

Guidelines for External Reviews Administrative Departments and Programs

Purpose

The primary purpose of regularly scheduled external reviews is to illuminate how departments can improve their administrative programs. Thus we assume that the goals of scheduled departmental reviews are to provide:

- Regular opportunities for information gathering, reflection, and evaluation of the department's effectiveness, thoroughness, and currency.
- Systematic input for deciding institutional resource allocation and planning.
- Opportunities to bring External Reviewers to campus to learn more about Whitman College and to share their knowledge of best practices.

While important, decisions about increased institutional support should be subordinated to the larger aim of improving department effectiveness.

Process and Logistics

Each department will be reviewed approximately every seven to ten years, with the provision that timing can be adjusted to maximize participation of department members.

Each review should take approximately three months from start to finish, with two departments typically reviewed during each year.

External Reviewers

The Department head will submit an initial list of names to the appropriate Vice President for consideration as External Reviewers. The Vice President will select two to three Reviewers using the list as guidance, but may select Reviewers of his or her own choosing. The Vice President will invite one of the External Reviewers to be the Chair of the External Review Committee.

Two of the External Reviewers should come from similar (or higher ranked) liberal arts institutions. At least one External Reviewer should come from a liberal arts institution with a reputation for innovative or highly successful programs in the administrative area to be reviewed, and one reviewer should come from an institution located outside the Pacific Northwest region. Whenever possible, one or more of the reviewers should be individuals with whom the Director of the department under review is not well acquainted personally.

External Reviewers will be contracted to participate in advance of their visit to campus. They will be compensated for their work after their report is received by the Vice President, and be reimbursed for least-cost air travel, lodging, and food expenses.

Internal Liaison

The Director of the department will serve as the Internal Liaison for the review process. The Internal Liaison has several responsibilities, including:

- Serving as a liaison between the Vice President, the External Reviewers, and the Department.
- Conferring with the Vice President to help shepherd the review process, including the Department Self-Study (see below) and the Departmental Response to the External Reviews' Report (see below).
- Answering substantive questions from External Reviewers before they arrive on campus, as well as during and after their visit.
- Coordinating logistical arrangements for the External Reviewers.

The Internal Liaison is not considered a reviewer, but is rather a consultant to the review process, a provider of institutional context to the External Reviewers, and a helpful discussant in the preparation of review materials.

The Internal Liaison is responsible for coordinating the review process and will supervise the preparation of materials for the review process. The responsibilities of the Internal Liaison include:

- Ensuring that all materials for the Departmental Self-Study and Charge to the Reviewers are properly assembled.
- Ensuring that all department members are involved in the conceptualization and preparation of the Department Self-Study.
- Coordinating and hosting the External Reviewers' site visit; making available departmental self-study materials and an overview of Whitman College for the Reviewers' examination.
- Ensuring that the Departmental Response to the Review Report is submitted on time.

The Review Chair will work with the Internal Liaison to facilitate these procedures.

Departmental Self-Study and Supporting Materials

The Internal Liaison shall be responsible for coordinating the Departmental Self-Study, the Charge to the Reviewers, and for gathering the supporting materials. These items will be submitted to the External Reviewers before the site visit. The Self-Study materials will include:

- Detailed responses to the Self-Study Questions (see Appendix B).
- Report of staffing in department.
- Departmental budgets for the past two years.
- A profile of Whitman (see link in Appendix C), and a summary of the College's mission, institutional climate, and unique attributes.
- A description of the department's mission, culture, goals and challenges.
- The Department should include a Charge to the Reviewers, which should include questions or specific issues they would like the Reviewers to address. Please see Dennis Hopwood for samples of focus questions for the Charge.

Relevant materials should be sent to each of the External Reviewers in advance of their arrival.

External Review Visit

Within a predetermined time-line, a site visit will give the External Reviewers the opportunity to meet in an initial interview with the President of Whitman College, then with all department staff, individually and as a group; tour facilities; meet with the Vice President, Internal Liaison, and key "customers" of the department (students, staff, faculty, etc). Time will be built into the schedule for their own discussion and writing.

External Reviewers' Report

Within four weeks of the campus visit, the External Reviewers will submit a written evaluative report to the President, the appropriate Vice President and the Director of the reviewed department. The report should provide an evaluative perspective of the department. The report should focus on the department as a whole and refrain from making judgments about individual staff members.

The report should address, but not be limited to, the following items:

- The strengths and weaknesses of the department.
- The range, depth, balance, and currency of the department's offerings compared to departments in similar colleges.
- Ways in which the department can continue to serve the College as a whole.
- Changes the department could make in order to improve the program on short (1-2 year) time-line.

- Changes that the department could make in order to improve the program on long (8 year) time-line.
- Responses to the questions posed by the department being reviewed.

The report should reflect the collective judgment of the External Reviewers. However, if a consensus opinion is not possible, the report should present the individual members' judgments with justifications.

Post Review Procedure

Following the External Review, several procedures will be followed to ensure that information from the review is used effectively by both the Department and the College.

- After the External Reviewers' Report is received by the Vice President, honoraria are sent to the Reviewers.
- The Vice President reviews and then sends the Reviewers' Report on to the Department for consideration and response.
- The Department will have eight weeks to send to the Vice President a written Departmental Response to the External Reviews' Report that provides short term and long-term goals and a time-line for the changes it plans to implement. Specific requests for additional resources from the College may be made at this time.

President Notification

The President will receive copies of all formal reports in the review process including the Department Self-Study, the External Reviewers' Report, the Departmental Response, if needed, and any additional follow-up reports.

Appendix A

Department Self-Study

This template is meant to provide guidelines for writing your department's self-study. Although you will need to describe many aspects of your program, the primary focus of the self-study should be less about *description* and more about *analysis, appraisal, and assessment*.

Goals

What are the goals of the department? How do those goals contribute to the mission of Whitman College?

Governance

Describe how the department is governed. How are responsibilities allocated among individual staff members? How are department decisions made?

Assessment

What evidence does the department have that it is meeting its goals?

Staffing

Describe the staffing in the department.

Support

How have new technologies affected the department? Are there new technologies that the department would like to incorporate into future goals?

Are there adequate support staff and physical facilities (e.g., technology, resources,) for the department to realize its goals?

Appendix B

Sample Itinerary for External Reviewers' Visit to Campus

Wednesday

Afternoon	Arrival of External Reviewers
Early Evening	Dinner for External Reviewers, Internal Liaison, and Department members (leaving time for the External Reviewers to get together after the dinner).

Thursday

8:00am	Breakfast with Vice President to receive charge and discuss institutional context.
9:15am-11:00am	Meetings with individual staff members. Review department's supporting materials.
11:00am-11:45 am	Meeting with Department Director.
11:45am-1:00pm	Lunch with students. Each of the External Reviewers will have lunch with several students.
Afternoon	Tour of campus and department facilities, continue meeting with staff if necessary. The Internal Liaison will be available to meet with or assist Reviewers as needed.
Evening	Committee has dinner by itself; works on the report

Friday

8:00 a.m.	Reviewers have breakfast as a group.
9:15am-11:00am	Follow-up meetings with staff or administrators as necessary.
11:00am-12:00noon	Debriefing session with Vice President and Internal Liaison.
Afternoon	Reviewers depart. (Written report due within one month.)

Appendix C
Profile of Whitman College

See 'External Reviews (Admin)' link on Whitman College HR site, under 'Faculty Staff' tab.