The Dean of the Faculty and Committee on Academic Policy 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 5-10 years to assess its strengths and weaknesses and to provide opportunities for strategic planning. The reports produced by this process will be used by the Dean and CAP for use in long-term planning, e.g., the allocation process and 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.

I. Overview and Timing of the Process

A. The year prior to the review
   • The Office of the Dean of Faculty (subsequently referred to as DOF) and the CAP chair meet in the fall to select departments for review in the following year and notifies the selected departments.
   • The DOF meets with each department chair to discuss the department’s mission, to review the planning process. The DOF reports the results of these discussions to the CAP chair.

B. The year of the review
   • The department submits a self-study and plan to the DOF office and CAP subcommittee. These materials need to be completed six weeks prior to any scheduled visit of a review team (see section IV below).
   • The CAP subcommittee and the DOF evaluate the department’s self-study and the report of the review committee, and collect any additional information they might require.
   • The CAP subcommittee prepares a summary of the review team’s findings and shares with the entire CAP.
   • The Dean, ADOF, CAP subcommittee, and departmental faculty meet to discuss CAPs summary and the department’s response to the external review.
   • If revisions are necessary the CAP subcommittee sends a final summary of findings to the department and the Dean (see section V below).
   • The department has an opportunity to respond to the CAP report.

C. Deadlines
   • *Fall semester reviews (*preferred timing because of CAP schedule)
     o A list of 3-5 reviewers nominated by the department should be submitted to the DOF by the end of June. This allows administrators to begin contacting reviewers and coordinating schedules for the fall.
     o The self-study should be completed by the end of July. This gives reviewers adequate time to prepare for the campus visit.
   • Spring semester reviews
     o A list of reviewers should be submitted by the end of mid-August.
The self-study should be completed by mid-December.

II. The Planning Process: Defining the Issues

The process of a department review begins with meetings between the DOF and the department chair to discuss the department’s mission and to plan for a self-study of the department. Funds from the DOF will be available to support department retreats and campus visits for the purpose of developing a plan. Topics to be included in the self-study may include:

A. Curriculum
   - Should the present curriculum change to better prepare concentrators and non-concentrators for life after graduation?
   - Are recent changes in the discipline or field reflected in the department curriculum? If not, how will the department address these changes?
   - How does the department faculty contribute to the education of non-concentrators, either through courses or participation in interdisciplinary programs?
   - Do enrollment trends (provided by the Registrar) raise questions that need to be addressed?
   - Are department courses sufficiently rigorous? How do department grade distributions fit into those of cognate fields and those of the College?
   - 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.

B. Scholarship
   - What role does faculty scholarship have in the department?
   - Are the department’s expectations for scholarly activity congruent with its mission? What is the appropriate balance between teaching and scholarship for department faculty?

C. Personnel
   - Are retirements or other personnel changes anticipated within the next 4-6 years?
   - What are the implications of personnel changes for curricular offerings and faculty job descriptions, etc?
   - How will curricular changes affect future allocation requests or job descriptions?
   - How are junior faculty mentored?
   - What are the personnel barriers to long-term planning?
   - Does the culture of the department encourage the faculty to work together as a team?

D. Facilities
   - What facilities changes, major equipment purchases, changes in library resources, staff and administrative resources, etc. will be helpful, necessary, or essential for the department to fulfill its goals in the coming 5 years? This information may be particularly helpful for C&D as it identifies fund-raising opportunities.
Useful links for this phase of the self-study and planning process. The Office of Institutional Research has prepared the links to the relevant Planning Notebook sections 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

**III. Types of External Reviews:** (1) campus visit by an external review team and (2) remote consultation.

A. The Dean, in consultation with the CAP subcommittee and the department, may arrange for a visit to the campus by a team of two or three external consultants to interview faculty, staff, and students, to address the questions listed under section IV below, 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, such as whether the interaction among faculty and between faculty and students supports the department/program mission; or whether department facilities and equipment are adequate to support the department mission.

B. The Dean and the department may ask outstanding faculty at other institutions to evaluate the department plan and supporting materials, such as CV’s, department/program catalogue copy and course syllabi, and other information the Dean, CAP subcommittee, or department considers useful. Among the questions these external consultants should be asked to address are listed in section IV below. They would not be expected to visit the campus.

**IV. Task for External Reviewers:** External reviewers are expected to conduct a rigorous review of the department’s mission and plan. Questions that the review team might be asked to consider are listed below. In some circumstances the DOF may pose additional questions to the review team. It would be particularly helpful for reviewers to summarize their findings with a specific set of actionable recommendations that take into consideration the College’s broader goals and needs. The time-frame for receiving the final report from reviewers is normally 4 weeks after the campus visit.

A. Curriculum
   - Are the department’s goals appropriate for the department, the concentrators, and the mission of the college?
   - Does the department’s plan set out reasonable steps to achieve their goals?
   - What are appropriate measures for determining the degree of success in achieving these goals?
• Are the goals consistent with the future direction of the field?

B. Personnel
• Are department faculty sufficiently aware of professional developments in their field?
• Do they continue to participate in recent trends in scholarship?
• Do they demonstrate a trajectory of continuing development?
• What is the reputation of this department among professional colleagues?

C. Facilities and other resources
• Are the department’s facilities and equipment adequate for what the College expects and for what the department itself hopes to achieve?
• Is the quality of interpersonal interaction among faculty, and between faculty and students, conducive to the fulfillment of the department’s mission?

V. CAP Summary and Recommendations
• After the review team submits its report, the CAP subcommittee will prepare a preliminary summary and share the findings with the full CAP and the DOF office. A written summary will be shared with the department.
• The DOF office will organize a meeting of the Dean, ADOF, the CAP subcommittee, and the faculty of the department to discuss the results of the external report and the CAP’s preliminary summary, to gather additional information, and to discuss implementation of a plan for moving forward. Normally, this meeting occurs within 4 weeks of receiving the review team’s report.
• If necessary, CAP may revise their final summary before submitting it to the DOF and the department.
• The department will submit to the Dean a written response to the CAP report. The department should include a 5 year plan that outlines implementation of objectives specified in the initial self-study.

General notes for CAP and ADOF planning
• Recommendations for new allocations must consider the College’s broader needs
• All materials for the review will be available electronically to sub-committee members during the review process.
• An on-line archive of department reviews will be maintained.
• Procedures:
  o Both the Dean’s office and the department will identify external reviewers
  o Whenever possible reviews shall occur in the fall semester; this increases the likelihood that CAP members will complete their responsibilities for the review before the end of the academic year
  o For continuity CAP sub-committee members should not both be leaving CAP the same year as the review