



Academic Program Review (APR) Handbook

Updated July 2026



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Even more info at: <https://srinfo.sulross.edu/ie/academic-program-reviews/>

Purpose of the Academic Program Review (APR)

All academic programs must conduct and submit an academic program review (APR) every 10 years, as required by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB). *The SRSU program schedule for THECB can be found on page 8 in this handbook.*

The self-study, aimed at reflecting and analyzing the program's quality, productivity, and effectiveness, is essential to improving programs and planning for their future. The APR process is an important part of maintaining our SACSCOC accreditation.

Knowledgeable program faculty conduct the program review with the support from the Office of Institutional Effectiveness. The faculty assigned to conduct the program review is named the Academic Program Coordinator (ideally this is the same person who completes the annual Academic Program Assessment for a department).

The purpose of the APR is below:

1. Required for compliance with THECB. [Chapter 2, Subchapter I, Section 2.181](#) of THECB rules provides criteria and procedures for the review of existing graduate programs. The rule creates a 10-year period during which institutions are required to review all master's and doctoral programs.
2. Provides evidence of compliance with SACSCOC core requirement 7.1, and comprehensive standards 8.2.
 - a. Core Requirement 7.1: The institution engages in ongoing, comprehensive, and integrated research-based planning and evaluation processes that (a) focus on institutional quality and effectiveness and (b) incorporate a systematic review of institutional goals and outcomes consistent with its mission.
 - b. Comprehensive Standard 8.2: The institution identifies expected outcomes, assesses the extent to which it achieves these outcomes, and provides evidence of seeking improvement based on analysis of the results for student learning outcomes for each of its educational programs.
3. Suggests opportunities for programmatic improvement.
4. Identifies programmatic innovations worth replicating.
5. Ensures a quality learning experience for students.
6. Supports decision making.

Key Content in the APR

The APR may take most of the year to complete; Coordinators are encouraged to begin in the fall. *The timeline for the APR process is on page 7 of this handbook.*

Report Writing Process

The APR process begins with the Academic Program Coordinator gathering data and evidence from other faculty in the program, as well as the Department Chair and Dean. The Office of Institutional Research provides tables of data for the report. The Office of Budget and Finance may be utilized for sections of the report. The Office of Institutional Effectiveness will provide training, support throughout the process, and access to the APR template in Watermark. *The guide how to complete the APR in Watermark is found in page 10 of this report.*

Coordinators will address the following in the Watermark template:

- I. Introduction: Overview of the purpose of the report to introduce the reader.
- II. Academic Unit
 - a. Statement of Purpose
 - b. Need for Program
- III. Program Curriculum
 - a. Degree Plan
 - b. Course Offerings (IR will provide course offerings and enrollments)
 - c. Course Syllabi
 - d. Academic Program Student Learning Outcomes
 - e. Curriculum Mapping
 - f. Marketable Skills
 - g. Annual Academic Assessment (past 3 years)
 - h. Program Enhancements
 - i. Comparison to Peer Programs (IR will provide data for this)
- IV. Students and Graduates
 - a. Enrollment and Student Demographics (IR will provide 10 years of enrollment and demographic data)
 - b. Degrees Conferred and Time to Degree (IR will provide 10 years of number of degrees and time to degree)
 - c. Annual Retention and Graduation Rates (IR will provide 10 years of data)
 - d. Graduate Placement (IR will provide Alumni Survey results)
- V. Faculty
 - a. Number of Faculty
 - b. Faculty Responsibilities
 - c. Faculty Qualifications
 - d. Teaching Loads (IR will provide 10 years of teaching load data)
 - e. Student to Faculty Ratio (IR will provide 10 years of ratio data)
 - f. Scholarly and Artistic Endeavors
 - g. Professional Growth and Development
 - h. Non-Teaching Activities
- VI. Resources and Administration
 - a. Program Facilities and Equipment
 - b. Program Finances and Resources (Budget and Finance can provide information)
 - c. Program Administration
 - d. Unit Staff
- VII. Conclusions and Recommendations for Improvement

Report Review Process

When the Coordinator completes the draft of the APR, it moves into the review process. The Department Chair, the Dean, and the Provost all review the APR and deliver feedback for the Coordinator to work into the report.

The type of information Coordinators can expect to receive from the Chair, Dean, and Provost include editorial remarks, factual corrections, and suggestions for making a stronger case for program effectiveness.

This process has very tight deadlines that should be adhered to in order to complete the report in a timely manner.

The Office of Institutional Effectiveness sends graduate APRs to an External Reviewer for their feedback. This is a requirement from THECB to provide outside support and critique to programs. The External Reviewer will return a detailed report to the Office of Institutional Effectiveness. *More information about the External Reviewer can be found on pages 13 and 14 of this handbook.*

The Coordinator must write a response to the External Reviewer's comments. This can be a short narrative, or it can be in the form of bullets responding to comments.

APR Submission Process

After all reviews are submitted and the Coordinator responds to any items, undergraduate APRs are complete. For graduate APRs, the Office of Institutional Effectiveness must submit three documents to the THECB Portal: the Self-Study, the External Reviewer's Report, and the Coordinator's Response. Copies of all these documents will be delivered to the Department Chair, Dean, and Provost. In addition, Institutional Effectiveness will share a summary of findings with the Executive Cabinet.

Review Cycle Ends

All Coordinators who complete the APR process within the timeframe presented will receive a stipend for their work, and the External Reviewer will also receive a stipend. Coordinators who do not finish within the assigned academic year will not receive a stipend.

Programs should carefully consider the information gleaned from the APR and use the findings to improve and modify practices and content. Findings on APRs can be incorporated into annual academic assessment plans.

All APRs will be uploaded to Watermark to store the data for the next APR cycle.

In addition to a tool for improvement for a program or department, the APR will be used in future SACSCOC reports to prove that a program is regularly and comprehensively evaluated.

Differences Between the Graduate and Undergraduate APRs

There are two major differences between the undergraduate and graduate APR:

1. Graduate APRs must be reviewed externally, while undergraduate reviews do not have this requirement from the THECB. The process to secure a reviewer is as follows:
 - a. The Academic Program Coordinator must identify a prospective External Reviewer.
 - b. If the Academic Program Coordinator needs assistance finding an External Reviewer, the Office of Institutional Effectiveness can assist.
 - c. The External Reviewer must be an academic who:
 - holds expertise in the same type of program, and
 - resides (or is affiliated with an institution) outside of the state of Texas.
 - d. The Academic Program Coordinator contacts the External Reviewer with an invitation to participate in the review process.
 - e. Upon acceptance, the Office of Institutional Effectiveness sends the Evaluation Agreement Letter to the External Reviewer.
 - f. The Academic Program Coordinator provides the External Reviewer with the APR by the date on the calendar in Appendix A of this document.
 - g. The External Reviewer receives an honorarium of \$1000 within 30 days upon APR feedback.
2. THECB Submission is required for Graduate APRs, but not for undergraduate.
 - a. [Chapter 2, Subchapter I, Section 2.181](#) of THECB rules provides criteria and procedures for the review of existing graduate programs.
 - b. THECB has an online system that records and tracks the graduate review schedule of each institution, allows institutions to submit review materials, and gives institutions feedback from Board staff. The Office of Institutional Effectiveness submits APRs to THECB. See the [THECB graduate program reviews site](#) for more information.

SRSU elects to perform Undergraduate APRs because all programs benefit from review and because SACSCOC requires regular programmatic review.

APPENDIX A: SRSU APR CALENDAR

The following calendar will be used for Graduate and Undergraduate APRs in 2026-27.

Phase	Due date	Activity
<i>Report Writing Process</i>	October 1	IE Office provides APR orientation and handbook for Coordinators.
	Fall-Spring	Coordinators begin collecting data and feedback from program faculty to write APR in Watermark.
	January 4-15	IR Office launches Alumni Survey.
	February 12	IE Office uploads all data tables and Alumni Survey results in Watermark for all Coordinators.
	March 5	Graduate Program Coordinators select External Reviewer and report to IE; IE contracts with Reviewer.
<i>Report Review Process</i>	March 31	APR rough draft is due. Coordinators submit APR draft in Watermark, and it is automatically routed to Department Chair for feedback via Watermark. Coordinators won't see the draft again until all internal reviews are complete.
	April 15	Department Chair feedback is due in Watermark. The draft is automatically routed to Dean for feedback.
	April 30	Dean feedback on the APR is due in Watermark. The draft is automatically routed to the Provost for feedback.
	May 14	Provost feedback is due in Watermark. The draft is automatically routed back to the Coordinator to respond to the feedback of the Chair, Dean, and Provost.
	May 31	Coordinators' response to feedback is due in Watermark. When Undergraduate Coordinators submit the APR to IE via Watermark, their reports are complete.
<i>Graduate Report External Review and Submission Process</i>	June 16	IE provides Graduate APR to the External Reviewer for feedback.
	July 1	IE receives feedback from External Reviewer and sends to Graduate Program Coordinators via Watermark to write a response in Watermark.
	July 15	Graduate Program Coordinators deliver completed APR documents to IE in Watermark: 1. Self-study 2. External Reviewer's report 3. Response to External Reviewer's comments
	August 2	IE submits Graduate Program APR to THECB. IE submits stipend requests for all Coordinators who completed APRs.
<i>Review Cycle Ends</i>	August 31	Each Coordinator (1 per program) receives a \$1,000 stipend in SRSU paycheck for a complete report. Each External Reviewer (1 per program) receives a \$1,000 stipend upon completion.
	September 7	IE presents summary of findings to the Executive Cabinet.

APPENDIX B: THECB APR 10-Year Cycle

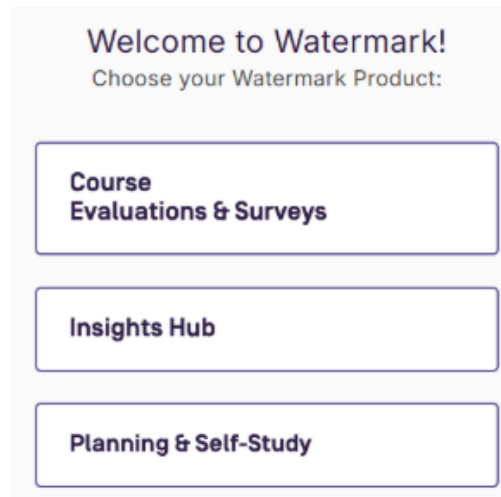
Review Year	College	Program CIP	Graduate Program Name	Undergraduate Program Name	Doctoral Program Name
26-27	CLASS	16090500		Spanish	
	CLASS	23130400		Communication	
	ED	13010100	Education, General		
	ED	13040100	Educational Leadership		
	ALPS	52021300		Organizational Leadership	
27-28	ED	13050100	Educational Instructional Technology		
	HEALTH	31050500	Health & Human Performance	Kinesiology & Human Performance	
	ALPS	11010100		Computer Science	
	CLASS	45100100		Political Science	
28-29	CLASS	42010100		Psychology	
	CLASS	43030100	Homeland Security	Homeland Security	
	CLASS	50070100	Art	Art	
29-30	CLASS	23010100	English	English	
	ALPS	26010100	Biology	Biology	
	ALPS	40060100	Geology	Geology	
30-31	ALPS	3060100	Range & Wildlife Management		
	ALPS	3060100	Natural Resource Conservation		
	ALPS	3020100		Natural Resource Management	
	CLASS	24010200		Interdisciplinary Studies	
31-32	CLASS	44040100	Public Administration		
	CLASS	45100100	Political Science		
	CLASS	54010100	History	History	
	HEALTH	51380100		Nursing	
	HEALTH	31050400	Sports Administration		
	ALPS	1000000		Agriculture	
32-33	CLASS	24010100	Interdisciplinary Studies		
	RGCOB	52020100	Business Administration	Business Administration	
	CLASS	24010100		Theatre	
	CLASS	45010100		Social Science	
	ALPS	1010200		Agriculture & Industry	
33-34	ALPS	1090100	Animal Science	Animal Science	
	ED	13120600		Education	

34-35	ED	13100101	Educational Diagnostician		
	CLASS	43010400	Criminal Justice	Criminal Justice	
	ALPS	27010100		Mathematics	
	ED	43040600	Forensic Science		
	CLASS	45020100	Anthropology		
35-36	RGCOB	52021500	Cybersecurity & Risk Assurance		
	RGCOB	52130100	Management		
	ED	13110100	Counselor Education		
	ALPS	40050100		Chemistry	
	CLASS	50090100		Music	
	ALPS	15061200		Industrial Technology	
36-37	HEALTH	51380100	Nursing		
	HEALTH	51220100	Public Health Sciences		
	CLASS	45020100		Anthropology	
	RGCOB	52020100	Executive MBA (EMBA)		
	RGCOB	52020100	Finance		
	RGCOB	52020100	International Business		
	RGCOB	52020100	Space Commerce		
	RGCOB	45060200	Applied Economics		
	ALPS	03010400	Environmental Sciences		
	ED	13040100			Educational Leadership

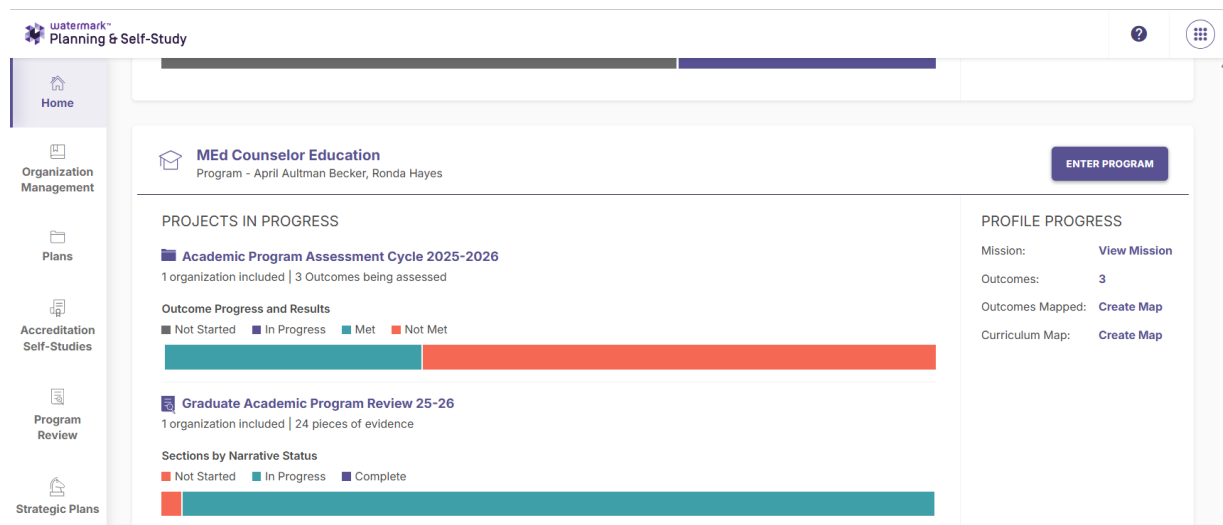
APPENDIX C: USING WATERMARK TO COMPLETE THE APR

Log in with Single Sign-On (SSO) at <https://srinfo.sulross.edu/ie/academic-assessment/>.

Select the **Planning & Self-Study** option:



Select the **Graduate or Undergraduate Program Review** project to enter the APR:



The panel on the left-hand side shows all categories and sections included in the template. You can navigate between an overview of the entire template or specific sections to view progress made on each area.

“Progress by Section” gives a glimpse of the status of all the sections of the APR. It also displays the date and name of the Program Coordinator who made the latest changes to a narrative.

To get started writing or uploading evidence, click on any of the sections.

Welcome to your program review!
This is where you will manage and contribute to your institution's program review. Use the panel on the left to navigate the program review report, drill down to see specific details, and write the narratives.

Details

Last Updated: 07/05/2026 by Ronda Hayes

MEd Counselor Education Leads: April Aultman Becker, Ronda Hayes

Progress By Section
Track the progress of each section.

Filter by: All Sections

SECTIONS	STATUS	NARRATIVE LAST UPDATED
Cover Page	DRAFTING	03/14/2026 by Ronda Hayes
Table of Contents	DRAFTING	03/14/2026 by Ronda Hayes
Introduction	DRAFTING	03/14/2026 by Ronda Hayes

Begin by clicking the **Write Narrative** button on the upper right side of the page. Formatting and structure is simple is typing and working within Watermark, rather than copying and pasting from Word.

Program Mission Statement/Statement of Purpose
• Consider the Statement of Purpose (SOP) from the Annual Academic Assessment Reports...
[...Read More](#)

Details

Narrative last updated: 07/03/2026 by Ronda Hayes

MEd Counselor Education Leads: April Aultman Becker, Ronda Hayes

Evidence: 0 Documents

WRITE NARRATIVE

The Write Narrative screen is similar to a Word document (or rich text editor). Be sure to **Save** work before leaving the screen

Program Mission Statement/Statement of Purpose **SAVE** **SAVE AND EXIT**

Prompts

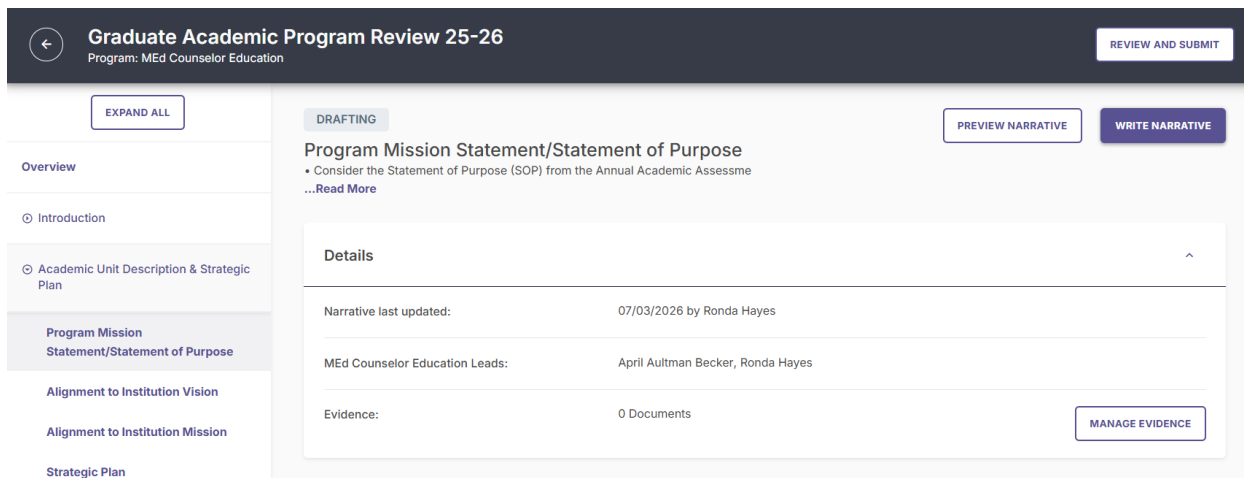
Program Mission Statement/Statement of Purpose

- Consider the Statement of Purpose (SOP) from the Annual Academic Assessment Reports...does it adequately describe the purpose of your program? Or does it include course sequences, requirements for graduation, or other extraneous information? If not consider revising your SOP.

Notice the icons on the right side of the screen:

	The information icon means a prompt is loaded to respond to.
	The paperclip icon means an attachment – upload documents or evidence to support the draft, if needed.
	The refresh icon – to see the narrative status helping to track the progress of the narrative over time.
	The clipboard icon means feedback –find chair, dean, and provost feedback here after the review process.

Upon completion of the entire report, click **Review and Submit** in the top-right.



IE will get a notification that the report has been submitted, and Watermark will automatically move the APR through all reviewers (Department Chair, Dean, and Provost). The Coordinator will not see the report again until all reviews are completed.

When reviews are completed, the Coordinator will respond to the review in Watermark and submit the response.

APPENDIX D: External Evaluation Agreement Letter

(only for Graduate APR; sent from the Institutional Effectiveness Office)

[date]

Dear [External Reviewer]:

Thank you for agreeing to evaluate our [Program Name]. In addition to fulfilling accreditation requirements and mandates from the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB), we do recognize that your evaluation of our program is valuable to our faculty in improving our degree. This is an opportunity for us to put into perspective the strengths and weaknesses of our graduate program.

Upon completion we are able to offer you compensation for your evaluation of our program:
Stipend: \$1,000.00

The evaluation will be done remotely. All materials will be delivered electronically. Your contact person is:

April Aultman Becker
Associate Vice President for Institutional Effectiveness
april.becker@sulross.edu
P.O. Box 77, Alpine, TX 79832
432-837-8121

In addition, it is expressly understood that you will serve as an independent contractor and not as a representative or agent of Sul Ross State University. If you agree to these terms, please sign in the appropriate area below and return the signed letter to the address or email above.

Again, thank you for your willingness to provide this service to Sul Ross State University.

Sincerely,

April Aultman Becker
Associate Vice President for Institutional Effectiveness
april.becker@sulross.edu
P.O. Box 77, Alpine, TX 79832

CC: [Program Coordinator]

Acceptance of Terms of Appointment

I accept the terms of appointment as the evaluator of graduate program in [program name] at Sul Ross State University as described above.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

APPENDIX E: External Review Form

(only for Graduate APR; Institutional Effectiveness Office will send to External Reviewer)

Graduate Program External Review Form

Institution: _____

Department: _____

Academic Program: _____

External Reviewer Name: _____

External Reviewer Title: _____

External Reviewer Institutional Affiliation: _____

Directions:

Please write a summary of each section of the report and rate each section as excellent, very good, appropriate, needs improvement, or NA. In your summary, please expound on any items identified as excellent or needing improvement. Provide recommendations for improvement at the end of each section.

Sections:

1. Academic Unit Description and Strategic Plan
2. Program Curriculum
3. Faculty Productivity
4. Students and Graduates
5. Resources and Administration
6. Report Conclusions and Recommendations

Please include at the end:

7. External Reviewer's Conclusion and Recommendations
8. External Reviewer's Curriculum Vitae