AREA OF STUDY REVIEW (AOSR) 2013-14

Purpose

The Area of Study Review (**AOSR**) is an assessment of the degree portfolios of graduates in relation to relevant academic policies. Faculty members review degree portfolio documents for recent baccalaureate graduates in each AOS. The college has conducted the AOSR on a regular basis since the 1980's.

Empire State College students create individualized degree programs. The purpose of the AOS Review is to assess the quality and integrity of Empire State College's individualized academic degrees in relation to college policies regarding degree program design, degree program rationales, prior learning assessment, learning contracts, etc. The review also provides some direct, but limited, evidence of student achievement. The reviews are staggered so that student degree portfolios for each AOS are assessed every six years, on the same schedule as the AITM reviews. The focus is at the AOS (program) level.

Revised Rating Form

In 2013-14, we are piloting a revised AOSR rating instrument that reflects current academic policies. In most cases, the revised instrument references, and draws items directly from, the relevant policy document(s). The most significant changes relate to the college's decision in 2011 to discontinue narrative contract evaluations. The section on contract evaluations has been deleted, along with other items that cannot be addressed in the absence of contract evaluations. Questions about liberal arts and sciences credit for the degree designation and compliance with general education requirements have also been deleted, as these are fully documented as a matter of program approval. The revised instrument also includes new open-ended questions designed to invite reflection and collegial conversation regarding issues, themes, strengths and concerns, with a view to identifying potential program improvements.

Revised Procedures

Documentation. In recent years, portfolios have been available for review electronically. The electronic portfolios have included numerous documents that are not needed for the review. In 2013-14, we are piloting a streamlined procedure for collecting, redacting and reviewing portfolio documents. In a test case, applying the revised procedure reduced the electronic review portfolio from 61 to 14 pages. The revised procedure:

1. Excludes documents housed in Nolij that are not relevant to the AOSR rating instrument.
2. Excludes contract evaluations, which are no longer used to document ESC student learning and are not included in the revised AOSR rating instrument for 2013-14.
3. Includes only one learning contract (or equivalent CDL course information documents), consistent with instructions in the instrument in past reviews.
4. Includes only one PLA report, as specified in the rating form, consistent with instructions in the past.
5. Significantly reduces CPIE staff time spent compiling and redacting documents that are not relevant to the AOSR rating instrument.
6. Reduces faculty reviewer time spent sorting through documents that are not relevant to the AOSR rating instrument.

Cluster Sampling Pilot. With the endorsement of CHS, HIS and SOC, which will conduct AOS reviews this year, we are piloting a new "cluster sampling" model. The model provides for teams of AOS faculty to review clusters of degree program portfolios in successive stages, until themes for further consideration and continuous improvement are identified. The new methodology is intended to make reviews more interactive and meaningful for participating faculty, while also ensuring reliable reviews that provide a sound basis for improving academic programs.

AOSR RATING FORM 2013-14

Reviewer _____

Sample # _____

Area of Study _____

Degree Program Rationale

A. Quality of the Degree Program Rationale

Items are drawn nearly verbatim from the current Degree Program Rationale Policy (2006)

For each item below, please circle the number for the response that best fits your judgment. Please indicate the extent to which the student's degree program rationale meets the following expectations:

	Not at All	Not Very Well	Fairly Well	Very Well	Extremely Well	
1. Outlines her/his own educational and professional experience, goals and learning needs	1	2	3	4	5	
2. Discusses how the proposed degree reflects her/his own background and purposes	1	2	3	4	5	
3. Discusses how the degree plan reflects the relevant educational expectations of the college (i.e., SUNY general education requirements, level and breadth of learning, and integration and progression of learning)	1	2	3	4	5	
4. Discusses how the student's learning reflects, or may depart from, the ESC area of study and concentration guidelines that apply to the degree	1	2	3	4	5	
5. Reflects the student's awareness of external professional expectations, where applicable	1	2	3	4	5	NA
6. Meets college-level writing expectations in terms of substance (e.g., well developed, well organized and analytical)	1	2	3	4	5	
7. Meets college-level writing expectations in terms of presentation (e.g. punctuation, grammar, word usage)	1	2	3	4	5	
8. Meets college-level writing expectations in terms of academic integrity	1	2	3	4	5	
9. Is individualized: reflects the student's own choices from among a number of possible studies	1	2	3	4	5	
10. Is generally consistent with the degree program itself	1	2	3	4	5	

11. What significant strengths do you see in this degree program rationale?

12. What significant concerns do you have about this degree program rationale?

B. Student Goals

For each item below, please circle the number for the response that best fits your judgment. These questions are intended to collect descriptive information. They are not intended to evaluate the appropriateness or value of the student's goals.

Did the student explicitly state any of the following goals in the degree program rationale? (If the student did not clearly express a particular goal, circle "no.")

		NO	YES
1.	Prepare for or advance in a career	1	2
2.	Prepare for graduate study	1	2
3.	Enhance academic skills (e.g., self-evaluation, self-directed learning, writing, quantitative, analytical skills)	1	2
4.	Create positive change in the world	1	2
5.	Become broadly educated	1	2
6.	Enhance personal development	1	2
7.	Gain a sense of personal satisfaction	1	2
8.	Apply learning to practical situations	1	2
9.	Serve as a positive role model for others (co-workers, children, etc.)	1	2
10.	Simply complete an undergraduate degree	1	2

Please check here if the rationale did not clearly state any goals at all _____

Concentration and Area of Study

For each item below, please circle the number for the response that best fits your judgment. Items are drawn from the current Individualized Program Design: Bachelor's Degrees Policy (1978; revised 2005).

Please indicate how well the program meets the following expectations:

	Not at All	Not Very Well	Fairly Well	Very Well	Extremely Well	
1. The concentration is integrated and coherent.	1	2	3	4	5	
2. The concentration reflects a progression of study from the introductory to the advanced level.	1	2	3	4	5	
3. Topics in the concentration are sufficiently current.	1	2	3	4	5	
4. The concentration is consistent with the relevant concentration guidelines.	1	2	3	4	5	NA
5. The concentration encompasses study of key theoretical concepts in the field.	1	2	3	4	5	
6. The concentration encompasses study of major methods of inquiry or practice in the field.	1	2	3	4	5	
7. The concentration encompasses learning about basic facts and specific knowledge in the field.	1	2	3	4	5	
8. The concentration has adequate breadth (i.e., is sufficiently comprehensive, provides adequate coverage of the student's field).	1	2	3	4	5	

	NO	YES
9. Does the degree program fit within the Registered Area of Study (AOS)?	1	2

    9a. **If NO,** what would be a more appropriate AOS?

	NO	YES
10. Does the concentration title fit the substance of the degree?	1	2

    10a. **If NO,** what would be a more appropriate title?

11. What significant strengths do you see in the student's program design, in relation to the concentration and AOS?

12. What significant concerns do you have about the student's program design, in relation to the concentration and AOS?

College Learning Goals

For each of the following questions, please circle the number for the response that best fits your judgment.

In 2011, the college adopted College Leaning Goals which define expected competencies of graduates, appropriate to their degree levels. Based on your reading of this student's portfolio, please estimate the <u>likelihood that the student's program supported achievement of these goals</u> (items are drawn verbatim from the policy):

	Very Unlikely	Somewhat Unlikely	Neutral/ Don't Know	Somewhat Likely	Very Likely
1. Active Learning -- Assess and build upon previous learning and experiences to pursue new learning, independently and in collaboration with others	1	2	3	4	5
2. Breadth and Depth of Knowledge – Cultivate a broad, interdisciplinary understanding in the liberal arts and sciences, as well as expertise in a particular field	1	2	3	4	5
3. Social Responsibility – Engage in ethical reasoning, and reflect on issues such as democratic citizenship, diversity, social justice and environmental sustainability, both locally and globally	1	2	3	4	5
4. Communication – Express and receive ideas effectively, in multiple contexts and through multiple strategies	1	2	3	4	5
5. Critical Thinking and Problem Solving – Evaluate, analyze, synthesize and critique key concepts and experiences, and apply diverse perspective to find creative solutions to problems concerning human behavior, society and the natural world	1	2	3	4	5
6. Quantitative Literacy – Read, interpret, use and present quantitative information effectively	1	2	3	4	5
7. Information and Digital Media Literacy – Critically assess, evaluate, understand, create and share information using a range of collaborative technologies to advance learning, as well as personal and professional development. in the field of concentration	1	2	3	4	5

8. What significant strengths do you see in the student's program design, in relation to college learning goals?

9. What significant concerns do you have about the student's program design, in relation to college learning goals?

Advanced Standing Credit

A. Individualized Prior Learning Assessment (PLA)

Items are drawn nearly verbatim from the current <u>Individualized Prior Learning Assessment Policy and Procedures</u> (2007)

For each of the following questions, please circle the response that best fits your judgment. The PLA report included in the review portfolio (if any) is for the most recently completed PLA component in the student's concentration, or (if there is no PLA in the concentration) the most recently completed PLA component in general learning..

Please indicate the extent to which the PLA report meets the following expectations:

If there is no PLA report in this portfolio, please check here _____and go to part B.

	Not at All	Not Very Well	Fairly Well	Very Well	Extremely Well	
1. Clearly specifies the methods of evaluation	1	2	3	4	5	
2. Describes the nature of the student's <u>college-level learning</u> (not just the student's experience)	1	2	3	4	5	
3. Provides justification for the level of credit recommended (introductory/advanced)	1	2	3	4	5	
4. Provides sufficient justification if liberal arts and sciences credit is recommended	1	2	3	4	5	NA
5. Recommends title(s) that match the content	1	2	3	4	5	
6. Explains how the component meets SUNY general education requirement(s), if applicable	1	2	3	4	5	NA
7. Serves as a good model for student work, in terms of substance and presentation	1	2	3	4	5	

	No	Yes	
8. Does the report appear to recommend too much credit in relation to the student's learning?	1	2	NA
9. Does the report appear to recommend too little credit?	1	2	NA

B. Other Advanced Standing Credit

	No	Yes	
10. Are there any problems in this student's advanced standing not covered by the the questions in the preceding section (i.e., credit other than individual PLA)?	1	2	NA

10a. **If YES**, please describe your concerns:

C. Credit Duplication

	No	Yes
11. Do instances of credit duplication appear in the degree program?	1	2

11a. IF YES, please identify components where duplication occurs:

Learning Contract (or Course Information Documents)

Items are drawn nearly verbatim from the current Learning Contract Study and Undergraduate Students Policy (2011)

For each of the following questions, please circle the number for the response that best fits your judgment. The learning contract (or equivalent) included in the review portfolio is for the most recently completed advanced level study in the student's concentration.

Please indicate how well the learning contract meets the following criteria:

	Not At All	Not Very Well	Fairly Well	Very Well	Extremely Well	.
1. The purpose of the study is clear.	1	2	3	4	5	
2. Learning outcomes are defined explicitly.	1	2	3	4	5	
3. Learning activities are described clearly.	1	2	3	4	5	
4. Learning outcomes, learning activities and methods and criteria for evaluation are interrelated.	1	2	3	4	5	
5. Methods of evaluation are described clearly.	1	2	3	4	5	
6. Criteria for evaluation are described clearly.	1	2	3	4	5	
7. A plan for formative feedback is included.	1	2	3	4	5	
8. The level of credit intended for the study (introductory or advanced) is clear.	1	2	3	4	5	
9. The level of credit intended for the study (introductory or advanced) is appropriate to the learning activities and evaluation criteria.	1	2	3	4	5	
10. The amount of credit for the study is appropriate to the learning activities.	1	2	3	4	5	
11. General education learning outcomes are identified clearly, if applicable.	1	2	3	4	5	NA
12. The learning contract includes learning resources and activities that are designed to lead to the relevant general education learning outcomes, if applicable.	1	2	3	4	5	NA
13. The learning contract (or course information documents) serves as a good model for student work, in terms of substance and presentation.	1	2	3	4	5	

14. What significant strengths do you see in this learning contract?

15. What significant concerns do you have about this learning contract?

Overview

1. How would you characterize the overall level of academic rigor in this degree?

Very Low	Low	Moderate	High	Very High
1	2	3	4	5

	Yes	No
2. Do you consider this to be a model program?	1	2

2a. **If yes,** please indicate in what ways the program is exemplary:

Themes for Faculty Discussion

Please identify important themes, topics, strengths or concerns you would like to discuss with colleagues, in relation to this degree portfolio:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.