

USD Guidelines for Program Review

Purpose

The University of San Diego's academic program review process provides a systematic and continuous means of assuring academic excellence. It is designed to encourage accountability and dialogue among members within the department under review as a self-reflective process and within the broader institutional and discipline-based contexts. The process is meant to assist programs in understanding their distinctive and collaborative roles within the University community and with relevant external constituents. It provides the basis for making evidence-based plans and decisions to foster improvements at all levels of the institution.

Overview of the four-stage process:

1. Department self study
2. Program review team report
3. Recommendations of the Academic Review Committee
4. Responses to recommendations and program plans via a discussion with the provost, dean, and program administrator.

I. Stage 1: Self-Study

A. Key characteristics of a self study include (refer to template in **Appendix 1**):

1. Articulation of program mission/goals and connection between these and the university's and college's/school's mission and goals.
2. Description and analysis of data or evidence, including information about faculty, students, the curriculum, and the learning environment.
3. Identification of and comparison with benchmark/aspiration programs.
4. Articulation of learning outcomes and evidence of effectiveness.
5. Articulation of the program's promotion of scholarly work, creative productivity, curricular and instructional innovations, and linkages among scholarship, teaching, student learning, and service.
6. Description of service in support of the program's academic mission.
7. Identification of support for student development.
8. Investment in faculty and staff.
9. Evaluation of facilities and equipment.
10. Plan for improvement.

B. Program review timeline: [Linked to timeline document]

C. Self Study Preparation:

1. Initiation of process
 - Program chairs and deans meet to initiate process of program review.
 - Program chairs and department faculty meet to appoint a self-study group and chair.
2. Resources
 - Self study teams or committees will be provided guidelines and a template with embedded key characteristics for assistance in formatting the report.
 - Self-study teams will receive training to assist them in the process of program review.
 - Self-study teams can apply for funding to compensate faculty, staff, and outside consultants.
 - Self-study teams will receive a set of program-based data tables from Institutional Research and Planning.

D. Conducting Self-Study Inquiry:

- The template provided assists departments by providing a series of questions in an organized format to ensure fully addressing the key characteristics identified in point I.A. above.
- Excluding appendices, the self-study report should not exceed 20 pages.

- Programs will receive samples of other program review self-studies and can consult with program self-study teams that have completed the full cycle successfully.
- Programs will complete a final self-study report to be issued to program review team of reviewers external to the department, the dean, and the Academic Review Committee.

II. Stage 2: External Program Review

A. Key characteristics of an external review include:

1. The external review provides honest and objective advice to the program, Dean and Provost, about the program's (a) strengths and areas of needed improvement (b) assessment activities, and (c) opportunities and plan for improvement.
2. The external review is completed by a Program Review Team, composed of two faculty from external peer programs, and a USD faculty member from another USD program.
3. The external review is based on the program's Self-Study, a site visit, the Dean's response to the Self-Study, and other materials requested by the PRT itself.

B. Choosing Reviewers:

1. The USD faculty member is appointed by the Dean in consultation with the program faculty.
2. The external reviewers are determined by the Dean in consultation with the Associate Provost and program administrator(s). The program administrator(s) sends the vitae of external reviewers to the Dean and Associate Provost. The external reviewers should have the terminal degree, years of experience, and level of teaching appropriate to review the program. It is preferred that at least two of the PRT members have program review experience.
3. External reviewers are ineligible if they graduated from USD, worked at USD in the last five years, were a prospective candidate at USD, are related to a USD employee, or have other conflicts of interest. External reviewers must disclose their relationships with USD employees. A member of the Academic Review Committee (ARC) cannot serve on the PRT.
4. The Dean will select one PRT member to serve as chair of the team. The PRT Chair will convene meetings, coordinate reviewers, and prepare the team report in consultation and with the approval of team members.

C. Timeline:

1. The PRT membership is determined approximately two months before the Self-Study is completed. The external reviewers must have signed the Letter of Agreement (refer to **Appendix II**) and faxed or returned it to the Associate Provost.
2. The Dean will send the Self-Study to the PRT a month before the site visit. The program administrator(s) will send to the PRT in a timely manner:
 - a. Information on travel and lodging arrangements.
 - b. The itinerary, local contact information, and the contact information (and short biography) of the external review team member(s) (**Appendix III**).
 - c. The Letter of Agreement form (**Appendix II**).
 - d. The PRT Evaluation form.
 - e. The USD APR process and APR Guide documents.
 - f. Other relevant documentation.
3. The PRT report should be submitted to the Dean and program within 21 days of the site visit.

D. Site Visit

1. The typical site visit lasts 1-1/2 to 2 days and 2 nights.
2. The external reviewers should arrive before the site visit and have dinner with the USD PRT team member. This meeting is an opportunity to get acquainted, discuss issues raised by the Self-Study, and deal with organizational issues.
3. The PRT should meet with program administration at the beginning of the first visit day. This meeting is an opportunity to welcome the PRT, give an overview of the program, and answer questions that the PRT may have.
4. Time should be allocated during the site visit for the PRT to meet by itself for discussion.
5. At the end of the site visit, there is an exit meeting with Dean, program administration and program faculty.

E. External Review Report

1. The PRT Report should be based on/include the PRT Evaluation Guidelines (refer to **Appendix IV**).
2. The PRT will determine its members' roles in writing the report.
3. The PRT Report is sent to the Dean, program administration, and program faculty.
4. The Dean and program (including individual faculty) have 30 days to respond to the PRT report.
5. The Dean forwards the Self-Study, the PRT report, and responses to the PRT report to the Academic Review Committee.

F. Reimbursement and Honoraria Procedures (refer to **Appendix V).**

1. The external reviewers should mail their airline ticket receipts and receipts for other incidental expenses for travel reimbursement to the Associate Provost.
2. Upon receipt of the PRT report, a (honorarium) check is mailed to each of the external reviewers.

III. Stage 3: Academic Review Committee Recommendations (from policy document):

- A. The Dean will forward, with an individual response if desired, the self-study, PRT report, and program administrator and/or faculty's responses (if provided) to the ARC. The Dean may also distribute these materials to appropriate internal governing bodies, such as faculty planning committees.
- B. The ARC will review the self-study, the final PRT report, and any responses to the PRT report. The ARC will take into account current structures in the program under review, program-specific goals, and the educational mission of the academic unit to which the program is assigned.
- C. The ARC will prepare a report informed by the materials provided in which it comments on the program and suggests strategies by which to achieve program goals. When appropriate, the ARC may note opportunities for further development of the program, including University-wide opportunities for program enhancement and interdisciplinary and collaborative educational efforts.
- D. The ARC will make its recommendations to the Provost with copies to Dean(s) and program administrator(s). Deans may supplement ARC recommendations with their own recommendations to the Provost.

IV. Stage 4: Administrative Response and Plan (from policy document): The value of Academic Program Review rests on its process, its outcomes, and its usefulness. Because the process and outcomes are developed for purposes of improving educational opportunities, curriculum quality, and program relevance, it is essential that the University make appropriate use of the results.

- A. The Dean, program administrator, and program faculty will meet to discuss ARC recommendations and establish goals for program improvement.
- B. Within 45 days of receipt of the ARC's report, the Provost, Dean(s), and program administrator(s) will meet to discuss ARC recommendations, strategies for program improvement, and University commitments to achieving agreed-upon goals.
- C. At the mid-point between reviews, program administrators will report progress toward achieving program goals to the Dean(s) and Provost. The timeline for progress reports may be accelerated upon the recommendation of the Dean(s) and/or Provost.

APPENDIX I: SELF STUDY REPORT TEMPLATE

- I. Introduction and Context:** This section describes central features of the program. Information in this section might include answers to the following:
- A. Describe the program's mission, goals, and outcomes. Describe briefly how the program contributes to the discipline.
 - B. How are these related to the mission and goals of the school/college and institution?
 - C. In what school or college does the program reside?
 - D. What degrees does it grant and what concentrations are available?
 - E. In what year did the program start?
 - F. What major changes have taken place since the start of the program?
 - G. Identify any special issues or concerns the program will address in this self-study, perhaps as a response to a previous self-study or recognition of unique needs or concerns.
 - H. Identify and briefly describe how the program responds to the needs of the communities of interest (these might include students of the school/college in general, students enrolled in the program, program non-university affiliates and sponsors, interested groups in San Diego County, and members of the discipline).
- II. Evidence of Excellence and Program Accountability:** This section provides profiles of the central elements (students, faculty, curriculum, and learning environment), and evidence of student learning and effectiveness. In the "dialogue," this section identifies what the program provides or contributes to the intellectual community.
- A. **Students:** What is the profile of our students and how does it relate to or enhance the mission and goals of the program? Data might include students' gender, ethnicity, average GPAs, standardized test scores (general and discipline-specific), membership in honors' societies, retention and graduation rates, post-graduation placement of students. For graduate programs, descriptions could include the various means used to recruit students.
 - B. **Faculty:** What are the qualifications and achievements of the faculty in the program in relation to program mission and goals? How do faculty members' background, expertise, and professional work contribute to the academic excellence of the program? Data might include the proportion of faculty with terminal degrees, institutions from which faculty earned terminal degrees, list of faculty specialties within discipline (and how these align with the program curriculum), distribution of faculty across ranks (and years at institution), diversity of faculty, awards and recognition. During the initial review cycle, data might include a comprehensive record of scholarship and creative activity, external funding, record of professional practice, service to the department, university, and discipline. In subsequent reviews, the emphasis should highlight faculty accomplishments in the previous five-six years.
 - C. **Curriculum and Learning Environment:** How current is the program curriculum? Does it offer sufficient breadth and depth of learning for this particular degree? How well does it align with learning outcomes? Are the courses sequenced and reliably available in sequence? Has the program been reviewed by external stakeholders, such as practitioners in the field, or compared with similar other programs? Identify benchmark and aspirational programs for comparison and contrast to this program in form and quality. Data for this category might include curricular maps or flow charts to show how curriculum addresses outcomes, a comparison of the program's curriculum with curricula at selected other institutions and with disciplinary/ professional standards, measures of teaching quality and effectiveness (e.g., peer observations and

evaluations, faculty self-evaluations, students' course evaluations, faculty scholarship on teaching and learning, and formative discussions of pedagogy among faculty and through faculty development), a description of other learning experiences that are relevant to the program goals (e.g., internships, research experiences, study abroad or other international experiences, community-service learning, etc.) as well as how many students participate in those experiences.

- D. **Student Learning and Effectiveness:** Are the students achieving the desired learning outcomes for the program? Are they achieving those outcomes at the expected levels of learning, and how is the expected level determined? Are they being retained and graduating in a timely fashion? Are they prepared for advanced study of the world of work? Data for this section might include annual results of direct and indirect assessments of student learning in the program (qualitative and/or quantitative), including the degree to which students achieve the program's desired standards, ongoing efforts by the department to "close the loop" in responding to assessment results, student retention and graduation rates (disaggregated by demographics), placement of grads in graduate or professional schools, job placements, graduating senior surveys, employer critiques of student performance or employer satisfaction surveys, and alumni achievements.

- III. **Program Sustainability and Support:** This section identifies student demand for the program and the degree to which resources are allocated appropriately and are sufficient in amount to maintain program quality. In the "dialogue," this section identifies what the program needs to be sustained.

- A. **Demand for the Program:** What are the trends in numbers of student major declarations reflected over a 3 to 5 year period? What is happening within the profession, local community, or society generally that identifies an anticipated need for this program in the future? With whom does the program compete for students? What are the unique elements (from benchmarking) that make the program attractive to future students? Data in this section might emphasize how the unique elements identified in I. and II. Contribute to the program's effectiveness.
- B. **Allocation of Resources:**
1. **Faculty:** Are there sufficient numbers of faculty to maintain program quality? Do program faculty have the support they need to do their work? Data in this section might include number of full-time faculty (ratio of FT to PT faculty), student-faculty ratio, faculty workload, faculty review and evaluation processes, mentoring processes/programs, professional development opportunities/resources (including travel funds), release time for course development, research, etc.
 2. **Student support:** Are their sufficient mechanisms in place to assist students with achieving their academic goals? Data in this section might include listing academic programs and resources, tutoring and supplemental instruction, basic skills remediation, support for connecting general learning requirements to discipline requirements, orientation and transition programs, financial support, support for engagement across the community, support for non-cognitive variables of success (including emotional, psychological, and physical interventions if necessary).
 3. **Information and technology services:** What IT resources are currently used by the program? Are there adequate IT resources for adequately sustaining the program? Data in this section might include library print and electronic holdings in the teaching and research areas of the program, information literacy outcomes for graduates, technology resources available to support pedagogy and research in the program, technology resources available to support students' program needs.

4. **Facilities:** What facilities and unique space or equipment (e.g., labs) are used by the program? Are the facilities adequate for sustaining the quality of the program? Data in this section might include classroom space, instructional laboratories, research laboratories, office space, student study spaces, access to classrooms suited for IT purposes, and access to classrooms designed for alternative learning styles/universal design.
 5. **Financial resources:** What do the operational budget trends (revenues and expenditures) show over a 3 to 5 year period? Evidence in this category might include increasing or decreasing revenues in areas directly related to sustainability issues (e.g., no increases or replacements in tenure lines with rising numbers of students, or little funding available for necessary equipment to keep students current in the practice of their fields).
- IV. **Strengths and Opportunities for Improvement:** This section of the report is a general analysis or interpretation of the evidence for program excellence and effectiveness, and support for sustainability. Its purpose is to provide an overview of the program's strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities for improvement. Here are a few general examples of questions that might be addressed in this section: Are the curriculum, practices, processes, and resources properly aligned with the goals of the program? Are the department/ program goals aligned with the goals of the constituents that the program serves? Are program goals being achieved? Are student learning outcomes being achieved at the expected level?
- V. **Program Plan for Improvement:** In this section, we return to one of the listed purposes of program review—providing a foundation for evidence-based plans and decisions to promote effective change and improvements at all levels of the institution. This section also provides the essential transition to the next review cycle. Answers to questions might include: What are the program goals for the next few years? How will the program specifically address any of the identified weaknesses? How will the program build on existing strengths? What internal improvements are possible with existing resources (through reallocation)? What improvements can only be addressed through additional resources? Where can the formation of collaborations improve program quality?

**APPENDIX II: LETTER OF AGREEMENT
PERTAINING TO EXTERNAL REVIEW PARTICIPATION**

Thank you for serving on the Program Review Team (PRT) for the University of San Diego. For your participation you receive an honorarium (negotiated by the Dean) and reimbursement for travel to and from USD.

As a member of the PRT, your responsibilities would include reviewing the Self-Study and any additional relevant materials delivered to you a month prior to your site visit. You will also participate in a pre-visit conference call with the Program Review Team members to identify issues and concerns with the Self-Study and site visit. On the site visit, you will meet with faculty, students, alumni, and senior administrators. From the conclusion of the site visit, you have 21 days to produce your report.

Every program review requires the utmost care in preserving confidentiality. The Peer Review Team will secure all documents and refrain from discussing issues with anyone other than the Peer Review Team or USD faculty and staff.

Occasionally, the PRT may hear allegations of misconduct (e.g., harassment, falsification) during the site visit. It is not the PRT's responsibility to handle these allegations. They should be reported to the USD PRT member, who will discuss them with the appropriate USD official.

If you agree with these terms, please sign and date, then fax back to the Office of the Executive Vice-President and Provost, c/o Andrew Allen, Associate Provost at (619) 260-2210.

Print Name/Signature

Date

Associate Provost

Date

APPENDIX III:

Sample Visit Schedule and Contact Information

The site visit begins with a dinner for the PRT the night before the two-day visit. This meeting is an opportunity to get acquainted, discuss issues found in the Self-Study, and review the itinerary. Different programs will have different needs therefore, the program administrator(s), in consultation with the PRT, will determine the meetings and tours that are necessary for an effective site visit. The PRT should meet with the program administration early on the first day of the visit. Time should be allowed for the PRT to meet by itself, particularly during the second day.

At the end of the site visit, the PRT should have an exit meeting with the Dean, program administration and program faculty. Arrangements need to be made for breakfast, lunch, and dinner for the PRT for the duration of the visit.

Important Contact Numbers:

Peer Review Team USD member:

Peer Review Team external member:

Peer Review Team external member:

Program Chair or program review coordinator:

Dean:

Associate Provost: Andy Allen phone: (619) 260-4553 email: andrewt@sandiego.edu

Hotel (if required): Hacienda Hotel: (619) 298-4707

APPENDIX IV: PRT EVALUATION REPORT GUIDELINES

The external review provides honest and objective advice to the program, Dean and Provost, about the program's mission and relation to University and/or community with attention to (a) strengths and areas of needed improvement (b) assessment of student learning and the curricular environment, and (c) opportunities and plan for improvement. As each of these areas is addressed in the report, the PRT is encouraged to note any convergence or discrepancies between the Self-Study and the site visit observations. It would also be important to review any issues or concerns raised by the Dean or program administrator in their discussions with the PRT.

When considering a program's strengths and areas of needed improvement, you might use the following questions as a guide: How well do the faculty areas of expertise support the program's curriculum? In what ways does the system for evaluating teaching practices facilitate continuous improvement? In what ways are the faculty supported and encouraged to pursue professional development to stay current in their disciplines? Are resources allocated to the program adequate? This might include financial resources like faculty lines or budgets and physical resources such as facilities, equipment and technology. Do you recommend any changes to strengthen the program's current administration, support, and resources (including possible reallocations of resources from current program operations to fund new budgetary needs)?

When considering assessment of student learning and the curricular environment you might consider using the following illustrative questions as a guide: Do you recommend any changes in the program's student learning outcomes? In what ways could the program improve its assessment processes? In what ways could the program improve its discussions around observed student learning? Do you recommend any changes to improve student experiences and learning environment?

When considering opportunities and plan for improvement you might consider using the following illustrative questions as a guide: What is your evaluation of the program's plan for improvement? How realistic are these plans? What improvements are possible with existing resources (through reallocation)? What improvements can only be addressed through additional resources? What suggestions do you have to improve program quality?

APPENDIX V: EXPENSES

Department Expenses

Expenses such as copying, drinks and snacks, should be determined in consultation with the appropriate Dean.

Peer Review Team Expenses

Check requests, petty cash forms or expense reports should be sent to the Associate Provost for approval. Forms are available online from the Accounting Office's web site found at:

<http://www.sandiego.edu/administration/businessadmin/procurement/forms.php>

Please follow all Account Payable policies (such as including original invoices and taping small receipts to sheets of paper).

Travel

The external reviewer should make his or her own plane reservations and be reimbursed (please remind them to submit original passenger receipt, baggage claim tickets or boarding passes, not just the e-ticket print out from the web site). The University will reimburse round-trip, coach airfare.

Lodging

The Hospitality Suite on campus is free of charge. It must be the first lodging choice for an external reviewer before departments/areas seek other lodging accommodations. Complete the Hospitality Suite Reservation form (found at: <http://www.sandiego.edu/administration/academicaffairs/policies/> and e-mail to provost@sandiego.edu. Only if the Hospitality Suite is booked, or if you have two external reviewers who need lodging, you may use the Hacienda Hotel (619-298-4707) in Old Town (Corporate Acct. L244). Please identify your USD department when calling to make reservations. The Hacienda offers a free breakfast and a dinner voucher Monday-Friday. Or you may use the Holiday Inn Express in Old Town by calling (619-299-7400, extension 402, and asking for USD Direct Bill reservations. An e-mail should be sent to the Associate Provost at gough@sandiego.edu with consultants' names and reservation dates.

Food and Other Expenses

The Provost's Office will reimburse the external reviewer for meal and local travel expenses associated with the visit. Meal expenses should be held within the \$64/day per diem rate for San Diego (or the current per diem rate is as published on the US General Services web site).