

# Suggested Adjustments to the Template for Program Reviews

## Duke University

1 December 2023

### I. Purpose of Program Reviews

Through the review process, a dedicated committee and a set of governance structures evaluate the contributions that specified academic units make to research and teaching at all levels (undergraduate, graduate, and professional). The committee and governance structures also make recommendations to the University administration to enhance program effectiveness, with explicit attention to opportunities for improvement within the context of current resource constraints.

### II. Authority to Conduct Reviews

Reviews are typically implemented through the office of the Vice-Provost for Academic Affairs, under authority delegated by the Provost, with the assistance of the relevant school Deans for all programs, and the Dean of the Graduate School for units that have graduate degree programs. The Vice Provost for Academic Affairs may delegate the tasks of: coordinating reviews; preparing all necessary documents; obtaining confidential external letters; inviting and liaising with the Review Team; scheduling the events of the site visit; keeping the involvement of university committees in the review process on track; keeping records of previous reviews; and maintaining engagement with units between reviews to provide support and accountability in addressing past review recommendations.

### III. Frequency of External Reviews

Reviews of departments and similar units are typically conducted on a regular cycle of approximately seven years, although decisions about when to schedule reviews are made by the Provost, the Dean of the relevant school, the Vice Provost for Academic Affairs, and, where appropriate, the Dean of the Graduate School. Faculty members from the Provost's Academic Programs Committee and the Executive Committee of the Graduate Faculty and other School councils, where appropriate, may also call for the review of a given program. Within the School of Medicine, the Basic Sciences Faculty Steering Committee may offer such suggestions about departments in that division.

### IV. Procedures for External Reviews

#### 1. Charge

The charge to the Review Team is developed by the Vice Provost for Academic Affairs, in consultation with the Provost, the Dean of the program's home school, and the Dean of the Graduate School, where appropriate. The Provost may also consult the Academic Programs Committee, the Executive Committee of the Graduate Faculty, and other

school councils, in developing the charge. Normally, the charge will address all internal aspects of a given program, as well as its interrelations with other units of the institution, its contributions to university priorities, and the quality of its external reputation.

## **2. External Letters**

The Review Team will receive three confidential letters from external scholars who are prominent in the relevant area, at least one of whom should have significant administrative experience. These letter-writers will be asked to reflect on the success of the unit in research, teaching, mentoring, and where appropriate, community/public engagement and other forms of scholarship and service, based on the written self-study (explained below, and which they will receive well in advance of the deadline for their letters), their appraisal of the unit's external reputation with regard to the quality of faculty research output and instruction, and their knowledge of wider intellectual and pedagogical trends. In selecting letter-writers, the Vice Provost for Academic Affairs (or delegate) will solicit nominations from the department or program to be reviewed, and will engage with decanal and provostial leadership as appropriate. The Executive Vice President for Health Affairs may, if needed, also be consulted on letter-writers for reviews of Basic Medical Science departments. These letters will not be shared with the department but will be shared with the Review Team and university leadership (see below).

## **3. Review Team**

The Review Team will consist of two to three external scholars and one Duke scholar from a unit distinct from that being reviewed. At least one of the external reviewers should have significant administrative experience, such as service as a department chair or dean. In forming the Team, the Vice Provost for Academic Affairs (or delegate) will engage with decanal and provostial leadership as appropriate. The Executive Vice President for Health Affairs may, if needed, also be consulted on external teams for reviews of Basic Medical Science departments.

One external member of the Review Team will be named as Chair by the Vice Provost for Academic Affairs. In consultation with the Vice Provost for Academic Affairs (or delegate), the Chair will assume responsibility for the final version of the Team's written report. The Team as a whole, however, will be provided with time during its site visit to compose jointly an outline or first draft of that report. The Chair will also speak for the Review Team during the site visit.

## **4. Review Team Visit Procedures**

Approximately two weeks prior to the site visit, the Review Team will be sent electronically a set of confidential materials furnished jointly by the Office of Academic Affairs and the department under review. These materials will include: the formal charge; a detailed site visit schedule; a cover letter from the department chair or

program director; a “self-study” document (described in detail below), and the confidential external letters. Any external letters received later will be provided to the Review Team as they are received, through the date of starting the formal review.

Graduate students of the unit under review will be invited to meet with the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs in the Graduate School prior to the review and will be invited to prepare a confidential consensus document about the department, which may be based on a survey of graduate students in the unit. This graduate student report is not shared with unit faculty until the external review report has been submitted but will be shared with the Review Team.

Typically, the Review Team will begin its work by meeting with university leadership prior to or on the first morning of the in-person site-visit. At that meeting, the Provost, the Vice Provost for Academic Affairs, and the Dean of the Graduate School, together with the Dean(s) of the relevant school(s) (and the Executive Vice President for Health Affairs in the case of Basic Science departments), or appropriate designees thereof, will discuss with the Team the plan for the visit, critical questions from the perspective of senior university leadership, and the plan for the written report. There will be time for each visitor to pose questions to the central administration; and the administrators, in turn, should provide whatever historical or institutional background the Team may need to conduct a thorough examination of the program in question.

During the in-person site-visit, the Team will meet with groups of faculty (both tenure-track and non-tenure-track), undergraduate and graduate students, staff, and departmental administrators, as well as other faculty and administrators with important perspective on the unit’s role within the wider university. The associated Dean’s office can provide more specific guidance to the department on selection of the above. A set of meeting slots should also be reserved for confidential 1:1 meetings with unit stakeholders who request them.

Prior to an Exit Interview with the senior administrators indicated above, the Team will be given a few hours to draft the initial outline of its report, including key findings and recommendations. The major findings and recommendations will then be delivered orally to the administration at the Exit Interview. The Vice Provost for Academic Affairs (or delegate) will take full notes of this meeting, which will remain confidential to the administration.

#### **4. External Team Written Report**

The final written report should be submitted electronically to the Vice Provost for Academic Affairs (or delegate) within approximately one month of the site visit. The report should be written with the expectation that it will be circulated to the full department faculty. *If the Team wishes to provide additional confidential analysis to the administration, that should be provided as a confidential appendix to the report.*

#### **5. Departmental/Program Response to the External Team Written Report**

The Vice Provost for Academic Affairs (or delegate) circulates the Team's report to all faculty members in the program or department, and asks the department to reply through a formal written response to that report, addressing the issues raised therein. Departmental leadership must write this response in consultation with the voting faculty of the department or program under review, and must document the process by which it involved faculty members (e.g., co-authorship or editing by other faculty, majority vote of approval of the final response document, etc.).

#### 6. Institutional Response to the External Review

The Vice Provost for Academic Affairs (or delegate) will forward the Review Team's report, along with the departmental response, to the **Executive Committee of the Graduate Faculty** (if the unit in question has graduate programs), the **Academic Programs Committee**, and, when appropriate, other School councils. These committees will prepare written resolutions on the review detailing their recommendations for subsequent departmental or institutional action (in the case of ECGF, focusing solely on issues related to graduate education), which the Provost will forward to the department or program in question, along with any additional context or commentary. Any committee charged with assessment of the review must ensure that it organizes its work to ensure a timely completion of the review process.

- [Academic Programs Committee](#)
- [Executive Committee of the Graduate Faculty \(ECGF\)](#)

#### 7. Mid-Cycle Check-in

At roughly the mid-point of the review cycle, and within five years of the last external review, the Provost's office will convene a check-in meeting of the department or program leadership, along with the Vice Provost for Academic Affairs, the Dean of the relevant school, the Dean of The Graduate School (if the unit has graduate degree programs), and other leaders as appropriate. The Provost's office will ask for a brief memorandum in advance, outlining the state of efforts to implement the recommendations of the most recent review, and may consult members of the Provost's leadership team or other appropriate stakeholders for input before the mid-cycle check in.

#### 8. Historical Archives

The Provost's Office of Academic Affairs will maintain complete files on all program reviews, including self-study documents, the external report and the department/program's response, the recommendations of the various faculty committees, and the Provost's communication of recommendations to the reviewed unit. Individual units will also maintain copies of final versions of all materials that the unit submitted or received at least until the conclusion of a subsequent review.

## V. Materials to Be Furnished for Program Reviews

The unit chair will provide safe and confidential opportunities for all stakeholders to contribute to the self-study during its preparation. The following materials constitute the self-study for the external review. The Office of Academic Affairs will ensure that the reviewed unit receives key statistical components for the self-study, as specified below, if possible the semester before the self-study is to be submitted. Departments may also request additional specific data, with a minimum of one-month's notice (the respective offices will do their best to accommodate). Collation of all materials, preparation of other components, and timely delivery of the full self-study is the responsibility of the department chair or unit head, who should recruit additional faculty as well as staff to assist in its preparation. All faculty in the department or program must also be consulted in the process of preparing the self-study. The document is due as a PDF to the Vice Provost for Academic Affairs (or delegate) no less than two months before the review date.

### I. DEPARTMENT/ PROGRAM MATERIALS

#### **Information provided by the Provost's Office and shared with Department/ Program**

1. Most recent previous review and review response documents
2. List of all departmental faculty, separated by rank and track, along with demographic breakdown of faculty, both overall and separated by rank and track
3. Graphs of total and direct-cost external research funding for the unit in last 5 years, as well as total value associated with submitted grant applications
4. Compendium of courses taught in last 5 years, along with overall course enrollments (departments may request Tableau access for more granular analyses if they so choose)
5. Inventory of office, teaching, and laboratory space
6. Departmental administrative staff composition and retention rate over last 5 years
7. Data on faculty participation in signature university programs

#### **Information provided by the Department/ Program**

1. Chair's cover letter to review team. This letter should also include the chair's assessment of the department's national standing, defined as they see fit, as well as a brief description of how unit faculty participated in the preparation of the self-study.
2. Statement of the department's vision and mission (one page, if not already subsumed in item #3 below).
3. Department's most recent strategic plan, or summary thereof (not to exceed five pages)

4. Narrative highlighting especially successful broad scholarly areas or research collaborations (e.g., humanities labs, cross-school centers, etc.) and describing nature of direct support for faculty scholarship (e.g., standard yearly allocations for faculty discretionary accounts, types of external funds typically available) (one page).
5. Categorization of faculty by area of scholarship or teaching in department, as defined by the department.
6. Description of policies and practices regarding teaching assignments (e.g., mechanism to assign specific courses, standard teaching expectations for faculty by track, mechanisms of counting teaching toward those expectations, and any incentive structures that reduce teaching requirements (e.g., for heavier service, research roles, or supplemental teaching) (one page).
7. List of collaborative degree programs that span departmental lines, if relevant
8. Overview of the most significant recent evidence-informed DEI efforts, noting when implemented. Possible topics include hiring practices, graduate student recruitment practices, climate and culture initiatives, inclusive faculty and student mentoring practices (if not already covered in next section and in III.2.), efforts to make classes more inclusive, etc. (not to exceed three pages).
9. Present administrative structure of department:
  - Organizational chart, including starting dates for faculty leadership
  - Table including committees within department and committee leadership assignments over last three years
10. Record of major university-level and national/international service undertaken by unit faculty (such as major university committee chairs, society presidencies, senior editorships, national committees; limited to 2 pages; use of tables and bullets encouraged)
11. 5-10 bullets that convey key aspects of the intellectual life and community-building elements of the unit. Suggested items may include departmental seminars/ workshops, opportunities for scholarly interaction such as book or journal clubs, social events, etc.
12. Statement (or series of bullets) on significant community and public engagement by the department faculty, staff, and trainees (one page).
13. OPTIONAL: A narrative statement with any data or context not covered in the above documents that the department wishes to convey, not to exceed four pages.

## II. FACULTY MATERIALS

1. Two-page vitae for each member of the faculty, including short description of current research interests, recent honors, recent scholarly works appropriate to the field (e.g., publications, performances, exhibitions, etc.) and major external research support. The Provost's Office will export these vitae for all department faculty from Scholars@Duke, unless departments specify, within one month of learning about the timing for the review process, that they prefer to generate their own two-page vitae using their own resources.



2. List of faculty members hired in the last five years.

### **III. GRADUATE MATERIALS**

#### **Information provided by The Graduate School and shared with department**

1. Graphical data for each degree program for the past five years (with master's and PhD data provided separately):
  - number of students in the program
  - number of applications
  - number of admits
  - number of matriculants
  - breakdowns by demographic categories
2. Time-to-degree and attrition statistics, with contextual averages for all programs in that division of knowledge, as defined by the Graduate School
3. Number of master's and Ph.D.'s awarded per year over last 5 years
4. List of and enrollments in graduate-level courses over last 5 years
5. Involvement of graduate students in teaching/ mentoring undergraduates (including common research projects or other learning experiences), fostering vertical integration (one page)
6. Graduate student experience survey results
7. Overview of data about "first placement" career outcomes for master's and PhD students over past 5 and 10 years
8. Participation in signature university-wide programs within or outside The Graduate School
9. Overview of exit survey data and alumni survey data for degree recipients

#### **INFORMATION PROVIDED BY THE DEPARTMENT OR PROGRAM**

1. Description of graduate program. Items to cover include a brief overview of mission and expected career trajectories, requirements, brief description of any major revisions to the graduate program in the last five years, and overview of the role of graduate students in departmental/ program governance (no more than 2 pages).
2. Statement of faculty mentoring expectations and brief overview of efforts to ensure excellent mentoring of graduate students. Departments are encouraged to use existing documents for this section, if available (no more than two pages).
3. Approximate fractions of students whose funding in a typical year is tied to key aspects of training, such as teaching assistantships, research assistantships, or external fellowships, and one paragraph on how the unit assigns teaching assistantships, if applicable.
4. One page (or series of bullets) describing TA training, expectations, and evaluation, if applicable.

5. Reflection on unit strategy for the provision of professional development opportunities for academic and non-academic career trajectories (up to one page).

#### **IV. UNDERGRADUATE MATERIALS**

##### **Information provided by the Provost's Office and shared with Department or Program.**

(Pratt departments can submit most recent Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology [ABET] report in place of this section.)

1. Number of enrollments, majors, and minors over last 5 years, including demographics
2. List of cross-listed courses offered over last 5 years
3. Number of students completing credited research projects and graduation with distinction over the past five years
4. Post-degree positions of graduates

##### **Information provided by the Department**

While items for inclusion are noted within the numbered sections below, the specific suggestions under each bullet serve more as guidelines than rigid lists, and departments should feel free to address other items that they determine appropriate, so long as they keep any additional material to match the lengths specified.

1. Overview of undergraduate program (program goals and student learning objectives). Suggested items include a list of offered majors/ minors/ concentrations, broader educational goals for majors and non-majors, and rationale for & limits on courses that count toward majors/ minors (tabular form encouraged). Note: this summary section should align closely with sections 2 and 7 below, and this section and subsequent sections should reference the data provided by central admin noted above (no more than two pages).
2. Description of undergraduate curriculum. Suggested items to cover (if appropriate) include scaffolding of pathways through the major (visual schematic recommended); any significant changes to the curriculum in the past three years; any responses to national curricular trends; difficulties students encounter fulfilling major requirements and indications of sociodemographic factors influencing success; and ways the curriculum contributes to other departments & programs, the broader school and overall Duke undergraduate curriculum, & Duke's prevailing strategic plan. Suggested length is no longer than 3 pages.
3. Description of co-curricular activities and connection to experiential learning. Suggested items to cover (if appropriate) include how the department supports



clubs and other co-curricular endeavors (financially or otherwise); how the department facilitates research experiences, DukeEngage, Bass Connections, community engagement, study abroad, and other related activities; and nature and extent of faculty involvement in such activities (one page).

4. Analysis of enrollment trends, recruitment, and retention of majors/minors. Please specify how the department perceives enrollment rates, attrition, and number of majors & minors as well as how the department attracts non-majors, majors, and minors (one page).
5. Assessment of undergraduate program. Please specify student learning outcomes and how the unit measures them, and how they have evolved in response to any evaluation mechanisms (two pages).

Appendix 1: Sample itinerary for external review visit

**Sample Itinerary  
Department of XXX External Review**

**Monday**

External reviewers arrive and are transported to lodging.

- 5:00 – 6:00 p.m. Meeting with University Administrators:  
Dean and Vice Provost, The Graduate School  
Vice Provost for Academic Affairs  
Dean of college, example: Arts & Sciences. Possibly also in that case:  
Divisional Dean of Humanities and the Arts, Arts & Sciences  
Dean of Academic Affairs, Trinity College of Arts & Sciences  
Dean of Graduate Affairs, Trinity College of Arts & Sciences
- 6:45 p.m. Review Team Dinner w/ department chair, associate chair, possibly others

**Tuesday**

- 8:15 a.m. Transport review team from lodging to academic building. One conference room reserved for whole day for most meetings, except where noted.
- 8:30 – 8:45 a.m. Space/ facilities tour with Business Manager
- 9:00 – 9:55 a.m. Meet Full Professors
- 10:00 – 10:45 a.m. Meet Director of Graduate Studies and DGSA
- 10:45 – 11:00 a.m. Break
- 11:00 – 11:45 a.m. Meet Associate Professors
- 11:50 a.m. Walk to lunch
- 12:00 – 12:45 p.m. Lunch with Undergrad majors
- 12:45 – 1:15 p.m. Meet Unit Administrative Staff
- 1:15 p.m. Walk back to conference room
- 1:20 – 2:05 p.m. Meet Assistant Professors
- 2:05 – 2:40 p.m. Meet Director of Undergraduate Studies and DUSA
- 2:40 – 3:25 p.m. Meet Non-tenure-track faculty
- 3:25 – 3:40 p.m. Break
- 3:40 – 4:25 p.m. Meet Graduate Students
- 4:25 – 5:10 p.m. Meet more individuals from a faculty category above (which depends on relative number)

5:15 pm Transport review team to lodging from academic building. Possible dinner discussion among review team members.

**Wednesday**

8:45 a.m. Transport review team from lodging to administrative building.

9:00 – 9:45 a.m. DGSs of affiliate programs

10:15 – 11:00 a.m. Exit meeting with chair (and associate chair)

11:15 – 12:00 p.m. Time for confidential additional meeting(s)

12:15 p.m. – 1:15 p.m. Exit interview with University Administration

Dean and Vice Provost, The Graduate School  
Senior Associate Dean of Academic Affairs, The Graduate School  
Vice Provost for Academic Affairs  
Dean, Arts & Sciences  
    Divisional Dean of Humanities and the Arts, Arts & Sciences  
    Dean of Academic Affairs, Trinity College of Arts & Sciences  
    Dean of Graduate Affairs, Trinity College of Arts & Sciences

1:15 p.m. – 2:45 p.m. Working lunch and preparation of draft report

2:45 p.m. Transportation to airport