



**CLARK ATLANTA UNIVERSITY**  
**Office of Planning, Assessment and Research**

**ADMINISTRATIVE and EDUCATIONAL  
SUPPORT UNITS PERIODIC REVIEW:  
Guidelines and Procedures**

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# **CLARK ATLANTA UNIVERSITY**

## **Administrative and Educational Support Units**

### **Periodic Review Guidelines and Procedures**

#### **I. INTRODUCTION:**

The purpose of the periodic review of administrative and educational support units is to ensure the continuous enhancement and improvement of the units in support of the University's mission of teaching, research, and public service. Continuous improvement is facilitated when each unit, department, or program periodically assesses the quality and effectiveness of its performance in fulfilling its mission and goals; identifies areas for improving processes and/or outcomes; and develops and implements a *Plan of Action* for improvement. The periodic review of administrative and educational support units helps to ensure the achievement of institutional planning goals and objectives.

The guidelines and procedures for the periodic review of administrative and educational support units are provided to assist units in completing the periodic review process. The guidelines and procedures allow flexibility in conducting a review process that meets the unique needs and circumstances of each administrative and educational support unit at the University, including the one-person administrative department to the more complex, multifunction administrative units.

##### ***a. Cycle of Periodic Reviews***

Periodic review of each administrative and educational support unit occurs on a five-year cycle. The periodic review schedule is maintained and distributed by the Office of Planning, Assessment and Research on an academic year basis.

##### ***b. Components of the Periodic Review Process***

The periodic review process includes the following basic steps:

- Data collection and reporting by the unit undergoing review;
- Evaluation of the unit; and
- Use of results for continuous improvement.

Within the framework of required elements of the review process and the schedule of periodic review activities, the responsible senior administrator, in consultation with the unit's head administrator, determines the specificity of each step and element, and the timetable for conducting and completing the periodic review within the academic year.. Considerations should include the nature of the functions and work performed by the unit; the "*customers*" of the unit; and the type of information needed for an effective review process.

#### **II. ELEMENTS OF THE PERIODIC REVIEW**

The periodic review of administrative and educational support units must include at a minimum, the following elements:

- a. ***Broad-based involvement of personnel*** - All personnel including support staff and, if applicable, student employees, are to be involved in the review. Involvement promotes understanding of issues, appreciation of the need for change, and a sense of individual and collective purpose. These outcomes can be accomplished by making certain that each employee has the opportunity for input through meetings, surveys, interviews, or other data collection efforts, by communicating how those results were incorporated into the recommendations and review report.
- b. ***Status of Findings and Recommendations of Prior Review*** - The review should contain an assessment of the unit's status against findings and recommendations of prior internal and/or external reviews and/or evaluations.
- c. ***Status of Compliance with Governing Regulations, Professional Standards, and Internal Policies and Procedures*** - The review should contain an assessment of the unit's compliance with applicable governing regulations, professional standards, and internal policies and procedures.
- d. ***Assessment of strengths and weaknesses*** - An assessment of strengths and weaknesses are essential to a good review process. The identification of weaknesses assists the unit in identifying areas for improvement, targeting resources appropriately, and developing baseline measures to monitor progress.
- e. ***Written evaluation report with recommendations*** – The evaluative component of the review process must culminate in a written report with recommendations presented to the responsible Vice President and/or Dean and the unit. The report is written by the individual or individuals charged with conducting the evaluation of the unit. The responsible Vice President and/or Dean should be prepared to review the report, discuss the recommendations with the unit's head administrator and make determinations regarding their implementation.
- f. ***Unit Quality Improvement Plan (UQIP)*** – to ensure continuous and improvement, a Unit Quality Improvement Plan based on recommendations is a required component of the unit's periodic review.

The remaining guidelines and procedures are organized to provide further directions and suggestions for an effective review process.

### III. COMPREHENSIVE DESCRIPTION AND SELF-STUDY REPORT

The unit undergoing a periodic review should collect the documents, data, information, and materials necessary to provide a comprehensive description of the unit and how it functions to support the mission and strategic plan of the university.

#### *a. Content*

The Comprehensive Description Self-Study Report should cover the following nine content topics:

1. Unit's mission (purpose) and goals statement.
2. Functions performed and type of services provided, including examples.
3. Organizational structure of the unit within the context of the University.
4. Resources available, including staff, space, equipment and funding and a statement regarding the effective use and adequacy of resources.
5. Results of student/customer/client surveys used to evaluate services, or data collected from affected constituents to provide feedback on performance, applicable, over several planning, assessment and evaluation cycles.
6. Statement on status against findings and recommendations of prior internal or external reviews or evaluations.
7. Statement on status of compliance with applicable governing regulations, professional standards, and internal policies and procedures.
8. Analysis of the unit's strengths and weaknesses.
9. Recommendations for improvement based on findings of the Self-Study Report.

The responsible senior administrator may request additional data and analysis regarding specific problems facing the unit, as the periodic review process provides an excellent opportunity for a focused effort to resolve problem areas within the unit.

A portfolio of work samples can be included for units such as University Publications or other units where an assessment of the quality of work produced may be desirable. In such cases, an external consultant with expertise in the unit's area of specialization may be asked to evaluate the portfolio according to predetermined criteria such as design creativity, use of graphics, clarity, etc.

An assessment of the climate that describes the attitudes and perceptions of the unit's personnel in relation to the work environment are recommended as a tool for ensuring broad-based involvement, especially for very large units.

The unit is free to include any other information deemed important to the effective functioning of the unit, including policies and procedures that affect the unit, environmental factors that impact the unit's leadership and/or staff changes, etc.

The analysis of strengths and weaknesses should be a result of the careful review and discussion of documentation about the unit by its staff.

***Format***

The Comprehensive Description/Self-Study Report should be written in a narrative style and should be formatted identically with the nine (9) content topics delineated under the content section. The report should be typed in standard 12 point type and double-spaced. All pages should be sequentially numbered. A table of contents should be included showing the location of each topic in the report.

***Copies***

Four (4) copies of the final report should be made. The original and copies should be bound securely.

***Transmittal***

A cover memorandum should accompany transmittal of the self-study report to the responsible senior administrator. The original report and three (3) copies are submitted to responsible senior administrator and one (1) copy to the Office of Planning, Assessment and Research (OPAR).

**IV. EVALUATION OF THE UNIT**

The periodic review must include an evaluation procedure that involves a viewpoint outside of the unit under review. If the unit is simultaneously undergoing an accreditation or standards review for an external, professional organization or agency, then the organization or agency may serve sufficiently as an external viewpoint. The responsible senior administrator should consult with the unit's head administrator, in consideration of the unit's needs before making a decision as to the most appropriate evaluation procedure. Conducting a review process that fulfills requirements and that, at the same time, complements the normal operations of the unit is encouraged.

The responsible senior administrator, in collaboration with his or her administrator, should select one of the following evaluation procedures:

**1. *Internal Review Team (IRT)***

**a. *Composition and Appointment***

An Internal Review Team may be used to evaluate the unit under review.

The team is comprised of three to five members, of which a majority should be external to the unit. One member should come from the staff within the unit and one from the faculty, if available. The team should be representative of the areas affected by the unit's functions, services and activities. The responsible senior administrator,

in collaboration with his or her administrator, (1) appoints the members of the team, (2) names the chairs; and (3) conveys the charge to the team.

*b. Charge*

The review team receives a charge to: (1) evaluate the extent to which the unit is efficiently and successfully fulfilling its purpose and goals in support of the University's mission and strategic plan; (2) conduct an independent analysis of unit strengths and weaknesses; (3) identify areas of needed improvements; and (4) submit a written report with recommendations to the responsible Vice President or Dean and the unit's head administrative. The review team may be charged with focusing on particular areas of concern or known problems, in addition to the overall assessment of the unit's effectiveness.

*c. Procedure and Activities*

The review team considers and discusses the descriptive information provided by the unit and collects and analyzes additional information as necessary. Requests for gathering additional information and use of other analytical tools should be discussed with the responsible senior administrator and the unit's head administrator. These may include: (1) conducting interviews or focus groups with key individuals; (2) reviewing portfolios of work samples; (3) administering and analyzing surveys or questionnaires; (4) reviewing institutional reports; (5) reviewing prior review and evaluation reports, and (6) using other appropriate data collection procedures.

Based on careful examination of the data and other documentation, the review team writes an evaluation report and includes specific recommendations for enhancement and improvement. Recommended enhancements and improvements may or may not require additional resources. While the review team should consider the resources available to the unit in making recommendations for improvements, it should not omit clearly needed recommendations due to a perceived lack of resources.

*d. Final Report and Presentation to the Responsible Senior Administrator*

A final written report of the findings of the Internal Review Team will be submitted to the office of the responsible senior administrator. A draft of the report will be submitted to the unit prior to its being finalized. The unit may submit any comments or responses to the team for further consideration in finalizing the report. These comments may be incorporated into the final report by the team or they may be submitted as a separate attachment with the final report.

A meeting should be scheduled by the Chair of the Internal Review Team to formally present the final report to the responsible senior administrator. This meeting should include the Director for Planning, Assessment and Research and the unit's head

administrator. The purpose of the meeting is to present the findings and recommendations of the team's review. The Vice President and/or Dean and/or the unit's head administrator are expected to share the results of this meeting with the staff of the unit.

e. *Orientation*

An orientation for the Internal Review Team should be conducted jointly by the responsible senior administrator and the Office of Planning, Assessment and Research (OPAR).

**2. *External Consultant***

Use of an External Consultant with expertise in the area of operation of the unit may be an appropriate evaluation procedure for a particular unit. This procedure may be more costly to the unit; however, under certain circumstances an expert evaluation from an individual external to the institution is highly desirable. The responsible senior administrator will handle arrangements for contracting with the external consultant(s) to provide specified evaluation services. The charge to the external consultant(s) is the same as that of the Internal Review Team.

a. *Procedure for External Consultants*

Prior to arriving on campus, the unit provides the external consultant with its comprehensive description and self-study report discussed earlier. The external consultant reviews the documentation and develops a review plan to be implemented during a campus visit. The review plan may include collecting additional information through interviews with key individuals, focus groups, portfolio review or other appropriate data collection procedures.

b. *External Consultant's Report*

As with the review team procedure, the external consultant reviews the information and writes and submits an evaluation report including recommendations for improvement to the responsible Vice President and/or Dean and unit's head administrator.

**V. USE OF RESULTS FOR CONTINUOUS ENHANCEMENT AND IMPROVEMENT**

The results of the review process are used for improvement of the unit under review. When the review is completed, the responsible senior administrator will: (1) discuss the review findings and recommendations with the unit's head administrator; (2) in collaboration with the unit's head administrator, identify strategies to ensure improvements based on the recommendations; and (3) in collaboration with his or her administrator, approve the unit's moving forward with the department's improvement plan. The outcome of the review process should be a well-designed and agreed upon *Plan of Action* formulated by the unit for continuous improvement.

The *Plan of Action* should:

- be explicit, realistic and achievable, and reflect the mission and vision of the unit;
- include intended improvements as goals or objectives with attendant activities in a strategic and/or the unit's annual plan;
- assign responsibilities and a timetable for achieving the goals or objectives; and
- be monitored annually to report and document progress in achieving the goals or objectives and implementation of the improvement plan.

Copies of the following document must be on file in the offices of the unit under review, the responsible senior administrator, and the Office of Planning, Assessment and Research:

- Unit's Comprehensive Description/Self-Study Report
- Internal Review Team's or External Consultant's Report
- Unit's Quality Improvement Plan (UQIP)