

GUIDELINES FOR DEPARTMENTAL REVIEW

Departmental review is an important process that permits individual department chairpersons the opportunity to review in a systematic way the progress made by his or her department over several years. This process identifies both strengths and weaknesses of the program and highlights targets for improvement as well as methods to achieve that improvement. At the same time, the review assesses the departmental mission and goals within the framework of those of the School of Medicine. This assures that the department is an integral component of the institution with a common purpose.

Departmental review is a comprehensive process that requires not only the collection of data from a wide variety of sources, but also observations and evaluation from a host of individuals including department faculty members and staff, representatives from other departments, administrators, resident physicians and medical students, and outside agencies.

There are four components of the departmental review process, and each is structured to provide a unique element of the outcome.

1. **Preparation of the database** using the Departmental Review Questionnaire as a guideline provides an assessment of departmental performance in several dimensions, including education, clinical services, scholarly activity, service, organization, and finances. This process should take between six weeks and three months.
2. **Internal review** uses the database as well as interviews to assess the various dimensions of departmental performance. The Internal Review Committee is composed of a defined but broadly based group of faculty members from throughout the campus. The committee works under a strictly enforced charge of confidentiality to prepare an assessment of the department under review. A written report of this review is provided to the Regional Dean and also serves as a reference document for the External Review Consultants. This process should take no more than one month.
3. **External review** is conducted by a panel of external consultants selected by the Regional Dean from a panel of potential participants recommended by the Chairperson and the Regional Dean. The review panel visits the campus for two days during which time it reviews the database and conducts interviews of key individuals. Based upon their findings, they conduct an exit interview with the Regional Dean and prepare a written report within two weeks after their visit. This written document is used by

the Regional Dean in subsequent considerations of the department.

4. **Summary review and action by the Regional Dean** occurs after all reports have been submitted. The Regional Dean meets with the Department Chairperson to review the summary of the database and the findings and recommendations of the review committees. This meeting is confidential and is meant to convey the Regional Dean's assessment of the department as well as his/her recommendations for improvement or change. The Department Chairperson may present additional information or perspectives on the content of the various reports and on the conclusions reached.

Preparation of the Database

The Department Chairperson is notified in writing by the Regional Dean that his/her department is to be reviewed. The notification should include a list of key dates in the process as well as a description of the process, a copy of the Departmental Review Questionnaire to be used as a guideline in the preparation of the self-study database, and instructions about recommendations for external reviewers.

When the Department Chairperson receives notification that his/her department is to be reviewed, s/he should examine the Departmental Review Questionnaire and develop a plan to respond to the requests for information contained in that document. Much of the information should be readily available from departmental documents, but some data will need to be obtained from diverse sources including the billing office, affiliated hospitals, and Health Sciences Center records. The Chairperson should designate individuals to assist with the collection and collation of the data, but s/he should also develop narrative responses as appropriate. The Questionnaire is designed to invite written responses. These responses should be sufficiently detailed so that the reader is able to obtain a clear idea of the departmental position. In general, a simple "yes" or "no" answer is not considered sufficiently responsive to be an acceptable response.

The departmental response to the Questionnaire should be in written form. It may be single-spaced but it should have sufficient margins and printed in 12 point typeface. It should be submitted to the Regional Dean's office no later than the date specified in the letter of notification; the original and ten (10) unbound copies should be submitted.

Internal Review

Committee Selection

The Regional Dean will appoint a committee, composed of faculty members from the Texas Tech System as well as the El Paso campus, according to guidelines established for the composition of the committee. Two committee members will be drawn from the faculty of the department under review. In the event that the department is too small for this representation, one faculty member will be selected. One chairperson of the same discipline but from another Texas Tech campus will be included. Three additional members will be drawn from departments with strong working relationships with the department under review. Efforts will be made to select members representative of various constituencies including seniority, gender, and discipline.

The committee will be chaired by the Associate Dean.

Committee Responsibilities

All committee deliberations will be conducted in strict confidence. Breach of confidentiality will be grounds for disciplinary action.

The organizational meeting of the committee will be held according to the schedule put forth in the Regional Dean's letter of notification of review. At that meeting, the Regional Dean will issue the formal charge of the committee, including a schedule of deliberations and reports.

The committee will review the published database provided by the department under review. Using this database, the committee will perform its own fact-finding activities. These activities may include the request for additional data from the department, the request for additional data from various offices within the Health Sciences Center, and interviews of relevant individuals including faculty members, staff members, resident physicians, and medical students. The committee will meet with the Department Chairperson to discuss their findings and to obtain additional information from the Department Chairperson.

At the conclusion of their review, the committee should prepare a written report of their findings and recommendations to the Regional Dean. This report becomes a part of the written documentation of the departmental review. The Regional Dean should use this report as the basis of meeting with the Department Chairperson. This meeting will include the findings and recommendations of the committee; the meeting will also serve as preparation for the external review process.

Schedule

It is essential that the committee work within the timelines established by the Regional Dean.

External Review

Committee Selection

It is expected that external reviewers will be fully aware of the academic environment of the Texas Tech campus in El Paso. Thus, they should be drawn from medical schools with similar missions and of similar size.

The Department Chairperson and the Regional Dean will both develop a slate of potential reviewers. One reviewer will be drawn from each of these lists. A third reviewer will be selected from the combined lists with mutual agreement of the Chairperson and the Regional Dean. Invited participants must be able and willing to work within the time constraints of the review process.

Committee members will execute a contract with Texas Tech describing their and Texas Tech's responsibilities.

Committee Responsibilities

The review committee agrees to travel to El Paso on the appointed date and to confer with campus representatives during the days scheduled for the review.

Committee members must receive all study materials, including the departmental database and the internal review committee report, no later than two weeks before their scheduled visit.

Based upon their review of study materials, the committee will consider a proposed agenda including suggestions for interviews. They may request interviews of individuals not included on the original list.

The individual selected by mutual agreement should serve as the chairperson of the committee and assume responsibility for preparing the written report.

The committee accepts that its work is conducted confidentially and that the products of their work, including verbal and written reports, are confidential documents.

In recognition of their services, the committee members will receive an honorarium consistent with the policies of the Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center along with reimbursement for travel, food, lodging, and other personal expenses.

Schedule

Deliberations and reports of the committee must comply with the timelines established in the Regional Dean's letter of notification.