

Guidelines for Department or Program Self-Study with External Review

Self-study with external review at the University of Richmond is intended to provide both internal and independent assessments of each unit's (department, program or other academic unit)¹ operations, curricular needs, and strategic direction, and to inform short- and long-term planning. Reviews will commence with a departmental self-study that builds upon and/or updates previous internal reviews. External reviews complement departmental self-assessments by inviting individuals from peer institutions to share their perspectives and to provide advice on the department's use of resources and future direction. The composition of the external committee will be determined in consultation with the Office of the Provost and the department. The Provost's Office will provide funding, and the provost and school deans will support departmental efforts to gather information and host reviewers. Each academic unit should have an external review once every ten years.²

General Timetable

The timeline for reviews is established by the Office of the Provost in consultation with deans, department chairs and program coordinators, and will be available to relevant planning bodies within each school. In the inaugural year, departments scheduled for review will be informed early in the Fall semester. In subsequent years, departments will be informed in the spring semester that they are scheduled to begin their review in the following academic year.

A self-study with external review is usually a year-long process. The department will complete its self-study in one semester and the external review committee will visit and complete its report the following semester. The department will offer a response to the external reviewer's report.

The Self-Study Report

The department determines the scope and content of its self-study in consultation with the dean and provost regarding particular areas of emphasis. There is no fixed format for the self-study, however all reviews should address each of the following points:

- the department's goals and aspirations for its curricular and co-curricular programs and for its faculty, majors and minors, and staff;
- the department's contribution to the general education of UR students, including the department's relationship to other UR departments and programs;

¹ In this document, the term "department" will be used to indicate an academic department, program, or other academic support unit.

² For some units and schools, external reviews are occurring regularly through normal accrediting body processes in that area.

- resource considerations, including: student demand for courses and applied learning experiences (e.g.: research, internships, community-based projects, and performances), anticipated enrollment changes, staffing, funding, space and equipment requirements; and
- efforts through scholarship, pedagogy, and service to align with the values and goals of the University's strategic plan: student growth, pursuit of knowledge, inclusivity and equity, diversity and educational opportunity, ethical engagement, responsible stewardship, alumni engagement, and academic excellence. (For reference, see [https://strategicplan.richmond.edu/.](https://strategicplan.richmond.edu/))

A department may also find it useful to consider the history, design, structure, and intended outcomes of its curriculum.

The self-study report should include an appendix with or links to faculty CVs, course syllabi, enrollment statistics, historical financial reports, and, to the extent possible, the accomplishments of alumni. See the Appendix an outline and *List of Materials for the Department or Program Self Study*.

(The Provost will collect data indicated in the adjoining excel document, *Metrics for the Department or Program Self Study and External Review*.)

Those preparing the self-study will naturally consult with colleagues in their department, senior and junior, so that the document reflects as broad a discussion and consensus as possible. Departments may also wish to consult students, alumni, and UR faculty in departments across the university.

The self-study report should be completed and shared with the dean and the provost at the end of the semester. Approximately three weeks prior to the scheduled on-site review, the provost will send to the external reviewers the set of self-study materials described above.

External Reviewers

The Office of the Provost will work with the dean and the department to collaboratively assemble a team of external reviewers, with the final composition determined by the provost.³ The department will nominate up to four reviewers. The provost will select one to two reviewers from the department list, and through consultation with peer institutions, may identify one or two additional reviewers.⁴ The provost will seek the input of the department before making final selections. Typically, the external review team will select its chair.

³ The review team is typically comprised of two to three members, dependent on the size and complexity of the department.

⁴ Nominations should include a brief rationale and disclose any professional or personal relationship.

The On-Site Visit

The provost's office will work with the department to create a detailed schedule for the on-site review. The Office of the Provost will provide logistical and financial support for the external review committee.

- The external review team will first meet with the provost's office and department chair or program coordinator.
- During the course of the visit, the external reviewers will meet individually and in small group settings with the department's faculty, staff and students.

Final Report Distribution and Department Response

The external review team provides a report to the provost and department chair or program coordinator summarizing the strengths and challenges of the department and its recommended action plan. The external review team's report is normally due to the provost within a month following the on-site review. The report will be shared with the department, which will submit a response to the provost within an agreed timeframe following receipt of the report. Both the final report and the department response are then distributed by the provost and the dean, relevant university leaders, and planning bodies within each school.

Appendix: List of Materials for Department or Program Self Study

Table of Contents

Mission and vision statement

Introduction to the Program:

Departmental/Program efforts to align with the values and goals of the University of Richmond strategic plan <https://strategicplan.richmond.edu/>

Listing of faculty and their expertise

Administrative and departmental/program support personnel

Department/program educational goals

Department/program scholarship goals

Department/program service goals

Overview/summary of teaching, scholarly and service activities within the program within the last 5 years

Departmental/program governance structure

Information related to teaching:

Curriculum/program review

Major and/or minor requirements

Contributions to the general education curriculum

Contributions to programs outside of the unit

Enrollment pressures last 5 years

History of curriculum development

Innovative teaching highlights (team, interdisciplinary and innovative practices)

Numbers of minors and majors

Course scheduling, student demand for courses

Average teaching loads

Trends in course enrollments (last 5 years)

Course descriptions

Approach for evaluating non-tenure track (NT) and adjunct faculty

Student professional development, opportunities and awards (last 5 years)

Assessment practices

Departmental/program advising loads

Graduating student/alum accomplishments (last 10 years)

Information related to scholarship:

Faculty research descriptions

Student mentoring opportunities (research, internships, community-based projects, performances)

Faculty and/or student presentations at meetings last 5 years

Faculty and/or student coauthored publications/books last 5 years

External funding last 5 year

Internal funding last 5 years

Departmental/program awards

Resources:

Space and facilities

Library holdings

Technological resources

Materials that could be included in appendices:

Faculty CVs

Course syllabi

Historical financial reports

Enrollment statistics