

PROGRAM EVALUATION PROCESS

**Guidelines for the Evaluation of
Academic and Administrative Programs
Academic Year 2020-21**

**Roanoke College
Salem, VA 24153**

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Roanoke College Profile

Vision

Roanoke College is committed to being a leading national liberal arts college, a model of experiential learning, and a community committed to open discourse and civil debate as ways of learning and as preparation for service in the world.

Mission

Roanoke College develops students as whole persons and prepares them for responsible lives of learning, service, and leadership by promoting their intellectual, ethical, spiritual and personal growth.

Roanoke College pursues its mission through an innovative curriculum that combines a core program in the liberal arts, major fields of study in the natural sciences, the social sciences, and the humanities and fine arts, along with career-oriented, specialized programs of study. Founded by Lutherans in 1842, Roanoke College welcomes and reflects a variety of religious traditions. The college honors its Christian heritage and its partnership with the Lutheran church by nurturing a dialogue between faith and reason. In keeping with its history and mission, the college strives to be a diverse community, nationally and internationally.

Central to achieving the purposes of the college is a strong commitment to liberal education and its vision of human freedom leading to service within the human community. The college's learning goals, therefore, focus upon developing both a student's confident sense of freedom in the world and a sense of purpose in using that freedom. Through these goals the college strives to produce resourceful, informed, and responsible citizens prepared for productive careers and for leadership in community.

Roanoke College has a population of approximately 2,000 undergraduate students, 70% of whom live on campus. Over half of Roanoke College students are from Virginia with the remaining students from approximately 40 states and 25 countries. The student population is 56% female and over 9% minority. A selective institution, Roanoke College compares itself with nationally ranked liberal arts colleges.

Program Evaluation: Overview and Philosophy

As described in the mission statement, Roanoke College promotes quality instruction through a liberal arts philosophy that nurtures the development of the whole person. Roanoke is committed to provide broad, deep, and experiential educational opportunities. The Intellectual Inquiry curriculum, implemented in 2009, provides the breadth of a Roanoke education. Majors provide educational depth. Expanding experiential educational opportunities for all students, in combination with the curriculum, provides a Roanoke educational experience that strives to be nationally competitive and distinctive.

The quality of the educational depth, as provided in the major programs, is continuously reviewed through processes ensuring continuous quality improvement. The Program Evaluation Process provides a periodic, formal review of each academic program and key administrative units and involves program faculty, department/unit leadership, and/or students as well as faculty outside of the program, administrative staff, and external disciplinary experts where appropriate. The review process results in a 5-year strategic plan for program improvement.

Roanoke College has engaged in ongoing formal reviews of its academic programs since 1984 and the following principles provide a framework for evaluation for both academic and administrative units:

1. Evaluation is periodic and predictable, frequent enough to identify possible issues and plan for proactive solutions.
2. Evaluation is the responsibility of program faculty (academic reviews), program leadership, and administrative leadership in a common endeavor to continuously improve programs and administrative units.
3. Administrative support is provided to ensure evaluators have the necessary information needed to execute a careful review of the program.
4. The expertise of external peers encourages an objective review of program strengths and weaknesses in the context of national standards of practice in higher education.
5. Objectivity and candor by review participants is required to address areas needing improvement.
6. Planning for improvement is an ongoing process; therefore, progress on program improvements is documented in annual reports to the Dean.

Program Evaluation Process

The academic major, general education, and honors programs are scheduled to participate in a formal review as specified in the *Faculty Handbook* Section 3.4.1. Additionally, administrative units follow the same general guidelines. Program Evaluation Process:

Program evaluation guidelines specify that all academic major, general education, and honors programs be formally evaluated at least once every six to eight years, through a program evaluation process. The system was established by the Dean of the College in cooperation with the Dean's Council to ensure programs are nationally competitive and distinctive. Each program evaluation is facilitated by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Assessment consistent with the process outlined in the evaluation guidelines. Using core data provided by the Director of Institutional Research as well as benchmark data from other institutions, the department chair, in consultation with program faculty, **conducts a self-study** preparing a report assessing program strengths and weaknesses. For the review of the general education program, the self-study is completed by the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs and General Education with the General Education Committee (GEC). For the review of the honors program, the self-study is completed by the Director of the Honors Program with the Honors Program Advisory Group (HonorsPAG).

Typically, for each program under review, **external evaluators review the self-study** and other relevant institutional data and craft an external evaluator report. An independent advisory panel is formed only if requested by the Dean, department chair, GEC or HonorsPAG. When needed, faculty members for panels are recommended by FAC and appointed by the Dean.

Using the self-study report, the external evaluators' report, and the panel recommendations (if applicable), the chair and/or coordinator (academic majors) or program director (general education and honors) works with program faculty and the Dean of the College to **develop a 5-year strategic plan**.

Program Evaluation Activities for Majors and Administrative Units

(Without independent advisory panel)

The PEP cycle has essentially 4 stages and is a four semester process: 1) pre-planning with IEA and program leadership, 2) conducting a self-study, 3) hosting an external review, and 4) writing a 5-year strategic plan.

Activity	Deadline
1) Pre-Planning: Director of Institutional Effectiveness and Assessment contacts department Chair to answer questions, discuss benchmark schools and possible evaluators. At this time, the program or Dean may request the use of an internal advisory panel.*	December 15, 2020
2) Write Self-Study: Using core data provided by the Office of Institutional Research as well as benchmark data from other institutions, the department chair (academic majors) and/or program director (general education and honors), in consultation with program faculty, conducts the self-study. Evaluators are selected and scheduled by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Assessment.	Spring 2021 semester
Self-Study Due Date: Self-study document is due to the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Assessment.	March 15, 2021
External evaluators review report.	Spring and Summer 2021
3) Site Visit: External evaluators visit campus and prepare report (due 30 days following the visit). Upon receipt, the external evaluators' report is sent to the department Chair.	September/October/or November 2021
Site Visit Review: Director of Institutional Effectiveness and Assessment facilitates meeting with Dean and department Chair to review self-study and external evaluators' report and discuss the 5-year strategic plan.	September/October/or November 2021
4) Write 5-Year Strategic Plan: Using the self-study report and the external evaluators' report, the chair/program coordinator works with program faculty and the Dean of the College to develop a 5-year strategic plan.	Spring 2022
5-Year Strategic Plan Due Date: Dean has final review of the 5-year plan.	Due June 15
Annually, the Chair or Administrative leader (in consultation with program coordinator, if applicable) update progress on the 5-year strategic plan in the Dean's Annual Report (or the appropriate Vice President Report).	June 30, 2022

*If review by an advisory panel is requested, the review will follow: *Program Evaluation Panel Calendar*

General Guidelines and Key Questions of the Self-Study

1. All academic major, general education, the honors program, and select administrative units are reviewed on a six to eight-year cycle.
2. For academic majors, participants in the review include leadership and members of the major program. For general education evaluations, participants include the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs and General Education, the General Education Group, and an internal panel with members from Curriculum Committee. For review of the honors program, the Director and Associate Director of the Program with an internal panel participate. For administrative units, the participants in the review are guided by the unit leadership. All reviews are in consultation with primary groups served by the program (other departments on campus, current and prospective students, alumni, graduate and professional schools, industry).
3. Goals of the review
 - a. To assess how well academic programs and administrative units are advancing the purposes of the College in ways that make the programs nationally competitive and regionally distinctive.
 - b. To recommend ways in which the programs and administrative units can be strengthened with existing resources and with strategic allocations of new resources.
 - c. To provide focus and suggestions for development of a 5-year plan.

Key Questions to be answered in the self-study document

1. Fulfilling the Roanoke College Mission
 - a. Revisit the program's mission statement. Does the statement clearly connect the program or unit to the College's mission and Freedom with Purpose statements? Does the mission effectively capture the main goals of the program or unit? Does the mission effectively contextualize the program or unit in the broader College environment?
 - b. What revisions are needed?
2. Assessing Strengths and Weakness*
 - a. What are the strengths and weaknesses of your program or unit compared to other institutions against which the College competes for students?

- b. How do the strengths of your program or unit make it nationally competitive and regionally distinctive when compared against the programs or units of other national liberal arts colleges?
- * Points to consider:
- 1) major requirements;
 - 2) service to other programs beyond the major;
 - 3) contributions to General Education;
 - 4) staffing;
 - 5) enrollment;
 - 6) accreditation standards and/or national guidelines;
 - 7) student learning outcomes; student post-graduation success; and,
 - 8) issues relevant to program quality in the discipline.
3. Other issues
- a. Are there other issues not covered in the strengths and weaknesses that concern the program faculty or unit leadership?
 - b. How are these issues impacting program quality? Please include materials that speak to these issues.
4. Increasing Efficiency
- a. How can existing resources be reallocated to eliminate the most serious weaknesses, enhance existing strengths, or create new strengths?
 - b. How can existing resources be reallocated to make your program or unit more nationally competitive and regionally distinctive?
5. Utilizing New Resources
- d. What new resources are needed to eliminate the most serious weaknesses, enhance existing strengths, or create new strengths?
 - e. What new resources are needed to make your programs or unit more nationally competitive and regionally distinctive?

Roles and Responsibilities of the Internal Panel (Academic Reviews)

The panel is composed of the Director of Institutional Effectiveness and Assessment, the Director of Institutional Research, and three faculty members, one from each division. The panel is endorsed by the Faculty Affairs Committee and approved by the Dean of the College. For reviews of the general education and honors programs an independent advisory panel is convened. For academic major review, an independent advisory panel is formed only if requested by the Dean or department chair and/or program coordinator.

The panel's focus should be the quality of the program, including its structure, integrity, strengths, connection to the College mission, and sufficiency of support. The program evaluation requires critical analysis of the program in the context of the institution as well as in comparison to programs at peer institutions and to best practices in the discipline. Panel members should provide sound rationales citing disciplinary norms, standards of accrediting agencies or professional organizations, specific data points, the report of the external evaluators, or College priorities.

In October of the evaluation year, panelists receive a copy of the program self-study report. The panel members meet to discuss the self-study and panel responsibilities. During the external reviewers' campus visit, the panel will meet with the external reviewers to ask and answer questions and provide perspectives of the program from faculty outside of the department. Following receipt of the external evaluator's report, panelists review the report and meet with program leadership to discuss the external reviewers' findings and suggestions. From this discussion, the panel prepares recommendation to program leadership and the Dean to inform the development of the 5-year strategic plan.

Roles and Responsibilities of the External Reviewer

The evaluation of program strengths and weaknesses by qualified experts in the discipline is crucial to the success of the program evaluation process. Professionals who are knowledgeable in the field bring objectivity and fresh perspectives to the process assisting faculty and staff in the advancement of quality programming. The duties and tasks expected of external reviewers include:

1. Conduct an on-site visit to campus to meet and interview key program or unit constituents including faculty, staff, administrators, and students.
2. Thoroughly study program or unit data and self-report provided prior to and during the campus visit.
3. Request additional materials of administrative staff and/or program leadership that are required for a thorough review.
4. Produce, in consultation with the other reviewer(s), a report summarizing the strengths and weaknesses of the program or unit and make suggestions for improvement no later than 30 days following the campus visit. See Appendix B for suggested format/outline.

The primary focus of the external evaluators should be the academic program or administrative unit under review including its structure, integrity, strengths, weaknesses, connection to the College mission, overall quality, and the sufficiency of support for its operation. Evaluators are requested to go beyond rendering opinions when providing recommendations. Recommendations should be supported by rationales referencing disciplinary norms, standards of accrediting agencies or professional organizations, national data, or other sources that help the faculty and staff consider program quality indicators as compared to other leading liberal arts colleges.

To assist external evaluators in the review, college staff will provide information on Roanoke College and the program or unit under review. See Appendix A for additional resources. Prior to the campus visit, external evaluators will receive the following documents:

- A copy of the program's self-study document.
- Documents from the Office of Institutional Research (where appropriate).
- Copies of the program's assessment materials from the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Assessment.

The on-site visit is designed to facilitate key review activities including interviews with select College administrators, meetings with program constituents, and a private work meeting of

external reviewers. A typical itinerary for a campus visit is in Appendix B. The final itinerary and schedule for the campus visit will be sent electronically prior to arrival.

Travel and Honoraria

Roanoke College reimburses documented travel costs per College policies. Typical expenses include flights, mileage, car rentals and meals not provided by the College. All travel expenses must be submitted with accompanying receipts through the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Assessment. Typically, reimbursement takes two weeks once all forms are submitted to the Roanoke College Business Office.

External reviewers are paid a \$750 honorarium for his or her services. The honorarium is submitted for payment following the receipt of the External Review Report, due no later than 30 days following the campus visit. Prior to honorarium payment, an external evaluator must complete and submit a W-9 form and the letter of agreement.

Appendix A: Additional Resources

Below are additional sources of information that are available to the external evaluators and may be accessed at this site: http://www.roanoke.edu/inside/a-z_index/institutional_research

Institutional research data. To understand the program or unit in the greater context of Roanoke College, the Office of Institutional Research provides the following information where relevant:

- 1) Roanoke College Fall Snapshot data
- 2) Roanoke College Enrollment Summary
- 3) Total College Enrollment Trends
- 4) Freshman Class Retention and Graduation Rates
- 5) Statistics on Academic Faculty
- 6) Majors, Minors, and Concentrations
- 7) Declared Majors by Status
- 8) Roanoke College Graduates
- 9) Student Credit Units by Academic Discipline
- 10) Student Credit Units by Department & Discipline
- 11) Faculty Instructional Data Summary: Departments
- 12) Grade Distribution Percentages for Academic Year

Academic program learning outcome assessment. Academic major programs maintain a curriculum map, an assessment map, and an annual assessment process to evaluate program effectiveness connected to student achievement of program-level learning outcomes.

Curriculum map. Academic programs develop a visual representation of the curriculum elements connected to program-level learning outcomes to ensure the learning is taught at multiple points in the students' course sequence for introduction, emphasis and reinforcement of essential learning consistent with guidelines.

Assessment map. The assessment map for academic programs is a visual representation of assessment elements within the program structure connected to program-level learning outcomes. The assessment map is a matrix promoting clear communication of where program-level assessment takes place so faculty can effectively plan for and conduct assessment capturing information about student learning that best informs program improvement.

Annual learning outcomes assessment report. The components of the annual student learning outcomes assessment process in academic programs are: program mission statement, program-level student learning outcomes, assessment mechanisms, achievement targets, findings, and action planning.

Dean's annual report. The annual report serves as a chronicle of the activities and accomplishments of the academic department for the academic year. While it will be used in the process of evaluation, its value goes beyond that. The complete annual report summarizes significant achievements of departmental faculty and students for individual faculty, other departments, members of the administration, and others who might be interested. The components of the annual report to the Dean include: progress made on goals for the year, goals proposed for the next year reflecting results of assessment, program evaluation, and how results have been or will be used to make program improvements.

Additional administrative Unit information. Additional information is available for administrative units and will vary according to the mission of the unit. Unit leaders will provide this information to the reviewers through the self-study document, but if additional information could inform the process, please feel free to request it.

Appendix B: Sample Itinerary for Campus Visit

One Day Prior

Afternoon/Evening Arrival in Salem

Day One

7:00 a.m. Breakfast with Director of Institutional Effectiveness and Assessment
8:45 a.m. Orientation and Acclimation
9:00 a.m. Entrance interview with Dean of the College
10:00 a.m. Meet with Chair/Program Director
12:00 p.m. Lunch with Students and/or Alumni
1:00 p.m. Meet with Program Faculty (30 minute meetings)
3:00 p.m. Meet with Library Representative
3:45 p.m. Private Work Meeting for External Review Team
6:00p.m. Dinner with selected program faculty

Day Two

Breakfast on own
8:30 a.m. Orientation and Acclimation
9:00 a.m. Meet with Program Faculty (30 minute meetings)
10:00 a.m. Follow-up meeting with Chair/Program Director
11:00 a.m. Exit interview with Dean of the College
12:00 p.m. Working Lunch
1:30 p.m. Depart from Campus

Appendix C: Suggested format for External Report

1. Introduction
2. Analysis of Programmatic Strengths and Challenges
 - a. Distinctive features of the program or unit
 - b. Overview of programmatic challenges and areas of concern
3. Review of Program or Unit Goals, Objectives, and/or Student Learning Outcomes
A review based on the stated goals, objectives, and/or Student Learning Outcomes and goals common to high-quality programs or similar units.
4. Other Observations that emerged from the Campus Visit
5. Summary of Recommendations
Provide key recommendations that will help the program better serve student interests while advancing the College's priority to develop nationally competitive and regionally distinctive programs.
6. Conclusion

Note: This format provides a suggested framework for the external report. However, reviewers may alter the format to offer feedback in the most effective form possible.

Appendix D: Developing a 5-year Plan

1. Mission

- a. Include a revised mission statement for the program.

2. What are your Strategic Goals over the next 5-year period?

—Strategic Goal Statements

- a. Strategic goals are a clear statement of purpose providing an answer to the problem statement and communicating the intended aims or impact of the program over time.
- b. Some Strategic Goals could take multiple years to complete and state specific changes that can reasonably expected at the conclusion of 5 years.

–Identify Outcomes

Outcomes are to be written in a “SMART” format:

- a. Specific
- b. Measurable
- c. Attainable
- d. Relevant
- e. Time-bound

3. How do you plan to accomplish the Strategic Goals?

—Activities and Timeline (with existing resources and with new resources)

- a. List and describe activities that will lead to the specified outcomes and the achievement of goals.
- b. List the activities in order accompanied by an estimated timeline for completion.

Notes for Ongoing Evaluation and Monitoring (Academic Reviews)

As part of the annual report to the Dean, Department Chairs are required to give a progress report on program evaluation plans. The following types of evaluation should be considered when updating progress:

- i. Program Evaluation: Measures of goals. Did you accomplish the activities/outcomes as specified in the plan?
- ii. Process Evaluation: Evaluates what has been happening and whether or not the program is conducting activities as planned.
- iii. Impact Evaluation: Are the changes/activities making a difference? Were there unintended benefits or consequences?