

UNIVERSIDAD DE LAS AMÉRICAS, A.C.
DEVELOPMENT AND REVIEW
PROGRAMS MANUAL

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Presentation

This Manual described the general procedures followed by the *Universidad de las Américas*, A.C. for the development and review of its educational programs, for which the University have taken into consideration the requirements established by the public body responsible for reviewing and granting the *Reconocimiento de Validez Oficial de Estudios* (RVOE) (Official Studies Validity Recognition) the Ministry of Public Education (SEP).

The procedures described below provide the opportunity for each academic area of the *Universidad de las Américas*, A.C., to undertake a comprehensive effort in the development and review of the educational programs. It also allows that Academic Coordinators and Directors dialogue with faculty, interact with external experts, identify strengths and weaknesses to design, renew and update the educational offer in the framework of the Institutional Mission.

This manual contains the methodology to be followed and the information required to carry out the process of Development and Program Review, the stages and criteria for *Licenciatura*, *Maestría* and *Doctorado* programs are specified. The following procedures are the minimum indispensable to be considered by the University academic areas in the development or review of an educational program; however, there is a possibility that such procedures be extended and enriched according to the needs of each Academic Coordination.

For the optimal development of each of the stages of the Development and Review Programs Process, is proposed the establishment of a Departmental Technical Council, which will be formed by the professors of the educational program and will be coordinated by the Academic Director of the program to follow up the results derived from the Development and Review Programs process. It is important that the members of the Departmental Technical Council should be familiar and have the existing curriculum.

The Program Review is the cornerstone of the planning of educational programs because, from the analysis of results and processes, provides information for the update and adjustment of these, as well as the development of new. The Program Review is performed every five years.



The Program Review process includes a self-assessment and an external evaluation; the results are integrated in a report. The assessment mechanism allows analyzing the following aspects:

- Congruence of the Institutional Mission with the Department's Mission.
- Congruence of the Department's or Division's Mission with the general objectives of the educational program.
- Feasibility, relevance and appropriateness of the proposed curriculum.
- Internal and External congruence of the proposed curriculum.
- Faculty and students' quality and the learning outcomes.
- Effectiveness of Educational Support Services.
- Relevance and significance of the physical plant and the equipment for the operation of the program.
- Teaching Effectiveness

With the establishment of the Development and Review Program methodologies, the University seeks to strengthen its commitment outlined in the Institutional Mission for offering academic programs that prepare professionals able to meet the demands of the workplace.



Description of the Program Development Process

The development of an academic program must meet the social needs of the moment and consider the constant changes in scientific and technological advances that occur in each of the disciplines. The Program Development Process consists of the following elements that meet the regulations of the Ministry of Education:

➤ Program Fundamentals

It refers to the justification for the existence of the program based on the results obtained in the detection of social needs and the research on the different educational responses provided to meet these needs, therefore, this section should include the following aspects:

- a) Diagnosis and prospective needs
- b) Diagnosis and prospective of the existing educational offer (conduct an investigation about other institutions that offer similar programs and analyze to what extent they respond to the detected needs).
- c) Description of the graduate field work (indicate potential sources of employment in both the public and the private sector)

➤ General Objectives:

This stage defines the purposes intended to be achieved through the academic program and should answer the following:

What kind of professional will be formed?

What will the students' specialization be?

What are the kind of needs that it will attend?

What will be the impact on resources formed?

➤ Enrollment Profile

Description of the characteristics to be covered by the applicant in terms of knowledge, skills, attitudes and abilities.



- Graduate Profile

It refers to the academic and professional characteristics achieved by the graduate. This must be written in terms of knowledge, skills, attitudes and abilities and competencies.
- Curricular Map by Discipline

It consists of a schematization of courses in order to identify them by disciplines (area of knowledge).
- Curriculum Organization

Based on the concepts of the teaching-learning process, and the development of the individual, there are three types of curriculum organization:

 - a) By course
 - b) By discipline
 - c) By modules
- Curriculum Development

It is the list of courses that have been selected to achieve the program objectives and the graduate profile.
- Syllabus

It is the specific instrument that regulates the teaching-learning process to develop in a course, guiding the actions that professor and students have to carry out to achieve the objectives for each course.

Each study program should contain the information that allows the identification of the location of the course in the curriculum, as well as the elements that regulate and guide the corresponding educational process (learning objective, topics, learning activities, evaluation criteria and bibliography)
- Research Program
(*Maestría and Doctorado* programs)

It refers to the research program associated to the master's or doctorate degree, which must indicate the objectives and goals of the program, the thematic areas or lines of research, the development projects, the outcomes achieved, the researchers' characteristics, the time dedicated to the program, and the links between it and the curriculum of graduate programs.



➤ Curriculum assessment

While the curriculum is aimed at meeting certain needs, it must be evaluated in its execution and after the discharge of one generation to obtain the necessary information to establish the objective basis for maintaining and / or modifying the academic program. This evaluation process comprises two aspects:

- a) Internal Curriculum Assessment (intermediate): Refers to the academic achievement of the objectives established in the professional profile and the assessment of the procedures performed and results obtained within a program.
- b) External Curriculum Assessment (final): Refers to the research about the needs that must be addressed through the curriculum and the pertinence of the learning achieved by the graduate, its scope and its applicability in the professional field.



Responsibilities

In the development process different units of the University collaborate; their main responsibilities are described below:

Rectoría

The scheduling and monitoring process is conducted by the *Rectoría* with the support of the Direction of Planning and Evaluation, which coordinates the programming, implementation and the obtaining results process.

Academic Coordinator and Departmental Technical Councils

The responsible of the program, commonly the Director of the Department or Division participates in the initial scheduling, coordinates the selection and work of the members of Departmental Technical Council conducts the internal review of the program and prepares the Self-Assessment Report. On the other hand, it is responsible for recommending to the Rector the expert who will be involved in the process. Finally the Director shall prepare and submit to the Rector the Plan to follow up all recommendations of the review.

Development Criteria

The responsible of the program and his team must agree on the specific design criteria and how external research of the needs will be conducted, in order to develop the New Academic Program, for the program development the following aspects should be considered :

- Congruence of the Department's Mission and the program with the institution;
- Durability of program content and relevance of the curriculum;
- Faculty Quality;
- Quality of the Students;
- Effectiveness of Educational Support Services:
 - Library
 - Computer Center
- Availability and quality of physical facilities;
- Effectiveness of academic processes.



Calendar

Below is shown the calendar for the Development of a new program:

ACTIVITY	RESPONSIBLE
1. Organization of the development process	▪ Program Responsible ▪ Direction of Planning and Evaluation
2. Formal start of the process within the Divisional Technical Council :	▪ Program Responsible ▪ Direction of Planning and Evaluation
2.1 Presentation of the workgroup	
2.2 Approval of the external expert	
3. Research of the needs to address with the new program, as well as the existing educational offer.	▪ Program Responsible ▪ External Expert ▪ Departmental Technical Council
4. Definition of: the graduate work field, program objectives and curricular organization according to the needs detected.	▪ Program Responsible ▪ External Expert ▪ Departmental Technical Council
5. Integración de las asignaturas y sus respectivos programas de estudio	▪ Program Responsible ▪ External Expert ▪ Departmental Technical Council
6. Formal presentation of the new education program at the University Council	▪ Program Responsible



As it was mentioned the program development methodology followed by the University is generic and can be enriched according to the requirements of each Academic Direction, but without straying from the official requirements described in the Agreement 279 of the Ministry of Public Education (SEP); official body and highest authority in education; which grants the *Reconocimiento de Validez Oficial de Estudios* (RVOE) (Official Studies Validity Recognition) and final approval.



Description of the Review Programs Process

The Review Programs Process consists of the following stages:

Justification or Program Needs

The Direction of Planning and Evaluation, through a process of data collection, prepares a document detailing the current status of the Academic Program to review, taking into account the results of the first generation that completes a full cycle of the Curriculum. This document includes the following information: number of students that initiate the program, students acceptance condition, terminal efficiency rate degree, graduation rate, dropout and lag rate, grades and failure rate, faculty performance, results of the Exit Survey and results obtained by students in the General Exit Exam. It is also during this stage that the Direction of Planning and Evaluation applies to graduates and employers, a survey to identify the strengths, weaknesses, areas of opportunity and relevance of the program contents for an appropriate professional development based on the experience of graduates and their employers.

During this stage the following areas are involved: Registrar's Offices, Direction of Students' Development, the Academic Director and the Direction of Planning and Evaluation.

Curriculum Review

Under the guidance of an external expert, the Academic Director and faculty members who are part of the Departmental Technical Council should agree on specific review criteria, identify strengths and weaknesses, problems and alternative solutions in the general aspects of the program that are outlined below:

- Congruence of the Department's Mission and the program with the institution;



- Durability of program content and relevance of the curriculum;
- Faculty Quality;
- Quality of the Students;
- Express the general objectives of the curriculum in terms of knowledge, skills and attitudes.
- The relevance of the disciplines
- Express the objectives of each course and discipline in terms of knowledge, skills and attitudes.
- Analyze the progression of course contents, taking in consideration the horizontal and vertical congruence.
- Effectiveness of Educational Support Services:
 - Library
 - Computer Center
- Availability and quality of physical facilities;
- Effectiveness of academic processes.

During this stage the following areas are involved: Academic Director, Faculty members of the Departmental Technical Councils and an External Expert.

Preliminary
Presentation

The Academic Director presents, during the meeting of the University Council, the results of the curriculum evaluation stage and thereby the first proposal of the Review Report for Updated Curriculum.

The recommendations arising from this presentation should have a monitoring plan to be addressed by the Academic Director and the Departmental Technical Council.

During this stage the following areas are involved: the *Rector*, the Provost, the Academic and Administrative Directors that are part of the University Council, who evaluate the proposal and make recommendations.



Final
Presentation

Once the recommendations made by the University Council are addressed, the Academic Director presents the modifications made to the initial proposal for a second evaluation.

During this stage the following areas are involved: the *Rector*, the Provost, the Academic and Administrative Directors that are part of the University Council, who evaluate the proposal and make recommendations or, if appropriate, give the final approval.

Program Approved

Once the program is approved by the University Council, it is submitted to the Ministry of Public Education (SEP) for official approval.



Responsibilities

In the development process different units of the University collaborate; their main responsibilities are described below:

Rectoría

The scheduling and monitoring process is conducted by the *Rectoría* with the support of the Direction of Planning and Evaluation, which coordinates the programming, implementation and the obtaining results process. It is also responsible for integrating the Data Book and results of the external surveys

Academic Coordinator and Departmental Technical Councils

The responsible of the program, commonly the Director of the Department or Division participates in the initial scheduling, coordinates the selection and work of the members of Departmental Technical Council conducts the internal review of the program and prepares the Self-Assessment Report. On the other hand, it is responsible for recommending to the Rector the expert who will be involved in the process. Finally the Director shall prepare and submit to the Rector the Plan to follow up all recommendations of the review.

Review Criteria

The responsible of the program and his team must agree on the specific design criteria and how external research of the needs will be conducted, in order to develop the Program Review Report for Updated Curriculum, the team should identify strengths and weaknesses, problems and alternative solutions on the general aspects of the program described below:

- Congruence of the Department's Mission and the program with the institution;
- Durability of program content and relevance of the curriculum;
- Faculty Quality;
- Quality of the Students;
- Effectiveness of Educational Support Services:
 - Library
 - Computer Center



- Availability and quality of physical facilities;
- Effectiveness of academic processes.



Calendar

Below is shown the calendar for the Review Programs Process:

ACTIVITY	RESPONSIBLE
1. Organization of the review process	▪ Program Responsible ▪ Direction of Planning and Evaluation
2. Formal start of the process within the Divisional Technical Council: 2.1 Delivery of the support information 2.2 Presentation of the workgroup 2.3 Approval of the external expert	▪ Program Responsible ▪ Direction of Planning and Evaluation
3. Internal review of the program by the responsible and its working group	▪ Program Responsible ▪ External Expert ▪ Departmental Technical Council
4. Integration of the results of the internal review.	▪ Program Responsible ▪ Departmental Technical Council
5. Formal presentation of the Review Report for Updated Curriculum at the University Council	▪ Program Responsible ▪ Departmental Technical Council
6. Presentation of the monitoring plan at the University Council.	▪ Program Responsible



Appendix 1. Program Review Calendar 2014-2015

<i>Activity</i>	<i>Responsible</i>	<i>Date</i>
Organization of the review process	Direction of Planning and Evaluation Academic Director	June to July 2014
Formal start of the process within the Divisional Technical Council: ▪ Delivery of the support information ▪ Presentation of the workgroup ▪ Approval of the external expert	Direction of Planning and Evaluation Academic Director	July 2014
Internal review of the program by the responsible and its working group	Academic Director Departmental Technical Council External Expert	July to December 2015
Integration of the results of the internal review.	Academic Director Departmental Technical Council	January 2015
Formal presentation of the Review Report for Updated Curriculum at the University Council	Academic Director Departmental Technical Council	February 2015
Presentation of the conclusions and the Monitoring Plan at the University Council	Academic Director	March 2015
Start of the new programs	Academic Director	August 2015

