Periodic Graduate Program Reviews

(Approved by Graduate Council, February 18, 2009)

Introduction

On April 18, 2002, the Graduate Council passed the following policy: "Each TWU graduate program that is not regularly reviewed for professional accreditation will be reviewed on a five-year cycle." The main objective of periodic program reviews is to provide a mechanism for improving the quality of graduate programs at Texas Woman's University. Periodic program reviews give faculty and academic leaders important information about the effectiveness of a program including its strengths, weaknesses, and contribution to the mission of the university. In addition, information about the efficiency of programs is provided. Results of program reviews are used to give direction, to set goals for the future, and to ensure that general academic plans and budget decisions are based on information and priorities which match closely those of the university. Information gathered in these reviews will be incorporated in the next SACS self-study. TWU will begin this process in the 2004-2005 academic year with a five year review cycle. The schedule for review is listed in Appendix A.

General Procedures

Notification of Department Review: About one year in advance of the review, the Dean of the Graduate School will notify the head of the academic unit and the academic dean of the college that a review has been scheduled. During the spring semester prior to the academic year during which the academic unit is to be reviewed, the chair of the academic unit will meet with the Dean of the Graduate School who will explain the review process and establish a timetable. A timeline for the review is shown in Appendix B. The chair will be asked to begin making a list of names of full graduate faculty members who can serve as internal review committee members for the departmental review.

Gathering Preliminary Information: The department/school will gather internal information with assistance from the Graduate School, the Office of Institutional Research and Planning, the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs, Finance and Administration, and the office of the dean of the academic unit to be reviewed. Each department will begin to gather evidence of effectiveness during the
summer prior to the academic year during which the academic unit is to be reviewed:

**Effectiveness in Achieving Student Learning Outcomes**

- Direct indicators may include the following (These indicators are selected by the academic unit):
  - Capstone course evaluation (for all students in the program)
  - Course-embedded assessment (for all students in the program)
  - Tests and examinations (local, state, or nationally standardized)
  - Portfolio evaluation (of all graduates by group of faculty)
  - Electronic record of performance evaluation (of all graduates)
  - Pre-test/Post-test evaluation (all majors/graduates)
  - Thesis or dissertation evaluation (of all graduates by group of faculty)
- Indirect indicators may include the following (These indicators are selected by the academic unit):
  - External reviewers (reviewing student documents)
  - Internship evaluations
  - Student surveys and exit interviews
  - Alumni surveys
  - Curriculum and syllabi analysis
  - Placement of graduates
  - Student GPAs

**Administrative Effectiveness and Productivity**

- Number and type of degrees awarded during the past five years
- Masters and doctoral semester credit hour production by major for the past five years
- The number of majors in the department for the past five fall semesters
- Demographics of applicants and enrolled students
- Average time for degree completion
- Test scores of students and applicants on GRE, GMAT and language proficiency exams
- GTAs, GRAs, scholarships, fellowships, and other awards to students.
- The salary and departmental operating expenses
- HEAF expenditures
- Faculty information
  - The number of full and part-time faculty by rank as well as graduate faculty membership
  - Research activities
  - Refereed publications and creative activities of faculty and program students
- Citations in publications
- Grants applied for by source
- External and internal grants and contracts awarded by funding source
- Work by faculty and program students in professional societies
- Other academically relevant on-campus and off-campus service

A department may gather information from peer institutions as a part of their review.

**Preparation of Self-study:** The self-study document should follow the format shown in Appendix C. The chair of the academic unit being reviewed is ultimately responsible for the content, accuracy, and completeness of the self-study. The chair may designate another faculty member or a team of faculty members to carry out the self-study, but should be continually and actively involved in overseeing the preparation of the self-study. All faculty members should be involved in the preparation of the self-study. The participation of enrolled students, alumni, and professional staff is highly encouraged. The self-study should be evaluative rather than simply descriptive. It should be more than just a collection of data, but a document of academic judgment about the effectiveness of the program, students' curriculum, resources, and future directions of the academic unit. The self-study should be one that assesses the academic unit’s effectiveness in reaching goals, strengths, weaknesses, and needed actions.

**Selection of Internal Review Committee Members:** The Dean of the Graduate School will select a three-member internal review committee in consultation with the chair and dean of the academic unit being reviewed. Committee members must be full members of the graduate faculty. Internal review committee members cannot be from the department to be reviewed, and no more than two can be from another department in the same college/school. The other committee member should be from departments outside the college/school. The Dean of the Graduate School will request members’ service in the fall semester of the academic year during which the academic unit will be reviewed.

**Selection of External Review Committee Members:**
The chair and dean of the academic unit being reviewed will select a one to three-member external review committee in consultation with
the Dean of the Graduate School. Committee member(s) must be recognized experts in the program under review. External review committee member(s) will review the program in paper form. The Dean of the Graduate School will request member(s)’ service in February of the year of review and will allot six weeks from the request date to complete the external review. External reviews will be conducted when university funds are available.

**Submission of Self-Study:** The self-study should be forwarded (either electronically or as a hard copy) to the Graduate School no later than the second week in February of the academic year during which the academic unit is being reviewed. The Dean of the Graduate School will review the self-study document for content, completeness, and accuracy, and, if necessary, request that revisions be made by the department. The Graduate School will forward one copy of the self-study to the dean of the college, one copy to the Provost, and a copy to each member of the review committee.

**Doctoral Program Characteristics:** The self-study of doctoral programs should address the required "Characteristics of Texas Public Doctoral Programs" detailed in Appendix D.

**The Review Process:** The Dean of the Graduate School will meet with the review committee members during the third week of February of the academic year during which the academic unit is being reviewed. At this meeting, a committee chair will be elected from the three-member review committee, and instructions and advice on the review process will be given. Within thirty (30) days of this initial meeting, the review committee will submit its report to the Graduate School. Guidelines for the reviewers are detailed in Appendix E.

**Assessment of Report:** The Dean of the Graduate School will schedule a meeting with the academic unit no later than two weeks after receiving the assessment report. Attendance at this meeting will consist of the chair of the academic unit, the dean of the college of the academic unit, the Dean of the Graduate School, the chair of the review committee, and any other faculty selected by the department chair. At this meeting, the chair will be given the opportunity to respond to the report of the review committee and to add any relevant information. This will be followed by a summary from the chair of the review committee. After a brief statement by the dean of the college, a discussion will follow. The time allotted for the meeting will be approximately 45 minutes.
**Action of the Dean:** After further consultation with the Provost and the Dean of the Graduate School, the supervising dean will submit a brief statement outlining the follow-up steps to be taken based on the outcome of the review. This statement should be issued within fifteen days after this meeting, and a copy will be forwarded to the Provost.

**Follow Up:** Approximately one year after the completion of the review of a department or program, there will be a meeting with the chair of the department (or program director), the dean of the supervising college, and the Dean of the Graduate School to discuss the follow-up steps taken.

**Appendix A: Schedule for Review of Graduate Programs**

**Academic Year Department**

**2009-2010**
- Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT)
- Communication Sciences & Disorders
- Family Sciences
- School of Library & Information Studies
- Kinesiology
- Psychology & Philosophy

**2010-2011**
- Exercise/Sports Nutrition
- Nutrition & Food Science
- Reading
- Sociology & Social Work
- Women's Studies
- Teacher Education

**2011-2012**
- Dance
- Health Care Administration - Houston
- Physical Therapy
- College of Nursing

**2012-2013**
- Biology
- Health Studies
- History and Government
- School of Occupational Therapy
- School of Management
2013-2014
Visual Arts
Chemistry & Physics
English, Speech, & Foreign Languages
Mathematics & Computer Sciences
Music and Drama

2014-2015
Cycle repeats

Appendix B: Timeline for Reviews

One year in advance of the review:
The head of the academic unit and the academic dean of that college are notified by the Dean of the Graduate School that a review has been scheduled.

Spring semester prior to the review:
The Dean of the Graduate School will meet with the head of the academic unit to explain the review process and establish a timetable. The academic unit will begin preparing the program review document and collecting data representing the last 5 years of activity.

Summer prior to the review:
The head of the academic unit, in collaboration with other offices in the university, will continue to collect data on the unit representing the last 5 years of activity.

Fall semester during review year:
Preparation of the self-study document will begin. A three-member internal review committee will be selected.

Second week of February during review year:
Deadline for one copy of the self-study to be forwarded to the Graduate School.

Third week of February during review year:
The self study will be submitted to the review committee. The Dean of the Graduate School will meet with the members of the review committee to provide instructions and advice on the review process.

One month after submission of review:
The review committee will submit its report to the Graduate School, which will forward the report to the head of the academic unit being reviewed.
By the second week of April:
The head of the academic unit being reviewed and the dean of that college will meet with the Dean of the Graduate School, the chair of the review committee, and others as appropriate to discuss the report.

By the end of April:
The dean of the unit being reviewed will submit a statement outlining follow-up steps to be taken based on the program review.

One year after completion of program review:
The head of the academic unit and the dean of the college will meet with the Dean of the Graduate School to discuss the outcome of the follow-up.

Appendix C: Guidelines for Graduate Program Self-Study

Note: Include tables and charts as appropriate along with discussion of each item.

I. Program Overview – A one to two-page summary of department’s mission and measurable student learning goals (outcomes) for each graduate degree program.
(Note: Each program should have measurable student learning goals indicating what students will know and be able to do. In addition, the program should specify the level of success the program targets for percentages of students achieving the program goals. Example: 85% of students will be able to . . . as demonstrated by . . .)

II. Assessment of Program’s Institutional Effectiveness Plan
Each program must have a plan for measuring and monitoring achievement of student learning goals (institutional effectiveness plan). The plan includes a regular cycle of measuring all students’ (as a group) achievement of program goals. Provide an assessment of how the program has monitored, measured, and made adjustments to the program based on student success in reaching measurable learning goals/outcomes.

III. Graduate Curricula and Degree Programs
Assess curricula and degree programs after consideration of the following:
   A. Alignment of courses with student learning goals
   B. The connection between the curriculum and current developments in the field
C. Mechanisms which foster independent learning enabling the graduate to contribute to the profession and field of study
D. Number and types of degrees awarded over the past five years
E. Undergraduate, masters, and doctoral semester credit hour production by area/concentration
F. Number of majors in the program for the past five fall semesters
G. Course offerings and their enrollments over the past five years

IV. Faculty
Assess the contribution of the faculty to the program after consideration of the following:
   A. Rank and demographics of the faculty, including graduate faculty status
   B. Faculty salaries
   C. Summary of the number of refereed publications and creative activities (Provide citations as an appendix.)
   D. Responsibilities and involvement in professional societies
   E. Faculty productivity (use discipline appropriate criteria to determine)

V. Graduate Students
Assess the success of students in completion of degree programs after consideration of the following:
   A. Demographics of applicants and enrolled students
   B. Test scores (GRE, GMAT, and/or language proficiency exam) of applicants and enrolled students
   C. GPAs of entering students and graduates
   D. Applicants from universities/colleges outside TWU and within TWU
   E. Present position and place of employment of graduates over the past five years
   F. Type of financial support available for graduate students
   G. Number of students who have received national and university fellowships, scholarships and other awards
   H. Summary of graduate student involvement in organizations related to the profession
   I. Department efforts to retain students
   J. Graduation rate of masters and doctoral students

VI. Department
Assess the administrative effectiveness and efficiency of the department after consideration of the following:

A. Department operating expenses
B. External and internal grants and contracts awarded
C. Source and amount of pending grants
D. Success rate of grant applications
E. Research expenditures
F. Scholarships and endowments
G. Departmental resources for research and teaching (i.e. classroom space, lab facilities)
H. HEAF expenditures

VII. Analysis – A two- to three-page summary of the observed strengths and weaknesses identified by the program review. Highlight significant contributions to the University mission. Include a prioritized list of program needs and actions to be taken over the next five years.

VIII. Appendices – Appendix should include, but not be limited to, the following:

A. Course offerings and enrollment trends
B. Recruiting materials – include departmental graduate program brochure, content of information/applicant packet mailed to prospective students, web address to which prospective students are directed for further information about the program.
C. Graduate Student Handbook
D. Graduate faculty review - Provide table on faculty rank, tenure status, graduate faculty status, and faculty productivity
E. Description and information about Graduate Student Association(s)
F. Description and information about Program Advisory Boards
Appendix D: Characteristics of Texas Public Doctoral Programs

The following chart represents the approved “Characteristics of Texas Public Doctoral Programs”.

### Characteristics of Texas Public Doctoral Programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Operational Definition</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of Degrees Per Year</td>
<td>Rolling three-year average of the number of degrees awarded per academic year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduation Rates</td>
<td>Rolling three-year average of the percent of first-year doctoral students(^2) who graduated within ten years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Time to Degree</td>
<td>Rolling three-year average of the registered time to degree(^3) of first-year doctoral students within a ten year period</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment Profile (in field within one year of graduation)</td>
<td>Percentage of the last three years of graduates employed in academia, post-doctorates, industry/professional, government, and those still seeking employment (in Texas and outside Texas)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Admissions Criteria</td>
<td>Description of admission factors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage Full-time Students (FTS) with Financial Support</td>
<td>In the prior year, the number of FTS (≥ 18 SCH) with support/the number of FTS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Financial Support Provided</td>
<td>For those receiving financial support, the average financial support provided per full-time graduate student (including tuition rebate) for the prior year, including research assistantships, teaching assistantships, fellowships, tuition, benefits, etc. that is “out-of-pocket”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student-Core Faculty(^4) Ratio</td>
<td>Rolling three-year average of full-time student equivalent (FTSE) /rolling three-year average of full-time faculty equivalent (FTFE) of core faculty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Core Faculty Publications</td>
<td>Rolling three-year average of the number of discipline-related refereed papers/publications, juried creative/performance accomplishments, book chapters, notices of discoveries filed/patents issued, and books per year per core faculty member.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Core Faculty External Grants</td>
<td>Rolling three-year average of the number of core faculty receiving</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^1\) Programs included only if in existence 3 or more years. Program is defined at the 8-digit CIP code level.

\(^2\) First-year doctoral students: Those students who have been coded as doctoral students by the institution and have either completed a master’s program or at least 30 SCH towards a graduate degree.

\(^3\) Registered time to degree: The number of semesters enrolled starting when a student first appears as a doctoral student until she completes a degree, excluding any time taken off during graduate study. The number of years is obtained by dividing the number of semester by three.

\(^4\) Core Faculty: Full-time tenured and tenure-track faculty who teach 50 percent or more in the doctoral program or other individuals integral to the doctoral program who can direct dissertation research.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Operational Definition</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percentage Full-Time Students</td>
<td>Rolling three-year average of the FTS (≥ 9 SCH)/number students enrolled (headcount) for last three fall semesters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Core Faculty</td>
<td>Number of core faculty in the prior year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty Teaching Load</td>
<td>Total number of semester credit hours in organized teaching courses taught per academic year by core faculty divided by the number of core faculty in the prior year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty Diversity</td>
<td>Core faculty by ethnicity (White, Black, Hispanic, Other) and gender, updated when changed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Diversity</td>
<td>Enrollment headcount by ethnicity (White, Black, Hispanic, Other) and gender in program in the prior year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date of Last External Review</td>
<td>Date of last formal external review, updated when changed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External Program Accreditation</td>
<td>Name of body and date of last program accreditation review, if applicable, updated when changed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Publications/Presentations</td>
<td>Rolling three-year average of the number of discipline-related refereed papers/publications, juried creative/performance accomplishments, book chapters, books, and external presentations per year per student</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTE: Institutions may wish to add a “comments” field to explain any anomalies.

Appendix E: The Task of the Reviewers

The task of the reviewers is to formulate objective judgments of the quality and effectiveness of graduate programs. The evaluation is concerned primarily with student learning outcomes. The following are important considerations:

- The overall quality and direction of the program
- The quality of faculty
- Students and the existence of policies and practices in support of them
- Curriculum offerings and program options
- The adequacy of staff support, physical facilities, library resources, equipment, research facilities, and the program budget.

The review committee is encouraged to focus attention on questions regarding the relationship of programs to the goals of the university. It is the task of the reviewers to single out those features of the program that merit special commendation, and to make recommendations.

5 All external funds received from any source including research grants, training grants, gifts from foundations, etc.
where there is room for improvement. Reviewers should formulate their evaluations not only from the self-study document, but also from interviews with the unit chairperson, faculty members, and students.

**The Executive Report:** The findings and recommendations of the committee should take the format of a concise one to two-page executive summary. Overall observations, reputation, strengths/commendations, deficiencies/recommendations, and value of the program to the mission of the university should be included in this report. Specific recommendations should be made regarding what is needed to strengthen programs that have deficiencies, or perhaps what is needed to lift an outstanding program to the top of its discipline. Specific recommendations should also be made for each program in the event that additional resources are not available. Reviewers should rate the program under review and provide a graded assessment similar to the following:

- Commendable
- Satisfactory
- Less than satisfactory

**Guidance for Reviewers**
During the review of each academic unit, reviewers are encouraged to evaluate the academic unit with respect to the areas listed below. Reviewers are encouraged to give a rating of less than satisfactory, satisfactory, or commendable for each area. Ratings of commendable should be reserved for areas of exceptional merit. Reviewers should not feel confined to the areas specified and can examine and comment on other areas that they deem important to the review process.

**Program Overview and Mission**
Reviewers should examine the mission and organization of the academic unit, paying special attention to program planning, goals, and program size.

**Student Learning Outcomes**
Reviewers should examine the program’s evidence that students have achieved the learning outcomes set by the program. In addition, the program should indicate how its monitoring and measuring efforts have resulted in program improvements.

**Faculty Productivity**
Factors to be considered are: faculty profile, faculty scholarship and awards, faculty teaching load, and faculty service.
Quality and Quantity of Graduate Students and Graduates
Factors to be considered are: student profile, student recruitment, student retention, program applicant pool, placement of graduates, career success of former students, student productivity, and teaching/research assistant preparation and support.

Curriculum and Programs of Study
Factors that should be considered are: degree requirements, alignment of degree requirements with student learning outcomes, course offerings, frequency, areas of specialization, nature and type of qualifying/final exams, connection of curriculum with current developments in the discipline, and mechanisms which foster independent learning enabling the graduate to contribute to the profession and field of study. Reviewers should determine if the program is compatible with similar programs elsewhere.

Facilities and Resources
Determine if existing space, library resources, information technology, and support staff are adequate to support the program.