

What is Program Review?

Program review is a “360-degree review”¹ of the effectiveness of a program over time. It requires the program to ask important questions about itself and provide thoughtful answers which can be used to improve program (and institutional) effectiveness and student learning. According to the Research and Planning Group, it “is part of a sound, comprehensive education planning practice”². Accordingly to the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges, “faculty-driven program review is essential to the integrity of the college community and its educational programs.”³

A complete program review cycle involves distinct steps:

- **Description** of the things as they exist
- **Evaluation** of whether the resources are sufficient; and where the results are good enough to satisfy the program’s and the institution’s pursuit of excellence
- **Planning** for needed improvement
- **Implementation** of those plans
- **Evaluation** of the effectiveness of the actions taken

Plans for improvement from program review should be integrated or connected to the overall college plans, so that the institution can establish directions, timelines, resources, and support the implementation of the plans.

Program review is recurrent so that an institution can assess its progress in improving effectiveness over time.

¹ Beno, B. (2003, April). What accreditors expect from Program review. *Accreditation Notes*. Novato, CA: Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges.

² Meehan, Ken. (2010, June). Inquiry Guide: Maximizing the Program Review Process. Research and Planning Group.

³ The Academic Senate for California Community Colleges. (2009). Program Review: Setting a Standard.