

**Administrative Key Issues
and Self-Study Guide
2021-2022**

INTRODUCTION

This guide details the outline and expectations for the following program review deliverables: the Key Issues and Self-Study. The Key Issues and Self-Study are separate documents that will both be included in the final set of materials provided to the review team, along with the Staff and Customer Survey results and the unit's Data Profile.

KEY ISSUES OVERVIEW

The Key Issues are an overview of the critical issues facing the unit, which will each be explored in more detail in the Self-Study. One of the unit's first steps in the program review process is to identify a list of Key Issues that it believes to be critical to the unit both now and over the coming years. The issues may take the form of known challenges that the unit currently faces or critical questions to consider and on which it would like feedback. It is important that the list of issues generated by the unit corresponds with the unit's strategic plan or will shape future strategic plans. While consideration should be given to new issues that have arisen since the previous review, it may be equally important to review recurring issues that the unit still faces and seeks to address. Emphasis should be placed on how critical the issue is to the unit's strategic direction rather than how long an issue has existed.

The Key Issues are identified early on in the process in order to guide the focus of the review. Once drafted, the list of Key Issues is circulated with the line Vice President and central administration (President, Provost, Senior Vice President for Business and Finance, Vice President of Administration and Planning, Vice President for Research, Dean of The Graduate School, and Vice Provost for Administration) for their input. The line Vice President and central administration may provide feedback on the Key Issues included or suggest additional Key Issues for the unit to consider during the Self-Study process. This step ensures alignment among these parties on the areas of focus for the upcoming review. The unit should address any feedback provided on the Key Issues in the Self-Study. In some cases, units will be asked to provide a revised list of Key Issues. The analysis of each Key Issue will be the main focus of the unit's Self-Study report.

The Key Issues document should be one to three pages and contain five to ten issues. Key Issues can be in the form of bullet points or short paragraphs. Please refer to Appendix A for the suggested Key Issues framework and Appendix B for a list of discussion questions and suggested topics to guide Key Issues development.

SELF-STUDY OVERVIEW

The Self-Study, which analyzes the list of Key Issues in depth, is the unit's narrative of its strategy, strengths, opportunities, and challenges. The strongest Self-Studies are candid and thorough, yet succinct. The Self-Study 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 experience in the field.

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

The suggested length for a Self-Study is 15-25 pages plus appendices. Please refer to Appendix A for the suggested Self-Study framework and Appendix B for a list of questions to guide Self-Study development.

UNIT ENGAGEMENT

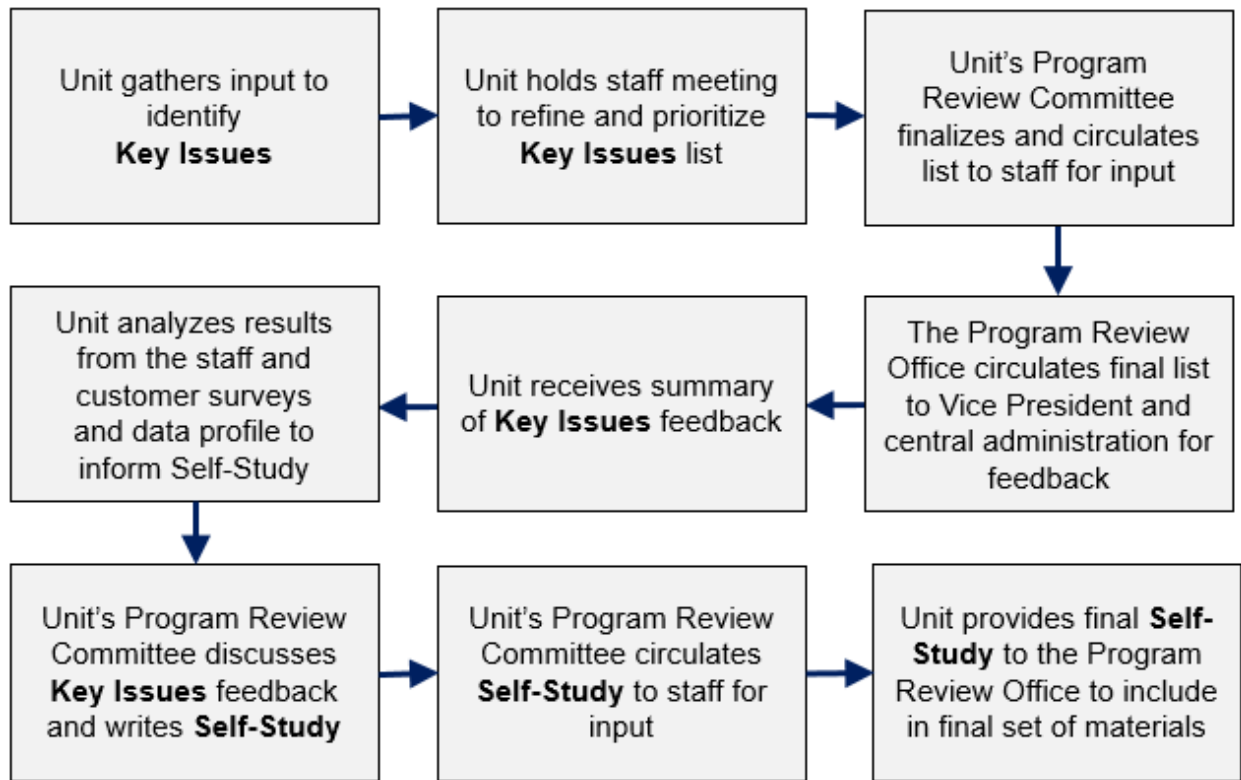
To develop the Key Issues and Self-Study, many units choose to form a program review committee of staff. It is encouraged to engage a wider representation of staff to contribute to a shared vision for the unit. Units may use a variety of mechanisms to identify issues, including but not limited to:

- Analysis of unit data, including the Data Profile
- Staff and customer feedback, including the Staff and Customer Survey Results
- Review of previous program review reports and implementation agreements
- Working knowledge of issues that have been discussed in recent meetings or planning sessions

Once the Key Issues and Self-Study documents have been drafted, the drafts should be shared with staff in the unit for input. The goal is that the program review materials will represent the perspectives of the entire unit. In areas where there are diverse perspectives, notes should be added as to the nature of the different perspectives.

Units have found many ways to engage staff in this process. Based on feedback from prior reviews, please see a suggested process on the following page for engaging staff on the Key Issues and Self-Study.

EXAMPLE KEY ISSUES AND SELF-STUDY DEVELOPMENT PROCESS



APPENDIX A: KEY ISSUES AND SELF-STUDY OUTLINES

Key Issues Outline

Please see below broad categories in which Key Issues could be identified. Issues may be identified in some or all categories or in other areas. These categories are examples of the areas which the unit may explore – fundamental to the philosophy of Program Review is that the unit itself is best-positioned to determine what challenges it faces. The analysis of the Key Issues identified will serve as the main focus of the Self-Study. Key Issues may explore the following areas:

- A. Organizational Structure
- B. Staff Composition
- C. Customer Service and Outreach
- D. Relationships with Other Units
- E. Systems and Processes
- F. Peer/Industry Comparison

Example Key Issue 1:

Improving Stakeholder Experience: How can the unit build a **culture that focuses on the experiences of the customer**? The unit has identified challenges with consistency, communication, and timeliness of response to constituents that impact the unit's relationship to its key stakeholders.

Example Key Issue 2:

Increasing Demand for Services: How can the Office manage the **expected growth in infrastructure**, ensuring that resources and staffing are sufficient to maintain appropriate support to faculty? Does the current organizational structure of the Office best support the expected institutional growth?

Example Key Issue 3:

Establishing Data-Driven Processes: **The unit anticipates a shift to more data-driven operations and performance evaluation.** The unit seeks additional insight into how to assess key processes, develop goals, and establish metrics to monitor progress on priorities.

APPENDIX A: KEY ISSUES AND SELF-STUDY OUTLINES

Self-Study Outline

The outline is provided to ensure key elements are included in the first iteration of the Self-Study; the unit should determine the organization of the Self-Study that works best for them.

- I. Unit Overview and Governance
This section covers the unit's history, vision, and mission. Describe the primary purpose and key functions of the unit, as well as the administrative structure. Consider the goals and priorities of the unit and how the unit is situated organizationally within the institution.
- 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.
- III. Brief Response to Previous Program Review Issues (if applicable)
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.
- IV. In-Depth Analysis of Key Issues
Describe the Key Issues that have been identified in the current program review cycle. The analysis of the Key Issues incorporates data and survey results, addresses feedback on issues from the Vice President and/or central administration and outlines plans to address the issues and move the unit forward. Key Issue areas may include the following:
 - A. Organizational Structure
 - B. Staff Composition
 - C. Customer Service and Outreach
 - D. Relationships with Other Units
 - E. Systems and Processes
 - F. Peer/Industry Comparison
- 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.

APPENDIX A: KEY ISSUES AND SELF-STUDY OUTLINES

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, resumes, or biographies for all full-time senior staff members. It is useful to the review team to have a listing and brief, one to two 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 appendices; include others as appropriate.

- A. Brief Bios on Unit Leadership (with description of role)*
- B. Senior Staff Resumes/Vitae/Biographies*
- C. Organizational Chart*
- D. Strategic Plan/Roadmap
- E. Communication and Marketing Materials
- F. Peer Comparison Data

APPENDIX B: DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

The following outline and questions are provided to guide the discussion and development of the Key Issues and Self-Study. The outline is intended to highlight the key items that could be included in the unit's analysis, but each unit may organize their assessment uniquely.

I. Organizational Structure

- Describe the organizational structure of the unit and how the unit is situated within the larger University, including the size and scope of the unit.
- How does the administrative structure effectively support the unit's goals? What other structures could be implemented to more effectively serve the unit and its constituents?
- Who does the unit primarily serve?

II. Staff Composition

- 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 the unit's goals for gender, racial, and ethnic diversity among the staff and how the unit monitors and assesses its progress in meeting these goals.
- 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.

III. Customer Service and Outreach

- 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?
- How does the unit communicate about its services to constituents?

IV. Relationships with Other Units

- Describe the unit's efforts to foster and promote collaborations among staff within the unit and across related units at the University.
- Who are the unit's current collaborators and how does the unit engage with these groups?
- Who are the unit's potential future collaborators, and how might these collaborations benefit the unit, other groups, and the University?

APPENDIX B: DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

V. Systems and Processes

- Describe the systems and processes that the unit owns or for which the unit provides oversight. How does the unit use tools and technology to serve its constituents?
- Are the current processes in place efficient and effective uses of resources?
- How does the unit remain apprised of new technology in the field? Is the unit prepared for evolving technology changes (e.g., shift to the Cloud)?

VI. Peer/Industry Comparison

- How does the unit engage with peers at other institutions? How does the unit collaborate with external partners in the industry?
- How does the unit benchmark against similar units at other universities or in industry?
- How does the unit remain informed of trends in the industry?
- List and describe any of the unit's collaborations and external partnerships not already discussed. How do these collaborations further support the mission of the unit?