

# Self-Study and External Review Process

A Department or Program self-study and the corresponding external review are a holistic department/program quality and effectiveness analysis. Departments and Programs reflect on and assess their contributions to student learning, scholarship, and the College's mission. They also plan for the future.

The self-study and external review, a comprehensive process, usually occur every ten years. This process begins with initial meetings between the Department Chair or Program Coordinator and the Associate Dean of the College charged with Curriculum and between the Department Chair or Program Coordinator and the College's Accreditation Liaison Officer (at Pomona College, the Director of Institutional Research). These initial meetings take place approximately one year before three external reviewers visit our campus, during the Spring semester. The selection of outside reviewers also begins as early as one year before the external review. Approximately one month after the external review, the reviewers submit their report to the Dean of the College, who then forwards it to the President and the Department Chair or Program Coordinator and meets with the Department or Program to discuss its contents. One year later, the Department Chair or Program Coordinator writes a brief follow-up report to the Dean, outlining how the Department or Program has responded to the external reviewers' recommendations and discusses any further actions with the Dean. This meticulous process ensures a thorough and fair assessment of the quality and effectiveness of our departments and programs.

The budget for each self-study and external review is \$7,000. Most of this amount will cover the travel expenses and honoraria for the outside reviewers, whose standard fee is \$1,000 apiece. The rest can cover other costs, such as photocopying, mailing, meals, or space rental for a retreat. The Dean's Office will issue the three honoraria directly. Individual departments and programs manage the other expenses as they see fit, including the travel expenses for the reviewers. Departments and programs are also responsible for collecting a *Vendor Data Record* form from the reviewers, attaching it to a completed *Request For Check* form, and sending it to the Associate Dean's office.

## Selecting the Outside Reviewers

By the end of May, the Department Chair or Program Coordinator sends a list to the Associate Dean with the names, titles, institutions, and email addresses of six to eight potential outside reviewers, ranked in order of preference and grouped according to their specific fields. Before submission, all continuing Department or Program members must discuss and approve these names. The Associate Dean selects three external reviewers from this list in consultation with the Dean. The Dean and Associate Dean may consider non-listed individuals, but only after consulting with (f)3(t)r (D)2 (e)4a(e)4(r)Bt (f)( m)-2 (e)4but (r)3(P)-4(r)3(ogr)3(a)4(m)-2[. T)1 ove tee

the sole work of one individual. It is a shared enterprise among department or program members, emphasizing the importance of each member's contribution. Student liaisons may be enlisted to help gather data from students and alums, further highlighting the collaborative nature of the process. By the beginning of the Fall semester, the Department or Program meets with the Director of Institutional Research to obtain a Department or Program self-study data package before the self-study starts. The Department or Program will reserve time in the Fall semester for in-depth discussion of the self-study issues during a retreat or a series of meetings. To facilitate discussion, the Department Chair or Program Coordinator may want to distribute a written set of topics or issues for the self-study to all faculty before the initial meeting.

As part of Pomona's 2021 reaccreditation process, our accreditor, the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC), issued the requirement that Pomona "*Demonstrate achievement of the institution's liberal arts education goals through regular faculty assessment of learning outcomes for each program.*" The Teaching and Learning Committee (TLC) has considered this requirement and recommends to the faculty that assessment of Student Learning Outcomes at the major level be included as a core component in Department or Program self-studies. The TLC also recommends that Departments and Programs planning a self-study consult with the Associate Dean overseeing self-studies and the Office of Institutional Research as early in the process as possible for guidance on conducting and reporting the results of assessments of Student Learning Outcomes to demonstrate our commitment to *monitoring and improving student learning*.

### **Core Information in a Department or Program Self-Study Document**

- History of the Department or Program, including changes in faculty, facilities, etc.
- A statement of the Department or Program learning objectives.
- An assessment of student learning in the major based on actual student work, not student opinion, considering the Department or Program learning objectives (could be a review of the Department or Program's recent annual assessments of student learning in the major).
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goals?

- How does the Department or Program determine the learning goals are being met with its current curriculum?

- Studies by national organizations in your discipline or field.
- Self-studies conducted at Pomona by other departments or programs (permission is required from the department or program to view the self-study document).
- The Director of Institutional Research can offer advice on strategies for data collection, provide technical support for web-based surveys (of alums and students), and supply existing data from institutional surveys to inform the review where appropriate. The Senior Survey and the Enrolled Student Survey cover many topics relevant to departmental self-studies.

## The External Review

Reviewers will spend at least two days at Pomona College, usually either a Monday-Tuesday or a Thursday-Friday, arriving the evening before the first review day. The review team meets the Dean and Associate Dean at the start of their visit and has an exit interview with the Dean and Associate Dean the following afternoon. After this exit interview, the reviewers should have time to discuss their written report without further contact with Department or Program members. To comprehensively understand a department or program, the reviewers will meet with faculty, support staff, and individuals from related departments or programs at the other Claremont Colleges. Departments and programs may wish to have the reviewers meet with the Associate Dean who oversees research support. The reviewers should meet with students, and they may visit one or more classes and see any significant resources, such as laboratories, libraries, theaters, study rooms, and common areas. Reviewers must have sufficient time to review student work, including senior exercises and class projects. Reviewers and the entire Department or Program often enjoy a reception or dinner on the first evening of the visit. The Department Chair or Program Coordinator compiles the two-day schedule. The reviewers should be prepared to spend the evening before the first review day at Pomona College.