

## Academic Program Review Guidelines for Self-Study

[Revision February 2013; available at <http://academicplanning.gwu.edu/academic-program-reviews>]

The Self-Study is a key element of the Academic Program Review Process. It is intended to give departments and programs an opportunity to conduct a critical evaluation of their current activities, identifying specific strengths and areas for improvement, and to engage in strategic planning. These Guidelines have been developed in order to establish a consistent framework for providing necessary information and for presenting specific goals and objectives, actions to be taken to achieve those goals, a time frame for implementing the actions, and measures of their effectiveness. This will facilitate planning not only at the departmental level, but at the School and University-wide levels as well.

It is important to note that the sections **Analysis of Strengths and Areas for Improvement** and **Strategic Plan** are regarded as the most important and should be guided by the assessment of programs and activities. They are the sections that will inform review committees, Deans, and the Office of the Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs regarding those issues the department considers of greatest importance and how it intends to address them. The sections that precede these sections in the Guidelines are intended to provide the context and necessary data for evaluation and planning.

The process by which departments and programs conduct their self-study is left largely to the discretion of the deans and of the program faculty. However, in preparing the self-study report, programs should follow these Guidelines, using the indicated headings (**boldface type**). GW has leased a data management software tool, TaskStream, to collect, manage, and store information and reports related to the APR and to yearly program assessments.

Upon completion, the Self-Study Report should be submitted, via TaskStream, to the Office of the Dean and to the Office of the Associate Provost for Academic Planning and Assessment. Questions regarding these Guidelines may be directed to the appropriate dean's office or to Cheryl Beil, Associate Provost for Academic Planning and Assessment at 4-6712 or [cbeil@gwu.edu](mailto:cbeil@gwu.edu). Questions regarding TaskStream including information on how to access your departmental work areas should be directed to Tamara Wilson at 4-0933 or [twilson@gwu.edu](mailto:twilson@gwu.edu). (More information about TaskStream can be found at: <http://academicplanning.gwu.edu/taskstream>.)

## Guidelines for Self-Study

### OUTLINE

- I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
  - II. MISSION STATEMENT
  - III. CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT AND ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING
  - IV. SCHOLARLY AND/OR CREATIVE PRODUCTIVITY
  - V. UNIVERSITY AND SCHOOL SERVICE
  - VI. FIVE-YEAR ENROLLMENT DATA
  - VII. PERSONNEL
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  - IX. PERTINENT INFORMATION FOR DOCTORAL PROGRAMS
  - X. OTHER PERTINENT INFORMATION
  - XI. ANALYSIS OF STRENGTHS AND AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT
  - XII. STRATEGIC PLAN
- APPENDICES

### I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Executive Summary should enumerate those issues that are of greatest concern to the program and the specific actions by which these issues can be effectively addressed. The emphasis should be on evidence-based evaluation of the department's degree programs, teaching, scholarly/creative productivity, University service, and the strategic plan.

### II. MISSION STATEMENT

Provide the department's/program's mission statement (Appendix A). The self-study provides programs with an opportunity to reconsider (or develop, if necessary) their mission statements.

#### Questions to consider for a mission statement are:

**Relationship to the School's Mission Statement:** a statement of the program's contributions to the mission of the School(s) of which it is a part. How does the department/program contribute to the School's goals and advance its strategic plan?

**Relationship to the University's Mission Statement:** a statement of the program's contributions to the University's mission. How does the department/program advance GW's Strategic Plan?

**Doctoral Programs:** Is there a well-defined mission and focus?

### **III. CURRICULAR DEVELOPMENT AND ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING**

**In this section, review all undergraduate majors, master's degree programs, and doctoral degree programs for which your department/program is responsible.** In Appendix B, list ALL programs offered by the department/program (e.g., undergraduate majors and minors, double majors, secondary fields of study, combined bachelor's/master's programs or other dual or joint programs, master's, doctoral, and other degree programs, certificate programs). For the undergraduate offerings, include any special academic programs supported by the department/program (e.g., academic/residential programs, summer institutes, study abroad). For doctoral programs, include definitions of any program concentration areas, and list the faculty associated with each.

#### **A. Curriculum Development and Relevance**

As your academic field, the external environment, and departmental resources have changed during the past five years, how have the programs responded to new challenges and new opportunities? How does the curriculum reflect best practices in its field and prepare students to succeed at the next career or educational step? During the past five years, what significant curriculum changes have been planned and implemented to stay abreast of the field? What changes have occurred in degree requirements, courses offered, internships, or other elements that define the learning expectations and experiences of students in each program? What career path expectations does the doctoral program have for its graduates upon earning their degrees? How have you used measures such as student surveys, alumni placement, alumni satisfaction, alumni gifts, employer ratings, intern supervisor ratings, and student research and conference presentations to review the curriculum? Include graduation survey data on student satisfaction and plans after graduation in Appendix C. (Survey data from the undergraduate and graduate student graduation surveys are available from the Office of Survey Research and Analysis.)

#### **B. Assessment of Student Learning**

Assessment of student learning is an essential tool for advancing GW's commitment to achieve academic excellence in teaching and to provide outstanding learning experiences for its students. How well students have mastered the knowledge, analyses, skills, and tools set forth in each degree program's learning outcomes serves as the measure of how successfully the degree program contributes to these overall University goals.

##### **1) Assess student learning**

Programs should use their past five years of annual assessments of student learning as the foundation for this section of the APR. First, summarize and review how well students have achieved the learning goals, outcomes, objectives and/or competencies defined by each degree program on its own or in accordance with its professional accreditation group and any changes made in response to each year's findings. (The

number of learning outcomes may range from as few as three to as many as 12-15 depending on accrediting agencies' requirements.) Second, reflect on the past five years' annual reviews of student learning and the changes made in the curriculum and teaching to evaluate how well your program is achieving its mission and providing quality academic programs and opportunities for its students. What are three of the most important changes made in each degree program in response to the annual assessments? What is your overall evaluation of the improvements of the past five years in each degree program? What is currently the most important aspect of each program where the students could be doing better, and how is the faculty planning to improve student learning? Yearly assessment reports for each degree program should be included in Appendix D.

## **2) Map the curriculum**

Individual courses and curricula should be developed within the context of the program's goals and should reflect a coherent plan of study. Curriculum mapping provides an efficient means to display the relationship between student learning and the curriculum. Its value is that it enables the faculty to display visually where central information, concepts, or skills are introduced, developed, and mastered. If the program has not already produced a curriculum map, use the curriculum mapping feature in TaskStream to map the curriculum. For an example of a completed curriculum map, see:

<http://www.gwu.edu/~assess/documents/CurriculumMappingExample.pdf>.

## **C. Instructor Development**

### **1) Faculty**

Given the variety of people responsible for student instruction and learning, how has the program worked with regular active status and limited service faculty to encourage high quality teaching? How does each of the different groups responsible for student learning gain knowledge and understanding of the programmatic and course learning outcomes pertinent to their work? How do student surveys and course evaluations provide information to teaching staff to help them improve their effectiveness in supporting student learning? How do course evaluations, departmental syllabus review, class observation, or other techniques enable the program to monitor consistency, not uniformity, across sections? (For doctoral programs: Are the faculty resources adequate for carrying out the doctoral program at a level of high quality?) Include a copy of the department's course evaluation form in Appendix E, along with summary course evaluations for full-time faculty and for adjunct faculty teaching core courses for at least two years.

### **2) GTAs (if your department has GTAs)**

How does your department/program prepare GTAs to be effective instructors? Describe the criteria used by your department to determine a GTA's readiness to perform specific instructional activities. Describe the training and supervision/feedback your department

provides for GTAs, including any workshops or tutorials provided specifically for your department's GTAs. Describe the methods (e.g., separate course evaluations, observation by faculty) used by your department to evaluate the performance of your GTAs and to give them feedback. Describe the methods used to assess the reliability of grading (particularly more subjective grading such as grading of essay questions or papers) done by GTAs. Include copies of rubrics used for grading essay questions or papers.

#### **D. Curriculum and Assessment Strategic Plan**

After the review of curriculum and assessment, use the data described above to identify overall strengths and weaknesses of the academic program(s) and to develop strategies to improve the program(s). What needs and goals does the department have for keeping curriculum up to date and responsive to professional and environmental demands? What needs and goals exist for assessing and improving student learning? These conclusions should inform the strategic plan that the department or program proposes in Section XI.

### **IV. SCHOLARLY AND/OR CREATIVE PRODUCTIVITY**

#### **A. Organization of Scholarly and/or Creative Activities**

Describe the organization of the department's scholarly activities, including 1) designation of specific research groups (e.g., organic chemistry, modern European history), 2) collaborations among faculty within the department, 3) collaborations with faculty in other GW departments, 4) affiliations with research centers and institutes within GW, 5) collaborations with individuals outside GW, and 6) formal affiliations with organizations (scholarly, research, creative, governmental, etc.) outside GW. Provide an evaluation of the effectiveness of this organization in promoting scholarly and/or creative activity. Are there modifications or extensions of this organization that might enhance its effectiveness? If so, describe them and comment on their potential for implementation.

#### **B. Research Foci**

What are the primary research areas and research clusters in the department/program? Which faculty are associated with each area/cluster and how? Are there faculty external to the department and/or to GW who collaborate on this research, and if so, in what areas? How important are these relationships to the research cluster?

#### **C. Research and Graduate Education**

Which faculty are directing graduate student research and in what areas? Does the department have internal guidelines for faculty directing graduate student research? What are some examples of outstanding graduate research and why are these important? (List the last five years MA/PhD theses/dissertations titles, student names,

faculty advisor(s), and publications resulting from the thesis or dissertation in Appendix F.) How has faculty research been integrated into the graduate curriculum?

#### **D. Research and Undergraduate Education**

How has faculty research been integrated into the undergraduate curriculum (e.g., Dean's Seminars, independent research courses, other)? Which faculty are directing undergraduate student research and in what areas? What are some examples of outstanding undergraduate research? Have your undergraduates been involved in school, university-wide, or external initiatives to support undergraduate research (e.g., Gamow, Luther Rice, NSF's REU program) and in what areas?

#### **E. Publications and Creative Works**

List separately for each full-time tenure track and non-tenure accruing faculty member the refereed publications, books published, and other important publications or creative works completed in the past five years. (Up-to-date curriculum vitae of full-time and core adjunct faculty should be included in Appendix G.)

#### **F. External Funding**

For all requests for external funding (grants, contracts, fellowships) submitted during the past five years, provide the project title, the name(s) of the full-time faculty involved, the agency (e.g., NSF, NIH, foundation) to whom the request was submitted, and the amount requested. For those that were funded, add FUNDED, and provide the amount awarded.

#### **G. Professional Activities**

Provide a summary of the professional activities (e.g., editorships, offices in professional organizations) of the full-time faculty during the past five years. List those faculty members who have garnered special recognition for their scholarly work (e.g., Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science).

### **V. UNIVERSITY AND SCHOOL SERVICE**

Provide a summary of service to the University (e.g., Faculty Senate, IRB) and to the School (e.g., freshman advising, teaching initiatives, committees) by full-time faculty during the past five years.

### **VI. FIVE-YEAR ENROLLMENT DATA\***

#### **A. Undergraduate Programs**

- **Number of undergraduate majors in each undergraduate program by school;\***

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\* Statistics needed for Sections A, B, C, and D will be populated by the division of Academic Planning and Assessment in TaskStream once the department/program begins the APR process.

- **Number of minors in each undergraduate program by school;**\*
- **Number of undergraduate degrees conferred in each undergraduate program.**\*

## **B. Graduate Programs**

- **Degree programs\*:** The number of students enrolled in each of the individual graduate degree programs\* (e.g., MA, MS, MFA, PhD, EdD, PsyD) offered by the department as well as enrollments for any graduate certificate programs.\*
- **Program concentrations\*:** Where a degree program has specific concentrations, include the number of students pursuing each concentration.\*
- **Graduates\*:** The number of students completing each graduate degree program, and, where applicable, each concentration. Include the absolute numbers of doctorates awarded for the past eight years. For doctoral students, include the average time to degree from the bachelor's or master's levels (indicating which).\*
- **Number of applicants\*:** The number of applications received for each of the department's graduate programs.\*
- **Number of applicants admitted\*:** The number of applicants admitted to each of the department's graduate programs.\*
- **Number of admitted students enrolling\*:** The number of admitted applicants who enroll as new students in each of the department's graduate programs.\*
- **Standard examination scores\*:** The means and ranges of the standard examination scores (e.g., GRE, GMAT) for enrolled students in each graduate degree program.\*
- **Attrition of doctoral students\*:** For each program, the three-year attrition rate, as measured for five entering classes (in the fall). For example, 2012 will contain those classes entering in the fall of 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, and 2008.\*

## **C. Enrollments in All Courses Offered by the Department/Program**

Undergraduate and graduate enrollments for fall and spring semesters; including course totals and student level and student school registration. (This report from Data Mart\* includes headcount and credit hours as of census date except for the current semester, which will be as of the run date.)

## **D. Faculty Teaching Report**

Five-year faculty workload report\*, formatted as one spreadsheet per semester, showing all department/program faculty teaching for each semester. This includes courses and enrollments.

## **E. Enrollment Trends**

Describe any increases or decreases that are apparent in the five-year enrollment figures. Note factors (e.g., addition or deletion of courses, faculty sabbatical leaves or

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\* Statistics needed for Sections A, B, C, and D will be populated by the division of Academic Planning and Assessment in TaskStream once the department/program begins the APR process.

retirements, changing demand for the program) that may account for variations in the enrollments.

**F. Placement of Graduates** (not doctoral students)

Detail the types and levels of positions obtained by graduates of the program, both undergraduate majors and graduate students. (Data from the graduation surveys concerning plans after graduation may assist here, as may alumni surveys.)

**G. Placement of doctoral students**

Is there an employment market for students who have completed their doctoral training? What has been the placement of graduates in the program, including the mix between academic institutions, government, industry, and independent employment? For those pursuing an academic path, list the institutions, academic titles, and types of positions graduates attain. Include placement data for students who have graduated over the past 5 years.

**VII. PERSONNEL**

**A. Full-time Faculty**

**List ALL full-time faculty by rank and tenure status, including those on contract.** Note all changes (e.g., departures, replacements, additions) in the faculty in the past 5 years. How have these changes affected the department's programs?

**B. Part-time Faculty**

To what extent are part-time faculty relied on to teach courses? Where are they used in lower division, upper division, and graduate courses and, at each level of instruction, what are the justifications for their use? How are they trained, supported, and evaluated?

**C. Graduate Teaching Assistants**

Provide the number of GTAs awarded by the program in each of the past five years, and describe their major roles.

**D. Clerical Support**

Provide the number and levels (e.g., executive aide, senior secretary) of the clerical staff assigned to the program.

**VIII. FACILITIES**

**A. Space**

Assess your facilities in relation to your programmatic goals, considering amount and types of space and its inadequacy.

**B. Computer, Instructional, and Research Technology Resources**

Describe any computer or other instructional and research technology resources of which the program has exclusive use other than faculty computers in relation to needs.

**C. Equipment**

Describe specialized equipment maintained by the program for instructional and/or research purposes.

**IX. OTHER PERTINENT INFORMATION FOR DOCTORAL PROGRAM (S):****A. Costs and Revenue**

What is the cost of operating the doctoral program? What is spent per year from C or R funds on GTAs and other forms of graduate student support (salary, stipend, and tuition)? What is the total amount in graduate student stipend awards and research assistant funding that comes from sponsored projects (i.e., A or B funds)? Are there other extraordinary costs associated with the program? What is the size of the graduate student support packages? How many are regularly offered?

**B. Special Resources**

What special resources, if any, are required to offer this specific doctoral program? Are these resources adequate? For example, what about library resources? (The Gelman Library has software with comparative data that could provide comparisons: e.g., for nationally ranked doctoral programs, a comparison of GW with Association of Research Libraries institutions.) Are there special laboratory and equipment requirements? Other requirements?

**C. National Rankings**

What external evidence exists to describe the quality of the doctoral program(s) under review with respect to national standards of excellence for graduate education/research in your discipline? Evidence that is as objective as possible, and not totally subjective, should be cited (e.g., NRC data, other rankings, citation index data). At the same time, note any unique aspects of the program that do not necessarily apply to other such programs. Describe all published reports that have ranked/rated programs in your discipline; include their findings.

**X. OTHER PERTINENT INFORMATION**

Include any additional information that the department/program thinks will prove useful in conducting the program review.

## **XI. ANALYSIS OF STRENGTHS AND AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT**

This section should include highlights of the evaluation of all of the department or program goals for student learning, faculty scholarly/creative productivity, and University service. Discuss specific strengths, immediate and future opportunities and challenges, and areas for improvement. The evaluation should consider any trends in the above data and factors that may account for them. Most important, it should be honest.

## **XII. STRATEGIC PLAN**

This section consists of the program's plans for the next five years for developing its strengths, meeting challenges and opportunities, and addressing the areas identified for improvement. It should include a **prioritized** list of the areas to be addressed. For **each** of these areas, the following should be stated:

- Specific goals and objectives;
- Actions to be taken in order to achieve the stated goals;
- A schedule for implementation of the actions;
- Measures of effectiveness for each of the actions.

## **APPENDICES**

**Appendix A: Mission Statement**

**Appendix B: All programs offered by the department/program**

**Appendix C: Graduation survey data on student satisfaction and students' post-graduation plans (if available)**

**Appendix D: Annual academic assessment reports for each degree program**

**Appendix E: Department/Program course evaluation forms and summary course evaluations of full-time faculty; summary course evaluations of adjunct faculty teaching core courses for two years \***

**Appendix F: MA/PhD Theses/Dissertations (Titles, Student Names, Advisor(s))**

**Appendix G: CVs of full-time and core adjunct faculty**

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\* Prepopulated in TaskStream by the division of Academic Planning and Assessment if the GW Online Course Evaluation tool is used.