Southern New Hampshire University

HEA 540 Final Project Guidelines and Rubric
Program Plan

Overview

The final project for this course is the creation of a program plan. The project is divided into **three milestones**, which will be submitted at various points throughout the course to scaffold learning and ensure quality final submissions. These milestones will be submitted in **Modules Three, Five, and Seven.** The final product will be submitted in **Module Nine.**

It is incumbent upon a higher education administrator to possess the skills and abilities to effectively engage in academic program planning and evaluation. This is an integral component of internal performance monitoring as well as the external accreditation and review processes. Higher education administrators must obtain and use empirical evidence to identify what academic programs are candidates for improvement opportunity, address changes necessary for academic program success, and evaluate the effects of academic program change. Data-driven decisions are the basis for program planning and analyzing program results. This helps to ensure appropriate continuous improvement ensues according to institutional goals and objectives.

In the final project for this course, you will have an opportunity to engage in the academic program planning process. You will create a program plan for stakeholders in which you explain how you would identify, address, and evaluate an opportunity to improve an academic program based on relevant qualitative and quantitative data. You will demonstrate your ability to "see the big picture" in relation to the institution's mission and values, and you will translate that vision into the necessary processes, benchmarks, and indicators for achieving success.

In this assignment, you will demonstrate your mastery of the following course outcomes:

- Determine opportunities for improving the alignment of academic programs with institutional goals using appropriate qualitative and quantitative evidence
- Design targeted methods of communicating program evaluation findings and eliciting stakeholder approval
- Develop evidence-based processes for the continual improvement of academic programs that respond to an ever-changing academic environment
- Propose program improvement recommendations that align with appropriate regulatory and accreditation standards

Prompt

Using the provided case study (or instructor-approved information of your own—see below), identify an opportunity for improvement within the academic program, plan how you would address the needs of that program to improve it in accordance with institutional values, and then detail how you would evaluate whether the improved program is successful. All of your decisions must be grounded in relevant and accurate qualitative and quantitative data. In creating your program plan, you will need to use data analytics and program management methods and tools. This includes using tools to generate appropriate visuals (e.g.,

flowcharts, planning matrices, Gantt charts for time-sequence implementation, PERT charts, work breakdown structures [WBS], project critical paths, budget spreadsheets) to support your plan as appropriate. You will include an appendix that presents all the data that you used for your program plan.

If you have access to the proper information from an institution of your choice and would like to complete this project using that institution rather than the one presented in the case study, you must first obtain your instructor's approval so that the instructor can ensure you will be able to meet all the critical elements below with the information that you have. All students must show proficiency in the same critical elements, regardless of the source of their information.

Specifically, the following **critical elements** must be addressed:

I. **Institution Overview**
    A. Describe the **institution** and the specific program or initiative being addressed. What are the program's history and role or purpose? What are the expectations of the program as it currently exists?
    B. Determine an **opportunity** for continuous improvement within this program or initiative. Support your response with quantitative and qualitative data from the program that you have collected. For instance, what data confirms that the program is not performing as it should? What institutional goals informed your decision?
    C. Incorporate relevant **data from outside the academic institution** to support your determination. For example, what are the institutional/national standards, milestones, benchmarks, and/or trends that the program is not performing well against?
    D. Discuss what **additional** quantitative or qualitative **data** would be relevant to your evaluation and which assessment tools would you use to collect this additional data.

II. **Recommendations**: In this section, you will take the identified opportunity for improvement in the program you selected and develop your plan for implementing it.
    A. Make **recommendations** for how you will address the program need that you identified. What, specifically, needs to happen to help the program meet its outcomes and meet institutional goals and objectives? Include a budget sheet to illustrate the costs of your recommendations.
    B. Develop **strategies to implement the recommendations**. Be sure to cite relevant sources to support your strategies. Consider which best practice methodologies exist that support your approach to addressing this type of program.
    C. Explain which **regulatory and accreditation standards** helped drive your recommendations. In other words, how have particular standards informed your decisions regarding the trajectory of this program?

III. **Evaluation Plan:** In this section, you will determine a plan for evaluating the success of your recommendations once implemented.
    A. Outline the process by which you will **measure the success** of your recommendations. In other words, what are the steps you will need to take to measure the success of your recommendations, and what further information or indicators will you need to find and verify? Be sure to include appropriate visuals (e.g., flowcharts, pie charts) to illustrate the time sequence.
    B. Discuss how the evaluation of your recommendations will **foster continuous improvement** within the academic program. What ongoing processes will be in place? How will adjustments be identified and made?
    C. Explain how these continuous improvement processes **address institutional challenges**. How do they respond to the ever-changing academic environment? Use specific examples to support your explanation.

IV. **Communication Plan**: In this section, you will provide a broad outline of how you will communicate your findings with stakeholders.
   A. Discuss how your **findings** from the program evaluation **will be communicated** to the appropriate stakeholders. Who are the relevant stakeholders and how do you know this information? Which communication methods will be most effective for which sets of stakeholders?
   B. Explain how you intend your communication methods to **elicit support** for your recommendations from various sets of stakeholders. How will the messaging you develop create buy-in from these groups?
   C. Explain how different **technologies and data** will assist your communications to different stakeholders. Which sorts of data will be most helpful to which groups, and how will data be represented? Be sure to provide samples of these representations of data.

Milestones

Milestone One: *Institution Overview*
In **Module Three**, you will submit an overview of the institution that houses the academic program under evaluation. **This milestone will be graded with the Milestone One Rubric.**

Milestone Two: *Recommendations*
In **Module Five**, you will submit the recommendations you developed after reviewing the data about your selected program. **This milestone will be graded with the Milestone Two Rubric.**

Milestone Three: *Evaluation Plan*
In **Module Seven**, you will submit a plan for evaluating the success of the recommendations you proposed. **This milestone will be graded with the Milestone Three Rubric.**

Final Submission: *Program Plan*
In **Module Nine**, you will submit your final project. It should be a complete, polished artifact containing **all** of the critical elements of the final product. It should reflect the incorporation of feedback gained throughout the course. **This submission will be graded with the Final Project Rubric.Final**

Deliverables

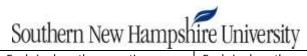| Milestone	Deliverable	Module Due	Grading
One	Institution Overview	3	Graded separately; Milestone One Rubric
Two	Recommendations	5	Graded separately; Milestone Two Rubric
Three	Evaluation Plan	7	Graded separately; Milestone Three Rubric
	Final Submission: Program Plan	9	Graded separately; Final Project Rubric

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Final Project Rubric

Guidelines for Submission: Your program plan should be at least 20 pages in length (including the cover sheet, reference page, and appendix) with 12-point Times New Roman font, double spacing, and adherence to industry-standard guidelines for formatting and citing sources.

Critical Elements	Exemplary (100%)	Proficient (90%)	Needs Improvement (70%)	Not Evident (0%)	Value
Institution Overview: Institution	Meets "Proficient" criteria and level of detail provided demonstrates thorough understanding of the institution and specific program or initiative being addressed	Describes the institution and specific program or initiative being addressed, including the program history, role or purpose, and current expectations	Describes the institution and specific program or initiative being addressed, including the program history, role or purpose, and current expectations, but description is cursory or contains irrelevant detail	Does not describe the institution or specific program or initiative being addressed	5.9
Institution Overview: Opportunity	Meets "Proficient" criteria and makes cogent connections among the quantitative and qualitative data and an opportunity for continuous improvement	Determines an opportunity for continuous improvement within the program or initiative with support from quantitative and qualitative data from the program	Determines an opportunity for continuous improvement within the program or initiative, but does not support response with quantitative or qualitative data from the program	Does not determine an opportunity for continuous improvement within the program or initiative	5.9
Institution Overview: Data From Outside the Academic Institution	Meets "Proficient" criteria and makes cogent connections among the data from outside the academic institution and an opportunity for continuous improvement	Incorporates relevant data from outside the academic institution to support determination	Incorporates data from outside the academic institution to support determination, but not all data incorporated is relevant	Does not incorporate any data from outside the academic institution to support determination	5.9
Institution Overview: Additional Data	Meets "Proficient" criteria and demonstrates a sophisticated understanding of quantitative and qualitative data relevant to the opportunity for continuous improvement	Discusses what additional quantitative and qualitative data would be relevant to the evaluation and what assessment tools to use to collect this additional data	Discusses what additional quantitative and qualitative data would be relevant to the evaluation and what assessment tools to use to collect this additional data, but discussion is cursory or illogical	Does not discuss what additional quantitative and qualitative data would be relevant to the evaluation or what assessment tools to use to collect this additional data	5.9

Recommendations: Recommendations	Meets "Proficient" criteria and makes cogent connections between the program need identified and relevant recommendations	Makes recommendations to address the program need identified, including what needs to happen to help the program meet outcomes, institutional goals, and objectives, including a budget sheet to illustrate the costs of the recommendations	Makes recommendations to address the program need identified, including what needs to happen to help the program meet outcomes, institutional goals, and objectives, but not all recommendations are logical or relevant or does not include a budget sheet to illustrate the costs of the recommendations	Does not make recommendations to address the program need identified	7.9
Recommendations: Strategies to Implement Recommendations	Meets "Proficient" criteria and strategies developed demonstrate a sophisticated understanding of how to successfully implement the recommendations	Develops strategies to implement the recommendations, using relevant sources to support the strategies	Develops strategies to implement the recommendations, using relevant sources to support the strategies, but not all strategies are logical	Does not develop strategies to implement the recommendations	7.9
Recommendations: Regulatory and Accreditation Standards	Meets "Proficient" criteria and demonstrates a sophisticated understanding of regulatory and accreditation standards	Explains which regulatory and accreditation standards helped drive the recommendations	Explains which regulatory and accreditation standards helped drive the recommendations, but explanation is cursory or illogical	Does not explain which regulatory or accreditation standards helped drive the recommendations	7.9
Evaluation Plan: Measure the Success	Meets "Proficient" criteria and makes cogent connections between the recommendations and steps needed to ensure success	Outlines the process by which to measure the success of the recommendations, including appropriate visuals	Outlines the process by which to measure the success of the recommendations, including visuals, but outline is cursory or illogical or not all visuals are appropriate	Does not outline the process by which to measure the success of the recommendations	7.9
Evaluation Plan: Foster Continuous Improvement	Meets "Proficient" criteria and demonstrates sophisticated understanding of the continuous improvement process	Discusses how the evaluation of the recommendations will foster continuous improvement within the academic program, the ongoing processes that will be in place, and how adjustments will be identified and made	Discusses how the evaluation of the recommendations will foster continuous improvement within the academic program, the ongoing processes that will be in place, and how adjustments will be identified and made, but discussion is cursory or illogical	Does not discuss how the evaluation of the recommendations will foster continuous improvement within the academic program	7.9

Evaluation Plan: Address Institutional Challenges	Meets "Proficient" criteria and demonstrates a sophisticated understanding of the ever-changing academic environment	Explains how these continuous improvement processes address institutional challenges and how they respond to the ever-changing academic environment with support from specific examples	Explains how these continuous improvement processes address institutional challenges and how they respond to the ever-changing academic environment, but explanation is cursory or illogical or is not supported with specific examples	Does not explain how these continuous improvement processes address institutional challenges or how they respond to the ever-changing academic environment	7.9
Communication Plan: Findings Will Be Communicated	Meets "Proficient" criteria and makes cogent connections between the needs of different sets of stakeholders and communication methods	Discusses how the findings from the program evaluation will be communicated to appropriate stakeholders, including who the relevant stakeholders are and which methods will be most effective for which sets of stakeholders	Discusses how the findings from the program evaluation will be communicated to appropriate stakeholders, including who the relevant stakeholders are and which methods will be most effective for which sets of stakeholders, but discussion is cursory, illogical, or contains inaccuracies	Does not discuss how the findings from the program evaluation will be communicated to appropriate stakeholders	7.9
Communication Plan: Elicit Support	Meets "Proficient" criteria and demonstrates a sophisticated understanding of how to use different communication methods to elicit support and create buy-in	Explains how the communication methods will elicit support for the recommendations from various sets of stakeholders and how the messaging will create buy-in	Explains how the communication methods will elicit support for the recommendations from various sets of stakeholders and how the messaging will create buy-in, but explanation is cursory or illogical	Does not explain how the communication methods will elicit support for the recommendations from various sets of stakeholders or how the messaging will create buy-in	7.9
Communication Plan: Technologies and Data	Meets "Proficient" criteria and demonstrates sophisticated understanding of how to effectively represent data to various stakeholders	Explains how different technologies and data will assist the communications to different stakeholders and which sorts of data will be most helpful to which groups, including samples of these representations of data	Explains how different technologies and data will assist the communications to different stakeholders and which sorts of data will be most helpful to which groups, but explanation is cursory or illogical or does not include samples of these representations of data	Does not explain how different technologies and data will assist the communications to different stakeholders or which sorts of data will be most helpful to which groups	7.9
Articulation of Response	Submission is free of errors related to citations, grammar, spelling, syntax, and organization and is presented in a professional and easy-to-read format	Submission has no major errors related to citations, grammar, spelling, syntax, or organization	Submission has major errors related to citations, grammar, spelling, syntax, or organization that negatively impact readability and articulation of main ideas	Submission has critical errors related to citations, grammar, spelling, syntax, or organization that prevent understanding of ideas	5.3
				Total	**100%**