Program Review Self-Study Guidance
Administrative Units

The self-study is the unit’s opportunity to present its strategy, accomplishments, and challenges. It should be informative to the external reviewers who are experts in the field, but also accessible to internal reviewers who may not have as much expertise in the field. To develop the self-study, many units choose to form a program review committee of staff members from the unit. It is encouraged to engage a wider representation of staff members to contribute to a shared vision for the unit.

The most useful self-studies are candid and thorough, yet succinct. The suggested length for a self-study is 15-25 pages plus appendices. Below are guiding principles and an example outline to help in the development the self-study. Additional descriptions and guiding questions for each section of the outline are available in the following section.

The outline is provided to ensure key elements are included in the first iteration of the self-study, but the unit should feel free to determine the organization of the self-study that works best for them. In some cases, the Program Review Office will provide suggestions on additional areas to focus on once the self-study has been provided. As part of the standard review process, this self-study will be shared with external reviewers, internal reviewers, the President, the Provost, the unit’s Vice President, and the Program Review Council. (In addition to the self-study, this audience also receives the unit’s key issues, data profile and staff and customer survey results.) Each self-study will be unique to the unit, but a strong self-study does the following:

✓ Provides a concise current state assessment of the unit’s strengths and opportunity areas
✓ Focuses on the analysis of the identified key issues
✓ Outlines recommended next steps for the unit
✓ Utilizes data in support of analysis and recommendations
✓ Identifies metrics to determine how success will be measured
Program Review Self-Study Outline

I. Unit Overview and Governance
   a. Mission/Vision for Unit

II. Strategic Direction

III. Current State of the Unit
   a) Staff
   b) Constituents
   c) Collaborations and Partnerships

IV. Analysis of Key Issues
   a) Issues Identified/Actions Taken in Response to Previous Review
   b) Analysis of Current Issues and Challenges

V. Notes on Preparation of the Self-Study
   a) Process of self-study preparation and list of people involved
   b) Description of how staff were engaged

VI. Appendices (the asterisk denotes required materials; include others as appropriate)
   a) Staff Resumes/Vitae*
   b) Strategic Plan/Roadmap
   c) Organizational Chart
   d) Communication and Marketing Materials
Program Review Self-Study Framework

The following outline and questions should be used to guide the discussion and writing of the self-study. The outline is intended to highlight the key items that could be included in the self-study, but each unit may organize their self-study uniquely. The self-study should be 15-25 pages plus appendices.

I. Unit Overview and Governance

This section covers the unit’s history, vision, and mission. Consider the goals/priorities of the unit and how the unit is situated organizationally within the institution.

- What is the primary purpose and key functions of the unit? What is the administrative structure of the unit?
- What are the top 3-5 priorities of the unit?
- What is the history of the unit on campus?
- What are the formal processes used for gathering regular feedback from all stakeholders (faculty, staff, students, parents, alumni, etc.)?
- How are decisions made to allocate the unit’s resources? Does the administrative structure effectively support the unit’s goals?

II. Strategic Direction

This section includes a description of how the field is expected to change and how the unit will respond to these changes to achieve or enhance administrative distinction and leadership. The administrative focus of the unit should be addressed in this section. Consider the unit’s set of guiding principles, focus areas, goals, and/or initiatives that help define the identity and direction of the unit.

- Does the unit have a current mission statement/strategic positioning plan? What outcomes are included in the plan? Are individuals assigned responsibility to implement aspects of the plan or facilitate specific outcomes?
- How does the unit mission align with the university mission?
- When was this plan created (or last updated to reflect new priorities)?
- How does the plan address or anticipate new developments or directions in the discipline/field? How is the field expected to change?
- Does the unit regularly review peer data? Which data and which peers are used? Who are in the unit’s current and aspirational peers? What distinguishes the best units in the field?
- Using existing resources, what specific steps does the unit plan to take to improve the quality of the unit for the future?
• How do you identify and measure demand for the unit’s programs or services? How do you measure quality of the unit’s programs or services?

III. Current State of the Unit
This section focuses on the staffing of the unit, the constituents who use the unit’s programs and services, and the collaborations between the unit and other administrative units across and outside of the university. Provide a description of the strengths and distinguishing features of the unit.

A. Staff
• How does the unit recruit and retain quality staff members? What efforts are there to promote staff development?
• Describe how staff performance is tracked and evaluated. Are criteria for promotion and raises clear to staff members?
• Describe any projection for change or growth within the unit. How do staff members provide feedback on the unit’s operation and mission?
• Describe your goals for gender, racial, and ethnic diversity among the staff and how you monitor and assess your progress in meeting these goals.
• Describe your efforts to foster and promote collaborations among staff within the unit and across related units at the university. How does the unit collaborate with external partners in the industry?
• How does the unit create time, space, and events for staff to interact in more informal ways?
• Describe how graduate students and/or student employees contribute to the unit’s services, if at all.

B. Constituents
• Describe the constituents who use the unit’s programs and services.
• How does the unit solicit and incorporate feedback from constituents?
• How does the unit assess and respond to the needs of its constituents?
• How does the unit assess user satisfaction with the unit’s performance?
• How flexible is the unit in responding to user feedback?

C. Collaborations and Partnerships
• List and describe any of the unit’s collaborations and external partnerships not already discussed. How do they further support the mission of the unit?
• How does the unit engage with peers at other institutions and more broadly within the industry?
IV. Analysis of Key Issues

A. Issues Identified in Prior Program Review

This section will address the key issues from the last program review and the action steps taken as a response. For some units, discussing the prior review is integrated into the history and/or vision of their unit. For others, it is useful to create a chart detailing the recommendations, the status of the recommendations, and where the document addresses the action steps taken towards resolving these items. This section should comprise the bulk of the self-study.

B. Analysis of Issues in Current Review

Describe the key issues that have been identified in the current program review cycle. The analysis of the key issues uses data, incorporates feedback on issues from Central Administration (e.g. President and Provost) and outlines plans to address the issues and move the unit forward.

V. Notes on Preparation of the Self-Study

Describe the process used to complete the self-study, including a list of who was responsible for the contents of the final report and how staff were engaged to provide feedback. As previously mentioned, units are strongly encouraged to create a program review committee to lead the development of the self-study.

VI. Appendices

The appendices should include any information that is not already present in the Data Profile, but would be helpful to the reviewers or is referenced in the Self-Study. The unit typically provides curricula vitae or resumes for all fulltime staff members. It is useful to the review team to have a listing and brief, 1-2 sentence description of the role of each staff member, as well as an organizational chart that identifies each employee by title and name. The asterisk denotes required materials; include others as appropriate.

a. Staff Resumes/Vitae*
b. Strategic Plan/Roadmap
c. Organizational Chart
d. Communication and Marketing Materials