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II-28.3(1) Departmental / Program Review

(Amended 2/07; 4/6/21; 10/3/23)

Effective October 3, 2023, this policy has been revised. For the most current version without redlining, return to [II-28](#).

- a. Purpose. For the purpose of this section “department” shall refer to any and all groups within colleges that undergo independent review. This can include programs that exist outside of departments and function independently. 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.
- b. Components. 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 external to the University.
- Pertinent information collected for the purpose of answering specific questions about the department's various components and activities will provide a foundation for evaluating the department.
- c. Timing. Review of a specific department shall be conducted at least every seven years. The Executive Vice President and Provost 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.
- d. Responsibility. The Executive Vice President and Provost has the responsibility for establishing general policy and procedural guidelines for departmental reviews. Within these general guidelines, the faculty of each college has the primary responsibility for establishing specific policies and procedures for departmental reviews. The collegiate dean has the responsibility to conduct such reviews in accord with these policies and procedures. However, when graduate programs are involved, the specific college and the Graduate College share these responsibilities. In such cases, integrated procedures and guidelines for joint review of undergraduate and graduate programs in a unit are to be established.
- e. Scope. Reviews should represent a comprehensive evaluation of all aspects of a department.
- (1) 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.
  - (2) 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.
  - (3) 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 College may jointly establish a separate schedule of reviews for such programs.
  - (4) Areas to be considered. The college 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.
  - (5) **Student data to be provided. Student enrollments, number of graduates, and employment or other placement outcomes, such as continuing education, by major and level (e.g., undergraduate, graduate, professional) over a five-year period.**
- Department reviews will take into consideration the same areas as those outlined in the guidelines for Collegiate Reviews II-28.2d(2). The reviews should focus on specific areas and questions that are most relevant to the particular department. These areas and questions should be specified by the college 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.
- f. Review procedures.
- (1) Self-study committee. The dean will direct the Departmental Executive Officer (DEO) in consultation with the departmental faculty to determine the makeup of the departmental or program self-study committee and the process for preparing the self-study report. The self-study committee shall be organized in accordance with procedures adopted by the collegiate faculty setting forth the size and qualifications for membership on the departmental or program self-study committee, including the method by which members of the self-study committee shall be selected.
  - (2) Self-study. The first step in the review process is the self-study to be carried out by the department or program faculty. The college(s) will establish specific guidelines to aid the department or program in preparing the self-study, including any required standardized data formats. 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 in consultation with faculty, staff, students and other appropriate groups;
    - (c) considers those quantitative 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 made 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 available for public dissemination. It will be made available to the department's faculty and to the external review committee members prior to the external review. Ordinarily, the self-study will achieve these goals by addressing the major areas described in paragraph e(2) above.
  - (3) 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 collegiate departmental and program reviews:
    - (a) Committee members may not be members of reviewed department;
    - (b) There will be at least two reviewers external to the University, unless the Executive Vice President and Provost 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) The committee will be advised that the review report shall not contain confidential personnel information concerning the DEO or other unit personnel.
  - (4) Consideration of report and administrative response. The collegiate dean(s) in consultation with the department or program, shall consider and respond to review reports.
  - (5) Dissemination of review reports and administrative response. The external review committee will submit its report to the collegiate dean(s), who will deliver it to the Executive Vice President and Provost and to the unit or program, along with any written response from the unit or program.
  - (6) Either the review reports or their substance shall be made available to departmental faculty and staff and, on request, to others.
  - (7) The dean, in consultation with the dean of the Graduate College 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 DEO and the unit's faculty, as well as to the Executive Vice President and Provost.
  - (8) Procedural variations. The dean shall consider and may seek approval from the Executive Vice President and Provost 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.