

Academic Program Review
Office of the Provost

Action Plan Overview and Templates
2024-25

Action Plan Overview and Process Steps

The “Action Plan” is a comprehensive outline of next steps to be taken as a result of the review. Using the External Reviewers' Report, the Faculty Advisory Council’s feedback, and/or review materials as input sources, the Action Plan articulates which recommendations will be pursued and identifies the owner(s) of each recommendation, its level of urgency, and any collaborators needed. The Academic Program Review (APR) team, in partnership with the Dean and department Chair, manages the development of the Action Plan following the below steps.

Step 1: Department Responds to Report Recommendations

The APR team compiles the review recommendations into the “*Department Response to Report Recommendations*” template ([see Attachment 1 below](#)). The department Chair prepares brief responses to the recommendations; this document, along with the full set of review materials and the External Reviewers’ report, is shared with the Action Plan meeting attendees.

Step 2: Action Plan Meeting

The APR team schedules a one-hour Action Plan meeting, attended by the Provost, Dean, department Chair, and other University leaders as needed. The goal of this meeting is to debrief the review materials and align on recommended items. During the meeting, the Chair provides brief opening remarks, and then the APR team guides the group through discussion of the recommendations.

Step 3: Post-Meeting Follow-Up

After the meeting, the APR team works closely with the Dean, Provost, and department Chair to co-create a final Action Plan. A sample Final Action Plan template with example recommendations is included below ([see Attachment 2 below](#)).

Step 4: Implementation of Recommendations

The Action Plan makes clear which parties are responsible for each recommendation. The APR team and the Dean work with the department to facilitate any next steps. While the Office of the Provost manages the development of the Action Plan, the department should take ownership of its Plan, and should follow-up with the APR team and/or Dean with any questions or concerns.

Step 5: One-Year Progress Update

Six months after the Action Plan is finalized, the APR team will check-in informally with the department on progress. At the one-year mark, the department will be expected to provide a formal “Progress Update” on its Action Plan. A report tailored to each department is provided to submit this update.

Attachment 1: Department Response to Report Recommendations Document

Academic Program Review: {Department}, {College/School}
Review Visit Dates: Dates

Department Response to External Reviewer Recommendations Template
For MONTH YEAR “Action Plan” meeting with Office of the Provost and Dean {X}

External Reviewer recommendations are listed in black. Department responses to recommendations* are noted in blue.
**It is the Chair’s discretion which recommendations to respond to in this document. The Chair may also add other potential action items to be addressed as a result of the review that are not represented in the report.*

1. FACULTY:

- a. APR team adds any relevant faculty recommendations from report here.

Department Response: Department provides brief response (1-2 paragraphs).

2. RESEARCH:

- a. APR team adds any relevant research recommendations from report here.

Department Response: Department provides brief response (1-2 paragraphs).

3. GOVERNANCE:

- a. APR team adds any relevant governance recommendations from report here.

Department Response: Department provides brief response (1-2 paragraphs).

4. **GRADUATE PROGRAM:**

- a. APR team adds any relevant graduate student/program recommendations from report here.

Department Response: Department provides brief response (1-2 paragraphs).

5. **UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAM:**

- a. APR team adds any relevant undergraduate student/program recommendations from report here.

Department Response: Department provides brief response (1-2 paragraphs).

6. **COLLABORATION:**

- a. APR team adds any relevant collaboration recommendations from report here.

Department Response: Department provides brief response (1-2 paragraphs).

7. **STAFF:**

- a. APR team adds any relevant staff recommendations from report here.

Department Response: Department provides brief response (1-2 paragraphs).

8. **FACILITIES AND OPERATIONS:**

- a. APR team adds any relevant facilities/operations recommendations from report here.

Department Response: Department provides brief response (1-2 paragraphs).

Attachment 2: Sample Final Action Plan Template

Northwestern Academic Program Review: UNIT NAME
Review Visit: DATES
Action Planning Meeting: DATE
<u>Department Response Memo Is Linked Here</u>
<u>Faculty Advisory Council Feedback Is Linked Here</u>

Below is the Action Plan for the {X} Department, at the conclusion of their {YEAR} Academic Program Review. Recommendations are based on feedback provided in the External Reviewers' Report, as well as feedback from the Faculty Advisory Council, and the review visit materials compiled over the last year.

Category	Recommendation	Action Items	Owner	Collaborators	Status	Priority/Urgency
FACULTY	Revamp Mentoring Program for Junior Faculty	<i>Owner to fill in here</i>	Department	None	Department Action Required	High
GOVERNANCE	Assess current department committee structure and revise to better align with academic strategy	<i>Owner to fill in here</i>	Department	None	Department Action Required	Medium
RESEARCH	Resolve issues regarding faculty accessing research materials	<i>Owner to fill in here</i>	Office of the Provost		Provost Office Action Required	High
UNDERGRADUATE	Collaborate with University Admissions to feature the department more prominently in materials to prospective students	<i>Owner to fill in here</i>	Department	University Admissions	Department Action Required	Low

GRADUATE	Clarify guidelines for TAs	<i>Owner to fill in here</i>	Department		Department Action Required	High
COLLABORATIONS	Revamp Alumni Program, and strengthen connections with young alumni	<i>Owner to fill in here</i>	Department	Alumni Relations and Development	Department Action Required	Low
STAFF	Connect staff with resources/training to improve grant submission process	<i>Owner to fill in here</i>	Department	Staff Leadership; Office for Sponsored Research	Department Action Required	Medium
FACILITIES AND OPERATIONS	Address custodial issues in building	<i>Owner to fill in here</i>	Dean	Facilities	Dean Action Required	High
OTHER	None.	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A