THE UNIVERSITY OF VERMONT
Guidelines for Preparation of a Self-Study Report
For Program Review

Introduction:

This document is a companion to the document System for Academic Program Review at The University of Vermont. The latter document describes the policies and procedures for a review of an academic program as well as the standards and criteria for review. The document can be reviewed in its entirety at the Provost’s Office website http://www.uvm.edu/~provost/

Purpose of the Self-Study Report:

The self-study report of an academic program describes an academic program using a common set of institutionally determined standards and criteria. It is a systematic approach to data collection that provides a basis for identifying the strengths of the program, describing difficulties in the program, and making decisions about the direction for needed improvement and opportunities for growth. The report is based upon the stated criteria and agreed-upon unit-specific indicators. Evidence that clearly indicates how these criteria are being met is the basis for the written report. The self-study report, along with the report of the external reviewers, will be the basis for the program review; the review is carried out by the Faculty Senate’s Curricular Affairs Committee and a team of external reviewers with disciplinary expertise in comparable academic programs.

A program review establishes a baseline understanding of opportunities and challenges in academic programs. All academic programs will engage in the UVM review process to ensure that programs are maintained at the highest level of quality possible; the review will contribute to an institutional perspective for planning and budgetary decision-making.

Guidelines for Writing the Self-Study Report

The self-study report is prepared by the responsible faculty and department chairperson or director of the program under review. The self-study addresses the process used to develop the report and describes what constituencies participated in its formulation. The self-study report includes relevant data supplied by the Office of Institutional Studies (enrollments, FTE ratios, performance of graduates, etc.). The report addresses a review of such data and is used to explain the status of the program with respect to the standards and criteria included in these guidelines. Evaluation data from existing reviews of the program such as accreditation reports should be incorporated into this self-study report wherever appropriate. The body of the report is to be approximately twelve pages in length; appropriate appendices should be attached.
The self-study report concludes with a narrative, integrative summary and a prospective that addresses the meaning and implications of the evidence presented and describes the manner in which the program meets each criterion. The narrative should specifically identify the program’s strengths and challenges as well as directions for needed improvement, opportunities, and other plans.

There are six sections to the self-study report:

- Section One: General Information
- Section Two: Introduction/Overview
- Section Three: Standards and Criteria
- Section Four: Analysis
- Section Five: Prospective
- Section Six: Appendices

**Section One: General Information**

General information provides factual data about the program, including name of the program, program type, college or school in which the program is located, name of the chairperson/director of the program, name of the dean of the academic unit, names of faculty writing the report, and date of the report.

**Section Two: Introduction/Overview**

The Introduction/Overview establishes the background and context for the review. It should include a brief history of the program, a brief description of its present status, the goals and mission of its graduate and undergraduate programs, unique and distinguishing characteristics, and links with other units such as joint faculty appointments, cross-listed courses, shared undergraduate and graduate service courses, and research collaborations.

**Section Three: Standards and Criteria**

In this section the self-study demonstrates the extent to which the program meets each standard and criterion. The standards are contribution to mission, program quality, demand, societal need, quality control mechanisms, and efficiency.

**Section Four: Analysis**

This section should present a brief summary of the teaching, research, and scholarly enterprise and review how the program meets each criterion. The meaning and implications of the
evidence presented should be explained. The narrative should specifically identify the program’s progress since its last review, its strengths, difficulties, directions for needed improvement, and opportunities.

Section Five: Prospective

The prospectus should present a vision for the Program grounded in the Program’s strategic goals and a balanced assessment of opportunities and resources needed. It should include a discussion of new scholarly directions, research plans, curricular or degree program changes, and plans for maintaining and enhancing excellence and diversity of faculty and students over the next eight years. Given the persistence of budgetary constraints, the discussion should include ways in which the unit can be strengthened without receiving additional resources.

Section Six: Appendices

Supporting data and materials may be appended to the main body of the report.
Standards and Criteria.

Standard I: The program has a clear and publicly stated purpose that contributes to the mission of the University.

Criterion 1: The program *contributes to the mission* of the University, the College/School, and department by:

a) Having an active strategic plan that is aligned with the vision, mission, and strategic plan of the University.

b) Supporting research and creative activities that generate new knowledge and understanding and enrich the intellectual environment for students, staff, and faculty.

c) Engaging in relevant application of new knowledge to contemporary problems through teaching, scholarship, creative activities, and service and outreach.

d) Preparing students for productive, responsible, and creative lives.

e) Encouraging students to use their knowledge and skills for the benefit of society.

f) Promoting global perspective and appreciation of cultural and intellectual diversity.

g) Fostering an enduring commitment to learning.

h) Fostering the qualities of integrity, accountability, and leadership.

i) Additional unit-specific indicators.

Standard II: The program is of high quality

Criterion 2: The *program quality* is evidenced by:

a) Faculty - The Program faculty are qualified to teach the curriculum, as indicated by earned academic degrees and professional certifications. The program invests in the professional and scholarly development of its faculty, including the mentoring and guidance of junior faculty members through the RPT process.

b) Resources - The program has adequate faculty, support staff, library resources, equipment, and facilities to accomplish its purpose.

c) Reputation – The program is well regarded, as evidenced by external rankings and assessments by external reviewers of students, faculty, resources, and productivity. The program attracts and retains excellent students as evidenced by admission qualifications, performance on standardized examinations, etc.
d) Faculty performance – Faculty demonstrate effectiveness in teaching and student advising, scholarship, and service, as evidenced by evaluations, awards, honors, grants, research contributions, publications, citations, and service endeavors.

e) Student performance – Students demonstrate mastery of knowledge by means of formative and summative assessments, performance in the field, professional achievements, and performance on professional licensure exams. Program graduates succeed in finding jobs and progress well in their chosen careers; alumni are satisfied with the program. Undergraduate and graduate students produce creative works, publications, and receive grant awards. Graduate students are awarded post-doctoral fellowships.

f) Benchmarks – The program reflects “best practices” and compares well to relevant performance standards from comparable institutions and/or accrediting agencies and/or other authoritative sources. The program demonstrates leadership in its performances relative to appropriate external benchmarks.

g) Advising – Program faculty provide excellent academic advising, per student evaluations and other appropriate indicators.

h) Extramural Funding (for programs where such funding is critical) – Success in attracting extramural funding that contributes to the Program’s long-term stability.

Standard III: There is demand for the program.

Criterion 3. There is demand for the program as evidenced by:

a) external demand based on local, regional, national, and global trends and forecasts for persons with particular types and level of education.

b) internal demand as reflected by both student enrollment in the program and the scope of service teaching for students from other programs.

Standard IV: The program provides graduates who contribute to social institutions.

Criterion 4: Societal need for the program is reflected by:

a) evidence for private, public and/or not-for-profit sector needs for persons with particular knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values required to make social institutions work.

b) evidence of the need at national, state, and local levels for persons who can be informed and responsible citizens.

Standard V: The program uses an identified plan for systematic evaluation and assessment of goals and purposes.

Criterion 5: The program has quality control processes that are used:

a) to evaluate how well the program is achieving its strategic goals.
b) to monitor on an ongoing basis the design and delivery of the curriculum/curricula as informed by student outcomes.

c) for ongoing evaluation of student outcomes. This includes but is not limited to formative and summative assessments of student learning. As appropriate, other outcomes should include academic or professional achievements; job placement and career progression; alumni satisfaction with the program; employer satisfaction with program graduates' performance; graduates' performance on professional licensure exams; post-doctoral placement of graduate students; publications, grant awards, and creative works of undergraduate and graduate students, etc.

d) to monitor the quality of student advising.

e) to determine needed changes in tactics, policies, curriculum, and course contents.

f) to implement the self-determined changes in a timely manner.

Standard VI: The program accomplishes effectively its educational and related purposes

Criterion 6: The effectiveness of the program is reflected by:

a) improvements in the design and delivery of the curriculum based on assessments of new knowledge in the discipline, student outcomes, societal need, and demand for the program.

b) measures to maintain or improve high quality student advising.

c) programmatic features that foster an appreciation of cultural and intellectual diversity.

d) linkages with other programs, including articulation agreements, co-sponsored academic majors, minors, or concentrations, joint appointments of faculty members, cross-listed courses, student internships, practica, or field-based projects with organizations outside the University, resources shared with other academic units, dual degrees, and 3-2, 4-1, or other undergraduate + graduate degree arrangements.