

Guidelines for Academic Program Review at Boston University December 2022

I. Introduction

The systematic and recurring review of academic programs at Boston University is an essential element of our ongoing effort to promote critical reflection, self-assessment, and strategic planning toward our goals. Reviews engage input from distinguished faculty with the relevant disciplinary and interdisciplinary expertise at other leading institutions in order to obtain an honest appraisal of an academic unit's strengths and weaknesses in all aspects of its activities. The information that is gathered as part of the review process helps to foster academic rigor and innovation within the unit, identify methods for increasing educational and scholarly quality, and provides critical guidance for administrative decisions. Furthermore, the systematic assessment of academic programs and the use of assessment results to improve academic quality and effectiveness are requirements of Boston University's institutional accreditation as outlined by the New England Commission of Higher Education (NECHE).

Importantly, Boston University considers each academic program review in the context of a holistic assessment of the opportunities for realizing the strategic priorities of the University as a whole. This means that while we carefully consider self-study evaluations and all recommendations made as part of individual program reviews, we will not likely act upon most recommendations in the immediate aftermath of a review; action on those recommendations consistent with the University's strategic priorities are likely to occur across a multi-year timeframe.

Boston University implemented the current system and first cycle of academic program review (APR) in Spring 2011. Twelve units were reviewed by the end of the Spring semester 2013, at which point the guidelines for APR were updated to reflect changes in practice and to clarify procedures. The guidelines were similarly refreshed in 2016 and again in 2020.

The University Provost is responsible for selecting the units to undergo review each year, and each program is reviewed on a roughly 8-year cycle, with ~60 units reviewed in total. Thus, individual programs are not singled out for review, but rather all programs are reviewed at regular intervals. The Office of the Provost, in close consultation with the relevant dean(s), determines the schedule of reviews. Reviews may focus on an individual department, cluster of departments, school/college, or interdisciplinary groups that cut across departmental or school/college lines. While the reviews are independent of any other type of review by professional or accreditation bodies, units that are separately accredited may request that internal reviews be scheduled at a time that is most convenient and productive in relation to the accreditation cycle.

Approximately eight separate reviews of academic programs will be conducted each year and will typically follow a timetable that allows the entire review process to be completed within an 18-month period. (See timetable template in Appendix 7.)

The goals of academic program review at BU are the following:

1. Critical self-assessment and articulation of future directions by the faculty and leadership of an academic unit.
2. Expert assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of an academic unit by specialists in the field from outside Boston University who can evaluate the program's overall quality including its faculty, academic programs, students, curricula, resources, and future opportunities.
3. Assessment of a unit's future potential and identification of priorities for making improvements in educational and scholarly quality and stature.
4. Discussion at the levels of the faculty, dean, and provost on the priorities, action items, and a timeline for implementation necessary to build excellence in an academic unit.

The Office of the Provost funds and manages the review process, led by the Provost's designee, working in close collaboration with the academic and administrative leadership of the units under review.

Broad faculty and senior administrative participation in all phases of the review process is absolutely essential for the process to be successful. There are ample opportunities for providing input on all levels of decision-making regarding the scope of issues addressed, development of the self-study, selection of the internal and external reviewers, format of and participation in the site visit, and reporting.

These guidelines are intended to clarify all aspects of the review process and provide guidance for all participants. Appendices to this document provide additional, specific details:

Appendix 1: Points for Inclusion in the Self-Study Narrative

Appendix 2: Self-Study Appendix Outline

Appendix 3: Use of Academic Analytics in APR at Boston University

Appendix 4: Guidelines for Review Committees

Appendix 5: Guidelines for Site Visit Itineraries & Sample Itinerary

Appendix 6: Guidelines for the Unit's Response to the Review Committee Report

Appendix 7: Standard Timeline for Academic Program Review

II. Agreement on the Scope of Review

Once initiated by the Office of the Provost, the first step in the review process is to develop agreement on the scope of the review. The Provost's designee, relevant dean(s), and leadership of the academic unit under review (e.g. department chair, director, section head) will meet to discuss and agree upon the scope of the review and to identify any

particular issues unique to the program on which specific input from external visitors is requested.

All reviews will include several common, standard areas for assessment in addition to any unique issues identified. These details will be outlined in the scope of review document, which all parties will sign as confirmation. The signed agreement will serve as the governing document and outline the official charge for the review committee.

The scope of review document will also provide guidance on the general composition of the review committee including its size, the range of disciplines and/or sub-disciplines to be represented, and the most likely sources for qualified reviewers.

Prior to the meeting and the drafting of the scope of review document, critical input on all aspects of the review structure and elements should be gathered from faculty in the unit undergoing review.

All reviews of academic programs at Boston University will include a thorough and candid evaluation of the following standard areas of assessment:

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 academic 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 assessment, advice, or feedback on a number of unique questions outlined in the scope of review document. However, answers to the unique questions should not preclude focus on the standard areas of review.

III. Self-Study Preparation and Unit Responsibilities

The academic unit will prepare a self-study document to serve as the foundation for assessment and for outlining the unit's strategic direction, goals, and plan for implementation. The self-study may vary in outline and format but should include the information requested in these guidelines and address any additional questions raised in the scope of review agreement. (See Appendix 1: Self-Study Narrative Outline.)

The preparation of the self-study is intended to assist the unit's faculty in establishing priorities and identifying strategies for making improvements in the quality of the unit. The self-study should identify institutions against which the unit benchmarks the quality of its programs and describe the specific aspects of the unit that make it distinctive.

Individual units should organize internally to elicit the necessary input from their constituencies and to draft a report that reflects a consensus, where possible, and notes substantive dissenting views, when consensus cannot be achieved. Units may receive written feedback on the draft version of the self-study report submitted to the Office of the Provost and will have the opportunity to make revisions and submit a final version. The final self-study report will be distributed to the members of the review committee prior to their participation in the site visit.

The narrative of the self-study report *should not exceed 20 pages* and should analyze and reference the required data and descriptive materials of the self-study appendix. (See Appendix 2: Self Study Appendix Outline.)

IV. Faculty Oversight of the Review Process

The University Committee on Academic Program Review (CAPR) is a standing committee composed of senior faculty representing the breadth of the University's schools and colleges that serves as a governing entity with faculty oversight of the program review process. Members are appointed to serve by the Provost and recommendations for service will be solicited regularly from the academic deans and the executive committee of the Faculty Council. One member will be invited by the Provost to serve as chair.

The members of the CAPR will represent the interests of the University faculty by participating at several points in each site visit and will advise in the formation of each review committee, including the selection of internal members of the University community to serve on individual review committees.

This committee is charged with considering all reviews conducted across the University in a given year. On the basis of this review and assessment, the CAPR presents the resulting review documents with a cover memo to the Provost and may make additional recommendations. The CAPR memo is advisory to the Provost and is not shared broadly. The CAPR will also evaluate the review process itself and, if necessary, suggest modifications and revisions to the official structure.

V. Review Committees

An ad hoc review committee will be appointed by the Provost for each unit to be reviewed. Each review committee is charged with conducting a comprehensive review of a specific academic unit and preparing a report for transmission to the Provost. (See Appendix 4: Guidelines for Review Committees.)

Review committees will consist of one or more senior members of the BU faculty (the internal member), three or more external consultants who are distinguished faculty members with relevant scholarly expertise at other institutions (external members), and one member of the Boston University Advisory Board (Advisor member). The number of internal and external reviewers will be determined in part by the breadth of the unit's scholarly focus, including its interdisciplinary breadth and methodological diversity and the background and training of the reviewers. The standard composition and size of the review committee is five members: one internal member, three external members, and one Advisor.

The internal member will be invited to serve on the review team by the Office of the Provost and is recommended by members of the CAPR. The unit leadership and dean(s) will have the opportunity to vet candidates for the internal member before he or she is invited to serve. No member of the program under review may serve in this role, including faculty with joint appointments and faculty with courtesy appointments. The internal member should not be currently teaching or working on a collaborative project with a member of the faculty from the unit under review.

As part of preparation of the agreement on the scope of review, the leader of the unit to be reviewed and the appropriate dean(s) will provide input on the desired expertise represented by the external reviewers but should not provide recommendations of specific individuals. The Office of the Provost will identify external candidates for service on the review committee, based on the established criteria, in consultation with the internal member.

The unit leadership and dean(s) should provide the Office of the Provost with the names of faculty at universities the program recommends we select reviewers from who they believe cannot be fair reviewers. Providing names of faculty to exclude should only be done with clear cause and compelling reasons for exclusions must be provided. Neither unit leadership nor the dean(s) should approach potential review committee members in advance. The Office of the Provost will invite external members to participate in the review and will determine the final composition of the review committee. Based on the availability of reviewers and the appropriate timing for the unit under review, the Office of the Provost will confirm the site-visit period.

External reviewers should have sufficient independence from Boston University faculty and ideally should represent a balance of faculty in administrative and non-administrative positions. External candidates with the following potential conflicts of interest should be excluded from serving on the review committee:

- Individuals who have now, or in the past five years, had a close collaborative relationship with a faculty member of the unit under review;
- Individuals with a prior faculty appointment in the unit under review during the past ten years, or individuals with a Boston University credential;

- Individuals associated with an organization or corporation that may benefit financially from a research project that includes a faculty member from the unit under review;
- Individuals associated with a corporation that currently sponsors research projects involving a faculty member from the unit under review.

Members of the Boston University Advisory Board participate on each academic program review committee. Their role is to participate in various points of the review process, including the entire site visit, and report back to the full Board as well as the Academic Affairs Committee of the Board of Trustees. While primarily serving in an observer capacity, the participation of the Advisors offers insights and perspectives useful to the improvement of our academic units. (For a more detailed description of the Advisors participation, see section VIII.)

VI. Site Visit

The review committee's site visit is typically a three-day commitment, during which the team meets with the dean(s), unit leadership, faculty, students, and relevant staff and administrators. Meetings with faculty from other units where significant collaborations exist will also be included.

The head of the unit under review is responsible for preparing the itinerary for the site visit based on the guidelines provided by the Office of the Provost. (See Appendix 5: Guidelines for Site Visit Itineraries.)

Whenever possible, input on the structure of the itinerary will be requested from the members of the review committee. The Office of the Provost will approve the site visit itinerary and ensure its distribution to the review committee.

The site visit will conclude with an exit interview during which the committee will present its findings to the Provost's designee, the dean(s), and the leadership of the academic unit under review (e.g. department chair, director, section head).

VII. Reporting

In addition to the exit interview, the review committee will prepare a written report to the Provost that offers a concise, candid appraisal of the unit's strengths and weaknesses, current reputation, reputational potential, and constructive recommendations for making improvements. Review committee reports are normally fewer than ten pages in length.

Whenever possible, the committee should complete a draft of the report during the site visit period, and time will be set aside in the itinerary for the committee to work on its report. As reflection following the exit interview frequently informs the final report, the draft report may be revised and finalized after the visit. However, the report must be submitted to the Office of the Provost in final form within two weeks of the conclusion of the site visit.

The report will be shared broadly with the unit's faculty and leadership. Written reports should be as direct and frank as possible. If the committee wishes to provide advice and/or specific findings to the Provost that are too sensitive to include in the report, the review committee has the option to write a separate confidential memo to the Provost that will not be shared with the unit under review.

The unit under review is expected to prepare a written response to the review committee's report within four weeks of its receipt. The response should be viewed as an opportunity to outline and prioritize the unit's plans based on the input of the review committee. The response need not address all issues raised in the report and is not a conversation with the review committee. (See Appendix 6: Guidelines for the Unit's Response to the Review Committee Report.)

The following outlines the timetable for submission and distribution of the report and response:

1. Review committee submits its report to the Office of the Provost within two weeks of the site visit.
2. The review committee's report will be sent to the head of the unit reviewed for distribution to the entire faculty and sent to the appropriate dean(s) by the Office of the Provost.
3. Following consultation with the unit faculty, the head of the unit will submit a response to the review committee's report to the Office of the Provost within four weeks; the response document should also be shared with the faculty of the unit and the appropriate dean(s). ***If the unit under review is a department or program within a school or college, the dean should not submit a separate response to the report.***
4. The Office of the Provost will distribute the report and the response to the members of the CAPR, who will meet to discuss the review, ideally within two weeks of receipt of the response (within ~eight weeks of the site visit).
5. Following presentation of the report by the review committee's internal member, the CAPR will discuss the report and response and reach consensus on the key points that should be brought to the Provost's attention.
6. The report and response accompanied by a cover memo from the CAPR are sent to the Provost. The CAPR memo and its recommendations are confidential to the Provost.

VIII. University Advisory Board

The University Advisory Board's participation in the Academic Program Review (APR) process should augment the input from external review committees on how individual academic unit plans fit into the overall strategic plan of the University. The collective insights and knowledge gained by the Advisor through this process will help them to better advise and support the University in its strategic efforts.

A member of the University Advisory Board will participate in each program review as a non-disciplinary institutional supporter and representative of the Advisory Board. The

Advisor is expected to attend and oversee activities as an observer at the seminal points of each review as schedules allow, including site visit and exit interview.

The Advisor will participate fully in all conversations and interviews of the site visit. They should feel free to ask questions and will share their insights with the review committee prior to the writing of their report. While they attend the report-writing session and may provide input on the draft, Advisors do not participate in the writing of the review committee's report, but instead leave the more detailed aspects of analysis of quality and metrics to the disciplinary experts of the committee.

The participating Advisor has the responsibility for reporting the outcomes of the program review to the full University Advisory Board. Advisors will supplement their oral reports with a written memo to the record of the academic program, even if the memo simply states overall agreement with findings in the review committee's report. Analyses of the Advisors will be shared with the Academic Affairs Committee of the Board of Trustees in their consideration of completed reviews.

IX. Post-review Planning

Timely follow-through on the review by the dean(s) and the Office of the Provost is critical to the success of the program review process.

The formal conclusion of the review process is to assemble those who participated in the scope of review meeting (Provost's designee, dean(s), and unit leadership). Others (such as members of the Provost's or dean's leadership teams) may be included in the post-review meeting, as appropriate. The reports generated by the review process will form the basis of the post-review meeting the aim of which is to develop consensus on the necessary next steps for addressing the opportunities and concerns raised by the review. The post-review meeting should be held as quickly as possible, usually within one to two months of the Provost's receipt of the documents generated by the review.

The result of the post-review meeting will be a formal memo from the Provost's designee that summarizes key aspects of the discussion at the post-review meeting and outlines follow up and continuing discussions on the issues identified. The dean(s) will be responsible for updating the Provost on progress toward the goals identified within the allotted timeframe.

Appendix 1: Points for Inclusion in the Self-Study Narrative

Note: the narrative portion of the report should not exceed 20 pages. The self-study may vary in outline and format, but should include the information requested in these guidelines, as applicable, and address any additional questions raised in the scope of review agreement.

Self-Study Expectations

The self-study report should:

- Begin with a succinct, 1-2 page executive summary that allows readers to become acquainted with the key issues presented in the full report;
- Include a frank discussion of the unit's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats;
- Serve as an introduction to the unit, its faculty, students, programs, and current strategic direction, presenting a concise and reflective overview of the unit's mission, activities and performance, and future direction;
- Articulate the mission of the unit and, in the context of describing its future direction, outline its aspirational goals (e.g.: rank in the top 10% of doctoral programs in the field within 10 years);
- Compile data, as appropriate; provide supplemental information where needed;
- Present any extensive lists and data tables within an appendix, not the narrative; however, only do so if this data is explicitly referred to in the narrative;
- Present relevant background and/or address the unit's perspective on the unique questions outlined in the "Agreement on the Scope of Review."

I. Executive Summary

Provide a brief description of the goals and mission of the program, the program's current status, and its plan for improvement.

II. Overview

1. Provide an introduction to the contemporary issues in the academic discipline or field; how does the unit engage in the critical issues?
2. Outline the current academic/intellectual/artistic profile of the unit and how its profile compares to other programs in the field.
3. Identify peer and aspirant peer programs and describe what distinguishes the unit from its peers nationally and internationally.
4. Provide a description of how the program/unit is responsive to goals outlined in the University's strategic plan.

III. Assessment of Quality

1. Outline the current academic stature of the program(s) including national rankings and metrics of excellence.
2. Analyze the quality and diversity of students including reference to intake and outcome measures.
3. Describe the stature and diversity of faculty, including recent achievements, awards, research strengths, sponsored research support, patents, performances, and service.
4. Describe the unit's history of faculty recruitment and retention and the structures that are in place for faculty mentoring and development.
5. Evaluate the quality and effectiveness of educational programs relative to goals and stated learning outcomes; provide evidence of student learning and analyze the quality of teaching.
6. As appropriate and relevant, describe how the unit contributes to interdisciplinary research and teaching in collaboration with other units at BU and/or elsewhere.
7. Outline the unit's comparative strengths, distinctiveness, and weaknesses.

IV. Scope of Review Questions

Present relevant background and/or address the unit's perspective on the specific unique questions outlined in the "Agreement on the Scope of Review."

V. Plan for Improvement

1. List core objectives and priorities as part of a plan for improvement over the next five years, assuming no new resources; clearly identify the sequence of actions to be taken within the timeline. (You may also discuss how you might expand or alter your resources with additional priorities, but this should not be the basis for your plan.)
2. Outline the aspirations for the graduate programs and the undergraduate programs, both major and non-major; identify how the unit is working to fulfill these aspirations and outline the major challenges.
3. Consider where the academic discipline or interdisciplinary field is likely to be headed in the next five years; indicate how the unit will position itself in a changing context.
4. Consider opportunities to extend the unit's existing strengths and briefly discuss the major obstacles.
5. Explain internal improvements that are possible through reallocation of existing resources; explain improvements that can only be addressed through additional resources.

Appendix 2: Self-Study Appendix Outline

The appendix to the self-study report should include any additional data and information that is systematically collected by the unit under review, by the school or college, and centrally by Analytical Services and Institutional Research (ASIR) that the unit under review believes will aid the review committee in its understanding of the unit. It may also be appropriate to include NIH, NSF, or other data tables.

ASIR will provide a standard data portfolio for units undergoing program review for use in preparing its self-study report. However, units should not simply reproduce the data portfolio as part of the self-study appendix, but rather, as appropriate, analyze and present the data contextually to accompany the narrative. Please coordinate with the Office of the Provost to obtain the appropriate data portfolio well in advance of the self-study draft deadline.

The following outlines the required elements of the report appendix. *(Note: In some cases, the data requested may not be applicable.)* If appropriate and relevant, the unit may augment the requested data with supplemental information that helps to provide a complete characterization of the unit's activities.

A. Appendix for Overview

1. Key of Acronyms used in the Self-Study (if necessary)
2. Organizational Chart for Unit
3. List of tenure-track faculty by rank, tenure status, gender, other measures of diversity, and major areas of expertise

- ASIR will provide list of active faculty, including name, rank, tenure status, gender, and race/ethnicity, as reported from the University's Faculty and Payroll databases.
- The department is responsible for major areas of expertise.

4. List of adjunct/clinical faculty (including part-time faculty) by rank, gender, other areas of diversity, and areas of expertise

- ASIR will provide list of active faculty, including name, rank, gender, and race/ethnicity, as reported from the University's Faculty and Payroll databases.
- The department is responsible for major areas of expertise.

5. New faculty hired during the last ten years (including those that may have left)

- ASIR will provide 10 years of faculty hires, including academic year, name, UID, rank, tenure status, gender, and hire date.

6. Faculty who have left during the last ten years (indicate where they have gone, if available)

- ASIR will provide 10 years of faculty terminations, including academic year, name, UID, rank, tenure status, gender, and term date and reason.

B. Appendix for Quality Indicators

1. Survey data, national rankings, and metrics of excellence showing the current reputation of the unit

- ASIR will provide current US News rankings, if available.
- Office of the Provost will provide FSP data summaries as calculated by Academic Analytics for applicable PhD-granting programs. These include a national comparison of comparable PhD programs by various faculty productivity measures, including journal and book publications, citations, grant funding, and awards.
- NRC data and other rankings may be reported at the program's discretion.

2. Graduate Student Quality Data
 - a. Numbers of applicants, admits, and newly enrolled students
 - b. Admit rate and yield (conversion rate)

- For PhD students this data is available in the PhD Program Profiles. Please contact the Assistant Provost for Academic Data and Decision Support for further information.
- ASIR will provide 5 years of central graduate admissions and quality data. If data is not centrally available, it may be supplied and/or verified by the department or school/college.

3. Student Diversity and Equity
 - a. Trend data showing change over time on measures of diversity

- ASIR will provide this data.

4. Faculty external funding (Federal and Foundation)
 - a. Total awards over the past five years (indicate the principal investigator, amount, dates)
 - b. Major awards, e.g. federally-funded “center” grants, grants over \$1 million, and high-prestige grants

- ASIR, as requested, can provide 5 years of summary data, including the number and total amount of Sponsored Research as reported by the Office of Sponsored Programs. ASIR can also provide 5 years of grant-related expenditures, as reported by the Office of the Budget.

5. Faculty quality indicators including major prizes and awards, membership in national academies or honor societies, “young investigator” awards, journal editorships; describe nature of distinctive service, outreach, and engaged scholarship

- The Office of the Provost, via Academic Analytics, tracks awards and distinction by school/department for the following:
 - National Academy Members
 - National Academy of Sciences
 - Institute of Medicine
 - National Academy of Engineering
 - Other Academy Fellows
 - American Association for the Advancement of Science
 - American Academy of Arts and Sciences
 - American Academy of Arts and Letters
 - American Philosophical Society
 - American Law Institute
 - International Communication Association
 - American Society for Clinical Investigation
 - American Academy of Pediatrics
 - American Academy of Social Work and Social Welfare
 - Nobel Laureates
 - National Medal Winners
 - National Medal of Arts
 - National Humanities Medal
 - National Medal of Science
 - National Medal of Technology
 - HHMI Investigators
 - MacArthur Fellows
 - Guggenheim Fellows
 - Sloan Research Fellows
 - Pulitzer Prize
 - US Poet Laureates
- BU-Specific Honors
 - Named Chairs and Professorships
 - Warren Professors
 - Metcalf Awardees
 - United Methodist Teacher/Scholar Award
 - University Lecturer
- The program may provide additional lists of faculty quality indicators specific to the discipline.

6. Program & Curriculum Information
 - a. Requirements for each program offered
 - b. Course listing (by semester) for the prior 2-3 years, to demonstrate offerings in a given year
 - i. For graduate and undergraduate programs, list all courses offered
 - ii. For undergraduate programs, annotate whether courses are general education, introductory, major requirements, electives, etc.
 - c. Select examples of syllabi (e.g.: introductory, non-major, and/or required major/ degree courses)
 - d. Describe any major changes to the curriculum over the past five years, including any changes in courses taken by undergraduates to fulfill general education requirements

- e. Discuss how the unit contributes to new forms of pedagogy, including the use of digital technologies and emerging media and tools to enhance instruction

7. Faculty

- a. Faculty-student ratios by program and by major

- For CRC schools, ASIR can provide 5 years of data.
- ASIR will work with BUMC programs to establish appropriate metrics.

- b. Faculty responsibilities with respect to teaching, advising, and mentoring of students, both undergraduate and graduate
- c. Information on standard teaching loads in the unit, including a summary of the average number of students taught by faculty/year at each rank and at each level of course (100, 200, 500, etc.)
- d. Any relevant summaries of course evaluations
- e. Describe any guidelines/ expectations for promotion/ tenure; provide Faculty Handbook, if available

8. Assessment of Student Learning and Educational Effectiveness

- a. Description of how the unit defines its undergraduate student learning outcomes. Include a copy of the latest Annual Report(s) on Program Learning Outcomes Assessment.
- b. Evidence of undergraduate student learning, including results of learning outcomes assessment (e.g.: surveys, portfolio review, exhibits, capstone course, theses, internship ratings)
- c. Evidence of the quality of undergraduate student experience (e.g.: satisfaction surveys of the major and non-major experiences, exit surveys, etc.)
- d. Outline how the results of student learning assessment and feedback on student satisfaction have been used to improve the program
- e. Undergraduate job/graduate school placements for the last five years (from unit records or from Career Services); how this information affects change to the curriculum
- f. PhD placements for last ten years, including placement rates into tenure-track faculty positions
- g. Methods used to evaluate doctoral dissertations and master's theses
- h. Passage rates on professional entry examinations, if applicable
- i. Other relevant learning assessments (e.g. participation in research opportunities, internships, qualifying examinations, PhD Handbook, etc.)
- j. Student scholarship: publications, conference presentations, grants, national awards, attendance

C. Appendix on Resources

1. Outline program endowment funds including named professorships
2. Outline student fellowships and endowments (last 5 years)
3. Describe the unit's current facilities and space, future plans, and needs

4. Describe the unit's access to technology and libraries as well as other learning resources

D. Appendix on Governance and Administration

1. List associate chairs, divisional directors, major committees and their chairs, and each of their responsibilities
2. List student associations, honor societies, and their student officers
3. Describe the current staff support for the unit

E. Appendix for Plan for Improvement

1. Provide the most recent existing Strategic Plan documents
2. Outline the sequence of implementation for top priorities
3. Outline faculty hiring plans including intellectual goals and goals for achieving diversity and gender equity
4. Describe proposed budget reallocations (e.g. funds freed by retirements, reduction or closure of lower priority programs, etc.)
5. Describe the new funds that are required to accomplish the priority objectives

F. Faculty CVs

1. Provide up-to-date CVs for all faculty in an electronic format

Appendix 3: Use of Academic Analytics in APR at Boston University

For Academic Analytics 2021 Database (AAD 2021)

Rationale for Use of Academic Analytics

While there are multiple elements of faculty performance, faculty research productivity and impact are among the most important. Comparative data on research productivity are especially difficult to collect. Assessing BU's competitiveness in research productivity in comparison with identified peers is crucial to informing strategic decision-making that will guide planning, investments in new faculty and facilities, and budget allocations. For this reason, BU employs Academic Analytics (AA) data—produced and maintained by a for-profit company specializing in higher education research – as a tool to support faculty productivity assessment. The data compiled by Academic Analytics allow us to look at journal and book publications, grant activity, published conference proceedings, honorific awards, and citations in comparison with peer programs. The metrics and reports generated from the AA, which emphasize recent productivity, can help in the identification of strong programs that have not yet achieved national recognition and programs whose reputation is unlikely to be maintained unless scholarly performance is improved.

About the Academic Analytics Database and Methodology (version: AAD 2021)

AA data includes information on 225,000 faculty members associated with 20,240 comparative groupings of 9,900 PhD programs and 11, 000 departments at 450 institutions in the United States. These data are structured so that they can be used to enable comparisons at a discipline-by-discipline level, as well as overall university performance.

The data in AAD for 2021 are aggregated and matched to individual faculty members for the Academic Year 2021 – 2022 in six areas of research activity, for the following periods of activity:

1. Journal article publications: 2018 – 2021
2. Citations between journal articles: 2017 – 2021
3. Published conference proceedings: 2015 – 2018
4. Book publications: 2012 – 2021
5. Federal research grants: 2017 – 2021
6. Professional honorific awards: No Limit

It is important to note that the only data submitted to AA by individual institutions are about faculty appointments in departments or affiliations in programs. Units undergoing review are urged to work closely with the Office of the Provost to verify and confirm the appropriate faculty listed with appointments in the department or program based on the following guidelines:

Criteria for Faculty Inclusion/Exclusion

The following guidelines are taken from Academic Analytics and define who is eligible for inclusion in the Academic Analytics database.

All tenure/tenure-track faculty and non-TTT faculty who are expected to produce research as of November 1. This includes:

- All tenure/tenure-track faculty (including administrators, faculty who are on sabbatical, faculty on leave without pay but expected to return, and those who haven't published recently).
- Others whose job involves scholarly research and are expected to pursue grants and publish (this could be research-track faculty, emeritus who continue to hold a research obligation, professors of practice engaged in research).
- Individuals not paid by the institution but who are affiliated and expected to produce research as a condition of the affiliation.

Full or part time faculty who meet the above criteria should be excluded if they are “adjunct”, “affiliate”, “visiting”, “clinical”, “of the practice”, “emeritus”, or have an otherwise modified title, *unless there is a documented and significant expectation of scholarly research*.

Inclusion in a Department List

Faculty included in a given department should be:

- Tenured/Tenure Track—or—hold a professorial rank
- Have an appointment in the department (primary, joint, secondary, etc.)

Reasons for exclusions:

- Affiliation is not an “official” appointment
- Faculty member has no expectation of academic research

Inclusion in a Program List

Faculty included in a given program should:

- Be Tenured/Tenure Track—or—Have a Professorial Rank—or—Have a significant expectation of academic research (e.g., Research Associate Professor). Programs may elect to include lecturers and instructors *if, and only if*, there is a documented and significant expectation of scholarly research.
- Have either an appointment in the associated department or an association with the program. A good rule of thumb is if the individual could be expected to serve on a dissertation committee.
- Have the expectation of academic research.

Use of the Academic Analytics Data in APR and Limitations

The AAD data has tremendous value in that it assesses multiple dimensions of productivity and it is unique – such data are not systematically and routinely assembled for comparison in any other database. Academic Analytics does not, however, provide an assessment of absolute faculty productivity. Rather, it provides comparative data by matching faculty associated with PhD programs and departments to research activity. This data is then scrubbed, checked, and validated for each of the more than 225,000

faculty members. The result is a data set that allows “apples to apples” comparisons within a discipline.

The AA reports will be used as one tool of assessment and should be analyzed by the programs in the context of the APR self-study to help explain how the productivity of the unit as a whole compares to the broader discipline. This comparison of patterns in faculty productivity should be used to identify opportunities, strengths, and weaknesses in the unit.

There are, of course, limits to AA data. For example, not all federal agencies make their contract and grant funding available publicly, and the database does not currently include foreign government support, or corporate, industrial, or private foundation sources. In addition, only Principal Investigators (not Co-PIs) are counted in grants awarded. Likewise, the publication data collected by AA does not include chapters in edited volumes or citations from books to books, from journal articles to books, or from books to journal articles. These acknowledged limitations may have the effect of understating research and publication activity and may affect some disciplines disproportionately. That said, *comparison within a discipline is still valid. The limitations of the data apply equally across all institutions included in the database.*

The program may wish to supplement the AA reports to give a broader assessment of a particular program’s standing in the field due to these known limitations. Supplementing supporting data within the context of Academic Program Review as a part of a unit’s self-study report is welcome – however, ***such data should not replace*** the use of AA data. Units affected by acknowledged AA data limitations should discuss specific concerns with the Office of the Provost during preparation of the self-study draft, in order to clarify the ways in which supplemental data will provide a more complete record of activity.

Units should include Reports generated by AA in the unit’s self-study report, together with analysis and thorough explanation of any perceived shortcomings, in order to provide the fullest assessment of quality and productivity in its many dimensions.

Obtaining and Using Academic Analytics Data

The unit should provide a list of all faculty associated with the PhD program and/or the Department (as outlined in the “Criteria for Faculty Inclusion/Exclusion” above). The Office of the Provost will manage the process of commissioning the AA report(s), which will be included in the appendix of the self-study for reference and analysis in the narrative.

For more information, please refer to this document: [About Academic Analytics](#).

Confidentiality

Because Academic Analytics is a third-party vendor, communication of data obtained from Academic Analytics is bound to the terms of our contractual relationship with the company. The following are guidelines for communication of Academic Analytics data with constituents outside of the University and should be adhered to when using the Academic Analytics data in all Boston University published documents, including Academic Program Review self-study reports.

- Data from custom releases are for your INTERNAL use only; no external communications are permitted.
- Reference Academic Analytics as source with release year specified (AAD 2013, AAD 2014 etc.).
- To reference rankings:
 - It is okay to say that your university, broad field, or discipline is ranked in the top x0 (in units of ten as a minimum: 10, 20, 30, 40, 50, etc.) universities/disciplines in the USA based on Faculty Scholarly Productivity Index (FSPI) and is in the company of universities a, b, and c in this ranking (no more than three).
 - It is also okay to say that you are ranked in the top x0 (10, 20, 30, 40, 50, etc.) for a discipline based on a particular metric (e.g., grant \$\$/faculty member) provided that the variable is stated.
 - It is NOT permissible to state that Academic Analytics ranks your university or discipline as better than named universities. This includes the naming of groups (such as Big 12) and geographic locations (such as all of New York).
- Individual faculty should not be identified.

To obtain further clarification, help with external communications, or use of the AA data, please contact the Assistant Provost for Academic Data and Decision Support, Dr. Neena Verma, in the Office of the Provost (neenav@bu.edu; 617-353-4231).

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.

Appendix 5: Guidelines for Site Visit Itineraries & Sample Itinerary

Faculty Participation

In scheduling the site visit, efforts should be made to coordinate on the broad availability of unit faculty so as not to coincide with major field-specific conferences or events. Once the dates are confirmed, the head of the unit to be reviewed should inform faculty of the site visit schedule ideally at least three months in advance and request their participation. The faculty are expected to be available to meet with the visiting committee and they should avoid traveling out of town or making any conflicting commitments on those three days until the final agenda has been prepared and they know the hour and day on which they are scheduled to meet.

Preparation of the Itinerary

The head of the unit under review is responsible for drafting a suggested itinerary for the review committee's visit in consultation with the Office of the Provost ideally at least 2-3 months prior to the site visit, following the general outline provided here. Prior to the site visit, the Office of the Provost will consult with the review committee on the draft itinerary, and they may provide input on the final schedule. Where possible, meetings should be held in the unit's facilities.

Standard Elements of the Itinerary

Review committees will typically meet on the evening before the review for a meal with the Provost's designee and the CAPR representative. Members of the unit under review will not participate in this initial dinner meeting. The committee will receive an orientation to the review process and its official charge from the Provost.

The first meeting on day one of the site visit should be with the unit head (e.g. department chair, director, section head) and the dean, in that order. Executive committees or other formal leadership groups should be scheduled early on day one.

All faculty should have an opportunity to meet with the committee and faculty meetings should be organized around groups that best reflect the unit's own internal organization. Faculty should not participate in more than one meeting with the committee except in extraordinary circumstances. The primary exception to this rule is an essential, separate meeting with untenured, tenure-track faculty. A separate meeting with adjunct faculty will be considered.

Student meetings with the review committee are important, and students from all programs should be represented. The meetings should be organized to focus on individual student cohorts such as undergraduate, master's and doctoral students. Students will be selected by the Office of the Provost, in consultation with the unit head, and invited to participate in the meetings; units will have the opportunity to review the proposed lists of students in advance.

Review committees should meet with faculty and chairs from other schools/colleges and departments who collaborate with faculty in the unit under review on research and teaching.

Meetings with staff are typically not scheduled, although in certain cases such meetings may be justified. Facilities tours, if included, should be kept brief and to a minimum.

The review committee will be allowed substantive private time to reflect on and discuss their observations and to draft their report. To do so, they will dine alone on day one and day two. A block of hours will be preserved on the afternoon of day two to allow the committee to work on their report. The goal is to encourage the completion of the draft report while the external members of the committee are on campus. The host unit should provide access to a printer as needed.

The exit interview on the final day of the site visit will be hosted by the review committee and will include the head of the unit under review, the appropriate dean(s), the Provost's designee, and the CAPR representative. The unit leadership and the 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 the CAPR representative in private.

Sample Boston University APR Itinerary

Date/ Time	Meeting	Hosted By
Evening before review	Welcome Dinner with Office of the Provost, CAPR representative	Office of the Provost
Day 1		
8:30 am	Unit Chair, Director, Head	Review Committee
9:30 am	School/ College Dean	Review Committee
10:30 am	<i>Break</i>	
10:45 am	Other Unit Leadership	Review Committee
11:30 am	<i>Break</i>	
12:00 pm	Working Lunch with Collaborating Faculty	Review Committee
1:30 pm	<i>Break</i>	
2:00 pm	Faculty Group	Review Committee
3:00 pm	Faculty Group	Review Committee
4:00 pm	<i>Break</i>	
4:15 pm	Faculty Group	Review Committee
5:30 pm	Depart Campus; Working Dinner (RC only)	
Day 2		
8:30 am	Faculty Group	Review Committee
9:30 am	Faculty Group	Review Committee
10:30 am	<i>Break</i>	
11:00 am	Student Group: Undergrad	Review Committee
11:45 am	<i>Break</i>	
12:00 pm	Working Lunch with Junior Faculty	Review Committee
1:30 pm	<i>Break</i>	
2:00 pm	Student Group: Masters	Review Committee
2:45 pm	<i>Break</i>	
3:00 pm	Student Group: Doctoral	Review Committee
3:45 pm	Depart Campus; Report Preparation & Working Dinner (RC only)	
Day 3		
8:30 am	Executive Session: Report Preparation (RC only)	
10:00 am	Exit Interview with Program Leadership, Office of the Provost, CAPR representative	Review Committee
11:00 am	Program Leadership excused, Exit Interview Conclusion	Review Committee
11:30 am	Conclusion of Review	

Appendix 6: Guidelines for the Unit's Response to the Review Committee Report

Following the distribution of the review committee's report to the faculty of the unit under review, the unit should prepare and submit a response to the Office of the Provost within four weeks. The head of the unit (chair, director, section head, or dean) should submit the response; ***if the unit under review is a department or program within a school or college, the dean should not submit a separate response to the report.***

The unit's response should reflect the input of the unit's faculty and, together with the review committee's report, will be shared with the CAPR, the Provost, the appropriate dean(s), and the University Advisory Board.

The unit's response should address the issues raised by the review committee's report including the assessments presented, any perceived inaccuracies, and the impact of the committee's recommendations on the unit's plan for improvement.

The response need not address all issues raised in the report point by point, although it can take such a format. The response should be viewed as an opportunity for the unit to synthesize external feedback and prioritize next steps based on the input of the review committee.

While there is no formal outline for the format of the response, the response should:

- Provide an overall response to the review committee's report *from the unit's collective faculty*. Please include information on how the unit solicited and received feedback from the faculty, how the report was interpreted and understood, and whether or not there were areas of agreement/disagreement.
- Comment on the assessments and recommendations put forward in the report and outline specific methods or approaches the unit will employ to address the points raised. Which recommendations will the unit adopt and for what reasons? Simply stating agreement or disagreement with individual points in the report is not adequate; responses to individual recommendations and the description of the subsequent course of action should be as detailed as possible.
- Discuss the ways in which adoption of individual recommendations may or may not affect the unit's proposed plan for improvement.
- Correct any factual errors reported by the review committee.
- Clarify any policies, practices, or systems that presented confusion or misunderstanding for the review committee.

Responses should provide detailed information but should be as direct as possible and kept to 5-8 pages in length.

Appendix 7: Standard Timeline for Academic Program Review

The process of academic program review should be undertaken in a timely manner with the goal of integrating resulting information into strategic planning and budgeting processes. Reviews will follow a timetable that allows the entire review process to be completed within an 18-month period, inclusive of semester and summer breaks. The following is an outline of the standard timeline that will be adhered to as closely as possible:

- Month 1: The Provost's designee notifies the unit selected of the timing of that review and initiates the review process. Faculty input is gathered on the elements to guide the scope of review.
- Month 2: The agreement on the scope of review is prepared and the unit begins preparations of its self-study report, including an initial meeting with Analytical Services and Institutional Research to discuss their data template.
- Month 3-4: A senior member of the University faculty is invited to serve as the internal member of the review committee. The internal member works in consultation with the Provost's designee to select and invite external members to serve on the review committee.
- Months 3-7: The unit drafts its self-study report and assists in preparation of a draft itinerary. The Office of the Provost confirms the members of the review committee and schedules the site visit.
- Month 8-10: The unit submits its draft self-study report to the Office of the Provost. As appropriate, the internal member, a CAPR representative, and the Provost's designee provide written comments to assist in revision; the unit prepares the final version of the self-study.
- Month 11-14: The site visit should occur during this period. The review committee's report is submitted to the Office of the Provost within 2 weeks of the end of the site visit and the unit submits a response within 4 weeks of receipt of the report.
- Month 15-16: The CAPR meets to discuss the report and response. Ideally, the meeting should occur within 2 weeks of receipt of the response (within ~8 weeks of the site visit). All documents will be transmitted to the Provost shortly thereafter.
- Month 17-18: A post-review meeting will be held within 1-2 months of all documents being transmitted to the Provost and a formal memo issued to conclude the official process.