

Department/Program Periodic Review Process (Revised November 2015)

The Dean of the Faculty (DOF) and Committee on Academic Policy (CAP) support the periodic review of each department or academic program to help ensure its long-term strength, vigor, and vitality. Each department/program normally conducts a review once every 10 years to assess its strengths and weaknesses and to provide the opportunity for strategic long-term planning. The reports produced by this process will be used by the Dean and CAP for use in long-term planning, including in the allocation process and in facilities planning.

For ease of exposition the term department is used in the language that follows, but the process applies to all departments and programs.

Types of Periodic Reviews

The Dean of Faculty, in consultation with the CAP subcommittee and the department, conducts an external periodic review which includes a campus visit by a team of two or three external consultants to interview faculty, staff, and students, to address the questions posed by the department and DOF Office, to assess the College's facilities and other resources, and to inquire into the details of department goals and plans that may not be apparent in the written documents, and may include how the interaction among faculty and between faculty and students supports the department mission or whether department facilities and equipment are adequate to support the department mission. Reviews should also address how the department contributes to broader institutional curricular programs through participation in the Writing, Quantitative and Symbolic Reasoning, Oral Presentation, and First Year Course Programs.

In advance of a department making an allocation request, any department that has not had a complete external review within the last five years should conduct a mid-cycle curricular review whereby the Dean and department agree on three outside experts to evaluate the department's curriculum without visiting campus. In this curricular review, the department provides a brief report for the reviewers about departmental personnel, the courses and concentration requirements, and enrollments. The reviewers might engage in remote consultation with each other and with the department as necessary and are asked to respond with written comments.

External Periodic Review

Scheduling of department reviews. In the fall semester of each academic year the office of the DOF and CAP meet to select departments for review in the following academic year. The selected departments are notified by the DOF office and provided with a summary of the process and a timeline for the review is established with the department. Whenever possible, reviews shall occur in the fall semester; this increases the likelihood that CAP members and the department will complete their responsibilities for the review before the end of the academic year

Assembling the Review Team. Before the beginning of the semester before the review, the Dean of Faculty consults with the department chair on the composition of the external review team (usually 3 members) and reviews the planning process. For fall semester reviews, a list of 3–5 reviewers nominated by the department should be submitted to the DOF by the end of June; for spring semester reviews, a list of 3–5 reviewers nominated by the department should be

submitted to the DOF by mid-August. The office of the Dean of Faculty invites reviewers, with at least one drawn from the department list and sets the dates for the review. The CAP forms a subcommittee of two members to participate in the review. For continuity, CAP sub-committee members should not both be leaving CAP the same year as the review.

Preparing the Self Study. Six weeks before the scheduled visit by the review team, the department submits a self-study report to the DOF office and the CAP subcommittee. Funding from the DOF is available to support department retreats and campus visits for the purpose of developing a long-term plan and the self-study for the review. In addition, the Registrar's Office and the Office of Institutional Research can assist in some data gathering for the self-study. In particular, the Office of Institutional Research & Assessment has prepared links to relevant parts of the Planning Notebook (listed below) to assist in the preparation of the self-study. If additional information is needed, departments can be in touch with OIRA.

Enrollments: <https://my.hamilton.edu/oir/enrollment>

Faculty & Staff: <https://my.hamilton.edu/oir/faculty-staff>

Concentrations, Minors, and Outcomes: <https://my.hamilton.edu/oir/gradretnoutcomes>

The departmental self-study should provide reviewers with in-depth background on the department's curriculum, faculty scholarship, departmental personnel and staffing, and facilities. The department, as warranted, should include discussion of any issues on which it would like the reviewers' advice. The self-study should include, but is not limited to, consideration of the following:

A. Curriculum

1. What is the department's curricular mission? How does each faculty and staff member contribute to that mission? How is that mission generally reflected in the curriculum?
2. How does the present curriculum change to prepare concentrators and non-concentrators for life after graduation, in both the particular and in the general sense?
3. Are recent changes in the discipline or field reflected in the department curriculum? If not, how will the department address these changes?
4. How does the department faculty contribute to the education of non-concentrators?
5. What curricular connections does the department currently have through contributions to interdisciplinary programs and which connections or new interdisciplinary programs could the department contribute to in the future?
6. In what ways does the department support the broader curricular goals of the College? What contributions does the department make specifically to programs in writing, quantitative reasoning, oral presentations, and first year courses?
7. What role does off-campus study play in your curriculum?
8. To what extent and how are issues of diversity and inclusion addressed in the curriculum?
9. Do enrollment trends raise questions that need to be addressed?
10. Are department courses sufficiently rigorous? How do department grade distributions fit into those of cognate fields and those of the College?
11. How will the department ascertain the success of its courses, the concentration, and its overall mission? A survey of department alumni and other forms of student input may be useful in addressing these questions among other methods.

7. Does the department make appropriate contributions to College's goals/core programs (e.g., diversity, FYC, WI, QSR, OP)?
 8. How does the department consider diversity and inclusion in enhancing its curriculum and in informing their goals?
- B. Personnel
1. Are department faculty sufficiently aware of professional developments in their field?
 2. Do they continue to participate in recent trends in scholarship?
 3. Do they demonstrate a trajectory of continuing development?
 4. What is the reputation of this department among professional colleagues?
 5. What kind of long-term planning has the department engaged in?
 6. In what ways has the department demonstrated its commitment and efforts to hire and retain a diverse faculty?
- C. Facilities and other resources
1. Are the department's facilities and equipment adequate for what the College expects and for what the department itself hopes to achieve?
 2. Is the quality of interpersonal interaction among faculty, and between faculty and students, conducive to the fulfillment of the department's mission?
 3. Is staffing adequate to support the department's mission and goals? What efficiencies could be realized to maximize achievement of the department's mission and goals?

The Campus Visit. The review team normally visits campus for two days over which time they meet with the department or program faculty, members of the CAP subcommittee, the Associate Dean and Dean of Faculty, and others with input on the review such as departmental support staff and faculty from affiliate departments. Exit interviews with the review team are held at the end of the visit for the department, the Dean, and the CAP subcommittee to hear the review team's initial observations and recommendations.

The Report, Recommendations, and Response. The external review team submits a written report to the DOF within four weeks of their visit. This is shared with the department and the CAP subcommittee.

After the review team submits its report, the CAP subcommittee prepares a preliminary summary within two weeks of receiving the reviewer's written report and shares its summary with the entire CAP and the Dean of Faculty's Office. The written summary is then shared with the department.

The DOF office will then organize a meeting of the Dean, ADOF, the CAP subcommittee, and the faculty of the department to discuss the review team's report, the CAP preliminary summary, and the department's response. The meeting may also serve to gather additional information and to discuss implementation of a plan for moving forward with recommendations of the review. Normally, this meeting occurs within a few weeks of receiving the review team's report. If

necessary, CAP may revise their summary before submitting the final summary the DOF and the department.

The department then submits to the Dean a written response to the review and the CAP summary. In this response, the department should include a five-year plan that outlines implementation of objectives specified in the self-study and external review.

An on-line archive of department reviews including the self-study, the external review report, the CAP summary, and departmental response will be maintained. These documents will be made available to CAP in making future allocation decisions.

Mid-Cycle Curricular Review

Scheduling of mid-cycle curricular reviews. When an allocation request is anticipated by a department either through retirement, resignation, or expansion and the most recent external review of the department is five or more years old, the department should schedule a mid-cycle review of their curriculum. It is up to the department to contact the DOF office to begin scheduling.

Assembling the Review Team. Four weeks before the semester preceding the review, the department chair consults with the Dean of Faculty on the composition of the mid-cycle curricular review team. A list of 3–5 reviewers nominated by the department should be submitted to the DOF at that time. The office of the Dean of Faculty invites reviewers and sets the dates for submission of departmental materials. These reviews normally should be scheduled and completed within a single semester.

Preparing the Curricular Materials for the Review. By the assigned deadline, the department submits to the DOF office all relevant curricular materials. These documents should include a brief description of personnel and their roles in the curriculum, a copy of course descriptions, a listing of the course requirements for the major (and minor, if applicable), and the average enrollments per course for the last three years, along with a 3–5 page report summarizing the department’s philosophy and current thinking about the curriculum including both strengths and concerns. The departmental summary, which may include any information that the department considers useful in assessing the department’s curriculum, should specifically include consideration of the following:

1. What is the department’s curricular mission?
2. Are recent changes in the discipline or field reflected in the department curriculum? If not, how will the department address these changes?
3. Do enrollment trends raise questions that need to be addressed?
4. What curricular issues have or have not been addressed since the last external review?

The Registrar’s Office and the Office of Institutional Research can assist in some data gathering for the summary. In particular, the Office of Institutional Research has prepared links to relevant parts of the Planning Notebook (listed below) to assist in the preparation of the self-study. If additional information is needed, departments can be in touch with OIR.

Enrollments: <https://my.hamilton.edu/oir/enrollment>

Faculty & Staff: <https://my.hamilton.edu/oir/faculty-staff>

Concentrations, Minors, and Outcomes: <https://my.hamilton.edu/oir/gradretnoutcomes>

All materials for the review (including the summary and supporting documents) will be available electronically to the department, the mid-cycle review team, and to the DOF office.

Task of the Reviewers. The mid-cycle review team is expected to confine their review to curricular issues including the department mission and planning and will simply be asked to respond to the department's summary report and the materials submitted for curricular review. In some circumstances the DOF may pose additional questions to the review team once the review materials have been assembled.

The Review and Report. The members of the review team may consult with each other and/or the department during or at the end of the review and will normally submit their individual final written reports (3–5 pages) to the DOF within three weeks after receiving the departmental materials. This report is shared with the department and made available to the CAP at the time of an allocation request by the department.