Expedited Program Viability Review: Programs No Longer Feasible Due to Archiving of Required Course(s)

Program Viability Review is a process through which East Los Angeles College (ELAC), in consultation with its Academic Senate, conducts an “in-depth analysis, beyond that provided through program review” of an “educational program,” as defined in Title 5, section 55000(g). Board Rule 6803, this standard for Program Viability Review ensures that the College’s instructional resources are used in response to the College Mission, the goals and objectives outlined in its Strategic Master Plan, the needs of the students and of the community it serves. The Program Viability Review considers the program’s link to the college “Mission”, a clear “need” for the program, “quality” of the program, the “feasibility” of offering the program, and “compliance” of the program with all related legal and governing obligations. Program termination or discontinuance shall be considered if a program fails to meet the requirements of Education Code section 78016, and Board Rules 6801 and 6802.

In instances when a degree or certificate program is no longer feasible because a course required for that program is archived, the program will undergo an Expedited Program Viability Review to determine what actions should be taken, such as program maintenance, modification, improvement, or discontinuance. The procedures for Expedited Program Viability Review ensure it satisfies the standard for Program Review Viability.

Procedure for Initiation of an Expedited Program Viability Review

Expedited Program Viability Review can only be initiated by the College President, a College Vice President, or the Academic Senate President on behalf of the Academic Senate. A formal request is written and brought to the Program Review and Viability Committee (PRVC) for approval and initiation of a viability study.

When a program’s feasibility is directly impacted by the archival of required courses, the lack/loss of program feasibility will be the determining factor on whether the Program Review Viability Committee (PRVC) decides that the request for an Expedited Program Viability Review should be approved. In this instance, if the required courses will no longer be offered, program discontinuance will be the default outcome.

If at any time during the Expedited Program Viability Review the department/program heads take sufficient corrective actions, the Viability Review Committee will terminate the Expedited Program Viability Review Process. After cessation of the Expedited Program Viability Review, it is still possible for the standard Program Viability Review to be conducted, if requested and approved under the college policy for such review.
Procedure for Establishing the Viability Review Committee

Approval to conduct an Expedited Program Viability Review is granted by the PRVC and it is carried out by the Viability Review Committee (VRC). The Office of Institutional Effectiveness facilitates appointment of VRC members. VRC composition shall include:

A. The Program’s Supervising Vice President  
B. 2 Deans  
C. 3 Academic Senate Representatives (at least 1 Chair from similar type of department – Workforce Education and Economic Development or Liberal Arts and Sciences)  
D. The Curriculum Chair  
E. 1 AFT Representative  
F. 1 Classified Representative (if the department employs classified Instructional Assistants or Laboratory Technicians)  
G. 1 Office of Institutional Effectiveness Facilitator  
H. At most two “outside experts” from other institutions when either program initiation or program discontinuance is being considered/when appropriate

Although the VRC will solicit information from members of programs under review, the VRC itself will not include representatives from programs that may be directly affected by the viability review process. The VRC will be disbanded and discontinuance procedures terminated, if corrective measures are taken by the program’s department heads before the Program Viability Report is put together.

Process for Conducting the Expedited Program Viability Review

Once the VRC is formed, the committee will meet to review the Expedited Program Viability Review process, establish a data collection plan for the study it is about to undertake, and draft and disseminate a Preliminary Notice of Program Discontinuance Pending Response to the Department Chair, Dean and/or other program head. A notice period of one month will provided for Department Chair, Dean, other program head, and interested parties to forward a response to the VRC. During the notice period, data collection period will also commence. The data collection should include data gathering; solicitation of position papers from faculty, staff, students and supervisors that may be affected by the Expedited Program Viability Review; consultations with outside experts, faculty and/or administrators from other institutions. At the start of the notice period, at least one well-publicized announcement of the Expedited Program Viability Review should be provided to members of the campus community, via the college website or Campus News, or the College’s Service Area, and written statements about their opinions and concerns shall be welcomed. In addition, the VRC shall consult (when appropriate) with District, regional, State agencies and institutions overseeing specific types of programs (such as vocational programs).

VRC will consider extending the notice period if the extension does not interfere with the College having sufficient time for completion of the next two stages of the Expedited Program Viability Review, deadlines for articulation agreements, and/or catalog updates.

Procedures and Rationale for Development of Program Viability Review Recommendations

Within 2 months of the VRC’s formation, the committee will produce a Program Viability Report (PVR) specifying the outcome of its deliberations and making specific recommendations for action, complete with timelines. The PVR shall include the following:

A. A summary of the process used by the VRC
B. A review of all data consulted
C. Formal committee recommendations
D. A detailed assessment of the recommendations’ impact on the College’s Mission, Strategic Master Plan, and budget as well as its likely impact on students, faculty, and staff
Possible outcomes of an Expedited Program Viability Review may include recommendations on the following:

A. Program continuance  
B. Program modification  
C. Program improvement  
D. Program discontinuance

**Program Discontinuance**

In general, program discontinuance should be recommended only after a serious attempt has been made to improve a program’s effectiveness and efficiency, unless it is clear that future efforts at remediation are not warranted. Pursuant to Board Rule 6801 and 6802, a viability review is required prior to program discontinuance and, in accordance with Board Rule 6803.10, when recommending program discontinuance, it must consider the following:

A. The effects on students and student success if the program is discontinued  
B. Provisions that can and should be made for students in progress to complete their training  
C. The impact that discontinuance of the program will have on the comprehensiveness and balance of offerings across the college curriculum and within the district  
D. How the program’s discontinuance would impact the educational and budget-planning process used at the institution  
E. How the program’s discontinuance affects the region  
F. The effects of the program’s discontinuance on transfer to four-year colleges and universities  
G. The effects of the program’s discontinuance on local business and industries  
H. The effects of the program’s discontinuance on faculty and staff

**Making the Decision**

Once approved by PRVC the PVR, and its accompanying recommendations, shall be forwarded to the Academic Senate for approval. The PVR shall also be forwarded to the Educational Planning Subcommittee and the ELAC Shared Governance Committee (ESGC) for approval. The approved PVR is then forwarded to the College President for final approval and decision making of the VRC’s recommendations. In the case of program discontinuance, the College President and the Academic Senate President shall make program discontinuance recommendations to the Board of Trustees for approval. The recommendations shall include a description of the viability review process and the reasons for the recommendation.

**Expedited Program Viability Review Timeline**

- **Viability Review Committee (VRC) Holds Initial Meeting and Develops & Disseminates Preliminary Notice of Discontinuance Pending Response**
- **Response Period per Department Chair, Dean and/or Other Program Head**
- **Data Collection** (takes into account responses including solicitation papers and public notice responses, updates from Curriculum and Department Chairs)
- **Compose Program Viability Report** (includes recommendations for decision making)
- **Making the Decision** (PVR approvals from Academic Senate, EPSC and ESGC forwarded to College President for final approval)