FAQ for Policy on Instructional Program Priorities Evaluation of Programs

Please note that questions regarding criterion 12 have been removed.

Questions Regarding the Clarification of Criteria

Some of the examples of traits (the open bullet items) are unclear. Will the Committee provide further clarity on these items? The Committee's work is consistent with the viewpoint of the task force that created the policy. Therefore we believe that faculty within a program should define how and what each trait means for their program. The Committee, however, would like to make it clear that these criteria were not created in a vacuum. In fact, they were developed based on the Sacramento State 1991 Policy on Instructional Program Priorities, the Academic Values Statement passed by the Faculty Senate in 2010, the book on Prioritizing Academic Programs and Services by Robert Dickeson, and the prioritization rankings that have already occurred at other universities (links provided on the task force website). While the Committee will not be using these resources to evaluate evidence provided by programs (the determination of benchmarks and the evaluations of evidence will be determined by the evidence provided), we do advise programs to understand the history and context of this task.

My department has many undergraduate programs. GE and service courses (of which there are several) are not actually a part of any of these programs, as they are not intended for our majors. However, they do represent significant faculty time and use of departmental and individual program resources. There are criteria that ask about GE/service, but only in the context of the program being discussed, and as we do not have any programs that actually use these courses. How do our programs show this in our reports? Programs should clarify their relationship to the service programs to which they contribute. They should also describe the different contexts. One way to approach this issue is in the Internal Demand criterion. A program could state that the faculty who teach in program A also teach service and GE courses X, Y, and Z, so the program gets "credit" when the faculty help satisfy the demand for service and GE courses, without which the university could not function.

The Committee understands that many criteria in the policy overlap, and therefore this issue could also be addressed in the Impact, Justification and Centrality criterion, as service courses and GE are central to the University's mission. If there are significant resources shared between the program and related service and GE courses, this efficiency could be written up as part of the Quality of Program and Resource Utilization criterion.

Criterion 11. Can you please clarify what "Enrollment-based budgetary support from University" is? What data is it derived from and what is its scope? Programs should describe monetary support received from the college and/or university and provide specific program allocation information if applicable. This can be in the form of numbers or narrative.

How does a program factor in 'mega sections'? What happens if the workload reports (in CMS) differ (In terms of WTU) from the OIR factbook (App A – Faculty workload)? We recognize that assignment of WTU per section varies based on local circumstances. As with other criteria, we recommend utilizing the Factbook as the first source for this information.

Other sources of evidence, as well as narrative, may be used to contextualize the data as appropriate.

Criterion 1. What is curriculum rigor? Curriculum rigor should be defined by your discipline-specific standards.

Criterion 5. How is young, maturing, etc. defined? Is there a strategic reason to decide one over the other? No, the question is there to provide a holistic picture of your program.

Criterion 5. What is meant by "local trends in enrollment"? What if we need to speculate? While it is okay to speculate, the Committee recommends that you find a way to support your narrative.

Criterion 8. What is meant by "standards"? While "Standards" will not apply to most programs, there are some programs that have external accreditation standards in addition to campus standards.

Criterion 8. What is the definition of scope? Program size and scope are interrelated characteristics. Use the specific follow-up question to help define scope; i.e. "What is the program's breadth of curricular coverage?"

(New) How do we address criteria and questions within the criteria that are not relevant to minors, graduate degrees, etc? Programs are asked to complete each criterion to the degree applicable. If a criterion is entirely inapplicable, please so indicate and provide a statement that clarifies the reasons for the inapplicability. Examples are shown below.

C3: Minors without majors may not have an advising program
C3: Graduate Rate is not applicable to minors
C3: Post degree success is not applicable to minors
C6: Minors without majors may not be applicable to this criterion
C2: Graduate programs are not required to align with the BLG's

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Questions Regarding Deadlines and Exemptions

What happens if a program fails to submit a report by the March 5th deadline? Hard deadlines have been established to preserve the fairness of this process. Programs should make every effort to submit a report by the March 5th deadline. Programs that fail to submit any documentation by March 5th will not be reviewed by the Committee and their ranking will automatically be placed in the lowest quartile for the final ranking. Furthermore, these programs will not be able to submit for the May 7th response.

What is done with evidence that is submitted past the March 5th deadline? Evidence submitted late will not be added to a program's full submission and therefore will not be reviewed or scored for the preliminary overall quartile placement.

Can a program "voluntarily declare insufficient evidence" by the deadline, knowing that the Committee will be giving feedback on incomplete information? The committee will assume that all evidence is complete and accurate as submitted on March 5th. Please refer to the follow-up question below.

(New) Can advanced credentials that are embedded within a program (no additional units) be deemed as non-applicable? Unless otherwise indicated by Academic Affairs, credentials are considered programs for the IPP process. When a credential is embedded within another program, requiring no additional units, the committee recommends using copy and paste to present the information that is common across each program.

(New) Since students in credential programs do not "graduate," can credential programs speak to the number of students entering the program and give an estimate of attrition over the trend period? Yes. This would provide valuable information.

(New) If a program is in the process of being revised, does a report still need to be submitted? Yes. There are no exemptions. The Committee recommends that for each applicable criterion, the report describe how the program addresses the criteria now and include a narrative of what changes will occur with the revision. The evidence presented will necessarily relate to the program as it has existed, but a narrative can help to explain what changes are being developed in order to more fully represent the program.

(New) Some of our credential programs are offered across multiple departments. Students are registered for the same program, but they are enrolled in one of multiple departments that offer the same program. Do we simply submit one for each program, and contextualize it with CMS/Cognos Data… or do we submit four, two for each, from each department? Submit one report for each program and contextualize it with reliable sources.

Questions Regarding the Ranking Process and Ranking Feedback

What can programs expect to receive from the committee on April 16th? The preliminary overall quartile placement and the program's relative standings within each criterion. The committee will only provide its holistic evaluation along with "insufficient evidence", "strength" or "weakness" in its response to each criterion.

What does the committee define as "supplemental information" to be submitted by the May 7th deadline in response to the initial recommendations for prioritization? The May 7th deadline is intended to provide programs with the opportunity to clarify incomplete or inaccurate information submitted in the initial documents.

Will the full learning outcomes document be used in the ranking process? The learning outcomes synopsis will be used in Phase I and the full learning outcomes document submitted to Academic Affairs will be used for Phase II of the evaluation process.

Will programs be allowed to revise their reports for the May 7th response? What are the guidelines? The May 7th response to the preliminary overall quartile placement and the program's relative standings within each criterion is intended to provide programs with the opportunity to clarify incomplete or inaccurate information submitted in the initial documents. The Committee has set the following initial guidelines as a result:

- Programs may not alter reports submitted for the February 3 (Learning Outcomes) and March 5 (full report) deadlines.
- Programs may provide a 1 page response to each of the Primary Criteria to clarify incomplete or inaccurate information submitted in the initial documents.
- Programs may provide a (total) 4 page response to the Secondary Criteria to clarify incomplete or inaccurate information submitted in the initial documents.

Questions Regarding the Template

Can programs remove the instructions (in italics) from their submission? Yes.

If programs do not use the full space for a criterion can they use that space for another criterion? Yes, however page breaks between each criterion section must be maintained.

Do tables need to follow the same formatting requirements of the whole document? No. Flexibility in the formatting of tables is permitted for the purposes of accommodation.

How do we handle the tremendous amount of information called for within the page limits and the timeline? The Committee strongly advises writers to succinctly summarize the evidence.

Can we cross reference other criteria in a different criterion's response? No.

Can we include confidential information or links to confidential information? Reports will be made public and therefore programs should be careful about including any confidential information.

Errors Noted in Template. An error in the template was found. Under Criterion 8, everything after Annual FTES is a duplicate of Criterion 9.

Additional "minutes" from information session

Concerns:

1. How are programs defined? Why do concentrations have to be separated?
   Response: Academic Affairs provided the Committee with the list of programs to be

ranked using the criteria defined in the policy. Refer to policy section II, first paragraph. The Committee also believes that in the majority of cases, concentrations are diverse enough which makes them relevant for this resource allocation process.
    - Much is inseparable from core, as it is supposed to be. The Senate should revisit this in future. Fiscal information is especially difficult or impossible to separate.
    - The message from this report requirement seems to be about "silo-ing" rather than being efficient because of the way programs are defined.
2. More time is needed, not just to gather data, but also to understand it.
    - The given timeline is not realistic to get the desired quality.
3. The Provost needs to know the response to this meeting.
4. When will the reports be public? Committee Response: At the conclusion of the entire process.
    - Suggestion to the committee to share the reports earlier than final ranking.
    - We are concerned about reports that are all narrative because no data are available. We are concerned about the potential negative effects of having only narrative evidence.
5. We are concerned about the negative effects of the quartile placements with regards to potential incoming students, especially given the fact that the rankings and the reports will be public knowledge.
    - What if a program is considered strong externally (as compared to other like programs) but weaker internally (compared to programs at this university)? When that information is seen by the public, it could hurt the program. Response : The Committee recognizes that in certain criterion there is a possibility that programs are ranked lower when compared to other programs in the university. This is one of the purposes of the Phase I holistic evaluation of a program—to identify criterion that programs excel at within their field of study.

Other:

1. This is important information for programs to review periodically. Will this be an ongoing iterative process?
    - Is IPP going to be connected to program review process? Committee Response: The Learning Outcomes document is being considered as a template for program assessment. Program Review is a Senate process and there are no plans in place within the Senate to connect the Program Review process and this prioritization process. They serve different purposes.
2. The Provost should be given feedback about the number of hours spent on these reports. Response: The Committee agrees.
3. Suggestion that since the Senate amendment has passed allowing 4 ranked groupings instead of two, the timeline could be changed to allow a later deadline for credentials, certificates and minors Response: This idea will be brought up with the Committee, Senate, and Provost.