



CLARK ATLANTA UNIVERSITY
Office of Planning, Assessment and Research

ACADEMIC PROGRAM REVIEW:
Internal Review Team (IRT) Guidelines

PURPOSE

These guidelines will assist you in carrying out your responsibilities as a member of the Internal Review Team (IRT). The guidelines describe the role of the IRT, the IRT Review process, the IRT Report, and provide other helpful information. They also provide a process for IRT members to follow while preparing to serve on the Internal Review Team, as well as during the conduct of their work on the IRT. You should read the guidelines carefully and complete the actions recommended. These guidelines should be used in conjunction with the academic unit's *Self-Study Report, the Academic Program Assessment Regulations* and the *Standards for Internal Academic Program Reviews for Schools, Departments, and Programs*.

INTERNAL REVIEW TEAM

The role of the Internal Review Team is to (1) evaluate the unit's Self-Study Report against the Standards for Internal Academic Program Review and (2) conduct additional inquiry through the review of supporting data and interviews with faculty and students. The team may utilize any other appropriate means needed to provide information by which a determination can be made as to the validity of the unit's self-assessment. The team's report should be a standard by standard evaluation of the unit's report and should include specific recommendations for improvement. Any noteworthy commendations identified in the report should also be included. This must be done in a collegial fashion and adhere to the highest standards of professional ethics and confidentiality.

You and Your Team

You have been chosen to serve on the Internal Review Team. Your team will consist of three to five members depending upon the size of the unit to be reviewed. Members should function as a team. Each member of the team is given specific assignments, but members should strive to be helpful to other team members, always alert to note and communicate information that may contribute to the findings of other team members. It is the collective judgment of the team members that forms the basis for the team's report.

You and the Chair of the Team

Leadership of your internal review team is vested in the Chair of the team. The Chair is responsible for organizing the work of the team and is your primary contact person as you prepare for and participate in the review. You should discuss with the Chair any matters of concern or problems you may encounter as you prepare for your responsibilities and perform your duties as a member of the team.

Departmental Team Member

Each team includes a member nominated from the department/school. This individual is a fully participating member of the team. She/he may be able to offer useful insight into the unit's operation, however, all questions, requests for additional information/documentation should be addressed to the unit's Chair or Dean.

Role of the Offices of the Provost, and the Office of Planning, Assessment, and Research

These offices are available to facilitate the work of the IRT. The staffs of these offices may clarify the Regulations, Standards and Guidelines, but in no case will they participate in the evaluation of the unit under review.

What Are You Trying to Accomplish

The IRT review process involves making collective, professional judgments. The team's responsibility is to provide an objective, professional judgment to the academic leadership (Provost, Dean and Chair) and the unit under review as to (a) the unit's status of compliance with the *Academic Program Assessment Review Regulations and Standards for Academic Internal Academic Reviews* and (b) the quality and acceptability of the institution's Self-Study Report. The team also provides advice on other areas of educational improvement. Your role will be to examine the unit's purposes (mission, goals, objectives), policies, procedures, programs, learning outcomes, resources and activities, etc., that relate to sections or subsections of the Regulations and Standards and then bring to the full team your findings and any proposed recommendations and suggestions. To do that, you will carefully review the unit's Self-Study Report and other documents, and talk personally with faculty and students, gathering information that will enable you to provide an equitable and objective evaluation of the unit.

What Are Your Specific Responsibilities

As a member of the IRT, you are responsible for the following:

1. You will be expected to prepare for the review by examining the unit's self-study and other materials, studying the Regulations and Standards, and becoming familiar with your role and assignment on the team.
2. You will participate in all scheduled or special meetings of the team.
3. Regardless of your specific assignment, you will be expected to provide input to the member(s) assigned to evaluate all other aspects of the review using related sections of the Regulations and Standards.
4. You will be expected to write a draft report covering your examination of the unit's compliance with the section(s) or subsection(s) of the standards and/or the programs assigned to you. A draft report must be completed by the end of the review and delivered to the Chair as scheduled. You should retain a copy of the draft for future reference and to serve as a replacement if the original is lost or destroyed.
5. You will be expected to contribute to the team's collective decisions.
6. Soon after the review, you will be sent a draft of the committee report and asked to review it and provide comments and suggestions to the Chair of your team.

Beginning Your Review Step 1

Read/study the (1) Academic Program Assessment Regulations and (2) Standards for Internal Program Reviews for Schools, Departments, and Programs (July 2012).

Suggested Step 2

Read the unit's self-study document. Its purpose is to help a unit evaluate itself, and it is used by the IRT in its review.

What Are You Looking For?

Your reading of the Self-Study Report should be focused on accomplishing your tasks as a team member and the assignment of the team.

Organizational Meeting of the Full Team

The organizational meeting will be attended by all team members. It will be your first opportunity to meet formally with the full team. Use the time to get all your questions and concerns on the table for discussion.

Function of the Organizational Meeting

The organizational meeting of the team functions as a general orientation session for all members. It provides pertinent information and consultation that may be needed to prepare team members to perform their assigned responsibilities at the desired level of proficiency. The session will include:

1. An introduction of team members and a discussion of team assignments and responsibilities.
2. A review of the role of the Chair.
3. A discussion of the self-study process and document.
4. Specific factors or information about the self-study or that are pertinent to the team's review.
5. Suggestions that will facilitate the work of the team.
6. A review of the team's schedule.
7. Instructions for writing the draft report.
8. Housekeeping and specific instructions from the Chair.
9. Clarification of any uncertainties you may have concerning your role as a team member.

Tips on Conducting Interviews

1. Understand clearly why you are interviewing the individual and how you will use the findings of your interview in your report.
2. Prepare in advance the questions to be asked.

3. Ask for additional information and materials that respond to the regulations and/or standards.
4. Ask for documentation if not already available.
5. Listen attentively and take notes. Do not trust your memory.
6. Do not focus attention on your department or program experiences.
7. Maintain an open interview style.
8. Do not discuss team business with those being interviewed.
9. Visit those interviewed in their own offices, if possible.

THE REPORT

The report of the team, while edited and compiled by the Chair, represents the collective thought of the full team. It is the process by which the team communicates to the academic leadership (Provost, Dean and Chair) and to the unit its professional judgment as to the unit's compliance with the regulations and standards and the quality and acceptability of the institution's self-study. The report should be concise and to the point.

Each member of the team, in consultation with other team members, is responsible for preparing the draft report on one or more sections or subsections of the standards and regulations and/or programs. The draft must be given to the Chair at the end of the review as scheduled. The Chair receives these drafts and edits them into a meaningful, cohesive report. Drafts of the report are sent to team members for their review and suggestions and to the unit for review for factual accuracy.

Final Report

A final written report of the findings of the Internal Review Team will be completed and submitted to the Office of the Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs no later than April 25. This report should include a set of recommendations for improving the quality of the unit's academic program as they relate to the standards. 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.

Presentation to Provost/Vice-President for Academic Affairs

A meeting should be scheduled by the Chair of the Internal Review Team to formally present the final report to the Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs. This meeting should include the Director for Planning, Assessment and Research, the Dean and the Department Chair/Program Coordinator. The purpose of the meeting is to present the findings and recommendations of the team's review. The Dean/Chair/Program Coordinator is expected to share the results of this meeting with the faculty.