SELF-ASSESSMENT GUIDE

Evaluating an Existing Program

Regular evaluation of existing academic programs is an important part of universities maintaining their commitment to excellence in education, ensuring continued alignment with evolving student needs and industry demands, and staying ahead of institutional goals. But whether they occur on a regular schedule or in response to a significant change in the landscape, evaluations can identify areas of strength, uncover opportunities for improvement, and create pathways for interventions that enhance the quality and impact of your program and university.

The typical evaluation process involves auditing several aspects of the program, including the effectiveness of your curriculum, student outcomes, faculty engagement, amount and methods of resource allocation, and the measured impact of your program. Systematic collection and analysis of this data can identify emerging trends, best practices, and areas for growth, leading to evidence-based decision-making and strategic planning. It also creates opportunities to improve engagement by all stakeholders, including students, faculty, university leadership, and industry partners.

By prioritizing program evaluation, universities can uphold their commitment to every facet of academic excellence and help ensure that they remain responsive, relevant, and effective in preparing students for the future. We've created this list of questions to help your university identify how to approach key topic areas when undertaking an evaluation of your existing programs.

1. Familiarize yourself with current market research

How has demand for this program changed in recent years? Since its inception? How many similar programs exist in the US? In your region? At what rate are similar programs launching in the US? In your region? Is the industry to which this program relates projected for stability and/or continued growth? Is interest and enrollment sufficient to support the resources and investments needed to sustain the program?

2. Connect with career placement staff and industry partners

What skills are most in demand for graduates of programs like this? What's new since the program's inception? What skills have become obsolete? What emerging trends should your program be prepared to address? Is your program positioned to evolve along with changing student and industry needs to remain impactful over time? Are your industry and/or educational partnerships nurtured to enhance your program? Do projected employment rates for program graduates support keeping your program on the curriculum? Projected salary rates?

3. Review accreditation requirements

Has your program gone through re-accreditation since it launched? What feedback have you received and how can it be applied? How have requirements changed since your program was last accredited? What data from your LMS and other learning technologies can be leveraged to help with your accreditation process?

4. Validate/refine learning objectives according to market demands, industry needs, and accreditation requirements

Do your learning outcomes reflect what you learned from your market research, industry thought partnership, and accreditation review? Are your learning outcomes skills-based, so prospective students can easily see the connection between what they will learn in your program and the contributions they will be expected to make in the workplace?

5. Review student feedback, LMS engagement data, and retention data to determine gaps

Can you identify root causes for low feedback scores, lack of engagement, and retention issues? Where can you implement quick wins by leveraging current learning design best practices? Does your university offer instructor coaching for faculty looking to improve their teaching? Have faculty responded positively to this program? Have students? Is adequate communication and information still available to the right stakeholders at the right time to ensure ease of access and use? Does the program and curriculum still adequately map to the skills and competencies required by the industry?

6. Evaluate existing courses using a proven framework that assesses personalization, inclusivity, interactive and intuitive modalities, engagement, and active and collaborative learning

Has your department or institution developed strong criteria for course design? How do this program's courses score against it? Likewise, have you developed a visual style guide to ensure all courses reflect your university's unique brand and identity? Will students recognize continuity of your brand and identity from course to course, both within a program and across all university offerings? How do your courses reflect the unique spirit of your university and help differentiate your program from others in the market? What learning design resources exist on campus that you can leverage as you implement changes to your curriculum? Are there new resources needed to ensure the program remains technologically and pedagogically sound? Is your learning management system and/or technologies still the best fit for delivering the program's content?

Answer Evolving Academic Needs

Noodle is committed to maintaining and upgrading the online, traditional, and hybrid programs and courses that reflect your institution's identity and expectations for a powerful learning experience. We work with universities to evaluate course sections to ensure they reflect current program and faculty information; check that offerings follow institutional branding and celebrate the unique spirit of your university; revise assignments, grade books, and assessments if necessary to enhance courses; review data and feedback to refine objectives and identify gaps; and make recommendations to keep your offerings relevant and meaningful. From single, non-credit courses to certificates and credentials to multi-year degree programs, we'll help ensure that your learning experiences drive engagement and impact outcomes.

Our approach is collaborative, engaging, and inclusive so that your university's vision can come to life. Rather than trying to replicate the face-to-face experience online—an approach that often fails in terms of both learning and user experience—our philosophy is to develop programs that leverage technology to enhance learning.

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