Support Services/Administrative Program Review
Handbook for Reviewers

January, 2024

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Program Review at WCU

WCU's program/unit review process involves a self-study document and virtual visit by a review team. All program reviews will be conducted online. In specific instances, the Office of Institutional Assessment can make exceptions to the online process if a department/office makes a compelling case that an in-person review would be more appropriate for their particular circumstances (having significant physical resources associated with the program, for instance).

Ideally, the review team consists of two disciplinary experts external to WCU who provide feedback and recommendations for quality enhancement and one reviewer internal to WCU who provides institutional context. Especially large offices/programs may have an additional internal reviewer assigned.

The review visit is designed to accommodate several key activities including interviews with faculty, administrators, program constituents and stakeholders. The final schedule for your virtual visit will be sent to you prior to the review dates.

Determination of the quality in any academic unit is a complex undertaking and must be considered not only in terms of national or professional standards, but also in light of the institutional context and unit-specific mission and goals. To assist you in your evaluation, we will provide you as much information as possible about WCU, the UNC System, and the program under review.

Roles and Responsibilities of the Program Reviewers

Your role as a part of the review team is critical to the ultimate success of our continuous improvement process. We thank you for your willingness to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of our administrative and support program(s).

The duties and tasks expected of you are to:
- conduct an on-site or virtual visit where you will meet with key program constituents, including faculty, staff, administrators, students, and program participants,
- evaluate all program materials provided to you prior to and during the campus visit,
- produce a report summarizing the strengths and weaknesses of the program under review as well as making suggestions for improvement. Typically, the reviewers external to the university take the lead roles in composing the reviewer report. The components of the reviewers' report are in the following section, and the report is due 30 days following the campus visit.

Components of the Reviewers' Report and Recommendations

I.   Introduction
- A description of visit length
- A summary and description of meetings conducted by the review team

II.   Analysis of Program
- Provide a brief synopsis of:
    - the primary unit functions (Are they appropriate for WCU's student body? Are they consistent with professional norms or standards? Are the unit mission and goals appropriate for the type of unit?)
    - the unit's programming activities and/or services (Are the programming activities and services appropriate to stated mission and objectives of the units? Are the programming and services adequate to meet the expressed needs of the unit's constituent groups?)
    - the planning and assessment strategies (Can the unit document that its programming activities and services are having the intended effect? Are the programming activities and services routinely evaluated and the results used to make improvements? Do all staff have an opportunity to participate in planning and assessment activities?)
    - unit support of the university mission and strategic plan (Does the unit demonstrate appropriate support of the university mission and strategic plan?)

III.   Analysis of Staff
- Qualifications – Provide a brief analysis of staff qualifications (i.e., Do the unit staff have the requisite degrees/credentials and skills appropriate to the program?)
- Resources and Support – Provide a brief analysis of unit and institutional support for staff (i.e., Does the unit have adequate and appropriate processes and procedures for performance evaluation and promotion decisions? Is staff compensation appropriate and adequate? Do staff have access to adequate technological resources?)
- Professional Activity, and Service – Provide a brief analysis of staff participation in professional development and university service (i.e., Does the staff have adequate opportunities for professional development? Is the staff recognized by their peers for professional contributions to the field? Does the staff engage in an appropriate level of University service?)

IV.   Evaluation of Program Resources
- Does the unit have appropriate resources to fulfill its mission, and accomplish its work?
- Is there an appropriate level of institutional support for the program?

V.   Summary of unit strengths and areas for improvement
- What is your general impression of the unit?
- Overall, what are the areas of strength?
- Overall, in what areas could the unit make improvements?

VI.   Summary of Recommendations (provide numbered recommendations, along with rationale for each)

Review teams are encouraged to address issues that arise during the review that fall outside of this suggested template.

Honoraria

Each external reviewer will receive a $1200 stipend for their work. Each internal reviewer will receive a $750 stipend. If an employee's particular job classification doesn't allow for stipend payments, that $750 will be available to fund professional development activities. The stipend will be submitted for payment following receipt of the External Review Report, which is due no later than 30 days following the campus visit.

Points of Contact

Our office is here to assist you, as needed. Please feel free to contact us with questions about the assessment process, travel arrangements, scheduling, or any other topic.

Dr. Karen Price, Dir. of Assessment, kjprice@email.wcu.edu, (828) 227-2580

Ms. Tierney Cody, Assessment Coordinator, tcody@email.wcu.edu, (828) 227-2683

Mr. Logan King, Admin Support Specialist, kingr@email.wcu.edu, (828) 227-2264

WCU Support Services/Administrative Program Criteria and Self-Study Report

Reporting Expectations by the Unit for the Self-Study

The self-study consists of a brief, yet comprehensive response to each standard outlined below. An executive summary is included at the beginning of the report with a maximum length of two pages, and the narrative sections for the standards are typically 15 pages total. Supporting materials to further describe content in the narratives are available from the Office of Institutional Assessment.

1) **History and Description of Unit**

   a. State the primary purpose and key functions of the unit, include the unit's mission statement.

   b. List the unit goals/priorities.

   c. Summarize the history of the unit on campus.

   d. Describe the structure of the unit and how it is organizationally situated within the institution.

   e. Provide an organizational chart of the unit with every employee identified by name and title, as well as a concise list of the primary duties carried out by each employee in table format. Include a resumé for each full-time employee.
   If applicable, describe the number of student employees and/or graduate assistants in the unit and indicate their job duties within the unit.

   f. Describe the extent to which the program addressed the recommendations set forth by the previous program review. If the unit has not undergone a program review, please indicate this in your narrative.

2) **Alignment with WCU Mission, Vision, Values**

   a. How does the unit's mission align with the University's mission and strategic plan? How does it align with the division's mission and strategic plan?

   b. How has the unit's purpose changed in the past five years?

   c. How do you expect the purpose to change in the next five years?

3) **Unit Demand**

   a. Who are the key participants in the unit's programs and services?

   b. How do you identify and measure the demand for the unit's programs and services?

   c. List other units on campus your unit interacts with most. Briefly describe the nature of those interactions.

   d. List units on campus that provide related programs and services.

   e. Describe the unique contributions of the unit.

4) Quality

a. How do you identify and measure the quality of the unit's programs and services? List the benchmarks used to assess quality.

b. How do you use the results of quality assessments to improve programs and services? Provide specific examples.

c. What were the major unit accomplishments within the past five years? Include those directly related to unit functions and/or those related to University's strategic goals.

5) Cost Effectiveness

a. How do you identify and measure the cost effectiveness of this unit? List the benchmarks used to assess cost effectiveness.

b. Attach an itemized spreadsheet (see link below) outlining ALL revenues/resources generated and expenses incurred for the unit for the past three years.

6) Opportunity Analysis

a. How can the unit's programs and services be enhanced? Examples might include automation of processes, collaboration with other campus units, outsourcing to an independent contractor, etc.

b. How do the activities of other units advance or hinder the effectiveness of the unit? Focus should be on those units that were identified in 3c.

c. What programs and services offered by the unit are redundant or outside the scope of the unit's primary purpose?

d. What are similar units at peer or aspirant institutions doing that this unit would like to do or perhaps need to do?

e. What additional cost savings could be achieved in this unit?

f. What external funding opportunities (grants, contracts, etc.) exist that could be pursued by this unit? If applicable, include any efforts to pursue funding to date.

g. What would it take to make the program exemplary?

Institutional Profile

Western Carolina University is a regional comprehensive university with nationally and internationally recognized teacher-scholars dedicated to student learning. WCU is classified as a Carnegie Master's (Larger Programs) institution with Community Engagement designation. WCU is a coeducational residential public university within the University of North Carolina system. The University offers courses in the arts, sciences, technologies, humanities, and professions through degree programs at the bachelor's, master's, and doctorate levels. Western offers the advantages of a large university while maintaining its small college atmosphere. WCU is one of three NC Promise institutions in the University of North Carolina system, offering $500 per semester tuition to in-state students. The institution was founded in 1889.

The Regional University: As a regional university, WCU is committed to serving constituents within its geographic domain by offering services and appropriate educational programs. WCU strives to take advantage of its locational advantage by capitalizing on assets unique to the region. As a result, WCU's educational portfolio and services are influenced by its location and the opportunities within it. Although WCU has a defined region as specified below, it will utilize venues outside of the region including national and international sites for educational purposes and training.

WCU's Region: WCU's core geographical region is defined as the 17 western most counties of North Carolina. As such, it is obligated to work most closely with educational, governmental, and business entities in this area. Historically, WCU has provided educational programs and services to an extended region as far east as the I-77 corridor (extends from Charlotte through Statesville, NC). Further, WCU has multiple programs that will interact with its larger economic region extending from Atlanta in the west, Raleigh in the east, Knoxville in the north, and Greenville/Spartanburg in the south.

Mission: Western Carolina University creates learning opportunities that incorporate teaching, research, service, and engagement through on campus, off campus, on-line and international experiences. The university focuses its undergraduate, master's and three doctoral programs, educational outreach, research, creative, and cultural activities to sustain and improve individual lives and enhance economic and community development in Western Carolina and beyond.

Vision: To be a national model for student learning and engagement that embraces its responsibilities as a regionally engaged university.

Location: Cullowhee, North Carolina, near the Great Smoky and Blue Ridge mountains, fifty-two miles west of Asheville. Main campus covers approximately 600 acres. Instructional sites located in Asheville and Hickory, NC, Jamaica, and Colombia.

Academic programs: Approximately 110 degree programs, with more than 220 majors and concentrations for undergraduates in addition to over 42 graduate-level programs of study. Residential programs enroll approximately 80% of students, with the remainder enrolled in online programs.

Calendar: Two semesters (August to December and January to May) and multiple summer sessions.

Class size: More than 75% of classes have fewer than 30 students; the average freshman class size is 23; the student/faculty ratio is 17 to 1.

Accreditations: Western Carolina University is accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (1866 Southern Lane, Decatur, Georgia 30033-4097; telephone number 404-679-4501; www.sacscoc.org) to award bachelor's, master's, and doctor's degrees. Last SACSCOC reaffirmation: December 2017. The university holds 21 special program accreditations and is a member of more than 30 state and national associations and organizations to which its professional programs are related.

Enrollment: The most up-to-date enrollment data can be accessed by using the links below to view our publicly accessible Tableau dashboards:

[UNC System Fact Sheets](#)
Select any one of the University of North Carolina System institutions to view institutional and student characteristics, impact and operational data. There are 8 sections within the factsheets, providing summary data pertaining to: • Institutional Characteristics • Admissions • Enrollment • Student Success • Faculty and Staff • Revenues and Expenditures • Undergraduate Tuition and Financial Aid • Impact and Engagement Note: Fact sheets are updated twice annually, once in the fall after the fall census data has been finalized (typically in November) and once in the spring after the IPEDS finance data has been finalized (typically in April). The title of the factsheet is driven by the fall term (e.g., 2021 Fact Sheet is first published in November of 2021 with some remaining 2020 data and updated in April 2022. 2022 Fact Sheet is published in November of 2022).

[WCU Quick Facts](#)
Dashboard showing high level institutional descriptive enrollment statistics.

[University Organizational Chart-Public Dashboard](#)

[Student Enrollment Summary Dashboard](#)
Headcount enrollment by term shown across 7 years. Filtering is available to limit the selection of data being displayed. For example, choosing "female" from the Gender filter will then re-populate the bars/lines/data in the display to reflect the elected criteria. Filters are available for modality of attendance (student type), student level, enrollment status (new, first time, new transfer, continuing, old returning), degree seeking status/intent, FT/PT enrollment, Race/Ethnicity, Citizenship, Gender, Residency (in-state/out-of-state), and Age.

[North Carolina County Enrollment](#)
Dashboard showing enrollment of in-state students, by county of permanent residence.

[Credit Hours and Couse Enrollments](#)
This dashboard shows Course Enrollments or Student Credit Hours for the applicable time period.

[Retention, Graduation and Persistence Trends by Cohort](#)
This dashboard shows the first-time, full-time freshmen cohorts 1-year retention and 4-year graduation rates by the year and term the student cohort matriculated at the institution. This dashboard reflects the official IPEDS reported methodology for tracking first-time students' persistence and success. Filtering is available for a number of student attributes as described above.