



## 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, and 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.



- 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 and 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.** List the assessment of learning outcomes, the tools used, the results obtained, and the use of the assessment results for program improvement.
- 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. These guidelines are supplementary to (and do not replace) those prescribed by PASSHE. It is recommended that the graduate section be separate 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.

PENNSYLVANIA STATE SYSTEM OF HIGHER EDUCATION  
Academic Program Review Summary Form  
Board Of Governors Policy 1986-04-A

University:

Degree(s) Offered:

Division: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Last Review:

Completion Date of Current Review:



**I. Composition of Review Team**

Chair:

External Review Team Members:

Campus Review Team Members:

**II. Program Data - Insert other relevant program data related to the program review in the blank rows.**

Vision and Mission statement(s)

Program Purpose

Program Type: face-to-face, blended, fully online, off-campus, other

Program's uniqueness: Why should a prospective student choose your program over other, competing programs?

Graduate Student Profile: Number of applications per year versus number enrolled, GPA of entering students, student characteristics (gender, ethnicity, % international), average time-to-degree, percentage of dropout rate. Listed as trends over time (perhaps in a table, chart or bulleted list).

Organizational Chart: listing faculty and staff involved in graduate education




**IV. Outcomes Assessment (Board Policy 1997-01)**

**Program Outcomes:**

*Ex: Faculty and student achievements (grants, publications, awards).*

Research and Scholarly accomplishments of the faculty and graduate students (brief summary)

Program’s learning outcomes: List the assessment of learning outcomes, the tools used, the results obtained, and the use of the assessment results for program improvement

*Ex: Test scores, retention data, graduate school acceptance, employment rates, employer assessments.*

**Student Learning Outcomes:**

a. Describe how knowledge and skill outcomes are assessed.

b. Describe results of assessment cycles and resulting curriculum changes.

Professional development opportunities: Percentage of graduate students participating in internships, workshops, and professional society or other such meetings. A table or chart, or perhaps a bulleted list.

**V. Program Strengths**

*SWOT analysis*

*Assessment of facilities, equipment, and financial support for the program*

Faculty contributions to the graduate program

Graduate students/graduate faculty ratio, average thesis or dissertation load. A table, chart or a few sentences

**VI. Areas in Need of Improvement**

*SWOT analysis*

*Assessment of facilities, equipment, and financial support for the program*

**VII. Action Plan**

<b>Goals</b>	<b>Action Plan</b>	<b>Steps To Be Taken</b>	<b>Date</b>

**VIII. Comments**

Surveys: possibilities include surveys of alumni, current students, prospective student who did not attend, and employers. At least one survey should be included.

**IX. Actions Planned by the University (check all that apply)**

- Continue Program
- Place in Moratorium
- Discontinue Program
- Pursue Accreditation
- Continue Program and Revise as Indicated
- Interim Review
- Reorganization
- Other (Please explain below)

**X. Signatures**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Program Director (if applicable)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
College Dean

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Provost

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date