

CARLETON COLLEGE
GUIDELINES FOR DEPARTMENT AND PROGRAM REVIEWS
(From Department Chairs' Handbook, last modified 25 July 2008)

Each academic department undergoes a comprehensive department review roughly every 10 years. These reviews are designed to help the department and the College evaluate current curriculum and plan for the future. The review is overseen by the Dean of the College and the Education and Curriculum Committee, and is carried out by two review committees – internal and external.

The internal review committee devotes attention to questions having to do with departmental contributions to our undergraduate curriculum generally, and the sustaining of the larger purposes of the College.

The external review committee offers a comparative perspective and assesses the overall shape and quality of the department and program and proposes suggestions for shaping its future.

Assessment is made through:

- * the departmental review document,
- * meetings of each of the two committees with the entire regular faculty of the department,
- * meetings of each committee with department students (majors and non-majors) in the absence of the faculty, and
- * other procedures, if appropriate, as agreed upon in advance (such as acquiring data through institutional research, surveying graduates, etc.).

An agreement is made between the Dean and Department Chair for scheduling a departmental review one year prior to the review. The Dean's office can tell you when your department should be reviewed.

Administrative oversight and coordination of the review is handled by the Academic Project Specialist, in the Dean of the College office.

Please see the following for detailed instructions about the department review process.

Spring Prior to Review Year

Begin preparing for your review by putting together the review document.

- * Assemble documents showing your course offerings and enrollments during the years since your last review. This information may be obtained from the Office of Institutional Research or the Registrar's Office. This material will be valuable as you and your department members discuss what you've been doing and what you'd like to do.

- * Assemble your colleagues to begin pulling together the department's review document. This document might include responses to all or some of the questions in "Criteria for Reviews of Departments" (see below). You should also discuss: How and how well are we helping students

meet the College's goals for student academic learning (Assessment Plan)? What are we doing that we shouldn't be doing? What aren't we doing that we should be doing? What are we happy with? What can be improved?

* Reviewers want to look at descriptions of courses, opportunities for non-majors, paths through the major and career paths afterward, service to other departments, advising, student and faculty activities, descriptions of facilities and equipment, etc.

* The department review is not the sole responsibility of the Chair. Give colleagues reasonable deadlines, and allow time for the sections to be woven together and for departmental criticism of several drafts before the final document is given to the Dean's office.

* If your department would like to have a retreat to facilitate this discussion, you should submit a fund request form to the Dean for approval (see Department Retreats).

* Copies of faculty c.v.'s and relevant syllabi should be included in your review documents.

CRITERIA FOR REVIEWS OF DEPARTMENTS

1. What do you see as the main objectives of the major? How well are these being met?
2. What changes have been made in departmental programs since the last review? How successful have they been?
3. Are the range, balance and sequence of the curriculum reasonable?
4. Are departmental offerings sufficiently comprehensive?
5. Is the program overly uniform or homogeneous either in its topic, its methods, or its cultural perspectives?
6. How well does the department relate its responsibilities to its majors with its responsibilities for the general educational program of the College? What are the goals for non-majors taking courses in this department? Are they being met? Are intermediate and upper-level courses accessible to non-majors?
7. Do students get sufficient opportunity to practice the discipline?
8. Is there a requirement for research, i.e., for truly independent work as part of the program for the major? How is the senior integrative exercise working?
9. Do students acquire adequate training in necessary library or laboratory skills? in reading, writing, and speaking?
10. What are the relationships of the department to other programs and departments within and outside the College? Is the department contributing as much as it should and as appropriately as it might?
11. How does the department seem to relate to the profession, to the practice of the discipline elsewhere?

CRITERIA FOR REVIEWS OF CONCENTRATIONS

(at Carleton, concentrations are interdisciplinary minors)

1. Has the concentration succeeded in providing students with opportunities for enriching their educational experience?
2. What are the educational goals of the concentration. Are they being met?
3. How carefully are students advised prior to and during their participation in this concentration?

4. How are the administrative responsibilities handled? Advising responsibilities?
5. Have courses required for the concentration been offered with appropriate frequency? Is there adequate faculty participation?
6. What has been the pattern of students' participation? Are enrollments too low? What is the optimal number of concentrators?
7. Were any events sponsored by the concentration this year? How well attended were they?
8. Has the interdisciplinary nature of the concentration been maintained? Has it weakened? Strengthened?
9. Is there adequate structure to the curriculum? Have the capstone seminars been successful?
10. Are there adequate institutional resources (library, administrative, faculty) for the concentration?
11. Does the concentration continue to serve faculty interests?
12. What is recommended for the future of the concentration?

May Prior to Review Year

Meet with your department to discuss the internal review committee list.

* The Dean of the College will submit a list of tenured faculty members eligible to serve on the internal review committee. You may choose to delete names or add names. There are names that may not be on the list because of other time-consuming commitments or a leave of absence, so be aware that if you add names, that person may not be willing or able to serve. The committee will be made up of:

- o one Carleton faculty member from the same general area or division as the department being reviewed,

- o two other Carleton faculty from fields different from the field in question,

- o two Carleton students (one ECC member who is not a major, one major). The

Department Chair will submit at least two names of students majoring in the field who might serve on the committee; the Dean chooses and invites one. The Dean and ECC will select an ECC student as the other committee member.

- * One Carleton faculty member will serve as committee chair.

- * The Dean and the ECC co-chair will choose the internal committee and will invite the internal review faculty committee members to serve (usually in May).

Meet with your department to formulate your list of potential outside reviewers.

* The Dean will send you a request for names of potential outside reviewers. The qualifications for outside reviewers are:

- o someone in your field, but not at Carleton,

- o at least one professor who teaches in your field at a College comparable to Carleton,

- o a professor who teaches in your field at a major university and who has some close connection with a liberal arts College.

- * Candidates should be a senior member at their institution and one of the three should be a Carleton graduate.

* Your department should agree on a list of at least six potential reviewers. Describe their qualifications completely in your reply memo to the Dean. It would also be helpful to rank your choice of reviewers within each category. Please include addresses, phone numbers and e-mail addresses on your list.

August-September

Arrange transportation and prepare schedule for external review committee visit.

* The Dean's office will work with you to determine the dates for the committee to visit for two days in January or February to conduct the review. The Dean's office will invite the reviewers and provide a list of the review committee members to you and your department assistant. You or your department assistant will need to:

- o arrange reviewers' travel pick-ups, overnight accommodations, meals, and meetings, and
- o begin preparing a schedule for the reviewers. The following meetings should be included:

- + kick-off and closing meeting with the President and Dean (times established by Academic Projects Specialist in Dean's office),
- + each regular department member separately,
- + entire regular department meeting,
- + at least one open student meeting (both non-major and major) without department staff,
- + breakfasts, lunches and dinners with students and faculty,
- + other interested faculty/staff, faculty in related fields or area studies, adjunct faculty or department technical staff, if any,
- + committee caucus time.

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The Dean's office will invite a student major to serve on the internal review committee and will inform the department of the internal committee members' names.

[Click here for sample External Reviewer Schedules](#)

October – November

The Internal Review Committee will attend a kick-off meeting with the Dean of the College, Department Chair, and ECC Co-chair to discuss review procedures and agree on which issues and areas of concern to focus on. Then the internal committee will:

- * read the department review document,
- * meet at least once with the entire regular staff of the department and meet individually with all faculty or at least very small groups of faculty,
- * meet at least once with students of the department (both majors and non-majors) in the absence of faculty,
- * meet with other faculty and staff, if appropriate, and
- * submit a written report to the Dean of the College.

November – December

Send a copy of the external reviewers' itinerary to the Dean for approval in early December.

Make copies of the department review document for:

- * President of the College,
- * Dean of the College,
- * Faculty co-chair of the ECC,
- * Internal Review Committee members (one for each member),
- * Library - Circulation,
- * Department (assistant to circulate), and
- * External Review Committee members (one for each member).

* All copies except the department's and library's should be delivered to the Dean of the College office for distribution. The Dean's office will send the department review document, College catalog, itinerary, and cover letter from the Dean to the external reviewers in preparation for their visit to campus.

- * Also send an electronic copy to the Academic Projects Specialist.

January – February

The External Review Committee will attend a kick-off meeting with the Dean of the College and President to discuss review procedures.

* Following the Committee's review, the reviewers will discuss their findings together on campus.

* The External Review Committee will write a report and submit it to the Dean of the College. The report shall include an assessment of the department's program with respect to the major, the overall academic program of the College, and the state of that discipline.

March

Submit an electronic copy of the Internal and External Committee reports to the Academic Projects Specialist in the Dean of the College office in early March. The Dean's office will circulate copies of the internal and external review committees' reports among the President, ECC Co-Chair, and members of the Department being reviewed. Faculty members of the internal review committee will receive copies of the external reports. Recommendations by the internal and external committees are viewed as starting points for discussion with the reviewed department rather than mandates for action.

April

In consultation with the full department, write a brief response to the reports. Include all significant minority views on issues on which members of the department disagree. This will be

important to the discussion in the final meeting.

May

The Dean's office will schedule the wrap-up meeting involving the President, Dean, ECC Co-chair, Internal Review Committee chair and Department Chair to discuss recommendations from the various reviewers, the departmental responses, and what actions to pursue. Faculty members on the internal review committee other than the chair may attend the summary meeting if views with the committee are divergent. Additional members of the department may also attend the meeting if opinions or areas of expertise within the department differ significantly. The Dean may assist in choosing additional attendees.

The Dean of the College will write a summary of conclusions reached at the final meeting, taking into account any differences expressed. This statement will be circulated to everyone attending that meeting and will provide an agenda of items to be addressed by the department in the future.

Expenses

The department review charge number is xxxxxx. This number should be used for meal expense, airfare for reviewers, ground transportation, lodging, etc. Be sure to provide the Dean's office with a copy of the charges.

The Following Year

The department should pursue appropriate follow-up activities and should report on them in subsequent department annual reports.