

**POLICY FOR THE REVIEW OF
EXISTING ACADEMIC PROGRAMS
Revised October 2008**

Arkansas Code §6-61-214 requires the Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board (AHECB) to establish standards for the academic programs offered by Arkansas colleges and universities and to create a 7-10 year review cycle for all existing academic programs. The existing academic program review policies (AHECB Policy 5.12) were adopted in 1988 and revised in 1995 and 1998.

In April 2008, the AHECB directed the Arkansas Department of Higher Education (ADHE) staff, in cooperation with the public colleges and universities to revise the existing program review process to ensure quality academic programs that support Arkansas's economic development goals; to identify and remove non-viable programs from the AHECB approved program inventory, and to reduce barriers to graduation.

The proposed policy includes the following:

- Institutions will schedule an external review for all existing programs every 7-10 years.
- External program reviews will employ out-of-state reviewers/consultants.
- Academic program viability standards will be increased.
- Academic programs that do not meet viability standards will be removed from the approved program inventory and will not be supported by state general revenue funds.

ADHE staff has met with the presidents, chancellors, and chief academic officers and has received extensive input on the proposed changes in the program viability standards and review process.

ADHE Executive Staff recommend that the Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board approve the following resolution:

RESOLVED, That the Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board approves the revised Policy for the Review of Existing Academic Programs (AHECB Policy 5.12) outlined in this agenda item, effective immediately.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Coordinating Board instructs the Director of the Arkansas Department of Higher Education to notify the presidents, chancellors, chief academic officers, and institutional board chairs of this action.

**POLICY FOR THE REVIEW OF
EXISTING ACADEMIC PROGRAMS
Revised October 2008**

Arkansas Code §6-61-214 requires that the Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board (AHECB) review existing academic programs. The goals of existing academic program review are as follows:

1. To establish a process for the statewide review of academic programs.
2. To identify certificate and degree programs not meeting minimum standards of quality or viability and establish schedules for either resolving these concerns or removing the programs for the AHECB approved program inventory.

Existing Academic Program Review Process

All certificate and degree programs offered by public colleges and universities in Arkansas will be reviewed through the Existing Academic Program Review Process. This review process includes the following parameters:

1. All academic programs will be externally reviewed every 7-10 years. Each institution will submit its recommended program review cycle to ADHE. If changes in the review schedule are necessary, ADHE will be notified.
 - a. Accredited/licensed/state certified programs will follow the usual review practices and schedule of the accrediting/approval body. The site team's written evaluation and institutional response will be sent to ADHE within six weeks of receipt of the written evaluation.

Accredited/licensed/state certified programs failing to maintain accreditation/certification/licensure will be subject to further review by ADHE.
 - b. Academic programs which are not program-specific accredited will be reviewed by external reviewers/consultants. Institutions will select a minimum of two out-of-state reviewers affiliated with programs that are similar in mission and scope to the program under review.
2. At least one consultant is required to conduct a site visit and meet with program faculty, students, and administrators.

Individuals selected as consultants will be well-qualified and without bias toward institutions under review.

3. The institution will complete a comprehensive self-study that is reviewed by the program consultants. Components of the self-study will include, but not be limited to, information related to: program need/demand, curriculum, faculty, resources, course delivery methods, student outcomes, and recent/planned program improvements.
4. The consultants will submit a written report of findings to the institution. Key information on continued program improvement will be included in the report submitted to ADHE. Specific contents of the consultants' reports will be determined by ADHE staff and Chief Academic Officers (CAOs).

Recommendations to Coordinating Board

1. The consultant's written evaluation and institutional response will be sent to ADHE within six weeks of receipt of the written evaluation.
2. Findings from academic program reviews will be reported annually to the AHECB. ADHE staff will recommend that the AHECB receive the consultants' reports and acknowledge that the contents may be consulted as a resource when decisions must be made by the Board regarding institutional role and scope, budget requests, new program approval, and statewide funding issues. The staff may propose other general resolutions that address statewide issues.
3. A further resolution will encourage institutional administrators, faculty members, and boards of trustees to consider implementing the recommendations made by the consultants for program improvement.
4. If appropriate, a resolution will be offered concerning program deletions, modifications, and/or follow-up. A resolution recommending program deletions will place the program(s) on notice for removal from the AHECB approved program inventory. At the end of the two-year notice period, those programs still not meeting minimum standards will be deleted from the approved program inventory. In extraordinary cases, documentation of legitimate extenuating circumstances may prompt the Coordinating Board to extend the notice period. State general revenue funds may not be used for the operation of a program beyond the termination deadline set by the Coordinating Board. ADHE will not include SSCHs generated by major courses of programs removed from the approved program inventory in its funding formula calculations.
5. The president, chancellor, or chief academic officer may respond to ADHE staff recommendations in writing or request a conference to discuss the recommendations prior to consideration by the Coordinating Board. The discussions will be limited to those issues that concern the state's interests, i.e., program closings and broader statewide issues that the

Coordinating Board may wish to address. Any recommendations in the consultants' reports that are not included in the ADHE staff recommendations would pertain to matters of campus concern and, therefore, would represent suggestions to be considered locally.

ADHE Review of Program Viability

The AHECB adopted program productivity standards in 1989 and established benchmarks of an average of 3 graduates per year over five years for undergraduate programs, 2 graduates per year for master's programs, and 1 graduate per year for doctoral programs. This policy revises those benchmark standards and renames them program viability standards.

Beginning in 2010, ADHE staff annually will identify existing certificate and degree programs that do not meet AHECB program viability standards. New certificates and associate degrees will be identified for program viability standards after three years, and bachelor's degrees and above will be identified after five years.

1. The viability standards, based on a three-year average, are as follows:
 - An average of four (4) graduates per year for career and technical education certificates (CTE) and career and technical associate degree programs (AAS);
 - An average of four (4) graduates per year for bachelor's degrees in science, mathematics, engineering, foreign languages, middle school education, and secondary education programs for licensure in science and mathematics;
 - An average of six (6) graduates per year for transfer associate degrees (AA, AS, and AAT) and bachelor's programs;
 - An average of four (4) graduates per year for master's, specialist and first-professional programs; and,
 - An average of two (2) graduates per year for doctoral programs.
2. Cognate, embedded and related programs will be considered one program for program viability purposes.

Cognate (coupled) programs are supported primarily by courses existing in and for other (viable) programs and should be certified as such by the offering institution through the provision of documentation to ADHE.

Each institution will submit to ADHE a list, with justification, of the certificate and degree programs that the institution believes are cognate programs. Common CIP Code classifications should serve as the base premise for determining cognate programs. Shared courses across majors and program levels also will be considered. Electives, general

education, and/or core courses will not be included in determining programs that can be considered cognate.

The ADHE Director will inform the campus president or chancellor of the programs that will be designated as cognate programs.

Awards of certificates that are embedded within an associate degree program will count toward program productivity standard. When calculating the three-year average of a degree program with embedded certificates, a student will only be counted once –either as certificate or an associate completer. If the highest award of an embedded program does not meet the graduate threshold and produces less than 50% of the graduates in the entire program (certificates and associate's degree), the highest award will be discontinued if the number of graduates does not meet the threshold within two years.

Programs that are required by programmatic accreditation to offer a higher level award may seek an additional two-year exemption from the 50% highest-award-viability standard by providing evidence from the accreditor of the need for the higher credential and a program-specific enrollment management plan for meeting the threshold at the higher level.

Programs identified as below the viability threshold will have two (2) years to meet the threshold or will be removed from the AHECB approved program inventory.

ADHE will not include SSCHs generated by major courses of programs removed from the approved program inventory in its funding formula calculations. SSCHs removed from the formula will be for courses within a major/program of study that are not required within another major/program of study.

General education courses listed in the Arkansas Course Transfer System (ACTS) will not be subject to loss of funding.

3. Programs discontinued can be reinstated via the new program approval process. Evidence of curricular revision, market demand/analysis, and a student recruitment plan must be provided for each program being reconsidered.
4. When an academic program is identified as below the viability threshold, the institution may request that ADHE reconsider decisions that identified the program as a low viability program. If the request is based on suspected data submission errors, the institution must provide the source, nature, and extent of the data error.

Career and technical education programs (CTE) with low degree production may be reconsidered by providing specific evidence of market demand for students who do not complete the degree. Evidence must include a history of high job placement rates at high wages for non-completers.

Institutions may also request a reduction in the viability targets for specific academic programs that are crucial to the institution's role, scope and mission. Evidence must exist that students can graduate in a timely manner (courses needed to complete an associate, bachelors or masters level programs are taught within a two year time frame and courses needed to compete a doctoral level program are taught within a three year time frame). Academic programs with a reduced viability threshold will be monitored based upon the revised threshold. The need for a reduced viability target will be reconsidered after five years.

Institutions submitting programs for reconsideration must follow the appeals process established by the ADHE staff in collaboration with the chief academic officers.

Existing Academic Program Review Process

Arkansas Department of Higher Education
January 29, 2009

Annual Review of Program Viability

ADHE identifies existing certificate and degree programs that do not meet viability standards. Programs not meeting viability will have 2 years to meet the threshold or will be removed from AHECB approved program inventory. (Cognate/embedded programs will be considered as one (1) program for viability purposes.)

Institution voluntary discontinues program not meeting viability standards.

Institution requests special consideration for programs not meeting viability standards. Consideration will be given on the basis of:

- Data submission adjustments
- Programs central to mission
- CTE program high wage/high demand

ADHE staff determines that the program has two (2) years to meet viability standards.

Program meets viability standards and ADHE staff recommends continuance of state support of program.

Program does not meet viability standards and ADHE staff recommends discontinuance of state support of program.

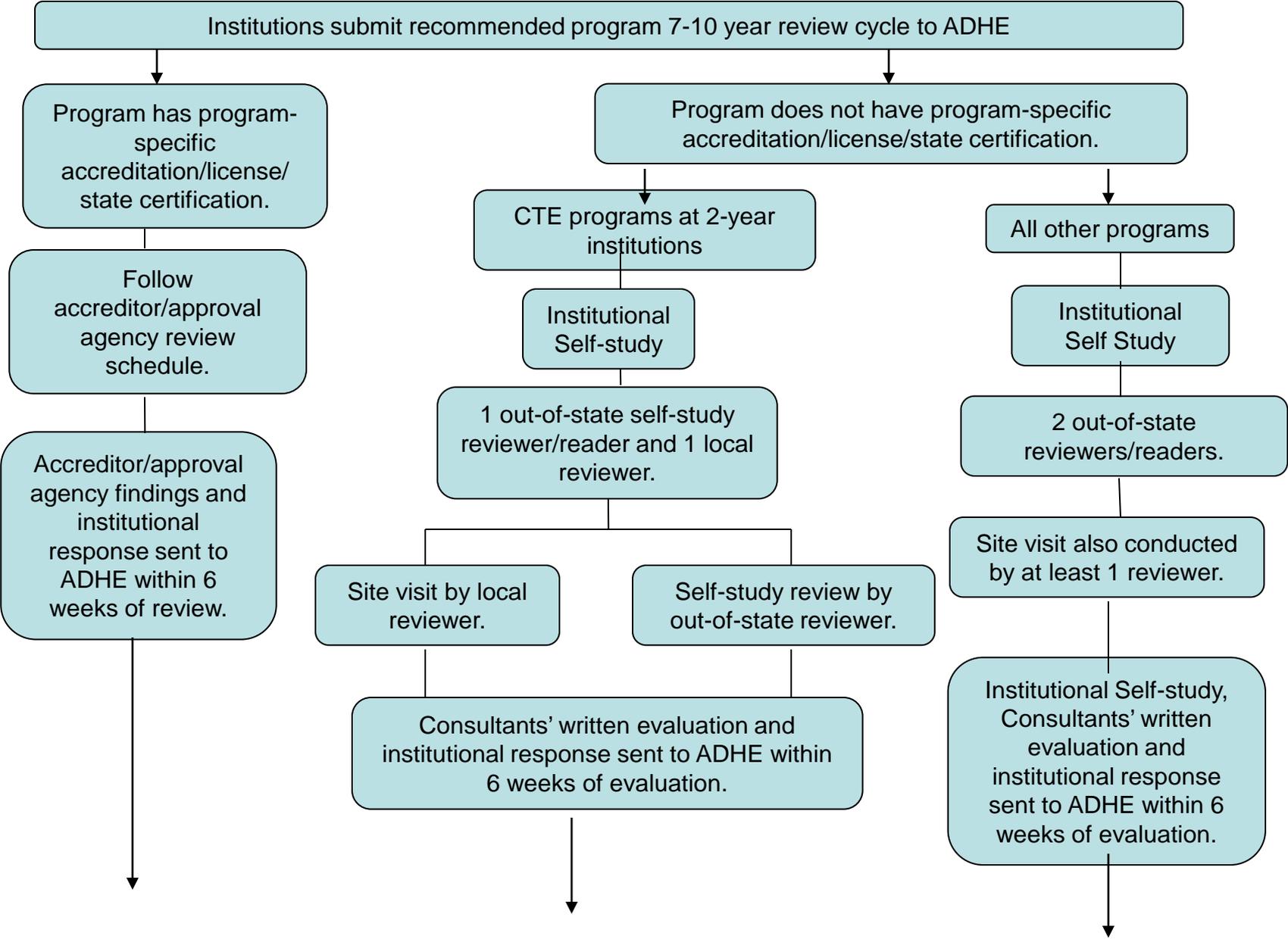
ADHE staff determines that program warrants special consideration.

Central to mission; continues with reduced viability standards for 5 years.

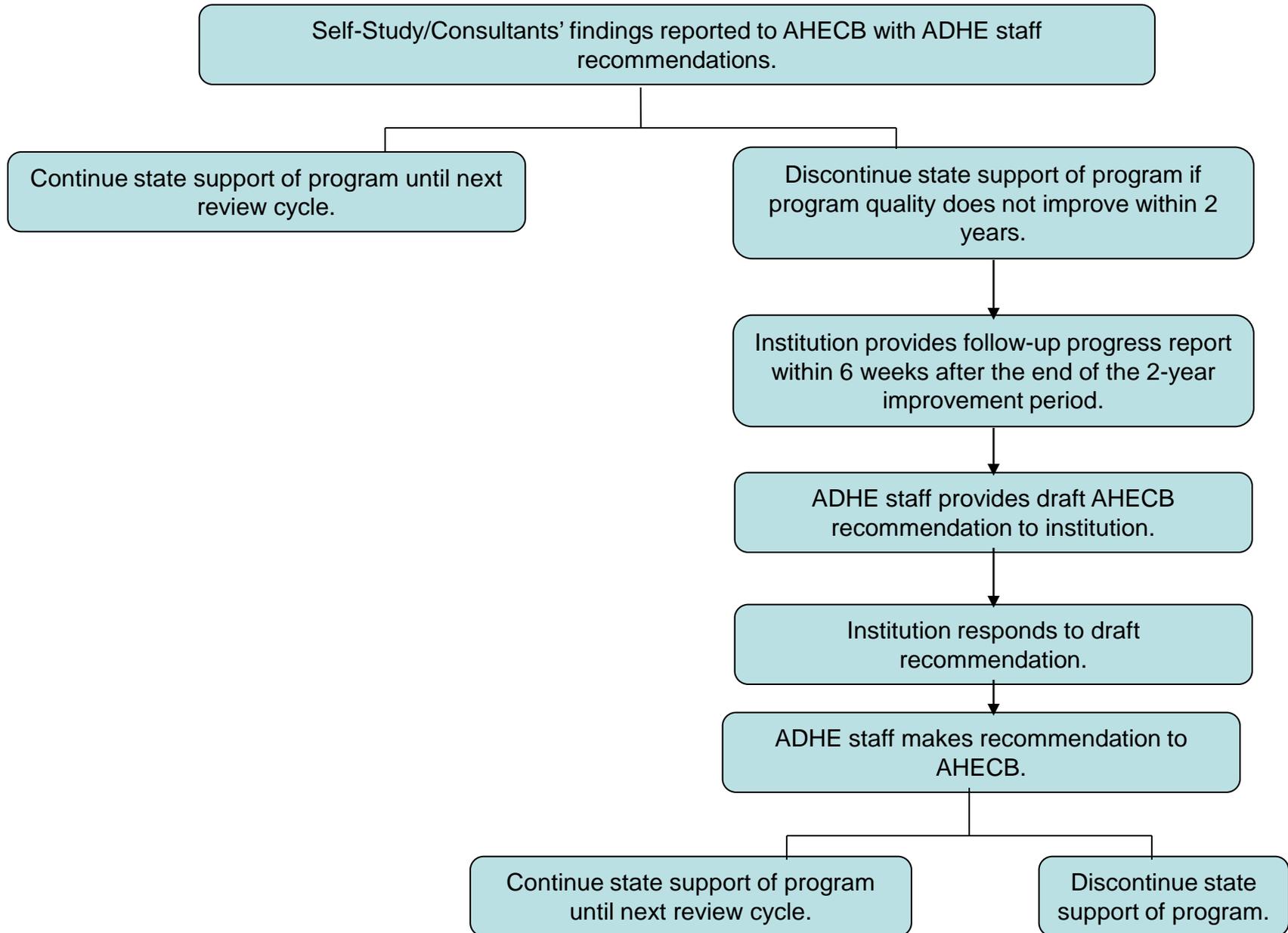
History of high wage, high demand job placement; continues with reduced viability standards for 5 years.

Data submission correction; program meets viability standards and continues to receive state support.

External Program Review Process



External Program Review Process (con't.)



Existing Program Review Institutional Self-Study Guidelines

The AHECB Existing Program Review Policy adopted in October 2008 requires the review of all academic programs every 7-10 years. A major component of the policy is an internal review (self-study) by institutions and an external review by consultants of programs that do not have program-specific accreditation/licensure/certification. The institution's self-study, consultants' written evaluation, and the institution's response to the consultants' findings will be submitted to ADHE.

The institutional self-study to be reviewed by external consultants should contain the following information:

Goals, Objectives, and Activities

1. Describe specific educational goals, objectives, and activities of the program.
2. Explain how the program serves the general education program and other disciplinary programs on the campus, if applicable.
3. Document market demand and/or state/industry need for careers stemming from the program.
4. Document student demand for the program.

Curriculum

1. Describe how program content parallels current thinking/trends in the field/trade (best practices, advisory committee recommendations, etc.).
2. Provide an outline for each program curriculum, including the sequence of courses.
3. State the degree requirements, including general education requirements, institutional, college or school requirements, and major requirements.
4. Indicate the semester/year the major/program courses were last offered. Exclude general education courses.
5. Provide syllabi for discipline-specific courses and departmental objectives for each course.
6. Outline the process for the introduction of new courses, including all internal curriculum review processes and the findings.
7. List courses in the proposed degree program currently offered by distance delivery.
8. Describe the instructor-to-student and student-to-student interaction for distance courses (prerequisite courses, lab requirements, examination procedures-online/proctored, instructor response to student assignments).

Program Faculty (full-time/adjunct/part-time)

1. Provide curriculum vitae or program faculty information form for all full-time program faculty. The vita or form should include the following: all degrees and institutions granting the degrees; field or specialty of degrees; number of years employed as program faculty at the institution; current academic rank, if applicable; professional certifications/licenses; evidence of quality and quantity of creative and scholarly/research activity; evidence of quality and quantity of service activities; evidence of professional activities and non-teaching work experiences related to courses taught; list of course numbers/course titles of credit courses taught over the past two academic years; and other evidence of quality teaching.
2. Indicate the academic credentials required for adjunct/part-time faculty teaching major/program courses.
3. Describe the orientation and evaluation processes for faculty, including adjunct and part-time faculty.
4. Provide average number of courses and number of credit hours taught for full-time program faculty for current academic year.

Program Resources

1. Describe the institutional support available for faculty development in teaching, research, and service.
2. Describe the professional development of full-time program faculty over the past two years including the institutional financial support provided to faculty for the activities.
3. Provide the annual library budget for the program or describe how library resources are provided for the program.
4. Describe the availability, adequacy, and accessibility of campus resources (research, library, instructional support, instructional technology, etc.).
5. Provide a list of program equipment purchases for the past three years.

Instruction via Distance Technology

This section should be completed if at least 50% of any program/major course is delivered electronically.

1. Summarize institutional policies on the establishment, organization, funding, and management of distance courses/degrees.
2. Summarize the policies and procedures to keep the technology infrastructure current.
3. Summarize the procedures that assure the security of personal information.

4. Describe the support services that will be provided to students enrolled in distance technology courses/programs by the institution and/or other entities:
 - Advising
 - Course registration
 - Financial aid
 - Course withdrawal
 - E-mail account
 - Access to library resources
 - Help Desk
5. Describe technology support services that will be provided to students enrolled in distance technology courses/programs by the institution and/or other entities.
6. Describe the orientation for students enrolled in distance technology courses/programs.
7. Summarize the institutional policy for faculty course load and number of credit hours taught, compensation, and ownership of intellectual property.

Majors/Declared Students

1. State the number of undergraduate/graduate majors/declared students in each degree program under review for the past three years.
2. Describe strategies to recruit, retain, and graduate students.
3. Provide the number of program graduates over the past three years.

Program Assessment

1. Describe the program assessment process and provide outcomes data (standardized entrance/placement test results, exit test results, etc.).
2. Describe program/major exit or capstone requirements.
3. Provide information on how teaching is evaluated, the use of student evaluations, and how the results have affected the curriculum.
4. Provide transfer information for major/declared students including the receiving institutions for transfer and programs of study.
5. Provide information for program graduates continuing their education by entering graduate school or by performing volunteer service.
6. Provide aggregate results of student/alumni/employer satisfaction surveys.
7. Describe how the program is aligned with the current job market needs of the state or local communities.
8. Provide job placement information for program graduates including the number of graduates placed in jobs related to the field of study.

For undergraduate career and technical education programs only, provide the following:

- Names and location of companies hiring program graduates.
- Average hourly rate for program graduates.

- Names of companies requiring the certificate/degree for initial or continued employment.

Program Effectiveness (strengths, opportunities)

1. List the strengths of the program.
2. List the areas of the program most in need of improvement.
3. List program improvements accomplished over the past two years.
4. Describe planned program improvements, including a timetable and the estimated costs. Identify program improvement priorities.

Institutional Review Team

List the names/departments of the self-study committee chair and committee members.

Existing Program Review Full-time Program Faculty Information

The table on page 2 should be completed for each full-time faculty member involved with the program being reviewed.

Faculty Credentials

Faculty must hold degrees from an institution accredited by an accrediting agency recognized by the U.S. Department of Education or from institutions with comparable status, certification, or recognition in other countries.

- a. General Education: Faculty must hold at least a master's degree with 18 graduate hours in the teaching field.
- b. Remedial Education: Faculty members must hold at least a baccalaureate degree in the teaching field.
- c. Associate Level: Faculty must have at least an associate degree or appropriate industry-related licensure or certification.
- d. Baccalaureate Level: Faculty must hold at least a master's degree with 18 graduate hours in the teaching field.
- e. Graduate Level: A majority of the faculty members teaching graduate degree programs must hold the appropriate terminal degree and have demonstrated competency in teaching or research at the appropriate graduate level.

Institution:	Program:
Full-time Instructor Name	
Number of years employed as program faculty at the institution.	
Current academic rank (if applicable)	
List all degrees obtained and institution(s) granting degrees.	
Identify the field/specialty of all degrees.	
List all professional certifications/licenses held by the faculty member.	
Provide evidence of quality and quantity of creative and/or scholarly/research activity.	
Provide evidence of quality and quantity of service activities.	
List professional activities and non-teaching work experiences related to courses taught.	
Provide evidence of quality teaching.	

Full-time Program Faculty Information

Full-time Program Faculty Information, con't.

<p>List the course number and course title of each credit course the faculty member has taught over the past two (2) academic years.</p>	
---	--

Academic Program Review

External Reviewers Report Template

The report prepared by the External Reviewers will be used by the Arkansas Department of Higher Education (ADHE) to verify the student demand and employer need for the program, the appropriateness of the curriculum, and the adequacy of program resources. The report should not include a recommendation to ADHE on program continuation or program deletion.

The External Reviewers written report must include a summary of each area examined and should provide examples that document the conclusions. The questions below should be used by the reviewers as a guide in preparing the summary for each area. Responses to the questions should not be simply “yes or no”.

- I. Review of Program Goals, Objectives and Activities
 - A. Are the intended educational (learning) goals for the program appropriate and assessed?
 - B. How are the faculty and students accomplishing the program’s goals and objectives?
 - C. How is the program meeting market/industry demands and/or preparing students for advanced study?
 - D. Is there sufficient student demand for the program?
 - E. Do course enrollments and program graduation/completion rates justify the required resources?

- II. Review of Program Curriculum
 - A. Is the program curriculum appropriate to meet current and future market/industry needs and/or to prepare students for advanced study?
 - B. Are institutional policies and procedures appropriate to keep the program curriculum current to meet industry standards?
 - C. Are program exit requirements appropriate?
 - D. Does the program contain evidence of good breath/focus and currency, including consistency with good practice?
 - E. Are students introduced to experiences within the workplace and introduced to professionals in the field?
 - F. Does the program promote and support interdisciplinary initiatives?
 - G. Does the program provide respect and understanding for cultural diversity as evidenced in the curriculum, in program activities, in assignment of program responsibly and duties; in honors, awards and scholarship recognition; in recruitment?

- III. Review of Academic Support
 - A. Does the program provide appropriate quality and quantity of academic advising and mentoring of students?
 - B. Does the program provide for retention of qualified students from term to term and support student progress toward and achievement of graduation?

- IV. Review of Program Faculty
 - A. Do program faculty have appropriate academic credentials and/or professional licensure/certification?
 - B. Are the faculty orientation and faculty evaluation processes appropriate?
 - C. Is the faculty workload in keeping with best practices?

- V. Review of Program Resources
 - A. Is there an appropriate level of institutional support for program operation?
 - B. Are faculty, library, professional development and other program resources sufficient?

- VI. Review of Program Effectiveness
 - A. Indicate areas of program strength.
 - B. Indicate the program areas in need of improvement within the next 12 months; and over the next 2-5 years.
 - C. Indicate areas for program development based on market/industry demands that have not been identified by the institution.

- VII. Review of Instruction by Distance Technology (if program courses offered by distance)
 - A. Are the program distance technology courses offered/delivered in accordance with best practices?
 - B. Does the institution have appropriate procedures in place to assure the security of personal information?
 - C. Are technology support services appropriate for students enrolled in and faculty teaching courses/programs utilizing technology?
 - D. Are policies for student/faculty ratio, and faculty course load in accordance with best practices?
 - E. Are policies on intellectual property in accordance with best practices?

- VIII. Review of Program Research and Service
 - A. Are the intended research and creative outcomes for each program appropriate, assessed and results utilized?
 - B. Are the intended outreach/service/entrepreneurial outcomes for each program's initiatives appropriate assessed and results utilized?

- IX. Local Reviewer Comments
 - A. How is the program meeting market/industry demands and/or preparing students for advanced study?
 - B. What program modifications are needed?

- X. Report Summary
 - A. Include reviewer comments on the overall need for program graduates/completers in the local area, region and/or nation over the next 5 years.
 - B. Include reviewer comments on overall program quality, state program review process, etc.