



**Procedure for Periodic External Review  
of Academic Degree Programs  
For reviews occurring fall 2018-spring 2020**

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**I. Purpose**

Regular, periodic reviews of academic degree programs provide a formal process for thorough, fact-based documentation and evaluation of the programs, the infrastructure supporting them, and the plans for their growth and improvement. A distinctive feature of external reviews is that they include evaluation of the offering unit’s<sup>1</sup> resources and how those resources are managed to promote the overall success of the degree program. Michigan Tech conducts external reviews for undergraduate and graduate programs as described in this document.

In the procedures described in this document, if there is no college dean associated with the unit under review, any reference to "college dean" is to be omitted. If an

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<sup>1</sup> Unit is defined as the department or school offering the program(s) being reviewed.

external review does not consider graduate programs, any reference to the "graduate dean" is to be omitted.

## II. Review Cycle

Degree programs that are reviewed by an external professional accreditor (such as ABET, AACSB, SAF) will be reviewed by those accreditors according to the accreditor's regular cycle. For those degree programs, the final report submitted by the external accreditor will constitute the unit's final *External Review Report (ERR)*, which is then routed and evaluated according to the post-final-ERR steps of the non-professional-accreditor external review process, as described in Section IV.

Degree programs that are not reviewed by professional accreditors, but are within units that do have at least one professionally accredited program, may be reviewed on a cycle that is of the same length as the professional accreditation or else on a six-year cycle (undergraduate) or a ten- to twelve-year cycle (graduate).<sup>2</sup>

Degree programs within units where no programs are reviewed by professional accreditors will be externally reviewed on a six-year cycle (undergraduate) or a ten-to twelve-year cycle (graduate, with a mid-cycle internal review).

The undergraduate and graduate programs within a given unit should be addressed as part of a single review process. If an external professional accreditor reviews degree programs only at one level, however (e.g., only at the undergraduate level), it is recommended that degree programs at the other levels (e.g., graduate programs) be reviewed as soon as possible following the completion of external review by the professional accreditor. When an external professional accreditor that does not review all degree levels or all degrees is involved, units may choose to offset the review cycle of non-accredited programs by a number of years so that a regular staggering of accredited program review from non-accredited program review occurs.

The academic deans, the graduate dean, and provost shall regularly review the plan for upcoming reviews to accommodate changes in accrediting timelines, schedules, or cycles.

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<sup>2</sup> See *Graduate Program Procedures* posted at <<http://www.mtu.edu/provost/curriculum/degree-programs/periodic-review/>>. The *Graduate Program Internal Review* is also referred to as the "B1" process to distinguish it from the *Graduate Program External Review*, discussed in this procedure, the "B2" process.

### III. Responsibility and Locus of the Review

Units are responsible for ensuring that all degree program reviews are conducted at the specified intervals. Departments and schools are also responsible for preparation and submission of all unit documentation associated with the review process; this includes a self-study document that is to be prepared in the academic year preceding the academic year of the visit (i.e., in the self-study year).

Degree programs reviewed within the context of professional accreditation follow the accreditors' review guidelines.

Reviews of other degree programs are initiated by the provost through a memo to the cognizant dean(s). The coordinating office (CO) for external review of programs in a school will be the office of the provost. For programs in a college, the CO will be the office of the college dean. The coordinating office will work with the involved unit(s), the provost, and the graduate dean (when graduate programs are under review) to follow the established timeline, identify specific expectations for the review, and identify external and internal reviewers (Section IV).

### IV. Procedural Schedule for an External Review (See [Table 1](#) for visual summary)

Degree programs reviewed by a professional accretor will follow the accretor's guidance on procedural timeline, selection of reviewers, submission of self-study documents, on-site reviews, etc.

Degree programs (including graduate programs) that are not reviewed by an external professional accretor or approval agency will follow the procedural schedule outlined here.

- A. Units with a degree program to be reviewed will be notified by the provost by the end of Week 2 of the spring semester that precedes the self-study year. By Week 14 of that semester, the provost, with input from the college dean and the graduate dean, writes the charge to the (yet-to-be-named) external review team. The charge is then shared with the involved unit, so the unit's preparation of the self-study document is informed of the elements of the charge. See Section VII for delivery of the charge to the review team.
- B. Commencing in the fall of the self-study year (the year preceding the fall external review visit), units will prepare their self-study document (Section V) in monthly consultation with the coordinating office. During the spring semester of the self-study year, the following deadlines will apply:

- Units will identify potential reviewers by the end of Week 2 (Section VI).
  - The coordinating office, with input from the graduate dean and approval from the provost, will select the members of the review team.
  - The coordinating office will formally invite reviewers by the end of Week 6.
  - Confirmation of reviewers is expected by the end of Week 10.
  - The unit, in consultation with the coordinating office and graduate dean, develops the visit schedule by Week 14.
  - The unit's draft self-study document is due to the coordinating office by the end of Week 3 of the summer semester.
  - The coordinating office will review the self study with the provost and the graduate dean and will work with the unit to incorporate any suggestions into the self study. The provost will approve the self study for distribution to the review team.
- C. The coordinating office will provide the self-study document, the charge from the provost, and the visit schedule to the external and internal reviewers at least one month before the scheduled review.
- D. The campus visit by external reviewers will be completed by Week 9 of the fall semester of the external review year. The visit ends with the oral presentation of preliminary findings to the provost, associate provost, graduate dean, college dean, and unit administrators. The draft External Review Report will be due to the coordinating office by the end of Week 12 of that fall semester.
- Copies of the draft External Review Report will be provided by the coordinating office to the unit, provost, and graduate dean for fact checking (Week 12).
  - The unit's fact-checking response to the draft External Review Report is due to the CO by the end of Week 13 of that fall semester. The coordinating office will share the response with the provost and graduate dean.
  - The coordinating office will forward the unit's response to the review team for incorporation or response.
  - The final External Review Report is due to the coordinating office by the end of Week 15 (finals week) of fall semester. The coordinating office discharges the external review team with formal thanks; stipends are paid (Section VI).

- The coordinating office will share the final External Review Report with the unit leadership, who will share and discuss with unit members (Week 15, finals week). The unit writes a letter of response to the final External Review Report and submits the letter, a summary of the report's findings and recommendations, and a set of three to four substantive action items developed by the unit to the coordinating office by the end of Week 3 of the spring semester Year 3 (see Table 1).
- E. The college dean, in consultation with the graduate dean, will prepare a letter of response to the review results (the ERR and unit's response) by Week 7 of the spring semester. The college dean's letter of response is sent to the graduate dean and the provost.
- F. The graduate dean, in consultation with the college dean or provost (for degree programs within schools) will prepare a letter of response to the review results (the ERR, the unit's response, the college dean's letter) by Week 7 of the spring semester. The graduate dean's letter is sent to the provost.
- G. The school dean , or the department chair and college dean (for departmental programs within a college), will meet with the faculty of the unit to discuss the results of the review (the ERR and accumulated responses) by the end of Week 9 of spring semester.
- H. By Week 11 of the spring semester following the review, the unit will provide the provost, for approval, an executive memo that summarizes the review process's outcomes and an action plan including three to four substantive action items aimed at program improvement.
- I. By Week 13 the provost will provide the unit, the college dean, and the graduate dean with the provost's statement of the results of the external program review. This will include follow-up expectations.
- J. In a timely fashion, the provost communicates the results of the external program review to the Board of Trustees and archives the documents associated with the review.

Table 1: Abbreviated procedure to implement an external review of degree program. Linked to list items A-J in section IV (above) and steps shown in the full visual procedure in the appendix.

Year	IV. Steps	Action	When? (deadlines)	
			Semester	Week
1 initial notice	A 1-2	Provost's Office notifies unit of upcoming review, charge is drafted and shared	Spring	14-Feb
2 prep year	3	Unit prepares self-study document with monthly interval reporting to CO,	Fall & Spring	
	B 4-8	Candidate reviewers identified, approved, invited. Visit schedule developed	Spring	2-14
	9-12	Draft self study submitted, reviewed, edited, and approved.		3-14
	C 13	CO distributes self study, charge from the provost (from step 2), and visit schedule	Summer	14
3 year of visit	D 14	On-site campus visit by review team coordinated by the unit; visit ends with oral presentation of preliminary findings	Fall	9
	D 15-19	Draft External Review Report is submitted, corrected for errors, and finalized		12-15
		CO discharges the external review team, with formal thanks; stipends are paid		15
		CO provides final ERR to unit, which is shared with unit members		15
	D 21	After discussion with unit members, unit writes a letter of response to final ERR and submits letter + summary of report findings and recommendations to CO		Spring
	D 22			
	E 23	College dean writes a letter of response	5	
	F 24	Grad dean writes letter of response	7	
	H 25	Unit submits to provost <b>for approval</b> , an executive memo that summarizes review's process and outcomes and an action plan	11	
	I 26	Provost provides unit, college dean, and grad dean with the provost's statement of results of program review and follow-up expectations.		13
J 27-28	Provost communicates to Board of Trustees the executive summary, action plan, and provost's statement. Provost archives the Summary Documentation (Section VIII)	next BoT meeting / once complete		

## V. The Self-Study Document

Each unit with degree programs up for review undergoes a self study to assess the strengths and limitations of the degree programs within the context of the offering unit and its resources. The self study should provide a comprehensive overview of the degree programs that can guide the review team. For degree programs reviewed by professional accreditors, units should conduct the associated self study following the accreditors' guidelines. For all other degree programs, and subject to the approval of the provost, the unit should first consider whether a single review team can review all degree programs within the unit or if the diversity of degree programs calls for multiple review teams. If multiple review teams are approved, then a self-study document for each review team must be prepared. If a single review team is used for multiple degree programs, then a single self-study document is prepared. The principal author(s) of a self-study document may be an individual, such as the department chair/school dean, or may be a committee. The final document should represent a departmental consensus whenever possible.

- A. Data: The self-study shall contain, but not be limited to, the following information and analyses<sup>3</sup>:
- Departmental mission and vision statements and the list of degree-program learning goals for each program covered by the study. Note that for undergraduate degree programs, the university's common eight Undergraduate Student Learning Goals (USLGs) are among each undergraduate degree program's learning goals and should be evident in the list of learning goals for each degree program.
  - Quantitative data: Basic information that should include categories such as faculty (number, ranks, demographics) and staff (roles), with details on how advising is handled; facilities; budgets; students (number, degree programs, demographics); retention and degree completion; placement after graduation; and scholarship (publications, presentations, funding). The department may provide additional data as needed.
  - Results of direct assessments linked to degree-program learning goals, analyses of assessment results, and evidence that results are being used for continuous improvement.

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<sup>3</sup> units should follow the detailed template available at [www.mtu.edu/provost/curriculum/degree-programs/periodic-review/](http://www.mtu.edu/provost/curriculum/degree-programs/periodic-review/)

- Results of surveys of graduates and their employers, as appropriate.
  - Recent initiatives and their effects.
  - Goals for the future.
- B. The self study shall conclude with responses to the following questions (synoptic questions):
- In what ways does the program support both the university's and your college's/school's mission and vision statements?
  - In what ways does the academic program align with the university's strategic plan?
  - In what ways is the program, or are the students, faculty, and staff associated with the program, contributing to an increase in state, national, and international awareness of the quality of Michigan Tech's educational offerings and research capabilities?
  - How do the research and scholarly activities of faculty (and staff as appropriate) enhance the learning experiences for students in the program?
  - What are the principles that guide decisions regarding the allocation of resources for the program?
  - Additional questions may be added by the college dean, the dean of the Graduate School (for reviews of graduate programs), or the provost to gain information from reviewers that will support the University's ongoing continual improvement processes.
  - Appendices: additional information may be presented in appendices that are referred to in the main body of the self-study document.

## **VI. External and Internal Reviewers**

- A. Composition of review team:
- For degree programs reviewed by professional accreditors, units will follow the accreditors' guidelines for the number and selection of external reviewers.
  - For review of all other degree programs:



- Traditionally the review team is composed of three reviewers: two external and one internal.
  1. Programs can recommend modifications to team size and composition by submitting a request to the college dean and the provost's office.
  2. In all cases, external reviewers will outnumber internal reviewers.
- Participation of internal reviewers is intended to improve university-wide appreciation of the aspirations of each academic unit. Internal reviewers will also be able to assist external reviewers in accessing additional campus/unit information, which will improve the efficiency of the review process.

B. Qualifications of reviewers:

- External reviewers should be senior academic faculty members, department chairs, deans, or individuals of similar professional stature. External reviewers should have experience with both undergraduate and graduate education (if graduate programs are under review) in the disciplinary areas represented by the programs under review.
- Internal reviewers must be tenured members of the graduate faculty at Michigan Tech and may not be affiliated with the unit offering the degree program under review. For the review of non-departmental or interdisciplinary programs, internal reviewers must not be affiliated with those programs.

C. Selection of reviewers:

- The unit offering the degree program being reviewed will recommend a slate of at least five potential external and at least five potential internal reviewers to the provost, the college dean, and graduate dean. The provost will make the final selection of the reviewers, with input from the deans.
  - After approval by the provost, the coordinating office will contact potential reviewers to determine their willingness to participate and their availability.
  - The coordinating office will send formal invitations to selected reviewers according to the procedural timeline in Section IV.

- Reviewers who accept the invitation to review must submit a copy of their curriculum vitae to the coordinating office prior to conducting the review.
- D. Reviewer responsibilities:
- One of the external reviewers will serve as the review team lead. This person will be responsible for submitting the reviewers' prepared reports to the coordinating office.
  - The reviewers are to read the self-study document prior to visiting the campus and conducting their on-site review.
- E. Incentives:
- Travel expenses for external reviewers will be paid in accordance with university travel policy.
  - An honorarium will be provided to both internal and external reviewers following completion of the review and submission of the final External Review Report.
  - When the honorarium is not paid according to the guidance of an external professional accreditor, the following will apply:
    - External review team members will receive \$1000.
    - Internal team members will receive \$500. Internal honoraria may be paid either through additional compensation (through a gold form) or transfer to an IRAD account, at the recipient's discretion.

## **VII. Process**

For degree programs reviewed by a professional accreditor, departments and schools should adhere to the accreditor's guidelines for conducting reviews if those guidelines deviate from the process outlined below.

The reviewers will receive a charge from the provost as to the expectations associated with their work. The reviewers will receive and read the self-study prior to their on-campus visit and review.

Each review team visit will include meetings with the following parties:

- The unit's chair/dean
- The college dean
- The graduate dean (if graduate programs are involved)
- Unit faculty, staff, and students

- Other parties as deemed appropriate by the unit (e.g., advisory board members, post-docs) or as requested by the review team (for reasonable requests, as judged by the CO)

Each visit should include a tour of relevant facilities, including research and teaching laboratories, classrooms, and offices. It is expected that the external reviewers will be on campus for approximately two days to ensure a thorough review. The agenda for the visit will be set by the department/school in consultation with and approval of the coordinating office.

At the conclusion of their visit, the reviewers will prepare a draft External Review Report. A standard set of questions,<sup>4</sup> which will be addressed in every review and included in the provost's charge to the review team, will guide development of the reviewers' report.

### **VIII. Summary Documentation of External Review of Program**

Following receipt of the final External Review Report and the conclusion of the follow-up steps noted in Section IV, the provost's office will prepare and archive summary documentation of the external program review containing the following sections in the listed order:

1. the unit's executive memo summarizing the review's process and outcomes.
2. the final External Review Report
3. unit's response to the External Review Report
4. a listing of the principal observations, comments, and recommendations made by the reviewers in their final report, and of the action items developed by the unit.
5. the college dean's response to the final External Review Report
6. the graduate dean's response to the final External Review Report
7. the action plan
8. the provost's statement of results of the review

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<sup>4</sup> These questions will be reviewed on a regular basis by the deans, associate provost(s), and provost and updated as necessary. School deans and/or department chairs may supplement the standard questions with additional queries, and the reviewers will be encouraged to comment on topics not specifically addressed by the provided questions and to make recommendations as needed in order to provide useful feedback to the unit offering the reviewed program.

## **IX. Provost's Report**

The provost will communicate the findings of the external program review to the Board of Trustees in a timely fashion.

## **X. Procedure Review**

The provost, college dean(s), and graduate dean will review, at least every three years, the process for conducting external program reviews and implement any agreed-upon revisions to the process.

## **XI. History of Revisions or Changes**

08/25/2004 Initial Procedures Adopted  
01/19/2016 Revised Procedures open for Review and Comment  
03/01/2016 Revised Based on Comments  
04/05/2016 Revised Based on Comments  
05/19/2016 Revised Based on Comments  
01/09/2017 Revisions from the Graduate School  
02/03/2017 Revised Based on Comments and Revised Schedule for Fall Visit  
04/17/2017 Revised Based on Comments  
04/19/2017 Approved by Provost  
09/04/2018 Revised based on first round of external reviews  
09/19/2018 Approved by Dean's Council and Provost

Appendix: Complete procedure to implement an external review of a degree program (for programs without professional accreditation).

An abbreviated/summary table appears as Table 1 in the main text.

For Reviews in Fall 2018 & 2019

Academic Year	Action	Whose action?	sent to:	copy to:	Final Document Section #	When? (deadlines)		
						Semester	Week #	
1 (initial notification)	1	Provost's Office notifies unit of upcoming review	provost's office	unit	college dean grad dean		Spring	2
	2	Provost, with input from college dean and grad dean, writes charge to be made to the external review team (in step 13) and shares this with the unit preparing the self study	provost's office, with input	unit	college dean grad dean			14
2 (prep year)	3	Unit prepares self-study document through fall and spring of academic year 2 with monthly interval reporting to CO	unit				Fall & Spring	
	4	Unit identifies candidate reviewers (five external and five internal)	unit	provost's office, college dean, grad dean			Spring	2
	5	CO selects reviewers, with input from grad dean, and sends to provost for approval	CO, with input	provost				6
	6	CO invites approved reviewers	CO	review team				6
	7	CO confirms composition of review team, team chair is identified, and final team is reported to unit.	CO	unit	provost's office grad dean			10
	8	Unit, in consultation with CO and grad dean, develops visit schedule	unit, with input					14
	9	Unit submits draft self study to CO	unit	CO			Summer	3
	10	CO circulates the draft self study to provost's office and grad dean	CO	provost's office, grad dean				3
	11	Feedback from provost's office, college dean, grad dean is incorporated into the self study	unit					
	12	Provost approves final self study for distribution to the external review team	provost					
	13	CO distributes self study, charge from the provost (from step 2), and visit schedule to review team at least one month before team visit	CO	review team	provost's office grad dean			14
3 (year of visit)	14	On-site campus visit by review team coordinated by the unit; visit ends with oral presentation of preliminary findings to provost, assoc. provost, grad dean, college dean, and unit administrators	unit				Fall	9
	15	External review team chair provides CO with draft written External Review Report (ERR)	review team chair	CO	provost's office			12
	16	CO provides draft ERR to unit and grad dean to review for errors of fact	CO	unit grad dean				12
	17	Unit, with input from provost's office, college dean, and grad dean, responds to errors of fact in ERR and sends to CO	unit, with input	CO				13
	18	CO submits unit's response on errors of fact to the external review team for incorporation or response	CO	review team	provost's office			13
	19	External review team provides final ERR to CO	review team chair	CO	provost's office	2		15
	20	CO discharges the external review team, with formal thanks; stipends are paid	CO	review team				15
	21	CO provides final ERR to unit, which is shared with unit members	CO	unit	grad dean		15	
	22	Department chair / school dean convenes faculty/unit member meeting to discuss ERR and develop action items and plan. After discussion with unit members, unit writes and sends to CO: a letter of response to final ERR (document item 3), summary of report findings, reviewer recommendations, and unit action items (4), and proposed action plan (5)	unit	CO		3, 4, 5	Spring	3
	23	College dean writes a letter of response (in consultation with the grad dean) to the final ERR + unit's response and submits letter to provost and grad dean (along with document items 3, 4, 5)	college dean	provost, grad dean	unit	6		5
	24	Grad dean writes letter of response to final ERR + unit's response + college dean's response and submits letter to the provost	grad dean	provost	unit, college dean	7		7
	25	Unit submits to provost for approval, an executive memo that summarizes review's process and outcomes (1). Memo may be used to note any errors of fact in college/graduate dean responses and should record any changes to the proposed action plan based on the provided feedback	unit	provost	college dean, grad dean	1		11
	26	Provost provides unit, college dean, and grad dean with the provost's statement of results of program review and follow-up expectations.	provost	unit, college dean, grad dean		8		13
	27	Provost communicates to Board of Trustees the executive summary, action plan, and provost's statement (document items 1,7,8).	provost					next BoT meeting
28	Provost's office archives the provost's statement and the Summary Documentation of External Program Review (document items 1-8)	provost's office			1-8	once complete		

- A) Based on the document "Procedure for Periodic External Review of Academic Degree Programs." Refer to full document for additional details and requirements.
- B) Provost's Office refers to the provost's office staff and associate provosts for undergraduate and graduate education.
- C) The Coordinating Office (CO) will be the college dean for reviews occurring in colleges, or the provost's office for reviews within schools.
- D) If the unit under review is a school, any reference to "college dean" is to be considered not applicable. If an external review does not include graduate degree programs, any reference to "grad dean" is to be considered not applicable.
- E) ERR = External Review Report prepared by review team (appears first in step 15 as a draft version)