



Procedure for Periodic Review of Academic Programs

(Updated 2024)

Contents

I. Purpose	2
a. Definitions.....	2
b. Scope.....	2
II. Review Cycle.....	3
III. Responsibility and Locus of the Review	3
IV. Internal Reviews	4
V. External Reviews.....	4
a. Procedural Schedule for an External Review.....	4
b. Summary Documentation of External Review of Program.....	6
c. Table 1: Abbreviated procedure:.....	7
d. The Self-Study Document	8
e. External and Internal Reviewers.....	9
VI. Procedure Review	11
VII. History of Revisions or Changes.....	11
Appendix: Detailed Schedule	11

I. Purpose

Regular, periodic reviews of academic programs provide a formal process for thorough, fact-based documentation and evaluation of the programs, the infrastructure supporting them, and the plans for their growth and improvement. A distinctive feature of external reviews is that they include evaluation of the offering unit's¹ resources and how those resources are managed to promote the overall success of the program. Michigan Tech conducts external reviews for undergraduate and graduate programs as described in this document.

In the procedures described in this document, if an external review does not consider graduate programs, any reference to the "graduate dean" is to be omitted.

a. Definitions

The following organizational definitions apply to this document:

- **Unit:** is defined as the department, or college without departments, offering the program(s) being reviewed.
- **Supervisor:** is the individual who directly oversees the unit. Most often a department chair, or dean in the case of colleges without internal departments.
- **Coordinating Office (CO):** is the office the unit supervisor reports to; either the office of the college dean (for chairs) or provost's office (if the supervisor is a college dean).

b. Scope

These procedures are for degree and certificate programs (referred to simply as "programs") not otherwise covered by an external professional accreditor.

Programs that are reviewed by an external professional accreditor (such as ABET, AACSB, SAF) will:

- be reviewed by those accreditors according to the accreditor's regular cycle.
- follow the accreditor's guidance on procedural timeline, selection of reviewers, submission of self-study documents, on-site reviews, reviewer honoraria, etc.
- conduct the associated self-study following the accreditors' guidelines.
- submit the final report by the external accreditor, which will constitute the unit's final *External Review Report (ERR)*, which is then routed and evaluated according to the post-final-ERR steps as described in [Section V.a.iv.](#)

¹ See definitions on next page.

Programs with professional organization relationships where the review and approval processes do not result in accreditation and/or do not involve a visit from an external team should consult with the cognizant associate provost(s) to determine if additional materials are needed to be considered equivalent to the required self-study and ERR components described in this document.

II. Review Cycle

Programs that are not reviewed by professional accreditors but are within units that have at least one professionally accredited program, may be reviewed on a cycle that is of the same length as the professional accreditation or else as described below.

Programs within units where no programs are reviewed by professional accreditors will be externally reviewed on a ten-to twelve-year cycle with a mid-cycle internal review.

The undergraduate and graduate programs within a given unit will be addressed as part of a single review process if they are not otherwise included in review by an external accreditor. When an external professional accreditor only reviews a subset of programs within a unit (e.g., only the undergraduate programs), the unit may choose to offset the review cycle of non-accredited programs by a number of years so that a regular staggering of accredited program review from non-accredited program review occurs. In that case, it is recommended that the unaccredited programs be reviewed as soon as possible following the completion of the external review by the professional accreditor.

The academic deans, associate provosts, and provost shall regularly review the plan for upcoming reviews to accommodate changes in accrediting timelines, schedules, or cycles.

III. Responsibility and Locus of the Review

Reviews are initiated by the provost through notice to the cognizant dean and associate provost(s). The coordinating office will work with the involved unit(s), the provost, and the applicable associate provost(s) (depending on if undergraduate and/or graduate programs are under review) to follow the established timeline, identify specific expectations for the review, and any identify internal and external reviewers.

Deans are responsible for ensuring that all degree program reviews are conducted at the specified intervals. Units are responsible for preparation and submission of the majority of documentation associated with the review process; this includes a self-study document prepared for external reviews.

Interdisciplinary programs normally administered by the graduate school will be linked with related programs in a regular academic unit. Such programs will be reviewed at the same time, and managed by the same CO, as the linked programs in the unit.

IV. Internal Reviews

An internal review will be conducted before the first external review in a unit and is recommended to occur before the external review of any new programs added afterwards.

Internal reviews will focus on metrics of student success (e.g., time-to-degree, attrition rates, student satisfaction, placement after graduation), program goal assessment, and overall strengths, weaknesses, and action plans of the program.

Internal reviews that follow an external review should include an update on any action items that resulted from the external review.

Data and templates for the internal reviews will be centrally provided by the relevant associate provost(s).

V. External Reviews

a. Procedural Schedule for an External Review

(See [Table 1](#) for visual summary)

Program reviews will follow the procedural schedule outlined here.

i. Spring Semester Notification

Deans with one or more programs to be reviewed will be notified by the provost by the end of Week 2 of the spring semester that precedes the self-study year.

1. The dean will confer with the unit(s) slated for review and report to the provost's office, for consideration, any needed scheduling changes by week 4.
2. By Week 14 of that semester, the provost, with input from the college dean and associate provosts, writes the charge to the (yet-to-be-named) external review team. The charge is then shared with the involved unit, so the unit's preparation of the self-study document is informed of the elements of the charge. See [the Reviewers Process Section](#) for delivery of the charge to the review team.

ii. Self-Study Year (Fall-Summer)

Commencing in the fall of the self-study year (the year preceding the fall external review visit), units:

3. will prepare their [self-study document](#) in monthly consultation with the CO.

During spring semester of the self-study year, the following deadlines will apply:

4. Units will identify potential reviewers by the end of Week 2.

5. The CO, with input from the associate provosts and approval from the office of the provost, will select the members of the review team.
6. The CO will formally invite reviewers by the end of Week 6.
7. Confirmation of reviewers is expected by the end of Week 10.
8. The unit, in consultation with the CO and associate provosts, develops the visit schedule by Week 14.
9. The unit's draft self-study document is due to the CO by the end of Week 3 of the summer semester.
10. The CO sends self-study to the provost's office and associate provosts.
11. The CO will review the self-study with the provost's office and the associate provosts and will work with the unit to incorporate any suggestions into the self-study.
12. The provost's office will approve the self-study for distribution to the review team.

iii. Semester of Visit (Fall)

In the semester of the planned visit:

13. The CO will provide the approved self-study document, the charge from the provost, and the visit schedule to the external and internal reviewers at least one month before the scheduled review.
14. The campus visit by external reviewers will be completed by Week 9 of the fall semester of the external review year. The visit ends with the oral presentation of preliminary findings to the associate provosts, college dean, and unit administrators.
15. The draft External Review Report will be due to the CO by the end of Week 12 of that fall semester.
16. Copies of the draft External Review Report will be provided by the CO to the unit and associate provosts for fact checking (Week 12).
17. The unit's fact-checking response to the draft External Review Report is due to the CO by the end of Week 13 of that fall semester. The CO will share the response with the provost's office.
18. The CO will forward the unit's response to the review team for incorporation or response.
19. The final External Review Report is due to the CO by the end of Week 15 (finals week) of fall semester.
20. The CO discharges the external review team with formal thanks; [stipends are paid](#).

21. The CO will share the final External Review Report with the unit supervisor, who will share and discuss with unit members (Week 15, finals week).

iv. Semester following visit (Spring):

22. The unit writes a letter of response to the final External Review Report and submits the letter, a summary of the report's findings and recommendations, and a set of three to four substantive action items to the CO by the end of Week 3 of the spring semester Year 3 (see [Table 1](#)).

23. The CO and associate provosts, in consultation with each other, will prepare a letter of response to the review results (the ERR and unit's response) by Week 5 of the spring semester. This may be formatted as either a single or separate response letters. The letter of response is sent to the provost.

24. In time for the October Board of Trustees meeting following the review year, the associate provosts will prepare a one-page report for the Board's Academic Affairs Committee, with the statement of results of program review and follow-up expectations for the unit.

25. The provost will communicate the findings of the external program review (as prepared in the one-page report) to the Board of Trustees in a timely fashion.

v. Post-visit Follow-up

The dean ensures that the approved action plan is followed by the unit and reports updates to the provost's office annually. A summary of final actions resulting from the review process is added to program review file once actions are complete.

b. Summary Documentation of External Review of Program

Following receipt of the final External Review Report and the conclusion of the [post-visit follow-up](#), the provost's office will prepare and archive summary documentation of the external program review containing the following sections in the listed order:

1. summary of actions taken by the unit as a result of the program review.
2. the one-page report as prepared for the Board of Trustees.
3. the response to the final External Review Report and unit response prepared by the CO and associate provost(s).
4. unit's response to the External Review Report.
the final External Review Report.
5. the approved self-study that was distributed to the review team.

c. Table 1: Abbreviated external review procedure:

Steps indicated are the list items 1-24 in Procedural Structure for External Reviews (above). See full visual procedure in the appendix.

Year	Steps	Action	When? (deadlines)	
			Semester	Week(s)
1	1-2	Provost's Office notifies dean of upcoming review, charge is drafted and shared	Spring	2-14
2	3	Unit prepares self-study document with monthly interval reporting to CO,	Fall & Spring	
	4-8	Candidate reviewers identified, approved, invited. Visit schedule developed	Spring	2-14
	9-12	Draft self-study submitted, reviewed, edited, and approved.	Summer	3-14
3	13	CO distributes self-study, charge from the provost (from step 2), and visit schedule	Fall	5
	14	On-site campus visit by review team coordinated by the unit; visit ends with oral presentation of preliminary findings		9
	15-19	Draft External Review Report is submitted, corrected for errors, and finalized		12-15
	20	CO discharges the external review team, with formal thanks; stipends are paid		15
	21	CO provides final ERR to unit, which is shared with unit members		15
	22	After discussion with unit members, unit writes a letter of response to final ERR and submits letter + summary of report findings and recommendations to CO	Spring	3
	23	CO and associate provost(s) prepare a memo of response to ERR and unit		5
	24	Associate provosts prepare one-page report for the Board of Trustees Academic Affairs Committee		11
	25	Provost communicates to Board of Trustees the executive summary, action plan, and provost's statement.		next BoT meeting / once complete

d. The Self-Study Document

Each unit with programs up for review undergoes a self-study to assess the strengths and limitations of the programs within the context of the offering unit and its resources. The self-study should provide a comprehensive overview of the programs that can guide the review team, should follow the guidance below, and is expected to utilize provided templates². The principal author(s) of a self-study document may be an individual, such as the department chair, or may be a committee. The final document should represent a departmental consensus whenever possible.

The self-study document, excluding appendices, should be no more than 100 pages in length regardless of the number of included programs.

i. Data

The self-study shall contain, but not be limited to, the following information and analyses:

- Departmental mission and vision statements and the list of degree-program learning goals for each program covered by the study.
- Quantitative data: Basic information that should include categories such as faculty (number, ranks, demographics) and staff (roles), with details on how advising is handled; facilities; budgets; students (number, degree programs, demographics); retention and degree completion; placement after graduation; and scholarship (publications, presentations, funding). The department may provide additional data as needed.
- Results of direct assessments linked to degree-program learning goals, analyses of assessment results, and evidence that results are being used for continuous improvement.
- Results of surveys of graduates and their employers, as appropriate.
- Recent initiatives and their effects.
- Goals for the future.

ii. synoptic questions

The self-study shall conclude with responses to the following questions:

- In what ways does the program support both the university's and your college's mission and vision statements?

² www.mtu.edu/provost/curriculum/degree-programs/periodic-review/

- In what ways does the academic program align with the university's strategic plan?
- In what ways is the program, or are the students, faculty, and staff associated with the program, contributing to an increase in state, national, and international awareness of the quality of Michigan Tech's educational offerings and research capabilities?
- How do the research and scholarly activities of faculty (and staff as appropriate) enhance the learning experiences for students in the program?
- What are the principles that guide decisions regarding the allocation of resources for the program?

Additional questions may be added by the college dean, the associate provost(s), or the provost, to gain information from reviewers that will support the University's ongoing continual improvement processes.

iii. Appendices

Additional information may be presented in appendices that are referred to in the main body of the self-study document.

Appendices should be provided separately from the self-study document, with each appendix being its own file or digital folder and will use a standard naming convention. The goal is to reduce the burden on reviewers in finding and examining information of interest.

e. External and Internal Reviewers

i. Composition of review team:

The review team is comprised of three reviewers: two external and one internal.

Participation of internal reviewers is intended to improve university-wide appreciation of the aspirations of each academic unit. Internal reviewers will also be able to assist external reviewers in accessing additional campus/unit information, which will improve the efficiency of the review process.

ii. Qualifications of reviewers:

External reviewers should be senior academic faculty members, department chairs, deans, or individuals of similar professional stature. External reviewers should have experience with both undergraduate and graduate education (if graduate programs are under review) in the disciplinary areas represented by the programs under review.

Internal reviewers must be tenured members of the graduate faculty at Michigan Tech and may not be affiliated with the unit offering the degree program under review. For the review of non-departmental or interdisciplinary programs, internal reviewers must not be affiliated with those programs.

iv. [Selection of reviewers:](#)

The unit offering the degree program being reviewed will recommend a slate of at least five potential external and three potential internal reviewers to the provost, the college dean, and associate provosts. The associate provosts, acting on behalf of the provost, will make the final selection of the reviewers, with input from the dean.

- After approval, the coordinating office will contact potential reviewers to determine their willingness to participate and their availability.
- The coordinating office will send formal invitations to selected reviewers according to the [procedural timeline](#).
- Reviewers who accept the invitation to review must submit a copy of their curriculum vitae to the coordinating office prior to conducting the review.

v. [Reviewer responsibilities:](#)

- One of the external reviewers will serve as the review team lead. This person will be responsible for submitting the reviewers' prepared reports to the coordinating office.
- The reviewers are to read the self-study document prior to visiting the campus and conducting their on-site review.

vi. [Incentives:](#)

- Travel expenses for external reviewers will be paid in accordance with university travel policy.
- An honorarium will be provided to both internal and external reviewers following completion of the review and submission of the final External Review Report:
 - External review team members will receive \$1000.
 - Internal team members will receive \$500. Internal honoraria may be paid either through additional compensation (through a gold form) or transfer to an IRAD account, at the recipient's discretion.

vii. [Review Team Process](#)

The reviewers will receive a charge from the provost as to the expectations associated with their work. The reviewers will receive and read the self-study prior to their on-campus visit and review.

Each review team visit will include meetings with the following parties:

- The unit's chair (as applicable)
- The college dean
- Applicable associate provost(s)
- Unit faculty, staff, and students

- Other parties as deemed appropriate by the unit (e.g., advisory board members, post-docs) or as requested by the review team (for reasonable requests, as judged by the CO)

Each visit should include a tour of relevant facilities, including research and teaching laboratories, classrooms, and offices. It is expected that the external reviewers will be on campus for approximately two days to ensure a thorough review. The agenda for the visit will be set by the unit in consultation with and approval of the coordinating office and associate provosts.

At the conclusion of their visit, the reviewers will prepare a draft External Review Report. A standard set of questions,³ which will be addressed in every review and included in the provost's charge to the review team, will guide development of the reviewers' report.

VI. Procedure Review

The provost, college dean(s), and associate provosts will review, at least every three years, the process for conducting external program reviews and implement any agreed-upon revisions to the process.

VII. History of Revisions or Changes

08/25/2004	Initial Procedures Adopted
01/19/2016	Revised Procedures open for Review and Comment
04/19/2017	Approved by Provost
09/19/2018	Revised and approved by Dean's Council and Provost
03/27/2024	Revised and approved by Dean's Council and Provost

Appendix: Detailed Schedule

A detailed schedule including step numbers (from [Procedural Schedule for External Review](#)), office responsible for action, and communications is [available online](#).

³ These questions will be reviewed on a regular basis by the deans, associate provost(s), and provost and updated as necessary. Unit supervisors may supplement the standard questions with additional queries, and the reviewers will be encouraged to comment on topics not specifically addressed by the provided questions and to make recommendations as needed to provide useful feedback to the unit offering the reviewed program.