AUDIT & REVIEW FAQS

1. **What is the purpose of Audit & Review?** The Audit & Review process serves several functions. These include:
   - Improving the quality of programs;
   - Identifying needs for further study and/or planning;
   - Helping programs to set priorities;
   - Ensuring appropriate standards for program quality;
   - Identifying needs and unique circumstances of specific programs;
   - Identifying non-functional and unnecessarily duplicative programs; and
   - Identifying needs for structural changes in programs or administrative units.

2. **When and under what circumstances was Audit & Review established?** In 1993, under the direction of then-Provost Kay Schallenkamp, all academic programs at UW-Whitewater were required to establish an operating plan to assess student learning outcomes. Initially, programs completed annual assessment reports, which were reviewed by the University Assessment Committee, comprised of elected faculty representatives from each college. In the mid-1990s, the Board of Regents adopted a policy that required the periodic review of all academic programs to ensure quality academic programs throughout the UW System. At UW-Whitewater, the Audit & Review process replaced the annual assessment reports that had been required in the past.

3. **Which academic programs complete the Audit & Review process, and how often do programs undergo Audit & Review?** All undergraduate majors, undergraduate stand-alone minors, and graduate programs complete Audit & Review. All academic programs undergo Audit & Review on a five-year cycle. View the 'Review Schedule' on our Audit & Review page.

4. **What steps comprise the process for Audit & Review?** Audit & Review is a three-step process.

   First, programs undergoing review complete a written self-study explaining:
   - Program purpose and overview, including program mission, goals, and accomplishments
   - Assessment of curriculum and student learning
   - Student recruitment, enrollment, retention and graduation
   - Resource availability and development

   View the undergraduate and graduate-level self-study instructions on the Audit & Review web page.

   After the self-study has been submitted, the second step consists of the review of the self-study by the Graduate or Undergraduate Audit & Review Committee. Members of the committee read the self-study and complete an online Qualtrics survey regarding program strengths, weaknesses, questions, recommended actions, and their recommended result. Committee members' survey results are compiled and the committee meets to discuss the program. Following the committee's discussion, a draft report is written and sent to committee members for
their review, then to the coordinator/department chair and dean of the college of the program undergoing Audit & Review.

The third step consists of a face-to-face meeting with the program coordinator/department chair, dean of the college, Provost, and members of the Audit & Review Committee. The Committee's draft report is discussed, and recommended actions and a recommended result are determined. Following the face-to-face meeting, a final report is written which includes a summary of the discussion, the final recommended actions, and the final result. The report is reviewed by all parties prior to being uploaded to the Audit & Review website.

The process is meant to be collaborative, and differences of opinion or discrepancies between the committee's assessment of an academic program and those of the program coordinator, department chair, and or dean are discussed during the face-to-face meeting.

5. **When are self-studies due?** The self-study is due to the college dean/s by October 1st. After responding to feedback from the dean/s, the program submits the final self-study to the Audit & Review Committee by November 1st.

6. **Should the self-study be a specific length?** Due to the variability in size and complexity of academic programs at UW-Whitewater, there is no single standard for the length of the written self-study. To the extent possible, the writer(s) of the self-study is asked to keep comments focused and provide supporting evidence in the forms of tables or rubrics, uploaded as attachments, wherever possible.

7. **How do you submit a self-study?** As of June 2015, a new Audit & Review Self-Study online submission portal was opened to programs for use in writing, distributing and submitting their self-study. This portal is the required method of submission for self-studies. The portal is linked on the main page of the Audit & Review website.

8. **Who are the members of the Undergraduate and Graduate Audit & Review Committees, and how are they selected?** The Undergraduate Audit & Review Committee was established as a Faculty Senate Committee, and elections are held in the spring and fall semesters. For current membership, please visit the Faculty Senate page. There are three representatives elected from each college and three at-large representatives.

The Graduate Audit & Review Committee is comprised of two members from each college and one student member, regardless of college. Student members serve one-year terms and faculty representatives serve three-year terms, with one-third selected each year. Rules for selecting faculty representatives to the Graduate Audit & Review Committee are established by each college.

A representative of the Provost's Office serves as an ex-officio member on the Undergraduate Audit & Review Committee. The Dean of the School of Graduate Studies serves as an ex-officio member of the Graduate Audit & Review Committee.

9. **How do the Committee members assess the information presented in the self-study?** Audit & Review Committee members use an evaluation rubric (submitted as an online Qualtrics survey) that mirrors the organization of the self-study in reading and reviewing each academic program. View a copy of of the Undergraduate and Graduate Audit & Review Committee's evaluation forms on the Audit & Review website, which emulate the evaluation survey.

10. **What are the possible outcomes of the Audit & Review process, and how are they determined?** The "outcome" of the Audit & Review process, as explained above, is a final written report that summarizes discussion at the face-to-face meeting, lists program strengths, weaknesses, recommended actions, and a recommended result. The recommended result is one of the following:

- Insufficient information in the self-study to make a determination: revise self-study and resubmit;
- Continuation without qualification;
- Continuation with minor concerns (may or may not include a progress report, at the committee's discretion);
• Continuation with major concerns in one or more of the four areas; submit progress reports to the College Dean and Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs on progress in addressing the major concerns;
• Withhold recommendation for continuation, place on probation, and require another complete Audit & Review within 1-3 years at committee’s discretion;
• Withhold recommendation for continuation, place on probation, recommend placing in receivership within college, and require another complete Audit & Review within 1-3 years at committee’s discretion; or
• Non-continuation of the program.

Each committee member independently selects one of the above when submitting comments prior to the committee’s meeting to review the program’s self-study. Committee members’ selections are shown on the draft report. After discussion at the face-to-face meeting, between program representatives, dean, Provost, and committee members, the committee will come to an agreement on a single recommended result.

11. Do the above recommended results reflect a grading scale for academic programs (e.g., "Continuation without qualification" = an A; "Continuation with minor concerns" = B)? If my program is required to submit progress reports, is this a reflection that my program is a below average program?

The Committee members do not view the recommended results as being the equivalent of a grading scale. Committee members recognize that the academic programs at UW-Whitewater are generally sound, but that they may be at different stages in their evolution. Some programs are subject to accreditation reviews while other programs are not. Academic programs may be dealing with circumstances beyond their control when they are scheduled for Audit & Review (e.g., retirements of faculty, enrollment trends, and budgetary issues). The committee’s establishment of the recommended result is viewed by the committee as an assessment of the program at the point in time in which the Audit & Review is conducted.

At the same time, the committee believes it is important to recognize programs that are exemplary. In general, programs that earn the recommended result of "Continuation without qualification" have a clear vision of their mission and role in furthering UW-Whitewater’s mission and core values. These programs are able to establish program goals; demonstrate that they regularly monitor their progress in meeting these goals; and establish new goals as current goals are met. Exemplary programs also have assessment plans to articulate and measure student learning outcomes using direct and indirect assessment data from internal and external sources. They are able to show how assessment data is used in making program changes. They are aware of the changing nature of their discipline, and are able to adapt to fluctuations in enrollment or graduation rates. Faculty in these programs exemplify Boyer’s model of the educator-scholar. Since 2005, academic programs that earn the recommended result of “Continuation without qualification” complete an expedited (“short”) self-study during the next review cycle, with the next complete self-study to be completed in ten years.

12. The Audit & Review committees seem to stress different components of the self-study in any given year. How am I supposed to know what will be the focus of the committee’s work when my program is scheduled for Audit & Review? While the composition of the Audit & Review Committee is a factor that determines the areas that committee members will focus on during any given year, the committee will always examine all four major components of the self-study:

• Program purpose and overview, including program mission, goals and accomplishments
• Assessment of curriculum and student learning
• Student recruitment, enrollment, retention, and graduation
• Resource availability and development

13. Parts of the self-study seem redundant. For example, what’s the difference between program goals and assessment? Program goals (Section I) and assessment (Section II) differ. Program goals are generally broad and are embedded in program mission statements or purpose statements. While program goals often affect students’ learning in the program, they are not focused specifically on student learning outcomes. Examples of program goals may include: increasing enrollment; developing new emphases, modules, certificate programs; revisions of current emphases; increasing international opportunities for students and faculty in the program; attainment of accreditation from an existing agency; or serving as a political, economic, cultural, or other outreach to the community, region, or state.
Academic assessment asks for an examination of the curriculum (existing majors, minors, modules, certificate programs), and an assessment of instruction and learning that occurs in the courses that comprise the curriculum. Beginning in 1993, all academic programs have been required to establish plans for assessing the student learning outcomes or learning objectives that the program has identified. For additional information on assessment of students' learning, see below.

14. **When discussing Assessment of curriculum and student learning (Section II) in the self-study, to what should I pay particular attention?** First, the descriptions of the program and the emphases, minors, modules, or certificates that make up the program should be clear. Check sheets, or other visual descriptions of the program that specify the requirements in a manner that make it easy to understand, are especially useful in describing the program.

Second, "curriculum" is broadly defined. It not only includes the coursework, but also students' experiences that are directly related to enhancing their learning, such as professionally-based student organizations, mentoring programs, undergraduate research, internships, opportunities for international study, and service learning opportunities. In addition, prior to graduation, students must satisfy a writing requirement. How students satisfy this requirement, and how programs assess students' competency in this area, has been left up to each program to determine.

Third, according to a motion passed by the Graduate Council in 2004, expectations of undergraduate and graduate students in dual-listed (300/500-level courses and 400/600-level courses) should differ in content, intensity, and self-direction. Differentiations in content intensity, and self-direction should be specified on course syllabi. [Online syllabi](#) from the current and previous semesters are available on the UW-Whitewater website.

Fourth, all academic programs should have in place (first required in 1993) an operating plan to assess student learning outcomes. As such, all programs should be able to address the following questions in this section of the self-study:

- What should students be able to know and do upon completion of this academic program (use action verbs)?
- What data* has the program collected to assess the extent to which students have acquired the knowledge and skills identified in the preceding question as they complete the major?
- What changes has the program made to enhance student learning as a result of the assessment data mentioned in the preceding question? This question is often described as "closing the loop," or demonstrating how specific assessment data has been used to make program changes.

*Data should include both direct measures (e.g., content area tests; scores on standardized exams; evaluations of capstone experiences, portfolios, performances, papers, or other products; evaluations by internship supervisors, employers, Advisory Board members) and indirect measures (e.g., the University's Senior Outcomes Assessment Survey (SOAS), departmental exit survey, students' self-reports of learning). Contact Joan Littlefield Cook, Director of Academic Assessment (cookj@uww.edu, x1806) if you have questions about academic assessment or need assistance with this section of the self-study.

15. **Why does the Undergraduate Audit & Review Committee want to know about enrollment, retention, and graduation, and the Graduate Audit & Review Committee want to know about student recruitment, enrollment, retention and graduation (Section III)?** Some academic programs show stable rates over time, while others fluctuate due to demographics, employment trends, economic conditions, etc. This section asks programs to reflect on these trends, and it provides an opportunity for programs that have experienced fluctuations to identify reasons why the fluctuations have occurred. This shows that programs are keeping up-to-date with employment trends, market conditions, etc. Reporting on recruitment or retention plans, as well as systematic methods that the program has used to track the success of graduates, also serves as means for demonstrating the currency of the academic program.

16. **When discussing resource availability and development (Section IV), why am I being asked to put together a table of faculty/staff contributions in teaching, research, and service, AND describe the expectations of faculty/staff in these three areas? Isn't that redundant?** This section asks for quantitative data as well as a qualitative description of the context for these data. Quantitative data should be reported in the table, listing names of faculty and staff/graduate faculty; participation in teaching-
enhancement workshops, presentations, seminars, etc.; bibliographic citations or other means for documenting research, scholarly activities, and/or creative activities; listings of service contributions to the department, college, and University; and involvement in professional organizations, consulting, etc.

In addition to the quantitative reporting of data, the self-study should include 1-2 paragraphs in which the program faculty/staff efforts in teaching, research and scholarly activities, and service contributions are each put into context. This information assists Audit & Review Committee members in further understanding the unique expectations that different departments and programs will have in each of these three areas. For example, FTE/SCH ratios, expectations of one-on-one instruction, or programs with major responsibilities for core courses, proficiency courses, or graduate courses may affect roles of teaching in the program. Different programs will have different definitions of what constitutes "scholarly activities". Programs with service learning or internship requirements may involve significant service obligations of faculty. Explanations of factors that define and distinguish expectations of teaching, research and scholarly activities, and service contributions, both in quantitative and qualitative terms, enhances understanding of the needs and demands placed upon faculty and staff who teach in the program.

17. **My program is reviewed periodically by an accrediting agency. Why should the program also have to undergo Audit & Review? This is a duplication of effort.** The questions used by accrediting agencies do not always address the same areas that Audit & Review address, and their purposes, though similar, are not necessarily synonymous. Programs that complete self-studies for accreditation agencies are encouraged to copy and paste relevant segments from the self-studies for Audit & Review, and to contact the A&R Committee chair about aligning these reports.

18. **Why do programs have to justify their existence through Audit & Review? Program faculty are the experts-- why not simply trust the faculty to do their jobs? Audit & Review is a waste of time.** The Audit & Review Committee members do not view Audit & Review as a process to justify academic programs or as a waste of time. Instead, the process is viewed as a means for programs to periodically engage in self-reflection in order to improve program quality, and to receive feedback from an all-University faculty committee regarding the academic program. While program faculty are experts in their field, examining assessment data from multiple stakeholders, in addition to the program faculty, not only ensures the currency of the program but also provides different perspectives on the program. In addition, program assessment is taken seriously by the administration, since the college dean and Provost attend the face-to-face meetings, and often gain information during the face-to-face meetings that assist them in strategic planning and allocating University resources.

19. **I've been assigned to write an Audit & Review self-study but I've never written one before. How and where do I start?** The Audit & Review website contains information for self-study authors, including resources like UW-W's Mission & Core Values, the Audit & Review data dashboard, and Senior Outcomes Assessment Survey (SOAS). It also contains the review schedule and a downloadable copy of the final report from the program's last Audit & Review along with self-study instructions [PDF]. Former department chairs or program coordinators may have copies of the previous self-study. In addition, the Office of Academic Assessment has electronic copies of self-studies from the past five years that were compiled in preparation for the University's reaccreditation visit from the Higher Learning Commission in 2006 and 2015. The online Audit & Review portal has self-studies of programs submitted since fall 2015 and can be accessed by UW-Whitewater faculty and staff. If you are unable to locate a printed or electronic copy in the department, contact the Office of Academic Assessment for an electronic copy (assessment@uww.edu, x1806).

20. **To whom should I address any questions that may arise while I am writing the self-study?** Additional questions regarding assessment and Audit & Review may be directed to the Office of Academic Assessment (assessment@uww.edu, x1806) or Joan Littlefield Cook, Director of Academic Assessment (cookj@uww.edu, x1530).

*March 2017*