



COMPREHENSIVE PROGRAM REVIEW GUIDANCE & CONSIDERATIONS

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Purpose

This document provides comprehensive guidance for provost offices, academic leadership, and units tasked with overseeing the Comprehensive Program Review (CPR) process. As part of an institution's ongoing effort to ensure that a program meets the needs of its students, campus community, region, and the state as appropriate to the institution's mission, the CPR serves as a regular opportunity to reflect on a program's overall effectiveness and determine areas for improvement. It guides the institution in analyzing academic program inputs and outcomes, fiscal sustainability, alignment to workforce preparedness, degree and major investment planning, cost reduction, constituent transparency, stewardship of state resources, and critical decision-making concerning overall program health and its impact on the institution. Per the [Academic and Student Affairs Handbook 02.03.06](#): *Planning and conduct of academic program reviews shall be used for the progressive improvement and adjustment of programs in the context of the institution's strategic plan and in response to findings and recommendations of the reviews. Adjustments may include program enhancement, maintenance at the current level, reduction in scope, or, if fully justified, consolidation or termination.*

Different Forms of Program Review

Typically, institutions review certain components of degree programs annually and then conduct a more extensive deep dive as part of the comprehensive program review.

Annual Program Assessments typically include reviewing:

- course learning outcomes and program learning outcomes for the prior year
- student progression, change of majors, and other data to ensure the program is meeting the needs of current students

Comprehensive Program Reviews (every 5 – 10 years), which tend to look at long-term trends to ensure future students are set up for success, typically include:

- Holistic Review of the annual program assessments
- Reviewing workforce needs
- Questioning relevancy of program learning outcomes, and modernizing as needed
- Benchmarking with other programs in the state/nation
- External reviewers (e.g., from a different department and/or institution)

The University System of Georgia also annually reviews the overall productivity of programs, specifically fall-term enrollments and fiscal-year degrees conferred for each program. The USG Chief Academic Officer and other members of the University System Office Academic Affairs staff meet annually with each Provost to discuss, among other topics, programs with very low enrollment (over a three-year period) and/or that have conferred a low number of degrees (over a three-year period) to discuss remediation options for the betterment of institutions, efficiencies, programs, and students. Tied to this process, many institutions have also developed monitoring/improvement plans that serve as an additional type of review to ensure productivity.

Minimum Requirements for Comprehensive Program Review

Per [Board of Regents Policy 03.06.03](#), CPRs are required for “Career Associates, Associate degrees with a designated major, bachelor degrees and graduate degrees.” However, institutions may wish to use this process for all academic programs, including certificates. Per the [Academic and Student Affairs Handbook 02.03.06.01](#), these reviews shall be completed no longer than every seven (7) years for undergraduate degrees and no longer than every ten (10) years for graduate degrees.

[Academic and Student Affairs Handbook 02.03.06](#) also gives minimum requirements for what must be included in a CPR: “...[E]ach USG institution shall develop procedures to evaluate the effectiveness of its academic programs to address the quality, viability, and productivity of efforts in teaching and learning, scholarship, and service as appropriate to the institution’s mission. Institutional review of academic programs shall involve analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data, and institutions must demonstrate that they make judgments about the future of academic programs within a culture of evidence.”

Based on those requirements, each program review must include:

1. Quantitative and qualitative data that indicate whether the program is viable, productive, and of appropriate quality
 - Examples of such indicators are provided on page 4 and in the appendices.
2. An analysis of the above data. This analysis may be broken into contextual narratives that separately address the quality, viability, productivity, as well as any other measures of program effectiveness determined by the institution.
 - Examples of contextual narratives are provided on page 7.
 - Consider a SWOT analysis to frame the review.
3. Recommendations from the department for program improvement/adjustment, based on the above analysis.
 - This can be presented within contextual narratives, as a memo/cover sheet to the CPR document, or in other forms as determined by the institution. Consider using the [SMART goals](#) framework and/or establishing key performance indicators (KPIs) to track improvement.
4. Provost’s Office Determination of a program’s future action(s).
 - Minimum requirements for that summation are provided on page 9.

Minimum Reporting Requirements to the University System Office (USO)

Institutions are only required to report prior/next CPR year for all degree programs to maintain accurate data in the [Catalog of Authorized Academic Programs](#). CPR years are publicly available so that programs can identify similar programs at other institutions who are going through or recently went through the CPR process as a potential resource for program improvement. Institutions need not submit copies of CPRs to the USO, but copies should be available upon request. Official USO requests will be made through the Provost’s

Office, but CPRs should be accessible institutionally to academic affairs, institutional effectiveness, deans, department chairs, and others who may benefit from reviewing past CPR documents.

Indicators of Program Effectiveness

While the Academic and Student Affairs Handbook specifically requires institutions review quality, viability, and productivity indicators, institutions may decide to have additional categories for review. For example, an institution may wish to require programs separately review relevancy and efficiency, which can be considered subcategories within viability and productivity, respectively, depending on the priorities of the institution and academic affairs. Similarly, a college/school/department may wish to require review of those specific indicators based on the priorities of that unit. The remainder of this document will focus on the three required by the Academic and Student Affairs Handbook, but this should not be interpreted as the only allowable categories to review a program's effectiveness.

Institutions must decide the appropriate indicators of viability, productivity, and quality as appropriate to the discipline and institutional mission. Some indicators may be required institution-wide for all programs or for all programs at specific degree levels. Other indicators may be required at the college/school/department level. *All programs should also consider if there are any additional indicators that may be appropriate for program review.* Fairly exhaustive lists of example indicators for viability, productivity, and quality are provided in Appendices A – C, respectively. It is not necessary nor is it encouraged for every program to review all of these indicators; rather, institutions/colleges/schools/departments should first identify those important/valuable measures to the mission and priorities of the institution/units and focus a deep analysis on those measures.

The standards of viability, productivity, and quality are interconnected measures, but each addresses a different dimension of a program's overall health.

- Viability asks, "Can the program sustain itself?" A viable program shows sufficient ongoing demand, operational efficiency, and alignment with institutional goals.
- Productivity focuses on program output. For all institutions, this includes asking "Is the program producing enough graduates?" At some institutions, this may also include a review of research/grant productivity associated with the program/faculty.
- Quality questions "Does the program deliver on its goals and learning outcomes, and are those goals/outcomes appropriate to meet graduates needs?" Quality is about what students learn, how well they learn it, and how effectively the program prepares them for life after graduation.

Metrics used in review should include qualitative and quantitative measures of progress (see Potential Data Sources, below) that provide an institutional context, environmental

scan, academic and geographic indicators, and factors specific to the discipline, degree, major, and institution. Information used in preparation for institutional and disciplinary accreditation reports as well as external funding agencies and federal agencies may also be relevant for a comprehensive program review.

Potential Data Sources

Institutions are encouraged to develop internal dashboards that review applicable indicators of viability, productivity, and/or quality that are recommended or prioritized at the institutional level for CPR. Example Data Sources for such dashboards and for program reviews in general are listed below:

- Institutional Data from Banner, Degree Works, PeopleSoft, and other information systems
- Annual Program and/or Unit Assessments
- Unit/Program Budgets
- Program Catalogs and sample program maps
- Degree Works Audits, Student Plans, and Two-Year Planned Course Offerings
- USG Dashboards and Reports, including [METRICS](#), [Georgia Degrees Pay](#), and [Research and Policy Analysis's Dashboards](#)
- Internal/External Surveys, including student course evaluations and institutional First Destination surveys (if applicable)
- [Steppingblocks](#)
- Various web resources related to program/graduate supply at other institutions and workforce resources, including those available on the following USG webpages: [New Program Review](#) and [Workforce Demand Tools](#).

METRICS Dashboard

Access to the USG METRICS Dashboard can be requested through your Provost's office. Most institutions extend access to all department chairs, school deans, and other academic administrators and/or assessment personnel. Some questions that METRICS can help you address with regard to program review are listed below.

- [M] Major Change
 - Need to adjust/expand your program? This helps you identify what existing programs to leverage to make your program more interdisciplinary, based on what students have historically been interested in.
- [E] Enrollment and [C] Completion
 - Does your number of graduates seem reasonable for your enrollment? These tabs should be viewed in tandem with each other, and in comparison, with other programs at your institution.
- [R] Returning/Persistence

- At what point are students leaving the program? What coursework do they typically take right before or right after program exit that might indicate why some are leaving?
- [T] Teaching/DFW Rates
 - Thinking your retention/progression issue may be linked to particular courses? This measure can help you identify candidates for course revisions (or adjusting where they appear in the program).
- [I] Intensity
 - Are students taking longer to graduate because of the number of courses they take each semester? This helps you compare your program with others.

Overall data considerations:

- Trend data is typically more useful at the comprehensive program review level to see how things have changed over time. With all data points, institutions should consider how many years of data to consider – For example, 3 - 5 years or perhaps all years since the last comprehensive program review (or program launch).
- “Average” is used as a general placeholder. Depending on the data, it may be better to use mean, median, or mode, or to consider more than one.
- Whenever giving averages, you should specify the # datapoints that made that average (i.e., the “N”).
- For each data category, it should be discussed whether to look at specific terms (e.g., fall only) or all terms.
- When programs are offered in multiple modalities or multiple campuses, institutions should consider which data points should be disaggregated for each program modality/location.
- When programs have multiple concentrations/pathways, institutions should decide which data points should be disaggregated to review program health for each pathway.

Contextual Narratives

An analysis of the quantitative and qualitative measures of a program's viability, productivity, and quality requires contextualizing and synthesizing the data. Institutions may require a single narrative; individual narratives for viability, productivity, and quality; or shorter responses to targeted questions. The questions below are provided as examples of the types of questions within each category that could be addressed in these contextual narratives.

Addressing Viability

How does the data reflect the program's near and long-term viability? Specifically:

- How well does the program align with institutional mission, priorities, and accreditation expectations? How does this program contribute to the institution's strategic plan? How does this program align and/or complement other programs offered by the department/school.
- What current and relevant academic and workforce needs does the program fulfill? Does the curriculum align with current and emerging workforce skills? Is employer demand for graduates growing, stable, or declining? Does the program contribute to the needs of the community, region, and/or state?
- Who is the target market for recruitment? Is the enrollment pipeline sufficient to sustain the program? Is the program attracting its intended student population? How do any associated minors/certificates or coursework used in other majors help to support the program's viability? Are there demographic shifts that will affect future enrollment?
- Are there sufficient financial resources to support this program? Are faculty workload, class sizes, and course rotations efficient? How does the cost of instruction compare to the tuition generated by students/courses within the program? Is the program overly dependent on adjuncts or a small number of full-time faculty? How have/will recent or known near-future changes to the faculty or staff affect(ed) the program's effectiveness? Are specialized facilities, labs, or equipment adequate and up to date? (If not, what are the associated costs?)
- Should the institution devote continued resources to this program? Would program modification, expansion, or consolidation better suit this alignment?

Addressing Productivity

How does the data reflect the program's past and future productivity? Specifically:

- Describe any institutional or local factors (e.g., course sequencing or availability, high student transfer rate, etc.) that have an impact on students' progression in or graduation from the program. What improvements can be made? How well are students meeting the overall program learning outcomes?

- What monitoring strategies and resources do you employ to ensure students, both traditional and non-traditional, will progress? (e.g., strategies for bottleneck courses, intrusive advising, supplemental instruction, tutoring, etc.)
- What other factors related to this program, its faculty, and its students are attributed to the overall productivity of the program and its associated impact on institutional reputation through research, partnerships, or visibility? Does the program support general education or service courses that benefit the broader institution?
- Are faculty and leadership expectations of productivity aligned? Has the program demonstrated willingness to redesign or streamline when needed? Does it use data to identify bottlenecks or underperforming courses? Has the program adjusted curriculum, scheduling, or delivery to improve efficiency?

Addressing Quality

Briefly describe how the competitiveness of incoming students, their achievement of program learning outcomes, and their post-graduate success reflect the quality of the program. Specifically,

- Do the statistics on incoming students reflect high demand, which may indicate students consider the program to be of high quality?
- Do the statistics on graduating students, considering the data on student inputs, reflect significant learning and academic achievement?
- Does the program use curricular best practices and align to industry career needs? If applicable, does this hold for each concentration/pathway? How are program faculty encouraged to collaborate to improve teaching/courses? Are program faculty members in contact with employers and getting back feedback on graduates' job performance? Do employers state or suggest a need for changes in the program?
- Describe how the research/scholarly efforts and continued development efforts of the program faculty reflect the quality of the program within the discipline.
- Does the program meet all accreditation standards and reporting requirements? Are there upcoming accreditation risks or resource needs? Does the program comply with licensure or regulatory requirements (if applicable)?

Provost Office Determination

The final categorical summation evaluated by the Provost's Office should minimally include the components listed below. This may also include a Provost's Office response to the recommendations from the department for program improvement/adjustment for institutional consensus building on the necessary action steps for program improvement/continuation. The summation need not have this exact format. For example, it may be part of a spreadsheet that includes all programs that were reviewed for CPR in a given year, with a single signature line. Institutions may also have similar summary/sign-off sheets at the department, school, or college level.

Check any of the following to categorically describe action(s) the institution will take concerning this program.

- ☐ Program MEETS Institution's Criteria
 - ☐ Program is critical to the institutional mission and will be retained.
 - ☐ Program is critical to the institutional mission and is growing or a high demand field and thus will be enhanced.
- ☐ Program PARTIALLY MEETS Institution's Criteria and will be re-evaluated in <specify length of time until re-evaluation>.
- ☐ Program DOES NOT MEET Institution's Criteria
 - ☐ Program will be placed on a monitoring status.
 - ☐ Program will undergo substantive curricular revisions.
 - ☐ Program will be deactivated.
 - ☐ Program will be voluntarily terminated.
 - ☐ Other (identify/add text):

Provost or VPAA Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix A: Example Indicators of Viability

A degree program's viability comes down to whether it is academically sound, financially sustainable, market-relevant, and operationally deliverable over time. The most effective assessments look across demand, outcomes, resources, and strategic alignment.

It is not recommended for institutions/programs to review all these measures for each program but rather to choose those indicators that are meaningful to the institution/program.

Applicants/Admissions

- # prospective students showing interest in the degree
- # students who completed an application to the program (if an applicable process is in place)- Institution determines the milestone for reporting purposes (e.g., Point in time formal applications are reviewed and acceptances are granted)
- Yield Rate between interest and applicants
- Acceptance Rate --- Institution determines the milestone for reporting purposes (e.g., formal admittance to a degree program)

Enrollment*

- Headcount, disaggregated by:
 - Full/part-time status
 - Student classification (e.g., freshmen) and/or cohorts (e.g., year 1 students)
- FTE
- Average Class Size, in general and disaggregated per course
 - This should be compared with the frequency of course offerings
 - This can further be disaggregated by the major of students for courses shared by multiple programs.
- # majors in the degree program and % all same degree-level program enrollments for total University
- # double majors in the degree program
- # students in the related minors/certificates (if applicable)
- Average student credit hour production per faculty member in major courses and/or in service courses
- Student to faculty ratio in major courses and/or in service courses
- Course fill rates, in general and disaggregated per course
 - This can further be disaggregated by the major of students for courses shared by multiple programs.

*For bachelor's degrees with secondary program admission requirements beyond college admission, institutions may wish to consider enrolled students as only those who have been admitted into the program.

Post-Graduation

- What is the job outlook for graduates? (e.g., Job Postings, Industry Forecasts)
 - This should include both careers the degree is designed to prepare students for as well as the jobs students are getting.

- Note: This is not asking about job placement rates for graduates; that falls under quality measures. Rather, what is the array of careers available to students?

Faculty Resources

- Availability of qualified faculty to provide program instruction, including
 - # faculty resignations/retirements
 - # faculty searches conducted
 - # successful searches and % total
 - # failed searches and % total
- #/% of faculty in the program, disaggregated by
 - Full-time/part-time
 - Terminal degree/highest degree earned
 - Academic rank
 - Tenure status
 - Role (e.g., teaching vs. supervisory responsibilities such as thesis advisors, honors student mentors, directed study, etc.)
- Standard and average faculty course load, disaggregated by
 - Full-time vs part-time status
 - Full-time faculty rank
 - Portion of course load that supports the program
- # Faculty (tenured/track and non-tenured) supporting the degree program (excluding Core IMPACTS)
 - In the department
 - In the school/college
 - In other school/colleges at the institution
- % credit hours taught by FT, PT, and administrative faculty
- # course sections and credit hours taught in overload by full-time faculty

Partnerships

- Related to Enrollment Pipelines: # of established partnerships/agreements related to
 - Dual Enrolment students, High School CTAE pathways, TCSG institutions or other institutions of higher education
 - Local Employers who may be willing to pay for their employees to earn a degree
- Availability/Capacity of clinical/practicum/internship sites/providers

Other Resources

- (For applicable graduate programs) Total assistantships available in program
- Budget and availability of tutors/supplemental instructors/learning assistants for courses with high DFW rates and/or high enrollment
- Tuition Revenue Generation
 - Per program student and/or per course in the program
 - Compared to the cost of instruction or overall faculty salaries (+ fringe benefits)
- Adequacy of Library Resources
- Programmatic resources (e.g., technical support, advising support, administrative support)
- Equipment/Technology Audit

Appendix B: Example Indicators of Productivity

A degree program's productivity is about how effectively it converts its resources (e.g., faculty time, instructional capacity, and institutional investment) into meaningful academic outputs such as student credit hours, completions, research, and external engagement.

It is not recommended for institutions/programs to review all these measures for each program but rather to choose those indicators that are meaningful to the institution/program.

Retention/Progression

These should be compared with other programs at your institution.

- Retention rates, disaggregated per year (e.g., first year to second year retention rate)
- # Students who declared the program at 30/60/90 semester credit hours (for undergraduate programs only)
- # Students changing their major into this program
- Attrition rates, including
 - # Students changing their major out of this program
 - # Students who gave stopped out
 - # Students who have transferred

Course-Taking Data

- Average Credit Hours Attempted/Earned per term and per year, disaggregated by student classification
- Student credit hour generation (total for program and per faculty member)
- Complexity of Curriculum, as measured through [Curricular Analytics](#) or similar tools
- # credits of electives in the program (if applicable, per pathway)
 - Does it allow students to complete a minor? How many students have minors?
- ABC rates & DFW rates, disaggregated by course and/or instructor
- # of courses on a program map listed in a semester for which the course is not taught
- # of courses in catalog that have not been taught for 2+ years

Graduates

- # Degrees/Certificates Conferred
- Completion Rates
- Graduation Rates (at standard time to degree, at 150% time to degree)
- Average Time to Completion for all graduates, and disaggregated by:
 - For students with the same major throughout matriculation
 - For students who changed their major
 - For transfer students
- Total credit hours earned at graduation
 - Associated causes for excess hours (e.g., scheduling bottlenecks, course availability, advising practices)

Other Program Outputs

- Total amount of sponsored research funding by program faculty
- Amount of other external funds (e.g., gifts, gifts-in-kind) for program support
- # peer-reviewed publications in total and/or disaggregated by
 - # by faculty vs students
 - # by faculty rank and/or tenure-status
- # faculty research fellowships awarded in the academic year
- Number/exemplars of other forms of faculty/student scholarship, contributions, and/or recognitions

Appendix C: Example Indicators of Quality

A degree program's quality measures its effectiveness, relevance, and rigor related to program goals and preparing students for life after graduation.

It is not recommended for institutions/programs to review all these measures for each program but rather to choose those indicators that are meaningful to the institution/program.

Student Input

- Undergraduate college admission
 - Average standardized test scores (e.g., ACT/SAT/CLT)
 - Average high school GPA
 - Average freshman index (as applicable)
 - Average college credits earned upon admission, disaggregated for new freshmen (e.g., through DE, AP) and transfers
 - % Pell-eligible students
 - % requiring learning support (corequisite math and/or corequisite English)
- Baccalaureate program admission
 - Average GPA for students entering program (e.g., Core IMPACTS + field of study)
 - Average GPA in key program entry courses (e.g., field of study courses)
- Graduate admission
 - Average undergraduate GPA
 - Average standardized test scores (if applicable) (e.g., GRE, GMAT, LSAT, MCAT).

Student Output

- % of students attaining student learning outcomes at course/program level
- Pass rate/average scores on national/state licensure (if applicable)
- Employment rates (e.g., upon graduation, within 6 months of graduation, within 1 year of graduation)
- Starting salaries of graduates
- For undergraduate programs
 - Admission into graduate programs
 - # students entering graduate/professional programs
- Average graduate GPA (cumulative, major courses, final capstone courses)
- Completer satisfaction rates

Curricular Best Practices

- Student Course Evaluation data
- % courses using free/reduced cost materials, such as through [Affordable Learning Georgia](#)
- % courses utilizing at least one high impact teaching practice
- # of students in high impact practice courses offered in the program
- % of graduates completing internships, experiential learning opportunities, or discipline-specific projects, publications, and like achievements

Alignment to Disciplinary/Career Trends

- Is the CIP code an appropriate fit for the program curriculum? Does the program prepare students for **SOC codes** that are associated with the CIP code?
- Comparison of student learning outcomes with career competencies
- Comparison of program elements relative to other internal and external benchmarks
- External quality assurance
 - Professional accreditation status, surveys (e.g., NSSE-National Survey of Student Engagement), market rankings, employer/stakeholder satisfaction rates, awards and honors received by the program
- Stakeholder satisfaction rates (e.g., preceptor evaluations, internship evaluations)

Faculty Quality

- Average score on annual faculty evaluations for faculty in this program, compared to department/school-wide averages
- # opportunities for faculty development, disaggregated by
 - Institution, Center for Teaching and Learning, or program provided opportunities
 - External opportunities supposed by the institution/program
- # faculty development activities completed
- # faculty with earned certifications or badges related to the discipline and/or the responsibilities of a faculty member
- Faculty related indicators listed under program productivity>other program outputs can also serve as indicators of quality.

Partnerships

- # of established partnerships related to
 - Local Employers who repeatedly hire program graduates
 - Local stakeholders who sit on your program advisory board that ensures the program is meeting workforce and post-graduation needs