

**ROWAN COLLEGE OF SOUTH JERSEY**

**ACADEMIC PROGRAM REVIEW  
PROCEDURES MANUAL**

For use beginning Academic Year 2020-21

Office of the Provost and Academic Services

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## **FORWARD**

The following manual represents Rowan College of South Jersey's efforts to create a meaningful and continuous program review process.

## **Historical Timeline**

2020

Board policy and procedures adopting RSCJ program review.

2019

Rowan College Gloucester County merges with Cumberland County College and becomes Rowan College of South Jersey effective July 1, 2019.

Prior to the merger, both campuses were in the process of updating their individual program review models. At the time, Cumberland campus program review manual was in the 5<sup>th</sup> edition since 1997. Gloucester had just finalized the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition of program review referred to as 'Next Gen'. Because of the merger, the Report Review committees on both campus were charged with developing a 'common' program review model.

2007

Gloucester County College formalizes its commitment to continuous program improvement by adopting a board policy and administrative Rule and Regulation for program review (Board Policy 3017, Program Review, January 2, 2008 and November 13, 2012; Administrative Rule and Regulation 3017, Program Review Process, May 13, 2008, May 31, 2012, September 27, 2012, and November 13, 2012).

1997

Cumberland County College formalizes its commitment to continuous program improvement with the first program review manual and process.

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## **PROGRAM REVIEW AT RCSJ**

### Purpose

Rowan College of South Jersey engages in program review for the purpose of continuous improvement of existing academic degree and career certificate programs. The model follows a self-study design that integrates programmatic decision making with the strategic planning, budgeting processes, regional and specialized accreditation, and assessment of student achievement. The goal of program review is to inform strategies to improve student learning outcomes and teaching effectiveness. Program review also serves to examine quality and adequate utilization of resources – all geared to optimize *program effectiveness*.

Program review will produce:

1. Objective data on which to base program decisions.
2. A self-study sufficient to satisfy the requirements for program (in some cases) and institutional accreditation
3. Recommendations for the program resulting from peer review
4. Formal recommendations for the program from joint participation of faculty and administration that includes goals and action items to be accomplished within a specified time period

### Scope

All academic programs shall be evaluated through program review. Academic programs include:

- Transfer Degree Programs. Transfer degree programs include all programs leading to an Associate in Arts (A.A.) or Associate in Science (A.S.). Generally, these programs are intended for transfer into a four-year college or university.
- Terminal Degree and Certificate Programs. Terminal degree programs include all programs leading to an Associate in Applied Science (A.A.S.). Generally, these programs are career degree programs and are not intended for transfer into a four-year college or university. Certificate programs include any credit program leading to a Professional Certificate as well as non-credit programs that bridge into academic degree programs.

Programs that offer multiple options (specializations) and/or academic/professional certificates shall evaluate all offerings within a single comprehensive program review, where appropriate. Programs subject to specialized accreditation shall be reviewed in accordance with the accreditor's review requirements.

## Cycle

To support the continuous improvement of academic programs, each program will undergo the following levels of review:

- Comprehensive (full) Review. Each program will undergo a comprehensive review every eight (8) years. When deemed necessary, the President or a designee may require an alternative review period for any program.
- Annual Updates. Each program is to provide an annual update addressing a common set of key metrics and the status of recommendations identified in the comprehensive program review. The annual updates will inform the mid-point review. Annual updates will continue through the next scheduled comprehensive review.
- Mid-Point Review. Each program will undergo a mid-point review. The report provides a summary of the accomplishments of the program as well as any challenges affecting the effectiveness of the program. Recommendations to change the timing of the next comprehensive review should be made at this time.

Figure 1. Example program review timeline

<b>Full Review</b>	Annual Update	Annual Update	Annual Update	<b>Mid-Point Review</b>	Annual Update	Annual Update	Annual Update	<b>Full Review</b>
<b>Baseline</b>	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	<b>Year 4</b>	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	<b>Year 8</b>
<b>AY2020</b>	AY2021	AY2022	AY2023	<b>AY2024</b>	AY2025	AY2026	AY2027	<b>AY2028</b>

## Evaluation Criteria

Each program shall be evaluated on the following criteria:

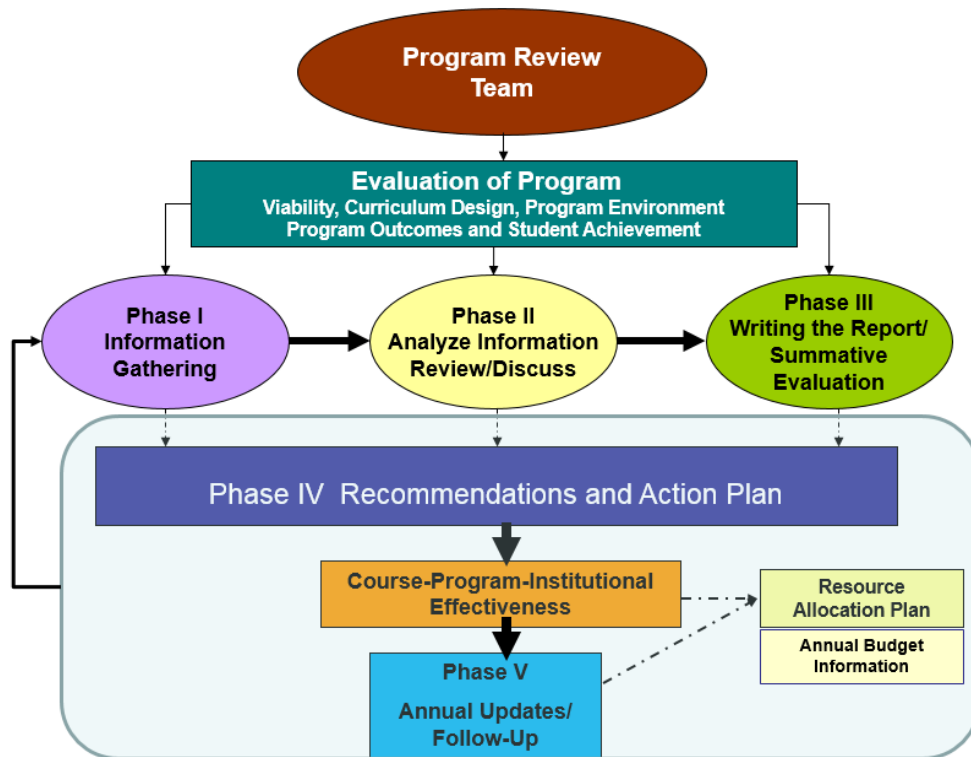
1. Program History, Goals and Contribution to College Mission. This component examines the program's alignment with the mission of the college and sustainability (i.e., demand) of the program.
2. Curriculum Design. This component examines the program's structure, resources, policies and practices. Comparisons to competitive programs and top transfer institutions are considered. Additionally, the program's alignment to institutional, state and industry standards will be reviewed.
3. Program Environment. This component examines the student and faculty profile, program course statistics, and assessment of program outcomes and resources.
4. Student Achievement and Program Outcomes. This component examines program goals as well as retention rates, graduation rates, transfer rates, licensure pass rates, and

employment placement rates. Student attainment of stated program learning goals will also be evaluated.

### Program Review Model

Figure 2 illustrates the program review model and phases of the review process. The entire program review process can be completed within one academic year. While activities may occur simultaneously throughout the academic year, the task timeline provided in Table 1 on page 9 serves as a useful planning tool.

Figure 2  
Program Review Model



## **PROGRAM REVIEW PROCESS**

### Program Review Author(s)

The following guidelines are provided to support a collaborative review process. The manner by which the program review Author(s) conducts the review is at the discretion of the program dean and faculty.

#### Responsibilities of the Program Dean:

- Recruits faculty to serve on the program review. The Author(s) should represent faculty that are knowledgeable of the program curriculum.
- Facilitates special services contract, where applicable.
- Determines whether an external evaluator is needed. If so, with the support of faculty, the Dean, and VP of Academics, identify an external evaluator and facilitate special services contract, where applicable.
- Facilitates program improvement action plan.
- Communicates with the Dean and VP of Academics on the status of recommended strategies for program improvement.

#### Responsibilities of the Program Review **Author(s)**:

- Assumes primary responsibility for facilitating the program review process and completing the final written program review report.
- Serves as the liaison between the program Dean and administrative offices that support the program review process (e.g., student advising, institutional research, student learning outcomes assessment, publications and marketing).
- Attends Report Review Committee meetings during the year, if requested.
- Meets with the external evaluator, if applicable.

#### Responsibilities of Institutional Research:

- Provide baseline program data as established within the program review manual.
- Provide additional data and analyses where deemed necessary by the program review Author(s).
- Provide support in the analysis and interpretation of data to inform program improvement.

#### Responsibilities of Assessment and Academic Compliance:

- Provide summative results of relevant existing (historical) student learning outcomes data for assessment of program learning outcomes, where appropriate.
- Support additional student learning outcomes assessment activities, where deemed necessary by faculty, to support assessment of program learning outcomes.
- Provide support in the analysis of student learning outcomes data to inform program improvement, where deemed necessary by program faculty.
- Provide copies of relevant program articulation agreements.
- Analyze transferability of program core course to transfer partners via NJTransfer data from Academic Compliance.

- Provide summary of relevant course/program curriculum changes approved by the curriculum committee since the last review.

### Report Review Committee

Report review is provided by the respective campus committees which are authorized by the Faculty Senate. Herein these committees are referred to as the report review committees. At Gloucester campus this is the role of the Student Learning Outcomes Committee and at Cumberland campus this is the role of the Academic Program Review Committee.


Responsibilities of the Report Review Committee:

- Mentor program review faculty.
- Serve as internal reviewer for program review reports.
- Assess the program review model and process and make recommendations to the Provost, VP of Academic Services for continuous improvement.

*External Peer Review **Option:*** When applicable, external peer evaluation is encouraged for each program review. The purpose of external evaluation is to garner additional perspectives on program strengths and weaknesses from experts in the program's field, or a closely related field. External evaluation generally consists of review of program information and a possible site visit. At a minimum, the external evaluator is to provide a written report of their evaluation to include a summative statement of program quality and recommendations for improvement. Additional guidelines for optional external evaluators are provided in Appendix A of this manual.



Program Review Timeline and Checklist

<b>Program Review Timeline</b>		<b>Target Completion Date</b>	
Organizing the Program Review Author(s) and Information Gathering	VP of Academic Services notifies Dean of program review requirements. This confirmation is provided to the Deans no later than October so that necessary resources are budgeted in next fiscal year. (e.g., external evaluator, special services contract for faculty)	October	
	Dean organizes Program Review Author(s) no later than April. Special Services contract, if applicable, for next fiscal year completed.	April	
	Dean or designee completes the program review information form. This form is required to initiate preparation of program review materials. This is due no later than May 1 <sup>st</sup> .	May	
	Program review packet provided to Dean and/or Program Review Author(s). Opportunity to request additional information or analysis by Institutional Research.	July	
	Optional. If applicable, Dean identifies external evaluator. Special services contract submitted to VP of Academic Services no later than August. External evaluator is provided program information.	August	
Analyze and Assess	Faculty Program Review Author(s) analyze program information and gathers additional material, where necessary. Meetings with relevant stakeholders held during the fall term, where applicable (e.g., division faculty, advisory committees, external evaluators, etc.)	September	
Report Review	Optional: External evaluator report due. Response to evaluator's comments incorporated into the program review where applicable.	November	
	Draft of the written report distributed electronically to division Dean and Report Review Committee for feedback no later than Feb 1.	February	
	Feedback from the Report Review Committee is due to the program review Author(s) no later than March 1 <sup>st</sup> .	March	
	Program Review Author(s) meets with the division Dean to review report and discuss recommendations and action plan.	April	
Finalizing the Report	Finalize written report.	May	
	Final written report and supporting materials archived in electronic format. Submitted electronically to VP Academic Services no later than June 30. Sign off on completed program review.	June	

Action Plan Annual Update	Annual update data released.	July	
	Dean provides status of the action plan. Includes resources required in annual budget due in November.	August	

**PROGRAM REVIEW: STEP-BY-STEP GUIDANCE**

Step 1: Gather Information

All comprehensive program reviews require the collection and organization of information and materials from numerous sources. In an effort to support timely completion of program review, each program review Author(s) will receive a program review packet.

The materials provided in the packet are by no means meant to be exhaustive of all information considered in the program review. As each program is unique, there will be additional materials collected and referenced by the program review Author(s).

*Program Review Report Template*

The Program Review Report Template is a formatted MS Word document that contains all required headings of the Program Review Report, with guidance for completing the report.

*Program Review Data Report (PRDR) Interpretive Guide*

The program review guidebook contains program and course baseline data from the Office of Institutional Research with interpretive guidance to help programs discuss the data in the Program Review Report.

## Supporting Documentation

An asterisk (\*) indicates that the material is include in the ‘binder’ provided to the program review chair.

### Tab 1. Prior Program Review (\*)

- Includes historical data, recommendations from last review.

### Tab 2. Curriculum Materials

- Program control sheet(s)
- Summary list of relevant course/program curriculum changes approved by the curriculum committee since the last review.
- Master syllabi (core program courses only)

### Tab 3. Industry and Best Practice Materials

- Advisory Board materials
- Industry recognized standards/criteria, if applicable
- Comparative peer materials, if applicable

### Tab 4. Transfer and Articulation Materials

- Articulation agreements with partner colleges/universities
- Transferability results from NJTransfer via the Academic Compliance Department.

### Tab 5. Program Marketing Materials

- Program brochures
- Websites

### Tab 6. Occupational Data (\*) via the Academic Compliance Department.

- List of occupations aligned to program’s classification of instructional program (CIP Code) as defined by O\*NET

### Tab 7. Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Materials via Academic Compliance Department.

- Sampling of student learning assessment tools and summary of results

### Tab 8. Statistical Tables (\*) via Institutional Research Department

- Grade distributions in core program courses: PRDR Course Data Sheets 6.1 & 6.2

Tab 9. Program Resources

- Summary of externally funded resources received, where applicable (e.g., Perkins, NSF, etc.)

Tab 10. Report Review Materials

- **Rubrics used by the Report Review Committee**
- External Evaluator's report (**where applicable**)

## Step 2: Analyze and Assess

The written report is to be a comprehensive, descriptive, and evaluative document based upon the information collected and the conclusions drawn from such.

As noted earlier, a Microsoft Word template of the Program Review Report is prepared for program review. The template ensures consistency in formatting. More importantly, the template includes baseline information to achieve comparable evaluation of programs across divisions and campuses. The program review **Author(s)** must address all baseline information included in the report template provided. Additional information may be included as deemed necessary. The **Author(s)** is reminded to provide any additional information as a supplemental artifact.

## Step 3: Summarize Findings and Formulate Recommendations

The program review report is nearly complete. The last section of the written report is dedicated to summarizing the major findings of the review including significant accomplishments as well as identifying plans for continuous improvement. See the Program Review Template document for guidance on summarizing findings and formulating recommendations.

## Step 4: Report Review

At this point of the review, the main body of the report is mostly complete. Step 4 is dedicated report review by the designated campus committee. This process is supported by the review committee authorized by the faculty senate. The external peer review process is supported by an external consultant, **where applicable**.

Report review committees are encouraged to provide the division faculty an opportunity to review and discuss their report rubric and respond to recommendations from the committee, and where applicable, external peer reviewers. These discussions may be helpful to prioritize recommendations for program improvement. **Author(s)** are reminded to refer to the program review timeline to ensure adequate time to address review committee comments and written recommendations.

## Step 5: Finalizing and Submitting the Completed Program Review Report

The final edited program review report and action plan is due to the program Dean by June 30. The electronic submission is due to the VP of Academic Services by August 1 of the academic year scheduled or within 45 days of the receipt of the final external accreditation report and/or letter.

## **USING RESULTS FOR CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT**

To ensure the results of program review are used for continuous improvement, the status of recommendations and action plans will be monitored via the annual updates to the Dean and mid-point review to the VP of Academic Services.

### Annual Updates

See template (separate document)

### Mid-point Review

Progress on action plan  
Viability and Capacity  
Student Achievement

\*See rubric next page

Midpoint Review Rubric<sup>1</sup>

Indicator	Level of Concern		
	No/Minimal	Moderate	Serious
Action Plan	The program's Action Plan performance is minimally/not concerning because significant progress has been made on the recommended activities and action steps.	The program's Action Plan performance is moderately concerning because limited progress has been made on the recommended activities and action steps.	The program's Action Plan performance is seriously concerning because there is no evidence demonstrating progress on the recommended activities and action steps.
Viability and Capacity	The program's viability/capacity performance is minimally/not concerning because the FTE has remained relatively level during the last four years.	The program's viability/capacity performance is moderately concerning because the FTE has fluctuated by 15-30% over the last four years.	The program's viability/capacity performance is seriously concerning because FTE has fluctuated by more than 40% in the last four years.
Student Achievement	The program's student success performance is minimally/not concerning. This is because the graduation rate has consistently been above 15% for the last four years. Additionally, the graduation rate has remained relatively level during this time	The program's student success performance is moderately concerning. This is because the graduation rate has been between 10-15% during the last four years and/or the graduation rate has seen a 10% or greater decrease over the last four years.	The program's student success performance is seriously concerning because the graduation has been below 10% in the last four years.

<sup>1</sup> Adapted from the Middle States Commission on Higher Education, Midpoint Review Indicators and Guidelines for Two-Year Institutions. Retrieved <https://www.msche.org/accreditation/mid-point-peer-review-faq/>

## **APPENDICES**



## Appendix A. Guidelines for Optional, External Evaluators

Evaluators must be approved by the Vice President of Academic Services. Except under special circumstances, external evaluators are to be from outside the New Jersey community college sector. The following criteria should be considered in the selection of an external evaluator:

- Appropriate terminal degree in relevant field from an accredited institution.
- Academic or appropriate professional experience (administrative and/or teaching) in the field.
- Research experience (where appropriate): publications such as books and articles in refereed journals; receipt of research grants from external funding sources such as government agencies and foundations.
- Appropriate professional experience in relevant field(s) if program to be reviewed has professional orientation (e.g., engineering, social work, law).
- Knowledge of leading edge industry standards.
- Familiarity with existing programs.
- Awareness of employment possibilities of graduates.
- Knowledge of budgeting and financial matters – of critical importance if program to be reviewed would be expensive or represent a major shift in an institution’s educational mission.
- Experience in evaluating academic programs.

### Scope of Work

In addition to the Program Review document, external evaluators should be provided a copy of the following program materials: (1) Graduation Control Sheet; (2) 5-year enrollment profile; (3) Syllabi of core program courses.

Reviewers are asked to prepare short, bulleted responses to the following questions:

1. Are the program’s learning goals relevant for students’ future *employment* success in occupations requiring an associate level degree? If not, what revisions could/should be made?
2. Are the program’s learning goals relevant for students’ future *transfer* success at the baccalaureate level? If not, what revisions could/should be made?
3. Does the program’s core curriculum reflect current industry standards with respect to scope? As best you can determine, is the curriculum adequately competency based? If not, what revisions could/should be made to improve the program?
4. As best as you can determine from the Graduation Control Sheet, does the program’s course sequencing promote student success? If not, what revisions could/should be made to improve student success in the program?

5. As best as you can determine, within baccalaureate programs at your institution that are most closely related to RCSJ's [INSERT PROGRAM NAME HERE], what are the academic strengths and weaknesses of transfer students as compared to native students? For the purposes of this review, a transfer student includes any student that did not begin his or her academic career at your institution. Please provide recommendations for strategies that RCSJ could/should employ to address these weaknesses (if any).

There is no prescribed format for the evaluation memo. However, we ask that the reviewer please include the following information: full name, highest degree held, affiliation and contact information of all reviewers as well as the memo transmission date.

### Compensation

Consultant fees for external evaluators may vary. Program Review Author(s) should work with the consultant and Division Dean to establish a fair fee. Please contact Academic Services for a Personal Services Contract.

## EXTERNAL REVIEWER SAMPLE LETTER

Dear Reviewer(s):

Thank you for contributing to Rowan College of South Jersey's (RCSJ) review of its degree program: [INSERT PROGRAM NAME HERE]. RCSJ engages in program review for the purpose of program improvement. Your input as an external reviewer provides valuable insight on areas where RCSJ may improve the program to promote student success in this particular area of study. Your observations, suggestions, and recommendations will be addressed in the program's final evaluative report, which is to include a plan for program improvement.

The following provides you with the details of the external review process including the scope of work and the specific questions we would like you to address.

### Scope of Work

- Reviewers. Reviewers of this program should possess training at the Master's or Ph.D. level (Ph.D. preferred) in the area most closely related to the field of study. Reviewers should be knowledgeable of undergraduate programs generally, with specific experience in curriculum development/review. Additional experience in the area of student academic advising – particularly in the area of *student transfer* into a baccalaureate program - would be helpful but is not necessary.
- Supporting Program Information. Reviewers are provided a brief overview of the program including:
  - Program Graduation Control Sheet (program goals and curriculum)
  - Master Syllabi of core program courses
  - Five-year fall enrollment profile
- Evaluation Memo. Reviewers are asked to prepare short, bulleted responses to the attached questions. Please feel free to add additional comments/observations as needed.

There is no prescribed format for the evaluation memo. However, we ask that you please include the following information: full name, highest degree held, affiliation and contact information of all reviewers as well as the memo transmission date.

We ask that completed memos be submitted no later than \_\_\_\_\_. [If you require additional information, please do not hesitate to contact us] via the contact information listed above.

Thank you again for your assistance in this important endeavor.

Appendix B. General Education/Core Competency Audit Form

\*insert here

Appendix C. Sample Faculty Feedback Survey

\*add copies here

Appendix D. Program Review Rubric

\*insert here

## Appendix E. List of Resources

### Occupational Data

- Economic Development and Employer Planning System (EDEPS)  
URL: <http://www.edeps.org/>
- NJ Dept. of Labor and Workforce Development – Labor Market Information  
URL: [https://www.nj.gov/labor/lpa/lbrdmand/LaborDemand\\_index.html](https://www.nj.gov/labor/lpa/lbrdmand/LaborDemand_index.html)
- Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission  
URL: <https://www.dvrpc.org/>

### Demographic Data

- New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development  
URL: [https://www.nj.gov/labor/lpa/acs/2014/acs14\\_5Yr\\_MCD\\_GLO\\_ndx.html](https://www.nj.gov/labor/lpa/acs/2014/acs14_5Yr_MCD_GLO_ndx.html)

### Curriculum

- New Jersey Higher Education Program Inventory  
URL: [http://www.state.nj.us/highereducation/Program\\_Inventory/index.shtml](http://www.state.nj.us/highereducation/Program_Inventory/index.shtml)