

University of Missouri-St. Louis

Office of Academic Affairs

Guidelines for Program Viability Audits at UM-St. Louis*

I. Introduction

University of Missouri Executive Guideline #25 (20.035 Program Assessment and Viability Audit) mandates regular administration of Program Assessments and Program Viability Audits. With respect to program viability audits, this Guideline notes that:

- A. The Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs (VPAA) generates an annual report on academic costs and revenues, enrollment trends, degree completion rates, percentage of service courses, and relationship between institutional and external support for research and scholarship.
- B. Based on the academic profiles derived from this annual report, the VPAA generates a list of academic programs or departments that are potential candidates for a program viability audit.
- C. This list is then submitted to the Chancellor and reviewed in relation to other quality and centrality indicators. The Chancellor may elect to add other degree programs to be reviewed based on other criteria, including the outcome of a program assessment.
- D. The Chancellor or her or his designee determines which programs or academic units should undergo a program viability audit and notifies the VPAA of those degree programs and associated academic units that were selected to participate in a program viability audit.

II. The PVA Committee's Scope of Responsibility

The charge of the PVA committee is to review the academic profile of the programs and academic units selected for an audit, compile and review other pertinent and related information and make recommendations to the Chancellor and the chief academic officer concerning the program and/or academic unit under review. The PVA committee should examine, but is not limited to, the following criteria during a viability audit of an academic unit:

- A. Quality of faculty and students;
- B. Outcomes of instruction, research, and outreach activities;
- C. Student demand and State need for the affected programs;
- D. Centrality to the mission of the campus and the University of Missouri;
- E. Comparative advantages or uniqueness of the program; and
- F. The adequacy of resources to support the program and other financial considerations.

III. PVA Committee Membership

Executive Guideline 25 requires that the PVA Committee include representation from the academic administration and the faculty. At UM-St. Louis the PVA Committee is comprised of fifteen members, fourteen of whom are appointed by the Chancellor:

- A. Ten tenured faculty members:

The Committee's faculty representatives will be determined in the following manner:

1. The Chancellor will appoint five tenured faculty members to serve on the Committee.
2. The Faculty Senate will nominate a pool of at least ten additional tenured faculty members from whom the Chancellor will select at least five to serve on the Committee. PVA Committee members selected from the faculty will serve three-year staggered terms so that new members will join experienced committee members as the academic year resumes each fall semester. Subcommittees may be formed and assigned to conduct program viability reviews.

3. The chairperson of the PVA Committee will be appointed from the faculty serving on the Committee. The chairperson of the PVA will have responsibility for:
 - a. Presiding at all meetings of the Committee;
 - b. Assigning committee members to one or more subcommittees that perform audits of specific programs/academic units;
 - c. Ensuring the program audits follow the procedures specified in Guideline 25;
 - d. Ensuring that all audits are completed according to a schedule determined at the first meeting of the Committee; and
 - e. Transmitting reports of the Committee to the Chancellor.
- B. A representative from the UM System Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs (ex officio);
- C. The campus' chief academic officer, or his/her designee (ex officio);
The chief academic officer will have responsibility for:
 1. Convening the first meeting each year of the PVA Committee;
 2. Appointing a tenured faculty member to serve as chairperson of the Committee; and
 3. Providing Committee members with information and data needed to conduct the program audit(s).
- D. The UM-St. Louis chief research officer (ex officio);
- E. The UM-St. Louis Dean of the Graduate School (ex officio); and
- F. The University's institutional research officer (ex officio)

IV. Stakeholders of Programs/Academic Units Undergoing Program Viability Audit

The PVA Committee, in the audit process, shall invite stakeholders (e.g., administrators, faculty) of the program or academic unit being audited the opportunity to provide input during the audit process. This input must include:

- A. Opportunities to review and provide written commentary on data reviewed by the PVA Committee;
- B. An opportunity for the Dean in which the program or academic unit is located to respond in writing to the PVA Committee's final report to the Chancellor. This response shall be included with the PVA Committee's final report to the Chancellor.

V. PVA Committee Recommendations

The PVA committee may recommend to the Chancellor that the program or academic unit:

- A. Be placed on probationary status for a fixed time period with an outcome-based improvement plan;
- B. Be modified, consolidated with another program, suspended, or discontinued; and
- C. Explore opportunities to develop a cooperative program with other campuses.

VI. The Chancellor's Decision-making Role

Based on the review and recommendations of the PVA committee, the Chancellor makes final decisions on the actions taken concerning the affected degree program and/or academic unit. The Chancellor will report the actions to the Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs.

*Established by the Office of Academic Affairs 8/19/03.

PROGRAM ASSESSMENT AND VIABILITY AUDIT

Executive Guideline No. 25, 7-23-87; Revised 5-16-90; Revised 12-19-02.

20.035 PROGRAM ASSESSMENT AND VIABILITY AUDIT

A. PROGRAM ASSESSMENT

Each department, center, and institute will undergo a cyclic process of assessment for the purpose of improving the quality of the educational opportunities provided by the academic unit. The assessment will include any degree programs offered by the department. The department faculty should assess the processes developed through its planning efforts to improve student learning, to enhance the impact of its research and scholarship on the discipline, and to link its service activities with the needs of the campus, discipline, and the community. The assessment should also determine if the planning at the academic unit is aligned with the campus strategic plan.

1. The campus determines the procedures and format of the program assessment.
2. The Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs will provide cooperation and coordination with the program review process of any applicable state agency or department. The Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs will provide summary reports to any applicable state agency or department according to a mutually agreeable five-year cycle for each degree program. The summary report submitted to any applicable state agency or department must contain the following summary information:
 - a. Name of the degree program and name of the department responsible for administering the degree;
 - b. Statement concerning program mission;
 - c. Distinguishing characteristics of the program;
 - d. Trends in student enrollments and degree completions;
 - e. Scholarship activity and public service.
3. The Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs will examine, on a rotating basis, the assessment process on each campus according to established best practices. Each campus process will be examined once every four years.

B. PROGRAM VIABILITY AUDIT

The management of the degree program inventory will at times require the elimination or consolidation of degree programs and associated academic units in order to optimally direct limited faculty and other resources to meet the dynamic educational needs of students in Missouri. The purpose of a program viability audit is to determine if a selected degree program or academic unit should be modified, consolidated with another degree program and/or academic unit, suspended, or discontinued. The Chancellor or her or his designee will determine which programs or academic units should undergo a program viability audit.

1. PROCEDURES TO IDENTIFY CANDIDATES FOR A PROGRAM VIABILITY AUDIT

- a. The Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs will generate an annual report on academic costs and revenues, enrollment trends, degree completion rates, percentage of service courses, and relationship between institutional and external support for research and scholarship. Based on the academic profiles derived from the annual report, the Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs will generate a list of academic programs or departments that are potential candidates for a program viability audit.
- b. The list will be submitted to the Chancellor and reviewed in relation to other quality and centrality indicators. The Chancellor may elect to add other degree programs to be reviewed based on other criteria, including the outcome of a program assessment.
- c. The Chancellor will notify the Vice President for Academic Affairs which degree programs and associated academic units were selected to participate in a program viability audit.

2. PROCEDURES TO CONDUCT A PROGRAM VIABILITY AUDIT

- a. A standing committee on each campus will conduct a Program Viability Audit. The Program Viability Audit (PVA) committee will include representation from academic administration, faculty, and the Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs (ex-officio). The Chancellor of each campus will determine the specific membership. Any program review, assessment or audit taking place on any campus prior to the effective date of this guideline may continue at the discretion of the Chancellor under the process utilized on that campus in lieu of utilization of the PVA committee.
- b. The charge of the PVA committee will be to review the academic profile of the programs and academic units selected for an audit, compile and review other pertinent and related information and make recommendations to the Chancellor and the chief academic officer concerning the program and/or academic unit under review.
- c. The PVA committee should examine, but is not limited to, the following criteria during a viability audit of an academic unit:
- (1) Quality of faculty and students;
 - (2) Outcomes of instruction, research, and outreach activities;
 - (3) Student demand and State need for the affected programs;
 - (4) Centrality to the mission of the campus and the University of Missouri;
 - (5) Comparative advantages or uniqueness of the program;
 - (6) The adequacy of resources to support the program and other financial considerations.
- d. The PVA committee may recommend to the Chancellor that the program or academic unit be placed on probationary status for a fixed time period with an outcome-based improvement plan, modified, consolidated with another program, suspended, or discontinued. Cooperative programs with other campuses should be explored as part of the recommendation to the Chancellor.
- e. A program or academic unit under suspension will not admit any new students, but will continue to provide instruction to students who are already enrolled in the program. The program will automatically be discontinued if it is suspended for more than five years.
- f. Based on the review and recommendations of the PVA committee, the Chancellor makes the final decision on the actions taken concerning the affected degree program and/or academic unit. The Chancellor will report the actions to the Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs.
- g. The Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs will submit to the President an annual report on the list of potential candidates for program viability audit, the list of candidates selected by the Chancellor for the program viability audit, and the final disposition for each affected program for each campus.

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