

**ACADEMIC PROGRAM REVIEWS**

**POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

**2007-2008**

**OFFICE OF GRADUATE STUDIES**

**NEW MEXICO HIGHLANDS UNIVERSITY**

## Schedule of Program Reviews

### **2007-2008**

#### School of Education

- Counseling and Guidance
- Curriculum and Instruction
- Education Administration
- Special Education

#### School of Business

- Business Administration

### **2008 - 2009**

#### College of Arts and Sciences

- English
- Media Arts & Computer Science
  - Computer Science
    - Networking Technology
    - Computer Graphics
    - Cognitive Science
  - Media Arts
    - Digital Audio and Video Production
    - Design Studies
- Applied Chemistry
- Life Sciences
- Psychology
- Human Performance and Sport
- Public Affairs
  - Political and Governmental Processes
  - Historical and Cross-Cultural Perspectives
- Southwest Studies
  - Anthropology
  - Hispanic Language and Literature
  - History/Political Science

### **2011 – 2012**

#### School of Social Work

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### Acknowledgements:

The following policies and procedures manual is based on material taken from the Arizona State University Policies and Procedures Manual for Academic Review and from the Policy Statement on Academic Review of Graduate Programs as issued by the Council of Graduate Schools.

## Introduction

Regular program review provides each academic program with an opportunity to evaluate its strengths and weaknesses. The primary purpose of program review is the improvement of each program by evaluating the following areas:

- the mission of the program and how it relates to the mission of the institution
- the curriculum of the program and how it relates to the program and institution mission
- the contribution of faculty and staff to the mission of the program and the institution
- the assessment of student learning outcomes
- physical facilities
- the comparison of the program to other programs at peer institutions

The self-study should be a broad-based examination of the program's strengths and weaknesses, its goals, its plans for improvement, and its strategy for assessment.

**The Assessment of Learning Outcomes.** Outcomes assessment is conducted within the context of the program's teaching, research/creative, and service activities, and is a continuous process. The results of the initial assessment will be applied to future curricular goals and program planning.

## General Procedures

If the program to be reviewed is accredited, the review is usually done as part of the accreditation process. All other programs will undergo a program review once every five years.

1. **Notification of the Review.** Twelve months before the review, the Office of Graduate Studies will notify the dean and chair(s) of the academic program that a review has been scheduled.
2. **Appointment of the Self-Study Committee.** In the late summer before the academic year of the self-study, the dean and/or chair(s) of the academic program should forward to the Office of Graduate Studies the names of the faculty members (3-6, depending on size of unit) who will be responsible for organizing and conducting the review process and preparing the self-study report. The committee will work with the dean and/or chair(s) of the academic program, who is (are) ultimately responsible for the self-study and review.

3. **Self-Study Orientation Meeting.** The self-study committee will meet with the dean and/or chair(s) of the academic program and representatives from the Office of Graduate Studies, and Academic Affairs to be formally charged with review task. A timeline for the review will be established. Also at this time, data on students, sponsored research admissions, alumni, and various aspects of the unit's productivity and effectiveness during the past five years will be available from the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Research.
4. **Preparing the Self-Study.** All faculty members should participate in the self-study. To this end, once the report is in draft form it should be distributed to all faculty for their comments. The participation of enrolled students, alumni, and professional staff should also be solicited.
5. **Submitting the Self-Study.** The self-study, with an executive summary, should be forwarded to the dean of the academic program, who reviews it and forwards it to the Office of Graduate Studies. Once the representative of the Office of Graduate Studies has reviewed and approved the report, it is then distributed to the following people: one for the Graduate Council representative, one for University Outcomes Assessment officer, one for the academic program, one for the academic program dean, and one for the Office of Graduate Studies.
6. **Graduate Council Representative's Departmental Visit.** Within 30 days of receiving the report, the graduate coordinator will contact the Graduate Council representative to schedule a meeting with the faculty and graduate students of the academic program to discuss the report.
7. **Graduate Council Evaluation.** After visiting with faculty and students in the academic program, the Graduate Council representative will present a report on the program review to the Graduate Council.
8. **Wrap-Up Meeting.** After all parties have reviewed the report, the graduate coordinator and administrators will meet to discuss the self-study and the graduate coordinator's response. The graduate coordinator's report will serve as the basis for discussion, and the supervising dean will have an opportunity to respond to the graduate coordinator's recommendations.
9. **Response to the Wrap-Up Meeting.** Within thirty days of the wrap meeting, the supervising dean will submit a brief action statement outlining steps to be taken based on the review. The statement will be forward to the Dean of Graduate Studies, who will then distribute it to all other administrators.
10. **Permanent Record of the Program Review.** The self-study and the respective reports of the graduate coordinator and the supervising dean will be considered permanent records of the review. A summary report prepared by the Dean of Graduate Studies will be forwarded by the Vice President of Academic Affairs to the University President and the Board of Regents.
11. **Follow-Up Meeting.** A twelve-month follow-up meeting will be scheduled to examine the progress made by the academic program in response to the review.

## Reviews of Accredited Programs

The guidelines from the accrediting association usually replace "Section III "Description of the Academic Program" of the outline of the self-study. However, Parts I, II, IV, V,

and VI should be included in the self-study report even if they are not required for accreditation. Program reviews are perhaps less quantitative and more reflective than accreditation reviews.

## **The Self-Study Report**

### **Introduction**

The self-study is a comprehensive written report that is prepared by an academic program scheduled for a program or an accreditation review. The self-study is an overview of the current status of the academic program based on its programs, activities, and achievements since its last program review. Strengths and weaknesses in curriculum and instruction; student quality; learning outcomes; faculty contributions in teaching, research/creative activities, and service; resource availability and needs; and special features or services provided by the unit. The self-study is also the means by which the academic program maintains an ongoing plan for the future. The self-study should include mechanisms for solving problems, building on existing strengths, and taking advantage of future opportunities.

The graduate coordinator of the academic program conducting the self-study initiates the process by submitting a list of the faculty members who will be responsible for gathering the appropriate information, analyzing the data, and preparing the text of the self-study report. The Office of Graduate Studies staff provides the self-study faculty members with information obtained from the university data bases for the following items:

- data on graduate student admissions (number of applicants, number accepted, number enrolled, test scores of accepted versus denied students).
- summary data on funded proposals that went through the Office of Research and Sponsored Projects
- addresses of graduate students enrolled in the program
- budget and enrollment data from the academic program

### **Guidelines for Preparing an Effective Self-Study**

The self-study document incorporates the above-listed items as well as other information that the contributing faculty members think is relevant. Although the allocation of resources is an important consideration, the primary purpose of the self-study is not a budget request. The report is more likely to be viewed as useful if it reflects original and creative thinking about the future of the discipline. The resource allocations are most usefully discussed in developing future budget scenarios. As an example, what could the program accomplish if:

- there was a 3-5% increase in support,
- support remained the same,
- there was a 3-5% decrease in support,
- there was a significant increase in support?

Program reviews have the following characteristics:

- They occur on a five-year cycle (unless accreditation reviews intervene).
- They are evaluative, not just descriptive. They are more than just data collection and meeting minimum criteria; program reviews require academic judgments about the program, students, curriculum, resources, and future directions.
- They are forward looking. While assessment of current status is important, improvements are of greatest concern.
- Units are evaluated on academic criteria - strengths and weaknesses - rather than on financial and political criteria.
- They result in a public and objective process.
- They are independent of any other type of review (although they may precede an accreditation review).
- They result in action.

Following is a list of questions for the self-study committee to consider for program reviews:

- Is the academic program advancing the state of the discipline or profession?
- Is the teaching or training of students useful/effective?
- Where applicable, is the program responsive to local and national demands for personnel?
- Does the program meet the institution's goals?
- Does the program respond to the profession's needs?
- How is the program assessed by the experts in the field; by people in the community; and by students?
- Does the program reflect the national norms in the discipline?

Additional suggestions:

- **Documentation.** The report should be data-based. Data should be interpreted and evaluated, not just included in the document.
- **Tone.** The report should be constructive.
- **Objectiveness.** The report should feature an honest examination of the program's status and opportunities.
- **Perspective.** Program needs should be addressed with appropriate attention to priorities and future plans.
- **Accuracy.** Before submission the report should be checked for factual errors by someone other than the author of the document.
- **Utility.** Program reviews are time-consuming exercises; therefore every effort should be made to ensure that the full benefit of the process will be derived from the effort.

## **Suggested Outline for Program Review Self-Study**

- I. Brief History of the Academic Program Including the Current Mission Statement**

Include previous administrative affiliations, dates new degree programs were established, significant additions to the faculty, and major changes in the orientation or thrust of the graduate program.

## **II. Findings and Recommendations Made during the Previous Review**

Specify the date and type of previous review. Briefly outline the major findings and recommendations of the previous review and the unit's responses to them. What were the strengths and weaknesses of the unit? Did the faculty and administration agree with the recommendations? What actions were taken as a result of the recommendations?

## **III. Description of the Academic Unit**

### **A. Programs Offered by the Academic Unit**

Name and briefly describe each academic degree program included in the review. Verify against current catalog copy. Include concentrations and areas of specialization offered under the major and the purpose and scope of each program.

### **B. Resources**

1. Present Personnel
  - a. Tenure-track faculty  
List by rank, including date of hire, tenure status, highest degree earned, graduating institution, and areas of expertise or research interest.
  - b. Academic professionals  
Describe how the academic professionals contribute to the unit's mission.
  - c. Nontenure-track full-time faculty (lecturers, instructors)  
Describe the unit's use of visiting faculty and full-time, nontenure-track faculty in the instructional and research programs.
  - d. Part-time faculty  
Describe the unit's faculty associates, part-time faculty, and graduate students in instructional and research programs.
  - e. Staff  
List and describe staff support positions, including administrative or research assistance, secretarial, technical, and student advising.
  - f. Students  
Describe your current students using data such as SAT or GRE scores, GPAs, and retention rates. If available, data from previous years should be included. Give the number of minority versus non-minority students.

2. Physical plant and equipment  
Briefly describe classroom and office space, studios, labs AV equipment, libraries, computers, etc., that contribute to the success of the unit.
3. Other resources  
Describe community resources, joint programs, affiliated centers, partnerships, cooperating institutions, etc., that contribute to the unit's programs.
4. Recruitment and retention  
Describe how students are recruited and what kinds of orientation, advising, and mentoring efforts are made to help them to remain in good academic standing.
  - Do students have access to computers and to study, office, and lounge space?
  - Does the academic program help students obtain financial support such as research or teaching assistantships, tuition waivers, student travel grants, privately sponsored scholarships, or assistantships through funded research?

### **C. Instructional Programs**

1. Curriculum  
Describe the unit's graduate degrees and how they differ. Which ones are research degrees? Which ones are professional? State the unit's philosophy of curriculum for each degree and tie it into the description of the graduate program in the Graduate Catalog. Explain how the unit's philosophy is reflected in the students' programs of study. Demonstrate how the curriculum is related to the unit's specified educational outcomes
2. Effectiveness and productivity  
Use supporting data to analyze the program's success. Demonstrate the degree to which the program's specified educational outcomes are being achieved. The unit could include measures such as academic records of entering students (undergraduate institutions, grade point averages, test scores, etc.), results of a survey measuring the satisfaction of graduates or present students, and comparisons to similar programs offered by peer institutions. Provide information on the number of graduate scholarships and teaching assistantships. Include information on time-to-degree and attrition. Show the number of degrees completed, with data on entrance to advanced degree (doctoral) programs; and show postdoctoral and career placements using data from alumni/employer surveys. What kinds of careers are

graduates pursuing? Provide information on the achievements of present students and recent graduates, including major performances, exhibitions, or publications that have resulted from their work. Discuss the success of the program in preparing students for the work place.

3. **Interdisciplinary Programs**

Briefly describe any interdisciplinary programs in which the unit participates. How is the interdisciplinary program integrated with the degree of programs offered by the unit? What is the extent of unit participation? How many faculty members are involved? What other resources are contributed by the unit?

**IV. Faculty Contribution to the Unit and the University Mission**

- A. The unit's written statements on policies, procedures, and philosophy of faculty assignment and performance evaluation, including the role of teaching, research/creative activities, and service in the unit's overall mission. It is essential to emphasize that the three activities are integrated activities within the overlapping spheres of faculty responsibilities.
- B. Each faculty member should prepare a one-page personal statement describing his or her role within the unit. A five-page (maximum) activity report will be prepared by each faculty describing his or her contributions to the success of the unit during the last seven years or since the last program review. Each unit should have a consistent format for summarizing the teaching, research/creative activities, and service contributions - preferably the one used by the unit during the annual performance reviews.
- C. A departmental report from the graduate coordinator or departmental chair that summarizes the unit's contribution to NMHU's mission; highlights the national distinctions of the program in teaching, research/creative activities, and service; and explains the role of various faculty in accomplishing these goals. This report should emphasize faculty productivity over the previous seven years.
- D. Résumés should be included as a separate attachment. Faculty should be encouraged to alter the format of their résumés so that teaching and service contributions are documented in a manner analogous to the documentation of publications, grants, and other research activities.

**V. Goals and Objectives**

- A. **Immediate and Long-Range Problems to Overcome**
- B. **Opportunities for Development**
- C. **New Degree Programs**

Describe graduate programs that the unit plans to offer in the future. Indicate whether the program is still in the "idea" stage or whether planning authority has been granted. When would the unit like to initiate the program? Is the program a research-oriented or professional one? How does it complement existing programs? Are necessary resources currently in place or will additional faculty and/or facilities be needed?

**D. Future Personnel Needs**

Briefly describe the unit's projected needs or desires in each of the above categories. In five years, what would be the ideal mix of students? What would be an ideal number of faculty and staff? Information from a unit growth and development plan or a mission statement could be adapted for this section.

**E. Long-Range Goals and Strategic Plan for the Unit**

**F. Specific Activities Leading to Attainment of Goals**

## **Appendices**

### **A1. Procedures for Graduate Council Representatives on Program Reviews**

The Graduate Council representative should be an observer of process throughout the review. Following are four tasks that the Graduate Council representative should perform.

1. Evaluate the self-study.
2. Provide discussion and feedback to the academic program being reviewed.
3. Provide a written and verbal report to the Graduate Council.

To accomplish the four listed tasks, the Graduate Council representative should:

1. Receive a copy of the self-study.
2. Schedule two meetings with the academic program, one with the faculty and one with the students within 30 days after the visit. The format of these meetings should be an open discussion of the process, as well as a discussion of the recommendations of the site visitor's report, followed by a question/answer period.
3. Submit a written report to the Graduate Council about the review and the overall process.

### **A3. Wrap-Up Session Strategy Report**

Department Chair/Graduate Coordinator

The unit chair should prepare an outline and written response to the Program Review Report as follows and submit them to the Office of Graduate Studies and the supervising dean one month before the wrap-up session is to take place. The following is a suggested outline for the wrap-up session:

#### Introduction

Identify, interpret, and respond to major strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities discussed in the consultants' report.

#### Specific Issues to be Addressed

Issue 1 (identify issue)

Proposed Action, Expected Outcome

Cost/Resource Implications

Source of Funds/Resources

Benchmark and Time Line for Solution

Issue 2 (identify issue)

Proposed Action, Expected Outcome

Cost/Resource Implications

Source of Funds/Resources

Benchmark and Time Line for Solution

#### Additional Information

List and discuss any other changes and developments in this program that are related to the site visitors' reports.

#### **A4. Program Review Twelve-Month Follow-Up**

After the program review wrap-up session, a follow-up is conducted to evaluate the progress toward action items agreed to in the wrap-up session. The action statement prepared following the wrap-up session should guide the agenda at the follow-up session.

##### **Written Report**

The follow-up session that facilitates evaluation of progress toward the agreed-upon actions will proceed as follows:

The Office of Graduate Studies will inform the department chair of the need for follow-up and will ask that a date be set. Attached to this memo will be a copy of the consultants' report, the academic unit administrator's response to the wrap-up session, and the supervising dean's response to the wrap-up session.

At the follow-up session, the administrator of the academic unit will be asked to address action item from the wrap-up session and the responses to it.

After the follow-up session, the Dean of Graduate Studies will send a memo to the administrator of the academic unit summarizing the discussion at the meeting. Copies of the memo will be sent to the supervising dean and the Provost.

A5. Checklist for Program Reviews

Academic Program

- \_\_\_\_\_ Recommend self-study committee to Office of Graduate Studies
- \_\_\_\_\_ Attend orientation meeting (early fall)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Complete self-study (Dec.)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Schedule faculty meeting to discuss review
- \_\_\_\_\_ Send written report to wrap-up session to Office of Graduate Studies
- \_\_\_\_\_ Attend wrap-up
- \_\_\_\_\_ Review actions to be taken by supervising dean
- \_\_\_\_\_ Attend twelve-month follow-up

Supervising Dean

- \_\_\_\_\_ Attend orientation meeting in the fall
- \_\_\_\_\_ Prepare supervising dean's questions
- \_\_\_\_\_ Approve self-study (Dec.)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Attend wrap-up session
- \_\_\_\_\_ Write action statement discussed at wrap-up session
- \_\_\_\_\_ Twelve-month follow-up

Graduate Council Representative

- \_\_\_\_\_ Read self-study
- \_\_\_\_\_ Meet with academic program faculty/students
- \_\_\_\_\_ Report to Graduate Council

Office of Graduate Studies

- \_\_\_\_\_ Notify unit of review
- \_\_\_\_\_ Consult with unit chair to appoint self-study committee
- \_\_\_\_\_ Conduct orientation session
- \_\_\_\_\_ Approve self-study
- \_\_\_\_\_ Select Graduate Council representative
- \_\_\_\_\_ Schedule review for agenda of Graduate Council
- \_\_\_\_\_ Schedule wrap-up
- \_\_\_\_\_ Coordinate final record of program review
- \_\_\_\_\_ Schedule twelve-month follow-up