

6.2 Programs of Study

Last Revised: November 2022

Policy: Subject to on-going evaluation and continuous improvement processes, Piedmont Community College (PCC) offers a variety of programs and disciplines designed to fulfill the College's mission.

Purpose/Definitions:

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure PCC offers a variety of programs to meet the educational and workforce needs of its service area in accordance with its mission and in alignment with SACSCOC standards.

Definitions

N/A

Approval Authority/Monitoring Authority: Piedmont Community College's Board of Trustees has approval authority for this policy. The Vice President, Instruction has monitoring authority for this policy.

Procedures:

Section 1: Available Programs

- 1.1. A current listing of available programs of study is maintained on the [College website](#).

Section 2: Annual Program Review

- 2.1. Program outcomes, supported by student learning outcomes, are reviewed annually as part of the College's Institutional Effectiveness Plan and are tracked using WEAVE assessment management software. (See PCC Policy 2.30 Institutional Effectiveness for more information.)

Section 3: 5-year Program Area Review (PAR) Process

- 3.1. All programs are reviewed on a five-year rotating cycle utilizing the PAR process.

- 3.1.1. The PAR process is a multi-layer, in-depth review with tasks distributed across the academic year. (See **Exhibit 6.2**—Program Area Review (PAR) Guidelines.)
- 3.1.2. Instructional deans, in conjunction with program faculty and advisory committee input, use the results of the PAR to complete a PAR Action Plan which documents areas of improvement for the program.
 - 3.1.2.1. The PAR Action Plan is updated one year after the completion of the PAR to document improvements and any continuing needs as identified on the plan. (See **Exhibit 6.2**—Program Area Review (PAR) Guidelines.)

Section 4: Program Changes

- 4.1. The addition or termination of curriculum programs requires the approval of the College’s local Curriculum Committee, Board of Trustees, the North Carolina State Board of Community Colleges (SBCC), and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC).
- 4.2. If a program change is determined to be substantive, SACSCOC notification or approval is required. (See PCC Policy 2.28 Substantive Change)

Legal Citation: [N.C.G.S. 115D-1](#); [N.C.G.S. 115D-2](#); [N.C.G.S. 115D-3](#); [N.C.G.S. 115D-5](#); [1D SBCCC](#)

History: Effective October 12, 1988; Revised October 2001, May 2021, November 2022

Cross-references PCC Policy 2.28 Substantive Change and Policy 2.30 Institutional Effectiveness

Exhibit 6.2: Program Area Review (PAR) Guidelines

(Contact the Office of Research and Institutional Effectiveness for an editable copy of this document.)

Program Area Review (PAR) Guidelines

Piedmont Community College

To ensure that programs are effective and consistent with the mission, PCC performs an in-depth assessment of curriculum programs every five years, on a staggered cycle. This process is called a Program Area Review (PAR). These descriptions and suggestions of a typical PAR process are provided as informal guidelines to increase the likelihood of an effective, productive review.

The Program Area Review should focus on the interpretation of general information and operating data illustrating program health. The PAR concentrates particularly on summative direct and indirect measures of program operating effectiveness in addition to the formative results of program area outcomes (PAO) assessment. The purposes and objectives of PARs are best served via participation by full and part-time faculty who teach the program courses together with program students, graduates, and Advisory Committee members (including employers), working with the Instructional Dean responsible for the program or their designee.

PAR Committee and Division of Labor

The Instructional Dean or their designee will direct the PAR process and will chair the PAR Committee. The chair of the PAR Committee collaborates with the full-time and part-time faculty who teach program required courses to identify and distribute explicit roles and responsibilities in the PAR process.

Recommended PAR Committee Membership (typically 5 or more members):

- Instructional Dean responsible for the program
- One or more faculty members who teach required program courses
- One faculty member who does not teach any required program courses
- One staff member from an administrative or educational support service area
- ORIE representative

PAR Timeline Example

Each program conducts a PAR every five years, on a staggered cycle. *(As a consequence, postponed PARs do not alter this staggered schedule: If a PAR completion is delayed one year, the succeeding PAR will be scheduled four years later, according to the original schedule.)* The suggested PAR timeline presented below describes tasks distributed across the academic year from August to May, specifically to avoid excessive competition with regular faculty teaching and advising responsibilities. Fall semester activities focus on information gathering and program description. Spring semester activities focus on interpretation and evaluation of program information to identify specific strategies and recommendations.

August-September	PAR Committee and Program Area Dean: Meet to decide how to divide up subsequent PAR Committee tasks (below).
Early December	Conduct preliminary review of program outcome data from Office of Research and Institutional Effectiveness (ORIE), including results of surveys of program students and graduates since the previous PAR. Assemble and review reported observations, recommendations, and survey results from annual Program Advisory Committee participants.
December	PAR Committee: Compose drafts of Section I: <i>Program Profile</i> and Section II: <i>Program Content</i>
January-February	PAR Committee: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interpret survey results (above) and ORIE data in a written synopsis with program implications • Summarize the most recent three years of PAO assessments • Compose draft of Section III: <i>Program Area Outcomes (PAO) Assessment</i>.
Early March	Program Advisory Committee: During the year in which a PAR is conducted, the Program Advisory Committee meeting should be scheduled early enough in the spring semester for the meeting results to be included in the PAR SWOT analysis.
Late March-April	PAR Committee: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct PAR Meeting to do the SWOT analysis and identify program recommendations • Compose drafts of Section IV: <i>SWOT Analysis</i> and Section V: <i>Recommendations to Improve the Program</i> • Review, revise, and “approve” the final copy for Sections I-V • Compose a one-page Executive Summary highlighting the most important findings of the PAR

- May 1** **Instructional Dean or Designee:** Forward Final PAR and Executive Summary to the Vice President, Instruction with a copy to ORIE.

- Following May** **ORIE** sends out an action plan update form for Instructional Dean or Designee to complete and return by August 1.

Suggested Content of the PAR Report

I. Program Profile

- A. For what careers or for what transfer programs does this program prepare students?
- B. What courses required for this program are also required by other programs?
- C. What courses required for this program are also General Education Courses?
- D. What other General Education Courses are taught by program faculty?
- E. Qualifications of faculty who teach courses required for this program
 - 1. Credentials
You may use the "abbreviated" degree-only credential format from the College Catalog, rather than the extended detail format employed for SACSCOC.
 - 2. Faculty Accomplishments
You may simply insert the list of faculty professional development activities.

Name	Credentials (PCC website listing)	Accomplishments (Professional Development)

F. Students

- 1. Review of recent course activity data, e.g., headcounts, FTE, retention, successful completers
You are responsible to review and interpret the course activity data provided by ORIE, but you may refer to other data. Do not simply copy the data into your document. Instead, reflect on the data and report your interpretation of implications for the program.

2. Program student demographics

You are also responsible to review student demographic data provided by ORIE. Do not simply copy them into the PAR document. You should comment on significant implications for the program.

3. Admissions

- i. What are the admissions criteria for the program, if any?
- ii. What do the enrollment and/or demographic numbers suggest about future enrollment prospects? Are any special recruitment/admission initiatives desirable?

II. Program Content

A. What credentials does this program offer? (degrees, diplomas, certificates, etc.)

B. Does this program achieve any external accreditation (aside from SACSCOC)?

C. LRC Program Holdings

Do not merely attach the list. Instead, review the list and comment on the adequacy and currency of the holdings (print or electronic) for support of the program. Any unnecessary items? Any important items missing?

D. Consortial Relationships and Contractual Agreements

Identify formal arrangements with other educational institutions for program delivery.

III. Program Area Outcomes (PAO) Assessment

A. ORIE will provide a pdf Weave document of the past three years of PAO Assessment reports (this report will be attached to your PAR by the ORIE office when your final report is submitted).

B. Curriculum Map

C. Briefly summarize the most important PAO assessment results from the past three years.

IV. Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) Analysis

⊕ Think of the SWOT analysis this way:

	HELPFUL Attributes	HARMFUL Attributes
INTERNAL to the College	STRENGTHS Examples: High quality instruction Skilled staff and faculty Strong attractiveness to prospective students Healthy financial condition and prospects	WEAKNESSES Examples: Outdated program Outdated equipment or facilities Obsolete technologies Weak administrative management Inadequate planning
EXTERNAL to the College	OPPORTUNITIES Examples: Potential new student sources Strong (or weak) area economy Limited or weak competition New technologies Chance to expand student prospect pool or attract a larger percentage of current pool	THREATS Examples: Competing institutions Resource constraints (financial aid) Changing student/workforce needs Competing educational modes (e.g., online for-profits, MOOCs, etc.)

Include SWOT input from the Program Advisory Committee meeting, in addition to the SWOT discussion by the PAR Committee. Also be sure to include your interpretations of program data from Sections I-III.

V. Recommendations to Improve the Program

- A. Recommendations addressing program ineffectiveness/inefficiency or knowledge/skill gaps for successful employment or transfer of program graduates (*For each recommendation, please indicate the source. For example: suggestion from the Advisory Committee, survey results, program enrollment, or completion data, etc.*)
- B. Projected/estimated resource requirements outside the current program budget (*Instead of attempting to estimate dollar amounts, simply identify the personnel, equipment, and/or other requirements.*)
- C. Action Plan with verifiable objectives and timelines for the next three years

ACTION PLAN			
Item	Plan	Responsibility	Timeline

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VI. Executive Summary

A 1-2 page Executive Summary highlighting the most important findings and recommendations of the PAR.

This Executive Summary focuses on the strengths, weaknesses, recommendations, and action plan for this program at Piedmont Community College (most of this information can be found in your final report).

- A. Members of the Program Area Review Committee (name and job title)
- B. Strengths
- C. Weaknesses
- D. Recommendations
- E. Action Plan Table

Action Plan Update (DO NOT include in this report)

The “action plan update” will be sent to the Instructional Dean **twelve months after the PAR is due**. The last column of the table will be blank and should be updated with the progress made towards the action items in the plan over the last year.

ACTION PLAN UPDATE				
Item	Plan	Responsibility	Timeline	Spring 2022 Update Please state if Complete (the action taken and the impact) OR Incomplete (and why)