

College of Arts and Sciences
Guidelines for Department/Program Reviews

Purpose

The departmental review process is primarily a mechanism by which the departments and programs in the College of Arts and Sciences can reflect on their performance over the past several years and, with the help of the administration and external consultants, plan for improvements in the future.

The process is a cooperative and collegial enterprise between the department and the College. It is the goal of the Dean's Office to make the process as streamlined as possible, and to assure that only important issues are considered.

The single most important factor in the success of a departmental review is the extent to which the faculty members in a department take ownership of the process; full participation by faculty members in all aspects of the review is highly desirable. The most successful reviews take a critical look at the past work of the department and reach an understanding with the Dean regarding realistic plans for the future. The review should result in a clear understanding about the development of the department over the coming seven years, especially with regard to improvement in the quality of programs and to the efficient use of limited resources.

Overview of Review Process

The major components of the review are as follows.

1. The Head and the Dean identify a set of issues that will guide and focus the review.
2. The Department writes a self-study addressing the issues that have been agreed on
3. External consultants visit the department and prepare a report, with recommendations, based on the self-study and their visit.
4. The department prepares a response to the report of the external consultants.
5. The Dean and the Head prepare a Memorandum of Understanding that looks forward to the next seven years and addresses major changes to be made in the department and implications for resources needed to carry out those changes.

Schedule for Review Process

The review typically begins in the fall of one academic year and concludes with the Memorandum of Understanding the following spring. Specific dates for submission of the various documents will be agreed on as the review proceeds.

Oct.	The Department Head, Dean, and Associate Dean have a preliminary discussion and establish the schedule for the review. The standard issues for reviews are listed in the following section, but other issues of importance are often identified as well. If appropriate, the Department Head works with departmental faculty to identify additional issues of importance to the department, and forwards that list to the Associate Dean.
Nov.	The Department Head works with the Associate Dean to prepare the final list of issues for approval by the Dean. The Dean and Associate Dean meet with department faculty to discuss the review,

	after which the Associate Dean sends the Department Head a memo confirming the issues and the schedule for the review.
May	<p>The Associate Dean works with the Department Head to identify potential external consultants. The Associate Dean selects and invites external consultants.</p> <p>The Dean's office sends to the department data on instructional productivity, the most recent departmental profile, most recent assessment report, budget information, and contract & grant information. The Dean's office will also provide these same materials to the external consultants; thus, these materials should <i>not</i> be included in the self-study. The department begins work on the self-study.</p>
Summer	The Department sends a draft of the self-study to the Associate Dean for comment.
end of Aug.	The Department Head provides an electronic copy of the self-study and current CVs of tenured and tenure-track faculty to the Associate Dean.
Sept.	The Dean's office posts the self-study and related materials on Blackboard and provides access to the external consultants, the Provost and the Dean of Graduate School (if appropriate).
Oct.-Dec.	The external consultants visit campus.
Jan.	<p>The consultants send their report to the Associate Dean, who reviews it for accuracy and sends it to the Department Head.</p> <p>The Department Head distributes the report to the faculty for discussion. The Dean and Associate Dean meet with the faculty to discuss the report.</p>
Feb./March	<p>The Department Head submits the department's response to the Associate Dean (prior consultation with the Dean's office is invited).</p> <p>The Department Head meets with the Dean and Associate Dean to discuss the department's response.</p> <p>The Associate Dean sends to the department a draft of the Memorandum of Understanding between the Dean and the Department.</p>
April/May	<p>The Department Head may send recommendations for changes in the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to the Associate Dean.</p> <p>The Dean and Department Head agree upon and sign the final draft of the MOU.</p> <p>The Department Head distributes the MOU to the faculty.</p>

Standard Issues for Inclusion in Self-Study

This list serves as a starting point for consultation with the Department Head, Associate Dean, and Dean. Other issues may be added to the list, or special emphasis placed on some of the issues in this list. In each section, the department should consider the last several years and look forward for the next seven years.

1. Departmental Context for the Review Process

This section provides an introduction to the self-study, including a brief description of the Department and its programs and a summary of any major or over-arching issues that the review will attempt to address. Important features of the Department, such as accreditation status, new undergraduate or graduate programs, what changes have been made as a result of assessment, or major changes in direction or emphasis could be mentioned here.

2. Departmental Mission, Goals, and Objectives

Provide a copy of the current Mission, Goals, and Objectives. If any of them should be changed, propose revisions to the current wording.

3. Curriculum

3.1: Undergraduate Program: What is the rationale underlying the structure of the curriculum? How does it compare to that of other departments of similar size and scope? Is the teaching of speaking and writing skills integrated into the curriculum? Does the curriculum appropriately balance breadth and depth of study? Do upper-level courses have suitable prerequisites?

3.2: Graduate Program (if applicable): What is the rationale underlying the structure of the curriculum? How does it compare to that of other departments of similar size and scope? Does it provide an appropriate balance between formal courses and independent work? Do graduate students receive adequately preparation before being assigned to teach?

4. Assessment

Provide an executive summary of the Department's assessment plan for all undergraduate and (if applicable) graduate degree programs. Is there evidence that all learning outcomes are being met? What action plans have been developed and implemented as a result of assessment findings? What changes have been made to the curriculum as a result of assessment? What changes are being contemplated to improve the program's in the future? A copy of the department's most recent completed Assessment Report in WEAVE will be provided by the Dean's Office.

5. Graduate Audience/ Recruitment (if applicable)

5.1: Audience: E.g., Is the program strategically oriented to serve a particular audience (or audiences) and to meet University objectives? Does the program have a sound reputation for academic quality?

5.2: Recruitment: Are admissions appropriately selective and are top applicants successfully recruited and retained? If necessary, what steps could be taken to improve these measures? (Dean's Office will ask Graduate School to provide data on the number of applications and number of students accepted into the program).

6. Contributions to General Education and Special Undergraduate Programs

6.1: General education: Provide a summary of the department's contributions to the General Education curriculum. Are there ways these contributions could/should be modified?

6.2: Special Programs: E.g., What have been the department's contributions to special programs such as AFS, LIHC, IGS, FMS, BLS, WGS, Residential College, and others during the past five years? Are those contributions adequate or could others be made?

6.3: Individual Learning: E.g., Do students have adequate opportunities for individual research/scholarly/creative activity, internships, and service learning? If not, how could these opportunities be enhanced?

7. Instructional Productivity, Class Sizes, and On-Line Teaching

7.1: Productivity: E.g., Are the department's SCH/FTEF and other measures of instructional productivity (majors, graduation rates, graduate enrollments, etc.) acceptable in comparison with other departments in the College and with similar departments elsewhere (using the Delaware study)? If these numbers are low, what steps can be taken to improve them?

7.2: Class-size distribution: E.g., Does the distribution of class sizes make the most effective use of faculty resources, consistent with the demands of the discipline? Are there opportunities to selectively increase class sizes, eliminate or reduce unproductive offerings, or achieve other economies while maintaining program quality?

7.3: Online courses: E.g., Has the department made adequate use of distance-learning technology for offering on-line courses? What opportunities exist for expanding such offerings?

8. External and Internal Relationships

8.1: Internal Relationships: E.g., Is the department involved in collaborations with departments and programs within the University that provide opportunities for students and faculty? Does the department confer with the School of Education regarding its involvement in teacher preparation?

8.2: Advisory Board: E.g., Does the department have an external advisory board or similar body? If so, how well does it function? If not, should one be established?

8.3: Local connections: E.g., Does the department have connections with local agencies and corporations that facilitate research interactions, internships for students, and local economic development? Could such connections be established or improved?

8.4: Alumni relations: E.g., What efforts that have been made to cultivate alumni and friends, and to seek financial contributions for departmental programs? How effective are those efforts and how might they be improved?

8.5: Public programming: E.g., Does the department offer programs of interest to the general public? Are there opportunities for establishing or expanding such programs?

9. Scholarly Productivity and Professional Development

9.1: Research, scholarship, or creative activity: E.g., What have been the accomplishments of tenured and tenure-track faculty over the past five years and are reasonable expectations in this area being met? Consider such measures as the percentage of faculty who regularly published, displayed, or performed their work (as appropriate), the quality of the venues in which their work has appeared, recognition in the form of awards, prizes, editorial appointments, professional society involvement, etc. Note: Faculty vitas will be attached to

the self-study so only a summary of accomplishments with notable highlights is necessary in this section.

9.2: External support: E.g., Does the department have an appropriate level of external support via fellowships, grants, and contracts, given funding opportunities in the discipline and the accomplishments of the faculty? Are there additional avenues for external support that should be explored?

9.3: Technology transfer: E.g., Has the faculty pursued opportunities in the development of intellectual property and in technology transfer? Are such opportunities available that should be explored?

9.4: Faculty development and workload flexibility: E.g., Does the department have a program for faculty development that encourages the establishment of strong programs of research, scholarship, or creative activity and guidelines for workload assignment that require alternative contributions for faculty without such programs? Are criteria for reappointment, tenure, and promotion clear and understood among the faculty?

9.5: Mentoring of junior faculty: E.g., Are junior faculty given appropriate guidance in professional development, including clear guidelines for tenure and promotion and regular written feedback on their work by the Department Head? Do non-tenure-track lecturers receive appropriate mentoring and support? If the department does not have a formal mentoring program, should one be established?

10. Administration of the Department

10.1: Governance document: E.g., Does the department have a written instrument of governance or similar document sufficient to ensure that faculty and staff understand how important decisions are made? If not, is such a document needed?

10.2: Department administration: E.g., Are the roles of the Department Head, Associate Head (if any), directors of undergraduate and graduate study (if any), and other faculty members holding administrative appointments clearly specified? Are such appointments properly compensated (by salary and/or release-time)?

10.3: Communication: E.g., Are communications between the Head (and other department administrators) and faculty, staff, and students effective? Should changes be made to the ways in which intra-departmental communication is carried out?

10.4: Staff support: E.g., Are sufficient staff assigned to the department to support the essential activities of faculty and students? If not, what are the highest priorities for new positions?

10.5: Publications: E.g., Does the department maintain an attractive and up-to-date website that is accurate and ADA-compliant? Are any written documents updated reasonably often?

11. Resources

11.1: Operating budget: E.g., Is the operating budget of the department sufficient to support its essential activities? If not, what are the highest priorities for an increase in operating funds?

11.2: Tenure-track faculty positions: E.g., Does the department have sufficient tenure-track faculty positions? If not, what would justify a request for additional positions and to what areas should those positions be allocated?

11.3: Non-tenure-track lecturers: E.g., Does the department have an appropriate allocation of continuing non-tenure-track lecturer positions and funds to hire part-time lecturers? Should plans be made to convert vacated lecturer positions to tenure-track lines?

11.4: Physical facilities: E.g., Are the department's physical facilities adequate to support its essential operations? If not, what modifications or additions should be considered?

11.5: Graduate support: E.g., Is support available for graduate students sufficient for the graduate program to be competitive regionally or nationally, as appropriate to its goals?

Self-Study

The self-study document must follow a numbered outline created by the list of issues agreed to for the review. The document should directly and succinctly address each issue, and should be only as long as necessary. Each section of the self-study should review the current situation and suggest improvements to be implemented over the next seven years. Thus, the document should provide the basis for future action. The Head may visit the Dean's office to examine self-studies recently completed by other departments. Some departments will find it useful to appoint a committee to compose the document. In all cases, the Head should assure a consistent writing style and format for the entire document.

The Dean's Office will ensure that information is available on Blackboard to the Department as it prepares the self-study: copies of materials from previous reviews; data on instructional productivity, grants and contracts, resource allocation, etc.; other information as requested by the Department. This information will be included in the materials provided to the consultants; the Department will provide vitas for all tenured/tenure-track faculty.

External Consultants: Selection, Visit, and Report

External consultants play a vital role in the departmental review process. In the best circumstances, they provide an unbiased, professional assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of a department and its programs, and offer the Dean and the department a fresh view of the many topics that are included in the review. They can offer expert opinions on the steps the department may want to pursue in the future. They may or may not agree with the views of the department; either way, they provide a valuable perspective. They consult with the department and the Dean and provide advice and suggestions to aid in our decision-making.

The consultants are hired by and report to the Dean (via the Associate Dean). Thus, their obligation is to the Office of the Dean, not the department, with regard to their work. Experience has shown that the best consultants not only are accomplished and respected teachers and scholars in their discipline but also have significant administrative experience. We normally expect each consultant to have served as a department head/chair or as an associate/assistant dean; the perspective gained in such leadership positions significantly increases the value of their advice. Typically, the Associate Dean prepares a list of potential candidates for the task, and invites the Head to submit a similar list. The Associate Dean then consults with the Head before deciding which consultants to

invite. The department should have no contact with the consultants prior to their visit. All arrangements for the visit are handled by the Associate Dean, but it is the responsibility of the department to prepare the detailed schedule for their visit.

The consultants' report should reflect their (combined) appraisal of the strengths and weakness of the department, as gained from the self-study and their visit. It should address, preferably in order, the issues discussed in the self-study. The consultants may include comments about issues not addressed in the self-study that arose during discussions in their visit. The report should be succinct and direct, and include recommendations for future action. The consultants will be asked to follow the numbered outline in writing their report.

Typical Schedule for Consultants' Visit. *Note: Please ensure that the schedule includes time for the consultants to get from one meeting to the next (especially if they must go across campus) and that there is some "down time" that will allow them to talk to each other about what they are learning. When arranging meals, keep numbers small enough to permit conversation; \$300 will be provided to pay for meals with the consultants organized by the department.*

Day 1

Consultants arrive in Greensboro and are met by the Associate Dean. Dinner with Dean and Associate Dean

Day 2

Breakfast with Head

Meetings with individual faculty, groups of faculty, groups of staff, groups of graduate students, groups of undergraduate students, Provost, Graduate Dean (if appropriate)

Lunch with faculty or students.

Meetings continue

Dinner with faculty

Day 3

Breakfast – this could be alone, to allow time for private discussion before the meetings on the second day.

Meetings continue

Wrap-up session with Head

Private lunch to begin preparation of report

Exit interview with Dean and Associate Dean. Depart campus

Departmental Response to Consultants' Report

The Dean's Office will send the Department Head a copy of the consultants' report as soon as it is received. The Dean and Associate Dean will meet with the department to discuss the report, after which the department prepares a response that summarizes its view of the comments and recommendations of the consultants. It should address any of the issues raised in the self-study and in the report that need comment; it may be that some topics need no comment if there is no

implication for change or future action. The response should be forward-looking and should consider each issue from the perspective of potential change. The response should explicitly accept or reject the suggestions of the consultants, with commentary as necessary. It need be only as long as necessary to cover the important points; it need not address every issue in the self-study and report of the consultants. The response will serve as a point of departure for the Memorandum of Understanding.

Memorandum of Understanding

This document lists the specific steps that the department and the Office of the Dean agree to take in the future. Any commitments from the Dean for resources will be included. The MOU will be reviewed each year during the annual meeting between the Dean and the Department Head to discuss progress that is being made and consider whether any modifications to the plans contained in the MOU are appropriate.

Revised 10/1/2009