Academic Program Review
Office of the Provost

External Reviewer Report Template
2024-25

Note, this is a suggested outline to help organize the report, but format may be adapted and customized as needed.

Report Goals and Overview: The goal of the External Reviewer Report is for peer experts (i.e., external reviewers) to provide feedback on the strengths and opportunity areas of the department. The report should give Northwestern leadership a sense of what is working well, what might need to be improved, and what the department should be thinking about re: strategic planning for the next 5 or so years.

Findings: Please address the review team's feedback on the department's identified Key Issues, as noted below in the report template **(see Attachment 1 below).** The main components – Faculty, Governance, Research, Education, Collaborations, and Human and Physical Resources – are further described below and may be addressed as relevant in the report. When preparing the report, you may draw on the departmental review materials and data profile as well as themes that emerge from interviews during your campus visit. The report should conclude with a list of recommendations for the Provost, Dean, and department to consider.

Recommendations: Should be action-oriented, specific as to what should be done and by whom, and time-bound. Recommendations need not be limited to parties within the department. These recommendations will help inform the post-review discussion and action planning.

Report Length: Please limit length of report to no more than 8-10 pages.

Report Recipients: The primary audience for the report is the Provost, leadership in the Provost's Office, the Dean and the department Chair. Core faculty in the department will be provided digital access to the report for 30 days, upon approval of the Dean/department Chair.

Confidential Addendum: If necessary, you may provide a confidential addendum to the main report that will be viewable only by specific individuals such as the Dean and Provost. Please consult with the Academic Program Review team members if you think this might be necessary and they will advise on next steps.

Report Timing: Due to Academic Program Review team within two weeks of the review visit. If you need additional time to complete this, please let the APR staff know. The report can be uploaded to the Sharepoint folder you have been provided. Please save and upload the document in Word format.

For any questions about the reviewer report, please email the Northwestern Academic Program Review Team at program.review@northwestern.edu.

Attachment 1: External Reviewer Report Template

<p align="center">Academic Program Review of the Department of {X}</p>

<p align="center">Northwestern University</p>

<p align="center">Dates of Review Visit</p>

<p align="center">**External Reviewers**</p>

<p align="center">Name
Title
Institution</p>

<p align="center">Name
Title
Institution</p>

<p align="center">Name
Title
Institution</p>

<p align="center">**Internal Reviewers**</p>

<p align="center">Name
Title
Northwestern University</p>

<p align="center">Name
Title
Northwestern University</p>

I. **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF REPORT** (1-2 pages)
   a. High level overview of the department's strengths and areas for improvement
   b. Summary of review team's strategic recommendations for department in next 5 years

II. **FINDINGS** (4-6 pages) *Note: not all sections or prompts may be applicable for this review. Complete only what is applicable and relevant to this review, drawing on unit's review materials, data profile, and interview feedback.*
   a. **Key Issues**
      i. **Key Issue 1:** Review team feedback
      ii. **Key Issue 2:** Review team feedback
      iii. **Key Issue 3:** Review team feedback
      iv. **Key Issue 4:** Review team feedback
      v. **Key Issue 5:** Review team feedback
      vi. .....
   b. **Faculty**
      i. The department's current faculty composition and plans for future hiring and recruitment
      ii. The department's approach to mentoring its junior faculty
      iii. The department's overall faculty culture and climate
   c. **Department Governance**
      i. The department's current decision-making processes regarding committee structures and assignments, tenure/hiring/admissions decisions, and other academic processes
      ii. Is there anything notable as particularly effective or positive in these processes?
      iii. Note any areas for improvement in the above processes
   d. **Research**
      i. How is the department's current research footprint perceived in the field? What are its areas of strength?
      ii. Is the department's current organizational structure for research (e.g., faculty groupings, intellectual cluster areas) effective?
      iii. Opportunities for the department's future research priorities (strategic direction) and whether it is positioned to achieve these goals
      iv. Are there emerging areas of research that the department should consider exploring?
   e. **Education**
      i. **Undergraduate**
         1. Impressions of program trends in undergraduate course enrollments and completion
         2. Is the department meeting its student needs?
         3. Any feedback on current undergraduate curriculum and potential changes

4. Any impressions on the career outcomes for students
   ii. **Graduate**
       1. Impressions of program trends in graduate course enrollments and completion
       2. Is the department meeting its student needs?
       3. Any feedback on current graduate level curriculum and potential changes
       4. Any impressions on the career outcomes for students
       5. Any concerns noted re: RA/TA staffing challenges
f. **Collaborations**
   i. **Internal**
       1. Impressions of how the department collaborates across Northwestern (both within and outside of its School)
       2. Any suggestions for new internal collaborations or improvements in existing ones
   ii. **External**
       1. If mentioned, how the department collaborates across the field/ outside of Northwestern (i.e., in the community)
       2. Any suggestions for new external collaborations to explore
g. **Human and Physical Resources**
   i. **Staff**
       1. Current staff structure and faculty/student support capacity within the department
   ii. **Operations (e.g., Facilities, IT, Classroom support, etc.)**
       1. Any operational needs or concerns that impact the department's ability to achieve its academic/research goals?

III. **RECOMMENDATIONS** (list in priority order) (1-2 pages)
    Over the next 3-5 years, what actions should be taken by the department to maintain or increase its excellence? Add any details about parties or offices that should be engaged in this work and time duration of the recommended actions.
    a. **Recommendation 1:**
    b. **Recommendation 2:**
    c. **Recommendation 3:**
    d. **Recommendation 4:**
    e. **Recommendation 5:**
    f. ......add as needed. Please limit to no more than 10 recommendations.