

FAQs ABOUT COMPREHENSIVE PROGRAM REVIEW AT VALDOSTA STATE UNIVERSITY

WHAT IS COMPREHENSIVE PROGRAM REVIEW (CPR)?

Comprehensive Program Review (CPR) is a “set of procedures to evaluate the effectiveness of . . . academic programs through a systematic review . . . to address the quality, viability, and productivity of efforts in teaching and learning, scholarship, and service as appropriate to the institution’s mission. The 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.” (*Board of Regents’ Policy Manual 205.01*)

WHY ARE PROGRAMS REQUIRED TO PERFORM CPR?

Both the University System of Georgia as well as VSU’s accrediting agency—The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS)—require that institutions demonstrate the effectiveness of their programs as well as maintain a strategic planning process designed to enhance/improve programs. CPR allows departments/divisions to assess their programs through the use of data so that they can make informed decisions about the ways to maintain, improve, enhance, or alter programs.

WHAT ADVANTAGES DOES CPR PROVIDE TO A PROGRAM?

The CPR process allows departments/divisions to look carefully at data about their program’s curriculum, students, and faculty. Exploring this data may confirm what they already knew anecdotally, or it may allow them to assess their situation in a new light. In their reports, they will also have the opportunity to discuss both their areas of strength as well as the areas in which they see the need for improvement. The reporting process gives them the opportunity to develop action plans which will allow them to enhance their strengths and address any areas for improvement. These action plans should also be part of the yearly strategic planning process as well as the annual report.

HOW OFTEN ARE PROGRAMS REQUIRED TO UNDERGO THE CPR PROCESS?

“The cycle of review for all undergraduate academic programs shall be no longer than seven years and for all graduate programs no longer than ten years” (*BOR Policy Manual 205.01*). If programs do not meet the productivity thresholds (determined by enrollment and number of graduates) as designated by the USG office, they may be asked to undergo a review more often than every seven years.

WHAT IF A PROGRAM IS ALREADY ACCREDITED BY AN EXTERNAL AGENCY? DOES IT HAVE TO UNDERGO CPR?

“Programs accredited by external entities may substitute an external review for institutional program review, provided the external review meets University System and institutional requirements for program review.” (*BOR Policy Manual 205.01*) VSU encourages the utilization of accreditation materials to support the program review process; however, these materials should be used solely in a supporting capacity and *not* as a substitution for the program review process. Programs that must complete both an external accreditation as well as the CPR process here at VSU should work with both

their dean as well as the Office of Strategic Research and Analysis to ascertain what sections of the CPR document parallel sections of the required accreditation review in order to avoid a duplication of effort.

WHAT ASSISTANCE DOES VSU OFFER IN PREPARING THE CPR REPORT?

Commonly used departmental data (such as number of majors, number of degrees conferred, graduation rates, etc.) will be produced and distributed by VSU's Office of Strategic Research and Analysis to assist departments with the self-study process. The CPR document itself provides prompts that should help programs analyze and evaluate this data. Guidelines, formatting information, and examples of CPR documents will be posted on VSU's Strategic Research and Analysis website for review. If programs have questions about the data, they should contact Ruth Salter in the Office of Strategic Research and Analysis. If they have other preparation questions, they should discuss them with their dean.

WHAT OTHER INFORMATION SHOULD BE INCLUDED AND EVALUATED IN CPR?

Besides the data provided by VSU's Office of Strategic Research and Analysis, programs have other sources of information available to them as well, such as the published program requirements and curriculum, the VSU Mission Statement, curricular and/or accreditation guidelines for the discipline, program budgetary information, enrollment data, achievements of faculty and students, and results of the program's assessment efforts/student surveys. All conclusions drawn in the CPR report should be supported by evidence from one or more of the sources listed above.

WHO IS THE AUDIENCE FOR THE CPR REPORT?

This document will have multiple audiences, so it must be written carefully with these varying audiences in mind:

- (1) the program's department. The CPR report should be a document in which a department/division analyzes and discusses data about its programs and majors. This document should be shared with all members of the unit since it will be the basis for planning about the future direction of its programs.
- (2) the program's dean. The department uses the CPR report to apprise the dean of the productivity, quality, and viability of its program(s). The report should demonstrate that the department/division has clearly and convincingly used data to assess the health of its program and to chart a course for the future that the dean can also use in setting priorities. The dean—in consultation with the program—will also be preparing an executive summary of the full report. This executive summary will be the document submitted to the USG System Office.
- (3) a review team. A review team—appointed by the VPAA and composed of one person from the reviewed program, one person from another department in the same college, and one person external to the college—will also read and review the CPR report; therefore, the report should be clear and comprehensible to people who are unfamiliar with the program or the college.
- (4) The Vice President for Academic Affairs. Any changes/improvements to a program will ultimately be based on recommendations by the VPAA.

WILL THE PROGRAM RECEIVE FEEDBACK FROM ITS CPR REPORT?

The program will receive feedback from several sources:

- (1) the program's dean. The dean—in consultation with the program—will prepare an executive summary of the CPR Report (see VSU's CPR document for a copy of what that executive summary should contain). This executive summary not only provides a summary but also the dean's evaluation of the data and evidence presented.
- (2) This review team—appointed by the VPAA—will provide further faculty oversight and participation in the process. Its report will also be available to the program.
- (3) The Vice President for Academic Affairs. The VPAA will read all the materials submitted—CPR report, Executive Summary, and Review Team Reports—and will prepare a response to the program's CPR report (to which the program will be given an opportunity to respond—see the Program Review Timeline in the CPR document). The VPAA, along with the program's dean and the program's department/division, will work together on charting the program's future direction.
- (4) The USG Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic and Fiscal Affairs. The Executive Summary will be submitted to the system office, which will give feedback, not on what actions should be taken in regard to specific programs (that action will be taken at the institution level) but on how well the process of review was carried out, whether or not data was used to help make decisions.

The VSU Faculty Senate. The VPAA will electronically distribute the executive summary and action plan for each program's CPR review to the Academic Committee of the Faculty Senate.