APR User Guide

Completing the Chairs' & Directors' Review Phase

Academic Program Review

Western Michigan University
Office of
Institutional Effectiveness

Academic Program Review

The main purpose for conducting Academic Program Review is to satisfy HLC Core Component 4.A.1, which states: "The institution maintains a practice of regular program reviews and acts upon the findings." APR is intended to promote continuous quality improvement of academic programs through a process of self-study and review. Results are meant to provide direction for the program's strategic planning efforts. The goal of this user guide is to provide participants with a step-by-step walkthrough of the technical aspects of the **Academic Program Review Chairs' & Directors' Review** phase.

Determining What and How Programs will be Reviewed

Beginning with spring 2021, Academic Program Review works on a five-year rotation cycle where approximately 20 percent of active degree-granting and graduate certificate-granting programs are reviewed each year over a five-year period. To reduce potential redundant responses between programs that are similar or share resources, departments and colleges may choose to "cluster" similar programs into one template. That way, information that is common to all programs within the cluster can be provided once while information specific to individual programs can be highlighted within a single question. Each fall semester, deans work with their chairs and directors to ensure the list of programs slated for the upcoming spring APR administration is current and "clustered" appropriately.

General Guidelines for Reviewing APR Self-Study Reporting Templates

The Chairs' & Directors' Review phase is significantly different from the Self-Study Completion phase. During the self-study phase, department chairs and school directors may have contributed to, or in some cases been solely responsible for, responding to self-study questions. During the Chairs' & Directors' Review phase, however, chairs and directors will be asked to reflect and comment on the information provided in the self-study responses from the larger, department/school perspective.

Specifically, chairs and directors choose an "observation" regarding whether the provided information meets or exceeds the department's/school's expectations of a quality program, or if the program needs development in the specific area. As the college dean and the provost will be next to review the self-study report, and may not know what expectations the department may have regarding the program, chairs/directors are asked to provide comments as to why they chose the specific "observation." This is especially true if the observation is "exceeds expectations" or "needs development."

Please note that this review is not meant to critique the quality of individual responses (e.g., "used the proper wording," "cited the correct documents," etc.), but rather for helping the program to plan improvements strategically.

Chairs/directors may also add comments to clarify or disagree with the program's response. For example, when asked to comment on a data source, the self-study completer restated the actual data instead of providing an analysis of what the data means in context to the program. The chair/director may choose to provide the requested analysis as part of the Chair's Comment.

For questions or concerns about this guide or the APR process, please contact:

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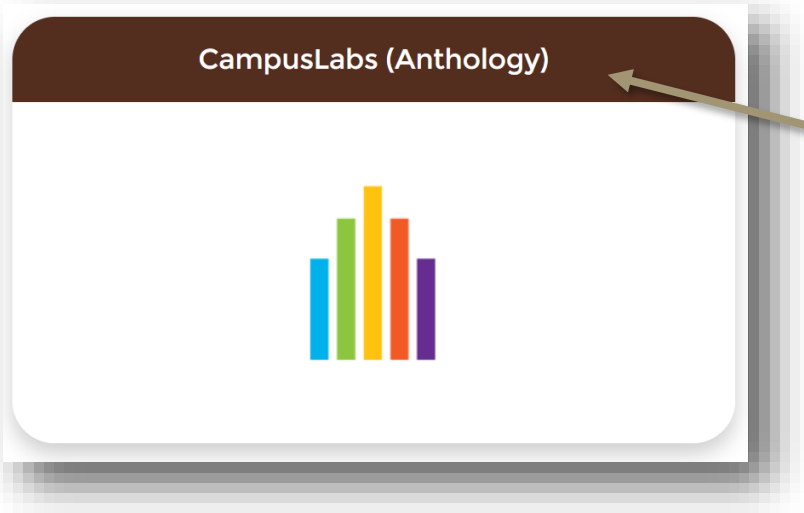
Accessing and Using Program Review

The APR self-study reporting template is completed online using Anthology's Program Review platform. Following is a step-by-step, pictorial guide to accessing and using Program Review. Since this is a web-based application, you will not need any special software and may access it from any computer with an internet connection.

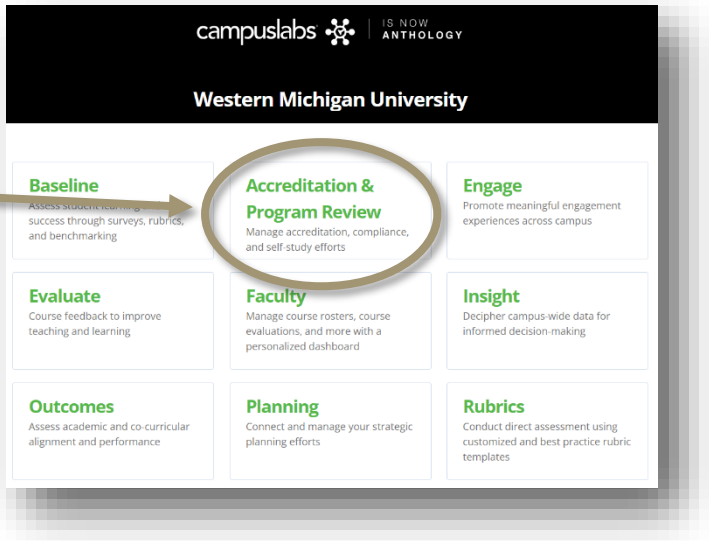
Locate and Open Program Review

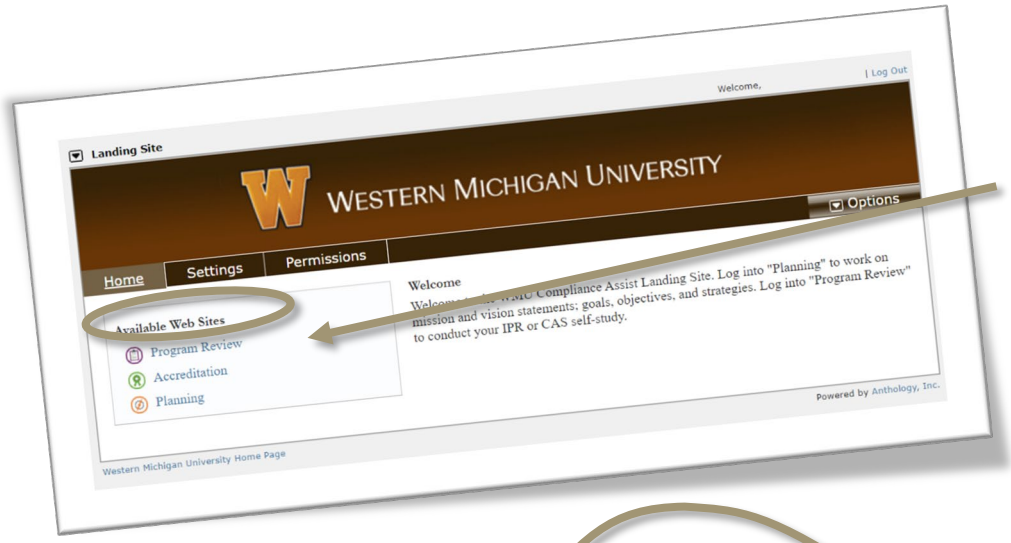
Open a browser and login to GoWMU with your Bronco NetID and password. Go to the "Apps" menu, and locate the "For Everyone" section.



Click on "CampusLabs (Anthology)" to launch the WMU's platform

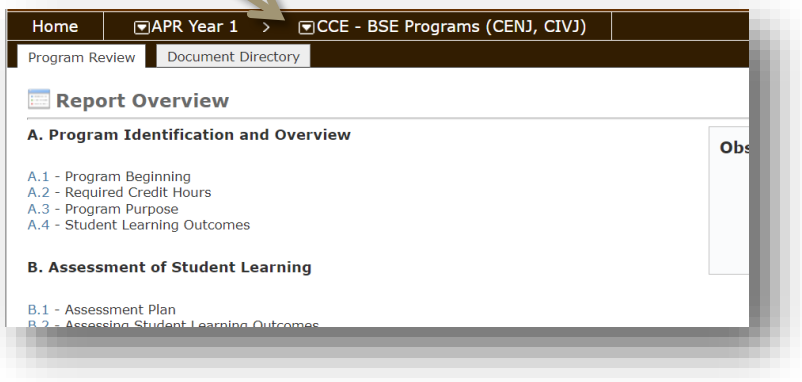
Click on "Accreditation and Program Review" to launch – *Note: This will redirect you to the Accreditation and Program Review landing site*





On the landing site, click "Program Review" to launch the template selector page

Note: Your "Available Web Sites" may look different based on your level of access



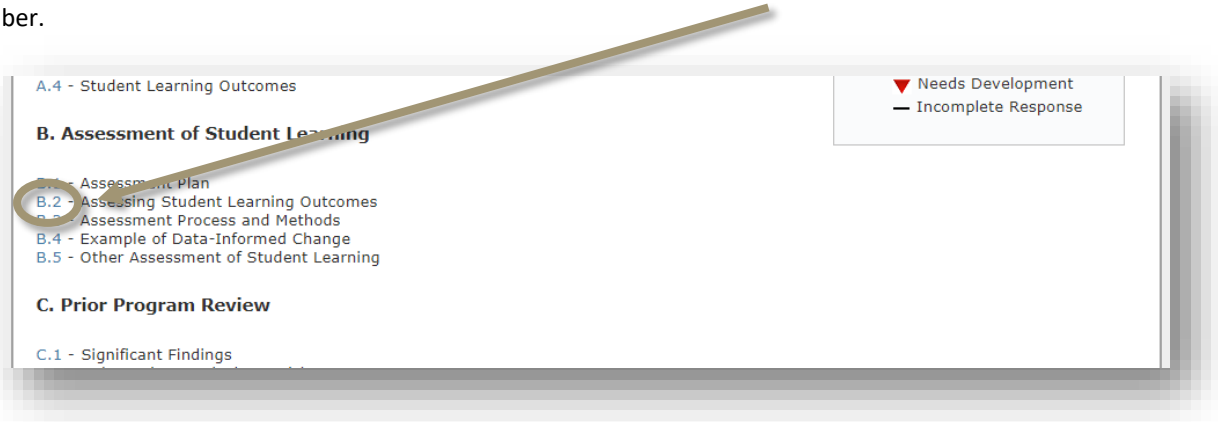
The dark bar on the Template Selector page shows what template you are using. A boxed arrow in front of the template name shows that you have access to multiple templates. Drop down the list and click on a new template name to select that program/program cluster.

Each program template has a series of two tabs:

- **Program Review** – this tab is the template you will need to review each program/program cluster
- **Document Directory** – this is a warehouse for PDF copies of documents programs may have referenced. *There is no need to access this tab during the Chairs' & Directors' Review phase.*

Completing the Review

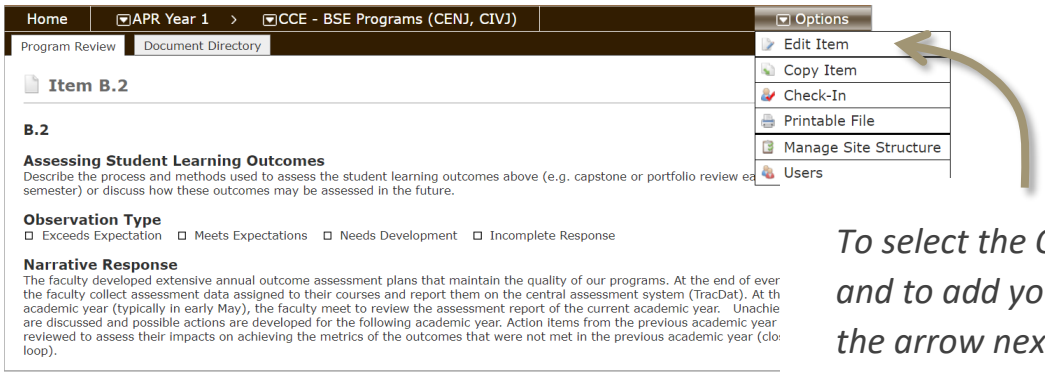
Questions are listed by number under their respective categories. To open and respond to a question, click on its related number.



This view shows the question number and title, the question to be answered, instructions for providing the self-study response, an observation type (to be completed by the chair or director), and the program's/program cluster's response.

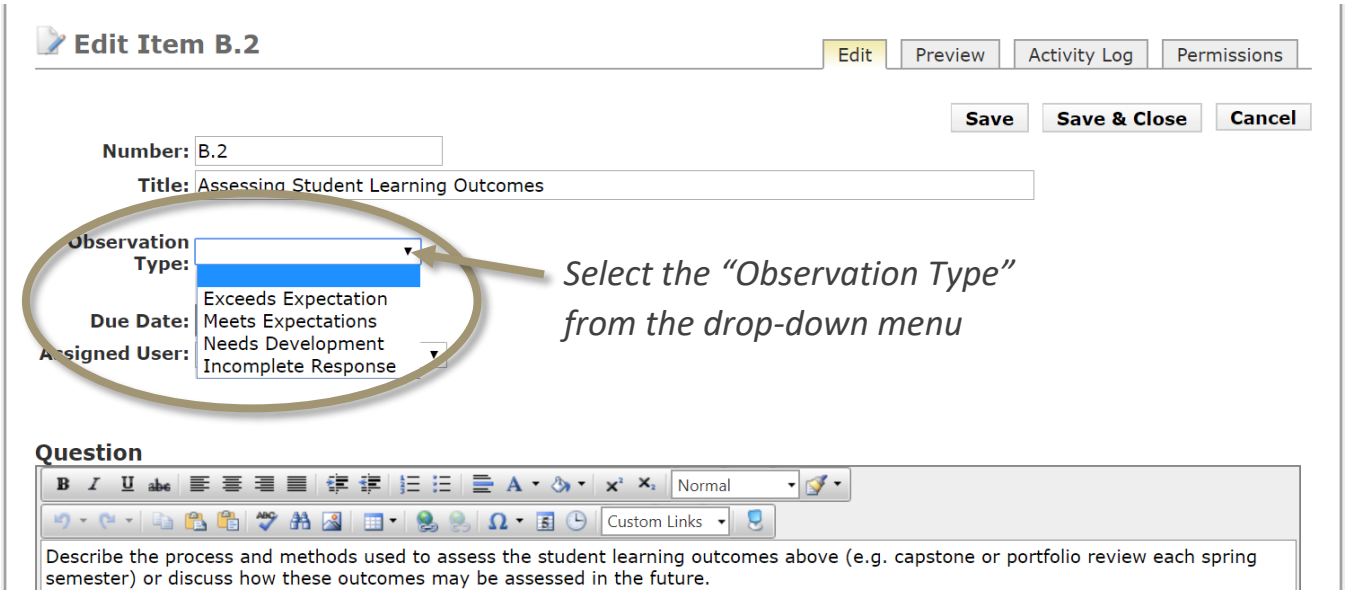
To complete the review, chairs and directors should:

1. read the question and the program's "Narrative Response,"
2. decide on an "Observation Type,"
3. follow the next steps to enter the "Observation Type" and a rationale for choosing it.

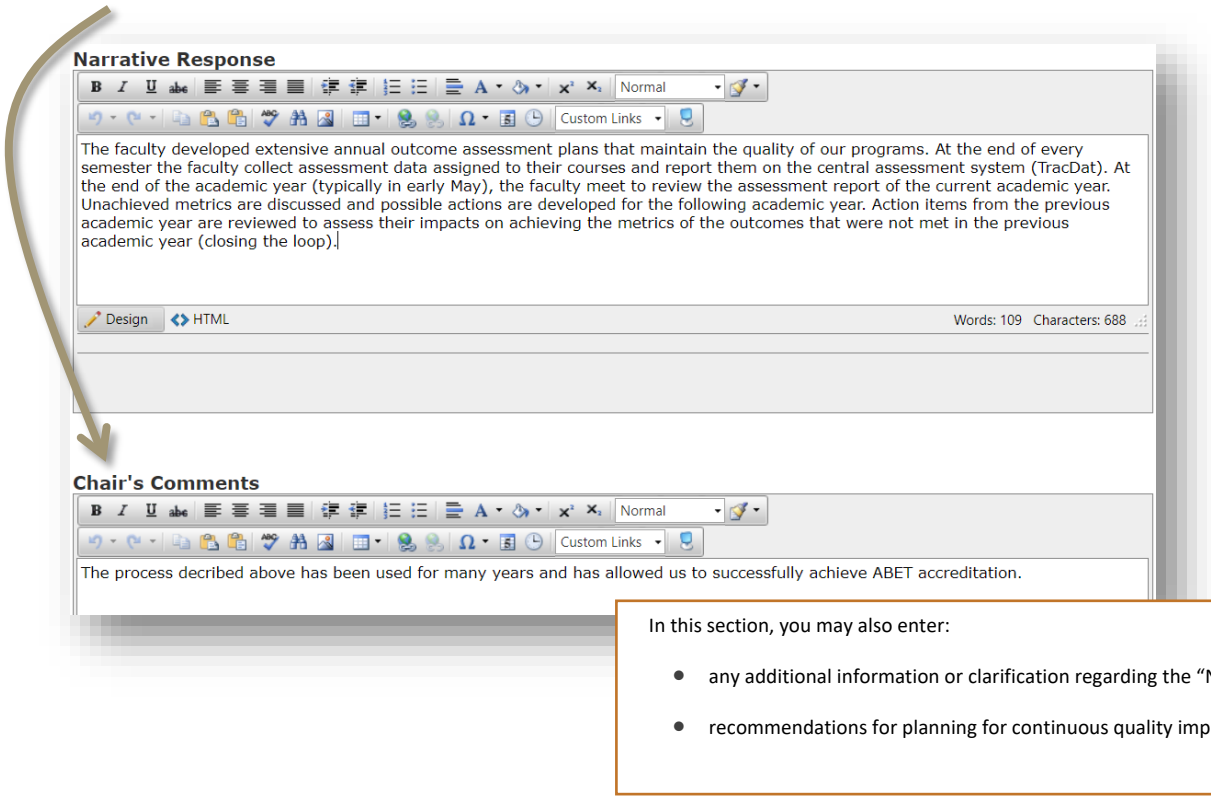


To select the Observation Type and to add your comments, click the arrow next to "Options," and select "Edit Item"

NOTE: When an item is opened in edit mode, it becomes "checked-out" of the system, and will need to be "checked-in" when completed.



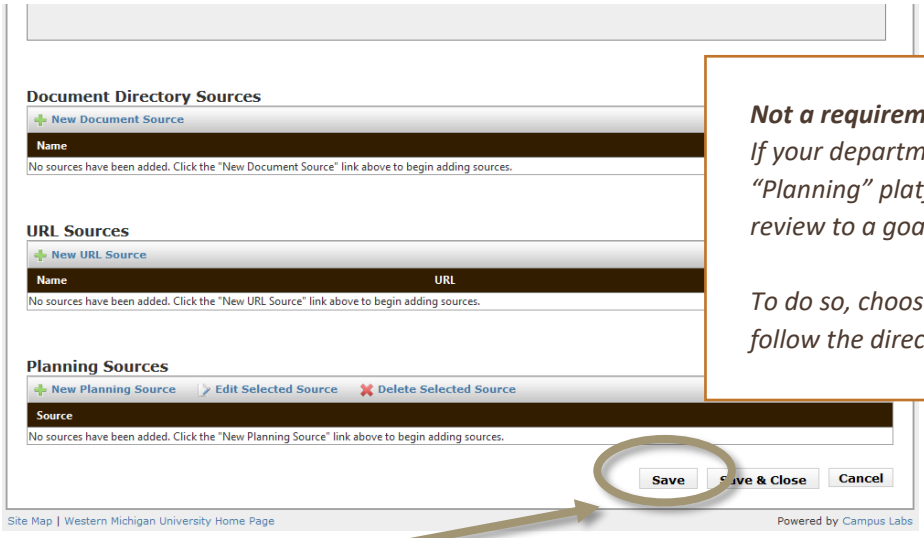
Scroll down the page to the “Chair’s Comments” section, and enter your rationale for choosing this “Observation Type.”



In this section, you may also enter:

- any additional information or clarification regarding the “Narrative Response”
- recommendations for planning for continuous quality improvement

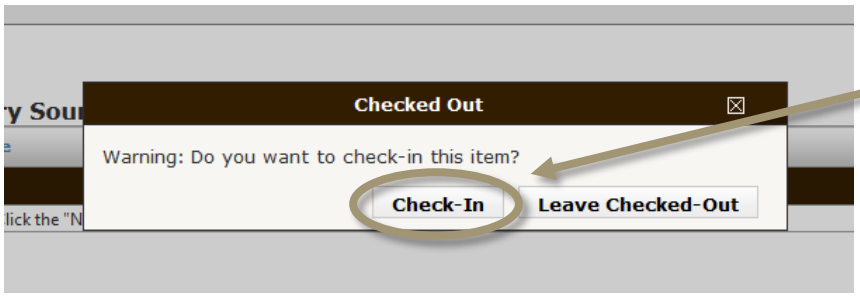
Scroll to the bottom of the page to add your source information, if applicable.



Not a requirement:
If your department lists a plan in Anthology’s “Planning” platform, you may connect this review to a goal or objective of that plan.

To do so, choose “New Planning Source” and follow the directions.

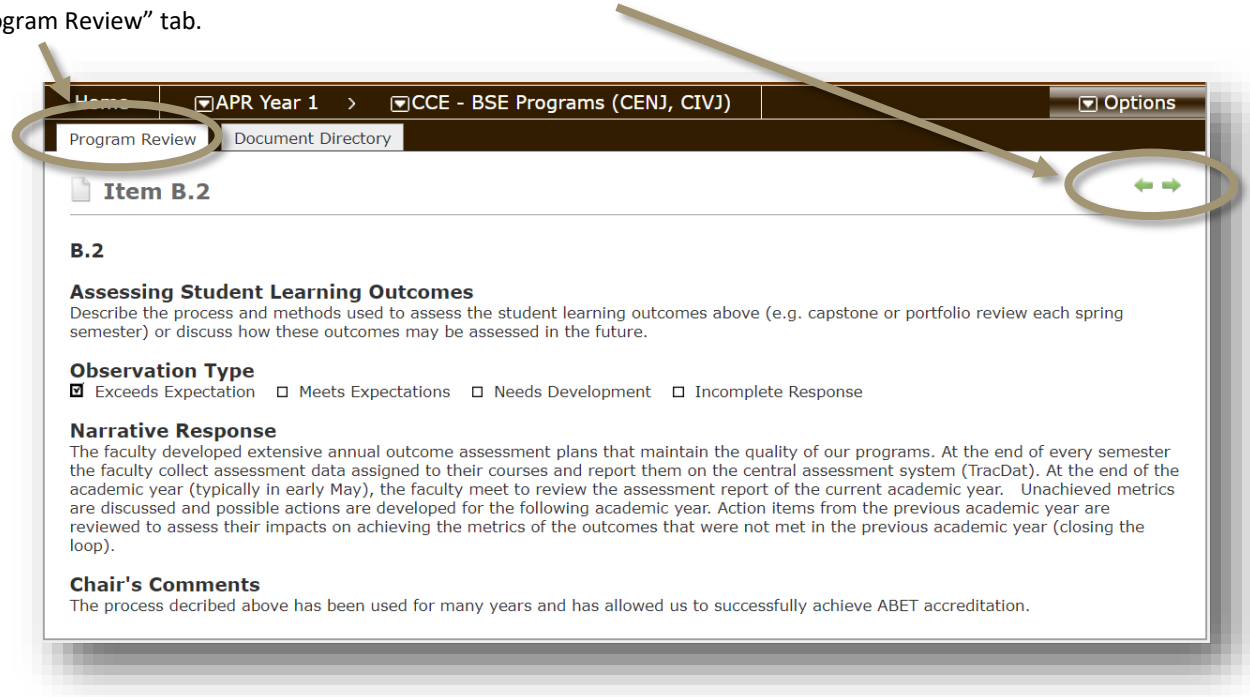
Click “Save & Close” to return to view the completed response. This will generate a warning window.



Click "Check-In" to register the response – you may always return, later, to make additions or corrections

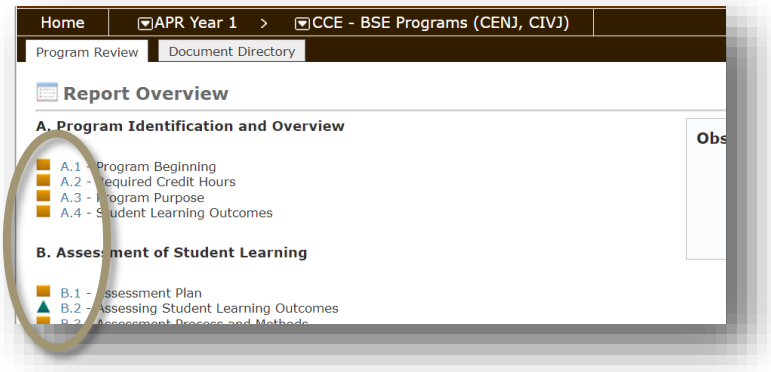
A word of caution: Responses that are left "checked-out" do not register, and will not become part of the report.

To access the next or previous question, click the appropriate green arrow. To return to the main menu of questions, click on the "Program Review" tab.



Completing the Chairs' & Directors' Review

There is no "submit" button in the Program Review platform. The reviewed self-study report is complete once observations have been made for all answered questions, and will be made available, automatically, for the Dean's Review phase.



You can double-check your progress by clicking on "Program Review" to return to the Report Overview. Reviewed items will have a colored shape representing an observation preceding the question's hyperlink.