Seven-Year Academic Program Review (APR-7) Self-Study Template

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Overview

Programs without specialized accreditation undergo a Seven-Year Academic Program Review (APR-7). The APR-7 review process begins with a self-study. The APR-7 self-study document should be no more than 50 pages (single-spaced), including tables and figures. Programs can include links in the self-study document to additional materials (e.g., faculty CVs, previous program review reports or responses/action plans, or other supporting documents), or make such materials available to reviewers online (e.g., Box or Google Drive).

Definition of Terms

Curriculum Mapping
Student learning outcomes must be mapped across the curriculum, linking program-level outcomes to course-level outcomes and assignments. This mapping should demonstrate increasing levels of student proficiency over time.

Measurability
Student learning outcomes must be assessed through direct evidence of student learning (e.g., rubrics, portfolios, performance assessments). Indirect evidence (e.g., surveys) may be used to supplement direct measures when appropriate. Assessment should be conducted relative to clearly defined performance targets.

Program Objectives (Program Goals)
Program objectives describe the broad purposes or aims of the program. These may include both:

- Educational aims, such as developing disciplinary knowledge or professional competencies.
- Programmatic priorities, such as student recruitment, retention, or faculty development.

To support a manageable assessment cycle and meaningful program improvement, programs typically identify 2–3 broad program objectives aligned with the university's mission and strategic priorities.

Program Student Learning Outcomes (Learning Competencies)
Program student learning outcomes describe the specific knowledge, skills, values,

and attitudes that students are expected to demonstrate upon completion of the program.

Scope and Sustainability
Programs typically identify 4–7 program-level student learning outcomes that collectively define the program's essential learning aims. This focused scope allows faculty to systematically review curricular relevance and effectively close the loop on assessment data within the seven-year review cycle.

Specialized Accreditation
Programs with external specialized accreditation may be required to maintain a larger set of competencies. For institutional self-study purposes, these competencies may be grouped or crosswalked to a smaller set of core outcomes that represent the program's central learning goals.

Transparency
Program learning outcomes must be publicly available and clearly communicated to students through program websites, catalogs, and course syllabi.

Additional information and assessment resources are available on the Assessment and Academic Program Review webpage.

Seven-Year Academic Program Review Self-Study (APR-7) Template

Please use the following as a template for your APR-7 self-study. Sections in the template are linked to the regional accreditor's (NWCCU) criteria 1.C.1 through 1.C.7 (see Appendix A).

Program Name (as it appears in the official catalog):

Review Period (Years Covered):

Self-study chair/team: Identify the chair who took on primary responsibility for the self-study. Include a list of all faculty team members participating in the development of the Self Study and their role (e.g., writer, reviewer, editor, etc) (see Appendix A, NWCCU 1.C.5 and 1.C.7).

I. Executive Summary: Provide a concise overview of this self-study document, including key information and main points.

II. Program Alignment

A. Describe the program's alignment with the University and College's mission, vision, values, and strategic plan.

B. Summarize the program's support of other units in the college and university (courses required in other programs, service courses, etc.), including any general education courses

offered by the program. Provide a link to program courses in the Course Catalog.

III. Program Overview

A. List program degrees, majors, minors, and certificates. Provide links to these on the program's website.

B. Provide the program's curriculum map (see Appendix A, NWCCU 1.C.2). You can use the table below or present the curriculum map in another format (see Appendix B).

Program-Level Learning Outcomes	Course	Course	Course	Assessment(s) [Note, add more columns as appropriate for your program]

C. List location and delivery modes of instruction (distance education, online, outreach location, etc.). Describe any unique features related to the location and/or delivery mode.

D. Include a brief summary comparing at least two peer institutions to your program, indicating what makes your program distinct. Peer programs may include those that are similar or aspirational (see Appendix A, NWCCU 1.C.1). Please do not offer a simple summary. Instead, find and communicate commonalities, differences, ideas for innovation, and actionable insights. Discuss the extent to which program standards are compatible with peer institutions, aspirational programs, or, if applicable, accepted standards in the discipline.

IV. Previous APR-7 Recommendation(s) and Academic Program Review Annual Reports (APR-A): Provide a summary of any changes made in response to recommendations from the previous APR-7. Use information from annual reports (APR-A) to demonstrate program changes over time (see Appendix A, NWCCU 1.C.5 and 1.C.7).

V. Program-Level Student Learning Outcome Summary

A. Provide a current Academic Assessment Plan Matrix (see template in Appendix B). Because this is a program review, not a course audit, the focus should be on the courses in the curriculum map. Explain how the program closed the loop and used assessment data and evaluation of the data to make changes. Evaluate the effectiveness of those closing the loop changes, or explain what may be needed for additional change.

B. Describe the process for establishing, reviewing, and revising program student learning outcomes. If relevant, be sure to consider the performance of programs on multiple ISU campus locations or delivery modes (see Appendix A, NWCCU 1.C.1 and 1.C.7).

VI. Student Information (contact Institutional Research for information and data)

A. Five-year student demographics

1. Gender
2. Race/ethnicity
3. Other demographics of interest to your program (e.g., Pell Grant eligibility, age, time to completion, credit count at completion, fall-to-fall retention, full-time/part-time, residency, etc.)

B. Five-year student retention and graduation trends/data

VII. Student Support Services

A. Student recruitment and retention activities

B. Advising and mentoring policies and processes
C. High-impact practices (e.g., undergraduate research, internships, capstone courses and projects, service learning, etc.)

VIII. Faculty

A. Faculty Workload: Describe teaching assignments, advising responsibilities, and service commitments for program faculty. Include a table summarizing faculty ranks, teaching loads, and courses taught.
B. Faculty Qualifications: Provide CVs for full-time faculty (links or shared folder). Include a brief narrative summarizing faculty expertise, scholarly activity, and how faculty qualifications support program goals and learning outcomes
C. Discuss whether current staffing levels are sufficient to support the program curriculum and enrollment..
D. Institutional Expectations: Describe institutional expectations for teaching, scholarship, and service (e.g., promotion and tenure guidelines). Explain how these expectations align with program priorities and student success.

IX. Program Resources

A. Budget: Describe budget planning and processes, fiscal priorities, and financial decision-making. Include funding for each program, with the total and percentage for instruction and operations.

B. Support resources and services: Describe available support resources and services (e.g., library, information technology, discipline-specific, etc.). Describe the programmatic resources available to students for all delivery pathways.

C. Facilities: Describe the facilities and resources that support the program (e.g., equipment, technology, distance learning infrastructure, classroom space, laboratory space, discipline-specific software). Note any anticipated changes, upgrades, or emerging needs that may affect the program over the next several years.

X. Overall Program Evaluation Using a SWOT Analysis

A. Program strengths

B. Program weaknesses

C. External constraints and challenges

D. Opportunities for improvement

Appendix A: NWCCU Student Learning Standards

Standard 1.C.1
Developed: Systematic review of all programs includes alignment with fields of study.
Highly Developed: All program content is systematically reviewed for relevance and applicability in line with currently recognized fields of study.

Standard 1.C.2
Developed: Courses, programs, certificates and degrees have clearly stated learning outcomes and consistent assessment practices; there is some level of institutional measurement of learning outcomes.
Highly Developed: Transcripts include learning outcomes not just courses taken; students articulate learning outcomes.
Developed: Learning outcomes are used in creating course sequences and prerequisite requirements; learning outcomes are appropriate to courses and assessed based on student demonstration relative to expected performance targets.
Highly Developed: Learning outcomes are mapped from the course to the program and institution levels, identifying increasing depth and level of student demonstration and multiple methods of assessment.

Standard 1.C.3
Developed: Learning outcomes are available to students and the public via multiple methods: catalog, course outlines/syllabi, program websites, brochures, etc
Highly Developed: Learning outcomes are publicly available in language commonly understood at the entry level for the program/degree.
Developed: Learning outcomes form the framework of courses; course learning outcomes are available to students before they enroll via course catalogs or other means.
Highly Developed: There is a consistent commitment to teach to well-formulated learning outcomes, making them transparent to students and clearly linked to assignments.

Standard 1.C.5
Developed: Faculty-led committees, work groups, etc. approve curricula and student learning outcomes on a cycle intended to improve instructional effectiveness; rationales for curricular changes are provided.
Highly Developed: Faculty-led committees, work groups, etc. have established practices for reviewing curricula, analyzing student learning, and planning for instructional improvement across disciplines; impacts of curricular decisions on programs of study are carefully addressed.

Standard 1.C.7
Developed: Results of student learning assessment are reviewed by program faculty and used to inform programs; may consult with faculty from other disciplines to inform course choices.
Highly Developed: Cross-disciplinary faculty teams representative of the courses that comprise programs of study review student learning outcomes and co-plan for improvements.

Appendix B: Academic Assessment Plan Matrix Template

Academic Assessment Matrix **Academic Year:**				
Program-Level Student Learning Outcomes	**What We Found Out**		**How We Used What We Found**	
List Program-Level Student Learning Outcomes.	**Assessment Methods and Data Collection** **List assessment methods for each student learning outcome** **Have a target for each measure.** **Collect data for each student learning outcome.**	**Data Analysis and Summary of Assessment Results** **1. What did we find?** **2. Was it what we expected?** **3. What does it mean?** **Did we achieve our target? If not, why? If we achieved it, how can we improve further?**	**Use Results for Continuous Improvement** **How will the program use the assessment results to improve the program's Student Learning Outcomes?** **Did we include all relevant stakeholders?** **Did we document the ideas we shared at our meetings?**	**The timeframe for additional assessment:** **1. How will we collect data over the next year?** **2. When will we reassess to see if our changes succeed?**
Objective #1:				
Student learning outcome:	**Measure 1:**			
Student learning outcome:	**Measure 2:**			
Student learning outcome:	**Measure 3:**			
Objective #2:				
Student learning outcome:	**Measure 1:**			
Student learning outcome:	**Measure 2:**			
Student Learning outcome:	**Measure 3:**			