



Academic Program Review

Guidelines for Narrative

Office of Academic Affairs

Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Analytics

Borough of Manhattan Community College

August 20, 2019

Purpose

Consistent with its mission, Borough of Manhattan Community College is a vibrant, pluralistic learning community committed to the intellectual and personal growth of students. Working closely with organizations across New York City and beyond, we prepare students from around the globe for degree completion, successful transfer, career achievement, lifelong learning, and civic participation. BMCC's highest priority is to improve student success, advancing equity through paths to social and economic mobility. The Academic Program Review (APR) provides for a comprehensive and systematic assessment of student learning outcomes at the program level, and for the regular self-study and continuous improvement of academic programs consistent with the BMCC mission and strategic priorities, and the College's commitment to academic excellence.

Benefits

The academic program review process is meant to serve as a resource and period of reflection for academic departments. There are numerous benefits to conducting completing an APR. A thorough review of all aspects of a department or program provides an opportunity to clearly identify strengths and weaknesses, areas for intervention, and establish priorities for future planning.

Faculty working on an APR also have an opportunity to review and clarify mission, vision, goals and student learning outcomes. This process can also serve as a useful tool for supporting and improving student success. By systematically reviewing relevant departmental information, faculty can be better equipped to make decisions that are informed by looking at data and trends over time. An APR also provides important information to key decision-makers external to the department. An APR allows a department or program to highlight strengths, share accomplishments, and articulate needs and future plans for the area.

As a collaborative process, the APR helps provide a structure for discussions on student learning, the overall student experience, curricular issues, and departmental needs. By completing an APR, faculty have information available to reach consensus on goals, outcomes, policies, and actions that can contribute to continuous improvement.

Responsibilities

CUNY Board of Trustees policy requires that all academic programs be subject to a formal, periodic review procedure, including both self-study and external assessment. BMCC will review all degree programs not subject to additional external accreditation and academic departments that do not offer degree programs every five years according to a schedule developed by the Office of Academic Affairs (see Appendix I: BMCC Program Review Schedule). Accredited degree programs are exempt from this process and will be reviewed according to their specific accreditation standards and cycle.

Through the APR, faculty assess the current level of program quality, gauge program currency and relevance, assess student learning outcomes, review program characteristics and outcomes in relation to the mission of BMCC, and plan for program improvements.

As defined in BMCC's Institutional Effectiveness Plan, assessment should be seen as a recurring process of inquiry and improvement in which clearly articulated student learning outcomes and program or unit goals that support aspects of the institutional mission are measured against pre-established performance criteria. Assessment results may meet or exceed expectations, fall short in some way, or uncover unanticipated learning or unexpected outcomes. Disparities between performance expectations and actual assessment results form the basis for dialogue and possible action. Results of assessment activities can be used to bring about improvement in teaching, student learning, and the environment for student learning. The cycle then begins anew either to assess different outcomes or to check to see if the changes implemented as a result of earlier assessments have achieved the intended results.

Process and Timeline

The APR process has four stages: 1) preparation, 2) self-study, 3) external review, and 4) implementation. The APR schedule allows for one semester of preparation, one year of writing, and one semester for external review; these phases can be consolidated with the mutual agreement of the department under review and the Office of Academic Affairs. Implementation of strategies for improvement occurs in the years following the external review and until the subsequent self-study. Activities to be completed in each of these stages are detailed below. The Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Analytics (IEA) supports departments throughout the APR process. IEA will work with departments and take into consideration specific scheduling and program needs.

Spring semester (Preparation)

- The department chair identifies a program review leader and a review committee to develop the Self-Study. A preparation meeting is held with IEA, the department chair, and the team lead to review the APR guidelines, and begin discussion of the needs of the department.

Fall semester (Self-Study)

- By **September 30th**, IEA provides an Academic Program Analytics Report (see Data Resources and Template document), with data needed for program review to the program review team and the department chair. After the data have been provided to the department, IEA will meet with the APR team and chair to answer any questions. IEA will work with department chairs and program review leaders to ensure training full access to Departmental Dashboards for additional information.
- IEA in collaboration with the department chair and program review leader will conduct at least two focus groups with students who have been enrolled in the major for at least three semesters. Each department is responsible for contacting and recruiting students to participate in the focus groups. Students should be identified and contacted by the APR team later than **November 15th** in order for IEA to provide a report by March 1st. A SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) faculty focus group is optional and can be facilitated by IEA if faculty request.

- The APR Team **1)** collects additional program-specific data as needed; **2)** analyzes data, student outcomes and other information collected; and **3)** develops a detailed outline and supporting documentation.
- IEA and APR team will meet to review progress on the APR throughout the semester.

Spring semester (Self-Study)

- IEA and APR team will meet to review progress on the APR throughout the semester.
- By **May 15th**, the APR Team submits their final report to the department chair to review and sign off. Then the report is submitted to the Provost, and the Dean of Institutional Effectiveness, and the Director of Assessment by **May 30th**.
- IEA is available to work with the APR team and chair to identify the external reviewers and site visit agenda prior to submission to the Provost for approval.

Fall semester (External Review)

- By **September 1**, the names and bios of the proposed external reviewers and the proposed site visit agenda are forwarded to the Provost for approval (see Appendix 2: External Review Visit Guide). The external review team must include one CUNY member (ideally from a transfer institution) and one member from outside CUNY. After approval by the Provost, the APR team leader will work with external reviewers to confirm the process and steps needed to ensure timely payment and reimbursement for any approved travel expenses (see Appendix 3: Guidelines for Academic Program and AES External Review Services)
- External reviewers conduct a site visit during the fall that concludes with an exit conference with the Provost. External Reviewers submit findings and recommendations to the Provost, Department Chair, and Dean for Institutional Effectiveness and Strategic Planning (see Appendix 4: Guiding Questions for External Reviewers Report).

Spring semester and ongoing (Implementation of Recommendations)

- After the external evaluators have completed their site visits and submitted their reports to the Provost, at the request of the faculty the Provost will meet with the Chair and the APR Team to discuss the self-study findings, recommendations, and priorities for program improvement.
- The Chair and Department faculty will implement and assess the impact of selected recommendations for improvement.

Academic Program Review Self-Study Template

Programs under review will submit a self-study that contains the following components. Where indicated below, IEA will provide data for review and analysis by the APR Team.

See APR Data Resources and Template document for further details

1. Overview of the Program:

- How the program aligns with BMCC's strategic outcomes
- Department/program mission statement
- Department goals
- Program learning outcomes for the degree program or department
- Identification of General Education Program outcomes addressed by the program under review

2. Enrollment, Retention, and Graduation Rates:

- Analysis of longitudinal enrollment, one-year retention, and three-year graduation rates, disaggregated by race, ethnicity, and gender (IEA)
- Analysis of pass rates in gateway courses in the major, disaggregated by race, ethnicity, and gender (IEA)
- Analysis of longitudinal credit accumulation in first four semesters, disaggregated by race, ethnicity, and gender (IEA)
- Description of recruitment strategies
- Plans and strategies to increase enrollment (if appropriate)
- Description of strategies to improve retention and graduation rates, including how to reduce any equity gaps by race/ethnicity, and gender

3. Transfer and Post-Graduation Outcomes:

- Longitudinal transfer rates before and after graduation, in CUNY and outside of CUNY, disaggregated by race, ethnicity, and gender (IEA)
- Identification of top 3-5 transfer institutions and GPA of BMCC students in these institutions (IEA) and all existing articulation agreements
- Six-year baccalaureate rates for transfer students, disaggregated by race, ethnicity, and gender (IEA)
- Analysis of labor market data for graduates (IEA)

- Description of strategies to improve transfer rates and post-graduation outcomes, including strategies to work with top transfer institutions to improve student outcomes by institution

4. Curriculum:

- A program map illustrating preferred course sequencing to complete all degree requirements in four semesters for students without developmental needs and a program map to complete all degree requirements in six semesters for students with developmental needs, including specific math courses/pathways for majors.
- Rationale for course sequencing
- Mapping of course learning outcomes with student learning outcomes for degree
- Strategies for maintaining consistent standards across multiple sections
- Evidence of responsiveness to changes in the field, including role of advisory board (if applicable)
- Description of any recent or planned curricular changes
- Review of the appropriateness and measurability of course student learning outcomes and program learning outcomes.
- Description of strategies to prepare students for fulfilling careers with family-sustaining wages

5. Instruction and Scholarship:

- List of all full-time faculty with rank, tenure status, date of hire, degrees
- Faculty development priorities and strategies to improve pedagogy
- Strategies for supporting new FT and PT faculty
- Full-time/part-time faculty ratios for required courses in major and high enrollment courses
- Enrollment and pass rates in hybrid or fully online courses offered in past three years (IEA)
- Strategies for increasing hybrid and fully online offerings
- Number of sections and enrollment in winter and summer sessions over the past three years (IEA) and strategies to encourage students to enroll in winter and summer to maintain momentum
- *Optional* summaries of student evaluations of faculty provided by department Chair.

6. Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes:

- Program assessment plan
- Discussion of the assessment plan for the program including alignment of BMCC general education assessment to program-level assessment
- Description of recent assessment efforts, including of general education outcomes
- Description of regular assessment process designed to ensure continuous improvement of program
- Description of how assessment results have been used for course-level or program redesign and/or improvement, and the results of those changes

7. Student Satisfaction with the Program:

- Analysis of faculty role in student mentoring and advisement
- Summary of findings from student focus groups (IEA) including alumni feedback collected by the program or BMCC graduate survey data
- Strategies to improve student engagement inside and outside the classroom
- Strategies to improve alumni engagement

8. Adequacy of Resources:

Analyze the use and adequacy of resources to support the program, including but not limited to the following:

- Budget allocation
- Facilities, including labs, offices, and equipment
- Library resources
- Student support services
- Administrative support
- Support from other College offices/services

9. Analysis of Program Strengths and Weaknesses:

- Assessment of strengths and weaknesses of the program, including how it is intentionally designed for student success
- Description of any specific concerns and/or any threats to the program

- Description of any opportunities to grow or improve the visibility of the program.
- Description of any special accomplishments and/or external recognition for the program, faculty, or for recent graduates

10. Recommendations and Priorities for Program Improvement: Action Plan

List of specific actions that will lead to improved student success and the enhancement of overall program quality based on this program review

Actions	Timeline	Person(s) Responsible

Appendix I: BMCC Academic Program Review Schedule 2016 - 2025

Department	Degree	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24	24/25
Academic Literacy and Linguistics	Linguistics and Literacy AA					X				
Accounting	Accounting AAS	X					X			
	Accounting Certificate Program		X					X		
	Accounting for Forensic Accounting BS @ J	X					X			
Allied Health	Paramedic AAS				ACCR					ACCR
	Health Informatics Certificate Program					ACCR				
	Health Information Technology AAS				ACCR					ACCR
	Respiratory Therapy AAS				ACCR					ACCR
Business Management	Business Administration AA					X				X
	Business Management AAS					X				X
	Small Business Entrepreneurship AAS					X				X
	Digital Marketing AS								X	
	Financial Management AS								X	
Center for Ethnic Studies	Ethnic Studies AA	X					X			
Computer Information Systems	Computer Information Systems AAS				X					X
	Computer Network Technology AAS				X					X
	Computer Science AS				X					X
	Geographic Information Science AS						X			
English	Children and Youth Studies AA								X	
	Writing and Literature AA					X				
Health Education	Community Health Education AAS			X					X	
	Public Health AS							X		
	School Health Education AS				X					X
	Gerontology AS (w/ Social Sciences)					X				
Liberal Arts	Liberal Arts AA						X			
Mathematics	Mathematics AS					X				
Media Arts and Technology	Animation & Motion Graphics AS				X					X
	Multimedia Programming and Design AS	X					X			
	Video Arts and Technology AS					X				
Modern Languages	Modern Languages AA				X				X	

Department	Degree	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24	24/25
Music and Art	Art Foundations: Art History AA				X					X
	Art Foundations: Studio Art AS				X					X
	Music AS							X		
Nursing	Nursing AAS			ACCR					ACCR	
Science	Biotechnology Science AS		X					X		
	Engineering Science AS	X					X			
	Science for Forensics AS		X					X		
	Science AS					X				
	Science for Health Professionals AS						X			
Social Sciences, Human Services and Criminal Justice	Criminal Justice AA	X					X			
	Economics AA						X			
	History AA				X					X
	Human Services AS			X					X	
	Psychology AA					X				
	Sociology AA				X					X
	Gerontology AS (w/ Health Education)					X				
Speech, Communications, and Theatre Arts	Communication Studies AA		X					X		
	Theatre AS				X					X
	Gender and Women's Studies AA (w/ Social Sciences)									
Teacher Education	Child Care / Early Childhood Education AS			X					X	
	Bilingual Childhood Education AA			X					X	
	Childhood Education AA			X					X	
	Secondary Education AS (Biology, Math, Physics, and Chemistry)			X					X	
										Updated 3-11-19

Appendix 2: External Review Visit Guide

The external review visit is designed to be a collegial experience. It is an opportunity for colleagues from different academic institutions with like-experiences to provide feedback on the current program. Departments may want to consider selecting an external reviewer from an institution that they have an articulation agreement with. After external reviewers have completed their site visit, the expectation is that each reviewer will submit their report to the Provost to be used by the department for future planning. The department chair and APR lead will meet with the Provost and an IEA representative to discuss the reviewers' findings and next steps.

External review visits should include, but are not limited to, the following components:

- Visit with members of faculty (including adjuncts)
- Observation of course(s) within the program
- Meeting with students
- Meeting with alumni (if available)
- Opportunity to write notes or feedback while on-site
- Exit interview with the Provost

External reviewers should be asked to identify strengths, weaknesses, and specific recommendations for improvement relative to the report as presented and observations from their visit.

Appendix 3: Guidelines for Academic Program and AES External Review Services

All external reviewers for academic programs and AES review must be approved by the Senior Vice President /Provost by **September 1st** of the review year. The reviewers' curriculum vitae and proposed travel plans must be submitted for review and approval.

The scheduled date and time of the review must be coordinated with the Senior Vice President/Provost's availability to meet with the reviewer and department/program head.

The honorarium for approved external reviewers is \$500 and is processed according to the City of New York and City University of New York (CUNY) policy for payment to CUNY employees and non-CUNY employees.

Non-CUNY Employees

- IEA will be in direct contact with the external evaluators to provide the required paperwork for honorarium and site visit.
- Please allow up to 30 days for external evaluator to receive the honorarium after the external evaluator has submitted their final report and findings to the Provost

CUNY-Employees

- CUNY employees cannot receive an honorarium as an independent contractor. After the report is submitted, reviewed and approved by the Senior Vice President/Provost and the department/program head, a request is made to the college's budget office to transfer funds, in the amount of \$500, to the reviewer's campus' budget office.

Travel Reimbursement

- The Office of Institutional Effectiveness does not provide funds for travel. Programs may use their own funds to bring in site visitors or can make an appeal with justification to The Senior Vice President/Provost who will review and consider requests for travel reimbursement for out-of-town external reviewers. These requests must be pre-approved or payment cannot be guaranteed. Reviewers who reside in New York City boroughs and the tristate area are abundant and preferred.
- If travel expenditures are approved, the reviewer must submit original receipts and documentation to the Office of Academic Affairs for reimbursement.

Appendix 4: Guiding Questions for External Reviewers Report

The purpose of the external review is to provide a broader and independent perspective on the quality of an academic program. Each external reviewer submits a separate report. The questions below are intended to provide guidance for writing the report but are not meant to serve as a template for report. The final report should be no longer than 3-5 pages.

1. Review of program mission and goals

- Are the mission and goals clearly articulated, appropriate, and aligned with the institution's mission and goals?

2. Review of student success outcomes

- What are any areas of concern relative to enrollment, retention, graduation, transfer, baccalaureate attainment, and labor market outcomes?

3. Review of the curriculum

- Are the learning outcomes clearly stated, appropriate, and adequate?
- Is there a comprehensive and integrated educational experience and curriculum for students?
- How does this program compare to peers?
- Is the curriculum current, reflecting any recent or emerging changes in the field?

4. Review of instruction and scholarship

- What are the strengths of the faculty in the department/program, as presented and observed?
- Are there any areas of expertise not represented among the faculty that should be?

5. Review of assessment

- Does the department/program have adequate processes for determining the extent to which it is meeting stated goals and for using assessment results to improve student outcomes and overall program quality?
- Are there any areas of concern relative to the assessment of student learning?

6. Review of student satisfaction

- Are there any concerns regarding student satisfaction as presented or observed?

7. Review of resources

- Does the department have sufficient resources to deliver a high quality program?
- What additional resources, if any, would increase the program's quality?

8. Specific commendations, concerns, and recommendations

- What are the program's major strengths and weaknesses?
- What specific recommendations do you have to improve student success and overall program quality?