

Appendix 3: Guidelines for Review Committees

Materials

Review committees will be provided with the unit's self-study report, including all appendices, the Agreement to Guide the Scope of Review, the Guidelines for BU Academic Program Review, and the site visit itinerary in advance of the site visit. The review committee may request additional information or clarifications before or during the site visit and the Office of the Provost will coordinate with the necessary areas or individuals to obtain the requested information.

Self-Study Draft Review

The internal member of the review committee and the chair of the university committee on academic review will comment on the unit's draft self-study report and recommend revisions prior to sending it to the external reviewers.

Participation of the Internal Member

The internal member of the review committee is a full and equal member of the team. The participation of the internal member will provide important institutional context for the review team. However, the internal member of the review committee should assure that a clear offer is made to the faculty of the unit being reviewed to have private meetings with external reviewers that are not attended by the internal reviewer. It is expected that the internal member will participate in all aspects of the site visit unless such a specific request is made.

Preparation of the Report

One of the external review committee members will chair the site visit and lead the preparation of the report. The internal member of the committee should avoid unduly shaping the report, but should be involved in the drafting process.

As peers with collegial ties to some of the faculty in the unit under review, the university recognizes that internal committee members in particular may feel constrained against being frank and outspoken in a written report. External reviewers may also feel some inclination to "advocate" for their disciplines. However, the Provost will not benefit from the committee's advice or be able to make appropriate decisions unless the reviewers are honest in their assessment of the unit.

The written report is most helpful if it is as direct and frank as possible. Reviewers should not be overly concerned with polished prose, but rather communication of the essential points. There is no prescribed format for the report and the committee's findings should be presented in a format that is most appropriate for the discipline and in keeping with the preferences of the review team.

The review committee should avoid using individual faculty names in the report (e.g. naming the junior faculty who may be concerned about the tenure process). If there is advice and/or specific findings that the Provost should have, but is too sensitive to write in the report, please explain this information in the private portion of the exit interview and write a confidential cover letter for the report that will not be shared with the unit. ***The Provost will protect the confidentiality of such correspondence.***

The review committee's conclusions and recommendations should be largely completed during the time set aside for this purpose during the site visit. The draft report may be revised after the visit, as desired by the review committee, however **the report must be submitted to the Provost's Office in final form within two weeks.** Review committee reports should be kept short and direct and are normally fewer than ten pages in length.

The review committee's report should offer a concise, candid appraisal of the unit's strengths and weaknesses and provide a critique of the unit's plans for achieving excellence as well as recommendations for constructive change. Specifically, the review committee's report should address:

1. The mission and scholarly/creative profile of the program.
2. The reputation of the program among peers in the discipline including national rankings and the extent to which the program is regarded as a leader in the field.
3. The likelihood that the program can significantly enhance its standing in the field. In particular, the review committee should recommend priorities and strategies that will enable the unit to rise in quality and reputation.
4. Improvements that are possible without significant investments of university resources.
5. Improvements that are only possible with additional resources.
6. Whether there are entrenched or irreconcilable issues within the unit that constrain its effectiveness and whether there may be more effective methods of working together.
7. Any issues on which feedback is specifically requested as outlined in the scope of review agreement.

The review committee is invited to share any additional observations based on the self-study and site visit.

Exit Interview

The exit interview will be held on the final day of the site visit, and members of the review committee are asked to provide an executive summary of their recommendations orally to the Provost's representatives. The chair or unit head and appropriate dean(s) will be invited to hear the executive summary of recommendations and to ask questions for the first portion of the exit interview; they will then be excused to permit the review committee to complete its report to the chair of the university committee on academic review and the Provost's designee in private.