

UT MARTIN ASSESSMENT NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER / OCTOBER 2025

Our most important job is to help our students succeed!

Five Year Program Reviews

All programs on campus that are not otherwise externally accredited are required to complete a program review every five years, as mandated by the Tennessee Higher Education Commission. This year begins a new Five-Year cycle with revised guidelines. The rubrics have changed, with new sections and previous sections in a different order. Our Accreditation and Assessment website <https://www.utm.edu/offices-and-services/accreditation-and-assessment/institutional-assessment/assessment-forms.php> has the new information you will need. Please scroll down to the section entitled Five Year Academic Program Review.

The review still requires an external evaluator with experience as a department chair or dean from outside the state of Tennessee and a group of three faculty from our colleges outside the college in which the program resides.

During the Spring 2026 semester, we will be reviewing **Cell and Molecular Biology, Chemistry, Environmental and Organismal Biology, Political Science, and the Master of Mass Media and Strategic Communications**. These programs are currently working on completing their Self-Studies and identifying their candidates for external reviewer.

In Spring of 2027, the following programs will be reviewed: **Agriculture and Natural Resources (MSNRM), Fine and Performing Arts (BAA, BFA), General Agriculture (BSAG), Geoscience (BS), and Natural Resource Management (BSNRM)**. Serving on a review committee

is a great way to help prepare for the review of your program. If you are interested in learning new things and enhancing your resume by serving as a review committee member, please contact Patty Flowers, Assessment Coordinator, (pflowers@utm.edu or 3477) to get your name on one of her lists.

Annual Assessment Reporting

Annual Assessment Reports for academic programs and General Education courses are due on November 1. This year November 1 falls on a Saturday. Grace will be extended to Monday, November 3. General Education courses in the Communications category are scheduled for Five Year Review in Spring 2026 with the Committee on Instruction.

Accelerating Takeoff: The UT Martin Retention and Progression Plan Progress

As a component of the SACSCOC reaccreditation procedure, UTM was required to submit a quality enhancement plan (QEP) intended to reflect the institution's commitment to overall quality and effectiveness. UTM's plan focuses on one overarching objective: to improve student success through activities focused on increasing the retention and progression of first-year students. To achieve this objective, UTM will revise the first-year student experience by focusing on two fundamental goals and associated objectives:

1. Preparing first-year students for success at the institution.
 - a. Objective 1: Revise the General Studies 101 (GENS 101) Freshman Seminar course.

- b.** Objective 2: Invest in infrastructure and personnel for First-Year Programming.
- 2. Preparing the institution for the needs of first-year students.
 - a.** Objective 3: Create a Center for Teaching and Learning dedicated to professional development for faculty.
 - b.** Objective 4: Enhance current academic support programs (tutoring, supplemental instruction, Math Lab, Writing Center).

The GENS 101 implementation team began the second year of our GENS 101 refit by evaluating assessment data gathered during and after the Fall 2024 semester. Based on feedback and assessment data, updates for the Fall 2025 GENS 101 included a new approach to Pep Leader assignment, an update to the parameters of the core GENS 101 assignments and supplementary materials, and more clarity of communication with GENS instructors for all aspects of the course. The implementation team also restructured the required core assignments for GENS 101 and updated the presentation of course materials in the Canvas LMS. For assessment purposes and to ensure a consistent experience, each GENS 101 section features core assignments linked to specific SLOs. New personnel and new and/or improved support services are also contributing to higher retention.

UTM has recently engaged in additional related projects within multiple areas that will contribute to overall QEP goals. These important steps reflect our university's commitment across all divisions to recruit, welcome, and retain students at the institution. UTM's bridge grant and scholarship reset initiative, approved through our recently adopted strategic enrollment plan and piloted for the first time in Spring 2025 with 140 students, is designed to assist with retention of our first-time, full-time freshmen. Preliminary data shows a 76.9% retention of those eligible students.

In Spring 2025, Dr. Adnan Rasool, Director of the UTM Center for Teaching and Learning, began offering programming. The CTL has hosted formal sessions on seven different topics, recording 176 total faculty interactions (164 of which were unique/non-duplicative). The CTL contributed to a system-wide CTL retreat focused on the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning. It has also conducted department specific visits and been independently engaged by individual faculty members. In addition to faculty development, the CTL has assisted in annual GENS 101 instructor training and professional development and training for student academic coaches and supplemental instruction leaders – with both in-person training sessions and review of online modules for continual professional development.

Thanks to financial support from our newly implemented academic support fee and funding from our Title III grant, much work has been completed over the past year in pursuit of Objective 4. UTM has piloted in-person tutoring at our regional centers. Based on research conducted via the QEP and in partnership with English and Education departments, the Provost approved funding for a full-time instructor for our READ 100 course. Though the need for seats still often outpaces the availability of instructors, this full-time position will alleviate some of the demand and provide support for course content and approaches. In an effort to create baseline proficiencies and track tutor training efforts, the Student Success Center developed a training program. This program features modules applicable to all academic support services and can be customized for specific roles.

As evidenced here, UTM is strongly committed to investing the resources needed for the Accelerating Takeoff Plan to succeed. Substantial financial resources and personnel hours have been and will continue to be devoted to the implementation of the plan to provide support for its objectives.