

ACADEMIC PROGRAM REVIEW

SWOT: Strength, Weakness, Opportunities, and Threats

SWOT (strengths, weakness, opportunities, and threats) was created as a business model for organizational strategic planning. Developed in the 1960s at the Stanford Research Institute (SRI, International) by Robert Steward, Albert Humphrey and co-workers, the research conducted led to the development of the SWOT analysis tool.

SWOT analysis is intended as part of an assessment technique to help units identify and discuss all factors that impact the unit. In discussing and presenting factors that are favorable and unfavorable to future improvements, effectiveness and efficiency of the unit, SWOT helps foster a collaborative environmental scan in which all can participate. The goal of SWOT is to provide meaningful information for each of the categories to inform future decision making. SWOT coupled with assessment helps units to self-evaluate and determine future direction related to unit goals and objectives, aligning with institutional mission and goals.

Diagram: SWOT

Internal	<p>Strengths: Positive attributes of the unit</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What does the program do well? • What are the program’s advantages? • What do others see as the program’s strengths? • What could the program boast about its operation? 	<p>Weakness: Negative attributes of the unit</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What can be improved? • What should be avoided? • What could be done more effectively and efficiently in the program? • What is the program not doing that it should be doing?
External	<p>Opportunities: Conditions external to the unit that have a positive effect on achievement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the opportunities facing the program? • What are some current trends that could have a positive impact on the program? 	<p>Threats: Conditions external to the unit that have a negative effect on achievement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What obstacles does the program face? • How are changing resources, technology, or external required specifications affecting the program’s ability to provide services? • What are some current trends that could have a negative impact on the program?

Large academic areas can conduct SWOT analysis in sub-units and compile the most common factors into one report or units can produce the SWOT analysis at one setting. For additional information or assistance, contact the Office of Assessment.