THE UNIVERSITY *of* TENNESSEE UT CHATTANOOGA

Academic Program Review

External Reviewer On-Site Visit Packet
(Graduate Programs)

Prepared by the Office of Planning, Evaluation, and Institutional Research (OPEIR)

Introduction

Thank you for your willingness to conduct an external program review for the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga (UTC). Your commitment to the process (time, input, feedback, etc.) is much appreciated.

The academic program review process is intended to provide UTC faculty and academic administrators with information to identify program strengths and weaknesses. This information should play a major role in helping faculty to define initiatives, improve quality, and justify needed resources. Program review is perhaps the most essential component in academic planning.

As an external reviewer, you will receive a copy of the program's self-study for review. You will then visit the UTC campus for a two-day site visit. During the site visit, you will have the opportunity to meet with faculty members, students, and key administrators at the university to assess various aspects of the program under review. Before leaving campus, you will be asked to complete the THEC Rubric, and within two weeks of the visit, asked to complete a Narrative Report.
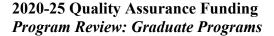
This packet contains three documents:

The Letter of Agreement explains your responsibilities as an external reviewer and the compensation you will receive. Please sign and return this document to [Department Head Name]. The other two documents are for your use during and after the site visit.

If you have any questions, please contact [Department Head Name], the Department head of [Program Name] at [phone and/or email address]. We look forward to working with you!

[Insert Letter of Agreement from Academic Program Review Packet]

Reviewer Rubric

2020-25 Quality Assurance Funding
Program Review: Graduate Programs

Institution: The University of Tennessee at Chattanooga	
Program Title:	
CIP Code:	**Degree Designation:**

Instruction for External Reviewer(s)

In accordance with the 2020-25 Quality Assurance Program Funding guidelines of the Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC), each non-accreditable graduate program undergoes either an academic audit or external peer review according to a pre-approved review cycle.

The criteria used to evaluate a program appear in the following *Program Review Rubric*. The *Program Review Rubric* lists 32 criteria grouped into six categories. THEC will use these criteria to assess standards and distribute points in to graduate programs. The four criteria noted with an asterisk are excluded from the point calculation but will be used by the institution in their overall assessment.

For each criterion within a standard, the responsible program has provided evidence in the form of a *Self Study*. Supporting documents will be available for review as specified in the *Self Study*. As the external reviewer, you should evaluate this evidence and any other evidence observed during the site visit to determine whether each criterion within a standard has been met. A checkmark should be placed in the appropriate box to indicate whether the program currently exhibits poor, fair, good or excellent in meeting the criterion. If a particular criterion is inappropriate or not applicable to the program under review, the item should be marked NA.

This evaluation becomes a part of the record of the academic program review. The rubric will be shared with the department, college and central administration, as well as the Tennessee Higher Education Commission. When combined with the written report, prepared by the entire program review committee, the *Program Review Rubric* will facilitate development of a program action plan to ensure continuous quality improvement.

Your judgment of the criteria will be used in allocating state funds for the university's budget.

Name, Title and Institutional Affiliation of Reviewer(s)

Name	_____	**Name**	_____
Title	_____	**Title**	_____
Institution	_____	**Institution**	_____
Signature	_____	**Signature**	_____
Date	_____	**Date**	_____

Program Review Rubric
Graduate Programs

Directions: Please rate the quality of the academic program by placing a checkmark in the appropriate box to indicate whether the program currently exhibits poor, fair, good or excellent evidence of meeting the criterion.

1. Learning Outcomes		N/A	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent
1.1	Program and student learning outcomes are clearly identified and measurable.					
1.2	The program uses appropriate evidence to evaluate achievement of program and student learning outcomes.					
1.3	The program makes use of information from its evaluation of program and student learning outcomes and uses the results for continuous improvement.					
1.4	The program directly aligns with the institution's mission.					
2. Curriculum		N/A	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent
2.1	The curriculum content and organization is reviewed regularly and the results are used for curricular improvement.					
2.2	The program has developed a process to ensure courses are offered regularly and that students can make timely progress towards their degree.					
2.3	The program reflects progressively more advanced in academic content than its related undergraduate programs.					
2.4	The curriculum is aligned with and contributes to mastery of program and student learning outcomes identified in 1.1.					
2.5	The curriculum is structured to include knowledge of the literature of the discipline.					
2.6	The curriculum strives to offer ongoing student engagement in research and/or appropriate professional practice and training experiences.					
2.7	Programs offered entirely through distance education technologies are evaluated regularly to assure achievement of program outcomes at least equivalent to on-campus programs.					
2.8	The program incorporates appropriate pedagogical and/or technological innovations that advance student learning into the curriculum.					

3. Student Experience		N/A	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent
3.1	The program ensures a critical mass of students to ensure an appropriate group of peers.					
3.2	The program provides students with the opportunities to regularly evaluate the curriculum and faculty relative to the quality of their teaching effectiveness.					
3.3	The program provides adequate professional development opportunities, such as encouraging membership in professional associations, participation in conferences and workshops, and opportunities for publication.					
3.4	The program provides adequate enrichment opportunities, such as lecture series, to promote a scholarly environment.					
3.5	The program seeks to include diverse perspectives and experiences through curricular and extracurricular activities.					
3.6	Students have access to appropriate academic support services.					
4. Faculty		N/A	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent
4.1	All faculty, full time and part-time, meet the high standards set by the program and expected SACSCOC guidelines for credentials.					
4.2	The faculty teaching loads are aligned with the highly individualized nature of graduate instruction, especially the direction of theses or dissertations.					
4.3*	The faculty strives to cultivate diversity with respect to gender, ethnicity, and academic background, as appropriate to the demographics of the discipline.					
4.4	The faculty engages in regular professional development that enhances their teaching, scholarship and practice.					
4.5	The faculty is actively engaged in planning, evaluation and improvement processes that measure and advance student success.					
4.6	The program uses an appropriate process to incorporate the faculty evaluation system to improve teaching, scholarly and creative activities, and service.					

5. Learning Resources	N/A	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent
5.1* The program regularly evaluates its equipment and facilities, encouraging necessary improvements within the context of overall institutional resources.					
5.2 The program has access to learning and information resources that are appropriate to support teaching and learning.					
5.3 The program provides adequate materials and support staff to encourage research and publication.					
6. Support	**N/A**	**Poor**	**Fair**	**Good**	**Excellent**
6.1* The program's operating budget is consistent with the needs of the program.					
6.2* The program has a history of enrollment and/or graduation rates sufficient to sustain high quality and cost-effectiveness.					
6.3 The program is responsive to local, state, regional, and national needs.					
6.4 The program regularly and systematically collects data on graduating students and evaluates placement of graduates.					
6.5 The program's procedures are regularly reviewed to ensure alignment to institutional policies and mission.					

Criteria not scored as part of Quality Assurance Funding.

Guidelines for Narrative Report

PART 1 – Learning Outcomes

How would you rank this program with similar ones in the state, region, and nation?

Are the intended program and learning outcomes clearly identified?
- Has the department specified program mission, vision, and goal statements? Do these statements clearly identify intended program and student learning outcomes? Are they appropriate for the program level (graduate) and for UTC?
- What goals should the department establish regarding its curriculum? In particular, what advice should be offered to the department developing goals regarding the following aspects.
  - Student opportunities for research/involvement in faculty research
  - Student opportunities for practical/field experiences
  - Student placement in the workforce related to the field of study
- What goals should the department establish regarding its teaching? Faculty qualifications? Faculty development?

What criteria does the department use to evaluate sufficient achievement of intended program outcomes? Are the criteria appropriate for such evaluation and/or for the program? How?

Does the department make use of evaluation information and/or information obtained from student, alumni, and employer surveys and/or data from institutional research to strengthen and improve the program?

Does the program fit/align within the institutional mission?

PART 2 – Curriculum

Is the current curriculum appropriate to the level and purpose of a graduate program? Is the program more advanced in academic content when compared to related undergraduate programs?

How has the program designed a process by which students can be assured of making timely progress in the degree program? How is it determined that courses are offered? Is there a set schedule for course offerings upon which the student can rely? Does the department clearly outline program requirements and offer courses regularly to ensure timely completion of the program?

Does the curriculum align with the program learning outcomes? How is mastery assured through the curriculum? How is the content reviewed on a regular basis with results used to determine actions to take to improve the curriculum? Does the department regularly review and revise curriculum content and organization to ensure that it is appropriate and that it prepares students to meet the specified

learning outcomes? Will the department need to update the curriculum and/or develop new or alternative offerings in the near future?

Is the curriculum adequate to enable students to develop the skills and attain the outcomes? Does the curriculum include knowledge of the disciplinary literature?

Are opportunities available to students that allow them to engage in research, professional practice or training experiences? How are those opportunities communicated to students?

Is the program offered through distance education or online? If so, how are those offerings assessed compared to on ground programming?

Are appropriate pedagogical and/or technological innovations included that enhance student learning? Are the department's instructional practices consistent with the standards of the discipline?
- Do the instructional practices provide adequate opportunities for student interactions with one another, faculty, and professionals?
- Does the department make adequate efforts to include students in the life of the program (e.g., seeking student advice in reviewing the curriculum/course schedules/teaching methods, etc.)?

PART 3 – Student Experience

Does the program have enough students to allow an appropriate group of peers as they participate in the program?

Are students offered the opportunity to evaluate both the curriculum and the faculty? How? Are these methods effective in getting feedback about the program and teaching effectiveness?

Are there appropriate curricular and co-curricular offerings to enhance student experiences?
- Are any short courses accepted toward the degree program? Is prudence exercised in the number and type of acceptable short courses?
- Does the program provide adequate opportunities for student professional development? To what extent does the program encourage membership in professional organizations, support participation in conferences and workshops, and/or promote opportunities for student publication?
- Does the program provide students with enrichment opportunities, such as lecture series, student organizations, etc.? Are such opportunities adequate to promote a scholarly environment?
- Does the program provide adequate opportunities for student internships, practica, and/or field experiences?

Are diverse perspectives and experiences provided for the students both through the curriculum and through extracurricular activities?

Are students provided with appropriate academic support services? What services are offered? Do students use the services? How well do they meet the needs of the students?

PART 4 – Graduate Faculty Quality

Are the faculty competencies/qualifications those needed by the program and by UTC? Do all graduate faculty meet the standards set by the program and expected SACSCOC faculty credentials?
- Do faculty hold terminal degrees in the appropriate discipline?
- Do faculty specialties correspond to program needs and to the concentrations in which they teach?
- If faculty need additional/different competencies/qualifications, how might these needs be addressed?

Are faculty teaching loads sufficiently reasonable and equitable to accommodate the highly individualized nature of a graduate program, especially the direction of theses or dissertations?

With respect to ethnicity, gender, and academic background, is faculty diversity appropriate for the program? Does the program student and faculty diversity mirror the demographics of the discipline?

Do the faculty have regular opportunities for professional development such as travel and participation in professional organizations, workshops, and other learning experiences? Do faculty take advantage of the opportunities provided?

Are faculty engaged in the planning, assessment, and improvement processes that measure and advance student success?

Does the program use assessment data, etc. to improve teaching, scholarship and creative activity and service? How does this work? Are the processes effective?

PART 5 – Learning Resources

Does the program regularly evaluate its equipment and facilities and pursue necessary improvements?
- Has the program requested/encouraged necessary improvements of its equipment and facilities through appropriate internal mechanisms? Through appropriate external mechanisms?
- Does it appear that the program's resources are appropriate within the context of overall college resources?
- How should needs of the program be prioritized? Could savings be realized from current program operations to fund any new budgetary needs?

Are library holdings and other learning and information resources current and adequate to support the teaching and learning needs of the discipline? Are there resources adequate to support the research and publication needs of the faculty and staff?

PART 6 – Support

Is the program's operating budget consistent with the needs of the program?
- Considering current budget constraints, what are the most pressing resource needs of the program?
- Could these needs be met in ways without requiring additional budgetary resources, such as savings from current program operations?
- How should the needs of the program be prioritized? Could savings be realized from current program operations in order to fund any new budgetary needs?

Does the program have a history of enrollment and graduation rates sufficient to sustain high quality and cost effectiveness?

Is the program responsive to local, state, regional and national needs of the discipline?

Does the program regularly and systematically collect data related to the success of its graduates, including placement? Do they also incorporate the results of that data to inform program improvements?

Are the program policies reviewed on a regular basis to ensure alignment with institutional policies and mission?

Considering current budget constraints, what are the most pressing resource needs of the program?
Does the program have acceptable completion rates? If unacceptable, what are possible contributing factors? How is this information used toward program revision?

PART 7 – Summary Recommendations

Overall, what are your impressions of the program?
- What are the major strengths of the program?
- What are the major weaknesses of the program?

What goals would you suggest the program set for the next five years? Please list goals in order of priority (i.e., the most important goal first, followed by the second most important goal, etc.)

How can the program work to achieve these goals over the next five years?
- Considering current budget constraints, what are the most realistic strategies the program can use to achieve the highest priority goals?
- What goals would require additional resources? What level of resources would these goals require? How might the program secure these resources?