**Letter of Understanding**

02/02/2024

Dear Dr. Academic Unit’s Dean or Chairperson,

Your unit is scheduled to complete the regularly scheduled self-study of the Academic Program Review (APR) process.

The attached Letter of Understanding (LOU) provides the focus for \_\_ program or the academic unit of \_\_ 2024-2025 APR self-study This formative self-study is in service of stimulating collaborative strategic program planning and improvement, facilitating the integration of program goals with the school’s and the university’s priorities and strategic plans. The purpose of the APR also is to foster within the program productive conversations about how implementing evidence-based teaching practices influences student learning. Evidence from the APR processes that demonstrates commitment to continuous improvement of teaching and learning will be used to illustrate how Loyola is meeting or not meeting accreditation standards.

Please review the following APR LOU, discuss with key stakeholders and then confirm any additional unit specific themes or questions you wish to add.

We look forward to working with you during your APR self-Study. Thank you.

Sincerely,

David Ensminger, Faculty Director of Academic Program Review and Assessment

Rachel Shefner, Assistant Provost, Assessment, Accreditation, and Regulatory Compliance

**2024-2025 Academic Program Review** **Letter of Understanding**

**Unit, School, Loyola University Chicago**

Within the guidelines for APR process the \_\_ program unit and school will use its own judgment on how best to organize its APR study, discussion, and reflection. However, the APR process must make evident in documentation the focus on the following topics outlined below. Thus, the study of these focal issues will also inform how the unit will write up an APR Self-Study Report (December 31, 2024) and then create an APR Action Plan due two weeks after Unit and Provost meeting. While the unit will use its own expertise to organize these reporting and planning written documents, we offer the recommendation that the APR Report be concise and focused on addressing the themes and questions posed. We estimate that the narrative addressing these points would be no longer than 20 to 30 pages. The narrative would be supported by evidence shown by data displays (figures, tables, etc.) and information in appendices. The intent is for the report to present clear evidence-based descriptions of activities and conclusions that accurately reflect the depth of the unit’s inquiry and collaborative interpretation and then set the stage for continued program improvement and sustainability.

Academic Program Review focuses on three main themes:

1. how faculty use evidence of student learning to refine program curriculum and pedagogy,
2. how faculty use evidence for identifying strategic issues, make recommendations for optimizing internal resource allocation or re-allocation or inform resource request to the Dean to improdiverve program delivery and sustainability,
3. how evidence is used to envision future programming changes. Each of these must be clearly addressed in your Self-Study Report.

Units can add unit specific themes and questions for their self-study that the unit deems relevant to the self-study process. The required themes and questions below along with additional unit specific questions will frame the APR self-study process and report.

1. **Student Learning and Support**

Directly answer a., b., and c. in your report and provide evidence:

* 1. What is the manner and interval in which the program assesses Program Learning Outcomes set for students? What has been learned from these assessments.
  2. How has the information on the unit’s assessment of Program Learning Outcomes been used to address improvements in the curriculum, learning environment, instructional practices, and assessment?
  3. How does the unit provide and assure that their students are receiving the support and building relationships they need in terms of academic advising, engagement with instructors, information from administration, etc.?

1. **Strategic Issues, Resources, and Sustainability**

Directly answer a, b, c and d. in your report and provide evidence:

* 1. How does the unit and its faculty support the school and Loyola mission, vision, and promise of becoming a more diverse and inclusive environment in which to learn, teach, research and serve?
  2. How does the unit use information on student enrollment, course size, retention, completion of programs to understand and make improvements in programs or decisions regarding program sustainability?,
  3. How does the unit use the information on faculty teaching loads, credit hours taught, number of full-time and part-time faculty to make improvements in programs, allocation of resources, and decisions regarding program sustainability?,
  4. Given careful review of data, how can the unit and school most effectively allocate or re-allocate resources to improve and sustain programs?

1. **Executive Summary**  
     
   Directly answer a. and b. in your report and provide evidence:  
   1. For each graduate program and for undergraduate program offerings, how does the evidence studied support decisions to either:
      1. Sustain it as it is currently?
      2. Change it substantially to be more effective?
      3. Sunset it, following good practices to teach-out currently enrolled students?
      4. Grow it given its potential and alignment with LUC mission?
   2. Three years from the completion of your self-study, what would you project to be the ‘right’ size for each of the programs?
      1. How many students?
      2. How would faculty be allocated/assigned across the teaching of programs – and across responsibilities for research and service?

The Office of Institutional Effectiveness will provide and help you access various data on current conditions and historical trends within programs and departments. The unit undertaking the APR self-study will review these data and other unit level data, develop findings, and collaboratively reflect on and interpret these findings to plan future directions. The data reviewed and general findings will be documented and shared.

Note the following key dates for deliverables:

* APR Cohort meetings during Spring 2024, Fall 2024, and Spring 2025 (TBD)
* Finalization of Units LOU to APP February 16, 2024
* External reviewer nominees to APP October 2, 2024
  + You may submit nominees sooner for approval
* Confirmation of two external reviewers to APP November 15, 2024
* Confirmation of external review campus visit dates to APP Dec 13, 2024
  + Note review dates can occur between Jan 13-Feb 13, 2025
* APR Self-Study Report December 31, 2024
* External Review visits take place between Jan 13-Feb 13, 2025
  + External review report due two weeks after visit
* Unit Memo to APP two weeks after receipt of external review report received
* CAS Dean Memo to CAS Units one week after receipt of Unit Memo (Only applies to units in CAS)
* Memo meeting with Dean for CAS units, CAS organizes (Only applies to units in CAS)
  + Finalized Unit memo and Dean’s Memo due to APP 2 business days following CAS Deans and Unit meeting (Only applies to units in CAS)
* Meeting of Unit with Provost [and if applicable CAS Dean and Graduate School Dean]
  + Scheduled based on Unit Memo submission date must occur by April 30, 2025
* Action Plan due 2 weeks after meeting with Provost
* Action Plan implementation and monitoring phase begins
* First Action plan monitoring report due May 1, 2026
* I have reviewed the APR LOU and added program-specific questions as determined by our steering committee.
* I have reviewed the APR LOU and not added program-specific questions as determined by our steering committee.

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Academic Unit Dean or Chairperson Signature Date