

Appendix 4: Guidelines for Review Committees

Materials

Review committees will be provided with the unit's self-study report, including all appendices, the Agreement on the Scope of Review, the Guidelines for Academic Program Review at BU, and the site visit itinerary in advance. 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 Provost's designee, the internal member of the review committee, and a representative of the CAPR may comment on the unit's draft self-study report to provide feedback and to recommend any 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 faculty of the unit being reviewed may request 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.

Participation of the Advisor

The Advisor participates in each academic program review committee as *ex-officio* and as an observer. The Advisor participates in various points of the review process, including the entire site visit, and has the responsibility to report back to the full Board on the process and outcomes of the review. While primarily an observer, the Advisor may offer insights and perspectives for inclusion in the committee's report.

Responsibilities of the Review Committee Chair

The chair is selected internally by the review committee from among the external members. The internal member and Advisor may not serve as chair. The chair is responsible for leading the meetings of the site visit, coordinating the efforts of the review committee in writing its report, and submitting the final review committee report to the Office of the Provost.

Preparation of the Report

The review committee chair will lead the preparation of the report. All members of the review committee should attend the report writing sessions. The internal member(s) of the committee should avoid unduly shaping the report, but should be involved in the drafting process. The Advisor should lend advice and perspectives, but should not participate in the writing of the review committee's report. Instead, the more detailed aspects of analysis of quality and metrics should be left to the disciplinary experts of the committee.

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 committee.

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 the committee wishes to provide advice and/or specific findings to the Provost that are too sensitive to write in the report, they may provide this information in the private portion of the exit interview and write a separate confidential memo to the Provost 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, and a working draft should be prepared in advance of the exit interview. The draft report may be revised after the visit, as desired by the review committee; however, **the report must be submitted to the Office of the Provost in final form within two weeks of the site visit conclusion.** 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, scholarly reputation, and reputational potential; provide a critique of the unit’s plans for achieving excellence; and outline prioritized recommendations for constructive change. Specifically, the review committee’s report should address:

1. The mission and scholarly/creative profile of the program.
2. The quality of the educational programs, both undergraduate and graduate, demonstrated in part by the presence of a systematic process of program learning outcomes assessment.
3. The reputation of the program among peers in the discipline (or interdisciplinary field) including national rankings and the extent to which the program is regarded as a leader in the field.
4. 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.
5. Improvements possible without significant investments of University resources.
6. Improvements only possible with additional resources.

7. 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.

In addition, reviewers may be asked to provide advice or feedback related to the unique questions outlined in the Agreement on the Scope of Review document. However, the review committee's responses to the unique questions should not preclude focus on the standard areas of assessment outlined above.

In drafting its report, review committees are encouraged to consider the following:

- What is the quality of the undergraduate program? How well does the unit teach its undergraduates, both majors and non-majors? How attentive is the unit to the University's mission of being "committed to educating students to be reflective, resourceful individuals ready to live, adapt, and lead in an interconnected world"? How successful is the unit in using the results of its student learning outcomes assessment for improvement of its undergraduate program?
- What is the quality of the graduate program(s)? Are the graduate curricula, size of the program(s), and career mentoring and support structures appropriate? How successful is the unit in achieving student time-to-degree and placement objectives? How successful is the unit in using the results of its student learning outcomes assessment for improvement of its graduate program(s)?
- How would you characterize the quality of the faculty's research productivity and scholarly impact? Are the size and composition of the faculty appropriate to achieve the unit's teaching and research mission?
- Where and when appropriate, how successful is the unit in developing and sustaining interdisciplinary collaborations and programs? Are there further opportunities for collaboration that have not been realized?
- Are the strategic plan and proposed direction of the unit appropriate and feasible? What alternate strategies might the unit consider?

These points of review and assessment are not intended to be exhaustive. As each unit under review presents unique circumstances, the review committee is invited to share additional observations and recommendations 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 Provost's designee and a representative from the CAPR. The unit leadership and appropriate dean(s) will be invited to hear the executive summary of recommendations and to engage in discussion for the first portion of the meeting. They will then be excused to permit the review committee to complete delivery of its report to the Provost's designee and CAPR representative in private.