Indiana University of Pennsylvania
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

Guidelines for the Review of Graduate Programs

Spring 2011

The Council of Graduate Schools "is the only national organization in the United States that is dedicated solely to the advancement of graduate education and research." It has been an active organization for more than 40 years. Its membership includes over 500 universities in the United States and Canada, and 16 universities outside North America. IUP is a longstanding member of this organization. Collectively, these member institutions annually award more than 95 percent of all U.S. doctorates and over 78 percent of all U.S. master's degrees. The Council of Graduate Schools has published a book listing guidelines for assessing and reviewing graduate programs, and the section entitled, "BEST PRACTICES IN THE SELF-STUDY DOCUMENT" in this document is based on recommendations in this book.

BASIC CONCEPTS:

1. It is hard to disconnect a graduate program from an undergraduate program; the same faculty may be involved in undergraduate and graduate programming. The department may emphasize one over the other.
2. The review is for self improvement. It is not to be used as a weapon to eliminate programs, nor is it to extract money or positions from Administration.

REVIEWS SHOULD BE:

1. A 360 degree view- internal and external to department, college, university, and relevant stakeholders.
2. Data driven.
3. Focused on the past and the future. At least a third of the document should be about the future.

A GARMIN AS AN ANALOGY FOR A REVIEW:

1. A Garmin provides a map to get you where you want to go. The self-study should do the same.
2. There are many different paths to the same destination. Why are you choosing your path over others? Why did you eliminate other paths?
3. Is everyone else going to the same place (not good)?
4. When will you get there? How will you know?

BEST PRACTICES IN THE SELF-STUDY DOCUMENT:

The self-study document is the central piece of the review, and it can make or break a review. It is important! Some length suggestions are given below for some sections; you may exceed these if you wish. They are provided to indicate that a self-study does not have to be long to be effective. ***You will get out of this self-study what you put into it.*** A good self-study can guide your program's development over the next five or more years. It is worth doing well.

1. Its contents should include (most important items to submit are in **bold**)…
    a. Vision and Mission statement(s).
    b. **Program type:** face-to-face, blended, fully online, off-campus, other.
    c. Program's Purpose. A few short sentences.

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d. **Program's uniqueness**: Why should a prospective student choose your program over other, competing programs? A few sentences.
e. **Organizational chart**: listing faculty and the staff involved in graduate education.
f. **Department size:** FTE of graduate faculty and staff. Number of master's and doctoral students, degrees awarded over time, portion of the departmental budget used for graduate education, amount of grants, gifts, and scholarships used to support graduate education. Choose any five of the seven variables. Just displaying the data is sufficient.
g. Research and scholarly accomplishments of the faculty <u>and</u> graduate students. A brief summary, not an exhaustive list.
h. **Faculty contributions to the graduate program:** Graduate students/graduate faculty ratio, average thesis or dissertation load. A table or chart, or a few sentences.
i. The program's learning outcomes. A few sentences.
j. **Surveys**- possibilities include surveys of alumni, current students, prospective students who did not attend, and employers. At least one survey should be included.
k. **Graduate student profile:** No. of applications per year versus number enrolled, GPA of entering students and their standardized test scores, student characteristics (gender, ethnicity, % international), average time-to-degree, and percentage dropout rate. All of these should be listed as trends over time. A table or chart, or a perhaps a bulleted list.
l. **Professional development opportunities:** Percentage of graduate students participating in internships, workshops, and professional society or other such meetings. A table or chart, or a perhaps a bulleted list.
m. Financial support for graduate students: Number of GA positions over time, percentage of students with financial aid, percentage of students on scholarships. A table or chart, or a perhaps a bulleted list.
n. **SWOT analysis** of the program, in relationship to competing programs. Perhaps two pages.
o. **Assessment of facilities, equipment, and financial support for the program**. Perhaps 1-2 pages.
p. **Profiles of graduates**: Number of graduates, contributions to the profession or field. Again, not an exhaustive list but a brief summary. A table or chart, or a perhaps a bulleted list.

NOTE: The format of the self-study document is prescribed by PASSHE, so the contents above should be included in the appropriate sections of the PASSHE format. It is recommended that the graduate section be <u>separate</u> from the undergraduate section.

REFERENCES

Council of Graduate Schools website: http://www.cgsnet.org/Default.aspx?tabid=104

Baker, Marilyn J. 2005. Assessment and review of graduate programs: a policy statement. Council of Graduate Schools. Washington, DC. 35 pp.

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