



# Site Visit Guidelines

## Preparing for the Site Visit

The Academic Program Review (APR) will send the academic unit's Program Review Self-Study Report (and Appendices) to the external evaluators and the Review Advisory Panel (RAP) 6 weeks before the site visit and make initial arrangements for the dates of the program review site visit during the academic year. The academic unit will work with the Office of the Provost to prepare for the program review team site visit and to develop a schedule for the external evaluators' three-day site visit.

Academic units are responsible for arranging refreshments and lunch for all of the evaluators on the first full day of meetings. The Office of the Provost will arrange airfare/transportation and hotel/lodging, and payment of honoraria to external evaluators following the program review site visit and submission of the External Evaluators' and RAP Reports. Academic units should consult with the Academic Program Review office for questions regarding budget expenses for program review.

The department/school will provide meeting spaces for scheduled meetings of the evaluators with the various groups. It is the academic unit's responsibility to arrange tours of its facilities, as well as to reach out to faculty, staff, and students to meet with the evaluators.

**Please DO NOT CONTACT the evaluators before the site visit.**

## Elements of the Site Visit

During the site visit, all of the evaluators will meet with program faculty, staff, students, and administrators.

## DAY 1 – Travel for External Evaluators

Flight, lodging and travel arrangements are made by the Academic Program Review Office. The evaluators will arrange a time to meet to discuss the site visit and self-study.



## **DAY 2 - External Evaluators and RAP**

### **1. Meeting with Administrators**

A meeting will be held at the start of the site visit with the Associate Provost for Academic Programs and Associate Vice President for Institutional Effectiveness, the Associate Dean of the Graduate School (if applicable), and the Program Coordinator for Academic Program Review. The purpose of this meeting is to orient the evaluators to the goals and agenda of the site visit, and to answer any questions they have on their roles in the program review and site visit, or on the academic unit's Program Review Report and academic programs.

### **2. Meetings with Dean and Department Chairs/Assoc. Dean**

Two simultaneously meetings will take place with the external evaluators and RAP. Each group will meet with the dean and the chair/assoc. dean of the Department. The purpose of this meeting is to answer any questions they have that are specifically for the dean or chair to answer.

### **3. Flex Time**

This time should be scheduled to meet the program's needs. Examples would include a tour of facilities, research presentations, student presentations, or additional meetings as necessary. Contact APR office for assistance.

### **4. Luncheon with Evaluators and Guests**

The Department arranges a room and is responsible for inviting the guests. Guests should include external people who have an association with the department. External means external to the University, NOT external to the department. University personnel (retired or active) are not allowed as guests. Examples include: corporate colleagues, community members/leaders, donors, and/or alumni. Up to 2 faculty from the department may attend to facilitate introductions - this includes the chair/assoc. dean. Maximum number of external guests at the luncheon is 8-9 people for a total of 15 people (5 evaluators, 1 – 2 faculty, 8- 9 guests). The APR office will provide the food.



## **5. Meetings with Faculty Members**

Depending on the size of the academic unit, two or three small group meetings may be held with faculty so that faculty members will have a chance to express their views and most (or all) programs in the academic unit are represented. One possible grouping is to create separate meetings with Senior Faculty and one for Junior Faculty. In addition, the evaluators should meet with the faculty members/committee who wrote the unit's Program Review Report and with the faculty members/committees whose work is most closely related to the program review. The department chair (or deans) should not attend any faculty meetings with site visitors so that faculty members feel free to discuss issues and concerns openly with the evaluators.

## **6. Meetings with Students**

Some of the most helpful meetings of a site visit are those with students. Because students often bring up questions for which the site visitors will seek answers, this meeting is scheduled on the first day of the visit. The person assigned to escort the evaluators should introduce the external evaluators and explain the purpose of their visit, then leave so that the students feel free to discuss any issues and concerns with the site visit team. Since undergraduate and graduate students may have different concerns, separate meetings should be arranged if possible for these students. Meetings with 5-15 students are most effective in promoting discussion and providing helpful insights and information for site visitors.

## **7. Dinner for Evaluators**

RAP evaluators will provide transportation to the dinner and to the hotel after the dinner is complete for the external evaluators. Only the evaluators will be permitted to attend the dinner. This will allow time for all of the evaluators to discuss the day's events. The APR office will arrange the dinner.

## **8. Preparation of the RAP Report**

At the end of the day, RAP will arrange a time to begin a draft of the Review Advisory Panel Report that summarizes their main findings and recommendations. The APR office will provide procedures for writing the report.



## **DAY 3 – External Evaluators Only**

### **1. Exit Meetings with Dean and Department Chairs/Assoc. Dean**

At least an hour should be scheduled for the site visitors to meet with the dean and department chair/assoc. dean beyond the orientation meeting at the start of the site visit. Because site visitors will often have questions from their conversations with students and faculty, some time for this meeting with the department chair and dean is scheduled in the morning.

### **2. Exit Meeting/Briefing**

The site visit will conclude with an exit meeting/briefing attended by the Associate Provost for Academic Programs and Associate Vice President for Institutional Effectiveness, the Associate Dean of the Graduate School (if applicable), and the Program Coordinator for Academic Program Review. At this meeting the external evaluators will ask questions from their conversations with students, faculty, chair/assoc. dean and dean. In addition, they will complete the forms for their honorarium.

### **3. Preparation of the Evaluators' Report**

At the end of the site visit, the external evaluators will begin to draft the External Evaluation that summarizes their main findings and recommendations. The site visit schedule will include 1-3 hours in the early afternoon of the final day of the site visit for the external evaluators to prepare and finish their draft report. The APR office will provide procedures for writing the report, lunch and a quiet private office or room for the external evaluators.

### **4. Transportation for external evaluators**

The APR office will provide transportation to the airport for the external evaluators.



## **Recommendations on Hosting the Site Visit**

- The faculty members or chair of the department should serve as local hosts for the site visit, picking up the external evaluators at their hotel, escorting them to meetings, arranging return transportation, and providing general assistance.
- On the final day of the site visit, the academic unit should arrange for site visitors to check out of their hotel before the designated hour in order to avoid being charged for an extra day, unless the visitors have requested to stay an additional night.
- Site visitors' evening hours should be kept free, following an early dinner. Lavish entertaining is not expected or encouraged, and modest funding is provided for meals. External evaluators will be reimbursed for reasonable costs and should be instructed to save receipts.

A sample itinerary can be found here: