

APPENDIX H

External Program Review Guide

Program Review Overview

Every department or academic program at Texas A&M University-Texarkana undergoes the academic program review process at least once every seven years. The program review is used for quality improvement of systematic assessment of A&M-Texarkana's academic programs and detects areas of improvement in education, scholarship, and service. A departmental review consists of two phases: a self-study by the department faculty and an evaluation by one or two external reviewers.

Part 1: The Self-Study

No less than every seven years, each undergraduate and graduate program will initiate a self-study. Closely related programs, defined as sharing the same 4-digit CIP code, may be reviewed in a consolidated manner. Master's and doctoral programs in the same discipline must be reviewed simultaneously. Baccalaureate programs may be reviewed at the same time as graduate programs at the discretion of the institution.

The self-study will be part of a program review process that focuses on program performance, continuous program improvement, the identification of problems and solutions, and evidence of student-learning outcomes. Each program will conduct the self-study, which will then be sent to the Dean of the College for approval. After approval the program will forward the self-study to the external reviewers *not less than one month prior to the site visit*.

The self-study will address the following:

1. **Program Focus:** A description of the fundamental questions that organize and motivate the current teaching, research, outreach and other scholarly activities of the programs;
2. **Curriculum Analysis:** Analysis including degree plans and course descriptions with any noted areas for improvement on course offerings and curriculum coverage.
3. **Program Assessment:** An overview of program assessment with noted improvement areas.
4. **Critical Analysis:** Current state of the work of the department, including graduate and undergraduate teaching, research, and outreach, and other quantitative information as required by the dean;
5. **Specific issues:** Any issues the department wishes the external committee to address and any other expectations the department has of the evaluation committee;
6. **Ongoing Plan Directly Linked to the Budgeting Process:** A plan including staffing and resource allocation, and its relationship to the fiscal guidelines supplied by the dean.

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Doctoral programs require additional information in the self-study:

1. Student retention rates for program
2. Student enrollment for program
3. Graduate licensure rates (if applicable)
4. Alignment of program with stated program and institutional goals and purposes
5. Program curriculum and duration in comparison to peer programs
6. Program facilities and equipment
7. Program finance and resources
8. Program administration
9. Faculty Qualifications

Master's programs require additional information in the self-study:

1. Faculty qualifications
2. Faculty publications
3. Faculty external grants
4. Faculty teaching load
5. Faculty/student ratio
6. Student demographics
7. Student time-to-degree
8. Student publications and awards
9. Student retention rates
10. Student graduation rates
11. Student enrollment
12. Graduate licensure rates (if applicable)
13. Graduate placement (i.e. employment or further education/training)
14. Number of degrees conferred annually
15. Alignment of program with state program and institutional goals and purposes
16. Program curriculum and duration in comparison to peer programs
17. Program facilities and equipment
18. Program finance and resources
19. Program administration

Graduate programs will submit three separate documents to THECB: Internal Program Review, Independent (External) Program Review, and Response Document.

Graduate programs may submit reviews performed for reasons of programmatic licensure or accreditation as their program review as long as it meets THECB requirements for program review.

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Part 2: The External Review

The external reviewers will consist of specialists in the field who meet these qualifications:

- Doctoral programs must use two external reviewers who are employed by institutions of higher education outside of Texas.
- Master's programs must use at least one external reviewer who is employed by an institution of higher education outside of Texas.
- External Reviewers should not have been employed with A&M-Textarkana for a minimum of five years preceding the review.
- External reviewers must have expertise in the discipline.
- External reviewers must affirm that they have no conflict of interest related to the program under review.

The external reviewers will be asked to evaluate the department addressing the following topics:

1. **Department mission and key goals:** Briefly discuss insights and observations regarding the department's success in achieving its mission and strategic goals. Comment on the department's contribution to the College's broader organizational mission and strategic vision.
2. **Strengths:** Identify aspects of the department that advance the organization's capacity for building and sustaining performance excellence.
3. **Limitations:** identify aspects of the department that hinder the organization's capacity for building and sustaining performance excellence.
4. **Organizational challenges:** Discuss the key program/service, operational, resources, and campus environment challenges facing the department.
5. **Opportunities for improvement:** Provide recommendations for improving upon current strengths, addressing organizational limitations, and increasing the department's effectiveness and efficiency.
6. **Measuring performance results:** Address how successful the department is in determining intended student learning and development outcomes, and/or specific business and service outcomes, user satisfaction, financial performance, and other noteworthy performance results related to organizational effectiveness. Discuss the relevance of key performance measures the department uses to track results.
7. **Additional insights:** This session can be used to address any remaining questions or concerns raised in the self-study report or site visit that have not been discussed in other sections of the report.
8. **Concluding comments**

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On-campus Review Visit

Reviewers' expenses are usually covered by the respective college dean's office. The typical stipend is \$500-1000 plus expenses.

Doctoral programs require an on-site review. Master's and baccalaureate programs may bring external reviewers to campus for an on-site review or ask external reviewers to conduct the review remotely.

Sample Agenda

- Orientation Meeting with Dean of College, Dean of Graduate Program, Provost, Department chair
- Meetings with department faculty and students
- Lunch and/or dinner
- Meetings with faculty engaged in research or thesis or dissertation
- Exit Interview with Department Chair, Dean of College, Dean of Graduate Program, and other interested parties including invited faculty members
- Work or document review session
- Optional meetings with Director of Library, Assessment Coordinator/Associate Provost, Director of Online Education, Director of Off-site locations, as needed

Part 3: Response to the Review

Once the external reviewers have submitted their report and recommendations to improve the program, the program faculty and Dean will respond to the external review. Of particular importance is a response to the recommendations that the reviewers have made. Electronic and hard copies of the documents—the external reviewers' final report and the faculty response—are provided to the Dean of the College. The Dean is responsible for submitting the documents to the Office of Institutional Data Management, Provost Office, and Graduate Dean (if required).

Undergraduate Program Reviews must be submitted to the Office of Data Management by the deadline on the Undergraduate Program Review schedule.

Graduate Program Reviews must include evaluation of the external reviewers and actions the institution has taken or will take to improve the program. These reports must be submitted to the THECB by the deadline on the THECB web page. The Office of Institutional Data Management will be responsible for submitting reports to the THECB web portal.