Rochester Institute of Technology

Academic Program Review
Framework

Office of the Provost and Senior Vice President
Academic Affairs

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I. Purpose

Academic Program Review (APR) is a transparent, collaborative and comprehensive process providing faculty and administration with information needed to support and guide a university process of continual program planning, quality improvement and resource allocation. This process also provides a framework for program review requirements as stated in Institute Policy E20.1.

The value of program review includes the opportunity to:

- Identify an academic program's strengths, weaknesses and progress as a foundation for making informed decisions about quality

- Assess the contributions of each program to the university's mission and strategic vision

- Review the financial profile of the program and utilize this information in college and university-wide budgeting and resource allocation

The process will provide accurate and appropriate information to the university to make an informed decision about program enhancement, continuance, consolidation, reduction or discontinuance.

II. Timeline and Review Cycle

Undergraduate and graduate programs, which are not already on an external accreditation schedule, will be routinely reviewed on a seven-year cycle, tentatively scheduled to begin in 2015. Externally accredited programs will ordinarily be reviewed and aligned in accordance with their accreditation cycle. New programs will be reviewed no earlier than five years from the first entering class or since successful completion of an accreditation cycle, whichever occurs first.

On an annual basis, colleges will recommend which programs they would like to review and submit a proposed program review timeline to the Provost for approval. It is expected that some colleges may wish to propose one or more of the following possibilities: a staggered review schedule, concurrent bachelor and masters' program reviews, coordination with external accreditation processes, or recommend that all college programs be reviewed at the same time.

Colleges should plan their program review cycles in advance to allow for the possible needed adjustment of resources, staffing and faculty work plans.

III. Procedures

APR is a multi-step process. The first step entails preparation of a reflective self-study report which documents a program's accomplishments in relationship to specific criteria. The second step involves the development of recommendations and creation of an action plan that addresses recommendations growing out of the review process. (See Section VI)

The self-study articulates and is closely integrated with external accreditation processes within a college and with the assessment of program-level student learning outcomes.

Oversight of the APR process within each college is coordinated by the Dean (or designee) and organized through the Office of the Provost.

A. Department/Program Level Procedures

1. The Dean within each college and department chair or head will appoint a committee representative of college, school and department faculty and staff from the academic unit housing the academic program under review.

2. The committee is charged with the preparation of a self-study document according to RIT's APR criteria, guidelines and established timeline. Committee members will be provided a set of standard data, specific to their program (Appendix C, Possible Data Sources) which will assist them in preparing the self-study. As part of the self-study, committees are asked to include information on actions taken as a result of previous APR recommendations.

3. Externally accredited programs may substitute their entire accreditation self-study (or appropriate sections of it), past APR reports and action plans, and prepare other information as needed in response to specific self-study criteria. (See Appendix A)

4. The self-study is submitted to the Dean (s) of the college for review and discussion with the committee, department chair or head, program faculty and others, as deemed appropriate.

B. Procedures for Academic Programs without External Accreditation

1. A two-person external review panel (ERP) will be appointed to review those programs without external accreditation.

2. The Dean will solicit from the department chair or head and program faculty the names of potential reviewers with relevant knowledge and expertise. An *ERP Reviewer Nomination Form for Non-Accredited Programs*[1] will be completed for each nominee, including a curricula vitae and forwarded to the Provost and Dean for consideration.

3. The Provost in consultation with the Dean will review nominations, select and appoint a two–person ERP.

   i. External reviewers will be selected based upon their discipline expertise related to the program under review. Potential reviewers should not have a conflict of interest with program leaders, program faculty or other key program stakeholders. One of the two selected external reviewers must reside in academia. Consideration will be given to:

   a. faculty (either as associate or full professor) from other institutions that may have:
   - particular expertise in the review of programs,
   - leadership experiences such as program chair, administrative chair or dean,
   - served or currently serve on accrediting boards.

   b. professionals from communities of practice employed in or with relevance to the

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[1] Form to be developed as part of procedural guidelines

academic discipline. Depending on the discipline, this could include a representative from business, industry, government or the not-for-profit sector.

c. experienced administrators in the field.
ii. Selected ERP reviewers must demonstrate a thorough understanding of curriculum design and industry relationships related to the program under review.

iii. The Office of the Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs will cover reasonable expenses associated with the APR process including the cost of the two-person ERP visit (i.e. travel, lodging, meals, and modest honoraria).

C. Procedures for Academic Programs with External Accreditation

1. Externally accredited programs including site visit requirements will **not** be required to have external reviewers. Their self-study report plus any other materials that a program may wish to include (accreditation self-study or appropriate sections, past APR reports and action plans, and response to specific criteria) will be reviewed by the Dean and Provost. Special arrangements will be made for externally accredited programs which do not include a site visit.

D. External Review Panel (ERP) Procedures

1. Reviewers will:

   - receive the self-study and other relevant materials prior to their two-day on-site visit.
   - conduct and participate in a two-day, on-site visit.
   - be provided with a series of questions, criteria and metrics[2] to guide the APR process and evaluate the academic program.
   - submit a written report of findings and recommendations to the Provost and Dean no later than two weeks after the scheduled visit.

2. Written Report

   - The ERP written report of findings and recommendations will be shared with the committee, department chair or head and program faculty by the Dean of the College.
   - The department chair or head in consultation with program faculty and the Dean will provide a written response to the report detailing an action plan for the Provost's review.

IV. Use of Results and Actions

The Provost, in consultation with the Dean, will use the self-study, financial profile information and the program's proposed action plan to inform college planning, resource allocation and budgeting decisions. Such actions could include the approval of the program's proposed action plan, the development of a recovery plan, program enhancement, consolidation, reduction or discontinuance.

A. The Provost and the Dean will determine the type of progress report and appropriate timetable that may be needed in order to ensure that recommendations are successfully implemented.

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[2] Questions, criteria and metrics to be developed as part of procedural guidelines

i. In the event that results indicate greater program potential exists and/or the need for additional resources, the Provost will determine if incremental resources should be allocated.

B. Should results of the review raise important concerns or questions with respect to the program's quality or current financial profile, the Provost may require further study or review. An Academic Program Review Advisory Council (APRAC) will be established to provide counsel to the Provost and the respective College Dean to determine what additional actions may be needed. (See Section IV.C.)

ii. The Policy on the Discontinuance, Reduction or Transfer of Academic Programs (Institute Policy E20.2a-b; 3) will be followed should APR results recommend program discontinuation.

C. Academic Program Review Advisory Council (APRAC)

APRAC will be established to provide counsel to the Provost and the respective College Dean (s) and lend internal guidance to the university-wide APR process. Depending upon the program under review, the APRAC will consist of the ICC, in the case of an undergraduate program, or the Graduate Council, in the case of a graduate program, and will be supplemented, as needed and appropriate to the program under review, by a representative from Enrollment Management and Career Services, Finance and Administration and Assessment.

The APRAC will be convened at the discretion of the Provost and in consultation with the Council of Deans *after* recommendations and program action plans are reviewed by the College Dean and Provost *but prior* to the Provost making final decisions regarding program enhancement, continuance, consolidation, reduction or discontinuance.

While APRAC will always be convened when program reduction or discontinuance is under consideration, there will be other occasions when the group should be called together in order to insure that the appropriate context is established and that resources are allocated appropriately. Suggested "Guiding Principles for Convening"[3] will be developed.

D. Policy E20.1

The Academic Program Review (APR) process provides a framework for program review requirements as stated in Institute Policy E20.1. This framework provides procedural guidelines and a mechanism to create "an on-going system by which all departments and programs review indicators on their various programs" as cited within the existing E20.1 policy. Future modifications to the existing E20.1 policy should include reference to the APR framework.

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[3] To be developed as part of procedural guidelines

Future modifications to the APR framework should proceed through RIT's shared governance process (ICC and Graduate Council) with final endorsement by the Academic Senate.

V. <u>Self-Study Process</u>

Colleges have the option to choose from a fall or spring APR cycle. Each option requires approximately one-year to complete.

<u>Fall Cycle</u>	<u>Spring Cycle</u>

September 1st   **January 1st**
- The Office of the Provost notifies the Dean and department chair or head of the pending review process (based on previously established and approved schedule). The Dean and department chair or head will select and establish an internal committee to begin the review process. A representative from the Office of the Provost will meet with the committee to review the process, deadlines and address any concerns.

October - December   **February – May**
- The committee and department chair or head will collect relevant institutional data, and identify and nominate external reviewers for consideration.
- ERP nominations due to the Dean and Provost. External (on-site) reviewers confirmed.
- Self-Study review and report writing begins.

January 30th   **September 30th**
- APR self-study and other supporting materials due to the Dean and Provost.

February - March   **October - November**
- On–site ERP review completed. Recommendations due two weeks after visit.

April - May   **December**
- Provost, Dean and department chair or head meet to discuss report, recommendations, response to report and action plan.
- APRAC convened, if necessary.

September   **January**
- Implementation of Academic Program Action Plan

VI. <u>Self-Study Protocol</u>

Colleges should strategically plan for the designation of appropriate staffing (faculty and administrative) as well as modest resources to initiate the self-study and sustain the APR process throughout the review of its academic portfolio.

Committees comprised of college, school and department faculty and staff from the academic unit housing the academic program under review will prepare a self-study report that is guided by a core set of questions. The questions will enable each program to discuss its accomplishments, its unique role within the institution and ways it intends to enhance its quality.

Committees have the option of including additional information as they deem appropriate and will also be asked to comment on actions taken as a result of recommendations from previous APR reports.

The self-study will be guided by responding to the following questions contained in Appendix A: Areas of Inquiry.

- Program Description - What we do and why?
- Program Marketability – Is there continuing demand for the program?
- Program Quality and Accomplishments – How well do we accomplish program objectives?
- Program Vision - How do we intend to improve what we do and measure our success, what is our vision for the future?

In addition, the financial profile of the academic program will be considered during the APR process. A discussion related to program resources and associated financial information, including data from the Delaware Study, cost model, revenue generation, sponsored research and other relevant fiscal metrics, will be provided to committees.

A. Committees will determine how they wish to incorporate financial information and address any discrepancies or concerns into the self-study report. This information could be addressed in discussions related to program quality, resources and faculty contributions.

B. The Dean and Provost will use financial information during their discussions and determination of recommended actions.

Appendix A

<u>Self-Study Areas of Inquiry</u>

I. Program Description - What we do and why?

a. Provide a description of the academic program, curricular overview, facilities, space and utilization of current resources

b. Describe how the program supports:
- the College's mission, vision and strategic plan
- the University's mission, vision and strategic plan

c. Describe the program's contribution to and relationship with:
- the field, profession and/or industry (comment on brand recognition – regionally, nationally and internationally, if applicable)
- the University's General Education Curriculum, as appropriate
- RIT's Academic Program Profile Characteristics
- other RIT degree programs, if applicable
- student career preparation and post-baccalaureate study (if applicable)

d. Highlight the program's distinctive features (auxiliary locations, flexibility, interdependence, joint programming and department synergies, shared resources, cross-disciplinary and cross-college collaborations)

II. Program Marketability - Is there continuing demand for the program?

a. Provide an overview of the academic program's marketability including the five -year trends related to:

- admissions
    - student qualifications - high school GPA, SAT, ACT, GRE, GMAT
    - selectivity, program inquiries, applications, acceptance and yield rate

- enrollment (undergraduate/graduate)

- job placement rates and undergraduate program's record of admission to graduate school

- future projected enrollment and demand for graduates in the marketplace

III. Program Quality and Accomplishments –

How well do we accomplish program objectives?

a. Provide an overview of the academic program's accomplishments including:

- accreditation and external reviews (*existing reports and data may be used to the fullest extent possible to serve as an affirmation of program quality, if favorable, and received within 5 years of review cycle*)

- assessment of program-level student learning outcomes and program objectives; associated results and actions implemented as a result of findings

- innovative, distinctive curricular features (such as curriculum currency, curriculum and delivery design, national/professional rankings, and/or awards)

- distinctive student & alumnae accomplishments (such as awards, invited conference presentations and publications)

- student retention and graduation rates

- distinctive faculty accomplishments (degrees, certification, licenses, awards, research productivity and scholarship, publications, grants, contracts)

- recognition and feedback from alumni, COOP/internship supervisors and employers of graduates, as appropriate and applicable

IV. Program Vision - how do we intend to improve what we do and measure our success, and what is our vision for the future?

a. Provide a summary of opportunities for change, plans to enhance quality and competitiveness, plans for innovation and new initiatives, and how future progress and successes will be measured. Indicate which of these envisioned changes are within the control of the program and what changes require action at the Dean or Provost level.

b. Provide a vision statement that describes what the department would like the program to be in five years and what actions and/or resources are needed to accomplish the vision.

Appendix B

APR Process Overview

Item	Programs with External Accreditation	Programs without External Accreditation
Area of Review (Program Being Reviewed)	Program Centrality, Marketability, Quality, Vision (Multiple program codes may be included in a single program review, but all program codes must be included over time)	
Self-Study Report: Generation of a self-study report by a faculty/staff committee (appointed by the department chair or head) of the academic program under review	Use the self-study report required by the external accrediting body, with a supplement that addresses items in the RIT template not required by the external body	Committee prepares a self-study report using a template provided by RIT and modeled after those of typical accrediting bodies
Who is the self-study report submitted to?	The external accreditation body visiting team (during accreditation process) The Provost and the Dean	The Provost and the Dean ERP
Who prepares a Report of Recommendations based on the self-study?	The external accreditation body visiting team (with site visit)	ERP
Who receives the Report of Recommendations?	The Provost, who shares the results with the Dean, department chair or head and program faculty	
Who Prepares an Action Plan?	The department chair or head and faculty of the program being reviewed	
Who is the Action Plan submitted to?	The Provost, who shares the full packet (the self-study report, Report of Recommendations and Action Plan) with the Dean's Council	
APRAC	The APRAC will review all programs where program discontinuance is in question. It may also provide guidance *after* recommendations and program action plans are reviewed by the Dean and Provost *but prior to* the Provost making final decisions regarding program enhancement, continuance, consolidation or reduction.	
Final Actions	The Provost in consultation with the Dean (s) makes the final decision regarding the actions to be taken.	

Appendix C

Glossary, RIT Definitions and Possible Data Sources

I.   Glossary

Academic Program Review Advisory Council	**APRAC**
Academic Program Review	**APR**
External Review Panel	**ERP**
Inter-College Curriculum Committee	**ICC**

II.   RIT Vision, Mission, and Values

Vision
RIT will lead higher education in preparing students for innovative, creative and successful careers in a global society.

Mission
To provide a broad range of career-oriented educational programs with the goal of producing innovative, creative graduates who are well-prepared for their chosen careers in a global society.

The RIT community engages and motivates students through stimulating and collaborative experiences. We rigorously pursue new and emerging career areas. We develop and deliver curricula and advance scholarship and research relevant to emerging technologies and social conditions.

Our community is committed to diversity and student centeredness and is distinguished by our innovative and collaborative spirit. Internal and external partnerships expand our students' experiential learning.

RIT is committed to mutually enriching relationships with alumni, government, business, and the world community. Teaching, learning, scholarship, research, innovation, and leadership development for promoting student success are our central enterprises.

Values
RIT reaches the highest levels of quality of education through collective and individual commitment to ethics, pluralism, and respect for humanity. Together we value collaboration, openness, flexibility, pragmatism, experiential learning, entrepreneurship, global awareness and relationships, innovation, creativity and practical applications. Individually, we are responsible, hard-working, critical thinkers who pursue personal and professional growth with diligence, pride and spirit.

III. Guiding Principles

A. Students
- Providing opportunities for student success will motivate everything we do.
- The student climate will reflect the highest caliber of academic advising, professional counseling, caring, support, and mentoring.

B. Academics
- An RIT education will be a unique integration of high quality academic study and experiential learning, innovation, and creativity with a specific focus on successful careers.
- A high level of scholarship will be conducted in all academic areas to strengthen teaching and research and enhance the engagement of all undergraduate and graduate students in their learning experiences.
- Flexible and responsive curricula, programs, and systems will characterize the educational infrastructure.

C. Climate and Environment
- The campus climate will be one of openness, access, diversity, trust, mutual support, and effective communication.
- The university environment will reflect an aura of pride, spirit, and inclusion among all constituents.

D. Synergy
- Global awareness and experience will permeate the university.
- Academic and extracurricular programs will be connected and mutually reinforcing.
- Interdisciplinary academic programs will be encouraged.

E. Financial Base
- Cost effective and revenue opportunistic activities – always consistent with and supportive of the above principles and priorities-will be pursued to augment the required financial base. There will be a continual review of the cost base of the university to insure that funds are appropriately allocated to support the strategic plan.

Rochester Institute of Technology
Update to RIT 2005 - 2015
Strategic Plan

IV.   Areas of Inquiry and Possible Data Sources

Program Marketability
- Admissions
- Enrollment
- COOP/Job Placement/Graduate School Data
- Projected Enrollment/Marketplace Demands

Enrollment Management & Career Services
Institutional Research Program Census Data
Enrollment Management & Career Services
Enrollment Management & Career Services
Bureau of Labor Statistics

Program Quality & Accomplishments
- Accreditation Reports
- Student Learning Outcomes/Assessment Plans

- Retention/Graduation Rates
- Faculty Information
- Recognition and Feedback
- Surveys
     Alumni, COOP and Permanent Employer
- Student Qualifications

Program Office
Office of Student Learning Outcomes
     Assessment
Institutional Research - Program Census Data
Program Office
Program Office
Enrollment Management & Career Services
Alumni Relations, Program Office
Enrollment Management & Career Services