



# FERRIS STATE UNIVERSITY

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FERRIS FORWARD

## Academic Program Review: A Guide for All Participants

The Academic Program Review Council is a standing committee of Academic Affairs/Academic Senate

<http://www.ferris.edu/htmls/administration/academicaffairs/vpoffice/senate/progreviewcouncil/>

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## Welcome

Career-oriented education is at the core of the mission of Ferris State University. The instruction that meets this goal occurs primarily at the program level. An effective academic program review (APR) process is essential for the health of the University's degree programs. The academic program review process strives to ensure the quality and academic integrity of all programs through continuous program improvement. At its most basic, the program review process is simply a review of the good works, processes, procedures, and measured learning outcome results that programs develop as they strive for continuous improvement.

Academic program review has been present at Ferris State University since 1988. The APR process fulfills one of the criteria the University must meet for accreditation by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC). According to the *HLC Criteria for Accreditation, Core Component 4.A.1 of Criterion Four (Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement)*: "The institution ensures the quality of its educational programs [and] maintains a practice of regular program reviews and acts upon the findings." As part of a larger institutional system that collects, disseminates, and evaluates institutional information, an effective APR process provides evidence that the University meets the criterion. Both administration and faculty administer academic program review processes across the United States. At Ferris State University, program review is a faculty-led process conducted with administrative input and support. The Academic Program Review Council is comprised of representatives from all colleges and other support services. Through its recommendations, the Council serves the Academic Senate, the Provost's Office, and the President.

## Report Guiding Principles

Any complex organization such as a university is composed of several constituencies with different responsibilities and perspectives. Three major constituencies in any university are the students, the faculty, and the administration. The primary responsibility of students is to obtain an education. The faculty facilitates instruction and guides the learning of those students. The administration is responsible for the management of the university and for providing an environment and the resources necessary for the faculty to carry out their responsibilities to students. Clear and continuing communication among these constituencies is essential for optimal function of the university and for an effective academic program review process.

At Ferris State University, APR is a collaborative process that is largely faculty-driven. However, input from program administration at all levels is critical for a complete accounting of the state of a program. The process described in this document requires the formation of a program review panel (composed predominantly of faculty, with administrative representation) which is charged with collecting data concerning the program, evaluation of that data, and making recommendations regarding future direction of the program based on its findings. The Program Review Panel (PRP) report is submitted to the Academic Program Review Council (APRC), which is a standing committee of the Academic Senate composed of faculty representing all academic units. The APCR evaluates the report and may meet with the PRP for a discussion of the report, if necessary. The APCR then makes recommendations to the Academic Senate, which is composed of faculty representing all academic divisions of the University. The

recommendations of the Academic Senate are submitted to the Provost. Based on the PRP report, the APRC recommendations, the recommendations of the Academic Senate, and any other documentation, the Provost makes recommendations to the University President concerning each program. The University President may or may not accept the recommendations of the Provost.

The central role of the faculty in the APR process does not diminish the importance of input from or supplant the responsibilities of other constituencies in the University. During the process of preparing their report, members of the PRP solicit input from other stakeholders, including current students, alumni, employers of graduates, advisory committee members, faculty members who teach in the program, the Department Head/Chair, and the Dean. Additionally, the Department Head/Chair and the Dean are involved with the development and writing of the report throughout the process and are encouraged to present their views regarding program quality to the APRC.

Implementation of the recommendations made by the Provost and approved by the President with respect to curricular matters is the responsibility of the program faculty, the Department Head/Chair, and Dean of the College. Allocation of fiscal and human resources necessary to implement the recommendations is at the discretion of the administration.

The following guiding principles should be used in conducting program reviews. These guidelines should help to (1) reduce the amount of documentation required in the program review process; and (2) focus the review on program goals and student learning outcomes, how well the program has done to date in meeting those goals and outcomes, and the future actions needed for continued program quality improvement.

These principles should guide report development:

1. The report will be goal-oriented. If a program has established specific program goals, they should be stated clearly, and the attainment of those goals should be the focus of the PRP report. The goals should reflect the University's mission and the departmental, college, and divisional strategic plans.
2. The focus of the report will be on the program as a whole, supported by individual courses.
3. The focus of the report will be both descriptive and assessment-oriented. **The report will evaluate progress toward overall program goals rather than merely document the status of the program.** It will analyze available data, both quantitative and qualitative, provided or generated to assess the program's progress in meeting its goals and established program-level student learning outcomes.
4. Recommendations will be expressed in terms of action items. Recommendations for action will indicate specific tasks, designated/responsible person and timelines.
5. Program assessment should be a continuous process in order to support the report development.

## Style Guide Suggestions

The APR process is fully electronic. Programs undergoing APR are required to submit a report as according to the following guidelines:

- Reports should follow the outline exemplified in this document.
- Report pages should be numbered consecutively. The first page of the report (title page) should be numbered 1.
- All numerical information should be presented in table format – including raw numbers and percentages. Please assign each table and figure a numeric title. All data presented must be interpreted in relation to program status and/or potential program impact (both positive and negative).
- Reports are to be submitted via email in PDF format to the APRC email address (apr@ferris.edu). Print copies will not be accepted.

## What Should be Included in the Program Review Report?

Program Review Panels should prepare a report utilizing data collected since the last program review. The report should include information determined to be important for monitoring program progress and identifying program strengths and challenges that aid faculty and administration in continuous program improvement. The following recommendations for a minimum level of rigor are provided to aid programs in the development of a thorough, well-rounded review. Individual programs should focus on areas they deem most valuable to continued program improvement. The following recommended guidelines were developed with three questions in mind:

1. Why is the information being reported important?
2. How is the information requested helping to reach outlined program goals or University goals, and established program-level student learning outcomes?
3. Does the information requested speak to a program's current quality or provide insight into the quest for improved quality? The intent is to aid programs in continuous improvement.

The following pages contain the recommended headings for successful completion of the PRP report. At the end of many heading descriptions, the recommended length of a typical response is provided. Recommended response lengths benefit the programs by encouraging an increased retrospective and response focus. They also benefit the process of program review by allowing more clarity as to a program's strengths and areas for improvement and providing more time for debate and analysis among council members. Programs are encouraged to keep responses to as close to the recommended response length as possible.

**If an accredited program has previously prepared documentation that addresses the queries below, accredited programs are encouraged to utilize those reports (or other documentation prepared for accreditation) to provide the information requested below. Accredited programs should conform with the recommended report format so the APRC can accurately identify the program response to each section and only documentation directly related to the queries below should be included. Please ensure that all sections and appendices are clearly labeled.**

# RECOMMENDED REPORT FORMAT

## SECTION 1 - General Program Information

### A. Program Name and History [maximum 500 words]

Please provide a complete list of all programs (degrees, minors, and certificates) being addressed within the report. The APRC has left it at the discretion of the programs to determine which degrees, minors, and certificates may be logically ‘bundled’ into a single report. It is the responsibility of the program faculty and administration to ensure that all programs are reviewed during their scheduled semester.

Please provide a brief history of the program(s). By articulating the program’s past, the program should provide the reader a framework for responses in subsequent sections.

Programs may include their mission statement and/or summary of strategic plan in this section.

### B. Faculty Roster

Please provide the *APR Program Faculty Roster* listing all faculty and other instructional staff members teaching in the program during the two full academic years prior to APR.

### C. Assessment of Transfer Course Equivalency [approx. 250 words]

Please describe the process used to evaluate transfer courses for this program.

### D. Graduate Success [approx. 250-500 words]

Please provide a narrative and supporting data describing the post-graduation status of individuals completing the program. **Suggested data include:**

- Number and percentage of graduates employed within one year of graduation in a position requiring the degree earned
- Number and percentage of graduates enrolled in advanced study
- Number and percentage of graduates participating in post-graduate fellowships, internships, and special programs (note: this should not include activities that took place during coursework)

Data from the University Graduate Follow Up Survey is available [online](#) through the Office of Institutional Research and Testing. Additional data may be available from Institutional Research and Testing upon request.

## **SECTION 2 - Continuous Improvement Results & Plans**

The purpose of assessment is to inform continuous improvements designed to enhance students' learning and success. Beyond goals related to student achievement, assessment of student learning is a university-wide requirement from the Higher Learning Commission.

This section gives programs an opportunity to identify and evaluate established program-level learning outcomes, how the program measures accomplishment of established outcomes, and how results are used to make program improvements.

### **A. Curriculum Mapping**

Please provide the Nuventive Improve *Curriculum Mapping* report as Appendix 1.

If the curriculum map in Nuventive Improve does not match current check sheet(s) on record, please include a narrative describing the discrepancies.

### **B. Program Outcomes, Assessment Methods, Results, and Actions**

**[approx. 250-500 words]**

Please provide a narrative summary of program assessment, including outcomes, assessment methods, results, and actions. Attach the Nuventive Improve *Assessment: Program Four Column* report as Appendix 2.

### **C. Course Outcomes, Assessment Methods, Results, and Actions [approx. 250-500 words]**

Please provide a narrative summary of course assessment, including outcomes, assessment methods, results, and actions. Attach the Nuventive Improve *Assessment: Course Four Column* report as Appendix 3.

If the courses included in the *Assessment: Course Four Column Report* do not match the major/minor/certificate requirements listed on current check sheet(s), please include a narrative describing the discrepancies.

### **D. Participation of Stakeholders [approx. 250-500 words]**

Please provide a narrative summary of stakeholder participation in program continuous improvement processes. Please provide documentation of regular participation of stakeholders such as faculty, other instructional staff, students, graduates, and advisory board members in the process of improvement of student learning (e.g., program meeting minutes, advisory board meeting minutes, student/graduate/employer surveys). Please attach supporting data, including advisory board member lists if appropriate, as Appendix 4.

### SECTION 3 - Additional Data

#### A. Enrollment Trends [approx. 250 words]

Please provide a narrative summary and data describing enrollment and completion trends in the program since the last academic program review. Plans to address negative enrollment trends should be included.

Academic Year	Number of Declared Students	Number of Graduates

#### B. Resources Needed

- I. Describe essential new resources (print/electronic/digital), if any, necessary to acquire for the program.
- II. Describe essential staff and faculty requirements to effectively administer the program.
- III. Describe the physical and technological support needed to improve student outcomes.
- IV. List any additional resource deficiencies needed to improve student success.

**NOTE:** Include recommendations from advisory boards, student/graduate/employer surveys, etc., if applicable. Supporting documents should be attached as Appendix 5.

## SECTION 4 – Signature Page

Program Name  
Address

My signature below indicates that I was a contributing member of the Program Review Panel responsible for completion of the final Academic Program Review report submitted for review by the Academic Program Review Council, Academic Senate, Provost, and President of Ferris State University and attest to its completeness and soundness:

_____ Signature and Date	Joe Smith PRP Chair 231.555.1455 <a href="mailto:smithj@ferris.edu">smithj@ferris.edu</a>
_____ Signature and Date	Bill Clinton Department Head/Chair 231.555.1455 <a href="mailto:clintonb@ferris.edu">clintonb@ferris.edu</a>
_____ Signature and Date	Sam Brown Program Coordinator 231.555.1455 <a href="mailto:browns@ferris.edu">browns@ferris.edu</a>
_____ Signature and Date	Pete Moss Individual with Special Interest in Program 231.555.1455 <a href="mailto:moss@ferris.edu">moss@ferris.edu</a>
_____ Signature and Date	Lou Holtz Faculty from Outside the College 231.555.1455 <a href="mailto:holtzl@ferris.edu">holtzl@ferris.edu</a>
_____ Signature and Date	Michael Jordan Program Faculty 231.555.1455 <a href="mailto:jordanm@ferris.edu">jordanm@ferris.edu</a>

My signature below indicates that I have reviewed the Academic Program Review report submitted for review by the Academic Program Review Council, Academic Senate, Provost, and President of Ferris State University and attest to its completeness and soundness. Furthermore, my signature affirms that faculty or other instructional staff have the credentials that satisfy accreditation requirements to teach each course in this program. My signature also indicates that all Nuventive Improve data related to this program and its courses is complete, up-to-date, and consistent with current College assessment policies.

_____ Signature and Date	Betty White Dean 231.555.1455 <a href="mailto:whiteb@ferris.edu">whiteb@ferris.edu</a>
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Appendix 1: Curriculum Map - Nuventive Improve *Curriculum Mapping* report

Appendix 2: Program Outcomes - Nuventive Improve *Assessment: Program Four Column* report

Appendix 3: Course Outcomes - Nuventive Improve *Assessment: Course Four Column* report

Appendix 4 & 5: Other Supporting Documentation – e.g. recommendations from advisory boards, student/graduate/employer surveys, etc., if applicable and other supporting documents