University at Buffalo
Educational Effectiveness

Self-Study Guidelines for Academic Program Review

Contents

I. General Department Overview (up to 15 pages)

A. Mission, Goals, Objectives, Alignment

    1. Articulate the department's mission and explain its relationship to the school or college mission, as well as the institution's mission.

    2. Delineate the department's general goals and objectives. Show how these goals and objectives align with the goals of your academic unit (i.e., school/college) and with UB 2020 strategic goals.

    3. Explain how the department is achieving its academic program goals and objectives. Explain how the department assess that it is meeting these. Describe the department's process for self-evaluation.

B. Identity

    1. Define the department's scope of teaching, research and service.

        a. Provide specific examples in terms of research, scholarly and/or creative activity, grants, publications, performances and other creative endeavors, and explain what the department is and what it is not.

        b. Provide evidence of departmental impact in the areas of teaching and service.

    2. **Provide a frank assessment of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT analysis) for the department.** Are the departmental academic activities (scholastic endeavors, research, teaching responsibilities, creative performances, grants, etc.) concentrated in one area, or are they more varied? Is this good or bad? Is there room for growth?

C. Faculty Profile and Teaching Load

    1. Referencing the **faculty profile dashboard**, analyze the report and provide a brief narrative about the department's faculty size, make up, diversity (i.e., gender, race/ethnicity, appointment type, etc.), scope of discipline penetration (depth of research presence in specific sub-disciplines, etc.), and teaching responsibilities.

    2. Describe the rationale utilized in the distribution of teaching loads among department faculty by rank, full-time and part-time and tenured/non-tenured.

    3. Based on the **credit hours taught dashboard**, reflect on credit hours delivered by tenured and tenure-track faculty as compared to clinical, adjunct, or other part-time faculty and graduate TAs. How does this distribution of credit hours align with the department's teaching mission, goals and identity?

D. Strategic Faculty Development

    1. Identify the steps taken in the department to assure that ladder faculty members advance in their disciplines. What support and professional development is made available for tenured faculty members to ensure their continued capability to promote the department's strategic goals.

    2. Review the profiles of faculty hired since the previous Comprehensive Program Review and describe PhD-granting institution and program, years of postdoctoral training where applicable, and fellowships/career awards, etc. Briefly explain how these new faculty members will advance the mission, goals and objectives of the department.

    3. Explain the department's process for mentoring junior and associate-level faculty.

    4. Explain the department's processes for cultivating and sustaining departmental leadership (selection, training, and review of department chair, succession planning, etc.).

    4. Describe the department's explicit efforts to increase the diversity of its faculty and retain diverse faculty.

    5. Describe qualifications of part-time instructors (e.g., adjuncts, including name and highest earned degree. Also list the course(s) taught by the adjunct, estimated frequency of course offering, and an indicator of whether or not the course is required, elective, or either for its associated degree program. Include this same information for graduate student instructors.

E. Postdoctoral Scholars (where applicable)

1. Give an account of postdoctoral scholars hired in the department in the past five years, including where each received their graduate training.
2. Describe the formal or informal training and mentoring postdoctoral scholars receive.
3. Discuss your post docs' current productivity and accomplishments.
4. Describe the department's efforts to increase the diversity of its postdoctoral scholars.

F. Support Staff

1. List all the support staff for the department by type.
2. Describe professional development opportunities available to and completed by departmental staff. How has staff involvement in professional development activities impacted office procedures and efficiencies? Department morale?
3. Describe any deficiencies in staff and/or inefficiencies in office operations. What steps can be taken within your department to ameliorate these deficiencies or inefficiencies? (investigate the new scheduling system for data potential)

G. Department Space and Facilities

1. Delineate space by use/function and indicate any current deficiencies.
2. Describe the scheduling process for departmentally managed classrooms and indicate how this scheduling process meets university usage standards.
3. Describe and discuss equipment, collections and holdings for teaching, research, etc.
4. Describe the plans for updating and maintaining equipment and research materials.
5. Describe any school or university facilities used for your program (e.g., computer or scientific instrumentation/laborites/centers, performance spaces, galleries, libraries, etc.).

H. University Resources

1. Describe how the libraries support the department teaching and research endeavors:
   a. Are the collections adequate and available in a format that best supports your department?
   b. Are the services for faculty and students adequate?
   c. Describe the impact of library resources and library services on your academic programs.
2. Describe how the central IT resources support the program. Is the infrastructure adequate?

I. Effectiveness in Teaching

1. Reflect on the course evaluation results shown in the **Course Evaluation dashboard**. To what conclusions do you come based on these trends?
2. Describe the department's procedures for evaluating teaching effectiveness and for supporting improvement in teaching.
3. Highlight faculty innovations and awards in graduate teaching.

II. Department's Academic Programs (up to 15 pages)

In this section, list each program and address each of the following components for each program.

A. General Information

1. Program Goals and Learning Outcomes
2. Describe distinctive qualities and characteristics

B. Admissions

1. Describe admissions criteria for graduate programs. Please add an explanation of how these criteria compare with the published criteria of peer institutions.
2. Describe any departmental requirements for undergraduates to enter into your majors.
3. Refer to the **Enrollments and Student Characteristics dashboards** showing the last five years of data. Reflect on the trends over time with regard to gender composition, national origin, and racial/ethnic background.
4. For undergraduate majors, reflect on the entering status of your enrollees (i.e., first-time or transfer). What steps do you take to engage with students when they declare or are admitted to your programs? What steps do you take to integrate transfer students?
5. For graduate programs, reflect on the quality of admitted students based on the relevant standardized test scores (e.g., GRE, GMAT, etc.) and incoming GPA.
6. For graduate programs, provide the acceptance and yield (ratio of enrollees to those accepted) percentages over that five year period.
7. Enrollments: Reflect on the **Enrollments Dashboard**. Are the enrollments for the past five years at, below or above the department's target enrollment? Explain these trends.

C. Curriculum

1. Describe curricular requirements for each program. Please include curricula for any advanced certificates, concentrations, tracks (informal and formal) for any active program. Please feel free to copy this information from the department website or other publications. For undergraduate programs, consult the undergraduate catalog: http://undergrad-catalog.buffalo.edu/.
2. Describe the congruence between course and program goals and national standards and expectations in the discipline or profession, as appropriate for each program.
3. In addition, please address the following for each program:
   a. Do the prerequisites provide the appropriate course preparation?
   b. Explain the balance between breadth and depth within the program.
   c. Describe the methods used to ensure comparable learning outcomes among multiple sections of a course.
   d. Describe efforts to assure that required courses and electives are offered on a schedule to meet the needs of various student constituencies.
   e. Describe internship and research opportunities and methods of assessment.
   f. Describe departmental procedures for including student participation in the development, review and evaluation of courses.
   g. Describe discipline-related, college/school-related and community-related experiential learning activities (e.g., internships, embedded projects, course-based experiences, study abroad, etc.). How does the program promote and support faculty and student involvement and effort in these activities?
   h. Describe student advisement procedures and the way the department assesses advisement effectiveness. For undergraduate programs, please be sure to address the departmental advising structure beyond central advising services.
   i. Include any student handbook as an appendix.
4. For graduate programs, describe the mechanisms for monitoring the progress of graduate students through their programs including any co-curricular programing, comprehensive exams/dissertation prospectus, and other mentoring and academic advisement activities.
5. Assess the effectiveness of support staff in the delivery of the department's academic programs. Describe administrative and other mechanisms in place to support the department's academic programs. Include a brief analysis of how administration support impact program goals and objectives.

D. Student Learning Assessment

Include program curriculum maps and annual assessment reports for the last five years in the Appendix.

1. Reflect on your continuous improvement efforts based on your assessment results. How have you turned assessment results into actionable data to make improvements in program design or delivery?

2. Attach, as an appendix, any external reviews of your program(s) that have occurred over the past five years. Describe how you have addressed improvements based on these reviews.
3. Reflect on any additional improvements planned over the next five years. Attach the **Program Planning Worksheet** to describe how these improvements will be achieved.

Student Success Outcomes (Up to 5 pages)

Describe how your department defines student success in both undergraduate and graduate programs.

Refer to departmental data sources and the **Enrollments and Student Characteristics dashboards** showing the last five years of data. Separately for graduates and undergraduates to address the following:

A. Provide data on the types of research that your students have been conducting. List external awards received by students over the last five years.
B. Describe students' participation in departmental and professional affairs (e.g., conferences and publications).
C. Describe trends in the quality of the student body over the past five years. Your evaluation may be based on various criteria including test scores (SAT, GRE, etc.), undergraduate GPAs, internal and external student awards and fellowships, completion rates, research/creative activity achievements, scores on common assessments for the program (e.g., pass rates on comprehensive examinations), etc.
D. Reflect on the **course-level dashboard** with regard to DFRW rates in your undergraduate course offerings. Identify courses with very high DFRW rates where student failure or low grades is problematic due to the necessity for course repeats, bottlenecking, and inability of students to progress in a timely fashion, Describe suggestions for course redesign or student supports to decrease DFRW rates and improve student success.
E. Describe any goals your department has related to retention. How do you help ensure undergraduate students stay on track to finish in 4 years?
F. Reflect on student retention in each program (see the **Retention Dashboard**). How does your average retention rate compare to peer institutions? How do you explain the five-year trend as well as trends across each year of the program? Summarize any information you have relating to student reasons for not completing the program.
G. Describe any programs/outreach/initiatives you have in place to keep students enrolled in your major and/or at the University.
H. Reflect on degrees awarded over the past five years and the actual average time-to-degree-completion for each of your programs. How does your average time-to-degree at the graduate level compare with the discipline nationally? How does it compare with peer institutions?
I. Are there any achievement gaps in DFRW rates, retention, and/or completion based on differences in gender, ethnicity, Pell eligibility, first generation status, etc.?
J. Provide data on the subsequent career paths of each of your students who have received a degree over the past five years. (Particularly for graduate students, include the names of their initial and any subsequent employers and well as the graduate's professional title(s).) Indicate year(s) of data collected and total number of student responses: percentage employed in the field, percentage employed elsewhere, and percentage seeking employment.
K. How is your department exposing students to potential career options or opportunities for further study?
L. How does your unit maintain contact with alumni and how effective is that process? How often, and for what purposes, do you communicate with alumni? What are you doing to improve the tracking of your alumni and their subsequent careers? What feedback are you soliciting from alumni regarding program excellence and career preparation? What school/university assistance is needed in this area?

IV. Other Factors (up to 2 pages)

A. Describe other programs such as certificate programs, workshops, symposia and/or any other programmatic activity that you deem significant or distinctive.

B. Describe student and faculty satisfaction with services that support your programs.
C. Describe how departmental diversity relates to university-wide diversity for both students and faculty (see the **Demographics Dashboard**).
D. Describe the general campus environment and climate. Explain its impact upon student performance.
E. Explain how budget decisions reflect the concern for quality programs and support academic robustness.

V. Departmental Vision for the Future (up to 2 pages)

A. Include your 18-Month Follow-Up Report from the last review as an appendix. Reflect on the changes made in the department to address the action items identified after the last review. How have these changes influenced the current vision for the department?
B. What is the vision for the department five years from now? Outline your strategic goals for the next 5 years. Include future programming initiatives, impact of retirements and potential faculty realignments to meet new programmatic goals.
C. What additional resources will be needed to reach these goals?
D. What specific plans have been developed to improve the quality of the graduate and undergraduate programs you offer?