

Guidelines for Program Review Self-Study September 2009

Graduate Programs

Overview of Program Review at the Graduate Level

The primary purpose of program review is for improvement of graduate programs as measured by the quality of their faculty, students, curriculum, educational resources and facilities, and the academic reputation of the program among peers. Further, program review assists with planning and setting institutional and academic unit priorities. (Council of Graduate Schools, 1990)

At Illinois State University, primary responsibility for quality of academic programs resides with faculty; review of existing academic programs resides with the Academic Planning Committee, an external committee of the Academic Senate. Program Review is carried out in a manner compatible with institutional academic planning mechanisms and guidelines established by the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE).

Reviews result in recommendations for program development and modifications that inform the Department or School, College and University on decisions regarding resource allocation, faculty staffing, program focus, admissions, curricular content, and other academic matters. The Academic Planning Committee provides these recommendations in summative reports submitted to the Academic Senate, the Illinois State University Board of Trustees and the IBHE.

The program review process requires review of all degree programs every eight years to monitor quality, identify needed improvements, or make recommendations to boards of control for closure. Under IBHE guidelines, institutions must indicate if a program being reviewed is in good standing or if a follow-up review is needed to resolve concerns regarding program quality. Such programs are “flagged” and reviewed in three years. Institutions may also temporarily suspend the enrollment of programs identified as requiring attention sufficient to warrant such action.

While having similar program review components, graduate programs do have distinct features of purpose, delivery, and financing from undergraduate programs that need to be considered in the review process. Graduate education is advanced in nature based upon the supposition that its students have already successfully attained a baccalaureate degree and, in many instances, have experience in their area of study. Secondly, graduate education is focused, emphasizing depth rather than breadth which is a hallmark of undergraduate education and its general education component. Thirdly, there is the premise of scholarship both by graduate students and the graduate faculty, whereby the concern is not only for the transmission of knowledge, but involvement in the processes for attainment of knowledge (LaPidus, 1989).

Principles of the program review process for graduate education at Illinois State University

1. The program review process requires a thoughtful and critical self-analysis linked to long-term university priorities aligned with *Educating Illinois*, the University’s strategic plan. The unit must account for how the program contributes to the mission of the University and to the values and/or goals outlined in *Educating Illinois*.

2. Program faculty should fully participate in the self-study process.
3. The unit determines the goals and quality measures that are appropriate for driving improvement in its specific program. Further, the unit is responsible for explanation of its goal and measures selection. Units will look nationally to identify peer institutions or national standards for each quality measure.
4. Units will address comparator programs in Illinois identified by the IBHE for fiscal comparison using data provided by Planning and Institutional Research.
5. Units will identify benchmark programs within the discipline outside of Illinois who could provide a peer review of its (a) curriculum, including opportunities for scholarship appropriate to the discipline, and (b) faculty expertise for advanced teaching, scholarship, and advancement of knowledge through research and/or creative activity. If the graduate program is part of an accreditation or certification process that reviews curricular and faculty integrity, that aspect of the accreditation report can be provided in lieu of the peer review.
6. The program review document should be outcomes based and provide evidence the unit is meeting established goals to allow a more accurate determination of program quality.
7. Programs will demonstrate fiscal accountability through a documented planning process tied to budget decision-making.
8. In conjunction with a review of an academic program, Milner Library will conduct a self study of collections and an evaluation of services provided for the discipline.

Program Review Process

Data provided:

The University Assessment Office, Planning and Institutional Research, Research and Sponsored programs, the Office of the Provost and the Dean of Milner Library will work collaboratively to make the following data available (for each program being reviewed) to the academic unit during the self-study review. Data points are meant to be informative and programs are not expected to address every piece of data in their program review.

Planning and Institutional Research:

1. Fall enrollments (previous five years)
2. Enrollments of students from federally defined underrepresented groups
3. Degrees granted (previous five fiscal years)
4. Discipline costs (previous five years)
5. Average GPA of entering students
6. Average GRE of incoming class
7. Student to faculty ratio (for Department or School)
8. Instructional credit hour per staff year
9. Faculty profile
10. Number of graduate faculty
11. Time to degree

Graduate School:

1. Data on curriculum changes during the review period
2. Information on how many theses or dissertations were completed, and which faculty members served on those committees.
3. Number of graduate majors participating in Graduate Research Symposium

University Assessment Office

1. Alumni Survey data – cumulative report
2. Response to the Process for Review of Academic Assessment Plans (PRAAP) as conducted by the Assessment Advisory Council and communicated by the UAO.(previously provided)

Research and Sponsored Programs

1. Number of external grant proposals submitted by department faculty
2. Number and dollar amount of externally funded grants
3. Department faculty participation in interdisciplinary research grants

Milner Library

1. Collection size (for discipline when appropriate)
2. Relevant data bases and use of databases
3. List of journal holdings in discipline (when appropriate)
4. Number of library instruction sessions by course
5. Sampling of reference questions fielded by library staff

Additional Data:

The following URLs provide access to data which will be useful during the self-study process.

<http://www.pir.ilstu.edu/universityfacts/>

- Enrollment Reports
Census Day on-campus enrollment by department and sequence
- Degree Reports
Degrees conferred for past five years by department
- Credit Hour Reports
By department – undergrad (lower and upper division) and graduate credit hours produced
- Links to University Fact Book and Graduate Data Book

<http://www.pir.ilstu.edu/accountabilityreports/productivitymeasures/index.shtml>

- Student-based Measures
 - Degrees conferred by College, level, department, and major by fiscal year
 - Census Day Headcount enrollment by college, department and major
 - Undergrad and grad census day headcount by *gender*, college and dept
 - Summer enrollments by dept, major, sequence, college and class level
- Faculty-based Measures
 - Credit hours generated by funding department (fiscal year)
 - Fall staff by academic department and employee type
 - Faculty by academic department, tenure status and gender

<http://www.pir.ilstu.edu/benchmarking/programreview/>

Program review Data sets for comparisons with other programs in Illinois with similar CIP Codes. This is for the section on "IBHE Comparator Programs".

<http://www.cgsnet.org/Default.aspx?tabid=168> Council of Graduate Schools' annual Graduate Enrollment and Degrees Report.

The Council of Graduate Schools issues annual reports on degree enrollment, including national data on enrollment trends and demographics in each academic discipline.

Self-Study:

The academic unit initiates the program review process by conducting a thorough self-study of the academic program. The unit head (Chair or Director) identifies a Program Review Coordinator to coordinate the self-study process culminating in a self-study report. Faculty, students and staff in a department should be provided the opportunity for meaningful participation in the program review self-study process.

The Program Review Coordinator should contact the Library Subject Specialist for the program to collaboratively examine relevant holdings and usage statistics and assess the impact of the library on the program. The Coordinator and Subject Specialist should also identify current and future contributions of the library to student learning.

The Associate Provost serves as a liaison to the department to answer questions about the review process. The Assessment Advisory Council and University Assessment Office also provide guidance in matters of student learning outcomes assessment. Units may wish to utilize an external consultant to help identify program strengths and areas for improvement.

Report:

The academic unit will follow the [Program Review Self-Study Report Guidelines](#) approved by the Academic Planning Committee and provided by the Office of the Provost (pages 6-8 of this document). Programs that have undergone an accreditation self-study within two years of the report due date may submit the accreditation self-study report as their program review report. If there are areas required in the program review report not covered by the accreditation report, these must be studied and addressed in a brief addendum to the report. Programs substituting accreditation reports for the self-study report should also provide a 2-3 page executive summary using the format identified in the guidelines and a list which cross-references sections in the accreditation self-study with corresponding components of the program review guidelines.

Committee Review:

The Academic Planning Committee serves as the primary review committee for program reviews. For review of curricular and faculty integrity for graduate education, two committees of the Graduate Council will submit assessment reports to the Academic Planning Committee. As graduate education focuses on depth and advanced study in a discipline, disciplinary external reviewers (or accreditation/certification reports) will provide an assessment to these committees of Graduate Council. In addition to the peer assessment report on faculty expertise, the Membership Committee will review graduate faculty vita in terms of qualifications particularly related to scholarship and active participation in graduate education (serving on dissertations/theses, teaching graduate level courses). The Graduate Curriculum Committee will, in addition to the peer assessment regarding curriculum, review the curricular activity of units that occurred between reviews, particularly in regard to recommendations made from previous reviews.

Summative Report:

The Academic Planning Committee will write a summative report of the program which includes recommendations for program development and modification that serve to inform the academic unit, College, and University on decisions regarding resource allocation, faculty staffing, program focus, admissions, curricular content, and other academic matters. A draft of the summative report is provided to the unit head and appropriate dean for review and comment. The Academic Planning Committee will meet with the unit head and the dean to review the summative report prior to its inclusion in the Academic Plan.

Final Reporting:

The Academic Planning Committee submits the summative reports to the Academic Senate as part of the University's Academic Plan. The Academic Plan then moves forward to the Illinois State University's Board of Trustees for approval before being submitted to the Illinois Board of Higher Education. Subsequently, the Provost, in consultation with the President, works with appropriate Deans and academic unit heads to follow up on program review recommendations.

Academic Program Review Self-Study Report Guidelines (~20 pages):

Section I: Description of Self-study Process

Provide a description of the process used to conduct the self-study including faculty and student involvement and timeframe for the self analysis and review. Include the process for gathering feedback from key stakeholders such as alumni and/or employers.

Section II: Description and Analyses of Program

A. Overview of Academic Unit

1. Outstanding Characteristics (Uniqueness and quality)
2. Programs Offered (including minors)
3. Centrality to Mission of University
 - a. Alignment of the mission of the unit/program with the Mission and Values of the University
 - b. Program support for the goals of *Educating Illinois*?
 - c. Participation by faculty, staff and students in university initiatives such as the American Democracy Project, the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning
4. Academic Advisement and Career Counseling including process for evaluating the quality of advisement.
5. Facilities
 - a. Overview of current facilities
 - b. Equipment purchase and maintenance plan (may be included as an appendix to the self-study report)
6. Library – reviewed collaboratively with the appropriate Milner Library subject specialist. Incorporation of library resources into learning outcomes
 - a. Role of library facilities and collections in teaching and research
 - b. Interaction/collaboration with library subject specialist
 - c. Role of faculty in determination/selection of library resources
7. Budget Planning Process (how is this tied to fiscal decision-making)

B. Overview of degree program being reviewed

1. Student Demand
2. Profile of majors
3. Commitment to enhancing the diversity of the student major population. Describe efforts to enhance diversity and outcomes to date. Compare the diversity of this program to that of the discipline in general (using CGS Enrollment Reports and other disciplinary data as available), commenting on similarities and/or differences.
4. Financing of Graduate Students, Utilization of Graduate Assistants; Graduate Teaching Assistant Training
5. Description of any accreditation and summary of results of most recent accreditation review
6. Brief summary of program relative to IBHE comparator programs
<http://www.pir.ilstu.edu/benchmarking/programreview/>
7. Review the appropriate data on the program in the Graduate Data Book and describe any trends over the review period as they relate to goals and changes in the program and/or discipline in general. <http://www.pir.ilstu.edu/universityfacts/>

C. Curriculum of degree program being reviewed

1. Rationale for the curriculum including degree, sequences for the degree, and graduate level certificate programs.

2. Are student graduating in a reasonable and expected amount of time? How many students are past the catalog time limit for the program?
3. Curricular changes made as a result of curricular assessments since the last program review.
4. On-line courses offered as part of the program
 - a. Which courses are completely on-line (distance education)?
 - b. How do on-campus courses incorporate on-line components?
 - c. How is the quality of on-line offerings assessed?
5. Describe the program's current Assessment Plan, any recent modifications to the plan, and how assessment data have been used to inform program revisions and modifications.
6. Co-curricular and out-of-classroom academic experiences appropriate for graduate students. It is recognized that 2/3 of graduate students at Illinois State are working and attend on a part-time basis.
7. Participation in research and creative process activities such as research symposia, exhibitions, professional conferences.

D. Faculty of degree program or unit:

1. Indicators of faculty quality inherent to the discipline/field of study.
2. Indicators of meeting the criteria for appointment as graduate faculty (active participation in teaching, theses/dissertations/creative activity, scholarship).
3. National reputation of the program faculty.
4. Brief overview of scholarly/creative activities of the program including a quantitative summary of scholarly work of program faculty.
5. Methods of teaching assessment employed by the unit.
6. Indicators of quality teaching including evidence of best practice.
7. Diversity of the faculty and/or plans for recruiting for diversity
8. Typical faculty assignment (TT and NTT).

E. Goals and quality measures for the program (description on page 9 of this document)

1. Indicators of quality in the discipline/field and justification for these as the best measures for quality.
2. National benchmark programs for each of these measures.

Section III: Response to Previous Program Review Recommendations

A narrative summary addressing the previous program review recommendations (not to exceed one page).

Section IV: Program Goals and Planning Processes

- A. Summary of initiatives and plans for program for next three to five years.
- B. Summary of how these goals integrate with the university strategic plan *Educating Illinois*.
- C. Provide the Unit/Program Strategic Plan as Appendix 1.

Section V: Executive Summary (2-3 pages using following format)

- A. Introduction: Provide a brief paragraph summarizing distinctive features that separate the program from competitor programs, and evidence of programmatic excellence.
- B. Summary of each component of review: Summarize (in one paragraph per heading) each of the main headings of the program review document.

- C. Description and assessment of any major changes in the program since the last program review:
1. Changes in the overall discipline or field;
 2. Changes in level of student demand;
 3. Changes in overall societal need;
 4. Institutional context for offering this degree or certificate;
 5. Other elements appropriate to the discipline.
- D. Summary of the program's current assessment process including how assessment data have been used to inform program revisions and modifications.
- E. Description of any accreditation that this program receives from an affiliated agency including results of the most recent review.
- F. Description of major findings and recommendations as a result of the program review, and identification of opportunities for program improvement.
- G. Description of actions taken as a result of the previous program review including changes in instructional resources and practices, and/or curriculum.

Section V: Appendices

1. Strategic Plan for unit and/or program including short- and long-range goals.
2. List of national programs or national standards used for goal setting and quality comparisons.
3. Current faculty vitas which include the following information:
 - a. Rank
Degrees/certificates (date of degrees, degree-granting institutions, major fields of study)
 - b. Publications and other creative activities (indicate if refereed journal, juried exhibit, etc.)
 - c. Internal and external funding received
 - d. Professional Honors and Awards
 - e. Professional development activities
4. Current Assessment Plan for degree program (note: An electronic copy of the most recent plan must be on file with the University Assessment Office).

Timeline for Fall 2010 Report Submission

Date	Activity	Responsibility
October, 2009	Meeting with unit heads and program review coordinators re: program review guidelines	Associate Provost
October, 2009 – August, 2010	Unit faculty conduct program review self-study	Program Review Coordinator Chairperson/Director
March, 2010	Program Review data provided to Chairperson/Director	Associate Provost, PIR, UAO
September 1, 2010	Program Review Self-Study Report due to Chairperson or Director	Program Review Coordinator
September 15, 2010	Program Review Self-Study Report due to Dean's Office	Chairperson/Director
October 1, 2010	Program Review Self-Study Report due to Office of the Provost	Dean
November, 2010	"Site-visit" interviews with program faculty and Chairperson or Director (if needed)	Associate Provost APC
November, 2010–January 2011	APC writes Summative Reports	Associate Provost APC
February 1, 2011	Summative Reports draft distributed to Chairpersons/Directors and Deans	Associate Provost
February, 2011	APC meets with Program Review Coordinator, Chairperson/Director, and Dean to review Summative Report draft	Associate Provost
March 1, 2011	Summative Report drafts due to Provost for review	Associate Provost
March, 2011	APC writes final Summative Report	Associate Provost APC
April 1, 2011	Summative Reports (as part of Academic Plan) provided to Academic Senate	Provost Associate Provost University Planner
July, 2011	Summative Reports (as part of Academic Plan) provided to Board of Trustees	Provost Associate Provost University Planner
August, 2011	Summative Reports provided to IBHE	Provost Associate Provost

Comparison to peer institutions or national standards for program quality

Each program is asked to identify measures/indices of quality and look for external comparators. External comparators may be programs at other universities that are known for quality in a particular area or a program may wish to refer to national standards of program quality.

The purpose for such a comparison:

- Determine which quality indices are most appropriate for the program under review.
- Set program goals for achievement of excellence in these quality indices.
- Identify programs at the national level that exemplify excellence in a quality index area.
- Prompt programs to focus externally and plan for on-going improvement.

Examples of quality indices include:

- Quantitative indicators such as student:faculty ratio, number of graduates who enroll in graduate programs, or admission standards for majors.
- Descriptive indicators such as the scholarly accomplishments of program faculty, strong faculty professional development programs, unique curricula, excellent facilities, unique capstone programs or internship experiences.
- Descriptive indicators such as wide use of best teaching practices, ongoing faculty participation in teaching development programs, or service to the profession at the national level.
- Contribution to the knowledge on teaching and learning in the discipline (SoTL)

**Assessment Advisory Council (AAC)
Process for Review of Academic Assessment Plans
(November 2005)**

By fall 2004, each academic department/school was to have on file for annual review its academic assessment plan, which must contain the critical elements consistent with effective educational practice, as well as Goal 5 of the IBHE *Illinois Commitment*. The role of the members of the AAC was to examine the documents during the 2004-05 academic year and to recommend an annual process that both satisfies the requirement by the IBHE and facilitates a reasonable and appropriate exercise for chairs, directors, and faculty. The following process was approved in November 2005.

The assessment plans will be reviewed using a rubric developed by the members of the AAC (see attachment) which represents both the necessary elements and a range of sophistication and completion within each. The focus of the examination is the evidence within the program's plan that reveals a systematic and dynamic assessment process.

Beginning with the 2005-06 academic year the AAC will review assessment plans based upon the Program Review Schedule. Each fall the AAC will review the current assessment plans of schools/departments who have programs schedule for Program Review two years from the fall the review is initiated. The specific schedule of activities is as follows:

- a. Chairs/directors submit completed academic assessment plans (by academic major) to the Director of the University Assessment Office (UAO) via e-mail or disk (UAO staff posts the plans on the UAO web site at <http://www.assessment.ilstu.edu/program>) as modifications are made.
- b. Each fall semester a two or three-person team within the AAC reviews the elements of the plan using the assessment plan rubric and records comments and questions, and returns the report to the UAO.
- c. In February/March (~20 months from the Program Review deadline) of the spring semester, the Director of the UAO contacts the chair/director to discuss the feedback provided by the AAC peer-review team. The results may necessitate revisions or additions to the public plan.
- d. The UAO will provide consultation to the chairs/directors in the development of any suggested modifications. It is recommended that changes be finalized 14-16 months before the Program Review deadline.
- e. A final report of "Academic Assessment Plan Status" is submitted to the appropriate Dean's Office.

On-going assumptions and processes:

- a. It is assumed that the chair/director and faculty within a discipline will continue to engage in educational processes that improve the academic program through curricular planning, delivery, and assessment of student learning outcomes.
- b. It is appropriate and expected that the documents submitted to the AAC will be a summary of the more detailed plan being used at the department/school level.
- c. The feedback supplied by the peer-review team from the AAC is designed to be formative in nature, with the intent to provide constructive comments that may be useful to the chair/director.
- d. The director and research associate of the UAO will be available to assist the department/school in any areas requested in order to facilitate improved processes and strategies. If there are perceived deficiencies in the documentation of the plan or the plan itself, the director of the UAO and the chair/director of the department or school will work together to develop an action plan for improvement. Follow-up and reporting mechanisms will be designed on a case-by-case basis.

- e. Once the program's documented assessment plan is determined to be at least "established" (according to elements within the "Status and Implementation Rubric"), the chair/ director will be expected to submit to the UAO a one-page "update" annually, independent of the Program Review process (on or about March 15). This update should document any revisions made to the plan within the previous year, as well as changes and improvements made to the program *based on evidence reviewed as a result of assessment-related strategies*. Additionally, the report could document conclusion that have been drawn as a result of recent evidence that supports past changes to the curriculum. In other words, is there evidence that curricular or other revisions have resulted in the desired outcomes?
- f. The AAC will review the "annual update" documents and give formative feedback to chairs/directors.

Elements	Undeveloped	Developing	Established	Exemplary
Program goals and intended student learning outcomes	Absence of program goals and intended student learning outcomes	Program goals are developed, but intended student learning outcomes are only partially developed	Program goals and intended student learning outcomes are developed but lack disciplinary uniqueness	Program goals and intended student learning outcomes are developed and reflect the uniqueness of the program
Systematic assessment of student learning (methodologies and capture points appropriate to the discipline)	Absence of methods of assessment, or plan for implementation	Methods of assessment, and procedures for implementation are partially developed, but lack multi-method and multi-measure approach	Implementation of several assessment activities (methods and procedures) are developed to assess most learning goals and intended outcomes	Systematic assessment of student learning using multiple qualitative and quantitative measure, and reflects the uniqueness of the academic program and discipline
Feedback from key stakeholders (indirect measures)	No evidence of collection of feedback from students, alumni, or employers at the program level	Feedback is gathered from some stakeholders on a limited basis, for limited purposes	Feedback is gathered from key stakeholders (at least current students and alumni) through a number of methods, and is disseminated for analysis at the program level	Feedback is gathered from all key stakeholders (current students, faculty, alumni, employers of graduates, graduate schools, etc.)
Analysis of results/feedback mechanisms and response	No analysis of student outcomes is evident; no action or response identified or implemented	Some evidence of a periodic review of student learning outcomes for some learning goals; response or action identified but not implemented	Evidence of formal review process of actual student learning outcomes for most program goals; response or action based on feedback identified and implemented for most learning outcomes	Evidence of a formal and effective feedback & improvement mechanism: program faculty are engaged in a regular assessment and review process, with student learning and stakeholder feedback used to improve curriculum, instruction, and learning

