

Procedures for departmental and center reviews

(Updated June 2, 2021)

President's charge "The Academic Council will conduct periodic reviews of all departments in the Krieger and Whiting Schools; at the Council's discretion, it will also review centers, institutes, and administrative units¹ that in its judgment, have a significant influence on the quality of the Schools' academic programs."

Frequency of reviews Each department in KSAS and WSE will be reviewed approximately every five years, with centers and other departments being reviewed less frequently as appropriate by Council. This means that Council will review approximately six or seven departments each year.

Review process Briefly, the reviews proceed as follows:

What

Preliminary discussion between Council and Deans
Dean informs departments and centers to be reviewed
Departments/centers prepare self-studies
Selection of committees and scheduling of site visits
Department reviews
External committee reports due
Internal committee reports due

Department response to reports due
Council reviews reports

When

September in year prior to review
Oct. 1st in year prior to review
Year prior to review; due on Sept. 1
Summer prior to review
Late Sept., Oct. or early Nov.
One month after the review
Two weeks after receiving the external report but no later than February 1
Two weeks prior to review meeting
Spring semester

Selection of departments to be reviewed Each September, Council shall select the departments, centers, and other units to be reviewed the following year. Departments and centers to be reviewed will be chosen in consultation with the Deans, who may make specific suggestions. The departments and centers to be reviewed will be notified by the Dean by October 1st in the year before the review.

Self-studies Each department or center will prepare a written self-study that is to be provided to the Dean by September 1st. The self-study will address the following issues:

¹ The procedures here apply to departments and, with the exception of a few specific topics, research centers. Separate procedures for other units (e.g. libraries) will be developed by Council.

- Subfields and interests covered by the department within the broader subject that the department represents, and major subfields and interests not currently covered;
- Current trends and/or major changes in the discipline(s), with a discussion of how the department is addressing them;
- General strengths and weaknesses of the department;
- Overall reputation and quality of department in comparison with similar departments at peer institutions including, where possible, quantitative information;
- Research activities, including interactions with other departments and divisions as well as external institutions (as appropriate);
- Educational activities, including the role of the department in the broader undergraduate and graduate programs of the school and the university;
- Assessment of the quality of teaching and advising in the department;
- Outreach activities (as appropriate);
- Faculty recruitment, mentoring, promotion, and retention, including the department's experience with women and underrepresented minorities;
- Graduate and undergraduate student quality, recruitment, and retention, including the department's experience with women and underrepresented minorities;
- The department's Diversity Action Plan, including the department's progress in meeting its goals; and
- Plans for the future.

The self-study should be limited to approximately ten pages. In addition, appendices with the following information (intended to supplement, not replace, narrative elements of the self-study) should be included:

- List of faculty with brief (1-2 pages) biographical information:
 - Rank and other affiliations
 - Educational background
 - Professional appointments
 - Awards or other indicators of scholarly achievement
 - Brief description of primary research interests
 - List of representative publications
 - Grant support (including titles, dates, funding agency, and amounts of all current and pending grants)

The above information can be provided in a format convenient to the department, such as existing NSF bio sketches and current and pending support lists.

- Department-wide grant support (e.g. training grants and center support)

- Statistical information on admissions and progress of graduate students as indicated in accompanying spreadsheets.
- Information on individual graduate students, using the accompanying spreadsheets as a model. They should in all cases provide the name of prior institution(s) and degree(s) obtained prior to attendance. In addition, where possible, we urge departments to include the following information as well:
 - GRE scores
 - Time to degree
 - Placement following degree
 - Other objective measures of their academic strength on entering the program

The dual review format Departments and other units shall be reviewed concurrently by two committees:

1. An *internal committee* consisting of three tenured Hopkins faculty: at least one (preferably two) Council member and at least one non-council member with expertise relevant to the department in question. The members of the internal committee will be chosen by Council in consultation with the Dean, who nominates the non-council member(s). The internal committee chair is a Council member who is appointed by the Academic Council by June 1.
2. An *external committee* consisting of at least three distinguished scholars from the department's field who are not affiliated with Hopkins. The Dean will choose the external committee members. Care should be observed to avoid the selection of reviewers for which a conflict of interest may exist with the department.

The Dean's office will provide the internal and external committees with the following items a minimum of two weeks before the first day of the review: schedule for the review; department self study; material from the previous review of the department (the previous departmental self study and review committee report); membership list of the two committees; and a list of critical questions to be addressed.

Departmental Review Agenda The internal committee chair works with the Dean to define the agenda for the review (e.g. order of meetings and length of time with the different stakeholders). A suggested agenda is provided below. The Dean's office coordinates the scheduling. At the beginning of the visit, the two committees meet with the Dean to discuss the general state of the department or center and the larger university context within which it operates. The two review committees can meet jointly with department stakeholders except for the meetings with the chair, tenured and untenured faculty. The benefits of joint meetings are: (1) it will allow both internal and external

reviewers to benefit from each other’s perspectives and questions posed to stakeholders, and (2) scheduling is thereby much more straightforward than trying to coordinate two committees to meet with every stakeholder on the same two days. The main reason for separate meetings with the faculty is that discussion with internal committee might focus more on JHU internal workings whereas the discussions with external committee might be more field specific. At the conclusion of the site visit, the internal and external committees shall meet with the Dean to discuss the visit, preliminary conclusions, requests for additional information, and points to be addressed in the reports.

Suggested Agenda and Times for External and Internal Reviewers*

External Committee	Internal Committee
Internal and External committee and Deans (60 minutes)	
Chair (60 minutes)	Untenured tenure-track (60 minutes)
Untenured tenure-track (60 minutes)	Tenured faculty (60 minutes)
Tenured faculty (60 minutes)	Chair (60 minutes)
Teaching faculty (30 minutes)	
Research faculty and postdocs (30 minutes)	
Graduate students (60 minutes)	
Undergraduate students (60 minutes)	
Admin and technical (30 minutes)	
Drop-in session for tenured, untenured and teaching faculty (60 minutes)	Drop-in session for tenured, untenured and teaching faculty (60 minutes)
Exit Debrief	
Internal and external committee (60 minutes)	
Chair (30 minutes)	
Deans (90 minutes)	

*This agenda does not include a dinner on Day 1 and lunches both days.

Questions to be addressed by the committees In their investigations, reviewers are asked to address questions such as the following:

- How would you assess the quality, visibility and innovativeness of the scholarship and research programs in the department? What are the greatest contributions to the field(s) spanned by the department?
- Hopkins departments are often significantly smaller than many of their peer programs and hence strive to achieve excellence by concentrating on specific subsets of a larger field, by collaborating with other units of the university, or both.

With this in mind

- What do think the department loses by their chosen approach?
- Where do we diverge from the field?
- What opportunities are gained or lost by the department’s choice of sub-disciplines?

- Does the department's choice of fields affect the quality and scope of its undergraduate and graduate degree programs?
- What opportunities do you see for improvement in the department's research profile?
- Please evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of our doctoral training program(s), particularly our time to completion, placement rates, and the intellectual quality of our doctoral students, the work they do and the experience they have at Hopkins.
- Our undergraduates are central to our mission as educators. How well are we fulfilling our responsibilities to them? How might we improve?
- Is the department's Diversity Action Plan meaningful, are the goals being achieved, and is the department more broadly aligned with our institutional vision of inclusive excellence?

Reviewers may be asked to address other specific questions posed by the Dean. In addition, the internal committee should investigate issues related to the operation of the department including the efficacy of support staff operation and work and social environment issues.

Committee reports The internal committee will prepare a report for Council describing the state of the department or center that incorporates both its own findings and those of the external committee. The external committee serves at the behest of and reports to the Dean. The Dean will provide a copy of the external committee report to the internal committee.

Department response to reports The department shall prepare a written response to the internal and external committee reports in which it addresses criticisms, corrects misunderstandings (if any), and provides any additional information requested. The response should focus on major points and not attempt to be exhaustive.

Discussion of reports The Homewood Academic Council will examine the external and internal reports on a rolling basis during either regular or specially scheduled Academic Council meetings during the spring semester following the review. The department chair or center director will be invited to this meeting to discuss the reports. Prior to this meeting, the following information will be distributed to Council, the department chair or center director, both Deans, the Provost, and the President:

- The departmental self-study (see below),
- The internal committee report,
- The external committee report,
- The written response from the department, and
- Any supplementary information deemed appropriate by the Dean.

The internal committee chair provides a summary of Council's discussion of internal and external reviews to be approved by Academic Council. The summary will be sent to the department chair.