The University of Texas at Tyler Office of Assessment & Institutional Effectiveness



Academic and Student Support Services

External Review Handbook

Table of Contents

1
1
1
2
3
5
5
.4
6
-

Appendix A	Self-Study Guidelines
Appendix B	Suggested Questions for Reviewers
Appendix C	Suggested Campus Visit Schedule
Appendix D	Sample Staff Self-Study Survey
Appendix E	Review Process Satisfaction Survey

Introduction

An external review of UT Tyler academic and student support services is an essential function of the institution's quality review process and provides perspectives not available on campus. The results of the external reviews are included with other assessment and evaluation information in determining the quality, efficiency, and contributions toward student success of each unit. Additionally, the self-assessment and systematic review information contribute to planning for continuous quality. Both qualitative and quantitative criteria are included in the review and the various criteria may be weighted differently for each review. Flexibility in the application of the review criteria is appropriate to accommodate the specialized missions of the individual academic support services, offices, and programs.

The following factors serve as guidelines in the preparation and planning of the external review.

Guiding Principles

- UT Tyler is committed to external reviews as an integral part of strategic planning, institutional effectiveness and to ensure continuing quality enhancement toward fulfillment of the UT Tyler mission;
- All academic support services fulfill their respective mission and purpose within the context of the UT Tyler mission;
- The external review is considered to be an appropriate assessment effort in the systematic evaluation of performance and accountability;
- Participation in the review process emphasizes self-assessment and demonstrates a concern about quality, an ability to be self-critical and a willingness to act upon identified concerns; and
- Relevant groups within the University are included in the review process, especially when recommendations may refer to or affect particular groups.

All external reviews are conducted by a minimum of one external reviewer. The reviewer(s) visit the campus and meet with staff, faculty, students and administrators and view facilities and resources. The typical external review is scheduled on a 7-year cycle.

External Reviewer Selection

An approval process for all external reviewers is required. Reviewers are selected with particular reference to their records of experience and thoughts relative to broad issues of education within their respective disciplines. External reviewers should be of appropriate rank or stature in their respective discipline and not affiliated with U.T. Tyler to ensure a strong review is provided and that there is no appearance of a conflict of interest.

Nominations are required for prospective external reviewers. External reviewers must be full-time employees in an institution nationally recognized for excellence in higher education.

Ideally, the director/executive director provides the names of *two* potential external reviewers to the appropriate assistant vice president or vice president. The recommendations should include a statement of the nominee's credentials and documentation that clarifies the nature of any prior contact the director/executive director has had with each suggested reviewer. The assistant vice president/vice president may recommend additional names of potential external reviewers if desired. The assistant vice president/vice president/vice president makes the final selection of external reviewer.

The department director/executive director follows the university <u>Contract Processing</u> <u>Procedures</u>.

The director/executive director emails the **UT Tyler Contractual Agreement** provided by the Assessment and Institutional Effectiveness Office and the UT Tyler <u>Supplier</u> <u>Information Form</u> to the external reviewer. The external reviewer signs the MOA and completes the Supplier Information Form then returns both to the director/executive director.

The completed Supplier Information form should be sent to Accounts Payable at <u>accounts_payable@uttyler.edu</u> for processing.

The signed UT Tyler Contractual Agreement should be routed for signature approval(s) using the **Contract Approval Routing Form (CARF)** template in DocuSign by attaching the agreement and any supporting documentation to the CARF template.

The Office of Legal Affairs will notify the budget authority once the agreement is executed. The department director/executive director should send an electronic copy of the executed agreement to the Assessment & Institutional Effectiveness Office (AIE Office).

Fee for Service and Payment of Expenses

Typically, external reviewers earn a \$1,000 fee for service and the university will pay approved travel-related expenses up to \$1500.00. The expenses are funded through the department using transferred funds from the office of the appropriate vice president. Payment decisions are made on a case by case basis as approved by the vice president.

External Review Process Responsibilities of the Department

Pre-Visit

- □ Review the <u>Academic and Student Support Services External Review Handbook</u>.
- Schedule meetings with the assistant vice president/vice president and the Assessment & Institutional Effectiveness Office to discuss the review process, expectations, and timeline.
- Provide the names of potential external reviewers to the assistant vice president/vice president. Ideally, at least *two* potential external reviewers are nominated. The recommendations should include a statement of the nominee's credentials and documentation that clarifies the nature of any prior contact the director/executive director has had with each suggested reviewer.
- □ The assistant vice president/vice president may recommend additional names of potential external reviewers.
- □ The assistant vice president/vice president makes the final selection of reviewer.
- Contact the prospective external reviewers in order of assistant vice president/vice president approval ranking and provide preliminary information to the external reviewer about the scope and responsibilities of the external review, fee-for-service, and payment for related travel expenses.
- □ Review and follow the university <u>Contract Processing Procedures</u>.
- Email the UT Tyler Contractual Agreement provided by the Assessment and Institutional Effectiveness Office and the UT Tyler <u>Supplier Information Form</u> to the external reviewer. Both forms are required of the external reviewer prior to conducting the review.
- □ Send the completed <u>Supplier Information Form</u> to Accounts Payable at <u>accounts_payable@uttyler.edu</u> for processing.
- Route the signed Contractual Agreement for signature approval(s) using the Contract Approval Routing Form (CARF) template in DocuSign by attaching the UT Tyler Contractual Agreement and any supporting documentation to the CARF template.
- Survey departmental staff, including graduate assistants, to identify strengths and concerns of the department. (Appendix D)
- Prepare the Self-Study Report that includes all relevant components agreed upon with the assistant vice president/vice president. (*Appendix A – Self-Study Guidelines*).

- Include professional benchmark standards and criteria from the appropriate national professional organization and/or the appropriate CAS Professional Standards for Higher Education in the Self-Study report. Include the CAS Self-Audit Guide (SAG) results if the department completed the internal audit as part of the Self-Study Report.
- Provide the Self-Study Report to the reviewer approximately 30 days in advance of the site visit.
- □ Arrange for transportation and lodging per assistant vice president/vice president guidance.

Campus Visit

- □ Schedule opportunities to meet with students, staff, faculty, the assistant vice president/vice president, and with other administrators or offices as appropriate. If services are offered for off-campus instructional sites or for online-only students, include representatives from each area.
- □ Schedule time for campus tour(s) as appropriate.
- □ Provide time for the reviewer to work alone during the visit.
- □ Schedule an exit interview for preliminary external review report findings with the assistant vice president/vice president, department director, staff, as well as with faculty and other administrators as appropriate.

Post-Visit

- Coordinate with the vice president's office for transfer of funds to process fee-forservice and approved travel-related expenses. The reviewer is responsible to provide all receipts. Reviewers are compensated upon receipt of the External Review Report.
- Provide electronic copies of the Contractual Agreement, Self-Study Report, External Review Report, and a *draft* Written Response to the Office of Assessment and Institutional Effectiveness.
- □ Schedule a debriefing meeting with the AIE Office for the director and the assistant vice president/vice president within approximately 30 days of receiving the external report.
- □ The Self-Study Report, External Review Report, and *draft* Written Response are reviewed in a debriefing meeting to plan for continuing quality, budget planning, and preparing the final Written Response Report that includes decisions made with the vice president.

- □ Collaborate with the AIE Office to integrate the Self-Study, the External Review Report, and the final Written Response in the annual assessment plan including planned implementation of prioritized recommendations.
- Document how the action plan strategies were implemented in subsequent assessment cycles to "close the loop."

Responsibilities of the External Reviewer

Pre-Visit and Self-Study Review

- External program reviewer signs and returns the UT Tyler Contractual Agreement and the <u>Supplier Information Form</u> to the director/executive director.
- □ Review the program Self-Study document, supporting documentation, and program website information. Communicate with the department to request clarification on any additional information as needed.
- □ Coordinate with the director/executive director for travel and lodging requirements.

Campus Visit

- □ Visit the UT Tyler campus to meet with administrators, professional staff and students directly involved with the department or program as well as with professionals from offices that collaborate with the department under review.
- □ Visits may include the UT Tyler Longview University Center, the UT Tyler Palestine instructional site and/or the UT Tyler Houston Engineering Center, and with online-only students served by the department. Virtual meetings may be facilitated as needed.
- Complete a preliminary report to share during the exit interview at the conclusion of the campus visit.

Post Visit and External Review Report (See Appendix A)

The External Review Report includes findings based on information from the Self-Study Report and support documentation; the campus visit; and interviews with faculty, students, administrators, staff, and community stakeholders as appropriate.

Typical External Review Reports include the following information:

- A general description of the department/program's alignment with the UT Tyler vision, mission statement, and strategic plan as well as with the division strategic plan.
- □ A brief statement on the general process of the review, including a list of those who participated in the review. (Roster may be provided by the department)

- Overall strengths based on quantitative and qualitative data.
- Overall concerns based on quantitative and qualitative data.
- □ Evidence that the department uses assessment performance information for continuous quality improvement.
- □ Recommendations for continuous quality planning emphasizing student outcomes.
- □ Other information relevant to support continuing quality planning.
- □ If there is more than one reviewer, a single report authored by both reviewers should be submitted.
- The External Review Report should be provided to the director/executive director and to the assistant vice president and/or the vice president within approximately 30-60 days following the campus site visit.
- □ Payment of approved travel-related expenses and the fee for service are processed upon submission of the External Review Report.
- □ Complete the External Process Review Satisfaction Survey

Responsibilities of the Office of Assessment and Institutional Effectiveness

Evaluation and Assessment of the External Review Process

- □ The external review process is assessed for ongoing improvement by the AIE Office in collaboration with the department and vice president's office.
- □ Modifications and refinements to the UT Tyler external review process are implemented as appropriate.

Appendix A

The University of Texas at Tyler Academic and Student Support Services Self-Study Guidelines

I. Department Overview

A. **Purpose** - include a brief description of the department's accomplishments and alignment with the UT Tyler vision, mission and strategic plan. Specific examples may be included to demonstrate how the department supports one or more of the four pillars - Student Success, Student Engagement, Research and Scholarship, and Community Engagement and/or how the department supports institutional initiatives behind the scenes using effective, efficient, and creative strategies working toward institutional success. **Resource: Department Request Time: N/A**

B. **Department Strategic Plan** - describe 1-5 year planning goals **Resource: Department Request Time: N/A**

C. Summary of services and/or programs – table summary in comparison with peers (peers may be determined by vice president) Resource: Department Reguest Time: N/A

II. Department Personnel

A. Administrative structure for the department/program Resource: Department Request Time: N/A

B. **Professional Staff** (include job descriptions and credentials for each of the professional staff) **Resource: Department Request Time: N/A**

C. Administrative support staff (include a job description for each of the support staff within the department to include graduate assistants) Resource: Department Request Time: N/A

D. Staff Professional Development –Table Summary of professional development (3 most recent years) Resource: Department/Program Request Time: N/A

III. Department Resources

A. **Fiscal** – Budget and expenditure totals for 3 years Appendix B: Annual Budgets for 3 most recent years Resource: Program Request Time: N/A B. **Facilities** – Describe physical space available and needed (include a detailed description of plans for renovations, expansions, etc.) **Resource: Program Request Time: N/A**

- **IV. Student Information** (Insert Table with last 3 years data)
 - A. Institutional Enrollment semester, instructional site, online only
 - B. Student Body Demographics
 - C. Demographics of students served in department/program

V. Program or Department Quality and Impact

A. **Assessment and Planning** – Annual Assessment Plans showing use of results for last 3 years **Resource: Office of Assessment & Institutional Effectiveness/Program Request Time: 2 weeks**

B. Professional Organization and/or Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS) Standards – Self-Audit Report (as appropriate, confirm with AIE Office) Resource: Department/Program Request Time: N/A

C. **Self-Study Survey Report** (See Appendix C for Sample Survey Prompts) **Resource: Department/Program Request Time: N/A**

D. Other Measures of Quality Resource: Department/Program Request Time: N/A

VI. Staff Proposed Action Plans for Improvement based upon the Self-Study

Appendix B

Common Questions of an External Reviewer

NOTE: The Common Questions examples are based on academic program external reviews but may be adapted for academic support services as appropriate.

To facilitate meaningful analysis of the evidence, it may be helpful to provide guiding questions to structure the self-study inquiry and report. These questions often produce deep discussions among faculty and are considered the most important aspect of the self-study and peer review process. Hence, a set of sample questions is embedded below within each of the core elements typically analyzed in the self-study report. Ideally, program evidence falls into two categories: evidence that addresses questions about program quality and evidence that addresses issues of program viability and sustainability.

I. Program Overview

Department History and Purpose – How are national trends and initiatives considered in the program's planning processes? How does the program align with professional/business trends and practices? Does the Self-Study provide a sound analysis of strengths and areas for improvement? What evidence is provided that the program is increasing student access AND student success?

Future Goals and Planning for Improvement - What are the program's goals for the next few years? Does the program review key outcome measures and performance indicators? Are the quality, use and analysis of program data assessed consistently? What is happening within the profession, local community or society generally that identifies an anticipated need for this program in the future (including market research)? How will the program address any weaknesses identified in the self-study or build on existing strengths? What internal improvements are possible with existing resources? What improvements can be addressed only with additional resources? Where can the formation of collaborations improve program quality and viability?

Alignment with Institutional Mission and Strategic Plan - Are the curriculum, practices, processes and resources properly aligned with the goals of the program and the institutional mission? What evidence is provided on strategic plan revisions and updates? What is the process for strategic initiative development and review?

Evidence in this category might include:

- A detailed narrative on goals for the next 1-5 years including descriptions of resources necessary for goal attainment
- Minutes or notes from department faculty meetings describing recommendations for improvement
- Minutes or notes from department faculty meetings describing recommendations on collaborations
- Evidence of program goals/outcomes aligning with institutional mission and strategic plan

II. Program Administration

The Administrative Environment - The administrative structure of the program should reflect the purposes for which it was established. Well-defined lines of authority with detailed duties and job descriptions should be followed. Policies and procedures should be followed to guide processes. Capable, credible, knowledgeable and experienced leadership is essential for success. Is there evidence of shared leadership that is innovative, inclusive accountable and flexible?

Evidence in this category might include:

- Organization chart
- Job Descriptions and detailed duties
- Demonstrated success of leading academic programs to promote student success
- Faculty/staff evaluations/surveys of direct supervisors and/or administrators

Staff – Does the current support staffing contribute to the quality of the program? Does support staff participate in systematic professional development opportunities that enhance the quality of the program directly? What is the professional development plan for each staff member for the next 1-3 years?

- Professional, Clerical and Technical staff FTE supporting program/departmental operations
- Professional, Clerical and Technical staff qualifications
- Professional, Clerical and Technical staff professional development plans

III. Allocation of Resources

Financial resources – Has the program experienced any significant changes in budget allocation that have impacted the quality of the program in any way? Is the program budget linked with strategic planning based data-driven decisions? Does the program demonstrate fiscal responsibility and cost effectiveness consistent with institutional protocols?

Evidence in this category might include:

• Operational budget (revenues and expenditures) and trends over a 3-5 year period

Facilities – Do the facilities meet the needs of the program? Are there any plans for modifications or renovations in the near future? Do facilities meet established standards for accessibility to persons with disabilities?

Evidence in this category might include:

- Classroom space
- Instructional laboratories
- Research laboratories
- Office space
- Student study spaces
- Access to classrooms suited for instructional technology
- Access to classrooms designed for alternative learning styles/universal design

Equipment, Information and Technology resources - Does the program have state-of-the-art

equipment/technology that is comparable to what students will use in their chosen professions? Are the existing equipment, information and technology resources adequate to support the mission of the program? Do existing equipment, information and technology resources reflect current best pedagogical practices? Do resources meet established standards for delivery to persons with disabilities? What equipment, information and technology resources adequates and/or faculty and why? What equipment, information and technology the technology resources adequates and/or faculty and why? What equipment, information and technology resources adequates and/or faculty and why? What equipment, information and technology resources might improve the quality of the programs?

Evidence in this category might include:

- A systematic plan for replacing equipment/technology to ensure state-of-the-art programming
- Library print and electronic holdings in the teaching and research areas of the program
- Information literacy outcomes for graduates
- Technology resources available to support the pedagogy and research in the program
- Technology resources available to support students' needs

Student Support – What support services infrastructure is in place to help students graduate in a timely manner and experience academic success throughout the program? What student support services are available that students engage in the most? What student support services are available that students use infrequently or not at all and why? What student support services might be offered that are not currently provided? What resource requirements would be needed to accomplish providing new services? How does the program utilize distance education and other collaborative processes to promote investment in student access? How does the program ensure seamless transferability?

Evidence in this category might include:

- Academic and career advising programs and resources
- Tutoring, supplemental instruction, and Teaching Assistant training
- Basic skill remediation plans
- Support for connecting general learning requirements to discipline requirements
- Innovative use of technology to engage students in active learning
- Orientation and transition programs
- Financial support (scholarships, fellowships, teaching assistantships, etc.)
- Support for engagement in the campus community

- Support for non-cognitive variables of success, including emotional, psychological, and physical interventions if necessary
- Support for research or for engagement in the community beyond campus, such as fieldwork or internships

IV. Student Information

Students – What is the profile of students in the program and how does the profile relate to or enhance the mission and goals of the program?

Evidence in this category might include:

- Students' gender, ethnicity, age
- GPA from previous institution, types of previous institution
- Standardized test scores
- Student employment status
- Trends in numbers of student applications, admits, and enrollments reflected over a 3 year period

(Note that the specific list of indicators in this category will depend on the goals of the program)

V. Quality of Instruction

The assessment of the quality of instruction is the primary purpose of any self-study and external peer review. It is helpful to consider that program quality is multifaceted and assessment measures should include all components. While programs may have individual characteristics of excellence, all programmatic areas have identifiable commonalities that are necessary to guide decisions for program improvement. Additionally, the review process should consider the fundamental principles of "best practice" using well recognized and credible profession-wide standards specific to the discipline for quality assurance.

Evidence in this category might include:

- Student Faculty Ratios by course type
- End of course evaluations
- Student academic performance use of assessment results for program improvement
- Student performance on licensure/certifying examinations
- Graduate placement rates in employment or education settings
- Student awards and scholarship
- Comparison of peer programs

The 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 well sequenced and reliably available in sequence? Has the program been reviewed by external stakeholders, such as practitioners in the field, or compared with other similar programs? Is the level of program quality aligned with the college/university's acceptable level of program quality? Are program goals being achieved? Are student learning outcomes being achieved at the expected level?

Evidence in this category might include

- A curriculum flow chart and description of how the curriculum addresses the learning outcomes of the program (annual program assessment plan and curriculum map)
- A comparison of the program's curriculum with curricula at selected other institutions and with disciplinary/professional standards
- Measures of teaching effectiveness (e.g., course evaluations, peer evaluations of teaching, faculty scholarship on issues of teaching and learning, formative discussions of pedagogy among faculty)
- A description of other learning experiences that are relevant to program goals (e.g., internships, research experiences, study abroad or other international experiences, community-based learning, etc.), as well as how many students participate in those experiences
- A narrative that describes how the faculty's pedagogy responds to various learning modalities

Student Learning and Success – Are students achieving the desired learning outcomes for the program? Are they achieving those outcomes at the expected level 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 or the world of work?

Evidence in this category might include:

- Annual results of direct and indirect assessments of student learning in the program (could be combination of quantitative and qualitative measures), including the degree to which students achieve the program's desired standards
- Ongoing efforts by the department to "close the loop" by responding to assessment results
- Student retention and graduation rate trends (disaggregated by different demographic categories)
- Placement of graduates into graduate schools or post-doctoral experiences
- Job placements
- Graduating student satisfaction surveys (and/or alumni satisfaction surveys)
- Employer critiques of student performance or employer survey satisfaction results
- Disciplinary ratings of the program
- Student/Alumni achievements (e.g., community service, research and publications, awards and recognition, professional accomplishments, etc.)

VI. Faculty

Faculty – What is the profile of faculty in the program and how does the profile relate to or enhance the mission and goals of the program? Is support provided to ensure faculty may fulfill their professional expectations including excellence in teaching, scholarship, service, and advising? Are professional development opportunities fostered both on campus and through travel? What professional development opportunities might be offered that are not currently provided?

Evidence in this category might include:

- Faculty workload
- Faculty review and evaluation processes
- Mentoring processes/programs
- Professional development opportunities/resources (including travel and research funds)
- Sufficient time for course development, research, etc.
- Number of full-time faculty (ratio of full-time faculty to part-time faculty)

Questions adapted from the Montana University System Board of Regents' *MUS Strategic Plan 2013;* the <u>Program Review Guide, Rev. October 2007</u>, Office of Academic Programs and the Program Review Panel, California State University Dominguez Hills; the <u>Academic Program Review Handbook, 2009</u>, Institutional Research Office, Charles Drew University of Medicine and Science and the CAS Professional Standards for Higher Education 7th Edition, Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education.

APPENDIX C

Academic and Student Support Services Campus Visit Schedule

Department Name External Reviewer Name Campus Visit Dates

Day of Arriva	al		
Time	Attendees (Names)	Event	Location
		Airport Pick-up	Pounds Fields Airport
		Drop off at Hotel	Hotel name
	Department Director	Dinner	Restaurant name
Campus Visi	t Day One		
Time	Attendees (Names)	Event	Location
8:30 A.M.	Department Director or Staff	Pick up from Hotel	
9:00 A.M.	Department Director and Staff	Department Meeting	Room
10:15 A.M.	BREAK		
10:30 A.M.	Dean of Students and VPSS	Meet with Student Success Administration	Room
11:30 A.M.	Students	Lunch with Students	The Met Dining Room
1:00 P.M.	Student Success Directors and Coordinators	Student Success Meeting	Room
2:00 P.M.	Department Director	Campus Tour	
2:45 P.M.	BREAK		
3:00 P.M.	AIE Office	Meet with Assessment Staff	STE 378
4:00 P.M.	Return to Hotel	Writing Time	
6:00 P.M.	Department Staff	Dinner with Department Staff	Restaurant name
Campus Visi	t Day Two		
Time	Attendees (Names)	Event	Location
8:30 A.M.	Department Director	Pick up from Hotel	
9:00 A.M.		Work on Preliminary Exit Report	Room
10:30 A.M.	Department Director and Staff, Dean of Students, VPSA	Exit Interview	Room
11:30 A.M.		Leave for airport	Pounds Fields Airport

APPENDIX D

Self-Study Survey - EXAMPLE

Staff and administrators are invited to complete this brief survey as part of the external review Self-Study. Please share your thoughts and recommendations in the short-answer items below. The survey results will be included in the Self-Study as aggregate data and all survey responses are anonymous.

Identify department or unit strengths:

Describe how the current department or unit strengths could be enhanced in the next five years:

Identify department or unit challenges:

Describe recommendations to address the challenges:

Recommend ONE short-term priority you would implement for student engagement/success and include resources necessary to accomplish this initiative.

Other Comments:

APPENDIX E

External Review Process Satisfaction Survey

The purpose of this survey is to collect information on the quality of the external review process by the Office of Assessment and Institutional Effectiveness. Results will be used for future external review improvement planning. Reports are confidential and will be shared with the department, supervisor, and appropriate vice president.

Please identify your role in the external review process:

O External Reviewer
O Department Director/Coordinator
O Department Supervisor
Display This Question:
If Please identify your role in the external review process: != External Reviewer
I received information required for planning in a timely manner.
○ Agree
O Disagree
Display This Question:
If Please identify your role in the external review process: != External Reviewer
Comments:
The Academic and Student Support Services External Review Handbook was a useful resource document.
Agree
O Disagree
Comments:
Display This Question:

If Please identify your role in the external review process: != External Reviewer

The AIE Staff provided effective support and guidance throughout the external review process.

Agree
Disagree

Display This Question:

If Please identify your role in the external review process: != External Reviewer

Comments:

Please comment on any part of the process that you would have liked more support and guidance.

Briefly describe what you found to be the most beneficial aspect of the external review process.