**External Program Review**

University of Idaho

Overview

At the University of Idaho (UI), external program review has been used to meet the Idaho State Board of Education (SBOE) requirement of regular program review. The process has also been reported to the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU), our regional accreditor, as one way the institution ensures quality programs and mission fulfillment.

The UI conducts external program reviews of its academic and service/support programs for the purposes of improving the quality of those programs, providing accountability data for strategic planning, and enhancing the effectiveness and efficiency of the institution as it fulfills its mission. External Program Reviews (EPR) are required at least once every seven years, along with annual action planning, cascaded strategic plans, program learning outcomes assessment, program prioritization, and specialized accreditation (for many programs).

In the EPR process at UI, the unit faculty and/or staff conduct a self-study of the program/unit relative to defined criteria (Self-Study Questions), gathering both qualitative and quantitative information for this purpose. (Those programs with specialized accreditation can use those parts of their specialized accreditation self-study that aligns with this criteria, while providing an addendum to address anything not already covered.)

In addition to the self-study, a review team will assess the program quality with respect to questions and criteria provided. The composition of each team is tailored to each unit, but generally consists of three external peer reviewers. Vice presidents, vice provosts, and/or academic deans should be invited to review and suggest modifications to the schedule, the self-study, and the review team membership, before each are reviewed by Institutional Effectiveness and Accreditation and the Provost.

The review team will submit a written review and evaluation of the program. This final report, along with the final self-study, are forwarded to Institutional Effectiveness and Accreditation. Each of these documents is also uploaded into the EPR online system, where recommendations are entered and responded to with an action plan that requires annual updating. Once all of these items are uploaded, programs receive a small stipend to help subsidize the costs associated with the EPR process.

External Program Review Participants and their Responsibilities

Major participants:

1.) **Program staff and/or faculty** have the central role in producing the self-study. The department chair or program director, and the **dean, vice president, or vice provost** for the immediate area, is responsible for providing leadership throughout the EPR process.

2.) The **external review team** is responsible for reading the self-study in advance and reviewing the program during a site visit, and contributing to a written review of the program.

3.) The **program’s administrator’s office** handles all routine matters related to the EPR, including planning for and scheduling the site visit; submitting all documents timely to respective parties for review, feedback, and archiving; and participating in the site visit.

4.) The **Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Accreditation (IEA)** provides an overview of the EPR process, an orientation to the guidelines for the self-study, and maintains the EPR online system and website. Additionally, IEA reads the self-study to check for completeness, and provides detailed feedback to programs before the final self-study is presented to the review team and Provost.

5.) The **Accreditation and EPR Committee** provides recommendations on processes and intended outcomes, reviews and offers recommendations on external program review reports, participates in the EPR orientation, and provides expertise within their college or unit for programs during the EPR process. Each college, and student affairs/student enrollment management, has a representative on the committee.

Program/Unit Participant Responsibilities:

1.) Development of the self-study, responding to UI criteria and submission to reader(s) for critique prior to dissemination to external reviewers.

2.) Participation in nominating persons to serve on the external review team, and for obtaining signed Conflict of Interest Forms for each external reviewer before the site visit takes place.

3.) Active participation in the review team’s campus visit, to include activities such as participating or coordinating interviews, providing information to reviewers as requested or deemed relevant, and facilitating classroom observations.

4.) Engaging in collegial discussion of the reviewer’s feedback and written report, and communicating with the department chair or director about the resulting priorities and proposed actions.

5.) Scheduling follow-up meetings with the responsible dean, vice president, or vice provost to discuss the results, strategies, and timelines.

6.) Submit annually follow-up reporting in the online EPR system, as required.

NOTE: Programs are encouraged to select someone to oversee the progress of the self-study, act as a coordinator for the process, and communicate with other offices on EPR-related issues or tasks. This may or may not be the program chair or director.

External Program Review Team Responsibilities:

Within one month of visiting campus, the review team submits a written review and evaluation of the program to the university-level administrator and the unit administrator. The report provides reflections and judgments on

* The self-study
* Strengths and weaknesses relative to the criteria and questions provided
* The alignment of program role, missions, and goals, with those of the university
* Specific items requested by UI administrators
* The demand and need for the program
* The evaluation of the various program improvement alternatives proposed by the unit in the context of available and projected resources

Program Chair or Director Responsibilities Following Review Team Report

Within 30 days of receipt of the written review team’s report, the department chair or director will schedule a meeting with his or her dean, vice president, or vice provost to discuss proposed actions to address the recommendations. Within three weeks of this discussion, the dean, vice president, or vice provost will submit the report to the Provost’s Office and Accreditation and EPR Committee with his or her own comments and proposed actions. In the meantime, the department chair or director will completed the timeline and planned action columns in the EPR online template.

The Dean’s/Vice President/Vice Provost’s Report

The Dean’s/Vice President’s/Vice Provost’s report should include the following:

* General comments on the review team’s report
* General comments on the program’s response
* Recommend actions and strategies

The Dean’s/Vice President’s/Vice Provost’s recommendations should include:

* Examination of program focus
* Possible changes to program focus
* Potential reallocation of resources
* Other proposed actions

Each year following the site visit, the program chair or director, and the responsible dean, vice president, and vice provost will be asked to follow-up with a review of actions and progress made toward the recommendations in the EPR online template.

Final Documentation:

Copies of the following documents should be uploaded into the EPR system:

* The final self-study report
* The review team’s report
* The program’s response
* The dean’s/vice president’s/vice provost’s report

A stipend can be requested from IEA by email, once the review team’s report has been uploaded. Send an email to assessment@uidaho.edu with “EPR Stipend” as the subject. Verification that reports are uploaded will be completed, before funds are released.