

ACADEMIC PROGRAM REVIEWS

A. Purpose. Systematic departmental review should assist the faculty, dean, and University administration in: 1) evaluating how effectively the department is achieving its educational goals; 2) identifying the department's strengths and weaknesses; and 3) developing strategic plans and priorities for future directions of the department. Pertinent information collected for the purpose of answering specific questions about the department's various components and activities will provide a firm foundation for evaluating the department.

Review, particularly of a small department, need not be long and complex. It should concentrate on essentials. A departmental review has two parts -- 1) a self-study of the department and its programs by the departmental faculty and administration; and 2) a peer review by University faculty members from outside the department and usually two consultants from off campus.

B. Timing. Review of a specific department shall be carried out at least every seven years. The collegiate dean(s) shall establish a schedule for review of departments or programs within the college. Variations from the schedule may be justified for a review to occur before or after the usual period due to specific circumstances, e.g., a pending change in departmental leadership, specific problems that arise or the desirability of coordinating a review with an external accreditation evaluation.

C. Responsibility. The Provost and Executive Vice President has the responsibility for establishing general policy and procedural guidelines for departmental reviews. The Provost and Executive Vice President shall carry out this responsibility in consultation with appropriate faculty and administrative groups.

The collegiate dean has the responsibility for carrying out the reviews within these guidelines. When graduate programs are involved, the Graduate School is to be consulted on the review process.

Note: Throughout this subsection the terms "college(s)" and "collegiate dean(s)" are used to refer to a specific college or dean, to the Graduate School or dean, or to both functioning on a joint basis as specified in the above policy. Also, in this subsection, the term "department" will be used to refer to degree-granting academic units (i.e., traditional departments, schools, non-department programs, and interdisciplinary programs).

D. Scope.

1. General. Reviews should represent a comprehensive evaluation of all aspects of a department or program at all campuses with recognition of the mutual dependency of programs and activities. An able student body, a faculty engaged in effective teaching and scholarship, effective administration, and adequate facilities and support services all contribute to the success of a department and must be reviewed as a whole.

2. Units Reviewed. The basic units, for purposes of review, are defined as follows:

- a. In departmentalized colleges, the basic review unit is the individual department, school, or division, except as noted in subparagraph (b) below. Each such unit shall be reviewed as a whole with the review covering all undergraduate and graduate instructional programs that are the responsibility of the unit as well as the scholarly and creative activity and service programs of the unit. The term "chair" or "director" refers to the academic administrator of any such unit.
- b. In instances where instructional programs do not correspond with departments, schools, or divisions (e.g., interdisciplinary programs), such programs will be reviewed separately, except that undergraduate and graduate programs are to be reviewed jointly whenever

feasible. When a program is housed in two or more colleges, the Provost and Executive Vice President will appoint the dean of one of the colleges to take primary responsibility for the review.

- c. In non-departmentalized colleges, the undergraduate or professional instructional program of the college shall be reviewed as part of the collegiate review process. Reviews of graduate programs within non-departmentalized colleges also may be incorporated into the overall collegiate review, or the collegiate dean and dean of the Graduate School may jointly establish a separate schedule of reviews for such programs.

3. Areas to Be Considered. The college(s) shall define the areas to be considered in reviews (e.g., mission, goals, and strategic plan, students, faculty, educational programs, scholarly and creative activities, service programs, facilities, support services, departmental administration, and financial resources). Factors to be evaluated and questions to be answered should be specified in each area.

It is intended that reviews be focused on specific areas and questions that are most relevant to the particular department or program. These areas and questions should be specified by the college(s) prior to each review in consultation with the department. As a result, the exact focus of the self-study and review will vary among departments. Listed below are the general areas that are ordinarily subject to a departmental review. It is particularly important that the review address the parts of the department that are located at the regional campuses as well as in Pullman.

- a. Departmental Mission and Goals. The overall mission and goals of the department and their contribution to the college and University missions.
- b. Strategic Plan. The suitability of the departmental strategic plan and progress toward achieving plan goals.
- c. Students. Student enrollment over the review period, projected student enrollment for the next review period, admissions policies and procedures, quality, advising, governance, placement services, student perceptions of the department, its program, faculty, and administration.
- d. Educational Programs. Instructional programs of the department should be assessed in regard to:
 - i. the learning objectives of the program;
 - ii. curriculum content in relation to the learning objectives of the program;
 - iii. student achievement of learning objectives of the program;
 - iv. program changes since last review and success of changes in relation to program learning objectives;
 - v. recommendations for program changes based on recent assessments and other pertinent data;
 - vi. the relation of the program to the goals of the college;
 - vii. the continuing need for the program;
 - viii. the overall quality of the program; and
 - ix. the interaction of faculty and students with other parts of the University (e.g., development of and participation in interdisciplinary programs).
- e. Scholarly and Creative Activities. The scope and excellence of scholarly and creative activities and their contribution to instruction. "Scholarly and creative activities" are meant to include "research" whether or not it is in the laboratory.
- f. Service, Outreach and Engagement. The nature of programs or individual efforts that provide services to the college, to the University, to the state, to the nation, and to others; the contribution of service activities to instructional programs and scholarly and creative activities.
- g. Faculty. A profile of the faculty including educational background, teaching effectiveness, scholarly and creative contributions, service, outreach and engagement. The assessment of faculty obviously is related closely to evaluation of educational and service programs and scholarly and creative activities.

h. Facilities and Support Services. The adequacy of space and support facilities such as library, computers, staff assistance, instructional aids, equipment, and supplies. Assessment in this area also is related closely to evaluation of instructional and service programs and scholarly and creative activities.

i. Administration. The administrative structures and resources; their adequacy in supporting the strategic goals of the unit, the efforts of the faculty and the education of the students; the quality of the integration of parts of the department located on different campuses. The performance of individual administrators should not be addressed here. Individual administrative performance receives a separate review.

4. Criteria for Program Evaluation. Specific criteria for program evaluation are determined by the Provost and Executive Vice President. Emphasis in the departmental review should be placed on evaluating the need for various programs based on enrollment projections, their quality, and the way in which they relate to the goals of the program, the college, and the University. The program review should result in assessments based on the primary criteria of quality and centrality, and the secondary criteria of student demand, potential for excellence, external impact, and cost.

The review should identify strengths as well as weaknesses. When weaknesses are identified, particular attention should be focused on ways in which improvements in programs and functions can be achieved within currently available departmental resources, or if indicated by enrollment trends and other factors, with appropriately enhanced or reduced resources. The review should identify areas of flexibility in resources which could allow future allocations.

E. Self-Study Committee. The dean will ask the departmental faculty to determine, in consultation with the chair or director, the process for preparing the self-study report.

F. Self-Study.

1. General. The first, and most crucial, step in the review process is the self-study to be carried out by the department or program faculty including those located at the regional campuses. The college(s) will establish specific guidelines to aid the department or program in preparing the self-study. These guidelines should ensure that the self-study:

- a. is evaluative, not solely descriptive, and identifies priorities and directions for the future;
- b. is carried out with consultation among faculty, students, and other appropriate groups;
- c. considers those quantitative and qualitative data, including future enrollment projections, that are needed to provide an adequate description and evaluation of current and future status of the department;
- d. is distributed so as to make it available to all departmental faculty for their input or comment, prior to its being edited in a final form; and
- e. in final form shall be made available to the department's faculty and to the external review committee members prior to the external review (paragraph g(1) below). Ordinarily, the self-study will achieve these goals by addressing the major areas described in paragraph d(3) above.

2. Data. The use of data in standard formats already available in departments, colleges, or the Office of the Provost and Executive Vice President will reduce the need for special data collection efforts.

G. Post Self-Study Procedures.

1. External Review. The review process will involve review by an external committee. Collegiate procedures regarding the external review may differ, but the following principles apply to all colleges:

- a. committee members may not be members of reviewed unit;
- b. there will be at least two reviewers external to the University, unless the Provost and Executive Vice President approves a smaller number for good cause, such as the size of the unit reviewed;
- c. external reviewers will either participate as active members of a single review committee or they will submit their own separate written report;

- d. when a department has undergone a recent (within the last 2 years) external review for professional accreditation purposes, the reviews of those external accreditors may substitute for the external reviews, as long as there were at least two external reviewers;
 - e. procedures for selecting review committees and the description of the role of external reviewers must be approved by the Provost and Executive Vice President; and
 - f. the committee will be advised that the review report shall not contain confidential personnel information concerning the chair or director or other unit personnel.
2. Consideration of Report and Administrative Response. The Provost and Executive Vice President's general policy will include procedures for the unit, the collegiate dean(s), and the Provost and Executive Vice President to consider and respond to review reports.
3. Dissemination of Review Reports and Administrative Response. The external review committee will submit its report to the collegiate dean(s), who will convey it to the Provost and Executive Vice President and to the unit or program. Any written response from the unit or program will become part of the review report and will be conveyed to the Provost and Executive Vice President. It is the policy of the University that either the review reports or their substance shall be made available to departmental faculty and students and, upon request, to others. The dean, in consultation with the Provost and Executive Vice President, and with the dean of the Graduate School when the unit offers a graduate degree, prepares a final letter summarizing findings of the review and setting out recommendations and required remedial actions. The dean communicates this final letter to the chair or director and to the unit's faculty, as well as to the Provost and Executive Vice President.

H. Procedural Variations. The dean shall consider and may seek approval from the Provost and Executive Vice President for departures from these procedures in the case of particular reviews, where the dean and the unit or program faculty agree that variations from these procedures are appropriate and would be consistent with the purposes of the review.

Adapted from University of Iowa policies and procedures.