

## **University of Delaware Academic Program Review**

The Academic Program Review (APR) provides academic departments and programs with the opportunity to assess the quality of their teaching, research, and engagement activities, evaluate the effectiveness of their use of resources, and determine their progress toward meeting the unit's goals, as well as those of their college and the University of Delaware.

The APR process includes both self-study and external review. It encourages planning within the unit and can strengthen the connection between the planning agendas and practices of individual units with those of their college and the university as a whole. Although the process of program review is time-consuming, the benefits can be significant:

1. When the process is appropriately inclusive, it can be used to create and communicate a shared vision within the unit and throughout the university. It provides critical direction for hiring plans, budget setting, resource allocation, and development priorities.
2. The program review process can be used to assess progress in achieving the milestones of a unit's strategic plan. If a unit does not have a strategic plan, it can be used to build one.
3. It provides opportunity for individuals within a unit to examine and reflect on the curriculum and its impact on students – and to propose adjustments as needed.
4. It provides data on nationally benchmarked faculty productivity to allow a candid assessment of the unit and consideration of areas of strength and improvement.
5. Expert review of the unit by an external team provides valuable input on past success and potential future directions.
6. For professional programs, the APR can facilitate the preparation of an accreditation review and allow assessments of critical components that are not included in the accreditation process.

### **Process**

Academic Program Review (APR) is a function of the Office of the Provost in conjunction with the University Faculty Senate and is coordinated by the deputy provost for Academic Affairs. The provost and deans select units for review. Academic units will normally be reviewed at seven-year intervals, but this schedule may be accelerated in individual cases at the discretion of the provost. The review process should be a highly collaborative and dynamic process with frequent conversations between the department, college, and Office of the Provost. The process should be conducted in the following order:

1. *Program analytics.* The unit receives a standard package of data from the Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness (see Appendix A). These data include demographic, enrollment, retention, and graduation information on undergraduate and graduate students. Information related to faculty include demographic data, as well as

data from Academic Analytics about faculty scholarly productivity.<sup>1</sup> The Academic Analytics data will include data for comparable units in public institutions of the American Association of Universities and the University of Delaware's comparator institutions (<http://ire.udel.edu/comparators-dashboard/>).<sup>2</sup>

2. *Data assessment.* Discussions focused on the unit's strategic plan between the unit leader, dean, and provost or provost-designee will identify any additional data needed to assess progress. Specific objectives of the review should be clarified and agreed upon at the beginning of the process.

3. *Self-study.* Each unit will conduct a self-study that is responsive to the specific objectives of the review. Each self-study should include four sections:

- a. Introduction: Describe how the self-study was conducted, in particular how faculty, staff, and students were involved in writing the self-study.
- b. Strategic plan: Include the unit's strategic plan in the appendices, along with strategic plans of the college and University. Describe the alignment of the unit's strategic plan with that of the college and the University. Document progress on meeting milestones. Include a copy of the University's Inclusive Excellence action plan in the appendices. Describe how the unit has defined inclusive excellence for its programs, the unit's progress toward achieving its inclusive excellence goals, and the unit's alignment with the University's Inclusive Excellence action plan.
- c. Description of Academic Programs – undergraduate, graduate and certificate programs, as well as professional non-credit programs: Provide a statement of student learning objectives for each undergraduate program, including the University's general education goals, and detail how the curriculum enables students to meet these objectives. Provide information on how well students meet the learning outcomes. Include direct and indirect measures of student learning (e.g., placement of graduates) and describe how the faculty has improved the program in response to data on student learning. Provide information about enrollment, student quality, diversity, and achievements. Identify the strengths, challenges and plans to improve the academic programs, particularly if no new resources are available.
- d. Faculty Research and Scholarship: Provide an overall discussion of faculty research and scholarship. Include a two-to-five-page curriculum vitae for each unit faculty in the appendices. Provide an assessment of faculty productivity at the unit level based on Academic Analytics data (included in the appendices) relative to national benchmarks (including public universities in the Association of American Universities (AAU) and the University of

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<sup>1</sup> The University of Delaware recognizes that data from Academic Analytics are not equally applicable to all disciplines.

<sup>2</sup> If few comparator institutions have units similar to the unit under review, the unit or the dean may provide a list of comparator institutions that may be more appropriate to the unit's specific discipline than the University's general comparators.

Delaware's comparator institutions) and relative to the unit's prior performance (if available). Detail the processes and supports for faculty development and mentoring. Discuss areas of research strength in the unit, challenges and plans to improve the research and scholarship profile of the unit, particularly if no new resources are available.

- e. Outreach and Engagement: Provide an assessment of all outreach and engagement activities conducted by the unit. Describe the nature of the effort, its contribution to the academic mission of the unit, and its impact on and value to the University and the community.
- f. Staffing, Workload, and Organization: Provide an overall discussion of the staffing, administrative support, workload, organization, and general operation of the unit. Describe the strengths and challenges. Propose plans to meet the challenges, particularly if no new resources are available.
- g. Facilities and Other Resources: Provide an assessment of the facilities available to the unit for research, scholarship, creative activities, and student learning, as well as faculty and graduate student office space. Detail other resources (e.g., endowments, scholarships) available within and to the unit. Identify strengths and challenges.
- h. Summary: Summarize the strengths, challenges, and opportunities of the unit. Identify the unit's priorities for improvement with no new resources. What activities or programs would the unit consider dropping to invest in areas that would have substantial impact on enhancing the unit?

See Appendix B for template for self-study.

4. *Review team visit.* Each review is conducted by a review panel, composed of five members, all from disciplines related to the unit under review. The dean responsible for the unit, in conjunction with that unit, submits names of at least eight potential reviewers to the deputy provost for Academic Affairs for approval. The list should include brief explanations of why each individual is recommended along with an online link to the individual's CV. In all cases, prior experience with and connections to the department and faculty within the department must be disclosed in writing to the deputy provost. Reviewers who are leaders in their field should be selected; faculty and administrators (e.g., department chairs) from top research institutions should be included whenever possible on the team. The deputy provost for Academic Affairs will send the names of the approved reviewers to the dean. The dean then invites the reviewers with a goal of securing four external scholars who are available to do the review.

The fifth reviewer is a University of Delaware faculty member from another unit and is chosen by the Faculty Senate Committee on Committees and Nominations. The unit under review may suggest names of potential internal reviewers to that committee. The role of the internal reviewer is to answer questions about the general university context, clarify information, and point the external reviewers to additional sources of information

if needed. The internal reviewer does not participate in writing the external review report.

During their visit, the review team should meet with the unit leader, faculty, representative students (graduate and undergraduate, as appropriate), staff, and college and university academic leaders (dean, deputy dean, associate dean, provost, deputy provost for Academic Affairs, senior vice provost for Graduate and Professional Studies, as appropriate). For a sample schedule, please see Appendix C.

5. *Review team report.* The report is an analysis of the documents provided to the review team prior to the visit, as well as insights gained during the site visit. The review team should be given time the morning of the final day to draft their report. It is expected that the team will have an initial draft of the report prior to leaving on the final day. Questions that should be addressed in the review are provided in Appendix D. The review team will provide a final draft no later than 30 days after the completion of the visit.

6. *Response to the review team report.* The dean will work with the unit leader and the department to prepare a response to the provost that accounts for the recommendations from the external team and any other issues the unit raised in the self-study. The unit's response to the review should include a set of actions it will take to move forward, as well as a description of how the unit will effectively manage or reallocate existing resources to implement these actions. The response to review is due one month from the receipt of the review team's report.<sup>3</sup>

7. *Implementation agreement.* The provost or designee meets with the dean, deputy dean (or associate dean, as appropriate) and unit leader to review the proposed action items and timeline for implementation that are described in the response to the review. The meeting should take place within six weeks of receiving the response to review. The unit leader provides annual follow-up reports to the dean regarding progress on the implementation plan.

### **Timeline, Roles, and Responsibilities**

Typically, units are reviewed every seven years. The Deputy Provost for Academic Affairs will keep a master list of units to be reviewed. The master list will be maintained and updated in a directory shared with the Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness.

At the beginning of each fall or spring semester, the deputy provost for Academic Affairs confirms with the dean of the appropriate college and with the Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness the list of units to begin their self-study in the following semester.

Appendix E provides instructions for administrative assistants who coordinate the academic program reviews.

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<sup>3</sup> If the review team's report is received within the last four weeks of the fall or spring semester, the response to the review will be due one month from the beginning of the next regular semester.

Agent	Time	Action	Follow-up	Follow-up
Deputy Provost for Academic Affairs (DPAA)	Beginning Semester 1 (each fall and spring semester)	Confirm upcoming APRs with Deans and IR	Deans notify departments; IRE assembles standard data for each unit	
Academic units	Semester 1	Begin self-study		
Institutional Research and Effectiveness	End Semester 1	Provides IRE data to units	Units incorporate data into self-study	
Academic units	End Semester 1	Recommend at least eight potential reviewers to dean	Dean submits list to DPAA	Approved reviewers go to dean to invite; dean contacts Faculty Senate COCAN chair for internal reviewer
Academic units	Semester 2	Works on self-study		
Dean's office/Academic unit office	Semester 2-3	Makes travel and lodging arrangements for review	Obtains receipts; reimburses reviewers (DPAA code); pays honorarium after final report is received (DPAA code)	
Academic unit	Semester 3	Sets schedule for review, reserves room, makes reservations for meals	Ensure that reviewers, dean, DPAA, senior vice-provost for graduate and professional education (SVPGPE), and provost receive copy of the self-study at least 30 days prior to review	
Reviewers	Semester 3	Site visit; provide final copy of report to DPAA within 30 days of visit	DPAA distributes report to dean and chair	
Academic Unit	30 days from receipt of reviewers' report	Submits unit's response to external review to Dean, DPAA, SVPGPE and Provost	Dean, chair, DPAA, SVPGPE, and provost meet to decide on plan forward	
Dean, chair, DPAA and Provost	Within six weeks of receiving response to review	Implementation agreement	Chair provides dean with annual reports on progress	

## Appendix A

The Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness (IRE) supports departmental Academic Program Review by providing department-specific information related to its students, faculty and resources. This information will assist the department in addressing specific criteria within two Middle States Standards:

- 1) Standard III: Design and Delivery of the Student Learning Experience
- 2) Standard V: Educational Effectiveness Assessment

Unless otherwise noted, IRE will provide a set of standard summary tables and charts displaying seven-year trends for information listed below (when available). Excel files will also be provided to the department for any customization necessary. It is noted below where the information provided relates to a Middle States Standard.

### Student Information –

- Entering freshmen by major, with average high school GPA, rank, and SAT
- Student enrollment data (*Standard III, 1.*)
  - Majors and minors by gender and ethnicity
  - Majors by residency
  - Undergraduate and graduate student credit hours
- Undergraduate retention and 4-, 5-, and 6-year graduation rate data for first-time full-time freshmen by first academic plan or last academic plan in the department (2007 cohort through the cohort with a second fall retention rate or a four-year graduation rate) (*Standard V, 3.g.*)
- 4-, 5-, and 6-year graduation rates for first-time full-time freshmen by major, comparing department to college and university cohorts (2007 cohort through the cohort with a four-year graduation rate) (*Standard V, 3.g.*)
- Degrees granted by ethnicity and major based on IPEDS Completions Report (*Standard V, 3.g.*)
- Post-graduation activities based on the results of the annual Career Plans Survey (*Standard V, 2.b. and Standard V, 3.g.*)
- Student quality (i.e., undergraduate GPA, GRE), application trends, admission trends, enrollment trends, graduation rates, and time to degree for all graduate programs in the unit. (*Standard III, 1. and Standard V, 3.g.*)

### Human and Fiscal Resource Information –

- Faculty by tenure status, rank, gender and ethnicity (*Standard III, 2.c.*)
- Instructional costs and productivity data based on the Delaware Study, comparing department data to UD college and University results and national benchmarks (five-year trends provided) (*Standard V, 3.e.*)
- Faculty Scholarly Productivity data from Academic Analytics<sup>®</sup> [<http://www.academicanalytics.com/>] (using the most recent database coverage years) A standard report comparing the department to AAU public institutions and University of Delaware comparator institutions will be provided. Department chairs may be credentialed to have access to the Academic Analytics web portal to view and download additional detail level data on their faculty scholarly and research activity, as well as additional data visualizations. (*Standard III, 2.b. and Standard III, 6.*)

## **Appendix B Self-Study Template**

- I. Introduction
- II. Overall Goals (includes description of the strategic plan and goals for achieving inclusive excellence)
- III. Undergraduate and Graduate Programs
- IV. Faculty Research and Scholarship
- V. Outreach and Engagement
- VI. Staffing, Workload, and Organization
- VII. Facilities and Other Resources
- VIII. Summary
- IX. Appendices
  - Appendix A. Unit Strategic Plan
  - Appendix B. College Strategic Plan
  - Appendix C. University Strategic Plan
  - Appendix D. Inclusive Excellence: An Action Plan for Diversity at the University of Delaware
  - Appendix E. Data provided by Institutional Research and Effectiveness
  - Appendix F. Curriculum Vitae of Faculty
  - Appendix G. Other documents (e.g., workload policies, tenure and promotion policies, faculty merit metrics)

**Appendix C**  
**Sample Schedule for the External Review Team Visit**

**Sunday**

- 1:00 to 4:00 pm External Review Team checks into hotel
- 4:00 to 6:00 pm Review Team meets with the dean, deputy dean (associate dean, as appropriate), deputy provost for Academic Affairs, and senior vice provost for Graduate and Professional Education. Senior administration provides overall context for the review and specific objectives for the review.
- 6:00 to 8:00 pm Dinner. Review Team meets to frame the questions the members have for the various groups they will meet on Monday. (Alternative plan: department chair/school director and other unit leaders may meet with Review Team for dinner and then Review Team uses Monday breakfast as time to frame questions for the remainder of their visit.)

**Monday**

- 7:30 to 9:00 am Breakfast with the department chair/school director and other unit leaders.
- 9:00 to 9:30 am Travel to department
- 9:30 to 10:45 am Meeting with faculty
- 11:00 to 11:45 am Meeting with department/school support staff
- 12:00 to 1:15 pm Lunch with graduate students
- 1:30 to 2:45 pm Meeting with faculty
- 3:00 to 4:00 pm Meeting with undergraduate students
- 4:15 to 5:30 pm Meeting with faculty
- 6:00 to 8:00 pm Dinner. Meeting with faculty/unit leaders. Final opportunity to clarify issues.

**Tuesday**

- 7:30 to 9:00 am Breakfast with the team to plan report.
- 9:00 to 12:00 pm Opportunity for Review team to draft report.
- 12:30 to 2:00 pm Discussion with senior administration. Lunch with provost, deputy provost for Academic Affairs, senior vice provost for Graduate and Professional Education, dean, and deputy dean (associate dean, where appropriate).

## **Appendix D External Review Report**

The report should place the unit under review in the larger context of University academic priorities and of developments in the unit's discipline. It should address the major issues facing the unit, comment on the compatibility of the unit's purpose, achievements, plans and goals with those of the college and University academic priorities, and suggest strategies for achieving unit and University goals. To accomplish these purposes, the report should consider the following points as appropriate to the mission of the unit.

### **Overall Status of the Department**

- In comparison to similar departments in top research institutions, what are the unit's strengths and weaknesses? What are the major issues or challenges facing the unit?
- What will the unit have to do to achieve or maintain national or international prominence in the next decade? How does the unit compare to the top departments in its field?
- Do the leaders, faculty and staff in the unit have an accurate assessment of the unit's strengths and weaknesses and of its standing in the field?
- What are the most important actions the unit can take to improve without new resources?
- Is the unit trying to do too much? What should it not be doing in order to free up resources to achieve/maintain excellence in strategic areas?
- What should the University do to aid the unit in its competitiveness?

### **Goals and Plans**

- Does the unit have clear goals and a clear strategic plan for achieving those goals? How well do the unit's goals align with the strategic plans of the college and the University?
- How well do the unit's inclusive excellence goals and progress toward those goals align with the University's Inclusive Excellence action plan?

### **Undergraduate Programs**

- Does the unit have clear goals for student learning, strong measures to assess learning, and clearly articulated plans to improve the program based on the assessment of student learning outcomes?
- Is there evidence of excellence in instruction?
- Is strong advisement and mentoring available for all majors?
- What should the unit do to achieve or maintain excellence in undergraduate education, particularly if no new resources are available?

## **Graduate Programs**

- Is the graduate program successful at recruiting highly qualified and diverse students?
- Does the unit have clear goals for student learning, strong measures to assess learning, and clearly articulated plans to improve the program based on the assessment of student learning outcomes?
- Do students receive strong mentoring and complete their degrees in a timely manner?
- What should the unit do to achieve or maintain excellence in its graduate programs, particularly if no new resources are provided?

## **Faculty and Staff**

- Is there evidence that faculty have substantially increased the level and impact of their scholarly quality and productivity?
- Are faculty generating a level of external funding appropriate to the discipline/field of study?
- Are promotion and tenure policies and workload policies appropriate to the unit's mission and aspirations?
- Is the unit successfully hiring and promoting individuals who contribute to the excellence of the unit?
- Does the unit provide development and training programs to faculty and staff?

## **Leadership and Management of Unit**

- Does the unit's leadership work effectively to ensure the unit's smooth functioning?
- Does the unit have a strategic plan that is endorsed by the faculty, aligned with the College's and University's long-range plans, and used as the basis for annual planning?
- Does the unit use its current resources and facilities efficiently and effectively?

## **Appendix E**

### **Instructions for College and Department/School Administrative Assistants**

These are general guidelines for what needs to happen in the college and department or school. Each college handles the logistical details differently. In some colleges, the arrangements are handled by the dean's office; in others, the department makes the arrangements. The department chair/school director should consult with the dean's office to find out who takes responsibility for each action in their college.

#### **1. Make hotel accommodations for the external reviewers.**

Once the list of APR reviewers has been approved by the Office of the Provost, the dean's office/unit office will make reservations for the EXTERNAL committee members at the Courtyard Marriott (302-797-0900). Typically the administrative assistants will apply the charge to their procurement card, and it will be allocated to the account for the deputy provost for Academic Affairs when the charge is reconciled in WORKS. Costs should include room and food charges only. The appropriate account code may be obtained from the Office of the Provost (contact the administrative assistant to the deputy provost for Academic Affairs).

#### **2. Email each committee member, include the hotel confirmation.**

Below is a template that may be used to forward the confirmation email from the hotel to the committee member:

Dear Dr. XXX,

Below is the confirmation for your hotel stay while you are in Newark, Delaware for the Academic Program Review for the [department name]. Please send me the details of your travel arrangements as soon as you have made them so I can reserve a shuttle to pick you up from the airport/train station and bring you to campus.

You will need to arrive early Sunday afternoon (date). There will be a working meeting from 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. with college and university leaders and a working dinner for the review team at 6:00 p.m. Your visit will conclude on Tuesday (date) after the exit lunch so you should not plan to leave campus before 1:45 p.m. that day.

The department should have its self-study materials ready to send to you no later than four weeks prior to your visit. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call. We look forward to your visit to the University of Delaware!

Thank you,

[Signature]

#### **3. Sunday dinner and Tuesday exit lunch.**

The dean's office/unit office will make the arrangements for (a) meeting room and snacks at the Sunday afternoon working meeting at the Courtyard Marriott, (b) dinner Sunday evening, and (c) the Tuesday exit lunch at the Courtyard Marriott.

#### **4. Shuttles/taxi service.**

After the external reviewers have provided their travel information, the dean's office/unit office should arrange for a shuttle service or limo service to transport the reviewers from the airport or train station. Typically they will meet the guest at the airport in the baggage claim area holding a sign with their name. The Dean's office/unit office will need to provide the service with name and cell phone number of the guest in case any problems arise.

Typically, the return trips can be combined with the same pick-up for all the passengers leaving from campus and going to the same airport/train station.

After the confirmation is received for each review team member, the dean's office/unit office is responsible for sending the information to the review team member.

#### **5. Prepare the schedule.**

The dean's office/unit office is responsible for preparing the schedule. If the dean's office prepares the schedule, it should be done in conjunction with the department chair/school director. Copies of the final schedule should be added to members' folders for Sunday. Please see Appendix C for a sample schedule.

#### **6. Prepare emergency contact list for the visit.**

The dean's office is responsible for preparing a one-page list of the college leaders (dean, deputy dean, department chair/school director) and Review Team members' addresses, emails, and contact phone numbers, including a cell phone number in case of emergencies during the visit. This list should be included in the members' folders for Sunday.

#### **7. Self-study distribution.**

Please distribute the unit's self-study document as follows:

The department/school will send electronically to each of the review team members, the dean, deputy dean (and where appropriate, associate dean), provost, deputy provost for academic affairs, senior vice-provost for graduate and professional studies (for units with graduate programs) and the administrative assistant for the deputy provost for academic affairs.

Hard copies:

To the dean's office: one copy for each external review team member, one copy for the internal review team member, one for the dean and one for the deputy dean (and where appropriate, one for the associate dean).

To the Office of the Provost: one copy for the provost, one copy for the deputy provost for academic affairs and one copy for the senior vice provost for graduate and professional education (where appropriate).