

Office of the Provost

AY 2024-2025

Academic Program Review Guidelines

For academic units engaged in APR self-study.

The New NAU Charter

VISION

NAU aims to be the nation's preeminent engine of opportunity, vehicle of economic mobility, and driver of social impact by delivering equitable postsecondary value in Arizona and beyond.

MISSION

NAU transforms lives and enriches communities through high-quality academics and impactful scholarship, creative endeavors, and public service.

COMMITMENT

NAU will educate, support, and empower students from all backgrounds, identities, and lived experiences to reach their full potential and contribute to a more just, equitable, inclusive, prosperous, and sustainable future.

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Purpose

The primary purpose of Academic Program Review (APR) is to strengthen and improve academic programs. The APR process enables faculty to evaluate the effectiveness and progress of academic programs and identify future direction, needs, and priorities of those programs.

According to the [postsecondary value commission](#): Students experience post secondary value when provided equitable access and support to complete quality, affordable credentials that offer economic mobility and prepare them to advance racial and economic justice in our society. *Academic Program Review is one mechanism through which NAU can work toward equitable access and quality credentials.*

Institutional Accreditation and ABOR Policy 2-225

NAU's institutional accreditor is the Higher Learning Commission. Criteria for HLC accreditation requires institutions to engage in regular academic program reviews to ensure the quality of its educational offerings ([Criterion 4.4](#)).

Arizona Board of Regents policy ([ABOR 2-225](#)) requires review of all academic programs every seven years. The Provost may schedule an earlier review in response to changes or for other reasons. Similarly, a Dean may request an earlier review. On rare occasions, Academic Program Review (APR) may be delayed at the request of a Dean to the Associate Vice Provost for Curriculum and Assessment (AVP-CAGS), and subject to the approval of the Provost.

In alignment with ABOR and HLC requirements, NAU's departments, schools, and programs engage in the collaborative process of [Academic Program Review](#). Degree programs engaging in a discipline-specific [specialized accreditation](#) by organizations external to NAU are reviewed in compliance with the standards and procedures established by the accrediting organization and following the accrediting organization's calendar of review. Programs seeking first-time or renewal of specialized accreditation, please see NAU's Accreditation Protocol.

All programs, *regardless of accreditation status*, will engage in the final stage of the APR process and develop action plans to review with the Provost's office and will submit progress reports as described in these guidelines.

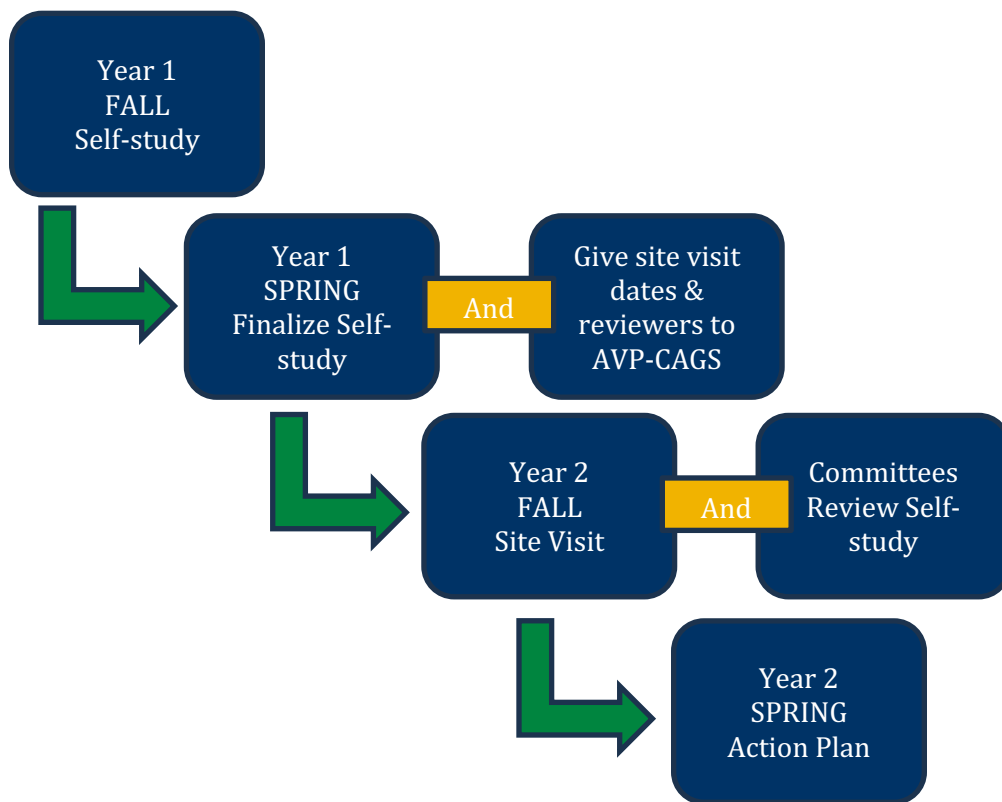
Unit of Review

An academic unit (department or school) is typically the basic unit of APR review. Normally, all programs within an academic unit are reviewed simultaneously. In some instances, particularly if a unit has one or more degree programs with discipline-specific specialized accreditation(s), sections of the APR may be done separately, and in different years for academic programs within the unit. Programs that do not reside within an academic unit, including programs such as General Studies are reviewed independently of academic units. The unit of review for the

Honors College is the college as a whole. Programs seeking first-time or renewal of specialized accreditation, please see NAU’s Accreditation Protocol).

The Academic Program Review Process

In its entirety, the Academic Program Review is typically a **two-year process** that includes completion of a Self-study, a site visit by external reviewers, a review of [Degree Program Expectations](#) by [Faculty Senate-charged committees](#), a compilation of feedback from internal and external reviewers, and the development of an Action Plan with a Curriculum & Assessment Plan in collaboration with the Provost Office, college Dean, and Office of Graduate and Professional Studies (when appropriate). The two-year process is as follows:



The Academic Program Review Process may be altered to create space for the completion of activities that are vital to a university initiative. For example, among AY 2024-2025 units undergoing APR and programs renewing, or seeking accreditation will be required to complete General Studies Implementation activities. The Director of the General Studies Program, Emily.Manone@nau.edu and the Director of the Office of Curriculum and Assessment, Melinda.Treml@nau.edu will inform units and programs of necessary actions.

The Provost’s office understands that those programs who hold specialized professional accreditation are on cycles determined by their accreditor that will often

not match NAU's APR Cycle. The Provost's office will support those programs throughout their accreditor-determined cycles.

Initial Planning

Notification of the Review: The Unit Leader and College Dean of the academic unit scheduled for review are contacted by AVP-CAGS to discuss the timing of the review. The AVP-CAGS office maintains and posts the [schedule of reviews](#).

APR Orientation Meeting and Selection of Strategic Questions: The APR process is initiated with an orientation meeting. The orientation will serve as an introduction to APR, its processes and purposes, and provide guidelines for successful completion. The Unit Leader and other unit faculty taking a leadership role in the APR process will attend the orientation.

Individual unit meetings will follow the orientation and together with the AVP-CAGS, the unit will identify sections of the template that are appropriate for analysis and remove sections that are not applicable. Introduction to the Strategic Questions section will occur, and the Unit Leader and representatives will consider potential Strategic Questions with their college Dean. Strategic Questions approved by the College Dean are to be submitted for review to AVP-CAGS.

Formation of the Self-study Committee and Development of the Self-study Plan: The Unit Leader consults with the College Dean regarding an appropriate composition for the Self-study committee. The composition of the Self-study team committee is unique to the composition of each unit's faculty, types of academic programs, and teaching, research, and service obligations.

- Large units having undergraduate and graduate programs, may want to engage a representative (or two, if there are many undergraduate and/or graduate programs) on the Self-study committee who leads a committee of faculty related to that level or program.
- Units with multiple programs at the same level frequently have representation for each program.
- Units with a heavy teaching agenda of service-related courses frequently engage faculty from those courses in writing various sections of the report.
- Units with heavy research agendas typically engage faculty from those areas in writing the research sections of the report.
- It is recommended that at least three academic unit faculty participate who have a good understanding of the academic unit and the discipline/ profession.
- Based on the breadth and depth of the strategic questions selected by the unit and/or Dean, representation would likely reflect the conversations and issues of importance to the unit.
- The Self-study committee should also include staff and student representatives, where possible.

After establishing the committee, the Unit Leader should lead its members in development of a plan and timeline for completion of the Self-study within a one-year timeframe. The AVP-CAGS will check-in with the Unit Leader and/or the Self-study team periodically throughout the process. There is a suggested timeframe appended to the end of this guide with timeframes that the AVP-CAGS intends to check-in throughout AY24-25 (Appendix A).

Purpose of the Self-study

A Self-study Report presents a comprehensive picture of an academic unit's strengths, challenges and potential, and serves as a roadmap to its future. It addresses any specific limitations or weaknesses cited in previous Self-study Reports, Action Plan, Annual Curriculum & Assessment Reports, and Midpoint Reviews, while also describing what the academic unit does best and how it could do better in both the immediate- and long-term. The report is the primary document used by [Faculty Senate-charged committees](#) and External Reviewers to evaluate the academic unit's use of human and fiscal resources to create and maintain quality academic programs, research, and service to the university.

The feedback the Self-study Report generates from students, faculty, administrators, review committees, and external reviewers lends greater clarity to the academic unit's goals and objectives while illuminating its accomplishments and opportunities for growth.

Procedures and Timeline for Writing the Self-study Report

The Self-study Report communicates basic information about the unit, addresses the strategic questions important to the unit, to the College Dean, Provost's Office, and external and internal reviewers.

Keep the following in mind as you write the Self-study Report:

- The Self-study Report is the faculty's opportunity for self-evaluation.
- The Report should be comprehensive but concise.
- It is essential that the process and results be open and available to all members of the academic unit (faculty, students, and staff).

Program Data Reports: In preparation for writing the Self-study Report, the Chair will receive data reports from the Provost's Office and have the opportunity to consult with Academic Affairs representatives to discuss the data and its implications. The AVP-CAGS will request the data reports from the Office of Strategic Planning, Institutional Research, & Analytics (**SPIRA**) and they will comprise the following:

Student data categories for non-accredited programs:	Each category of student data is further divided by:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enrollment • Completions • SCH • Retention • Time to Degree • DFW Reports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender • IPEDS Ethnicity • Student of Color (SOC) and/or Underrepresented Ethnicities (URE) (if not, IPEDS is ok) • First Gen status • Pell Eligibility • AZ Residency • Hispanic/Non-Hispanic • Academic Career (undergrad/grad)

Programs pursuing specialized professional accreditation/re-accreditation will inform the AVP-CAGS of any data needs.

- Cline Library will provide a standard library report while the unit is writing its Self-study Report.
- Budget reports are available to the unit through the Budget Office.
- FAAR Data – You will need to provide a list of faculty that are FTE over last five years, the provost’s office will pull the following data from FAAR:
 - Highest degree, rank, current employment status
 - SOE allocation of effort in teaching, research, service for last three academic years
 - Teaching enrollments and # of sections: fall + spring (AY) for three years
 - Scholarly productivity: last five years combined, split by activity type
- Degree Productivity – programs will be reviewed for degree productivity using the methodology outlined below. Units with programs that have failed to attain the required number of degrees over three years will be notified by the Office of the Provost. Reports on low productivity are provided to ABOR each year following the APR and potentially at other times, when requested.

Threshold for Defining Productive Programs Arizona University System	
Type of Degree	3-Year Degree Total
Baccalaureate	24 or more
Masters	9 or more
Doctorate	6 or more

Degrees are counted according to the fiscal year for graduates completing in August through May. Degrees with differing titles (e.g., B.A., B.S., etc.) for a given major will be combined for the purposes of this threshold analysis if substantial overlap of course work exists among the different degrees.

Collection and Review of Academic Unit Syllabi: Usually, during the first semester of the Self-study period, the academic unit leader or designee(s) review faculty members' class syllabi to ensure alignment with the Syllabus of Record (a.k.a. Master, or Common Syllabus) and determine whether course purpose or learning outcomes have changed substantially to warrant re-submission through the [curriculum approval process](#). Additionally, academic units are expected to ensure alignment with characteristics of [Strategic Course Design \(University's Syllabus Requirements Policy\)](#).

In AY24-25, if your unit has courses that need to be revised for the General Studies Implementation, we would like for you to please focus on those rather than the Collection and Review of Academic Unit Syllabi described above. Please contact Emily.Manone@nau.edu if you need assistance (See Appendix D).

Selecting the Review Team: The review team will comprise **two external reviewers** and **one internal consultant**. External reviewers should be selected based on the questions and analyses being raised by the academic unit. Once the final selection is completed, the review team typically consists of two external reviewers selected by the academic unit and one internal (NAU faculty) consultant selected by the Provost's Office. The purpose of the external and internal reviewers is to provide insights and feedback to assist the unit in achieving its future goals. For example, if the unit is thriving, and foresees few changes in the future, they will likely focus on reviewers from universities with similar goals and programs. If the unit finds weaknesses in one or more of its academic programs, reviewers should be selected who have strong programs and can provide insights into how to strengthen its programs.

Strategic questions might garner specific focus by reviewers. For example, if a unit is looking to expand its academic programs, it might obtain a reviewer who has recently expanded a program successfully. If a unit is facing a particular challenge, obtaining a reviewer or specialist who has successfully overcome a similar challenge would be beneficial.

The Unit Leader will submit a list of six to eight potential external reviewers, ranked according to preference, and provide up to three sentences stating the reasoning for choosing each external reviewer. The list is submitted to the College Dean for initial review and approval. The AVP-CAGS will review the recommendations and select the external reviewers, subject to the approval of the Provost. The AVP-CAGS will send formal letters of invitation to the selected external reviewers. Individuals on the list are contacted until two reviewers provide an affirmative response.

Drafts and Revisions of the Self-study: Units will submit a draft of the Self-study Report to the unit college Dean by an agreed upon date. The Dean will provide feedback to the academic unit by an agreed upon date. The Chair or their designee will incorporate feedback into revisions. The Dean-approved draft of the Self-study is due to the AVP-CAGS by **April 4, 2025** for review.

Distribution of the Final Self-study Report: Once the Self-study is finalized, the AVP-CAGS will forward the final version of the report to the College Dean, Provost, relevant Vice Provosts, and Vice President for Research (if the unit has a Ph.D. program and/or research-intensive mission). The Provost's Office will distribute the Self-study Report to the internal and external reviewers at least one month in advance of the site visit. NAU's review committees, including the [University Undergraduate Committee and University Graduate Committee](#), will receive the Curriculum and Assessment section of the Self-study Report that pertain to the area of their charge for review and feedback during the semester of the site visit.

The Site Visit

The site visit is typically scheduled for the semester following the submission of the Self-study Report. The site visit consists of entry/exit meetings with members of the Provost's Office, various meetings with the college's Dean, the Unit Leader, faculty members and students, and tours of academic unit facilities (See Appendix E).

Site Visit Preparation: The Unit Leader will provide a list of four 2-day timeframes for the unit's site visit. The AVP-CAGS will narrow the list down to two 2-day time frames based on the availability of the Provost and invite the Vice Provosts who oversee graduate programs, online programs, statewide programs, etc. who should be included in the site visit schedule as indicated by the unit's program offerings.

External Reviewers' Travel, Reimbursement and Service Payment: The external reviewers' travel arrangements (flight, hotel, etc.) should be made by the unit via NAU's [service team](#) to ensure compliance with policy. Use of the service team is not optional. The unit should submit an individual service ticket for each member of the external review team. The finance service team will work with the external reviewers to make travel arrangements. Reviewer travel, lodging, and meal expenses should be paid for by the unit (collect necessary forms and receipts during the visit). The external reviewers shall not bear any of the costs associated with their travel to NAU. The Provost's office will pay the external reviewers' payment (\$1000 each) upon receipt of their written report. Subsequently, the Provost's office will reimburse the unit for travel expenses.

Those units seeking program accreditation/re-accreditation are responsible for the accreditation fees and costs associated with external site reviewer visits (See the Accreditation Protocol).

Review of Academic Programs Quality by Faculty Senate-charged Committees:

Typically, during the semester prior to the site visit, the Liberal Studies and Diversity-designated course syllabi are reviewed by the appropriate committees to ensure their alignment with characteristics of Liberal Studies and Diversity [Designations](#) and [Strategic Course Design](#) (i.e., each course purpose, learning outcomes, and assignments/ assessments are aligned. ***[Note: This step in the process is on hold during the planning and implementation phase of the new General Studies program and will resume with the Fall 2025 launch of the General Studies program.]***)

In the semester of the site visit, the University Undergraduate Committee and/or University Graduate Committee are provided the Curriculum and Assessment sections of the Self-study Report. Committees will use reviewers' guides to evaluate and provide feedback and recommendations to the academic units concerning each degree program's curriculum and assessment efforts since the previous review period. The Purpose Statements and Learning Outcomes for minors and certificates will also be reviewed by university committees. Please contact Assistant Director of Assessment and Curriculum Design, Stephanie.Winters@nau.edu for questions regarding these reviews.

Compilation of Reviewers' Findings

The academic unit, Dean, and AVP-CAGS will receive findings and feedback from the external reviewers, the internal consultant, and review committees.

Review Committee Responses: The Assistant Director of Assessment and Curriculum Design, Stephanie.Winters@nau.edu coordinates and collects the feedback from Faculty Senate-charged committees engaged in the review of the units' report and syllabi. The findings are used, in conversation, to develop the Curriculum & Assessment Action Plan component of the program's Action Plan.

External and Internal Reviewers' Report(s): External reviewers have the option of submitting a combined reviewer's report authored by both reviewers, or submitting multiple reports authored by each individual reviewer. The internal reviewer/ consultant has the option to provide useful feedback to the academic unit and the Provost's Office. Within six weeks following their visit, the external reviewers should submit their completed report(s) to the AVP-CAGS, who will distribute it to the Provost, relevant Vice Provosts, the college Dean, and Unit Leader. After the Unit Leader receives the report, the Unit Leader should, in turn, distribute the report to the unit faculty and discuss the evaluation and recommendations made by the external reviewers and internal consultant. If the external reviewers submit their report to the unit Unit Leader or college Dean, that individual should distribute it as described above.

Development of Action Plans

Following the site visit and receipt of reports from reviewers and committees, the Unit Leader, in consultation with the college Dean and the AVP-CAGS, should work with the unit representatives to create Action Plans.

Action Plan Orientation: The AVP-CAGS and Assistant Director of Assessment and Curriculum Design, Stephanie.Winters@nau.edu will meet with the Unit Leader to discuss process and timelines for completing the Action Plans. Before, or during the orientation, the Unit Leader will be provided with a timeline, template, and sample Action Plans.

The purpose of developing Action Plans is to review the feedback from the external reviewers and Faculty Senate-charged review committees, incorporate perspectives and analyses into the unit's future goals, and prioritize efforts over the coming years to maintain current strengths, address challenges, and achieve or maintain the Degree Program Expectations in preparation for the next Academic Program Review (APR).

The Action Plan requires two components:

- 1) The Academic Program Action Plan, which focuses on the achievement of college-related goals of the unit (e.g., advising, enrollments, replacing laboratory or other equipment or facilities, hiring faculty, changing marketing approaches, etc.). If you are an accredited program this can take the form of whatever your accreditor requires, if anything. If your accreditor does not require an action, or strategic plan, we can talk through some ideas about how to proceed.

Due date for Final Plan: January 10, 2025

- 2) The Curriculum & Assessment Plan, which is used plan the curriculum design and assessment activities of the unit over the course of the next review period. For APR units, the review period is six years (from now to your next self-study year) and for the programs with specialized professional accreditation, the review period will be the timeframe determined by your accreditor. Like #1 above, the format of this plan can be whatever your accreditor requires. If your accreditor does not require a curriculum and assessment plan, you may wish to consult with Stephanie.Winters@nau.edu for ideas and assistance.

Due date for C&A Plan: May 2, 2025

- a. Beginning with AY 24-25, Academic Program Review and Accreditation activities will incorporate General Studies Implementation preparation when necessary. Emily.Manone@nau.edu and Melinda.Treml@nau.edu will be available at our meeting to explain these activities.

Academic Program Action Plan Development: The Unit Leader will facilitate discussion of the Self-study and the reviewer's feedback among the unit's stakeholders. Through these discussions, the academic unit will incorporate the feedback from reviewers and

committees and prioritize the goals. If the unit did not engage in [strategic planning](#) exercises during the Self-study process, they should do so after they receive the external reviewer report. [SWOT](#) and [NOISE](#) analyses are well known strategic planning tools. The goal is for the unit to articulate the priorities and efforts they will assume to maintain their current strengths, address challenges, and achieve their priorities in preparation for the next Academic Program Review.

Curriculum & Assessment Action Plan Development: The academic unit will work with the Assistant Director from the Office of Curriculum and Assessment to draft a Curriculum & Assessment Action Plan, which is provided to [Faculty Senate-charged committees](#) for final review for additional feedback. If revisions are needed to the Curriculum & Assessment Action Plan based on this feedback, the revisions will be submitted as part of the academic unit's next Annual Curriculum & Assessment Report.

APR Action Plan Leadership Meeting: The college Dean will send the draft APR Action Plan to the AVP-CAGS for review. An action plan meeting will be scheduled including the Unit Leader, college Dean, Provost, AVP-CAGS, relevant Vice Provosts, and Vice President for Research (if appropriate). By the conclusion of the meeting, all participants should agree upon the actions to be taken and any revisions needed to the draft action plan.

Finalized APR Action Plan: The Unit Leader should submit the proposed final action plan to the college Dean by the dates agreed upon during the orientation. The plan should reflect the discussion among all parties during the action plan leadership meeting. In turn, the college Dean should present the proposed final action plan to the AVP-CAGS. The AVP-CAGS will review the document for finalization. The final action plan will be filed and used for reference for annual decision making and during the three-year Midpoint Review and next Academic Program Review.

Permanent Record of the Program Review: The Provost's Office retains copies of the Self-study, external reviewers' report, the APR Action Plan, and the Curriculum & Assessment Action Plans.

Progress Reporting Based on Action Plans

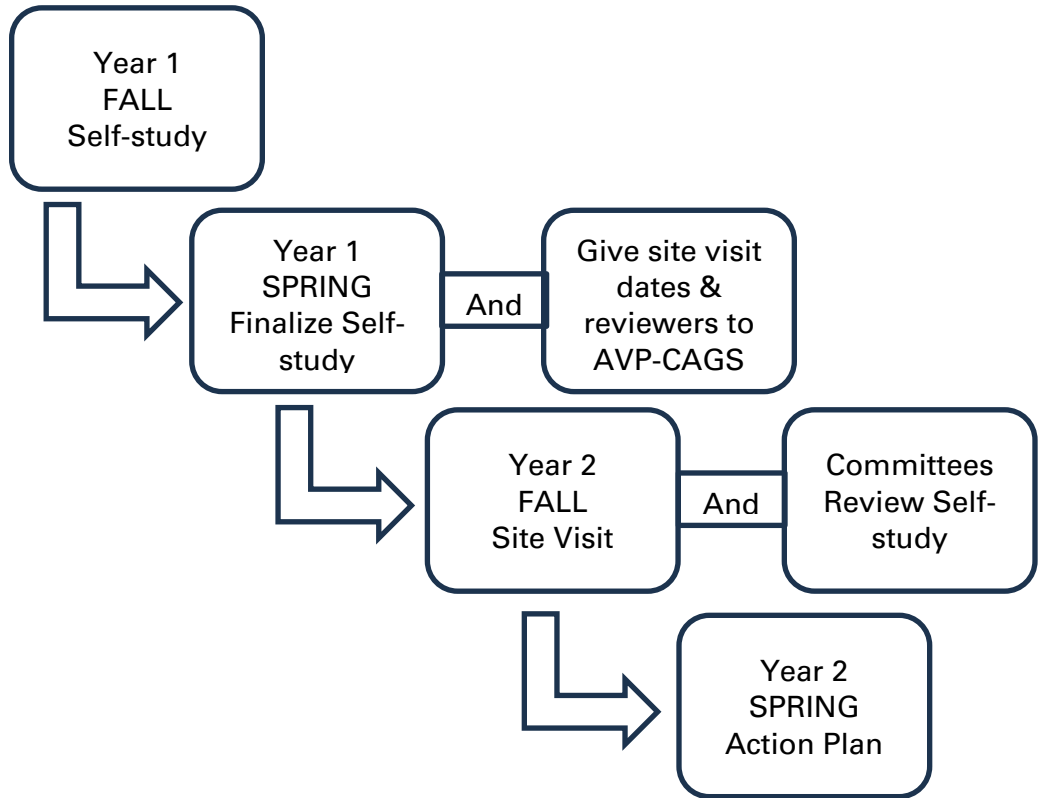
Annual Curriculum & Assessment Reports: The academic unit will use its Curriculum & Assessment Action Plan to develop and submit Annual Curriculum & Assessment Reports following the APR by end of May each year, as per the Curriculum Design and Assessment [policy](#).

Mid-Point Review/Syllabi Review: The AVP-CAGS will request a progress report in year three after the site visit. This report will entail a brief summary of progress relative to the APR Action Plan and any updates that have impacted the implementation of the plan.

Per the [Syllabus Requirements Policy](#), the academic unit leader or designee(s) will review faculty members' class syllabi to ensure alignment with the Syllabus of Record (a.k.a. Master, or Common Syllabus) and determine whether the course's purpose or learning outcomes have changed substantially to warrant re-submission through the [curriculum approval process](#). Documentation of review, recommended actions, and collection of all class and Syllabus of Record (a.k.a. Master, or Common Syllabus) is due to the [Office of Curriculum and Assessment](#) by the end of the academic year.

This component of the Midpoint Review can be replaced by necessary syllabus revisions for the General Studies Implementation.

Black-andwhite Illustration of Two Year APR Timeframe



Appendix A Suggested Self-study Timeline

Academic Program Review, AY 24-25
Self-study

Suggested Timeline

Self-study Outline (there is a separate, more detailed Self-study Template that the AVP-CAGS will review individually with the unit leaders and Associate Deans, or Deans to finalize)

Executive Summary

I. Introduction: Academic Unit Description & Context

- A. Description of Academic Unit
- B. Context of Academic Programs
- C. Brief History: Progress & Substantive Changes since the Previous Review
- D. Website

II. Analyses and Reflections

- A. Trends
- B. Curriculum & Assessment
- C. Research
- D. Faculty
- E. Resources & Governance

III. Strategic Questions

IV. Appendices

- A. General Studies Syllabi (as appropriate)

Suggested Timeline

<i>DATE</i>	<i>Tasks</i>
9/6/24	Self-study writing team is identified and assembled <u>Tasks:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • review template and guidelines & decide which sections are not applicable (send revised outline to Unit Leader, Dean, and AVP-CAGS); • meet with faculty to brainstorm and decide on Strategic Questions for Part III; • Unit Leader meets with Dean about final Strategic Questions for suggestions, edits, and/or additions; • Dean submits final strategic questions to AVP-CAGS. • Write Part I [Unit in context: Elevating Excellence, NAU's Diversity Strategic Plan, College Strategic Plan]
Wk of 9/24	AVP-CAGS check-in

DATE	Tasks
10/4/24	Part I - first draft finished and to Unit Leader <u>Tasks:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write Part II • Start asking faculty for external reviewer suggestions (need a list of 6-8 people who you think could provide helpful review; list, contact, and rationale --- list needs to be approved by Dean but isn't due to AVP-CAGS until the Self-study is done)
10/18/24	Unit Leader comments on Part I back to committee
11/1/25	Part II- first draft finished and to Unit Leader
11/15/25	Unit Leader comments on Part II back to committee
Wk of 11/18	AVP-CAGS Check-in
12/9/24	Committee makes second drafts of Part I and Part II available to faculty for comment & to read prior to working on Part III. <u>Tasks:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set deadline for faculty feedback on Part I and Part II to committee • Start addressing Strategic Questions section of Part III • Schedule faculty meeting to discuss draft responses to Strategic Questions section
1/31/25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finish Writing Part III and give to Unit Leader • Collect all external reviewer suggestions and decide on four sets of 2-day Fall 2024 site visit dates for external review (the Dean and Unit Leader must both be available for all four sets of 2-day timeframes – see Sample Itinerary appended to this guide)
Wk of 2/3	AVP-CAGS Check-in
2/14/25	Unit Leader comments on Part III back to committee
By 2/28/25	Committee addresses Unit Leader comments on Part III and assembles whole document & Chair puts on finishing touches
3/7/25	Unit Leader submits Self-study to Dean
3/24/25	Dean gives edits/feedback/comments to Unit Leader who addresses and returns to Dean.
4/4/25*	Dean submits final Self-study with approved list of external reviewers and four sets of possible 2-day site visit dates to AVP-CAGS.

***This is your hard deadline for submission of your self-study.**

Appendix B Review of Syllabi and General Studies Implementation

Review of and Report on Academic Unit Syllabi

The academic unit leader or designee(s) will review faculty members' class syllabi to ensure achievement of the following:

1. *Minimum outcome:* There is a Syllabus of Record for each course that clearly articulates the course purpose and the faculty-agreed upon course learning outcomes.
 - a. *Desired outcome:* Faculty who teach, and have taught class sections of each course since the last self-study will review their individual class syllabi against the course Syllabus of Record for the minimum standard, which is that all class sections of a course match the Syllabus of Record course purpose and course learning outcomes.
 - i. The faculty review of syllabi will result in a one-page summary and assessment of alignment/misalignment and actions taken, or planned actions per course that will be taken to ensure future alignment of class section syllabi with the course Syllabus of Record to the Unit Leader, or their designee who will compile these narratives into a sub-section of this section of the Midpoint Review.
2. *Minimum outcome:* Each syllabus of record aligns with the university syllabus template.
3. *On Hold:* Courses with Liberal Studies and/or Diversity Designations align with course design designation requirements [do not complete – complete General Studies Implementation Actions instead]

General Studies Implementation Actions

This area of APR will be addressed at the APR orientation on April 24, 2025, 1 – 2pm. Please direct questions pertaining to these activities to Emily.Manone@nau.edu and Melinda.Trembl@nau.edu

Appendix C

Site Visit Procedures

Selection of External Reviewers

External reviewers, as recognized experts in the disciplinary/professional field of the unit undertaking program review, provide critical judgment, ensure the objectivity of the program review process, and determine how the program compares to other programs in the region and nation. Reviewers should bring an informed and unbiased view to the evaluation of the program. External reviewers should judge whether the plans of the department are appropriate, considering such factors as the current condition of the program, trends in the discipline, nature of the faculty, and characteristics of the students and community the program serves.

Desirable qualifications of the external reviewers include:

- Prior program review service or training for a reviewer's role;
- Expertise in the academic and professional area(s) fitting with the department;
- Experience with similar institutional/departmental context;
- No close relationships with personnel in the unit undergoing review, or other potential conflicts of interest;
- Sufficient time to devote to the task.

National and/or regional associations or professional networks may make available or be willing to provide the names of individuals who are qualified to serve as external reviewers.

The Unit Leader should submit to the college Dean a ranked list of six to eight potential external reviewers, including contact information and some biographical information or other explanatory reasoning for the choices, together with potential site visit dates (see below). The Dean will review and forward a ranked list to the AVP-CAGS. The AVP-CAGS will review the recommendations and select the external reviewers, subject to the approval of the Provost. The AVP-CAGS will send formal letters of invitation to the selected external reviewers. Guidelines, general information about NAU, and potential site visit dates are sent with the invitation. The AVP-CAGS also selects the internal faculty consultant and notifies the Dean and Unit Leader.

Site Visit Dates and Planning

Around the same time a list of potential external reviewers is being compiled, the AVP-CAGS will request from the Unit Leader at least four sets of potential dates (two days each) for the site visit. The selected dates should not conflict with national professional meetings or previous program commitments. Additionally, the Unit Leader should verify that essential personnel will be available when sending potential site visit dates to the AVP-CAGS. The AVP-CAGS will confirm the Provost's availability

during those dates before contacting potential external reviewers.

Specially Accredited Programs: Units pursuing program accreditation/re-accreditation will follow the requirements of their accreditor and keep the AVP-CAGS informed as to the need for meetings with the Provost and their required timing. The AVP-CAGS will schedule this meeting in conjunction with the Unit Leader and Operations Director in the Office of the Provost.

After two potential external reviewers confirm willingness to serve during specified dates, the AVP-CAGS contacts the Unit Leader so the unit can begin planning for the site visit. The Unit Leader should confirm that the Dean (or designee) and Provost Office representatives will be available to meet with the external reviewers during the visit. In the case of an accrediting organization, meetings with other personnel (e.g., Registrar, President, etc.) may be expected or required as well.

The Unit Leader should engage in an initial discussion with the external reviewers to determine the duration of the visit (typically 2-3 days, including travel) and any other arrangements critical to the visit. Subsequently, the Unit Leader, in cooperation with the offices of the Dean, AVP-CAGS, and others as needed, will formulate an itinerary for reviewers' site visit to include:

- An entrance interview during the first morning of the visit including the Provost, AVP-CAGS, and relevant Vice Provosts (scheduled by the AVP-CAGS).
- Interviews with the college Dean and the Unit Leader during the first day of the visit, if possible. This meeting may be a joint meeting (Dean and Unit Leader together) or two separate meetings, depending on the preferences of all involved.
- Interviews with unit faculty, staff, and students and possibly with Unit Leaders of supporting academic departments and unit advisory committees (if pertinent).
- Tours of facilities, as relevant and appropriate.
- An exit interview with the Provost, AVP-CAGS, Vice Provost and relevant Vice Provosts.

Other important considerations in building the site visit itinerary:

- Accrediting organizations may request a private meeting with the Provost or President before or after the larger exit interview, so the schedule should be developed with some flexibility.
- The external reviewers and internal consultant should be provided the opportunity to review the draft itinerary prior to finalization.
- The internal consultant shall be present at all meetings.
- It is advisable to send calendar invites, especially to those involved in the entrance and exit meetings.
- If virtual attendance is offered for any of the meetings, separate links/invites (as opposed to the same link for all meetings) are recommended so that

attendees to the subsequent meeting do not interrupt a meeting in progress.

Sample Site Review Team Itinerary

(Accreditation visit itineraries may include additional meetings mandated by accreditation teams)

DAY 1

8:00 – 8:45 a.m.	Breakfast with college Dean and/or Unit Leader
9:00 – 10:00 a.m.	Entrance interview with the Provost, AVP-CAGS, college Dean, and relevant Vice Provosts (<i>scheduled by AVP-CAGS</i>)
9:45 – 10:15 a.m.	Meet with college Dean or Unit Leader
10:15 – 10:45 a.m.	Meet with Self-study committee
11:00 – 11:30 a.m.	Meet with program faculty
11:30 – 12:00 p.m.	Tour facilities
12:00 – 1:30 p.m.	Lunch
1:45 – 2:15 p.m.	Meet with undergraduate and graduate students
2:15p – 2:45 p.m.	Meet with staff
3:00p – 3:30 p.m.	Meet with Unit Leaders from supporting units (if applicable)
3:45p – 4:15 p.m.	Meet with alumni or advisory boards (if relevant and available)
4:30p – 5:00 p.m.	Meet with representatives from Curriculum and Assessment
6:00p – 7:30 p.m.	Dinner (possibly with unit personnel)

DAY 2

8:00 – 9:00 a.m.	Breakfast and reviewers work time
9:00 – 10:00 a.m.	Open forum for faculty, staff, and students
10:15 – 11:00 a.m.	Meet with Unit Leader and/or a program coordinator
11:00 – 12:00 p.m.	Meet with college Dean
12:00 – 1:30 p.m.	Lunch
1:30 – 2:30 p.m.	Exit meeting Provost, AVP-CAGS, college Dean, Vice Provost and relevant Vice Provosts (<i>scheduled by AVP-CAGS</i>)
2:45 – 3:45 p.m.	Wrap up with Dean and Unit Leader

Expenses

Those units seeking program accreditation/re-accreditation are responsible for the accreditation fees and costs associated with external site reviewer visits.

For Academic Program Reviews, the unit is responsible for initiating a ticket with the [finance service team](#) to plan the external reviewers' travel. External reviewers shall not bear any costs associated with their travel. In addition, the unit is responsible for collecting their receipts and submitting them to the service team to allow for

reimbursement of non-prepaid expenses. The Provost's Office will initiate and process the \$1000 payment to the external reviewers upon receipt of the final report in addition to reimbursing the unit for the external reviewers travel expenses. Other expenses (e.g., report preparation, postal costs, catering, local transportation, meals for non-reviewer participants) are the responsibility of the unit and will not be reimbursed by the Provost.

The Provost's Office will coordinate with the external reviewers to obtain a completed vendor registration form and determine their preferred method of payment. The Provost's Office will be the point of contact for the payment of the \$1000 stipend. The department will be the point of contact for all travel arrangements via a ticket with the finance service team. The department is responsible for submitting a transfer of funds form to the AVP-CAGS for the reimbursement of allowable travel expenses. All required expense receipts must be obtained by the unit and accompany the reimbursement request. The most convenient time to obtain this information is during the visit.

Reimbursement Notes:

- Reviewers' travel arrangements and any travel related expense reimbursement should be made with assistance from the unit.
- Reviewers' travel, lodging, and meal expenses should be paid for by the unit (collect necessary forms and receipts during the visit). The reviewers may have other receipts (i.e., ground travel) incurred for the visit that will need to be sent to the administrative assistant of the unit hosting the site visit.
- We recommend booking lodging at the [Drury Hotel](#) and ask for the NAU business discount.
- The Provost's Office will handle all vendor registration forms and the payment to the reviewers of the \$1000 stipend.
- After all the expenses associated with reviewer travel are finalized, the administrative associate from the department sends all receipts, with documentation, plus a transfer of funds form to the AVP-CAGS, in the Provost Office for reimbursement to their unit.
- Reviewers should not bear the burden of travel expenses. All travel related expenses should be charged directly to university funding sources.
- Reimbursements (for lunch, dinners, etc.,) will be reimbursed at the standard M&IE daily rate and ONLY for the external reviewers.
- NO ALCOHOL is allowed and WILL NOT BE REIMBURSED

Guidelines for External Reviewers

The AVP-CAGS will send the following letter with guidelines to external reviewers. At their discretion they may send a shorter one and follow up with more detailed guidelines after a reviewer has assented.

Letter

Dear Dr. [Reviewer Name]:

Thank you for considering our request to serve as an external reviewer for the Department [School] of [Unit Name] at Northern Arizona University (NAU). Academic Program Review (APR) is conducted under a mandate from the Arizona Board of Regents with the most important purposes being to assure the quality of educational programs and to identify opportunities for future development. As an external reviewer you have a critical role in this review process. Your objective input will help the unit and University evaluate its programs and develop strategic plans for program development.

The following information provides background on Northern Arizona University's program review process, specific functions and responsibilities of external reviewers, and suggestions for maximizing the effectiveness and outcome of the site visit and final report.

External Reviewer Guidelines

The primary purpose of academic program review is to evaluate and strengthen academic units and programs in terms of the quality of teaching and design of programs, the contribution of the program to the University's [strategic roadmap](#), to fully understand and outline the program's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, and to identify the best future strategic directions for the program.

Academic programs at NAU are reviewed on a seven-year schedule. Normally, program reviews include evaluation of both undergraduate and graduate degree programs, other educational programming, and scholarly activities housed within the academic unit. The reviews are coordinated and conducted under the auspices of the Provost's office by the office of the Associate Vice Provost for Curriculum and Assessment (AVP-CAGS).

Academic programs are asked to submit a Self-study report that presents a comprehensive picture of the academic unit's strengths, challenges, and potential. It should address any specific limitations or weaknesses cited in previous Self-study Reports, Annual Curriculum & Assessment Reports, and Mid-Cycle Progress Reviews, while also describing what the academic unit does best and how it could do better in both the immediate- and long-term. The report is the primary document used by Faculty Senate-charged curriculum committees and External Reviewers to evaluate the academic unit's use of human and fiscal resources to create and maintain quality academic programs, research, and service to the university. It is one link in [NAU's regional accreditor's](#) (the Higher Learning Commission) requirements for continual evaluation and improvement of academic programs.

Normally two external reviewers, selected by the Provost's office from a list developed by the academic unit, are invited to the NAU campus to participate in a two-day site visit. External reviewers, as recognized experts in the disciplinary/professional field of the unit undertaking program review, provide critical judgment, ensure the objectivity of the program review process, and determine how the program compares to other programs in the region and nation. Reviewers should bring an informed and unbiased view to the evaluation of the program. External reviewers should judge whether the plans of the department are appropriate, considering such factors as the current condition of the program, trends in the discipline, the nature of the faculty, and the characteristics of the students and the community the program serves. Additionally, a member of the university faculty is assigned to serve as the liaison to the external reviewers for each program review.

Prior to the site visit, the external reviewers are provided with:

- A copy of the Self-study report, the department's website URL, and any other information the academic unit believes will aid the external reviewers in understanding the unit
- Site visit itinerary

External reviewers have the option to submit a combined reviewer's report authored by the reviewers, or submit multiple reports authored by each individual reviewer. Within six weeks following their visit, the external reviewers should submit their completed report(s) to the AVP-CAGS, who will distribute it to the [Name of the College] Dean, [Unit] Chair, and Provost for review and comments. The evaluation and recommendations are used in future planning by both the reviewed unit and other affected campus units.