

Procedures for Undergraduate Academic Program Review at the University of New Hampshire

I. Introduction

Academic program review is a process that involves collecting and analyzing information about existing academic programs. The immediate goal of program review is to assess a program with respect to three criteria: centrality, quality, and demand. The resulting assessments will be used as a basis for three further action steps: planning, budgeting, and program enhancement. Though departments are not responsible for assessing their programs according to cost, the dean and senior administration may consider the cost of a program in the course of program review.

The present document describes UNH academic program review for undergraduate programs located in a single department. A separate document describes the review of similar graduate programs. For all programs, undergraduate and graduate, located in a single department, the department is the primary unit of analysis for program review. Whenever possible, the review of both undergraduate and graduate programs located in the same department should proceed together. Undergraduate programs that are not located in a single department (e.g., Justice Studies; Humanities; Women's Studies; Race, Culture, Power) will be reviewed according to procedures described in a separate document (forthcoming).

This document covers program reviews at both the Durham and Manchester campuses. UNH baccalaureate programs that are offered at UNH Manchester (UNHM) will be subject to internal review but not review by external teams. These programs

include English, History, Psychology, and Humanities. Programs unique to UNHM will include review by external teams. These programs include Communication Arts, Engineering Technology, Business, and Sign Language Interpretation. Associate degree programs at UNHM will be subject to internal reviews.

II. The Review Process

A. *Overview*

A program review includes several components that are collectively aimed at assessing the program with respect to the four criteria listed above. Each component will be separately discussed in this document. By way of overview, the first step is the preparation of a detailed self-study. The preparation of the self-study is conducted by program faculty. The program faculty are responsible for carrying out the data collection process, with assistance provided by the school or college dean's office and by the Office of Institutional Research & Assessment (IR&A). The program head should contact the director of IR&A to begin discussions about data collection one year prior to the September 1 on which their draft self-study will be due. These offices will provide assistance to departments as they collect, organize, and interpret relevant data. The core data collected should be common to all reviews, but other data sources will be particular to programs.

The self-study is reviewed by a self-study committee that prepares a report that addresses the questions and issues described in this document. Very early in the review process, the self-study committee contacts the Head of Collections to begin a conversation with the Library about the adequacy of resources for the program. When the draft self study is ready, a copy is sent to the dean and to the Undergraduate Program

Review Council (UPRC). The UPRC will indicate whether the draft is “acceptable” or “needs revision in consultation with the dean.” The dean can ask the UPRC if it has specific comments on the draft, but it would not always be expected that the UPRC provide full feedback on the draft. Further in the process, at the request of the dean or provost, the UPRC can be asked to offer comments and/or recommendations on the final self study, the report of the external review team, and the final recommendation of the dean; involvement beyond the review of the draft self study, however, is at the discretion of the dean or provost. Following completion and approval of the self-study by the dean, an external review team is appointed. The external review team visits the campus and meets with program faculty, students, and senior administrators responsible for program oversight. The team submits a report which informs the review and final decisions of the school or college dean and the provost.

B. Departments and Program Review

Many departments have two or more distinct academic programs, sometimes leading to different degrees. When feasible, all programs within a department—undergraduate and graduate—should be reviewed at the same time, even if distinct review processes are required. Academic programs that are not located within an individual academic department (e.g., International Affairs Dual Major, Humanities, Justice Studies Dual Major) will also be reviewed, and if appropriate and practical, the review may coincide with the review of one or more related departments.

C. Scheduling Programs in the Review Cycle

Programs will normally be reviewed every seven years. Programs may be reviewed out of the normal cycle if the program’s dean and the provost approve.

Whenever possible, undergraduate and graduate program reviews within the same department should be conducted in coordination and preferably at the same time. This includes review of professionally accredited programs. For programs subject to professional accreditation, the default assumption is that UNH program review will occur in the same year as the professional accreditation review. This default assumption, however, can be changed by agreement of the dean and the provost. See below, section VI (Special Procedures for Professionally Accredited Programs). The dean of the school or college in which program review will be performed is responsible for initiating the review process. In consultation with the affected department chair, the dean will assign a start-date for preparation of the program's self-study.

III. The Self-Study

The faculty in the program under review has primary responsibility for the self-study. IR&A will provide standard data from Department Profiles, the University of Delaware Study of Cost and Productivity, summaries of major counts, student evaluation of teaching summaries and possibly other sources. Some data may be provided by the school or college dean's office. In some cases, the external review team may request additional data.

The format of the self-study report may vary from program to program. However, all reports should include clearly labeled sections that address the following:

A. General Overview of the Program

The section on General Overview of the Program must include a clear description of the program and a statement of its mission and how it relates to the missions of its college and the University. The program's goals and objectives for the next five to seven years

should be included with its mission statement. The General Overview should address how the program fits with and advances the goals of (for the Durham campus) the University's Academic Plan (2003-2008) (<http://www.unh.edu/academic-affairs/pdf/academicplan.pdf>) and how it fits with and advances the appropriate school or college's academic plan. For UNHM, the General Overview should address how the program fits with and advances the goals of the UNHM Strategic Plan (2002-2007) (<http://www.unhm.unh.edu/strategic-plan.pdf>). The General Overview should describe the program's currency in relation to the field or discipline in which it is situated. The General Overview also should compare and contrast the program with similar programs at other institutions. To this end, the dean and the program chair at the outset of the process should identify the relevant comparator institutions that will be used for the program review.

B. Curriculum

The section on the Curriculum should describe the curriculum and evaluate its strengths and weaknesses, its currency within the field/discipline, and any plans for curricular modification. It should describe program requirements and discuss in detail the strengths and weaknesses of the department's major and minor(s). It should describe how the University's Writing Intensive Courses policy is addressed in the context of the program. For academic 2005-06 and thereafter, the section on Curriculum should describe in detail how the program participates in the University's Discovery program (currently in pilot) including, as applicable, the number and titles of first-year Inquiry courses, general education courses converted according to Discovery Program guidelines, capstone courses, and the names of faculty who have participated in the first-year University Dialogues program. It should describe in detail how the program is implementing the

institutional strategy set forth in the University's Strategic Plan for Diversity that calls for increasing the number of experiences and/or courses in the curriculum that focus on diversity.

The section on Curriculum should provide in an appendix a copy of a standard syllabus for all of the courses included in the undergraduate catalog that make up the curriculum. It also should include a copy of any paper written by program faculty in connection with the University Dialogues Program.

C. Undergraduate Research/Creative Artistry, Service Learning, and Honors-in-Major Opportunities

The section on Undergraduate Research/Creative Artistry, Service Learning, and Honors-in-Major Opportunities should address the following questions: Do students have opportunities to work with faculty on research or creative artistry projects beyond the classroom? Do students have opportunities to become involved in service learning? If so, the department should describe and evaluate the benefits of these opportunities to students.

If the department has an honors-in-major program, the department should describe it and discuss the nature of the relationship of this program to the University Honors Program.

D. Faculty

The section on Faculty should describe the qualifications and accomplishments of faculty associated with the program. It should describe in detail the process that the chairperson uses to assign individual faculty workloads and how these assignments meet program needs. It should specify whether, based on programmatic need and faculty interests and strengths, individual faculty workloads differ from one another in terms of

the allocation of time to teaching, research/creative artistry, and service activities. It should describe in detail how the department encourages faculty development and how the department mentors new faculty.

The section on Faculty should describe in detail how the program is implementing the Strategic Plan for Diversity's institutional strategy of enhancing the recruitment and retention of faculty from groups that have been historically underrepresented and/or marginalized in academia for reasons of race, ethnicity, sex, GLBT status, religion, disability, or income.

The section on Faculty should discuss the role of faculty in the advising of students in the program and answer the following questions. Are all program faculty involved in advising? Are others involved, e.g., staff? How efficient and effective is the student advising associated with this program? On what basis are these conclusions reached, e.g., student or faculty surveys, numbers of problems that students have at course registration times or at graduation?

The section on Faculty should include in an appendix an up-to-date curriculum vitae for all program faculty.

E. Student Characteristics

The section on Student Characteristics should describe the academic profile of students in the program, including their academic records upon entering and leaving the University.

F. Student Outcome Measures

The section on Student Outcome Measures should describe the procedures that are followed to assess student learning in the program as well as the means used to assess

the extent to which students achieve the overall goals and objectives of the program. It should provide information on retention of students in the major, time to graduation, placement information regarding jobs and graduate schools, and any other information the program deems relevant on these dimensions. The section should include department-related information from the Registrar's reports on undergraduate grade distributions. It should address whether there have been any trends in changes in assigned grades. The section should summarize the overall grade distributions in program-related courses, and comment on them as appropriate.

G. Facilities

The section on Facilities should describe the facilities used by the department to implement the program as well as the adequacy of those facilities in meeting the department's mission. It should address the adequacy of classrooms, office space, course-related and faculty laboratories, recital rooms, studios, computing facilities, equipment, software, and any other facilities resources.

H. Library Resources

The section on Library Resources should describe the University Library resources used by students and faculty associated with the program and discuss the adequacy of these resources. The department self-study committee should consult with the Head of Collection Development at the start of the process of program review, one year prior to the September 1 on which the self-study is due. The self-study must reflect the input of the Library.

I. Department Structure and Governance (Durham Campus Only)

The section on Departmental Governance should describe the department's structure and approach to governance, particularly in terms of how these relate to the program under review. For example, does a curriculum committee routinely review the department's undergraduate academic programs?

J. Other Information in Self-Study

The department may find it useful to present additional information on its program, faculty, students, and staff in the following areas: extramural grants and contracts, regional/national rankings or ratings, information on public service or outreach activities, external awards or other recognition. This list is intended to be illustrative not exhaustive.

K. Program Enhancement Plan

The section on the Program Enhancement Plan will contain a candid assessment by department faculty members of the strengths of their program and those areas in which faculty members seek to improve it, for the next three to five years. What characteristics of the program should be maintained, strengthened, ended, or otherwise changed? Based on the self-study committee's responses, a Program Enhancement Plan must be proposed. This Plan should include actions for program enhancement, a description of resources needed to accomplish this plan, and the sources of these resources. What internal reallocation of resources might be done to fund the Enhancement Plan? If the department concludes that a current program should be eliminated or reduced, the self-study committee should propose an action plan to bring about this outcome.

L. The Criteria and Possible Indicators

The self-study process provides program faculty with the opportunity to assess their program with respect to the criteria of centrality, quality, and demand.. The list of indicators below suggests some ways to apply the criteria in the self-study. Other indicators may be appropriate for a particular program. A useful self-study report provides a straightforward assessment of the strengths of the programs and of the areas in which improvement is warranted.

In order to apply the three criteria of centrality, quality, and demand in the review process, indicators for each criterion must be specified. For example, the quality of a program may be judged by considering the quality of its students. Indicators of student quality could include admissions profiles and results from student learning assessment efforts (e.g., performance on standardized exams, reports from employers, information obtained from student portfolios). Some indicators will be common to all programs, while other indicators will vary from program to program.

Information on the three criteria should be provided within the body of the self-study report. It should be clear to readers of the report where the individual criteria are addressed in the report. It may be useful to include a section in the report that lists the three criteria and the pages on which the criteria are addressed.

I. Centrality

- Statement of program or department mission and its relation to the missions of the University and the program or department's school or college.
- Connection of the program to its graduate program, if any.
- Connection to other programs at UNH including but not limited to the Discovery Program, Honors Program, Writing Program, Center for

International Education, UROP/IROP, ROTC, and Center for Teaching Excellence.

II. Quality

- Faculty
 1. Teaching: peer and students evaluations, awards
 2. Research: reputation in field/discipline, citations, external funding
 3. Service: University and public service, indication of effectiveness
 4. Credentials: appropriate terminal degrees, experience, etc.
 5. Diversity: tenure track faculty from groups that have been historically underrepresented and/or marginalized in academia for reasons of race, ethnicity, sex, GLBT status, religion, disability, or income.
- Student Assessment Data: admissions profile, scores on post graduate exams, placement in employment or graduate schools, surveys of employers, direct measures of student learning. If the department has a student assessment plan, describe it and provide examples of assessment data.
- Curriculum: comprehensiveness, attention to diversity goals and strategies, progression of courses, currency.
- Facilities: offices, classrooms, laboratories, equipment, etc.
- Library Holdings: appropriateness and adequacy of University Library holdings related to the program being reviewed.

III. Demand

- Current Students: number of majors annually, number of credits generated annually (both for 6 year period), unmet demand (e.g., data on courses in which student requests exceed course capacity), number of unmet internal transfers requests, etc.
- Potential Students: number of qualified applicants versus acceptances.
- External Demand: need for program graduates in state, region, or nation, ascertained by employer surveys, etc.
- Availability of similar programs at other institutions in the same state or region.

Although departments are not asked to analyze their programs in terms of cost, the self-study report is an appropriate place to discuss, from the department's perspective, the adequacy of its resources to support both current activities and future goals. The self-study should also address the appropriate balance of undergraduate and graduate programs in the department, if applicable, and how that balance affects the allocation of resources. Resources include program personnel and support budgets as well as physical facilities, library resources, computer services, etc. When program weaknesses are related to inadequate resources the connection should be made explicit.

M. Deadlines for Preparing the Self-Study

The official UNH Schedule of Program Review is maintained by IR&A. See the Schedule on-line at: <http://www.unh.edu/ir/MasterProgramReviewCycle1.xls> or contact the director of IR&A. Deans and program heads should consult in the year preceding a scheduled review to determine any issues that may bear on the program's timely compliance with deadlines for the preparation of the self-study. At the time of such initial consultation, the program head must contact the director of IR&A to begin discussions regarding data that the program will need for the review, including preparation of the self-study.

Deadlines related to the self-study are targets and may be adjusted by the dean in the interest of advancing the goals of program review. In general, the draft self-study report should be submitted to the school or college dean, the UPRC, and the vice provost for academic affairs by **September 1** of the academic year in which a program will be reviewed.

By **October 15** of the year in which the program will be reviewed, the school or college dean and the vice provost for academic affairs will request any needed additions to or clarifications of the self-study document. A revised self-study document, if requested, should be submitted to the dean, UPRC, and vice provost by **January 1**. When the self-study document has been accepted as final by the dean (and graduate dean, if graduate review is to be performed contemporaneously), and only at that point, the department will nominate faculty members from outside the University to serve as program reviewers. Ordinarily, the department will nominate four or five such persons, though the number may be less for very small programs. The dean usually will select two of the individuals nominated by the department to invite to serve; if one or more declines, the dean may continue down the list of departmental recommendations until a sufficient number of outside reviewers is found, or the dean may go back to the department and ask for new names.

IV. The External Review

The external review team usually though not always will consist of three members:

- One (1) University of New Hampshire faculty member. The UNH reviewer will be selected from the school or college in which the program is located (but will not be a faculty member in the department undergoing the review). The school or college dean will appoint this person.
- Two (2) senior faculty members from other universities with recognized expertise in the appropriate field or discipline. Department faculty members nominate four or five external reviewers to their dean. The school or college

dean reviews the nominations of the department and makes the final decision on the membership of the review team.

One of the members of the review team will serve as its chair. The site visit of external review team will be scheduled by the dean in consultation with the chair of the department or program under review. The specific agenda of the external review team may vary, but will normally include:

- *On the Durham campus:* An opening meeting with the department chair, department undergraduate program coordinator, and school or college dean to discuss the self-study report and to review the schedule for the site visit. This will typically be a dinner meeting that takes place the evening before the day of the site visit. *On the Manchester campus:* This meeting will include the dean, division chair, and program director.
- A meeting with current undergraduate students.
- *On the Durham campus:* Meetings with the department chair, undergraduate program coordinator, other department faculty, and appropriate staff. *On the Manchester campus:* Meetings with the dean, division chair, program director, other faculty, and appropriate staff.
- A tour of program facilities and continued meetings/interviews as needed.
- A meeting with the school or college dean.
- An exit interview with the department chair, undergraduate program coordinator, school or college dean, and vice provost for academic affairs.

The review team will submit to the department faculty, school or college dean, and vice provost for academic affairs a written report that describes and discusses their

findings. The report, which should be submitted no later than three weeks after the site visit, should address the following issues:

- To what extent is the program central to the mission of the University of New Hampshire and the school or college and department in which it is located? What changes would be necessary to increase the program's centrality?
- What is the quality of the program's curriculum with respect to scope, depth, currency, and student requirements for degree completion? What changes would be necessary to improve the current level of quality?
- What is the quality of the program's faculty with respect to teaching and student advising effectiveness, scholarly or creative productivity, and impact on the discipline or field? What changes would be necessary to improve the current level of quality?
- What is the quality of the program with respect to impact on student outcomes? For example, does the department provide information on student learning outcomes and, if so, is that information used to improve the curriculum? What changes would be necessary to improve the current level of quality?
- What is the quality of the program's resources with respect to its teaching, research, and service obligations? What changes would be necessary to improve the current level of quality?
- Is the demand for this program on the part of prospective students and post-graduate placements indicative of a high quality program? Is the level

of demand likely to change during the next five years? What can the department do to affect demand for the program, if that seems advisable?

- To what extent does the program advance the University's goals related to diversification of UNH faculty, students, and curriculum, and implement the relevant strategic initiatives adopted in the University's Strategic Plan for Diversity? How could the program do more in furtherance of these goals and strategic initiatives?
- Is the Program Enhancement Plan proposed by the self-study committee clear, appropriate, and feasible? Does the review team have recommendations for any changes to the plan?

Within three weeks after receiving the report by the external review team, the program faculty may write a response to the dean. This response may correct any errors of fact in the report and may provide alternative perspectives to those written by the review team.

V. Decisions About the Program

On the basis of the self-study report, the comments of the UPRC, the report from the external review teams, and responses to the external reviewers' report by program faculty, the appropriate school or college dean will make one of three decisions. The decision, and the rationale for it, will be provided in writing to the department chair within one month after the review panel has submitted its report and the department has had the opportunity to provide a response to the dean. The dean will also notify IR&A of his or her decision. IR&A will record the decision and denote the program review as closed (if the program lodges a timely appeal, and the appeal is successful, IR&A will

revise its records accordingly on notice from the vice provost for academic affairs). The three decisions available to the dean are:

- **Approval.** The self-study committee's Program Enhancement Plan is accepted as the basis for ongoing discussions with the program. The dean will then work with the department to maintain and strengthen the program.
- **Conditional Approval.** A program must address relevant issues raised in the self-study, by the outside review team, and by the dean. If a good faith effort to address the issues is consistently demonstrated within one year following the dean's decision, the program will be deemed approved, even if the issues are not entirely resolved. Example: where the review identifies personnel problems within a department, the department may be required to address them; although a dean cannot mandate successful resolution of all such conflicts, it is proper for a dean to look for indications that the department is striving to "set its house in order" as a condition of final program approval. Where a program fails to achieve conditional approval within one year, the dean may impose one of the statuses listed below.
- **Probation.** The program is placed on probation. The dean proposes specific changes in the Program Enhancement Plan and works with the department chair to incorporate these changes into the Plan. The dean sets a date by which she or he will review the implementation of the modified Plan. By mutual agreement of the dean and the department, this date may

be extended in the interest of achieving departmental compliance. If the review of the modified Plan is unsatisfactory, the program will be subject to closure.

- **Program Closure.** The program should be phased out. As described in an earlier section of this document, the department conducting the self-study may also propose to close a program. Before an academic program may be closed, a number of steps and approvals are required. Applicable UNH and USNH policies must be followed as well as any applicable sections of the USNH AAUP/UNH Collective Bargaining Agreement.

Within two weeks of receiving the dean's written decision, the department chair may submit a written request to the dean to reconsider her or his decision. If the request for reconsideration is denied, the department chair within one week of receiving the dean's written denial may file a written appeal to the provost. Except in the case of program closure, the decision of the provost shall be final. The decision of the provost to close a program must also be approved by the president and is subject to applicable policies and procedures of UNH and USNH and the terms of the USNH-AAUP/UNH Collective Bargaining Agreement.

VI. Special Procedures for Professionally Accredited Programs

Some undergraduate programs at UNH are involved in regular reviews for the purpose of specialized accreditation. For such programs, the process for academic program review is modified. Each school or college will determine for itself how best to handle the sequencing of professional accreditation and UNH program review. Some may wish to schedule UNH program reviews in the same year as their accreditation reviews

(this will be the default for purposes of scheduling); others may wish to engage in UNH program review in the following year. No separate self study is required for UNH program review for programs undergoing professional accreditation review. Rather, the self-study prepared for the accrediting agency will serve as the basis for the University self-study. Details on UNH program review for programs undergoing professional accreditation review may be found at:

http://www.unh.edu/ir/UGProgram_Review_REV_ED.pdf).

The following actions must be completed within one year of the end of professional accreditation review. When a department completes its UNH program review, the department must submit to the dean and the vice provost for academic affairs the self-study prepared for the accrediting agency, as well as the final report of the accrediting agency, including the determination of compliance with standards, official comments on program strengths, and weaknesses, the final determination on continuing accreditation, and any materials written by the program as responses or rebuttals to the accrediting agency's findings and conclusions. The department should provide a cross-reference or index that indicates where in the accreditation self-study the specific items set forth in the Undergraduate Academic Program Review are addressed. In addition, the department should submit a Program Enhancement Plan. The dean and vice provost will review these materials to assure that the self-study requirements have been met and to determine whether an external review team should be a part of the program review process. Within a reasonable time after receiving the materials referenced above, the school or college dean and the vice provost for academic affairs will request any needed additions to or clarifications of the self-study document. A revised self-study document,

if requested, should be submitted to the dean and vice provost. If an external review team is warranted, review will proceed according to the terms described in the section above on External Review. After all appropriate evidence has been assembled the dean will proceed according to the provisions set forth above under Decisions About the Program.

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