

Program Specific Accreditation

Procedure

Prior to Self-Study

- I. Program specific accreditation is a voluntary quality assurance process in which a field of study is reviewed by an external group of peers against standards established by the discipline to ensure that the education offered is of high quality.
 - a. The procedure relates to initiation of accreditation in a program of study that has not previously been accredited or a program pursuing reaffirmation in a program previously accredited.
 - b. The University is interested in pursuing accreditation in those instances in which attaining accreditation is advantageous to the University or required for students to work in the field.
- II. Prior to beginning work on a specialized accreditation, the discipline's area coordinator must check with the chair of the department and the dean of the college. The dean will check with the Provost to ensure that the University is interested in attaining the particular programmatic accreditation.
- III. The self-study coordinator will submit an accreditation plan and year by year cost estimate to the chair of the department and dean. The dean and the Provost will develop a budget item for the accreditation.
- IV. Once the accreditation and the funding are approved, the dean will make sure that the area coordinator and any faculty members who will be working on the self-study attend the one or more meetings of the disciplinary accrediting organization.
- V. If this is the first time that the self-study coordinator has worked with the accrediting organization or the self-study coordinator is uncertain about the nuances of the accreditation requirements, the dean will locate and fund a consultant knowledgeable about the accreditation and accrediting organization from funding for the accreditation.
 - a. Ideally, the consultant will have participated in the accreditation process as both a self-study director and as an accreditation visitor or executive in the accrediting organization.
 - b. The consultant will initially review the program and make recommendations for changes necessary for accreditation.

- c. The consultant will be available to answer questions for the program, the Provost, the dean, Director of IRPE and will review the self-study for acceptability.
 - d. The Authorization for Professional Services form must be signed by the Provost who must approve the hiring of all consultants
 - e. All consultant correspondence and reports must be filed with affected dean and the Office of IRPE
- VI. Prior to beginning the self-study, the self-study coordinator must notify the Director of Institutional Research, Planning, and Effectiveness (IRPE) of the proposed accreditation process with the plan and timeline for the accreditation.

Developing and Submitting the Self-Study

- VII. Information for the self-study that can be obtained from the university's database can be requested from the Director of IRPE
- a. Please allow about a week for the data to be returned to the program.
 - b. Be specific about the type of information needed and the number of semesters or years to be included.
- VIII. During the early drafts and as the self-study is being completed, the Director of IRPE is available for consultation on data or other questions.
- IX. Once self-study is completed, it must be sent to the Provost, the dean, the consultant, and the Director of IRPE at least one month prior to the submission date.
- a. The Provost, dean, the consultant, and Director of IRPE will review the report for readability, clarity, and adherence to the accrediting standards.
 - b. The Director of IRPE will also furnish additional information available from the university database as needed.
- X. All reviews will be completed no later than one week prior to the submission deadline.
- a. The self-study director will review the comments and will make the agreed upon changes as indicated.

- b. The self-study will be reproduced by the self-study coordinator and submitted along with any required fees as required by the accrediting agency.
- c. A copy of the self-study must also be sent to the Director of IRPE.

Preparing for the On-Site Visit

- XI. The self-study director will check the dates when the President, Provost and dean are available prior to agreeing to dates for the on-site visit.
- XII. The self-study director will notify the Office of the President, the Provost, the dean, and the Director of IRPE of the dates for the onsite review by the accreditation team as soon as the dates become available.
 - a. The self-study director will submit an itinerary for the site visit to the President's Office, the Provost, the dean and the Director of IRPE as soon as it is available.
 - b. Once the site team is appointed, self-study director will notify the Provost, the dean, and the Director of IRPE of the names and institutional affiliations of each of the onsite team members.
 - c. The self-study coordinator will work with the team chair to coordinate arrangements for the visit. Arrangements for a work room, accommodations, meals, snacks, transportation, guides, and appointments with on-campus groups and individuals need to be made as soon as practicable.
 - d. The self-study coordinator may contact the Director of IRPE for help in making the necessary arrangements.
 - e. Arrangements for mock visits must be coordinated with the department head, dean, Provost, and Director of IRPE.
 - f. During the site visit, the self-study director will keep the Provost, dean and Director of IRPE informed about issues of concern that arise during interviews conducted on or off campus.
 - g. The exit conference will normally be attended by the President, Provost, dean, chair, Director of IRPE and faculty as arranged with the site team chair.

Reports to the Accrediting Agency

- XIII. Once the site visit is completed, the self-study coordinator will send a copy of the site team report to the Provost, the dean, and the Director of IRPE along with information about the due date for any allowable response to the report.

- a. Any progress or monitoring reports should be submitted to the Provost, the dean and the Director of IRPE (and the consultant as needed) for review two weeks prior to their deadline dates with the agency.
 - b. The Director of IRPE will supply information from the university database as needed.
 - c. The review will be completed and returned to the self-study director for any changes that need to be made several days prior to submission.
- XIV. Once accreditation is acquired, the self-study director will keep the Director of IRPE informed of any additional reports required by the accrediting agency.
- a. The Director of IRPE will assist with any information needed from the university database.
 - b. The Provost, dean, and Director of IRPE will review the reports prior to submission.
 - c. A copy of all reports will be kept in the Office of IRPE.
 - d. Notify the Director of IRPE of the next due date for the self-study or maintenance report required for continuation or reaffirmation of accreditation.

Academic Affairs Procedure
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Director
Office of Institutional Research, Planning, and Effectiveness