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 Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) 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 for the five-year period 1989-90 through 1993-94. The schedule combined, to the maximum extent possible, reviews for accreditation and governance with the 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 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 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, who is responsible, and what the timetable is 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 SACS reaffirmation, as are the department’s Strategic Plan, assessment submissions, and assessment results that are coordinated with the office of the Assistant to the Provost for Assessment.
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 data forms and objective data from the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment to assist in completing the forms. There will be an internal review committee and an external consultant.

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 forms that are modified versions of the full review forms. OAA provides the department with objective data from the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment to assist in completing the forms. The forms and OIRA data are provided during the early stages of the department’s self-study for external accreditation. When the self-study is completed, the department sends OAA the completed forms and a copy of the self-study. The department sends OAA the site-visit report within one week of receiving it from the site-visit team or accrediting agency.

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 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.
| Spring prior to review | Deans contacted to fine-tune review schedule for next academic year  
| | On-line Student Satisfaction Surveys completed  
| | Consultants nominated and contacted  
| | Program review committees nominated |
| Summer prior to review | Consultants’ visits finalized  
| | Data to complete review forms obtained from Institutional Research and Assessment  
| | Two-day visits scheduled with external consultants (typically in mid-October to early November) |
| Fall | Review committees established and oriented  
| | Review forms completed & submitted online  
| | Committees analyze data and conduct interviews of provost, dean, assoc. provost/graduate dean, department chair, faculty, students, and others as appropriate in Sept/Oct  
| | Committees begin to draft report  
| | Consultant sends report to OAA review coordinator, who forwards it to department chair, dean and review committee  
| | Assistant to the Provost for Assessment reviews department’s most-recent assessment submissions; provides report to dept. (usually in mid to late Oct); and works with the department as needed if assessment issues are identified  
| | Associate Provost/Graduate Dean and the VP for Research also review departmental submissions and consultant’s report; they have option to provide their initial feedback for consideration by the department and dean’s office now (rather than for the first time at the final meeting in the spring) |
| 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 to addresses each recommendation in the committee’s report and consultant’s report; committee prepares final report online  
| | Final meeting: Provost, Associate Provost/Graduate Dean, VP for Research, Asst. to Provost for Assessment, 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 when each action in the Action Plan is 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. The department chair drafts the Action Plan online and discusses each proposed action with the dean. The chair makes 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. The Action Plan template takes the following simple format:

For each recommendation by the committee:
1. copy the committee’s recommendation verbatim;
2. state the specific action(s) to be taken to address the recommendation;
3. state the responsible person(s) to perform the action(s) to address each recommendation; and;
4. give a timeline for completion of the action(s).

For each recommendation by the consultant(s): Complete steps 1-4 as above.

Notes.
1. If the department chair feels it is more efficient to combine similar but distinct recommendations by the committee and consultant, give appropriate attribution.
2. It is the college dean who gives final approval of the Action Plan before it is sent electronically to the OAA program review coordinator for review and dissemination to all who will attend the final meeting in OAA.
3. The OAA program review coordinator can provide department chairs with sample Action Plans to follow from previous reviews; however, the samples may not always follow the current format.
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
Subject to 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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>During self-study period, OAA provides program review forms to unit director; OAA asks OIRA to provide unit director all available data to assist in completing the forms.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Unit director completes forms; unit director sends completed forms electronically to OAA program review coordinator, along with executive summary of the self-study report for the accreditor, by the date on which the self-study is to be completed.</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Assistant to the Provost for Assessment reviews department’s completed forms and most-recent assessment activities and reports; works with the department as needed if assessment issues are identified. Associate provost/graduate dean and VP-Research also review completed OAA forms and have the option to provide input to the department.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Provost, associate provost/graduate dean, and associate graduate dean/program review coordinator serve as a central committee to review the forms and self-study report; additional information may be requested as needed; provost may request additional reviewers to provide input.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Unit director sends copy of transmittal letter and site-visit report to OAA program review coordinator within one week of receiving it.</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>If 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; the provost determines the charge to the committee and 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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