

Self-study and External Review Process for Doctoral Programs

The intent of this review is to be a collaborative and comprehensive process to identify a program's strengths, opportunities for improvement, understand the program's unique contributions to RIT, and review the programs vitality and resource allocation. It is expected that programs complete the self-study and external review process within one year.

Self-study

The program, with guidance from the graduate school, will complete the self-study using the self-study framework. The purpose of the framework is to provide structure for narrative about the program. Due to the disruption of the pandemic, it is recommended that the program focus on the past three years. The program may provide further background information where relevant.

Process

1. The dean of the graduate school will email the program director and dean of the college to initiate the external program review process.
2. The program will assemble an external review committee. It is recommended to include the program director, 1-2 faculty, and an administrative staff.
3. The graduate school's project manager for graduate programming will support the committee through this process.
4. The program will develop a timeline to be approved by the dean of the graduate school.
5. The graduate school will provide the following
 - a. Self-study framework
 - b. Table data for tables 1–4 of the self-study
 - c. Qualtrics template for the student survey
 - d. Email templates for communication with reviewers
 - e. Examples from past self-studies
 - f. Review committee charge
 - g. Guidance and assistance as the program completes the self-study and external review process
6. The program, in collaboration with the graduate school, will complete the self-study using the self-study framework and guidance.
 - a. The program should use the framework sections 1–5 to provide narrative to the reviewers discussing the program goals, structure, curriculum, students, and strengths and challenges.
 - b. The program will complete tables 5a and 5b with faculty information.
 - c. The graduate school will provide tables 1–4 with program data.
 - d. The program will survey current students. A Qualtrics template with sample questions will be provided.
 - e. Appendix information should be provided as links. Materials should be hosted on an accessible drive or website such as Google drive, MS SharePoint or an equivalent, with a link to the files.

7. The self-study will be submitted to the deans of the college and graduate school for review and approval before sending to the external reviewers. The program should plan three weeks for dean's review and requested revisions.
8. Once approved, the self-study should be provided to the reviewers. It is recommended to provide to the external reviewers at least four weeks prior to their campus visit.

External Reviewers

A three to four-person external review committee will be appointed to evaluate the doctoral program. The external review committee members are expected to participate in a two-day, on-site visit. After the visit, reviewers will collaborate to respond to the charges of the committee and submit a written report of findings and recommendations to the dean of the graduate school within four weeks after their visit.

Reviewer Qualifications

- It is expected that three reviewers are faculty with working experience in research, teaching, and mentorship in the discipline. It is preferable to recruit reviewers from peer and or aspirational institutions.
- It is optional to have a fourth reviewer from government or industry if applicable for the program.
- Take precautions to avoid conflict of interest with program leaders, program faculty or other key program stakeholders
- They meet one or more of the following criteria:
 - Recognition as a leader in research relevant to the program under review
 - Demonstrated expertise related to the doctoral program under review
 - Leadership in the field (e.g. membership on editorial boards, journal editor, national associations, serving on NSF or NIH Boards, doctoral program director, innovation in graduate education)
 - Expertise or recognition in diversity, equity, and inclusion related to the discipline

Process

1. The review committee will work with faculty to determine a list of potential reviewers
2. The department's external review committee will review the list and rank order the potential reviewers.
3. The department chair will provide a list of reviewers with information and link to their CV and/or webpage for their top choice of five potential reviewers to the deans of the college and graduate school. It is recommended to submit a list of 6-8 potential reviewers to the deans.
4. The deans of the college and the graduate school will review the potential reviewer list and determine the 3 or 4 reviewers to be invited to campus, rank order the other reviewers put forward, and eliminate any reviewers unfitting for the position.
5. The program will reach out to the potential reviewers, confirm their willingness to serve as an external reviewer, and request a signed conflict of interest.
6. Once three reviewers are confirmed, the department will work with the reviewers to determine dates for their 2-day visit to campus.

Reviewers' Visit

The reviewers should travel to the RIT campus for a two-day visit. It is recommended that reviewers arrive the day before the review begins. The graduate school will provide a

recommended schedule for the review that can be revised and approved by the deans of the graduate school and college.

Travel and Expenses Process

1. The review committee will prepare an estimated budget for the external review, including travel, lodging, meals, and honorarium for each reviewer. The current honorarium is set at \$1000 per reviewer.
2. The dean of the college will submit the budget to the Provost's Office for approval, including the dates of the review. The budget should be sent to ProvostBudget@rit.edu.
3. Travel for the reviewers should be organized by the department with assistance from the college dean's office. RIT travel and honorarium procedures should be followed.
4. The college should incur all expenses for the external review. Once the process is complete, the Provost's office will process a budget transfer for the expenses back to the college.

Schedule and Visit

1. The program, with assistance from the college dean's office, should coordinate with the reviewers to confirm dates of the visit and arrange travel following the process above.
2. The graduate school will provide a sample schedule for the visit. The department may revise the schedule based on scheduling or request reviewers attend events or meetings specific to the program. A final schedule must be submitted to the deans of the college and graduate school for approval at least one month before the reviewers' visit.
3. Site visits should include the following meetings and time blocks.
 - Program director and relevant department chair(s)
 - Program faculty
 - Students
 - College dean
 - Dean and associate provost of the graduate school
 - External review committee reserved meeting time(s)
 - Scheduled breaks
 - Debriefing session with program director, program executive committee, and deans of the college and graduate school

* Note: External Review Committee members may request additional meetings with campus representatives and/or changes to the schedule as appropriate.
4. The program is responsible for reserving space for review meetings and any catering or facility expenses incurred.
5. The program should provide meeting notices and schedules to all people participating in the review.

Written Review and Response

After the visit, the reviewers are expected to submit a written report in response to the self-study and visit. The written report should respond to the charge provided to the reviewers by the dean of the graduate school. The program will then respond to the report before the external review process is complete.

Process

1. The reviewers will submit their report to the program chair and deans of the college and graduate school.
2. The program director should work with the program's external review committee to prepare a response to the external reviewers' report, directly addressing the feedback

and recommendations. The response should include specific considerations and plans for action that can be addressed at the program level. The response may also include considerations for action at the college, graduate school, or university level.

3. The program director will meet with the dean of their college to discuss the review and response.
4. Once approved by the college dean, the program director will share the response with the dean of the graduate school. The dean may provide further feedback on the response document.
5. A final response is submitted by the program to the deans of the college and graduate school.
6. The dean of the graduate school shares the self-study, external reviewers' report, and program response with the provost.