO (write CLO below)</th>
<th>PLO-1</th>
<th>PLO-2</th>
<th>PLO-3</th>
<th>PLO-4</th>
<th>PLO-5</th>
<th>PLO-6</th>
<th>PLO-7</th>
<th>Graded Assignment</th>
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Insert "I," "D," and A" into the cells above to indicate that the CLO denotes how the PLO is introduced, developed, or achieved.

(Use as many additional sheets as are needed.)
## Appendix B:
### Student Development Research Plan Template

**Development Research Plan 20xx – 20xx**
*(name of program and degree)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students who earn a XX in course from EWU should be able to do the following:</th>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Culminating Student Product</th>
<th>Target Ranges</th>
<th>Data Collection Dates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>PL O-1</td>
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<td>PL O-4</td>
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<td>PL O-6</td>
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<td>PL O-7</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Notes:**

+ = Faculty satisfied with results

~ = Faculty neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with results
- Faculty dissatisfied with results
## Appendix C: Student Development Research Plan Sample

### BA in English – Literature Student Development Research Plan 2019 – 2023

Students who earn a BA in English with a concentration in literature from EWU should be able to do the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Culminating Student Product</th>
<th>Target</th>
<th>Data Collection Dates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<td>+</td>
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<td>F W Spr Su</td>
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<tr>
<td>PL O-1</td>
<td>Identify important literary periods</td>
<td>Eng 330</td>
<td>Comprehensive Exam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PL O-2</td>
<td>Identify major writers</td>
<td>Eng 330</td>
<td>Comprehensive Exam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PL O-3</td>
<td>Closely analyzes literary texts using appropriate literary and critical vocabulary</td>
<td>Eng 330</td>
<td>Comprehensive Exam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Eng 400</td>
<td>Capstone Scholarly Paper</td>
<td>≥ 85%*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PL O-4</td>
<td>Synthesize theoretical knowledge to produce original written interpretations of literary texts</td>
<td>Eng 400</td>
<td>Capstone Scholarly Paper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PL O-5</td>
<td>Appropriately employ pertinent secondary sources in writing</td>
<td>Eng 400</td>
<td>Capstone Scholarly Paper</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Notes:

- + = Faculty satisfied with results
- ~ = Faculty neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with results
- – = Faculty dissatisfied with results
- *Average of students who correctly answered 80% or more of the comprehensive exam questions designed to assess the PLO
- **Percent of students scoring “proficient” or higher on rubric
Appendix D:
Student Development Research Results Template

Development Research Results 202x – 202x
(name of program and degree)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Culminating Student Activity</th>
<th>202x – 202x</th>
<th>202x – 202x</th>
<th>202x – 202x</th>
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## Appendix E:
Student Development Research Results Sample

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<th>2021 – 2022</th>
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**Notes:**
- % for PLOs 1 – 3(a): Average of students who correctly answered 80% or more of exam questions designed to assess the PLO
- % for PLOs 3(b) – 5: Percent of students scoring “proficient” or higher on rubric
- Target + = Results met target
- Target ~ = Results approach target
- Target – = Results did not meet target
### [Program Name’s] Action Plan: 202x – 202x

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Add rows and pages as needed