**Self-Assessment Guidelines**

The self-assessment is a systematic review of the department’s/program’s strengths and weaknesses, needs and challenges, and plans for the future. The self-assessment is an opportunity to consider the quality of the curriculum, student learning, faculty development, and departmental priorities. While the chair is responsible for coordinating the review and preparing the self-assessment, it is a participatory process that all members of the department should be engaged in. Departments may divide into groups to write specific sections but all should discuss the draft and approve the final report.

**The self-assessment dossier normally includes the following components:**

1. **Mission, history and institutional context**
   1. Institutional context
      1. Some background information about the larger context of the college
   2. The department’s mission statement
      1. The mission statement helps give identity, coherence and focus to the activities and outcomes of the program. It is also helpful to discuss the program mission statement in relation to the mission of the College.
   3. The department/program’s history
      1. Some history of the department and description of its current circumstances and culture (e.g., tradition and format of department meetings, governance structure, activities and involvement of the Student Advisory Council, mentoring practices for faculty and advising students, sense of community among majors, etc.)
      2. Current staffing
   4. Successes and challenges since the previous external department review.
      1. Recommendations that were implemented
2. **Student Learning and Department Development**
   1. An account of how the department’s curriculum has evolved over time and whether the current curriculum is new, well-established, or in transition
      1. Areas of specialization that are under or over-represented given the current state of the discipline
   2. Description and discussion of the instructional program – Requirements for the major and/or minor or concentration; coherence of the major; breadth and depth.
   3. Learning goals: what are the department learning goals for majors and non-majors
   4. The role and effectiveness of the department’s/program’s senior exercise and Honors program
   5. Types of academic experiences the department wants their students to have (assignments, engagement with academic research, off-campus study, collaborative work, etc.)
   6. A “map” of departmental courses that identifies just where in the curriculum students are offered opportunities to meet each of the department’s learning goals
      1. Consider conducting a transcript analysis of student curricular behavior (e.g., how many classes have students typically taken before they declare their major, when do students typically take certain courses, etc.)
   7. Some departments and programs address not just what they teach but how they teach. Samples of course activities and assignments may be helpful. Participation of faculty in faculty development programs supporting innovation and improvement in instructional strategies.
   8. Assessment plan and evidence of student learning – consider discussing reports from the annual department assessment meetings since the previous external review
   9. Current strengths and weaknesses in the area of student learning and learning goals and outcomes
   10. Contributions of the program to General Education, interdisciplinary programs, and other programs of the College
   11. Other department or program-related activities, e.g., student organizations, special lectures or performances, faculty –student collaboration in research activities, etc.
   12. Departmental statistics over the last 10 years (majors, minors, GPAs, internships, research projects supported, teaching loads/overloads, test scores such as GRE, MCAT, LSAT, TTS Major Field Test, etc.)
3. **Enrollment Patterns and Student Feedback**
   1. Comment on enrollment patterns and trends based on data from the Registrar
   2. Discussion of results from surveys of current students and alumni majors
      1. The Office of Institutional Research will help with the design, implementation, and analysis of these surveys. Department members with experience in survey design may want to participate in these planning meetings.
      2. The recommended sampling frame is majors who graduated in the last 10 years.
4. **Faculty Scholarship and artistic work**
   1. Department guidelines and expectations
   2. Department accomplishments in the area of scholarly and/or artistic expertise
5. **Faculty Service and Leadership**
   1. Department expectations
   2. Department accomplishments
6. **Reflections and Future Plans**
   1. What are the major conclusions the department has drawn from the self-assessment process and how does the department plan to respond?
   2. What actions are needed and by whom?
   3. Consider both short-term (3-5 years) and long term goals (6-10 years)
   4. Address constraints and challenges
   5. Specific areas the department would like external reviewers to address
7. **Supportive Data – External Reviewers Generally Like to See:**
8. Syllabi of recently offered courses
   * 1. Consider comparative data from departments or programs at peer institutions if useful for situating your department/program in a particular context
9. Curriculum Vitae of all department faculty members
10. The report from the most recently completed external review
11. Catalog listings of the department
12. Department budget
13. A list of physical resources that support instruction (technology, labs, special equipment, physical space, library holdings, etc.)
14. **\*Executive Summary (a short narrative that discusses the results of the self-assessment, provid**e**s background information and raises specific department/program concerns)**
15. Brief overview and history of the department/program
16. Description of the self-assessment process
17. A summary of the key issues from the previous self-assessment and key recommendations of the previous external review team
18. Key points from sections above
19. Brief summary of conclusions
20. Issues and question for the department/program and external reviewers
21. \*This will go at the beginning of the final document but it is typically the last section to be written.