

University of Utah Graduate Council Program Reviews

Description

and

Procedures

The Graduate School
302 Park Building
201 South Presidents Circle
University of Utah
Salt Lake City, Utah 84112-9016
(801) 581-7642
www.gradschool.utah.edu

Persons Involved with Graduate Council Program Reviews

David B. Kieda
Dean of the Graduate School
Phone: (801) 581-7642
e-mail: dave.kieda@utah.edu

Katharine S. Ullman
Associate Dean of the Graduate School
phone: (801) 585-7199
e-mail: associate.dean@gradschool.utah.edu

Denise Haynie
Program Review Coordinator
phone: (801) 587-5856
e-mail: denise.haynie@gradschool.utah.edu

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Introduction

All undergraduate and graduate degree granting programs at the University of Utah are subject to regular review as mandated by the State Board of Regents. Reviews for programs with both graduate and undergraduate components or that award only graduate degrees are under the jurisdiction of the Graduate Council and are administered by the Dean and Associate Dean of the Graduate School. The Undergraduate Council reviews programs that are solely undergraduate in nature.

These reviews are characterized by a general approach: They are collegial in the broadest sense of the term and are based on the concept of peer review; they are scholarly in that they seek to define questions whose answers will increase understanding of the programs; they are comprehensive in that they view the programs under review as being connected both to other programs within the university and to the intellectual issues of the discipline at large; and finally, they are dynamic in that they result in actions that will improve undergraduate and graduate education.¹

Purpose

Educational units within universities require regular scrutiny and self-examination to improve, and the systematic review of academic programs is an integral part of this process of improvement. The purpose of program review is to improve the quality of education in the State of Utah by strengthening established programs and eliminating or upgrading those that fail to meet acceptable standards.

Program review has several associated objectives or goals: (1) For the university, program review helps in long-range planning by providing information about the size and stability or vitality of a program, its faculty resources and student demand, its equipment and space needs, its strengths and weaknesses, and its contribution to the mission of the institution. It helps set goals for the future and ensures that overall academic plans and budget decisions are based on real information and agreed-upon priorities, not vague impressions. (2) For the educational unit, program review provides a mechanism for change and improvement by creating a structured, scheduled opportunity for a program to be examined. The mechanism should be well-reasoned, far-seeing, and as apolitical as possible. (3) From an external point of view, program review provides a mechanism for universities to be accountable to society (state government, funding agencies, donors, taxpayers, and tuition-paying students) for their activities and for the quality of their programs.

¹ Sections in "Introduction," "Purpose," and "Elements of an Effective Program Review" are adapted from *Academic Review of Graduate Programs - A Policy Statement*, Council of Graduate Schools, Washington, D.C., 1990, p. 26.

Elements of an Effective Program Review

1. Program review is initiated and administered within the institution.
2. Program review is evaluative, not just descriptive. More than the compilation of data on a particular program, it requires academic judgments about the quality of the program and the adequacy of its resources. It goes beyond an assessment of the minimum standards adequate for licensure or accreditation to evaluations of quality by peers and recognized experts in the field.
3. Review of programs is forward-looking; it is directed toward improvement of the program, not simply assessment of its current status.
4. Departments engaged in program review are evaluated using academic criteria.
5. To the extent possible, program review is an objective process. It asks departments to engage in self-studies, which assess, as objectively as possible, their own programs. It brings faculty members from other departments and from outside the institution to review the self-studies and to make their own evaluations, using independent judgments. It is part of an established, public process in which all programs are similarly reviewed.
6. Program review is an independent process, separate from other reviews. Reviews conducted by regional or professional accrediting associations, licensing agencies, or budget committees are separate and distinct. Data collection and parts of the department self-study may often serve a number of review purposes and thus program review will often be scheduled to coincide with an accreditation or other external review. But to be effective, program review must be a unique, identifiable process that stands on its own, draws its own set of conclusions, and directs its recommendations to the only individuals who have the power to improve programs: the faculty and administrators of the institution.
7. Most important of all, program review results in action. Based on the reviewers' comments and recommendations, the institution develops a plan to implement the desired changes on a specific, agreed-upon timetable. This plan is linked to the institution's budget and planning process, to help ensure that recommended changes actually get made, that necessary resources are set aside, and that the program's goals fit into the institution's overall academic plans.
8. Successful program review, then, is a process of evaluation that has all of the above characteristics. It provides answers to the following kinds of questions:
 - Is the teaching and training of students effective and useful?
 - Is the program advancing the state of the discipline or profession?
 - Does the program meet the institution's goals?
 - Does the program respond to the profession's needs?
 - How is the program assessed by experts in the field?

Participants in University of Utah Program Reviews and Their Responsibilities

Program review involves the participation of two groups of consultants: (a) external consultants who are professors of national reputation in the discipline under review; and (b) an internal committee consisting of faculty members drawn from other departments of the University of Utah.

External reviewers are faculty members from other universities who are nationally recognized educators and scholars in their respective subject fields. External reviewers are appointed by the Graduate School but are selected in part based on names suggested by the department or program under review. Generally, there are three reviewers on each external review committee, though committee size may be adjusted according to specific needs of the unit under review. The task of the external reviewers is to formulate objective judgments of quality and effectiveness of undergraduate and graduate programs. This evaluation is concerned primarily with the quality of education actually achieved and includes, but is not restricted to: overall quality and direction of the program; an assessment of the quality of faculty, students and the existence of policies and practices in support of them; curriculum offerings and program options; program effectiveness and outcomes assessment; and the adequacy of staff support, physical facilities, library resources, equipment, research facilities and the program budget. In addition, the review considers the justification of the program in terms of such factors as employment demand, potential student population, and service functions performed by the department/program.

Internal committee members are appointed by the Graduate School but are selected in part based on names suggested by the department under review. Generally, there are three faculty members on each internal review committee, though committee size may be adjusted according to specific needs of the unit under review. The internal committee provides judgment on program quality and governance from the viewpoint of colleagues at the University of Utah. Internal committees also are encouraged to focus their attention on questions concerning the relationship of the department/program under review with the goals of other programs on campus, as well as with the goals of the total university.

As an aid to the external and internal review teams, a self-study document is prepared by the unit under review and made available by the Graduate School to reviewers in advance of the review. The self-study follows a format described later in this document and includes a program overview followed by information on faculty, students and postdocs, curriculum and programs of study, program effectiveness/outcomes assessment, and facilities and resources.

The external and internal review teams each prepare a written report based on the self-study and on-site interviews. The reports are submitted to the Associate Dean of the Graduate School, who transmits copies of the reports to the department chair/program director and dean of the college. The chair/director is expected to share the reports with faculty and staff. The chair/director and college dean submit written responses after they have had the opportunity to discuss the reports with faculty.

All documents are then submitted to an ad hoc committee of the Graduate Council charged with synthesizing the reports and producing a summary report for the program review. The ad hoc committee meets with external reviewers when they are on campus. The ad hoc committee may, but is not required to, meet with the college dean or the department chair to clarify issues raised in the various reports. The ad hoc committee submits its report with commendations and recommendations, along with all materials on which they are based, to the Graduate Council, which discusses, amends, and approves the report.

The approved Graduate Council report is submitted either to the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs or the Senior Vice President for Health Sciences. The cognizant vice president, who has not been directly involved in the program review until this stage, then meets with the chair/director, college dean, and Dean and Associate Dean of the Graduate School, to discuss program review recommendations. A memorandum of understanding resulting from this wrap-up meeting, along with the Graduate Council report of the review, are transmitted to the Academic Senate, the Board of Trustees, and the State Board of Regents as information items. The department chair/ director is expected to share the final report and memorandum of understanding with faculty and staff.

The Graduate School covers expenses for honoraria, travel, housing, and meals for external reviewers invited to the campus. Internal committee members do not receive honoraria for their work.

Steps in the Graduate Council Program Review and Approximate Timelines

1. A department or degree-granting program is formally notified of a scheduled Graduate Council program review during the academic year prior to the year of the actual review. A seven-year plan for reviews is maintained in the Graduate School and is available on the Graduate School website (<http://documents.gradschool.utah.edu/7-year-review-schedule>).
2. The Associate Dean of the Graduate School meets with the department chair/program director and staff to review procedures and set timelines for the review. This meeting should occur no later than spring semester in the academic year preceding the review.
3. The department/program is requested to:
 - a. prepare a self-study (see later section for format and description),
 - b. supply the Graduate School with names and contact information of at least 7 potential external reviewers,
 - c. supply the Graduate School with names and contact information of at least 7 potential internal reviewers.
4. The Graduate School contacts and appoints external and internal reviewers. The Graduate School informs the chair/director of the names of the reviewers no later than the semester preceding the review.
5. The unit under review, in coordination with the Graduate School, arranges detailed itineraries for external and internal reviewers. External reviewers conclude their site visit with an exit interview with the Dean and Associate Dean of the Graduate School and members of the Graduate Council ad hoc committee assigned to that review. External review teams are requested to submit their reports within one month of the site visit.
6. The internal review committee, upon completion of its work, submits its report to the Associate Dean of the Graduate School. The internal review team is requested to submit its report within one month of the site visit.
7. The Graduate School submits the written reports from the external and internal review teams to the department chair/program director and college dean for a written response. Departments/programs are requested to submit their response within one month of receipt of the reports.

8. All review materials are submitted to a Graduate Council ad hoc committee assigned to write a summary report synthesizing key findings, commendations and recommendations for the unit under review. The ad hoc committee includes a representative assigned from the Undergraduate Council if the department/program under review offers undergraduate degrees. A period of at least one month is provided for the ad hoc committee to complete its summary report.
9. All Graduate Council members are given the program review summary report, together with supporting documents. The Graduate Council discusses, amends, and approves the report.
10. The approved Graduate Council summary report is forwarded to the department chair/program director and college dean for review. Chairs/directors are expected to distribute the report to faculty and staff. The chair/director is requested to inform the Graduate School of any factual errors in the report in addition to providing an outline of proposed actions to address review recommendations. Chairs/directors are requested to submit their response within one month of receipt of the summary report.
11. A wrap-up meeting is held with the cognizant senior vice president, department chair/program director, college dean, and Dean and Associate Dean of the Graduate School to discuss program review recommendations. A memorandum of understanding is created that outlines proposed actions, responsibilities and timelines for implementing the review recommendations.
12. The Graduate Council summary report and memorandum of understanding are approved by the cognizant senior vice president and president and then forwarded to the Academic Senate, Board of Trustees and State Board of Regents as information items. Chairs/directors are expected to distribute the summary report and memorandum of understanding to faculty and staff.
13. At the request of the Graduate School, the department chair/program director submits periodic progress reports following the conclusion of the review. A formal follow-up meeting may be held with the chair/director and Dean and Associate Dean of the Graduate School between 7-year reviews if there are unexpected difficulties that impede progress toward addressing recommendations, if new issues are raised, or if clarification is needed.

Nominating Potential Reviewers

External Reviewers

The unit under review should supply the Graduate School with a list of seven potential external reviewers. They should be faculty members from other universities who are recognized scholars and educators in the fields under review. Please consider gender, racial/ethnic, and age diversity when suggesting potential reviewers. Also, please report any prior or current connections with potential reviewers that may raise concerns about reviewers' impartiality. Note that the Graduate School, not the department or program, invites reviewers to participate. The Graduate School also may select reviewers not on the department/program list. The Graduate School will provide the names of the external reviewers to the department chair/program director as soon as the review team has been formulated.

For each reviewer nominated, briefly describe the qualifications (i.e., relevant academic and professional experience) that make this person an appropriate site visitor for your unit. In order to avoid overlap and ensure appropriate coverage of the programs under review, specify the person's principal area of scholarly activity in terms of the areas represented by the unit being reviewed (e.g., history of the American West, organic chemistry, environmental geology).

Internal Reviewers

The unit under review should supply the Graduate School with a list of seven potential internal reviewers. Internal reviewers should be tenured or tenure-track faculty members and should not be based in the same college as the department or program being reviewed. Please consider gender, racial/ethnic, and age diversity when suggesting names. Effort should be made to avoid nominating colleagues who have a conflict of interest (such as adjunct appointments in the unit under review); report any prior or current connections with potential reviewers that may raise concerns about reviewers' impartiality. The Graduate School will provide the names of the internal reviewers to the department chair/program director as soon as the review team has been formulated.

Program Self-Study

The self-study is prepared by the faculty of the unit under review and is both descriptive and evaluative; it provides basic information on the nature of the department or program and gives the faculty's assessment of the unit's strengths and weaknesses. A self-study is the faculty's opportunity to scrutinize itself, to publicize its accomplishments, examine its flaws, and demonstrate how it is viewed by its peers. A self-study should lead reviewers through the following three questions:

- What do you do?
- Why do you do it?
- How well do you do it, and what is the measure of your success?

PDF versions of the self-study are e-mailed by the Graduate School to external and internal reviewers. Units under review may produce hard copies of the self-study for their own use or to keep for their records.

While the self-study is intended to be a thorough analysis of the unit under review, it should be concise enough that the important points are accessible to reviewers. Some supporting materials could be available for on-site review rather than be included in the self-study (e.g., brochures, newsletters, handbooks, teaching evaluations, etc.).

The following outline is a suggested organization for the self-study. It is not an exhaustive list and individual programs (for example, interdisciplinary programs) may depart from the suggested format and/or include additional information where appropriate. Wherever possible, data should be provided for the period since the last Graduate Council review (normally seven years).

1. Program Overview

1.1 Program mission and organization

Include an introduction to the department/program, its purpose, organization and history.

1.2 Program planning (centerpiece of the self-study)

Include goals of the program, strategic or long-range plans. Include areas of teaching, research, or public service in which the program regards itself as especially outstanding and areas of teaching, research, or public service in which the program would like to improve. Give an outline of intended changes in the scope and/or direction of undergraduate or graduate education (new degrees, shifts in organization, new areas of specialization), and the resources at your command to make those changes.

1.3 Previous review and actions

Provide narrative on actions taken since the last review. Include the Graduate Council summary report from the last review, as well as any follow-up reports submitted, as appendix items. The Graduate School can provide this information.

1.4 Department/program profile

Include department/program profile, which is available from the Office of Budget and Institutional Analysis (OBIA) and includes information on faculty headcount; numbers of students and student credit hours; number of degrees granted; and department/program financial information over a seven-year period. It is the department's responsibility to check the data provided by OBIA for accuracy and to inform OBIA of any revisions that need to be made. The department/program should also provide narrative interpretation of the profile if appropriate.

2. Faculty

2.1 Faculty profile

Provide information on the number of faculty (tenure-line; career-line, including clinical, lecturer and research; and adjunct, visiting and emeritus; full-time and part-time); faculty hired or retired during the past seven years, or no longer with your program; average age by rank.

2.2 Faculty diversity

Describe the diversity of your faculty (gender, race/ethnicity) over the last seven years or since the last review. Describe efforts to achieve increased diversity by hiring strategies and procedures and discuss how successful those efforts have been since the last review. Please be specific, i.e., list specific places you have advertised/announced open positions to target diverse populations.

The University Diversity Committee strongly recommends that, prior to the preparation of the self-study, representatives from departments/programs on Main Campus meet with staff in the Office for Equity and Diversity, and that representatives from departments/programs in Health Sciences meet with staff in the Office of the Associate Vice President for Health Equity & Inclusion to discuss the unit's track record with respect to achieving diversity and to develop future plans for maintaining or achieving success in this area.

In addition, the University Diversity Committee has asked departments and programs to pay careful attention to the following suggestions as they prepare their self-study:

- Break out the gender and racial/ethnic composition of faculty according to rank.
- Identify *trends* during the period (typically 7 years) under review.
- Be explicit in drawing a distinction between *international* faculty, and faculty from *underrepresented minorities* in the United States in describing the character of your unit, as well as your efforts aimed at increasing both these populations.
- In addition to the composition of those actually hired (where known), include the racial and gender composition of the faculty applicant pool for any positions that were filled in the period under review.

- Provide a context in which to understand the nature of your unit's data by providing information on the disciplinary field as a whole. The Office of Budget and Institutional Analysis will provide this information from the national Survey of Earned Doctorates.

2.3 Faculty teaching

Provide a summary of recognition, awards, indicators of successful teaching. Include policies and practices in place to encourage and recognize good teaching. Describe participation in General Education, Honors, and other university-wide programs.

2.4 Faculty scholarship

Provide a summary of faculty research, scholarship, or creative activity; individual productivity; sources and distribution of external and internal funding; quality measures, peer assessments. Provide narrative about the funding levels in your discipline necessary to keep a productive scholar functioning. Include policies and practices in place to create opportunities for scholarly growth. Upon request, the Graduate School can provide schematics from the Academic Analytics database on overall faculty productivity within the program.

2.5 Faculty service

Provide a summary of faculty involvement in university, professional, and community service. Include policies in place to recognize service. Provide narrative about how the department/program is impacted (positively and/or negatively) by its service components.

2.6 Faculty review and promotion

Include a copy of the college or department Retention, Promotion and Tenure (RPT) or Faculty Appointment, Review and Advancement (FARA) guidelines, as applicable, with date adopted. Provide a table showing all cases, with outcomes, considered since the last Graduate Council review. Describe any faculty mentoring procedures you may have in place.

2.7 Faculty vitae

Include as an appendix item separate short-form (3-5 page maximum) vitae for all tenured and tenure-track faculty. In addition, provide short-form vitae for career-line, adjunct, or visiting faculty who provide significant training or mentoring for students. Vitae should include education and summary of training, honors and awards; other academic achievements that indicate a faculty member's academic stature; courses taught; current research; and selected publications and/or artistic presentations. You may wish to limit the content of faculty vitae to include activities and publications in the current review cycle (last seven years), plus particularly noteworthy achievements from previous years.

3. Students/postdocs

3.1 Student/postdoc recruitment

Describe methods employed in recruiting, evaluating, and admitting both undergraduate and graduate students. What practices do you employ to retain students in your undergraduate and graduate student body? Is there a central mechanism to recruit postdoctoral fellows? If so, describe.

3.2 Student/postdoc diversity

Describe the diversity (gender, race/ethnicity) of the students and postdocs in your department or program over the last seven years or since the last review. Describe efforts to recruit underrepresented students and to achieve appropriate diversity among your student body and discuss how successful those efforts have been since the last review. Please be specific, i.e., what University programs/organizations have you used to target diverse populations. As applicable, provide similar information for postdoctoral fellows.

The University Diversity Committee strongly recommends that, prior to the preparation of the self-study, representatives from departments/programs on Main Campus meet with staff in the Office for Equity and Diversity, and that representatives from departments/programs in Health Sciences meet with staff in the Office of the Associate Vice President for Health Equity & Inclusion to discuss the unit's track record with respect to achieving diversity and to develop future plans for maintaining or achieving success in this area.

In addition, the University Diversity Committee has asked departments and programs to pay careful attention to the following suggestions as they prepare their self-study:

- Provide a breakdown of the gender and race/ethnicity of undergraduate majors and pre-majors as well as that of graduate students.
- Identify *trends* during the period (typically 7 years) under review.
- Be explicit in drawing a distinction between *international* students, and students from *underrepresented minorities* in the United States in describing the character of your unit, as well as your efforts aimed at increasing both these populations.
- Provide a context in which to understand the nature of your unit's data by providing information on the disciplinary field as a whole. The Office of Budget and Institutional Analysis will provide this information from the national Survey of Earned Doctorates.

3.3 Student admissions

Describe restrictions, if any, that are imposed on admission to your undergraduate major. Assess the impact of the restricted major on your program. Provide information indicating the quality of graduate students admitted to the program. A useful table would include averages of GPA, GRE or similar exam scores. It may also be useful to include the names of institutions where students were undergraduates.

3.4 Student/postdoc support

Describe methods and levels of support for graduate students (distinguish between Teaching Assistants, Research Assistants, Graduate Fellows, and Graduate Assistants). Provide the number of graduate students and postdocs who have applied for and received funding from competitive internal funding as well as external fellowships (e.g., NIH, NSF, or other external funding agencies). List scholarships and other financial support for undergraduates.

3.5 Student advising

Describe academic advising practices for undergraduate majors and minors and graduate students in the program. Assess the efficiency and effectiveness of your academic advising. Include written policies for handling student appeals. List the date of the last update to the Graduate Handbook and, if possible, provide a link to this document.

3.6 Teaching assistant (TA) training

Describe programs to prepare and train TAs in the art of effective teaching. Include TA orientation, ongoing support and supervision, and TA evaluation. Describe additional measures, if any, taken to assist international TAs with communication skills.

4. Curriculum and Programs of Study

4.1 Degree and certificate requirements

List all degrees, degree requirements, certificates, and program specialties in the program. If known, provide date of Regent approval for degree/certificate programs. List any online degree or certificate programs (where at least 50% or more of the curriculum is offered online). Provide a table showing numbers of degrees granted since the last review, by year, for each degree and certificate offered by the program (please break down degrees by transcribed emphasis, if applicable). In addition, indicate whether any degrees or certificates are currently inactive or suspended and whether steps have been taken to discontinue these programs.

4.2 Courses offered

List all the courses offered in the program, including online courses. Providing a link to course descriptions in the General Catalog is acceptable.

Include the program's curricular management plan as an appendix. This includes "(i) an internal curricular decision-making process, and (ii) a schedule and procedure for conducting periodic curricular review." (from University Policy 6-001). See <https://curriculum.utah.edu/> for additional guidance.

- 4.3 Programs of study
Give typical programs of study for bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees. For the bachelor's degree include typical course sequences for the various program specialties offered in the program, where possible by semester and year. For the master's and doctoral degree programs, copies of representative candidacy and program of study forms could be used.
- 4.4 Professional development for students/postdocs
Describe program efforts to provide training in professional development and professional ethics and standards for undergraduates, graduate students, and postdoctoral fellows (where applicable).
- 4.5 Outreach education
Describe the unit's efforts to deliver education programs at sites remote from the central campus. What technologies are available to assist in your outreach programs? What is the relationship between outreach offerings and programs and the unit's overall instructional program, goals, and mission? What credits are accepted from outside providers; what is the contractual and oversight relationship to faculty, curriculum, and credit?
- 4.6 Qualifying exams
Give the program policy for qualifying exams for master's and doctoral students. Provide copies of questions for the last five qualifying exams. How do students perform on your qualifying exams? Give numbers of passes, fails, and retakes. Student responses should be kept in the department/program as exhibits for possible examination.
- 4.7 Theses and dissertations
Tabulate all master's theses and doctoral dissertations completed since the previous Graduate Council review (normally the last seven years). Include the following: name of student, master's or doctorate, year of completion, name of principal faculty supervisor, title of thesis or dissertation. Also include abstracts of five recent dissertations and five recent theses.

5. Program Effectiveness – Outcomes Assessment

Each educational unit has an obligation to plan carefully its courses of instruction. This planning should include developing faculty approved program learning outcomes, assessing the effectiveness of the educational program in terms of program learning outcomes, and making improvements in the program revealed by the assessment process. Departments may refer to the Office of Learning Outcome Assessment website at www.ugs.utah.edu/learning-outcomes-assessment/ in preparing information for this section. This website includes information submitted by departments regarding learning outcomes and assessment plans for all undergraduate and graduate degree programs on campus.

5.1 Learning outcomes assessment procedures

Include the unit's learning outcome assessment plan. The plan should include both direct and indirect measures of the unit's effectiveness. Indirect measures may include, but are not restricted to, the following: (a) student information (recruitment, quality of students, retention, graduation rates), (b) alumni satisfaction and loyalty, and (c) employment and/or employer satisfaction measures. Direct measures of the unit's effectiveness may include, but are not restricted to, the following: (a) program learning outcomes assessment reports, (b) mid-program assessments, (c) end of program assessment (standard exam, capstone experience, exit interviews).

List the dates of any interim or 7-year learning outcome assessment reports that have been completed by the department/program since the last Graduate Council review. Include copies of these reports in the appendix. For guidance on this process see <http://learningoutcomes.utah.edu>.

5.2 Outcomes assessment feedback

Provide specific examples of how the assessment activities have been used to improve teaching and learning in the unit. Of particular interest would be descriptions of the entire assessment feedback loop as depicted in the unit's written assessment plan (see www.ugs.utah.edu/learning-outcomes-assessment).

5.3 Degree completion data

Provide a table indicating graduate degree completion/attrition data for the period since the last review.

5.4 Employment

Provide statistical information and data, where available, on the present and projected job market for degree recipients and for further graduate or professional study.

6. Facilities and Resources

6.1 Operating budget issues

Assess the budget adequacy with respect to the program's mission.

6.2 Physical facilities

Describe the ways in which physical facilities in the unit encourage or limit the educational objectives of the program. In what ways do they fail to meet the unit's needs?

6.3 Libraries

Describe the program's general and special requirements for library resources in order to meet its educational and research objectives. Indicate ways in which the present library resources satisfy and do not satisfy these needs.

- 6.4 Centers, institutes or bureaus associated with the program
List any centers, institutes or bureaus that are directly administered by the department or program under review, or with which the unit is otherwise involved. Briefly describe the relationship between the unit under review and its centers, institutes or bureaus (with regard to governance, funding, faculty appointments, curriculum, or administration of any academic programs).
- 6.5 Technology
Provide a general description of computing, technology, networking, and IT support services in the unit. Assess whether this infrastructure sufficiently supports the program.
- 6.6 Staff support
Describe the existing staff support for your educational and research missions, including a description of gender and racial/ethnic diversity among the staff. Address issues that may be of concern to the staff in terms of morale, workload, or participation in department/program administration.

Scheduling External and Internal Reviewer Site Visits

Coordination

The Graduate School coordinates travel arrangements for the site visits, which are usually about a day and a half long for external reviewers, with the visitors arriving the evening before the visit and usually departing mid-afternoon or evening of the second day of the site visit. The internal team visit is generally conducted in one day. It is the unit's responsibility to schedule the meetings described below, with the exception of the final exit meeting for external reviewers, which is scheduled by the Graduate School. Exit meetings are not held with the internal review team. Departments should prepare external and internal site visit schedules based on the general guidelines in this handbook. Modifications to the sample itineraries provided in this handbook may be necessary based on the individual needs of the unit under review. If needed, departments/programs may consult with review teams in advance of the visits to coordinate the site visit schedules.

Visits with Students/Postdocs

Some of the most helpful meetings are those with students. These meetings often take place over lunch or during a coffee/refreshment hour. Separate meetings with undergraduates and graduate students are desirable. After the visitors are introduced and the review process explained, faculty members should leave so that students feel free to discuss issues that either they or the site visitors bring up. If the department/program has postdoctoral fellows, a similar meeting with them is recommended.

Visits with Faculty Members

Depending on the size of the faculty, two or three meetings might be desirable so that most faculty will have a chance to express their opinions. It is generally helpful for tenured and nontenured faculty to meet separately. It is also helpful to have meetings with career-line and/or adjunct faculty, particularly if they play central roles in education within the department.

Visits with Department/Program Staff

The external and internal review teams should have opportunities to meet with department/program staff.

Visits with Department Chair/Program Director and College Dean

Sufficient time should be scheduled for the site visitors to meet with the head of the academic unit. The unit also should schedule a meeting between the external and internal reviewers and the dean of the respective college. Because site visitors will usually have questions from their conversations with students and faculty, time for this visit with the dean should be saved for rather late in the schedule.

Visits with Graduate School Dean, Associate Dean, and Members of Graduate Council

The site visit for external reviewers ends with an exit interview in the Graduate School. The exit interview is attended by the Dean and Associate Dean of the Graduate School and by the Graduate Council ad hoc committee charged with writing the final summary report. Exit meetings are not held for internal review teams.

An Extra Note on Hospitality for Reviewers

It is helpful to have a faculty member serve as a local host who will pick up external reviewers at their hotel, escort them to their first meetings each day, arrange return transportation, and lend general assistance over the two days. Lavish entertaining of the site visitors is not expected or encouraged. Faculty members often go out to dinner with external reviewers; however, reviewers may also appreciate the opportunity to have dinner alone as a team in order to discuss review business. The internal review teams generally require only lunch on the day of the site visit. The Graduate School will reimburse meal expenses for the reviewers only (the Graduate School will provide information about processing reimbursements). If faculty members wish to go out to dinner or lunch with the visitors, the individuals or unit under review are responsible for faculty expenses. The Graduate School cannot make reimbursement for alcoholic beverages.

Sample Site Visit Schedule for External Reviewers

Wednesday, November 1

Evening Reviewers arrive and take taxi to University Park Marriott Hotel.

Thursday, November 2

7:30 a.m. Department Chair meets review team at hotel coffee shop for breakfast and overview of site visit and brings them to campus.

8:45 a.m. Meet with Department Executive Committee - conference room

9:30 a.m. Meet with faculty group 1* - conference room

10:30 a.m. Meet with faculty group 2 - conference room

11:30 a.m. Pizza lunch with undergraduate students – department lounge

12:30 p.m. Committee meets to review notes – conference room

1:00 p.m. Meet with graduate students** - conference room

2:00 p.m. Meet with faculty group 3** - conference room

3:00 p.m. Break

3:15 p.m. Tour of facilities

4:00 p.m. Committee meets to review notes – conference room

4:30 p.m. Department provides transportation back to hotel

6:00 p.m. Dinner with 1-2 department faculty, or review team meets for working dinner

(Cont'd next page)

* Separate meetings should be set up for tenured, nontenured, and career-line/adjunct faculty.

**Depending on unit, postdoctoral fellows could have a separate meeting (potentially instead of a third faculty group) or be combined with graduate students.

Friday, November 3

- 7:30 a.m. Member of faculty meets review team at hotel for breakfast and brings them to campus
- 8:45 a.m. Meet with department staff – conference room
- 9:30 a.m. Committee meets to review notes – conference room
- 10:00 a.m. Meet with College Dean - Dean's office
- 11:15 a.m. Exit meeting with department chair
- 12:00 p.m. Exit meeting and box lunch with Dean and Associate Dean of the Graduate School and members of the Graduate Council – 302E Park Building
- 1:15 p.m. Graduate School provides transportation to airport

Sample Site Visit Schedule for Internal Reviewers

Tuesday, November 7

- 8:00 a.m. Meet with department chair – conference room
- 8:30 a.m. Meet with department executive committee – conference room
- 9:00 a.m. Meet with faculty group 1* – conference room
- 10:00 a.m. Meet with faculty group 2 – conference room
- 11:00 a.m. Break
- 11:15 a.m. Meet with department staff – conference room
- 12:00 p.m. Pizza lunch with undergraduate students – department lounge
- 1:00 p.m. Committee meets to review notes – conference room
- 1:30 p.m. Meet with graduate students** – conference room
- 2:30 p.m. Meet with faculty group 3** – conference room
- 3:30 p.m. Break
- 3:45 p.m. Meet with College Dean – Dean’s office
- 4:30 p.m. Tour of facilities/exit meeting conducted by department chair

*Separate meetings should be set up for tenured, nontenured, and career-line/adjunct faculty.

**Depending on unit, postdoctoral fellows could have a separate meeting (potentially instead of a third faculty group) or be combined with graduate students.

Guidelines for External and Internal Reviewers

The task of the external reviewers is to formulate objective judgments of quality and effectiveness of undergraduate and graduate programs, and to determine where the program fits in the discipline regionally, nationally, or internationally. This evaluation is concerned primarily with the quality of education actually achieved by students and includes, but is not restricted to: overall quality and direction of the program; an assessment of the quality of faculty, students and the existence of policies and practices in support of them; curriculum offerings and program options; program effectiveness and outcomes assessment; and the adequacy of staff support, physical facilities, library resources, equipment, research facilities and the program budget.

The internal committee provides judgment on program quality and governance from the viewpoint of colleagues at the University of Utah. Internal committees also are encouraged to focus their attention on questions concerning the relationship of the department/program under review with the goals of other programs on campus, as well as with the goals of the total university.

The primary task of both external and internal reviewers is to single out those features of the program that merit special commendation, and to make recommendations about situations where there is room for improvement. Put simply: "What is the program doing very well?" and "What could the program do better?" Evaluations of these questions should be included in the sections of the reviewers' reports titled II Commendations and III Recommendations (see report format on p. 24).

Reviewers' investigations and subsequent reports should address issues pertinent to the following topics listed in the program self-study:

1. Program Overview

- 1.1 Program mission and organization
- 1.2 Program planning
- 1.3 Previous review and actions
- 1.4 Department/program profile

Issues to be addressed include: the program's mission statement and organization and its suitability for the future; the scale of the program in terms of the number and quality of the faculty, students, staff, facilities, and other resources; assessment of departmental leadership; the extent of well-defined policies supported by concrete goals and intermediate objectives and methods of assessing progress toward those goals and objectives; balance between teaching, research, and service; adequacy of salaries and fringe benefits to attract and retain outstanding faculty and staff; and program response to recommendations made in the previous Graduate Council review.

2. Faculty

- 2.1 Faculty profile
- 2.2 Faculty diversity
- 2.3 Faculty teaching
- 2.4 Faculty scholarship
- 2.5 Faculty service
- 2.6 Faculty review and promotion
- 2.7 Faculty vitae

Issues to be addressed include: the numbers of faculty and diversity of faculty interest for the undergraduate and graduate programs offered; the gender and racial/ethnic diversity of the faculty and efforts to achieve appropriate diversity by hiring strategies and procedures; policies and efforts in the recruitment, retention, and promotion of underrepresented minority faculty; the concern for, and performance in, teaching at all levels of the program; the general scholarly quality of the faculty compared with that of other leading colleges and universities in the country; publication records of faculty in monographs and refereed journals; record of external funding where appropriate; effectiveness of faculty performance evaluation, including tenured faculty review; suitability of review and promotion guidelines; faculty mentoring; faculty morale.

3. Students/Postdocs

- 3.1 Student/postdoc recruitment
- 3.2 Student/postdoc diversity
- 3.3 Student admissions
- 3.4 Student/postdoc support
- 3.5 Student advising
- 3.6 Teaching assistant (TA) training

Issues to be addressed include: quality of undergraduates, graduate students and postdocs; efforts to recruit underrepresented students/postdocs and to achieve appropriate diversity among the student/postdoc body; admission standards (too low? too demanding?); financial support for students/postdocs; undergraduate and graduate student academic advising practices; appropriate training of teaching assistants; student input into the decision-making process in the program; completion rate of programs within normal time limits; opportunities for student-faculty exchange; student/postdoc morale; and need for the program as indicated by (a) employers who hire graduates, (b) prospective students of high ability who apply for admission into the program, (c) knowledgeable persons who urge that well-prepared practitioners or researchers and new research findings and/or improved professional practice in the field are needed by society.

4. Curriculum and Programs of Study

- 4.1 Degree and certificate requirements
- 4.2 Courses offered
- 4.3 Programs of study
- 4.4 Professional development for students/postdocs
- 4.5 Outreach education
- 4.6 Qualifying exams
- 4.7 Theses and dissertations

Issues to be addressed include: diversity of curriculum offerings to allow for a broad range of educational experiences and for specialization in the major subdivisions of the discipline; program requirements (courses, graduation requirements, graduate qualifying examinations) compared with other leading universities in the country; instructional methods and innovations (including distance or online degree programs); training of teaching assistants; training in professional development and ethics; guidelines for thesis and dissertation completion; supervisory committee guidelines and operation.

5. Program Effectiveness - Outcomes Assessment

- 5.1 Learning outcomes assessment procedures
- 5.2 Outcomes assessment feedback
- 5.3 Degree completion data
- 5.4 Employment

Issues to be addressed include: processes (and data that come from these processes) for assessing educational programs using both direct and indirect measures of the unit's effectiveness: Indirect measures may include, but are not restricted to, the following: (a) student information (recruitment, quality of students, retention, graduation rates), (b) alumni satisfaction and loyalty, and (c) employment and/or employer satisfaction measures. Direct measures of the unit's effectiveness may include, but are not restricted to, the following: (a) program learning outcomes assessment reports, (b) mid-program assessments, (c) end of program assessment (standard exam, capstone experience, exit interviews). How have the department's assessment activities been used to improve teaching and learning in the unit? Of particular interest would be descriptions of the entire assessment feedback loop as depicted in the unit's written assessment plan (see www.ugs.utah.edu/learning-outcomes-assessment). Other issues to address include graduate degree attrition/completion rates for the period since the last review, as well as present and projected job market for degree recipients.

6. Facilities and Resources

- 6.1 Operating budget issues
- 6.2 Physical facilities
- 6.3 Libraries
- 6.4 Centers, institutes or bureaus associated with the program
- 6.5 Technology
- 6.6 Staff support

Issues to be addressed include: budget adequacy with respect to the program's mission; How appropriate are physical facilities (classrooms, office space, laboratories, study and lounge space), libraries, and computer facilities in terms of instructional, research, and service goals of the program? How do any centers, institutes or bureaus associated with the program affect the academic and research goals and operation of the program? In what ways is staff support adequate or inadequate to support the educational mission of the program? Are there significant issues among staff with regard to morale, workload, or staff participation in department/program administration?

Report Format for External and Internal Reviews

The most useful reports for the Graduate Council, and for program and administrative heads, are those containing specific suggestions for improving the program. External reviewers should concentrate on remarks that relate the unit being reviewed to national norms and peer groups elsewhere. Internal reviewers should concentrate on the functioning of the program in comparison with practice within the University of Utah. It is particularly useful to receive descriptions of "good practice" external to, and within, the University of Utah that would alleviate problematic practices that are uncovered in the review process.

Reports should be submitted within one month of the site visit. The length of reports is not prescribed; reports received in the past vary in length between 5 and 10 pages.

Part I: General

Part I should contain detailed observations, comments and discussion, organized into the six topics listed below:

- Program overview
- Faculty
- Students/postdocs
- Curriculum and programs of study
- Program effectiveness - outcomes assessment
- Facilities and resources

Because a Graduate Council ad hoc committee charged with preparing a synthesis of the multiple reviewer reports will assemble most of the background information concerning the program from the self-study document, reviewers need not write extensively in this section. However, it is important to provide a context for understanding commendations and recommendations.

Part II: Commendations

Part II should enumerate commendations. What is the program doing very well? And in what areas has the program made significant recent progress that also deserves commendation?

Part III: Recommendations

Part III is reserved for one set of recommendations that would improve any aspect of the program. These recommendations may be addressed to the program participants (students, faculty, staff), to program administrators, to the Graduate School, or to the university administration. Documentation on specific recommendations that are known to have been effective elsewhere are especially welcomed. Note: External and internal reports are distributed widely among faculty and administration. As such, it is generally inappropriate to name specific individuals in a critical manner.