

PART D.

REVIEW OF GRADUATE PROGRAMS

I. GUIDELINES FOR GRADUATE PROGRAM REVIEW

The periodic review of graduate programs is necessary to ensure that graduate programs maintain quality and currency. The Chancellor and members of CCGS view graduate program review as an institutional responsibility. The process is designed to provide information to faculty and administrators at the local level, so that necessary changes can be made to maintain program quality. The process is not meant to be used to compare programs across the University System of Ohio or to determine state funding of graduate programs.

Although graduate program review is considered an institutional responsibility and will necessarily vary from one university to another, all universities must employ graduate program review procedures that are informed by the key features and elements outlined in the Council of Graduate Schools 2011 publication, *Assessment and Review of Graduate Programs*¹, and must include a review of each element listed among CCGS “quality standards.”

A. Council of Graduate Schools (CGS) Key Features and Elements of Program Review

The CGS publication recommends that graduate programs be reviewed every five to ten years according to a published timetable. The document also outlines a number of important features of program review:

- the reviews should be evaluative and forward looking;
- the reviews should be fair and transparent as well as distinct from other reviews; and
- the reviews must result in action.

The CGS publication also provides guidelines regarding the elements that should be considered for inclusion in all graduate program reviews. The “key elements” are discussed fully in the CGS publication and include components such as:

- developing and disseminating clear and consistent guidelines;
- obtaining adequate staffing and administrative support;
- conducting a candid program self-study;
- incorporating appropriate surveys and questionnaires;
- including graduate students in the review;
- using both internal and external reviewers;
- obtaining a response from program faculty;
- delivering a final report with recommendations;

¹ Baker, M.J., Carter, M.P., Larick, D.K., & King, M.F. (2011). *Assessment and Review of Graduate Programs*. Washington, DC: Council of Graduate Schools

- implementing the recommendations; and
- following up over time.

B. Quality Standards

Members of CCGS have developed the quality standards listed below. Assessment of continued compliance with these standards could be included in the graduate program review process.

1. Program Faculty

A level of faculty productivity and commitment shall be required commensurate with expectations of graduate program faculty as indicated by the following:

- The number and qualifications of graduate faculty members are judged to be adequate for offering the graduate degrees in the specified areas, and faculty supervise an appropriate number of students.
- The preparation and experience of the faculty are appropriate for offering the graduate degree in an intellectually challenging academic environment as demonstrated by active scholarship and creative activity judged by accepted national standards for the discipline.
 - Faculty members have achieved professional recognition (nationally, internationally).
 - The faculty garners significant external funding, as defined by disciplinary norms, which enhance the graduate program.
 - Directors of dissertations and a majority of committee members generate new knowledge and scholarly and creative activity as determined by disciplinary norms.

2. Program Graduates Since the Most Recent Review

A level of student satisfaction, student accomplishment, and graduate accomplishment exists as evidenced by the following:

- Students express satisfaction with advisement, teaching, and program support services.
- The structure and conduct of the program lead to an appropriate degree completion rate and time-to-degree.
- The predominant employment of graduates within three to five years after graduation is in fields consistent with the mission of the program.
- Graduates demonstrate preparation for career-long learning and success as indicated by periodic surveys of career changes, job satisfaction, and relevance of doctoral training to various career opportunities.
- Accomplishment and potential of program graduates to generate new knowledge or new initiatives in teaching, public service, and/or other practice.

3. Program Vitality

A vital graduate program is dynamic and could possess the following indicators:

- The environment of the program promotes a high level of intellectual interaction among students, graduate faculty, and the larger academic community;
- The curriculum has been updated during the period under review with disciplinary developments;
- Essential resources are provided (e.g., library materials, computer support, laboratory facilities and equipment, student financial support, etc.); and
- Requirements for completion of the degree are deemed appropriate to the degree.

4. Program Demand

A graduate program should be able to demonstrate that there is demand on the part of prospective students and that it is fulfilling a clear need through the following:

- Student demand/enrollment during the period under review: application ratio, student GPA and GRE scores, or other indicators as appropriate; and,
- The extent to which the program meets community, region and state needs and occupational societal demands.

5. Program Interactions

Graduate programs do not exist in isolation but rather in relation to and in comparison to similar programs in the discipline at other institutions and to cognate areas in the same institution. Information regarding appropriate interactions could include:

- Centrality of the program to advanced study in the specific discipline(s) regionally or nationally;
- The ability of the faculty and students to make a particular contribution in this field;
- Interactions, including interdisciplinary, among graduate, undergraduate, and professional programs, as appropriate;
- Interactions with and in collaboration with similar programs at other universities and organizations; and,
- Programmatic access to special leveraging assets such as unique on-campus or off-campus facilities, non-university experts or collaborative institutions in the discipline, industrial or other support, endowments, as well as special funding opportunities.

6. Program Access

There should be evidence that the program has established or seeks to establish an appropriate level of diversity among its faculty and its graduate student body, as evidenced by:

- Trends and expectations in student demographics; and,
- Proven efforts to sustain and enhance diversity of faculty and students.

7. Assessment Mechanisms Used in Program Review

Since quality indicators are increasingly becoming an integral part of ongoing program review, an enhanced recognition of the uses of outcomes assessment in the review process provides a useful tool for program improvement, as demonstrated by:

- A summary of the appropriate outcome measures used to assess program quality; and,
- Procedures must be in place to ensure the use of assessment data for continuous quality improvement of the program.

II. REPORTS TO THE CHANCELLOR OF THE OHIO DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION

A. Institutional Process

Each CCGS member must provide the Chancellor with the university's program review procedures for conducting graduate program reviews. The document must describe the institutional process for graduate program review and must indicate the cycle under which such reviews are conducted.

B. Annual Report

By September 1 of each year, each CCGS member will provide the Chancellor and CCGS with an annual report of their existing graduate programs that were reviewed in the previous academic year. An 'Annual Report' form must be completed and circulated to Chancellor's staff and CCGS via the CCGS list serve and/or shared drive. Annual Report templates are available via the CCGS shared drive. The report must include:

- A list of the graduate programs reviewed;
- For each program reviewed, a summary of the findings related to program quality (i.e., student demand and the extent to which the program meets regional, state, national and societal needs);
- A list of graduate programs that have not been reviewed in the past 10 years with an explanation for the lack of review.

- The list of graduate programs for which admissions have been suspended during the past year should also be included in the university's annual report to CCGS.

Upon receiving the annual reports, the CCGS members will officially "accept" the annual reports as an action that will be recorded in the meeting minutes.