

Why an External Review using ACJS Quality Standards?

Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences

Academic Review Committee

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External Review

Many states require reviews of academic programs every five to 10 years; others require external reviews whenever a new academic program is proposed. Most need regional accreditation for competitive reasons (e.g., Middle States Commission on Higher Education, Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges, and so on) because the vast majority of colleges and universities have this accreditation, so it is difficult to attract students and faculty without it.

Who Conducts These Reviews, and According to What Criteria?

Rather than having external parties conduct reviews according to unknown standards, ACJS stepped into this space in 2005. ACJS is the only national organization with a specific focus on criminal justice education. It developed standards for higher education in criminal justice, which were adopted by its membership. These standards are revised periodically in order to remain updated, but they continue to serve as a benchmark for the review of academic programs (in the areas of teaching, faculty, students, and administration). The standards themselves, and indicators for compliance, are published on the ACJS website. <https://www.acjs.org/page/ProgramStandards>

We encourage you to review the ACJS Quality Standards and note that they emphasize that criminal justice is a broad-spectrum field with specific substantive specialties and cognates important for all graduates to understand. The scope and importance of the field is sometimes not recognized by university administrators. The ACJS Standards offer guideposts around teaching, faculty, students, and administration that make it clear that programs that are over enrolled or under resourced cannot meet the standards set by the discipline. Therefore, the Standards are useful in defending resource requests and in responding to calls for external reviews.

The ACJS Academic Review Committee carries out training (usually annually) for interested senior faculty who wish to become certified reviewers using the ACJS Quality Standards. A current list of these reviewers is available at <https://www.acjs.org/page/CertifiedReviewers>

Does ACJS Accredite or Review Programs?

Individual academic programs at the Associates, Bachelors, and Masters levels continue to need external reviews, so the ACJS Academic Review Committee maintains a list of [certified program reviewers](#) who can conduct reviews using the ACJS Quality Standards as benchmarks for their site visit and review.

While there is no accreditation in criminal justice, ACJS does offer **ACJS Program Endorsement** to programs that undergo a rigorous review with a certified program reviewer and are found to be in compliance with at least 85% of ACJS Quality Standards.

Questions?

Please direct any inquiries about the Standards or external reviews to the ACJS Academic Review Committee, Christine Tartaro (Chair, Christine.Tartaro@stockton.edu) or Jay Albanese (Deputy Chair, Jalbane@vcu.edu).