

# Guidelines for Academic Program Review

June 23, 2006

Texas Christian University

## Procedure for Academic Program Review

### Purpose

The Academic Program Review is designed to be a collaborative process that will enhance the mission of Texas Christian University by providing opportunities for programs and departments to assess, share, and improve our educational impact. Each program review is an opportunity for the department and the campus to take a comprehensive look at the unit, to clearly state and then evaluate strengths and weaknesses, and to assess its future. Such a process allows Texas Christian University to engage with exciting new paths of educational inquiry and discovery, while also supporting quality and distinction in each academic area.

The centerpiece of the academic review process is the departmental self-study. It is expected that this self-study will elaborate the departmental ethos and provide an opportunity for reflection and critical evaluation of the department's scholarly directions, academic programs, and influence on student learning. As a synthesis document, the self-study will provide the basis for the Peer Review process. The self-study should involve an assessment of departmental strengths and weaknesses, and a strategy to meet the opportunities and challenges that the unit anticipates over the next six or so years.

### Principles

- The program review is part of an overall assessment plan that provides a portrait of program strengths and limitations and should result in program improvement.
- The process should be broadly participatory.
- The process should facilitate planning in areas such as assessment planning, curricular development, scholarship activities, and resource allocation.
- The program review process allows TCU to account for its use of resources, develop support among its various constituencies, and provide collegial review.

### Schedule of Academic Program Reviews

Undergraduate and graduate academic programs usually will be reviewed every six years. In no case shall the time between reviews exceed ten years. Programs that have attained professional accreditation normally will be reviewed in accordance with the schedule set by the accrediting agency. Wherever possible, both undergraduate and graduate components of a program will be reviewed simultaneously. The Academic Program Review process will begin in January with naming of the program review committee and will be completed by November 1<sup>st</sup>.

The Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs (VCAA) with the assistance of the academic deans will establish a master calendar for program review. The Office for Assessment and Quality Enhancement (OA&QE) will maintain the program review calendar ([www.assessment.tcu/ProgramReviewCalendar.htm](http://www.assessment.tcu/ProgramReviewCalendar.htm)). Any adjustments or modifications to the existing review calendar require approval from the appropriate academic dean and immediate notification to the OA&QE.

## **Review Process: Phase I**

Notification of Departments Scheduled for Academic Program Review – By April 1<sup>st</sup>, each department chair and respective dean will be notified that they are scheduled for an Academic Program Review during the next academic year. Department chairs are encouraged, however, to check the OA&QE website to check on the Review Calendar ([www.assessment.tcu/ProgramReviewCalendar.htm](http://www.assessment.tcu/ProgramReviewCalendar.htm) ).

Establishment of Review Committee. The dean of the college shall establish a review committee in consultation with the appropriate department chair. Each review committee must consist of at least three members from within TCU. The review committee members will have no official affiliation with the program under review and at least one member must be from outside the program's school/college. The review committee may include no more than one non-faculty member. The dean, in consultation with the department chair, will designate one faculty member of the committee to serve as chair. In addition, the review committee may add supplemental committee members in non-voting status. The Dean will communicate the chair and members of the committee to the OA&QE by January 1<sup>st</sup>.

The review committee will construct a calendar for the program review and will be responsible for its maintenance. The voting members of the committee will conduct the review and write a formal report detailing their findings and substantive recommendations and suggestions.

Academic Self-Study. The program under review must compile an Academic Program Self-Study that includes the basic elements outlined below. The self-study is critically important to the review process. It should be viewed as an opportunity to explore and reflect upon the department's directions, celebrate the departmental achievements, and consider the learning outcomes of students. It should involve a description of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges for the department. Because of its nature, the self-study requirements are flexible, allowing for the department to determine for itself the critical aspects and important challenges that face the unit. This Self-Study must be submitted to the OA&QE by February 1<sup>st</sup> of the review year. Programs that have attained professional accreditation may submit their accreditation or reaffirmation materials to fulfill this requirement upon recommendation of the dean and approval of the VCAA.

The Review. The review committee will receive the departmental Self-Study from the OA&QE by February 15<sup>th</sup> of the review year along with a listing of potential issues. The Review Committee will analyze the Self-Study, hold meetings with program faculty, staff, and students to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the program, and delineate issues stemming from these resource materials. From this, the Review Committee will write a draft report with substantive suggestions and recommendations. The Review Committee will submit this draft to the OA&QE by September 1<sup>st</sup> of the review year. A meeting with the Dean, department, chair, members of the Review

Committee, and the Director of the OA&QE will be scheduled to discuss the draft report of the committee's findings. The Departmental Self-Study and the final report of the review committee will be forwarded to the department chair, the dean of the college, and the VCAA no later than October 1st.

The Report and Response. A formal briefing will be scheduled with the department chairperson, the dean, the Director of the OA&QE, and the VCAA to discuss the review committee's findings. The program under review will submit a formal action plan addressing the review committee's recommendations (no later than 30 academic days after the briefing) to the dean and the OA&QE. The dean of the college and the VCAA will, with discussion, approve the action plan and create a schedule and method of evaluation for assessing the success of the plan. The approved action plan will be given to the Department Chair and the OA&QE. The action plan will form the foundation of the next review cycle as well as guide planning and interim assessments such as the department annual report and program assessment plans.

## **Review Process: Phase II**

Indication for Phase II. The dean and/or the VCAA may deem it necessary to further evaluate the program based on the findings of the Phase I review or the review of the action plan. They may extend the program review to include an external review component. This does not preclude a department chair from requesting an external review at any time during the process, subject to approval from the dean of the college. Costs associated with external review are born by the Academic Affairs office.

Establishment of External Review Team. The dean and VCAA, following consultation with the department chair, will select the external reviewer(s). The external reviewer(s) must come from similar programs at accredited institutions. Team members will have no official affiliation with the program under review. The team will submit a formal report of the findings and substantive recommendations and suggestions.

External Review Criteria. Criteria for the external program review will be the same as those established for the internal review. The dean will make the criteria available to the external team members. The Academic Program Portfolio from Phase I will also be made available to the external review team upon their selection. As in the internal review, programs that have attained professional accreditation may submit their reaffirmation document to fulfill this requirement, but must provide any supplemental information requested by the review team.

External Review Process. The external reviewer(s) will review the Academic Program Portfolio. The dean, in consultation with the department chair, will schedule a two-day visit to the campus by the external reviewer(s). On the first day of the campus visit, the external reviewer(s) will hold separate meetings with the dean, the department chair, the VCAA, program faculty, and students to discuss the program and pose questions that may arise from the materials. On the second day of the campus visit, the external reviewer(s) will meet with the appropriate dean and department chair to discuss the

preliminary findings. Within 30 days, the external reviewer(s) will submit a draft written report of its findings to the dean of the college. The dean of the college, in consultation with the department chair, will review the draft report and, where appropriate, suggest revisions to the external review team within 30 days. A final report from the external team will be forwarded to the department chair, the dean of the college, and the VCAA no later than 90 days from the date of the campus visit.

**Report and Response.** A formal briefing will be held to discuss the external review team's findings with the department chair, dean, director of the OA&QE, and the VCAA. The program under review will submit a formal action plan addressing the review committee's recommendations no later than 60 academic days after the briefing. The dean of the college and the VCAA will approve the action plan and create a schedule and method of evaluation for assessing the success of the plan. The action plan will form the foundation of the next review cycle as well as guide planning and interim assessments such as the department annual report and program assessment plans.

### **Academic Program Self-Study<sup>1</sup>**

Critical elements for the program review will be determined by the dean and department chair and approved by the VCAA, but the Academic Program Self-Study must address, at a minimum, the areas noted below.

#### **1. Brief History/Profile of the Academic Program**

A. Provide a brief overview of the history of the program including such things as changes in administrative organization; dates new degree programs were established; significant additions to the faculty; and major changes in program direction.

#### **Required Appendix Item:**

A. Catalog copy (including degree requirements)

#### **2. Program Mission/Goals/Learning Outcomes/Assessment Results**

- Describe the mission of the unit and its relation to the mission of the college and the university.
- Describe the critical elements of the program, e.g. degrees, majors, tracks, concentrations, etc.
- Describe program goals/learning outcomes and the role of faculty in formulating the goals/outcomes.
- Describe the process for assessing the extent to which goals/learning outcomes are met.

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<sup>1</sup> generally not to exceed 15 pages, excluding appendices, e.g., workload, faculty profile; TCU website may be referenced for such materials as bulletin information, mission

- Describe the analysis of the assessment results for the past two years (at a minimum) and indicate how those have been used to make academic and/or other decisions that will impact student learning.
- **Required Appendix Items:**
  - A. Current program assessment plan (or access to the WEAVE Online system),
  - B. Assessment results for the past two years (or access to the WEAVE Online system), and
  - C. Previous program review documents (if applicable)

### **3. Student Recruitment, Retention, and Placement**

- Describe student recruitment, retention, graduation, and support practices, e.g., recruitment initiatives, financial aid, course advising, mentoring, career advisement and placement effort. Evaluate the effectiveness of these strategies noting areas for improvement. As appropriate and useful, discuss these activities for both undergraduate and graduate students.
- Summarize student quality indicators for your program, e.g., scores on standardized tests, grade point averages, retention, graduation and placement rates, and, if applicable, undergraduate institution.
- **Required Appendix Items:**
  - A. Most recent Student Profile (available from Institutional Research), and
  - B. Table listing program graduates for past three years with placement/employment and current contact information.

### **4. Faculty and Teaching/Research/Service Quality**

- Note outstanding achievements/contributions, e.g., leadership in national professional/research organizations in the discipline, awards for outstanding teaching, scholarship and creative activity, external funding for individuals or groups, success in recruiting faculty and staff from underrepresented groups.
- Summarize the process for determining faculty salary and the criteria used for awarding merit pay. The department chair and dean should review salaries and be able to report that salaries are generally appropriate for the faculty in the unit.
- **Required Appendix Items:**
  - A. Table of average and median salaries by rank. (when the number of faculty in rank is < 3 report salary data in the aggregate),
  - B. Faculty professional statements (Tenured/tenure-track faculty must submit a one-page professional statement describing his/her research, teaching, and service activities (both institutional and community-based) in the program).

## 5. Resources

- Describe the physical areas for instruction and research. Include usual classrooms and a brief overview of laboratory, technological resources, and other equipment in teaching and research areas. Note strengths, limitations, and possible resolutions.
- Review the departmental budget in terms of history, constraints, immediate needs linked to goals, etc.

## 6. Summary and Future Plans

- Describe the vision for the program over the next five to ten years in terms of curriculum, quality/quantity of students, faculty productivity, etc.
- Describe any limiting factors not previously discussed that prevent, or will prevent, the program from fulfilling its mission and/or achieving its goals/learning outcomes.
- Describe how the program can overcome these limiting factors to fulfill the vision outlined above.
- Should additional resources become available, specify three to five priority actions for the next five years. Identify specific outcomes to be accomplished with the additional resources.
- Assuming existing resources, identify specific outcomes to be accomplished prior to the next program review.

## Calendar of Program Review Events

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| April 1 <sup>st</sup> of Prior Year        | Notification of Program Review                  |
| January 1 <sup>st</sup>                    | Review Committee Named                          |
| February 1 <sup>st</sup>                   | Self Study Submitted                            |
| February 15 <sup>th</sup>                  | Self Study Given to Review Committee            |
| September 1 <sup>st</sup>                  | Draft of Program Review Results Completed       |
| Prior to October 1 <sup>st</sup>           | Meeting with Dept. Chair, Dean, and Review Team |
| October 1 <sup>st</sup> – 15 <sup>th</sup> | Briefing with Dean, VCAA, and Dept. Chair       |
| 30 Academic Days Later                     | Action Plan Due to Dean, VCAA, and OA&QE        |