

EXTERNAL REVIEWER EVALUATION GUIDELINES

Graduate Program Review University of Cincinnati

Expert external reviewers play an essential role in the program review process by providing a disinterested, critical evaluation of the program's orientation, goals and performance. The role of the external reviewer can be conceived as similar to that of a reviewer of a manuscript submitted for publication or a grant proposal submitted for funding. The items below solicit evaluative comments from reviewers for each section of the Program Review Report. Your comments along with those of at least one other reviewer will be provided to the provost, college dean and university dean who will jointly determine action steps and program review outcomes. Your professional and expert evaluation of the current status of the program will be invaluable to the university administration in crafting plans for the future.

Your report will be most useful if you avoid summaries of information in the program's self-study, and remember to be evaluative rather than descriptive in your remarks. Please provide responses to each of the items below based on the corresponding section of the Program Review Report. It would be most helpful if you would insert your responses directly into this document below the text of each item.

Section 1 - Program Mission, Goals and Context

1. Do the degree(s) offered and the areas of concentration/emphasis reflect current professional and disciplinary trends appropriately? Are these areas likely to see an increase, decrease or no change in activity within the profession/discipline over the next 5-10 years?
2. In your judgment, are the employment prospects in the areas of concentration and emphasis within the program average, better than average or worse than average as compared to programs specializing in other areas of emphasis/concentration? Please explain your response.
3. Are the mission and scope of the program suitable given the current number of faculty and graduate students and the resources available to the program (see table in Section 12, "U.C." column)? For example, are there too many or too few areas of specialty/emphasis within the program given the size of the faculty and number of students?
4. If applicable, do the certifications and/or accreditations listed in Section 1, Item 5, appear to be current and appropriate?

Section 2 - Program Recruitment and Admissions

1. Provide evaluative comments about program applicants, the demographic characteristics of applicants, student admissions and/or the quality of program applicants (as well as those offered and accepting admission) based on information provided in Section 2 of the Program Report.
2. Evaluate the recruitment efforts of the program. Would you rate the recruitment efforts as average, above average or below average?
3. Is an appropriate balance struck between program selectivity and accessibility (to, for example, minority students) given the mission and goals of the program? Please explain your response.

Section 3 - Students Enrolled and Graduated

1. Provide evaluative comments about current program enrollees including program size and demographics, time to degree, stipend and tuition support levels and student attrition. Is the number of program enrollees appropriate given the size of the faculty? (NOTE: UGS refers to a University Graduate Scholarship. A Full UGS covers all tuition charges for the quarters that it is awarded.)
2. Evaluate the quantity and quality of student publications, presentations and awards as listed in Section 3 of the Program Report. Are the quality and quantity what you would expect given the scope and goals of the program.
3. A complete list of University of Cincinnati graduate student theses and dissertations is available on-line through the OhioLink Electronic Thesis and Dissertation Center (go to: www.ohiolink.edu/etd/browse.cgi?by=show-univ&univ=University+of+Cincinnati). These electronic documents are listed by college and graduate program. We ask that you keep these documents confidential and use them only for the purpose of this review to protect the intellectual property rights and possible publication plans of the author.

Please select several theses and dissertations from those provided and complete an assessment of the quality of the research and scholarship reflected in the work. Is the quality of the theses or dissertations appropriate for the degree awarded?

Section 4 - Program Curriculum and Learning Environment

1. Provide evaluative comments on the program curriculum and its appropriateness in terms of preparing students for the career path(s) it is intended to support. Please review the course syllabi. Do the course syllabi reflect course content, reading materials, assignments and methods of evaluation that are appropriate to the degree being sought?
2. Provide evaluative comments about the role(s) of the program's speaker/colloquium series, visiting faculty/post-doctoral fellows/artists-in-residence and internships in graduate student education, as applicable. Are these resources being used to enhance graduate education as appropriate?
3. Is the quality of graduate course instruction being evaluated appropriately and are adequate steps being taken to improve instruction based on assessment activities?
4. Evaluate evidence provided for appropriate oversight of graduate student mentoring of scholarly and creative activities. Are mechanisms in place to support continual improvement of this activity?
5. Evaluate the program's efforts to train and supervise graduate student teaching assistants (if applicable). Are mechanisms in place to support continual improvement of this activity? Is the level of training appropriate for those who will pursue careers that involve teaching?
6. Evaluate efforts of program faculty to improve the curriculum through introduction of innovative pedagogical approaches and participation in continuing education activities. Are graduate students engaged in these efforts?

Section 5 - Graduate Student Duties, Career Development and Quality of Life

1. Evaluate the stipend and tuition support provided for students in the program by referring to Section 3, Item 2 of the Program Report. Are the levels of support and the number of students supported, appropriate? What impact do they have on the program's competitiveness, and on the students' time to degree?
2. Review the description of graduate assistantship duties provided by the program. Are the duties consistent with what you would expect? Are the students adequately prepared and mentored by faculty to enable them to perform their duties?
3. Review the description of how teaching by graduate students is evaluated. Is the teaching evaluation process adequate?

4. Evaluate program efforts to improve graduate student quality of life, career development and placement. In your judgment, are these activities above average, average or below average in comparison to similar programs?

Section 6 - Graduate Student Exit Survey Information

1. Please comment on the program's findings regarding graduate student satisfaction. Is the feedback received by the program being used to improve program quality in an appropriate way?

Section 7 - Alumni Information

1. Evaluate the process the program employs to collect information from its graduates.

2. Comment on the relationship between the employment obtained by program graduates and the career paths that the program is designed to support. Are a sufficient number of program graduates being placed appropriately given the stated scope and goals of the program?

3. Summarize your impressions of the feedback provided by Alumni to the program.

Section 8 - Faculty Composition, Qualifications, Workload and Scholarship

1. Evaluate the overall scholarship and creative productivity of the faculty with respect to both the quantity and quality of the work over the past five years. Is this level of productivity what you would expect for a program of this size and scope?

2. Is the scholarly and creative work of the faculty reflective of the latest developments in the discipline or profession?

3. Does the scholarly and creative work of the faculty appropriately support the stated areas of concentration and emphasis within the graduate program?

4. Are the faculty publishing and presenting their work using outlets that are appropriate given the scope and goals of the program?

5. Comment on the distribution of scholarly/creative productivity across the faculty. Are a sufficient number of faculty active given the scope of the graduate program and number of graduate students enrolled? In your judgment and reflecting disciplinary norms, what level of scholarly productivity would you expect from a faculty member in the program under review given its goals and areas of emphasis/concentration? Is this standard being met?
6. Comment on the match between faculty scholarly-creative productivity and involvement in the graduate training (as evidenced by teaching courses and supervising students). Do active faculty bear the majority of the burden for teaching graduate courses and supervising theses and dissertations?
7. Is the graduate student advising burden being distributed appropriately across the program faculty?
8. Comment on the overall faculty workload, including research, graduate and undergraduate teaching, advising and service. Are the department's workload policies appropriate for the size and scope of its mission?
9. Evaluate the professional service commitments of the faculty (see Section 8, Item 6). Is the level of activity what you would expect given the goals and scope of the program?
10. Provide other general comments and impressions of the scholarly and professional activities of the faculty and their involvement in the graduate curriculum not expressed above.

Section 9 - Program Sponsorship

1. Evaluate the overall sponsorship (through grants, contracts, gifts, fellowships) of the program faculty. Is the level of support what you would expect given the goals and scope of the program? In your judgment, what level of sponsorship would you expect from a faculty member in the program under review given its goals and areas of emphasis/concentration?
2. What is your evaluation of the level of graduate student support from external awards? Is the level of support what you would expect given the goals and scope of the program?
3. Provide general comments and impressions of the external sponsorship of the program.

Section 10 - Program Resources and Infrastructure

1. Evaluate the adequacy of program resources and infrastructure (such as space, facilities, internal and external funding, etc.) given the goals and scope of the unit's mission and in particular its program.

Section 11 - Program Administration

1. Evaluate the adequacy of the program's administrative structure. Please refer to the Graduate Program Handbook, which should be provided in an Appendix to the Program Report. Are the structures and operating procedures of the unit consistent with its stated missions?

Section 12 - Comparison to Benchmark Programs

1. Evaluate the comparability of the graduate programs listed in this section to the University of Cincinnati program under review. In your judgment, are the programs of similar reputation and quality? Could you suggest another program as a benchmark or model for this program?

2. Comment on the strengths and weaknesses of the University of Cincinnati program as compared to the benchmark programs.

General Comments and Summary

1. What is your overall assessment of the graduate program under review? Please list the three greatest strengths and three greatest challenges for this program.

2. How would you rate the program (poor, below average, above average or excellent) in comparison to others in the profession or discipline with respect to each of the following areas:

- Student recruitment and placement?
- Curriculum and student training?
- Scholarly and creative activities of the faculty and students?
- Overall program quality?