

# University Senate

## University at Albany

Academic Program Review Committee  
Council on Academic Assessment

### Procedures for Submission and Review of Program Review Extension Requests

Approved March 22, 2016

Background: Per the University at Albany's Institutional Assessment Plan (IAP), all academic programs are subject to program review every 7 years, within their home department. These reviews include the writing of a self-study report as laid out in the University's "Practitioner's Guide for Program Review," a site visit and report by external reviewers, and a departmental response to that report. The only exceptions to this review cycle are programs that undergo full external accreditation, involving a similar process of self-study and external review. The schedule for the first round of reviews was determined in 2001-2002 and the first review cycle began the next year. It was assumed in the IAP that departments would simply be scheduled again for seven years after the first review, but the IAP did not anticipate the large number of departments that would seek extensions. As it turned out, many did: 18 out of 38 departments received extensions in Cycle 1, and 19 out of 34 departments received extensions in Cycle 2. (See attachment: "Program Review Schedule at UAlbany.")

This raises two important questions, which this policy addresses: (1) What should the process be for departments wishing to receive extensions? (2) When should the next review be scheduled for departments that receive extensions?

The procedures detailed below closely follow, and detail, procedures that have been followed on an ad hoc basis roughly since 2012.

#### Process for Requesting an Extension:

1. Departments requesting an extension in their scheduled program review shall make their request in writing to their Dean. This request shall include at minimum:
  - a. an explanation of the reason(s) for their request;
  - b. a listing of the measures departmental leadership will take during the year of the extension to lay the groundwork for the program review, particularly regarding the implementation of their assessment plan during the year of the extension, so

that they will be fully prepared to carry out the program review the following year;

- c. a discussion of how any changes in departmental leadership in the coming year might affect preparation for the review process, and how those challenges will be addressed.
2. If the Dean does not support the request, the review will be conducted as originally scheduled. If the Dean supports the request, she or he will forward the request, with a note affirming the Dean's support, to the Director of Academic Assessment (DAA).
  3. The DAA will then forward the request, with the Dean's note of support, to the Vice Provost and Dean for Graduate Education and/or the Vice Provost and Dean for Undergraduate Education, as appropriate, for their review and approval. If both Vice Provosts approve of the request, it will be implemented. If either Vice Provost does not support the request, the matter will be sent to the Provost for a final decision.
- Note on reasons for extensions: while the Council takes no position on what constitute valid reasons for extension requests, some examples from recent years have included: recent or sudden major changes to the program, including faculty departures, new faculty arrivals, and substantial changes to the curriculum; loss of key staff or faculty leadership; timing coinciding with other reviews; development of new programs; shifting of a program to a new department or school/college.
  - Note on requesting a second year of extension: *No extension shall be granted for more than one year at a time.* To request another year of extension, departments may follow the same procedures outlined above. However, their Dean and the Vice Provosts will hold their request to a higher level of scrutiny than for the first year extension, both with regard to their reasons, and with regard to the measures they say they will take to prepare for review. It is expected that while departments will generally be given the benefit of the doubt when requesting a one year extensions, requests for a second year will require more rigorous review, and will be held to a higher standard.

#### Scheduling of Subsequent Reviews:

- 1) When a department receives an extension, their next review shall be rescheduled for seven years after the actual review, rather than seven years after the originally scheduled review.
- 2) In the case of a site visit in the Fall Term, the review shall be considered to have occurred the previous Spring Term for rescheduling purposes. (This is true even without formal extensions.)