DUKE UNIVERSITY

GENERAL PROCEDURES FOR EXTERNAL REVIEWS OF ACADEMIC DEPARTMENTS AND PROGRAMS

I. Purpose of External Reviews

The purpose of external reviews is systematically and periodically to evaluate the research and teaching--undergraduate, graduate, and professional--of all academic programs within the University, and to recommend to the University administration strategies for enhancing the effectiveness of these programs.

II. Authority to Conduct Reviews

Reviews are implemented through the office of the Vice-Provost and Dean of the Graduate School, under authority delegated by the Provost. The Associate Dean for Academic Affairs of the Graduate School normally serves as the Coordinator of all reviews: inviting the external team, scheduling the events of the site visit, and overseeing the preparation, distribution and archiving of all necessary documents.

III. Periodicity of External Reviews

Reviews are conducted on a regular cycle of approximately eight years, although decisions about when to schedule particular reviews are made by the Provost, the Dean of the relevant school, and the Vice Provost/Dean of the Graduate School. Faculty members from the Provost's Academic Programs Committee and the Executive Committee of the Graduate Faculty and other School councils, where appropriate, may also suggest that a given program should be reviewed.

IV. Procedures for External Reviews

1. Charge: The charge to the external review team is developed by the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs of the Graduate School, in consultation with the Provost, the Vice Provost/ Dean of the Graduate School, the Dean of the school, or Director of the institute in which the program to be reviewed is situated. Members of the Academic Programs Committee, the Executive Committee of the Graduate Faculty, and other school faculty councils, where appropriate, may also be consulted concerning the charge. Normally, the charge will seek to address all aspects of a given program, as well as its interrelations with other units of the university and its general position among competitive research universities.

2. External Review Team: In forming the external review team, the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs will solicit nominations from the department or program to be reviewed, develop a separate list of prospective reviewers, and solicit advice from members of the school’s senior leadership, the Vice Provost/Dean of the Graduate School and the Dean of the relevant school. The Chancellor for Health Affairs may also be consulted for reviews of Basic Medical Science departments, and the Vice Provost for Interdisciplinary Studies for reviews of interdisciplinary programs.
Review teams generally consist of 3-4 external reviewers, with one designated the Chair of the review team. In consultation with the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, the Chair will assume responsibility for the final version of the team's written report. The team as a whole, however, will be provided with time during its site visit jointly to compose an outline or first draft of that report. The Chair will also speak for the external review team during the site visit.

3. **External Review Team Visit Procedures:** Approximately two weeks prior to the site visit, the external review team will be sent electronically a set of program materials furnished jointly by the department under review and The Graduate School. These materials will include: a cover letter from the department chair or program director; and a “self-study” document (see below) which includes the program's most recent five-year plan, descriptive and statistical information on the department's academic programs, two-page faculty vitae, and other materials. Graduate students of the unit under review meet with the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs prior to the review and are invited to prepare a confidential consensus or survey document for the review team. This graduate student report is not shared with unit faculty until the external review report has been submitted. Shortly before the visit, the external review team will also receive the formal charge and a detailed site visit schedule.

Typically, the external review team will arrive in time for dinner the evening preceding the first day of the site visit. At that meeting, the Provost, the Vice Provost/Dean and Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, together with the Dean(s) of the relevant school(s) will discuss with the team the plan for the visit, the critical questions to be answered, and the plan for the written report. There will be time for each visitor to pose particular questions to the central administration; and the administrators, in turn, should provide whatever historical or institutional background the team may need to conduct a thorough investigation of the program in question.

Over the next two days, the review team will meet with faculty, undergraduate and graduate students, and administrators of the department. The reviewers will also meet with key stakeholders from outside the department, such as secondary faculty, chairs of collaborating departments, institute directors, etc. Review visits of individual programs sponsored by a larger academic unit, such as a master’s degree program, may be a single full day unless the program or administration requires a full two-day review.

Prior to the exit interview with the senior administrators indicated above, the review team will be given ample time to draft the initial version of its report. The major findings and recommendations of that report will then be delivered orally to the administration at the exit interview. The Associate Dean for Academic Affairs will take full notes of this meeting, which will remain confidential to the administration.

4. **External Review Team Written Report:** The final written report should be submitted electronically to the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs within approximately one month of the site visit, at which time honoraria are disbursed. The report should be public in nature, so that it may be circulated to the full department. If the review team wishes to provide a more private document to the administration, that communication should be appended as a codicil to the public report.

5. **Departmental/Program Response to the External Review Team Written Report:** Review reports are circulated via the program director or chair to all faculty members in the program or department, and the unit is asked to provide the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs with a formal
written response to the report, addressing each point raised in the team’s report. This departmental response must be written in consultation with the voting faculty of the department or program under review, as documented by indicating the process by which the faculty members were involved, with evidence of faculty endorsement (normally a majority vote). Dissenting viewpoints should be included in cases when consensus is not achieved through faculty discussions. The departmental response must be submitted within three months of the receipt of the external review team report by the department chair, excluding June, July and August (to ensure time for adequate faculty meetings in the issue). If the approved response document is not received by the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs by that time, the institutional review process described below will commence without the opportunity for departmental response to be included in the review documentation.

6. **Institutional Response to the External Review**: The external review team’s report, along with the departmental response, will then be forwarded sequentially to the Executive Committee of the Graduate Faculty, the Academic Programs Committee, and, when appropriate, other school councils. These committees will prepare written resolutions on the review detailing their recommendations for subsequent departmental or institutional action. The resolutions will be provided to the chair/head of the unit under review and forwarded to the Provost and the relevant Deans. The Dean or institute director will discuss the review report, departmental response, committee resolutions, and other documentation with the chair/head of the unit reviewed, addressing implications for the immediate future of this unit together with expectations that the administration has for the department/program.

   **Academic Programs Committee:**
   
   [https://provost.duke.edu/about/provosts-committees](https://provost.duke.edu/about/provosts-committees)

   **Executive Committee of the Graduate Faculty:**
   
   [https://gradschool.duke.edu/about/executive-committee-graduate-faculty-ecgf](https://gradschool.duke.edu/about/executive-committee-graduate-faculty-ecgf)

7. **Historical Archives**: The Graduate School will maintain complete files on all external reviews, including self-study documents, the external report and the department/program’s response, the recommendations of the various faculty committees, and any follow-up letters or memoranda from the Deans or Provost’s Office.

**MATERIALS TO BE FURNISHED FOR PROGRAM REVIEWS**

The following materials constitute the self-study for the external review. Preparation and timely delivery of the self-study is the responsibility of the department chair or program director, though he or she would be wise to recruit additional faculty as well as staff to assist in its preparation. The broader faculty of the department or program should be consulted in the process of preparing the self-study. The document is due as a single PDF to the Associate Dean of the Graduate School no less than one month before the scheduled review date. Alphabetized Faculty CVs may be included together as a single separate PDF. All PDF documents should have bookmarks to demarcate individual items and sections.
I. Departmental Materials

1. Chair’s cover letter to review team, which should highlight significant issues for reviewers’ exploration and include a brief description of how faculty provided input into the overall self-study
2. Description of the department's vision and mission
3. Statement on the intellectual life of department
4. Department's most recent long-term strategic plan or other planning document
5. Description of the unit’s intellectual and workplace climate, including efforts to address issues around equity, diversity, and inclusion
6. List of departmental faculty, by area of specialization
7. Research funding by area of specialization
8. Laboratory and computer facilities
9. Inventory of office, teaching, and laboratory space
10. Tabulation of Duke courses taught per semester by each primary faculty member over the past five years (course numbers only)
11. Description of the most important collaborations across departmental lines
12. Current national standing of department. Explain the sources used and the criteria used by those sources in determining rankings or other indications of national standing in the field
13. Present administrative structure of department
14. Non-student research trainees
   a. Numbers, titles and faculty supervisors of all postdoctoral fellows and any other non-student research trainees
   b. Description of how postdoctoral fellows and other non-student research trainees are integrated into the departmental community.
   c. Professional development activities or other support provided for postdoctoral fellows and other non-student research trainees.

II. Faculty Materials

1. Short vitae for each member of the primary faculty (either updated 2-page vita, or first page of Scholars@Duke profile)
2. Description of each member’s current research interest, limited to 250 words
3. External research support over last 5 years
4. Dissertations and theses supervised over past 5 years. Doctoral dissertations or master’s theses supervised: name, dissertation/thesis title, graduation year.
5. Courses taught in the past 5 academic years, with course numbers and titles.
6. Major service over the last five years (including roles in the department, university, and/or research field)

III. Graduate Materials

For each graduate degree sponsored by the department or unit under review, The Graduate
School will provide a statistical overview, consisting of the following data. For units under review that have professional degrees that are housed in another school, comparable data is to be provided.

- Application and admissions data over each of the past five years, including a demographic breakdown of applicants, admitted students, and new matriculants;
- Demographic analysis of the enrolled graduate student cohort over each of the past five years
- Pattern of graduate student financial support over the past five years, including the balance between internal fellowships and external fellowships
- Five-year data on attrition, time-to-degree, and annual # of degree recipients
- Five-year data, where applicable, about graduate student participation in TGS teaching certificate, Preparing Future Faculty program, Leadership Academy, and Duke Doctoral Academy
- Trends in career outcomes for degree recipients, split out into cohorts who received their degrees 11-15 years previously, 6-10 years previously, and 1-5 years previously. This information should reflect the categories of career outcomes maintained on TGS’s website, including the major employment sectors of graduates; for those with faculty positions, it should distinguish, tenured, tenure-track and non-tenure track; and also research universities from teaching intensive institutions.

The Department (or other unit) will be responsible for preparing and including the materials described below. In cases where multiple graduate or professional degree programs are offered, such as a master’s and a PhD, information for each degree should be provided to address the following:

1. Statement of intellectual mission for the graduate program
2. Description of the graduate curriculum, including an overview of all courses and requirements, relation of the curriculum to important disciplinary or interdisciplinary trends, and any integration with offerings from other Duke programs; indication of how the curriculum fosters the unit’s mission for graduate education; and discussion of how curriculum relates to any statement of best practices in graduate education from relevant scholarly societies
3. Description of opportunities for Teaching Assistant/Research Assistant/Project Management positions, and patterns of assignment
4. Description of approach to advising/mentoring (training for DGS and DGSA; training for new faculty; creation of other roles, such as faculty career adviser, ombuds, etc.; and any formal structure of peer mentoring)
5. Statement of expectations/responsibilities for faculty advisers and Ph.D. or master’s students
6. Assessment of climate related to diversity and inclusion
7. Descriptions of: mechanisms to assess student progress, and to receive student input/learn about student concerns (e.g., annual reporting, annual meeting with DGS, if relevant; confidential communication channel to unit head; exit interviews)
8. Overview of the most important departmental (or unit) opportunities for career and professional development, along with a sketch of the most important communities elsewhere at Duke for unit graduate students
9. Overview of most important professional activities undertaken by graduate students, along with lists of major external grants and fellowships, and external or university-wide prizes/awards, over the past three years
10. Overview of the extent to which your graduate students take advantage of university-wide
opportunities such as certificates, external internships, DukeEngage service learning projects, Bass Connections research teams, and interdisciplinary doctoral cohorts hosted by university institutes and initiatives.

11. Explanation of major reasons for attrition and analysis of time-to-degree statistics for each graduate degree program.

12. Description of type and frequency of interactions with departmental (or unit) graduate alumni (e.g., regular newsletter; updating alum information; practice of bringing alums back for professional development/career discussions; matching of current students with alum mentors).

13. Assessment of student learning outcomes and program effectiveness – including the assessment plan as well as the most recent annual report for each graduate degree program of the unit under review, with a summary of how the results have been used for program improvement.

IV. Undergraduate Materials

Note: In spring 2010, Trinity College revised the guidelines for providing undergraduate program materials for external reviews, as outlined in the following section.

Guidelines for Self-Study of Department Undergraduate Program

Note: Departments are asked to provide information in the following seven broad categories. The questions below each category are meant to serve more as guidelines for responses, rather than a rigid list to be answered in sequence.

A. General description of undergraduate program (intellectual foundations, program goals and student learning objectives)

1. What options do you offer undergraduates for having majors and/or minors in your department? If you have multiple majors, minors, concentrations, explain rationale, and any limits on courses counting for multiple majors/minors.

2. What are your educational goals and objectives for the major?

3. What are your educational goals for non-majors participating in your program?

4. In what ways does your program relate to Duke’s strategic plan, and to the general educational mission of Trinity College?

B. Curriculum

1. How was the curriculum of the department developed? What are the principles underlying the undergraduate curriculum? How has the department kept informed about and responded to national curricular trends?

2. Has the curriculum changed substantially in recent years, or is the department considering any changes? How and why?

3. What is the progression and sequence of courses through the major and minor? What is the rationale for the numbering of courses? For course sequencing? For requirements and prerequisites? Is it clear that courses are planned and offered as components of a larger program of study? Are there serious gaps in your offerings? What resources would be needed to fill them?

4. Are courses offered on a regular and rotating basis? What is the relationship of regular courses to special topics courses offered in a single term? Do students generally have a good idea of what courses will be offered during their progression through the major? Do they have any difficulties fulfilling the major requirements?

5. In what ways does your curriculum contribute or relate to the general educational goals of the
Duke undergraduate curriculum (including modes of inquiry, FOCUS, freshmen seminars, service learning, study abroad, undergraduate research, etc.)

6. What is the relationship of your curriculum to other departments and programs (including impact of changes on other majors, minors, certificate programs)? Do other departments offer “service courses” or prerequisites to your majors? If so, are they adequate for your majors? What agreements or procedures are in place to ensure continuity of course offerings when other departments are involved?

7. How do you articulate your program goals and curriculum to students (written materials/websites/advising, etc.)
C. Co-curricular connections
1. How are undergraduate majors and minors integrated into the intellectual life of the department?
2. Does the department support undergraduate clubs and/or co-curricular events?
3. To what extent do your majors/minors participate in research projects, DukeEngage, Bass Connections, study abroad, etc.?

D. Connection between undergraduate and graduate programs
1. How does the department foster vertical integration of undergraduate and graduate programs?
2. How and to what extent are graduate students involved in the teaching and/or mentoring of undergraduates (including common research projects or other learning experiences)?

E. Instructional Faculty / Teaching:
1. How is the teaching load in your program divided between regular rank junior and senior members of the faculty? What is the ratio of courses taught by regular rank and non-regular rank faculty (graduate students and non-ladder faculty)?
2. On what basis are graduate and non-regular rank faculty assigned to courses? How are they trained and supervised for teaching these courses?
3. Is your program limited by inadequate faculty resources? In what ways?

F. Enrollment trends, recruitment and retention of majors/minors
1. What do enrollment rates, attrition, and numbers of majors and minors indicate about the effectiveness of the department’s programs?
2. How does the department attract students, majors, minors?

G. Assessment
1. To what extent and how frequently are courses and course sequences reviewed? How and on what basis are decisions made to add, drop, and modify courses?
2. What are the student learning outcomes for each undergraduate program of the sponsoring unit? How are these outcomes measured? Include the assessment plans and the most recent annual assessment report for each undergraduate program.
3. How does assessment and evaluation feed back into program development?

H. Data to accompany self-study:
- Number of enrollments, majors and minors over last 10 years
- Number of students completing research project / study abroad, graduation with distinction
- Quality statistics of majors
- Post-degree positions of graduates