

## Academic Program Review Guidelines

The Academic Program Review (APR) provides academic departments and programs with the opportunity to assess the quality of their teaching, research, and service/engagement activities, as appropriate for the department and/or program. Further, the APRs evaluate the effectiveness of their use of resources and determine their progress toward meeting the unit's, college's, and University of Delaware's goals. If a department or program regularly undergoes an accreditation process, that accreditation can simultaneously be used to fulfill the department or program APR requirement. If all three areas are not addressed in the accreditation, the program or department must meet that requirement independently of the accreditation report.

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. Broadly, departments and programs may use the APR to improve their function via:

1. Assessment and 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.
2. Direction for hiring plans, budget setting, resource allocation, and development priorities.
3. Analysis of curriculum effectiveness and its impact on students.
4. Assessment of faculty productivity, as a whole, to allow a candid appraisal of the unit and consideration of areas of strength and improvement. Further it can re-evaluate workload policies and assignments of the department as a whole.
5. External review of the unit to assess past success and potential future directions.

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 the Faculty Senate must jointly select units for review. Units are scheduled to be reviewed once every seven years. The review process should be collaborative with frequent conversations between the department, college, and the Office of the Provost. The deputy provost for academic affairs, in conjunction with the Faculty Senate Academic Priorities and Presidential Advisory Committee, 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 and will be posted on the Office of the Provost website. Prior to the beginning of each fall and spring semester, the Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness confirms with the unit leader and the dean of the appropriate college their participation in the self-study in the following semester.

The Office of the Provost website will maintain guidelines on the recommended process which academic departments and programs should follow. It will be the responsibility of the Office of the Provost in conjunction with the Faculty Senate's Academic Priorities and Presidential Advisory Committee (APPA) to review these recommended procedures every two years. Other Faculty Senate responsibilities will also include: 1) The Committee on Committees and Nomination will select one reviewer from the University of Delaware Faculty, 2) Within 30 days of the Provost's receipt of the external reviewers' report, APPA will receive and review the document and provide a written report to the Provost, and 3) after the Provost receives the external reviewers' report and response letters (including the APPA letter), he/she may schedule a meeting with APPA once a semester to review the reports (with emphasis on academic program assessment) and provide any independent recommendations.

The APR procedures must be conducted in the following order:

1. **Specific objectives** of the review must be clarified and agreed upon by both the unit faculty and the administration at the beginning of the process. This should be done at a faculty meeting of the unit.
2. **Program analytics.** The unit receives a standard package of data from the Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness (see "Supplemental Material" housed on the Faculty Senate website to provide recommendations on process). These data include demographic, enrollment, retention, and graduation information on undergraduate and graduate students. In cases where analytics are used, the faculty within the unit must work with IR to create the faculty profile and the list of comparable units for comparison. If additional data is needed, the unit will work with the University of Delaware's Office for Institutional Research and Effectiveness to secure this information.
3. **Self-study.** Each unit must conduct a self-study that is responsive to the specific objectives of the review. Each self-study must include the following sections (and see "Supplemental Material" for a recommended template process)
  - a. **Introduction:** Describe how the self-study was conducted, and in particular, how faculty, staff, and students were involved in the self-study process.
  - 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:** Depending on the organization of the unit, undergraduate, graduate and certificate programs, as well as professional non-credit programs: Provide a statement of student learning objectives for each 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.
  - d. **Faculty Teaching:** Provide teaching workload allocations, and number of students in courses. Provide information about how teaching quality is assessed and how the faculty use the information to improve their teaching.
  - e. **Faculty Research and Scholarship:** Describe faculty research and scholarship activities within the unit. Include a two-to-five-page curriculum vitae for each unit faculty member in the appendices. Discuss areas of research strength, challenges, and achievable plans to improve the research and scholarship profile of the unit.
  - f. **Service and Engagement:** Describe and provide an assessment of all faculty and unit service and engagement activities. Describe the nature of these efforts, their contribution to the academic mission of the unit, and their impact on and value to the University and the community.

- g. **Staffing, Workload, and Organization:** Describe and 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. Detail the processes and support for faculty development and mentoring.
  - h. **Facilities and Other Resources:** Describe and 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.
  - i. **Summary:** Summarize the strengths, challenges, and opportunities of the unit. Identify the unit's priorities for improvement. What activities or programs would the unit consider dropping and adding to invest in areas that would have substantial impact on enhancing the unit?
- 4. **External Review Team.** Each review is conducted by a review team, composed of five members, all from disciplines related to the unit under review. The unit will suggest at least eight potential external reviewers. The list should include brief explanations of why each individual is being 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. Reviewers who are leaders in their field should be selected; faculty and administrators (e.g., department chairs) from prominent institutions should be included whenever possible. The Office of the Provost will select the four external reviewers. The fifth reviewer will be 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 "Supplemental Material".
- 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 "Supplemental Material". The review team will provide a final draft to the unit no later than 30 days after the completion of the visit.
- 6. **Response to the review team report.** The unit shall prepare a response to the review team report and submit a response to the dean. The response should 1) address the recommendations from the external team and any other issues the unit raised in the self-study, 2) include a set of actions it will take to move forward, and 3) describe 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. 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. The dean will write a separate response letter after receipt of the unit's letter. Both letters will be submitted to the Provost. The dean's letter shall be provided to the unit and shared with unit faculty members.
- 7. **APR Review by Faculty Senate Academic Priorities and Presidential Advisory (APPA)**

**Committee.** This committee is charged with the responsibility of participating in Academic Program Reviews, which are the function of the Provost Office in conjunction with the Faculty Senate. Within 30 days of the Provost's receipt of the report, APPA will review the document and provide a written report to the Provost. After the Provost receives the APR and response letters (including the APPA response letter), he/she may schedule a meeting with APPA once a semester to review the reports (with emphasis on academic program assessment) and provide any independent recommendations.

8. **Implementation agreement.** The provost (or designee) meets with the dean (or designee) 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 review by the APPA Committee. The provost should write a final review letter with copies supplied to the Unit, the dean, and the Faculty Senate. The unit leader provides annual follow-up reports to the dean regarding progress on the implementation plan.

### Recommended Time Line

Agent	Time	Action	Follow-up
Institutional Research & Effectiveness	One month prior to Semester 1 (each fall and spring semester)	Confirm upcoming APRs with Deans and unit leader, Faculty Senate APPA Committee	Deans and unit leaders agree on timing of the APR; IRE assembles standard data for each unit
Academic units	Semester 1	Begin self-study	
Institutional Research and Effectiveness	Early in 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, unit leader and APPA
Academic Unit	30 days from receipt of reviewers' report	Submits unit's response to external review to Dean, DPAA, SVPGPE, APPA, and Provost	APPA provides independent review. Dean, chair, DPAA, SVPGPE, and provost meet to decide on plan forward
Dean, chair, DPAA and Provost	Within six weeks of receiving APPA 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 and program Academic Program Reviews 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.

### Recommended 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.)
- Data from unit's annual assessments of the learning goals for each undergraduate and graduate degree program.

### 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 from any analytics software/company/database may be used only if 1) all unit faculty members are consulted and 2) all unit faculty members are provided all data and comparisons from such an analysis. A standard report comparing the unit to current peer and aspirational peer institutions will be provided. In this analysis, faculty workload assigned to research should be reported for both the unit under review and the current and aspirational peer institutions.

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

- I. Introduction
- II. Overall Goals (includes a description of the strategic plan and goals for achieving inclusive excellence)
- III. Undergraduate and Graduate Programs
- IV. Faculty Research and Scholarship
- V. Faculty and Unit Service 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 (or 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. See Process section 2 for development of written set of agreed to objectives.
- 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: unit chair/director and other unit leaders may meet with the 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 unit chair/director and other unit leaders.
- 9:00 to 9:30 am Travel to unit
- 9:30 to 10:45 am Meeting with faculty
- 11:00 to 11:45 am Meeting with unit support staff
- 12:00 to 1:15 pm Lunch with graduate students (if applicable)
- 1:30 to 2:45 pm Meeting with faculty
- 3:00 to 4:00 pm Meeting with undergraduate students (if applicable)
- 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 prominent institutions with similar workload allocations, 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/units 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 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?

#### **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?

#### **Faculty and Staff**

- Is there evidence that faculty have substantial impact in their scholarly quality and productivity?
- Are faculty generating a level of external funding appropriate to the discipline/field of study, both overall and within the context of the resources provided by the University?
- Is the teaching load of the faculty appropriate and comparable to the teaching load of faculty in other

institutions?

- Is the service load of the faculty appropriate and comparable to the service load of faculty in other institutions?
- 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?
- Are sufficient training and mentoring programs available to faculty and staff at all levels?

### **Leadership and Management of Unit**

- Does the unit's leadership work effectively to ensure the unit's proper and 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?
- Are there any areas of concern where the unit's leadership is clearly under resourced to carry out their mission?

## **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 Concur. 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 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 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 education (for units with graduate programs), and the Faculty Senate Academic Priorities and Presidential Advisory Committee.

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).