Background. The 1984 Plan for Progress for the University included as a goal the development and implementation of a system of program review as an integral part of the overall planning process. A calendar that combines governance, accreditation, program reviews, and leadership evaluations was established in 1984, and a regularly scheduled review of programs was initiated. Coincident with these developments, the Alabama Commission on Higher Education (ACHE) implemented a policy requiring regular review of all existing programs of instruction, research, and service. Moreover, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) requires regular review of all academic programs.

Based on a recommendation by the Council of Deans, the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs revised the review of existing programs beginning with the five-year period 1989-90 through 1993-94. The schedule combined, to the maximum extent possible, reviews for accreditation and governance with internal program reviews.

In 1996 the Provost and academic deans effected two changes in the program review process. The first was to alter the typical review cycle of “full” reviews from five years to eight years for programs that are not subject to external accreditation. The second was to initiate the “modified” review of programs subject to external accreditation, with such reviews typically occurring at the same time that an accredited unit is conducting the self-study for its accreditation site visit.

The goal of review is continuous program assessment and improvement. Program review committees and external consultants identify program strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities, and they offer specific recommendations to assist programs in their efforts to improve.

As of 2000 each department undergoing full review formulates an Action Plan in consultation with the academic dean’s office to which the department reports. For each recommendation in the reports by the review committee and consultant(s), the Action Plan must state the actions(s) to be taken, responsible person(s), and timetable for completion. Three-year, required follow-up reports began in May 2006 for reviews completed in May 2003. The Action Plan and the department’s Three-year Follow-up Report on the Plan are integral components of the University’s ongoing Institutional Effectiveness initiatives. Materials developed for program reviews are an important component of the University’s Compliance Certification for SACSCOC reaffirmation, as are the department’s Strategic Plan, assessment submissions, and assessment results that are coordinated with the Director of Institutional Effectiveness.
PROCEDURES FOR PROGRAM REVIEWS

The Office for Academic Affairs (OAA) coordinates program reviews in cooperation with the academic unit under review, the respective college or school, and the Graduate School whenever graduate programs are involved. Reviews are scheduled at a time convenient for the academic unit under review.

There are two program review procedures. “Full” review is for programs not subject to external accreditation. “Modified” review is for programs subject to accreditation.

1. Full Review.

When none of the degree programs in a department is accredited by an external agency or professional organization, there will be a full review every 8 years. At the beginning of the review, OAA provides online self-study templates; the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment provides information from its databases; and the Graduate School provides information from its databases to assist the department chair and faculty in completing the self-study. There will be an internal review committee and an external consultant selected from a pool of individuals nominated by the Provost, Graduate Dean and Associate Dean, Dean of the College, and Chair of the Department. The final decision regarding external consultants and committee members rests with the Provost.

2. Modified Review.

a) When all degree programs in a department are accredited (e.g., departments in the Culverhouse College of Commerce and Business Administration and the College of Education), OAA provides the department online self-study forms. The Office of Institutional Research and Assessment and the Graduate School provide the department information from their databases, so that the department can focus more on the qualitative than quantitative aspects of the self-study. The forms and OIRA data are provided during the early stages of the department’s self-study for external accreditation, in order to assist with that effort as well. The department completes the self-study online. The department also sends the OAA program review coordinator the site-visit report and all relevant correspondence to and from the external accreditor. This is important for maintaining a complete OAA record of external reviews.

b) When a department has both accredited and unaccredited degree programs (e.g., departments in the College of Engineering), OAA will consult with the dean and department chair to determine whether all should have full review or all should have modified review. Rather than following the 8-year cycle used when no programs in a department are accredited, the review of departments or colleges with a mix of accredited and unaccredited programs normally will occur in the year when the self-study begins for accreditation. If the accrediting agency has a short review cycle, full reviews may occur every other cycle.
### Detailed Steps in the Review of Programs Not Subject to External Accreditation (“Full” Review)

| Spring prior to review | • Deans contacted to fine-tune review schedule for next academic year  
|                       | • Online Senior Satisfaction Surveys and online Graduate Student Satisfaction Surveys completed by OIRA  
|                       | • Consultants nominated, contacted and selected  
|                       | • Program review committees nominated and selected |
| Summer prior to review | • Consultants’ visits finalized  
|                       | • Data to complete review forms provided by OIRA and the Graduate School  
|                       | • Two-day visits scheduled with external consultants (typically in mid-October to early November)  
|                       | • Director of Institutional Effectiveness works with dept. chairs to fine-tune their assessment efforts and WEAVE reports |
| Fall                  | • Review committees established and oriented  
|                       | • Dept. completes online self-study forms typically by mid-Sept.  
|                       | • Committees analyze data and conduct interviews of provost, dean, assoc. provost/graduate dean, department chair, faculty, students, Director of Institutional Effectiveness and others as appropriate in Sept/Oct  
|                       | • Committees begin to draft report online  
|                       | • Consultant sends report to OAA review coordinator, who forwards it to department chair, dean and review committee  
|                       | • Director of IE provides an assessment evaluation by the end of Sept. and continues to work on assessment issues with the department  
|                       | • Assoc. Provost/Graduate Dean also reviews departmental submissions and consultant’s report and may provide initial feedback for consideration by the department and dean’s office at this time |
| Spring                | • Committee posts draft report online; draft report ends with these 3 sections:  
|                       | (1) strengths;  
|                       | (2) areas of opportunity; and  
|                       | (3) recommendations—grouped into low-cost and higher cost  
|                       | • Chair consults with dean’s office and posts Action Plan online. The Plan addresses each recommendation in the committee’s report and consultant’s report; committee prepares final report online  
|                       | • Final meeting: Provost, Associate Provost/Graduate Dean, Dir. of Institutional Effectiveness, review coordinator, academic dean and AD(s), department chair, and review committee; discussion focuses on committee & consultant recommendations and the Action Plan to address the recommendations  
|                       | • Provost’s memo to dean, with copies to all who were involved in review |
| 1-2 years after review is completed | • Dean reports to provost as actions in the Action Plan are completed  
|                       | • Follow-up report on Action Plan progress (only if stipulated in provost’s letter) |
| 3 years after review  | • Mid-cycle report (“Form 5”) on Action Plan progress (all full reviews) |
ACTION PLAN

Guidelines for Department Chair and Dean
During Full Review and in Preparation for the Final Meeting

Action Plan: Background, Format, and Components

An important outcome of academic program review is the development of a comprehensive Action Plan. The Plan includes each action item (recommendation) in the report by the review committee and consultant (wherever there is not overlap between the two sets of recommendations). In the months and years following completion of the review, the department chair and dean work to complete each action item. In the dean’s regular meetings with, and reports to, the provost, the dean will inform the provost as action items are completed.

What the department chair does to formulate the Action Plan. First, OIRA posts each committee recommendation verbatim in the Action Plan online template. The department chair then drafts the Action Plan online and must discuss each proposed action with the dean, work through revisions with the dean, and receive final signoff from the dean to post the final Action Plan. The chair and dean make every effort to tell how current resources can be used to address each low-cost recommendation and each higher-cost recommendation of both the review committee and external consultant, wherever they don’t overlap. In the online Action Plan form, the department chair completes the following for each committee recommendation:

1. specific action(s) to be taken to address the recommendation;
2. responsible person(s) to perform the action(s) to address each recommendation; and;
3. timeline for completion of the action(s).

The chair and dean follow the same process for each recommendation by the consultant(s).

Notes.
1. If the department chair feels it is more efficient to combine highly similar recommendations by the committee and consultant, the chair may do so if recommendations are cross-referenced for the reader.
2. It is the college dean who gives final approval of the Action Plan before it is made available to the review committee and others.
3. The OAA program review coordinator can provide department chairs with sample Action Plans to follow from previous reviews.
4. Third-Year Reports. By May 15 of the third year following completion of the review, the department submits to the OAA program review coordinator a dean-approved report (Program Review Form 5) addressing the status of each component of the Action Plan. Form 5 and all other review forms are online at the UA homepage, A-Z site index, under Academic Program Review.
## Detailed Steps in the Review of Programs
That Have External Accreditation
(“Modified” Review)

### Notes
1. A modified review does not include an external consultant and usually does not include a review committee.
2. The review cycle is not fixed. It varies to coincide with the review cycle of each unit’s accrediting agency.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>During self-study period, OAA posts online self-study forms; Graduate School also provides information from its databases</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Unit director completes forms online by the date determined by the unit in consultation with the program review director in OAA</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Director of Institutional Effectiveness works with department on its WEAVE reports and overall assessment procedures; works with the department as needed if assessment issues are identified. Associate provost/graduate dean also reviews completed OAA self-study forms and may provide input to the department</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Provost, associate provost/graduate dean, and associate graduate dean/program review coordinator serve as a central committee to review the self-study; additional information may be requested as needed; provost may request additional reviewers to provide input</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Unit director sends copy of transmittal letter and site-visit report, along with all other major correspondences, to OAA program review coordinator within one week of receiving it</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>If the provost deems necessary, unit representatives meet with representatives of OAA and Graduate School to discuss site-visit report and completed OAA review forms, and to decide whether to establish a review committee to provide additional evaluation and recommendations; if such a committee is established, the provost determines the charge to the committee and the focus of a final meeting in OAA</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>After the meeting, provost sends letter to dean to whom the unit reports; copy of letter goes to all who attended the meeting; letter summarizes major strengths and issues to be addressed; provost and/or associate provost/graduate dean may call for a “mid-cycle follow-up” meeting within a specified time to address any pressing issues</td>
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