

# Guidelines for Academic Program Review at Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis

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## GUIDELINES FOR ACADEMIC PROGRAM REVIEW AT IUPUI

### PURPOSE FOR PROGRAM REVIEW

*Academic Program Review* at Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI) is a collaborative process designed to bring to bear the judgment of respected colleagues in assessing and improving the quality of academic units. The Program Review process involves students, faculty, community members, school and campus administrators, and external specialists in the discipline in:

1. Gathering information about a program (i.e., a department, a school-wide unit such as a placement office, or a school);
2. Developing an evidence-based self-study organized in a manner to aid in the ongoing improvement of the program undergoing review;
3. Identifying appropriate members of a review team;
4. Reviewing and analyzing the self study information during a site visit by the review team;
5. Synthesizing all available information and making judgments about overall program quality and recommendations for improvement; and
6. Following up to ensure that the unit is fully supported in its efforts to address the outcomes of the review.

Program Review at IUPUI places emphasis on:

1. Involvement of campus administrators and faculty from IUPUI units other than the one undergoing review;
2. Linkages between the program and the community it serves; and
3. Connections between the review and improvement, planning, decision-making, and resource allocation at departmental, school, and campus levels.

These emphases ensure that the reviews contribute in a fundamentally important way to the attainment of the campus mission and that warranted recommendations for improvement stemming from them are carried out. Indeed, it is the emphasis on *internal improvements* that is the hallmark of IUPUI's history, tradition, and use of the program review process. Program review also contributes to enhancing the overall quality, reputation, and accountability of IUPUI by strengthening its programs through *external peer review*.

Program review at IUPUI increases the sense of shared purpose among its many diverse academic programs and reinforces the need for coordinated planning for the future by all campus units. In doing so, the program review process intentionally involves several key stakeholders:

1. The involvement of *faculty, staff, and students, and other stakeholders in programs undergoing review* provides an opportunity for those directly involved in the program to assess its strengths and areas for improvement;
2. The involvement of *school and campus administrators* in the reviews ensures that meaningful and effective follow-up for each review will occur;

3. The involvement of *IUPUI faculty from academic units outside the one being reviewed* promotes campus-wide understanding of the contributions of each unit to the mission of the institution;
4. The involvement of *external specialists from the discipline* brings to bear peer review and input on strengthening the program's purpose, reputation, and future directions; and
5. The involvement of *community members who have an interest in the program* emphasizes the importance of IUPUI's connections with the community it serves and, at the same time, furthers community understanding of the program and of IUPUI as well as civic engagement. It should be noted that the term *community* may be construed broadly in this context; some programs may perceive their community to be Indianapolis and central Indiana, others may wish to involve community members from throughout the State, while still others consider the region, the nation, or the world as their community.

## **RESPONSIBILITY FOR PROGRAM REVIEW**

All academic units will be scheduled for review over an eight-year period. If a school is a unit with no departments, the program review will focus at the school level. It may even be coordinated with the administrative review of the school dean. If a unit also experiences periodic peer review for purposes of accreditation, the internal and external review processes will be carefully coordinated to minimize duplication of faculty time and effort.

The dean of each school will be responsible for carrying out the reviews of programs within his or her school. The Director of Program Review, based in IUPUI's Office of Planning and Institutional Improvement, will develop and coordinate the overall review schedule and orient academic units using these *Guidelines*. The Program Review and Assessment Committee, which includes two representatives appointed by the dean of each school as well as representatives of Student Life and several other academic support units, will serve in an advisory role to the Director of Program Review in order to ensure the continuity and integrity of the review process and follow-up activities.

The Director of Program Review and other Planning and Institutional Improvement staff will work with the dean of the school, and the program chair if the unit is a department, to plan the self-study and review. The program chair and representative faculty and students will prepare a self-study in the year prior to the review using the "Options for Program Review Self-Study Development" outlined below. The self-study will be reviewed by a subcommittee of the campus Program Review and Assessment Committee in advance of the visit by the review team. The unit responsible for the self-study is expected to revise the self-study based on feedback received from this internal review.

Two or three external reviewers from the discipline will be chosen to take part in a site visit. Two internal reviewers (IUPUI faculty or staff) and a community member also will be selected to join the review team. The Chancellor and his/her staff, the dean of the school and her/his staff, chairs and interested faculty and staff from related departments, program advisory groups, faculty,

students, graduates, and other stakeholders will take part in the review according to a pre-arranged schedule developed by the dean and/or department chair in cooperation with the Director of Program Review. Participation by those who support the program as well as those who participate in it and benefit from its offerings serves to emphasize the openness of the review process.

## **OPTIONS FOR PROGRAM REVIEW SELF-STUDY DEVELOPMENT**

The self-study is a key element of the Program Review process. It is intended to give program faculty and staff an opportunity to conduct a critical evaluation of their current activities, including identifying specific strengths and areas for improvement. Several campus offices, including the Office of Information Management and Institutional Research and the University Library, will be able to assist faculty, staff, and students in the program undergoing review in assembling information for the self-study.

The self-study approaches that follow are meant to be suggestive rather than prescriptive. Each department will have additional information to include and may choose a different order for parts of the narrative. Options for developing the self-study document include:

1. Legacy approach
2. Discipline-specific approach
3. Mission-centric approach
4. Elements common for all self-study approaches

***Legacy Approach:*** This approach uses the suggested self-study outline in place since program review began at IUPUI in 1993. This permits programs to structure self-study documents in a similar manner for each internal program review, thereby providing an opportunity for program stakeholders to make comparisons from one self-study to another. The legacy approach is especially useful for programs that do not have a discipline-specific accrediting agency, as this provides a comprehensive analysis of a program's resources, processes, and outcomes. As such, this approach has widespread utility for the multitude of disciplines represented at IUPUI.

Elements of the legacy approach to organizing the self-study include:

### **Purposes, Reputation, Aspirations:**

- Brief History of the Program
  - Origin and significant events in its development
- Mission and Goals
  - Statement of mission, including relationship to school and campus missions
  - Specific goals in the areas of teaching and learning; research, scholarship, and creative activity; and civic engagement (attach planning documents and relevant policy statements)
  - Evidence of external demand and internal (campus) needs for the program
- Reputation
  - Estimate of the program's national ranking based upon numbers of graduates,

subsequent placement of graduates, level of support, or other criteria appropriate to the discipline. [Comment: This is an area worth additional conversation, I think. Is the number of graduates really a criterion for national ranking? I believe that it is used as a surrogate more often than I care to think, but surely national reputation is built more on the quality of graduates, e.g. how many undergraduates from this program go on to graduate work and where do they go, how many graduates of this program hold faculty positions, etc.]

#### **Resources:**

- Students (Data for the past 5 years, if available)
  - Characteristics of students majoring in the program (number, SAT, GRE, GMAT, LSAT scores, GPA, TOEFL scores for international students and other relevant characteristics)
  - Description of recruitment practices and admissions criteria for both undergraduate and graduate students including how judgments are made
  - Activities and resources that serve University College students who declare a major in the department but have not yet met the department's entrance requirements
  - Number of students who have declared a major in the department but failed to meet the department's entrance guidelines
  - Types and levels of financial assistance available
  - Numbers/percentages of women, minorities, international students in the population of majors. Description of any special programs to recruit minority students
  - Number of students in service courses

#### **Faculty**

- General description of faculty, including year hired, rank, teaching assignments
- Student-faculty ratios
- Faculty development opportunities available in past 5 years
- Evidence of faculty accomplishments, including participation in University College and other campus-wide student initiatives, and teaching evaluations obtained from students, graduates, and peers
- Description of criteria for evaluation/reward/recognition of faculty
- Curriculum vitae for each faculty member, including list of courses taught, description of advising/mentoring responsibilities, record of service, research interests, publications, and sources of external support

#### **Program Costs**

- Analysis of income and expenses associated with the program for the current or most recently completed academic/fiscal year
- Projected analysis for at least two successive years of program income and expenses with budgetary implications of any planned or anticipated changes in the program
- Analysis of how graduate students are funded
- Amount and sources for fellowships and fee scholarships for graduate students
- Description of how the department is organized for participation in externally funded grants
- Description of travel funds for students to attend and make presentations at national or international research meetings

## Library

- Description of library holdings and an assessment of their adequacy

## Physical Facilities

- Overview of the physical environment for the program, including instructional technologies, other equipment, and supplies

## **Program Processes:**

- Program Content
  - Distinctive characteristics of the program
  - Structure, breadth, and depth of curriculum
  - Interdisciplinary program offerings
  - Desired learning outcomes for students
  - Requirements for minors taken by graduate students in the department
  - How has the department curriculum responded to new directions in the discipline?
  - What is the philosophy that has driven the establishment of the core, elective, and minor (i.e., minors offered for students in other departments) curricula?
  - If the graduate curriculum is related to a professional curriculum that exists separately (e.g. the M.D. curriculum) describe the relationship.
- Student Support
  - Description of student course placement procedures, orientation, advising, tutoring, mentoring, monitoring of progress, out-of-class contact with faculty, involvement in research and independent study, internships/field experiences, professional organizations and clubs, and other out-of-class learning opportunities
  - Evidence that remedial requirements by the department in mathematics, reading, and English are appropriate and increase the likelihood of student success in departmental courses
  - Opportunities for student involvement in program planning and evaluation
  - Description of efforts made to place graduates
  - Description of efforts to support entering students, including first-year seminars and learning communities
  - Description of research opportunities for beginning honors students and for graduate students. What opportunities are there for students and faculty to discuss their research either formally or informally? How are graduate students encouraged to attend national/international research meetings?
  - Description of how and when advisory committees are selected or assigned for graduate students.
  - How and when are research advisors selected for graduate students?
  - Description of how graduate students are advised for placement
  - Description of special programs to advise graduate international students.
  - When do international students take additional English courses recommended following the EAP test?
  - Description of processes to help graduate students learn to teach
  - Description of how graduate students advance to candidacy for doctoral degrees

- Description of how and when graduate students select a thesis committee
- Description of how the department monitors each graduate student's progress
- Description of how students are selected to be teaching assistants

### **Outcomes:**

- Indicators of Program Quality
  - Evidence of student demand for entry/transfer into the program
  - Evidence of quality of applicant pool (GPA, SAT, GRE, MCAT, GMAT, LSAT scores, other relevant characteristics)
  - Evidence of student retention in the program
  - Number of graduates
  - Evidence of student mastery of generic skills (Principles of Undergraduate Learning and the Principles of Graduate & Professional Learning)
  - Evidence of student achievement of specified learning outcomes in the major
  - Evidence of student learning in service courses offered by the department
  - Evidence of placement of graduates in employment in the field or in further education.
  - Evidence of the placement of graduate students. List graduates by current position, title, and employing institution and identify mentor for graduate work
  - Evidence of program quality derived from surveys/interviews of current students, graduates, employers, community members or agencies
  - External recognition of students, faculty, or graduates including awards or honors and research awards
  - Evidence that honors students benefit from honors initiatives sponsored by the department
  - Publications by students in the program

***Discipline-specific Approach:*** Several programs at IUPUI are accredited by discipline-specific accrediting agencies. This approach permits an accredited program to organize the self-study in a manner consistent with external self-study documents, thereby aligning the internal program review with external frameworks and reporting requirements to avoid unnecessary duplication of effort. It also provides programs undergoing external accreditation an opportunity to leverage the program review process to help make improvements in advance of such discipline-specific accreditation cycles. External discipline-specific accreditation inherently seeks to establish a program's level and nature of compliance with stated criteria, while IUPUI's program review process actively promotes an improvement-oriented approach. Thus, for the purpose of program review, programs are encouraged to address in the self-study document both their compliance with externally-developed, discipline-specific criteria *and* areas identified for internal improvement. In doing so, the aims and purposes of both the internal and external reviews can be maximized. Please consult the discipline-specific accrediting agency for specific criteria used to evaluate program quality and effectiveness.

***Mission-centric Approach:*** Program reviews may be conducted to examine the broader capabilities and effectiveness of a particular program. This approach encourages the self-study document to be developed, organized, and aligned with the broad elements of IUPUI's mission. It

permits programs to leverage and use the information from annual planning and budgeting reports and other sources in the development of the self-study document, thereby encouraging the integration of data and information routinely collected and analyzed for inclusion in the program review process. The mission-centric approach also provides programs the ability to report on strengths and areas for improvement in a manner consistent with the full portfolio of activities in a given program and recognizes that several programs demonstrate their effectiveness in holistic ways.

Elements of the mission-centric approach to organizing the self-study include activities related to the following campus mission-related themes and goals:

**Excellence in Teaching and Learning:**

- Attract and support a better prepared and more diverse student population
- Support and enhance effective teaching
- Enhance undergraduate student learning and success
- Provide professional and graduate programs and support for graduate students and post-doctoral fellows

**Excellence in Research, Scholarship, and Creative Activity:**

- Conduct world-class research, scholarship, and creative activity relevant to Indianapolis, the state, and beyond
- Provide support to increase scholarly activity and external funding
- Enhance infrastructure for scholarly activity

**Excellence in Civic Engagement, Locally, Nationally, and Globally:**

- Enhance capacity for civic engagement
- Enhance civic activities, partnerships, and patient and client services
- Intensify commitment and accountability to Indianapolis, Central Indiana, and the state

***Elements Common to All Self-Study Options:*** Regardless of which approach is used to develop the self-study document, all program review self-studies should also contain the following elements:

- Stated goals and outcomes for the program
- Explicit connection of the program to IUPUI's mission, vision, values, and diversity statements
- Evidence of program effectiveness, with a particular emphasis on assessment of student learning outcomes
- Critical questions to which the program is seeking answers or guidance from its program reviewers
- Overall assessment of the program's strengths, areas for improvement, and plans for the future
- Evidence-based information that is organized in a logical, well-written manner

Please refer to the Appendix for a sample rubric for evaluating each of these elements.

## **THE FOLLOW-UP PROCESS**

Within a month of the date of the site visit, external and internal reviewers will collaborate to produce a single written report summarizing the strengths of the program and recommending changes if these seem appropriate. Within six months following receipt of the reviewers' report, the program faculty will draft a written response to the reviewers' report, indicating the actions to be taken to address each recommendation for which action is warranted.

The dean of the school will call a follow-up meeting within six months to a year of the date of the site visit for the purpose of discussing the program faculty's response to the reviewers' report. All appropriate representatives of the campus administration and the two internal reviewers will be invited to this meeting in order to bring to bear all the university resources that are needed to assist the unit in making essential improvements. In subsequent years, the program's progress in each targeted improvement area should be addressed in its annual planning/budgeting review. During the third or fourth year following the review, the Program Review and Assessment Committee will schedule a meeting with the department chair for discussion of the longer-term outcomes of the review.

## **ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS**

Program Review at IUPUI is designed to help programs demonstrate their effectiveness and to aid in ongoing improvement efforts. Considerable campus-level support is available to program stakeholders throughout the program review process. Questions concerning program review should be directed to the Director of Program Review in IUPUI's Office of Planning and Institutional Improvement ([www.planning.iupui.edu](http://www.planning.iupui.edu)).

**Appendix:**  
**Sample Rubric for Evaluating Elements Common to All Self-Study Approaches**

Stated goals and outcomes for the program:

- \_\_\_\_\_ Program has developed a set of specific goals that are clearly identified
- \_\_\_\_\_ Program has developed a set of measureable outcomes that are linked to program goals
- \_\_\_\_\_ Program has explained the purpose/significance and the linkages between goals and outcomes
- \_\_\_\_\_ Program has described the processes used for establishing its goals and outcomes

Comments:

Explicit connection between the program and IUPUI's mission, vision, values, and diversity statements

- \_\_\_\_\_ Program has specific mission, vision, and values statements
- \_\_\_\_\_ Program has explained its commitment to diversity and inclusion
- \_\_\_\_\_ Program indicates how its mission, vision, values, and diversity/inclusion efforts are both derived from and aligned with those of the school and campus

Comments:

Evidence of program effectiveness, with a particular emphasis on assessment of student learning outcomes

- \_\_\_\_\_ Program identifies specific learning outcomes for students
- \_\_\_\_\_ Program has a documented process for assessing learning outcomes
- \_\_\_\_\_ Program provides evidence of its effectiveness, including student learning outcomes, using a variety of measures (relevant, direct, indirect, quantitative, and qualitative)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Program incorporates findings from its assessment process in ongoing continuous improvement efforts

Comments:

Critical questions to which the program is seeking answers or guidance from its program reviewers

- \_\_\_\_\_ Program has developed specific questions for its program reviewers
- \_\_\_\_\_ Program explains how these questions will facilitate improvement and planning efforts
- \_\_\_\_\_ Program questions are related to and draw from information contained in the self-study document
- \_\_\_\_\_ Program questions are written in a manner that can be understood and answered by members of the program review team

Comments:

Overall assessment of the program's strengths, areas for improvement, and plans for the future

- \_\_\_\_\_ Program identifies and describes its strengths
- \_\_\_\_\_ Program identifies and describes its areas for improvement
- \_\_\_\_\_ Program identifies and describes its plans for the future
- \_\_\_\_\_ Program establishes a linkage between information contained in the self-study document and its strengths, areas for improvement, and plans for the future

Comments:

Evidence-based information organized in a logical, well-written manner

- \_\_\_\_\_ Program provides appropriate evidence to substantiate claims made in the self-study
- \_\_\_\_\_ Program uses appropriate evidence in describing activities and accomplishments
- \_\_\_\_\_ Program self-study is organized in a logical manner
- \_\_\_\_\_ Program self-study is written in a manner free from major spelling, grammar, and organization errors

Comments: