

B. ISU Academic Program Review: Policies and Procedures

B.1. Self-Study Criteria: Hallmarks of an Effective Self-Study Process

In the past, program review often focused on the "status" of a program: did the program make efficient use of resources, was course content appropriate, did faculty efforts in research represent sufficient quality and quantity? While such concerns are still addressed, academic program review procedures should also encourage a *forward-looking and strategic planning purpose for the review*. Self-study committees and review teams are encouraged to focus the program review process toward eliciting well-designed and agreed-upon action plans for the future development of the academic program.

An effective self-study process:

- Promises to have an impact beyond the review team visit. Highly effective self-study processes produce findings and recommendations that the unit, department, college, or university should address.
- Focuses on the purpose of improving teaching and learning
- Builds on existing and ongoing self-evaluation processes. A well-designed self-study builds on what is already in place and makes use of data that already exists. Programs are encouraged to reference existing electronic documents as resource materials. Programs are encouraged to work with the Office of Institutional Research, the Parks Library staff, and the Information Technology Services office to gather relevant information.
- Will clearly and concisely demonstrate achievement of the three core criteria. The length of the document (excluding appendices) should **not be more than 20 pages**. Examples of appendices would include;
 - a roster of faculty and staff,
 - a one-page vita summary for faculty members, and
 - existing reports (e.g., strategic plan, student outcomes assessment reports).
- Explicitly addresses strengths and weaknesses to promote a focus on needed changes.
- Is a joint effort of all program members and participants – faculty, students, staff, and others contributing to the program.

B.2 Core Criteria: Mission, Program Quality and Preparing for the Future

Mission: The self-study should describe how the program is fulfilling its mission. There is a clear philosophy and focus on instructional, research, and outreach programs. The program self-study discusses how goals and objectives are linked to the university mission and strategic priorities, and includes strategies for further developing the program.

The following statements serve as specific examples that a program might present in addressing this criterion:

- The program mission is clearly articulated and aligns with the college and university missions and strategic priorities.

- The program's decisions are mission-driven (e.g., curriculum, enrollment, faculty activity, research).
- The program meets university-wide curricular needs.
- The program strives to improve its standing within the discipline and in national standing.

Program Quality: The self-study should provide information that reveals the program's efforts to develop and offer a high quality education for students through a curriculum that is relevant, rigorous, current, and coherent. Materials should be included that systematically examine the quality of the curriculum, instruction, and support services in helping students achieve intended learning outcomes. The self-study should include descriptions of faculty contributions to quality, including teaching, research, and outreach excellence.

Specific examples of how a program addresses this criterion might include the following:

- The program's student learning outcomes and assessment results that inform changes in curriculum, pedagogy, instructional resources, and student services.
- The program's efforts to enhance student learning, promote research excellence, and serve constituents' needs.
- Innovations that enhance research and teaching effectiveness.
- Peer comparison that offers quality benchmarks.
- Interrelationships of the instructional program with other programs at ISU and perceptions of quality outside of program.
- Activities and ways the program contributes to making the university a desirable place to learn and work.
- Possible indicators of quality include
 - Teaching, research, and outreach awards
 - Refereed publications, citations, and patents
 - Juried exhibitions, invited lectures, shows, and recitals
 - Prestigious positions and invited memberships
 - Productivity indicators such as SCH/FTE, publications/FTE
 - Placement of graduates
 - Student retention, average time to completion, and graduation rates
 - Results of student exit interviews, alumni surveys, and employer surveys
 - Results of faculty-designed and other assessments of student learning

Planning for the Future: The self-study should articulate ways in which instructional, research, and outreach programs might be changed or improved within currently available university resources. The allocation of resources and processes for planning should be applied to the mission, improve the quality of education, and respond to future challenges. The self-study should include information on how the program seeks to maximize the use of its human and material resources.

The following examples could be included to address this criterion:

- Program planning documents in order to reflect current and future trends
- Program processes that address effective environmental scanning
- Program efforts to maintain effective systems for collecting, analyzing, and using institutional information

- Feedback loops that are used to support continuous improvement of learning
- Planning processes that are linked to budgeting processes

B.1.3 Optional Foci

While programs should address the same core evaluation criteria (i.e., Mission, Program Quality, and Preparing for the Future), the program review guidelines also encourage a review process that addresses the specific needs of a program. Examples from previous reviews include;

- reviewing organizational structure,
- reviewing curriculum to determine currency and relevance,
- examining capacity and commitment to engage with constituencies, and
- exploring the feasibility of new program development.

Colleges/programs are encouraged to discuss optional foci during the annual review of the Program Review schedule and participating programs for the next academic year. This focus should be discussed with the Associate Provost for Academic Programs.