

**UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS AMHERST  
STUDENT AFFAIRS AND CAMPUS LIFE  
PROGRAM REVIEW**

**OVERVIEW OF THE PROCESS**

In recognition of the value of an ongoing plan of assessment for educational programs and administrative operations at University of Massachusetts Amherst, Student Affairs and Campus Life began implementing a seven-year cycle of departmental program review in 2012. Program Review in Student Affairs and Campus Life is a formal and meaningful assessment of how well a department achieves its stated mission, goals and outcomes and the identification of ways to sustain and create program excellence. The seven-year reviews are intended to ensure that departments continue to meet the educational and developmental needs of students, the goals of the university and Student Affairs and Campus Life. Program Review provides each department the opportunity to regularly reassess its mission and objectives, desired and actual learning and program outcomes, processes for planning and assessment, and overall effectiveness. It is a process of purposeful, reflective self-study, external peer review and action planning.

**Guiding Principles of Program Review**

The Student Affairs and Campus Life program review process is a formative assessment tool designed to enhance organizational performance via the systematic review of data pertaining to department activities, service delivery and use, resource management, and contributions to the advancement of Student Affairs and Campus Life's mission and strategic plan.

More specifically, the purposes of program review are to:

- Provide evidence of the excellence and effectiveness of the department's programs, activities, services, and operations;
- Assess the department's effectiveness in contributing to student learning and development outcomes and/or business and service outcomes;
- Foster understanding of University of Massachusetts Amherst students' characteristics, needs, and experiences;
- Encourage strategic thinking about the department's plans for the future;
- Define ways, primarily within existing resources, that the department can continue to improve in the quality of its programs, services, activities, and operations; and
- Identify obstacles that inhibit the department from achieving its desired goals and develop an action plan for managing these obstacles.

The principal institutional references for the program review are the University of Massachusetts Amherst mission and goals, the Student Affairs and Campus Life mission and strategic plan, and the department or program mission statement.

**Program Review Process and Timeline**

The Student Affairs and Campus Life program review is a 12-16 month process that includes the five phases outlined below:

*Phase 1: Program Review Preparation (3-4 months)*

- Selection and recruitment of self-study team leader(s) and members
- Selection of external review panel leader(s) and members
- Identification of the self-study protocol to be used in conducting the department performance review (Council for the Advancement of Standards (CAS), or comparable recognized industry protocol)
- Preparation of the Departmental Profile

*Phase 2: Department Self-Study (4-6 months)*

- Compilation and organization of documentary evidence to inform departmental self-assessment process
- Completion of departmental self-assessment according to selected protocol format

- Preparation of a self-study report
- Development of preliminary action plan that addresses issues identified during self-study
- Identification of external review priorities

*Phase 3: External Review (2-3 months)*

- Finalization of site visit itinerary
- External site review team's on-campus visit (2-3 days)
- Creation and submission of external review report, under direction of the external site review team leader

*Phase 4: Program Review Report & Action Plan (2-3 months)*

- Revision and finalization of a departmental action plan that incorporates the recommendations outlined in the external review report (or proposes alternative recommendations, if needed)
- Submission of final action plan and program review summary

*Phase 5: Implementing the Action Plan (final month and beyond)*

- Evaluation of department action plan progress via updates included in the department's annual budget and year-end reports

The program review process for each academic year typically begins during the preceding Spring/Summer, when the participating department receives notification that it is scheduled for review; it “officially” ends in the following Summer, with the submission of the department's finalized, seven-year action plan and program review summary. This timeline serves to structure and standardize the review process; actual calendar dates for each step may vary according to the department and the unique needs of each review.

The program review process is organized and supported by the Office of the Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs and Campus Life, as overseen by the Director of Assessment for the Division of Student Affairs and Campus Life.