

**American University in Bulgaria**  
**Regular Academic Program Review**

*Approved by the Faculty Assembly on April 16, 2008*

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**1. Introduction**

- 1.1 **Overall Objectives.** The purpose of periodic reviews of academic programs is to ensure that the University continues to offer its students an innovative educational experience that conforms to the highest U.S. and regional standards and effectively responds to the societal needs of the region and beyond. The reviews also serve as a means for accountability to the AUBG Board of Trustees, US and Bulgarian accreditation agencies, donor organizations, and the public at large. A specific purpose of Program Review is to collect, structure, and analyze information needed to manage the changes in the Program to ensure meeting the highest quality standards, contribution to AUBG mission and to guarantee long-term sustainability.
- 1.2 **Review Frequency.** Each Program should be reviewed at least once in every five years. The frequency of the review depends on dynamics in the field, external accreditation schedules, and needs of adapting to changes in AUBG strategy or available resources.
- 1.3 **Administrative Responsibility.** Responsibility for oversight of academic program review rests with the Provost. The Dean of Faculty and the responsible Department Chair have specific responsibilities in the completion of the self-study and other stages of the review process.
- 1.4 **Department Responsibility.** Each department will convene a committee of at least two faculty members of the department and one student representative. The responsible Department/Discipline Chair will head the committee. University units such as the Registrars, Library, and Institutional Research will be available for consultation.

**2. The Regular Review Process**

- 2.1 **Initiation.** The Review Process may be initiated either (1) by the Provost, according to regular review schedule or (2) by the Department, when caused by internal changes or by external changes, such as significant changes in the field.
- 2.2 **Guidelines and Calendar.** Provost's Office distributes the review guidelines and provides the review calendar, while allowing sufficient time for preparing the Self-study by the department or discipline.
- 2.3 **Accreditation Committee.** An approval of the Self-study by the Accreditation Committee is necessary whenever the program is expected to be submitted to NEAA for program accreditation.
- 2.4 **External Review.** A peer assessment of the program should be provided by external experts based on the Self-study and a site visit. The assessment made by NEAA expert team may serve as an acceptable external peer review. If the program is not subject to Bulgarian accreditation, the Provost in consultation with the Department may appoint external or internal experts as reviewers.
- 2.5 **Financial Analysis.** The Review Committee will prepare with the help of the Dean of Faculty an addendum for internal purposes based on AUBG requirements for a financial analysis.
- 2.6 **Recommendation by the Provost.** The Provost prepares recommendations with regard to the continuance and/or enhancement of the program based on the self study, peer review, and financial analysis. The recommendations are reviewed by the department, which may respond before informing Faculty Assembly and before a submission to the President.

- 2.7 **Response by the President.** The President will either (a) accept the review and the recommendations in the final report and initiate any appropriate action(s), or (b) discuss with AUBG's Board of Trustees the review documentation, possible future actions, or a possible termination of the Program.
- 2.8 **Decision by the Board of Trustees.** Recommendation for discontinuation of the Program is submitted to the Board of Trustees for final decision.

### 3. Self-Study

The Self-study forms the basis of the Program Review. It evaluates the effectiveness of the existing program, recommends improvements in academic quality, and assesses potential current and future needs in light of the long-range objectives and development plans of the University.

Whenever the *Bulgarian National Evaluation and Accreditation Agency* conducts program accreditation, internal Program Review must be consistent with the respective accreditation requirements in order to minimize inefficiencies.

NEAA has established the fundamental components of the Self-study for the purpose of Program Accreditation. As a principle, the review should follow closely NEAA requirements and suggestions. Any items in the listing below that do not fit into the NEAA format should be prepared as an addendum that will be used only for internal purposes, along with the Financial Analysis of the program.

#### 3.1 Inventory of the Academic Program

The inventory section of the self-study report should contain the following:

3.1.1. **Mission Statement**, a description of the mission statement of the academic program, consistent with the overriding mission and strategic goal of AUBG.

##### 3.1.2. **Enrollment Information**

- a. **Admissions Requirements**, if any, for the academic program
- b. **Student Enrollment**, numbers of students taking courses that are offered by the program
- c. **Enrollment Patterns**, by department or discipline (students majoring in a discipline)
- d. **Habilitation Ratio**, Percentage of courses taught by habilitated faculty
- e. **Majoring Student/Faculty Ratio**, for students majoring in a program (for internal purposes)
- f. **Overall Student/Faculty Ratio**, for all students taking courses in a program (for internal purposes)

##### 3.1.3. **Program Curriculum**

- a. The Program Curriculum in the current University Catalog
- b. List of Courses Taught
- c. List of Required and Elective Courses in Catalog not Taught over the past five years
- d. List of academically related co-curricular activities

##### 3.1.4. **Required Course Information**

- a. Collection of all Course Syllabi, each containing the following information:
  - Course Topics
  - Reading List
  - Teaching Methodology
  - Student Evaluation
- b. Enrollment Patterns for all Courses

c. Grade Distribution for all Courses

### 3.1.5. Faculty Resources

Summary of Faculty Qualifications - updated curriculum vitae with full list of publications of all full-time and part-time faculty members in the department and teaching courses in the program. The summary table may include:

- academic qualifications
- rank and type of contract
- teaching focus within the discipline/department
- service activities
- research and/or creative work related to the program
- professional activities and/or professional development

### 3.1.6. Teaching & Learning Resources

A short description of Classroom Space, Computer Facilities, Library Resources, and Equipment.

### 3.1.7. Cost Per-Credit Hour of Department (for internal purposes)

### 3.1.8. Cost-Per-Student Major of Department (for internal purposes)

## 3.2 External Evaluation

The external evaluation of the Academic Program should contain the following items:

### 3.2.1. Student Survey of the Academic Program

### 3.2.2. Alumni Survey, Recent (last five years) Graduates' Survey/Testimonials of the Academic Program

### 3.2.3. Employer Survey, Employer Satisfaction Survey/Testimonials of the Academic Program

## 3.3 Student Demand

This section of the self-study report should involve an assessment of the current and anticipated societal needs and student demand in the region and beyond for the academic program. The assessment should involve:

### 3.3.1. Current number of students majoring/minoring in the program

### 3.3.2. Projected future student demand

### 3.3.3. Projected future societal need within the program

### 3.3.4. Any supporting evidence

## 3.4 Overall Evaluation and Recommendations

The self-study should include an evaluation of the academic programs strengths and weaknesses and recommendations for the development of the academic program based on the completed assessments. The self-assessment should explicitly address the quality of the academic program. In assessing the quality of the major program, the following topics related to the academic substance should be explicitly addressed:

### 3.4.1. Desired student outcomes

### 3.4.2. Major contemporary research methodology in the field (interdisciplinary focus, quantitative vs. qualitative skills, etc.)

### 3.4.3. Major contemporary areas of development in the field (i.e. growth areas, new fields of research)

### 3.4.4. Benchmarking and Competitiveness – comparison of academic program with major competitors

### 3.4.5. The regional focus of the academic program designed for students primarily from SE Europe.

- 3.4.6. The learning outcomes of students in the major and their relation to the mission of AUBG
- 3.4.7. The interaction between AUBG's General Education and the major – how AUBG serves the major and how the major builds upon the offerings of General Education.
- 3.4.8. The role of co-curricular activities in the major.

Based upon this analysis, department/discipline should recommend general and specific improvements.

The Dean's Council must review and approve the self-study before submission for peer review.

#### **4. Peer Review**

Based on the self-study approved by the department/discipline and any other relevant information, an external review body, selected according to 2.4, will be appointed to complete a written evaluation of the academic program with respect to:

- 4.1. The coherency, rigor, and **innovativeness** of the program
- 4.2. The capacity of faculty to deliver the program
- 4.3. The quality of learning resources supporting the program
- 4.4. The student, alumni, and employer satisfaction with the program
- 4.5. Research related to the program and the field
- 4.6. The quality of the program's management
- 4.7. Suggestions and recommendations for improvements

The department or discipline should have the opportunity to complete a written response to the peer review within two weeks after submission of the peer review.