

# Co-Curricular Program Review George Mason University

## PURPOSE

The primary goal of the Co-Curricular Program Review (CCPR) process is to assess co-curricular programs and services, particularly as related to student outcomes and success. As a reflective and evidence-based process, CCPR includes the collection of critical and relevant quantitative and qualitative information that informs and instructs programs and services in their work and mission.

## CYCLE

The Program Review cycle encompasses three semesters from the beginning of the spring semester to the end of the subsequent spring semester. Units will engage in this process every seven years, which mirrors the cycle for Academic Program Review (APR). A suggested CCPR reporting schedule for current co-curricular units is displayed in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Co-Curricular Program Review Schedule

Timeline	Units
Spring 2021 – Spring 2022	Student Involvement
Spring 2022 – Spring 2023	Student Media
Spring 2023 – Spring 2024	Disability Services Learning Services Office of International Programs and Services Mason Recreation
Spring 2024 – Spring 2025	Housing and Residence Life Leadership Education and Development New Student and Family Programs Student Health Services
Spring 2025 – Spring 2026	Contemporary Student Services First Gen+ Center Student Success Coaching Student Support and Advocacy Center University Career Services
Spring 2026 – Spring 2027	Academic Integrity Center for the Advancement of Well-Being Center for Culture, Equity, and Empowerment
Spring 2027 – Spring 2028	Counseling and Psychological Services Green Machine Ensembles LGBTQ+ Resources Center
Spring 2028-Spring 2029	UL Regional Campuses Women and Gender Studies
Spring 2029-Spring 2030	Early Identification Program Graduate Student Life Student Conduct *Student Involvement *Student Media

\*second cycle

## PROCESS

CCPR is supported and guided by assessment experts in the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Planning (OIEP), and the process consists of five phases. An overview of what units can expect over the course of the three semesters is presented in Figure 1.

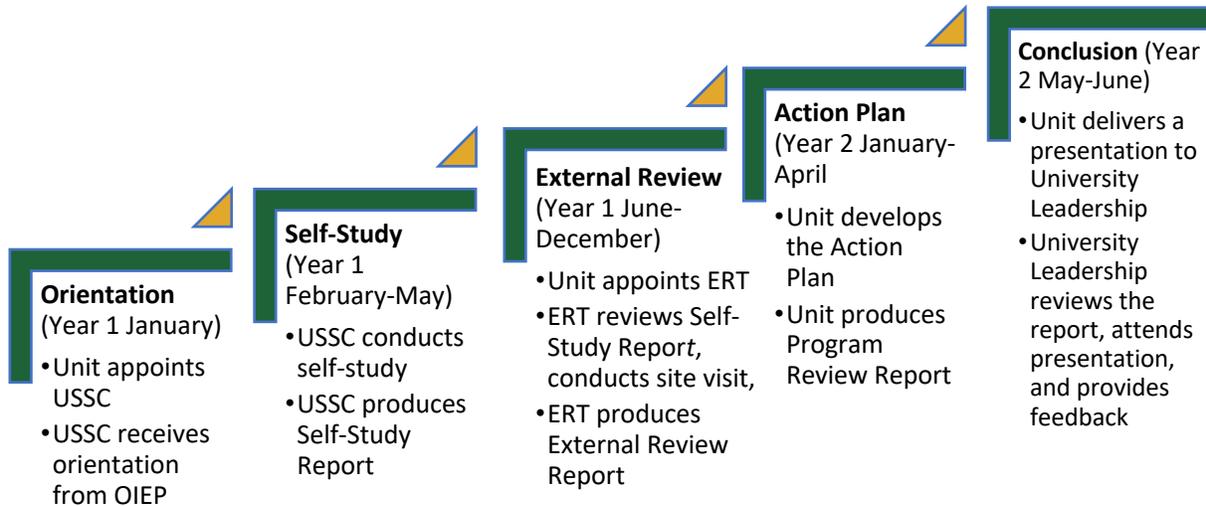


Figure 1. Program Review Phases

Phase 1. Orientation (Year 1, January): The unit appoints the Unit Self-Study Committee (USSC). The USSC and the Unit Lead participate in an orientation of the program review process provided by OIEP. The orientation will include the purpose of program review, an overview of the program review phases, an introduction to the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS) standards and Self-Assessment Guide (SAG), and guidance on how to organize the documentation of evidence.

Phase 2. Self-Study (Year 1, February-May): The USSC conducts the self-study of the unit through completion of individual and collective ratings based on the CAS Self-Assessment Guide (SAG). The USSC may also use other methods appropriate for the self-study that might include internal surveys, interviews, document analysis, observations, etc.

The USSC will use the SAG to complete the self-study. Prior to initiating the self-study, the USSC will meet to review the steps for the process, determine a timeline for completing the tasks, and define overall outcomes and expectations for the program review. The USSC will also review the SAG and if necessary, revise any questions within the standards based on the characteristics of their specific unit. Upon completion, the USSC produces a Self-Study Report (Appendix A, Part I) and finalizes it with the Unit Lead and Associate Dean. Once the report is finalized, the USSC submits it to OIEP.

Phase 3. External Review (Year 1, June-December): The USSC appoints the External Review Team (ERT) who will review the unit's Self-Study Report and conduct a site visit. The USSC lead is responsible for communicating with the external reviewers to confirm their participation in the process.

Nominations for at least three external reviewers will be made by the USSC (including names, CV, or web-link to a professional page, and contact information) and forwarded by the USSC lead to the Unit Lead and Associate Dean for approval. In selecting potential reviewers, the team should consider the following criteria:

- highly qualified disciplinary experts, external to, and not affiliated with Mason, who are from peer institutions to Mason;
- able to provide unbiased and professional opinions regarding the performance of the unit after extensive research and interviews conducted during and before their site visit;
- able to evaluate the various areas covered by the unit;
- student affairs officials with national/local stature; and
- free of conflicts of interest that would prevent them from conducting an objective review (Appendix D).

The USSC lead will work with the Unit Lead to develop the external review itinerary (Appendix B) and budget. The unit is responsible for logistics, honorariums, and all expenses incurred during the program review process, though limited, divisional budget (e.g., carry-forward funds) may be available to provide additional support. The unit should consult with the unit's Associate Dean if support for funding is required.

The estimated costs for external review are approximately \$3,000 for each External Reviewer:

- Travel: flight or car gas reimbursement \$1,000
- Lodging: residential apartments and/or a local hotel \$1,000
- Food: stipend and/or meals \$500
- Honorarium: \$500 per member

In conjunction with the list of approved external reviewers, the USSC will provide the Unit Lead and Associate Dean with the potential site visit dates. These dates should occur early in the fall semester. The USSC lead will communicate and confirm site visit dates with the external reviewers after which OIEP will provide the external reviewers a formal communication detailing information about the site visit and key issues, concerns, or questions the unit would like the External Review Team to focus on.

The guidelines for the site visits are as follows:

- Use a 3-day time range for the potential site visit that builds in travel at the beginning and end of the site visit. The schedule should consist of time for the reviewers to spend one full day on campus. Typically, reviewers would arrive in the morning of day one and leave late afternoon on day three.
- The USSC will coordinate an office space for the External Review Team to have a place to meet and access relevant resources (i.e., provided with description about the university, unit, staff, etc.) to complete the external review.

The External Review Report (Appendix C) will be delivered within three weeks of the site visit to OIEP, who will forward the report to the unit. OIEP will provide the External Review Team with specific guidelines to aid in developing the External Review Report.

Phase 4. Action Plan (Year 2, January-April): After the unit has received the External Review Report from the External Review Team, an Action Plan will be developed by the unit. Informed by the self-study and external review processes, the unit (led by the USSC Lead and Unit Lead) develops the Action Plan. All recommendations in the External Review Report will be addressed in the Action Plan.

The Action Plan is intended to detail next steps for each area identified through the program review process including the individuals responsible for the tasks. Other elements to be included in the Action Plan are:

- identified good practices and areas for improvement,
- recommendations for additions and removals in the program's goals and services,
- what actions are needed,
- identified resources, timeline, and persons, and
- connections to the unit-level and division-level strategic plans.

See the Action Plan Template (Appendix A, Part III) for an example of how to develop and present the Action Plan. The Action Plan should also be in alignment to the current strategic plan and contribute to the development of future divisional strategic plan. The unit's response to the External Review Report and proposed Action Plan will be submitted to the Associate Dean for approval. Upon approval of the action plan by the Associate Dean, the unit completes the Program Review Report (Appendix A).

Phase 5. Conclusion (Year 2, May-June): In the final phase of the program review process, the unit will complete documentation of the findings from the program review in the Program Review Report. The Program Review Report will be a comprehensive report addressing the Self-Study Report, External Review Report, Action Plan, and additional documentation as needed. The final report will be reviewed by the Associate Dean before submission to OIEP and then delivered to University Leadership<sup>1</sup>.

The unit will deliver a presentation of the program review to University Leadership. During the presentation, the unit will summarize the findings from the program review, present and discuss the response to external reviewer recommendations, and develop a shared understanding of next steps following the program review. This meeting is also the time when the leadership takes one of the following actions:

- Accepts the Program Review with no further actions required;
- Conditionally accepts the Program Review with further actions required;
- Rejects the Program Review.

In response to the Program Review Report, the University Leadership will send a response letter to the unit acknowledging, supporting, and providing feedback about the unit's work. Once finalized, a letter will be sent to the University Leadership for signature confirmation that no further materials or actions are required by the unit to close the program review cycle. If further actions are required

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<sup>1</sup> University Leadership consists of divisional leadership (e.g., University Life Cabinet), the Vice Provost of Institutional Effectiveness, and the OIEP Co-Curricular Assessment team.

or the Program Review has been rejected, the actions required to resolve any outstanding issues will also be detailed in the letter. OIEP will send a copy of the final signed letter to the unit and save it in the program file so that it may serve as a reference for subsequent program reviews.

The unit will integrate the findings from the Program Review into their ongoing work through the annual assessment plan. The status of the Action Plan will be documented on a yearly basis in the annual assessment plan.

## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

There are several different stakeholders involved in the program review process. The roles and responsibilities for each member of the Program Review are described in Figure 2.



Figure 2. Roles and Responsibilities

- Unit
  - The Unit Self-Study Committee (USSC) consists of 3-6 members who, in addition to engaging throughout the entire process, will conduct a self-study based on the SAG. The USSC is made up of professional staff members and students affiliated with the program.
  - The Unit Lead may be on the USSC, but not serve as the USSC lead. The Unit Lead will have an active role in the program review process, particularly as it relates to the external review process, action plan, and final presentation.
  - Submit a completed Self-Study Report that compiles all of the findings from the self-study.
  - Identify external reviewers for the external review phase, including external reviewer nominations and detailing the itinerary, logistics, and funding.
  - Develop the action plan based on self-study findings and feedback of the unit's programs and services from the External Review Report.
  - Submit the Program Review Report.
  - Deliver a final presentation on the findings of the Program Review to University Leadership.
  - Follow up on the action plan and report on the status through the annual assessment process.
- External Review Team
  - Review the self-study report.
  - Attend orientation and pre-visit meeting with committee members.
  - Conduct site visit.
  - Participate in post-visit meeting with the USSC and debrief among committee members.
  - Submit a collaborative report on the external review.
- Associate Dean
  - Provide feedback on the Self-Study Report, Action Plan, and Program Review Report, before final submission to OIEP.
  - Give approval for the selection of the external reviewers and budget.
- OIEP Co-Curricular Assessment Team
  - Host an orientation session about program review, and train units on the program review process.
  - Serve as a resource to units in understanding the components of the CAS Self-Assessment Guide.
  - Support the coordination of the external review team and be the point of contact for official communications and deliverables exchange.
  - Maintain relationships and communication with all stakeholders.
- The University Leadership
  - Review the Program Review Report.
  - Attend the final presentation.
  - Provide feedback and approval of program review.
  - Produce a response letter to conclude the program review cycle.
  - Provide support and resources needed for the unit after the program review process is complete.

## PROGRAM REVIEW DELIVERABLES AND TIMELINE

The Co-Curricular Program Review process will result in several deliverables as listed in Table 2 below. A template for each deliverable is presented in the Appendices.

Table 2. Deliverables

Deliverable	Owner	Timeline
Self-Study Report	USSC	Year 1: May
External Review Itinerary	Unit	Year 1: August
External Review Report	External Review Team	Year 1: December
Action Plan	Unit	Year 2: February
Program Review Report (all components above)	Unit	Year 2: April
Program Review Presentation	Unit	Year 2: May
Response Letter	University Leadership	Year 2: June

## Appendix A. Program Review Report Template

### CO-CURRICULAR PROGRAM REVIEW REPORT UNIT NAME DATE

#### PART I. Self-Study Report

<b>MISSION</b>
State the mission of the unit and discuss the mission in relation to the division and institution's mission and strategic plan.
<b>DESCRIPTION OF THE UNIT</b>
Explain the unit's programs, events, activities, functions and services, staff, and resources.
<b>COMMITTEE SUMMARY</b>
Provide a descriptive summary of the members of the committee.
<b>DISCUSSION OF CAS STANDARDS</b>
Discuss the strengths and areas of improvement/opportunity for each section. Refer to the Self-Assessment Guide overview questions to develop responses. Include hyperlinks or provide location of documentation/evidence.  <u>For each standard:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Discuss the strengths of the unit based on the collective ratings and associated documents/evidence.</li><li>• Discuss the areas of improvement/opportunity of the unit based on the collective ratings and associated documents/evidence.</li><li>• Provide questions or additional comments for reviewers (optional).</li></ul>

PART II. External Review

SUMMARY OF EXTERNAL REVIEW REPORT
Provide a high-level summary discussing the members of the external review team, process of the external review, and overall findings of the External Review Report.
EXTERNAL REVIEW REPORT
Attach the External Review Report.

PART III. Action Plan

ACTION PLAN
Directions: Using this form as a template, develop the Action Plan for each area of improvement identified through the program review. The Action Plan should include the CAS Standard, recommendation, action needed, and SMART outcome (the statement should identify the timeline for completion, the persons responsible for completing action items, and the metric for success). The progress of the Action Plan will be integrated into the annual assessment plan and should also be aligned to the strategic plan.

CAS STANDARD	RECOMMENDATION	ACTION NEEDED	SMART OUTCOME


PART IV. Lessons Learned from Program Review

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS
Directions: Discuss overall impressions on the findings from the program review. Make connections between the unit's strengths, and relevant, ongoing work within the division. Discuss the next steps based on the program review.

PART V. Appendices

Include supporting documents and evidence (e.g., job descriptions and resumes of staff, organization chart, annual reports from recent years, budget documentation, standards, ratings, external review budget and itinerary, etc.).

## Appendix B. Itinerary

### EXTERNAL REVIEW SITE VISIT ITINERARY

George Mason University

Unit Name

Date

This is a suggested itinerary and should be modified to meet the particular needs of the unit and the External Review Team.

*Important Note: It is essential for the reviewers to meet and work collaboratively while they are on campus. Be sure to set aside time and space for this to occur.*

#### Day 1 (Date)

2:30 PM	Reviewers arrive on campus
3:00PM-5:15PM	Orientation and Tour Facilities (USSC)
5:30PM-7:30PM	Dinner and Overview of Unit's Programs

#### Day 2 (Date)

8:30AM	Reviewers arrive on campus
9:00AM-9:45AM	Meet with USSC Lead
9:45AM-10:00AM	Break
10:00AM-11:00AM	Deep Dive (of functional areas)
11:00AM-11:15AM	Break
11:15AM-12:00PM	Meet with Graduate Professional Assistants
12:00PM-1:00PM	Lunch/Break (reviewers only)
1:00PM-1:50PM	Meet with Full-Time Staff
1:50PM-2:15PM	Break
2:15PM-3:00PM	Meet with the Unit Self-Study Committee
3:05PM-3:35PM	Meet with Director
3:45PM-4:30PM	Meet with Dean
4:30PM-5:00PM	Meet with USSC Lead
5:00PM-5:50PM	Depart Campus, Return to Hotel/Dinner Establishment
6:00PM-8:30PM	External Reviewer Team Meeting & Working Dinner

#### Day 3 (Date)

8:00AM	Reviewers Arrive on Campus
8:15AM-10:15AM	External Review Team Compiles Preliminary Findings
10:15AM-11:00AM	Exit Interview (Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Planning)
11:00AM	Depart Campus

## Appendix C. External Review Report Template

### EXTERNAL REVIEW REPORT

#### Title Page

George Mason University

Unit Name

Date

Report by External Review Team Name(s)

Title(s)

Institution(s)/Organization(s)

#### INTRODUCTION

What is your role at your institution?  
What is this report about?

Name, title, institution, and any other relevant information about reviewers. Describe that you were consulted by the unit to review their self-study and the conduct site visit. A few sentences describing the contents of the report.

#### INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT

Describe the institution.

A few sentences to describe George Mason University.  
Example: Facts/characteristics of institution, institutional priorities, unique qualities (from other institutions), etc.

#### DEPARTMENT/UNIT CONTEXT

Describe the department/unit.

A few sentences to describe the unit.  
Example: Reporting line, functional areas, staff, etc.

#### DISCUSSION OF CAS STANDARDS

Discuss the strengths, areas of improvement/opportunity, and recommendations using the 12 parts of the CAS Standards.

#### STRENGTHS

Discuss the strengths of the unit based on the self-study report, associated documents/evidence, and onsite interviews.

#### AREAS OF IMPROVEMENT/OPPORTUNITY

Discuss the areas for improvement based on the self-study report, associated documents/evidence, and onsite interviews.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

Provide recommendations that are based on the self-study report, associated documents/evidence, and onsite interviews.

#### CONCLUSION

Write a conclusion to the external review, including any central themes that should be highlighted from the review.

## Appendix D. Conflict of Interest

### CONFLICT OF INTEREST FOR EXTERNAL REVIEWERS

Mason relies on the professional integrity of those serving as external reviewers for Co-Curricular Program Review, as well as the co-curricular units inviting potential reviewers. Sensitivity to potential conflicts of interest must be addressed to ensure external reviewers can serve objectively. As a result, the following guidelines are provided to negate potential conflicts of interest. Persons who fall into any of the following categories should NOT participate as external reviewers.

1. Former Mason employees
2. Mason graduates within the last 10 years
3. Anyone who has been a candidate for employment at Mason within the last 10 years
4. Anyone who served as a consultant for Mason or the co-curricular unit within the last 10 years
5. Anyone with an active professional partnership (e.g., co-authors, co-presenters, committee memberships) with a member(s) of the co-curricular unit being reviewed
6. Anyone with close personal or familial relationships with a member(s) of the co-curricular unit being reviewed
7. Anyone having any other relationship that could serve to jeopardize objectivity regarding the evaluation of the co-curricular unit being reviewed

Co-curricular units should consult with their unit supervisor and/or OIEP regarding potential conflicts of interest for all potential external reviewers. University Life leadership reserves the final responsibility for determining the suitability of external reviewers for Co-Curricular Program Review.