



University of California, Merced

Graduate Program Review

Policy and Procedures

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1. Purpose of Program Review

As a public trust, the University of California, Merced, strives to assure its many constituents that it fulfills its obligations to create, preserve, and disseminate knowledge for the public good. Academic program review is one way the university demonstrates its commitment to accountability and continual improvement.

Academic program review is predicated on the idea of expert evaluation. Academic programs, combining cutting edge research with teaching, are far too complicated to be evaluated by simple measures; each program must be evaluated by peers whose knowledge of the fields of inquiry and education enable them to identify programmatic strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities.

Program review simultaneously serves both external and internal needs. Externally, program reviews are an essential requirement of accreditation in that they show reflection on annual program learning outcomes and on student success data, while providing an institutional mechanism for responding to shortcomings. In particular, program review must ensure that budgetary planning takes student learning and student success into account. Internally, program review enables us to consider annual assessment as a piece of the larger whole, connecting student learning to research and public service as appropriate. Perhaps more importantly, while WASC, under the direction of the U.S. Department of Education, holds us to modest standards, expecting us to cite program reviews when providing evidence that our students can demonstrate a number of core competencies upon graduation, we seek to foster excellence, creativity, and innovation, to create programs that attract students who seek distinctive, cutting edge, and prestigious approaches to learning and research. Thus, we see program review as an opportunity to reflect not just on what we are doing, but also on how we want our programs to grow.

Program review is therefore both formative, in that it shapes the actions of a program in its ongoing development, and summative, in that it identifies particular issues and problems that may need to be addressed and identifies actions required to address such issues and problems. Given that academic program review should spur creativity while also responding to external review requirements, and given our wide variety of programs and programmatic structures, reviews must be carefully tailored to specific circumstances.

Reviews of graduate programs are conducted under the authority of the Standing Orders of the University of California, the University of California Academic Senate, and the Merced Divisional Bylaws. Under Merced Divisional Bylaw II.4.C., GC has the authority to establish and review graduate programs, and GC retains the final authority to alter the type, format, requirements, review cycle, and length of program review. The details of program review are coordinated by the Periodic Review Oversight Committee (PROC), a joint senate-administration committee supported by the Office of Periodic Review, Assessment, and Accreditation Support (OPRAAS) under the Provost's Office. PROC, with the aid of extramural review teams, and supported by OPRAAS, is responsible for ensuring that a robust assessment process facilitates the alignment of resources and the academic mission and campus strategic plans. PROC identifies and recommends to the Academic Senate and the administration opportunities and mechanisms to support resource alignment and the integration/coordination of administrative and academic periodic peer-based program review.

2. Scheduling of Program Reviews

PROC will establish the sequence of program reviews, a sequence that is revisited annually. The current sequence is posted on the program review section of the Senate website. The sequence can be altered by action of PROC. GC will be apprised of alterations and retains final authority over the sequence. The timeline for program review is outlined in section 5.

Usually programs will be reviewed every seven years, though circumstances in the interim (such as radical change in a program requiring GC approval, or need to coordinate simultaneous review of undergraduate and graduate programs) may justify acceleration or delay of reviews. If a program's circumstances change once a review is formally initiated, the program and dean(s) may formally request to adjust the schedule of the review by up to one year. The request must be signed by the program chair and lead Dean, explaining the need to reschedule, and sent to PROC for approval.

For new programs, the first review occurs when the program proposal is submitted to GC for approval; that review follows the format prescribed for applications by CCGA, not the format outlined in this document. Otherwise, programs will be reviewed seven years after CCGA approval. However, programs may choose to be reviewed earlier in order to synchronize undergraduate and graduate program reviews to be on the same schedules.

3. Special Considerations for IIGP Emphases

For IIGP emphasis areas offering multiple tracks¹, each track will be scheduled for a separate abbreviated review during the same time as its IIGP emphasis area. Within seven years of first admitting graduate students, any graduate emphasis area under the Interim-Individualized Graduate Program (IIGP) that has not submitted a proposal to CCGA for approval as a standalone graduate program is subject to program review

PROC will determine the format for the abbreviated review and what information will be required from each track. PROC will contact each lead faculty member from each track regarding their abbreviated review. In general, tracks will be expected to provide a brief written report containing evidence and analysis of the critical features of the track, a plan for the future direction of the track, and establish a procedure and timeline for the track to lead to a stand-alone graduate program, if that is what is planned. No questionnaire will be conducted for the abbreviated reviews. The PROC will review the written report and may interview the lead faculty member. The abbreviated review of the tracks will be discussed concurrently when the “parent” IIGP emphasis area undergoes review.

¹ In this document the term tracks refers to graduate program emphases that serve as an umbrella (incubator) for the development of graduate programs in related fields.

4. Overview of the Timeline for Program Review

Program Review will take place according the following timeline. Minor variations in the timeline are the purview of the Periodic Review Oversight Committee

Year One	In January, by the start of spring semester	➤ Programs scheduled for review are formally notified, including a preliminary scope for the review. Program input into the scope is solicited via the notification memo.
	By March 1	➤ PROC finalizes the scope of the review, notifying the program of the format for the self-study. ➤ Program meets with administrative support team to review purpose, process, timeline, responsibilities, support available, etc.
	By April 1	➤ The program lead submits the list of proposed reviewers to PROC following input from the lead dean. ➤ The Office of Institutional Research and Decision Support (IRDS) provides institutional data to program to support development of self-study
	By May 1	➤ PROC approves list of candidates for the external review team.
	By September 1	➤ PROC analyst extends invitations to candidates for the external review team in anticipation of a spring visit the following year and sets date for review team visit, which should take place before spring break. ➤ Self-study submitted to PROC
	By December 1	➤ Charge is finalized and materials for external review team prepared for distribution to team no later than a month before the site visit.
Year Two	Before Spring Break	➤ Site visit by external review team takes place.
	By June 1	➤ Report of the external review team is submitted to PROC, following factual error check.
	By September 1	➤ PROC forwards external review team report to program and lead dean and issues a request for an action plan.
	November 1	➤ Action plan is submitted to PROC.
	By start of Spring semester	➤ PROC has approved the action plan and closed the review
Review is closed.		

<p>Years Between Reviews</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Program and lead dean update PROC annually on the status of action plan items, concurrent with the annual assessment report ➤ Every year, PROC reviews the last three years of program review results; a report on patterns and recurring issues will be shared with GC; patterns within particular schools, if relevant, will be shared with the school executive committee or equivalent.
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5. Notification of Program Review

The program review process is initiated by PROC in January of the first year of the review. Via a written notification, PROC communicates the scope of the review to guide the program in developing its self-study, invites the program to participate in a kick-off meeting with support staff, and provides the timeline and deliverables for the immediate next steps of the process.

Defining the Scope of the Review

The scope of the review guides the content and composition of the self-study. Factors that may affect the scope may include ties to other programs (graduate or undergraduate), whether it is programmatically accredited, or recent or anticipated changes (to the program itself or to its institutional context) that may impact the review process. The program's program review history, including the outcomes of previous reviews, may also influence the scope of the review. In the fall semester preceding the initiation of program review, PROC consults with the Academic Senate, via its membership, and the relevant lead dean to determine the scope of the review.

Notification Process and Related Requirements

The program review process begins with formal notification to the program's leadership in January of the first year of the review.

In its notification, PROC

- summarizes the program's program review history, including the date and outcomes of the last review, as applicable
- articulates the scope of the current review
- invites the program to participate in a kick-off meeting with support staff
- communicates the date for the submission of the list of candidates for the external review team to PROC (normally April 1)
- communicates the date by which the program's self-study should be submitted to PROC (normally, September 1)

(see [Appendix A: Template for Formal Notification](#))

Units with authority and resources that affect the program under review are copied on the notification, including as applicable:

- GC Chair
- AP/Bylaw Chair(s)
- relevant undergraduate group chair
- and dean(s)

The program is asked to confirm receipt of the notification. In its confirmatory memo the program should indicate whether PROC's understanding of the program, as represented in the written notification, is correct, and if not provide a correction. The program's memo may also propose changes to the timeline or scope of the review. Proposed revisions should be submitted to PROC in time for discussion at its March meeting.

Programs should ordinarily receive six months in which to complete a self-study after any alterations to the scope of the review.

Support for the Program

A “kick-off meeting” is organized by the PROC analyst to orient the program to the program review process, including staff support and related resources. This meeting takes place at least one month before April 1st, the date by which the list of candidates for the external review team is normally due to PROC. (see [Appendix B: Example Agenda for Kick-Off Meeting](#)).

This meeting brings together program leadership and the relevant administrative support staff, including the graduate assessment manager/analyst, the IRDS analyst, the director of institutional assessment, the GC analyst, and the PROC analyst/program review manager. The program is encouraged to broaden program faculty participation in this meeting, as desired. To ensure timely scheduling of this meeting, participants may be contacted before formal notification.

6. External Review Team

Comprised of disciplinary experts, the external review team provides an independent assessment of the program's strengths, areas to be strengthened, and its future plans/strategic direction. In making its evidence-based assessment, the external review team draws on (1) the program's self-study (including data appendices), (2) interviews conducted during the site visit, and (3) national trends in the discipline.

Requirements for the External Review Team Selection and Appointment Process

Selection Process

The program, with independent input from the lead dean and Graduate Council, develops and ranks a slate of potential review team members,² making sure individuals address the requirements articulated under Review Team Composition below. Productive candidates possess expertise relevant to the program, including its proposed strategic direction. This includes administrative experience, experience in learning outcomes/program assessment, capacity to act as chair, and diversity. Disciplinary or interdisciplinary expertise, however, is a fundamental requirement.

The slate must include a sufficient number of candidates, and supporting information, to enable PROC to recruit the membership specified below under Review Team Composition. The program lead and dean(s) must disclose all known affiliations between the proposed reviewer(s), UC Merced, and any of the program faculty (i.e. nature of the relationship, any potential conflicts of interest). It is expected that individuals within the same academic discipline will know one another and may have possibly worked together; nonetheless, this information must be disclosed at the time of the submission of names for consideration.

The slate of candidates for the external review team and associated cover letter are submitted by the program to PROC via the PROC analyst, along with a cover letter briefly describing the program's process for generating and approving the list (e.g. a vote, see also [Appendix C: Template for the List of Suggested External Reviewers](#)). PROC approves the slate and draws from it to appoint the external review team.

Programs should also identify two to three peer programs, true and/or aspirational, to assist PROC in evaluating the slate of review team members, and to assist the external review team in understanding the program, including its aspirations. This information should be included in the cover letter accompanying the slate of candidates for the external review team. It should also be integrated into the self-study.

Review Team Composition

The Review Team is composed of two to three faculty external to UC Merced. Within this group, it is expected that:

- one member is from another UC campus,
- one member is from a non-UC institution, preferably from a peer program
- one member has experience in student learning outcomes/program assessment
- one member serves as chair

The team is accompanied by the PROC senate liaison, although this person is not considered a member of the team.

² General Education is the exception. In this instance, the Vice Provost and Dean of Undergraduate Education is the relevant dean.

Responsibilities of the Review Team Chair

One member of the external review team is designated chair. This individual is the point of contact for the team and is responsible for leading the pre-visit conference call, coordinating team member roles during site visit meetings, and facilitating the completion of, finalization, and submission of the team report.³

³ Consultation fee will reflect additional responsibilities.

7. Periodic Review Oversight Committee Liaison

To help steward the review process, a senate member of PROC is designated as the senate liaison to the review. The senate liaison's role is two-fold: (1) to lead, along with an administration counterpart, PROC meeting discussions regarding the program under review, and (2) to accompany the external review team, providing institutional context and ensuring that the review proceeds according to policy. The liaison is not a member of the review team and, as such, is not responsible for evaluating the content of the program review or contributing to the writing of the external review team report.

The senate liaison facilitates PROC's discussions advancing the program review, as outlined in the table below.

First Academic Year (reviews begin in Spring semester)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Determine the scope for the review• Approve the program's slate of potential review team members
Second Academic Year	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review the self-study and develop the charge to the external review team• Approve the agenda for the review team site visit• Provide an update after the completion of the site visit• Review the external review team report and provide instructions to the program for the response phase
Third Academic Year (reviews conclude in Fall semester)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Evaluate the program's action plan and consider closure of the review

Because senate members of PROC serve one-year terms, the role of liaison will transition from one individual to another as committee membership changes. A transition document will be completed by each outgoing liaison to ensure continuity (see [Appendix E: Example Transition Document](#))

Requirements for the PROC Senate Liaison

The PROC senate liaison is selected by PROC and must be a member of the Academic Senate as well as being a member of PROC; exceptions for an alternate liaison can be requested. The liaison does not need to be an expert in the discipline of the program under review.

The PROC senate liaison must be available to participate in the site visit, and will report back to the committee following the visit regarding the success and integrity of process, to be recorded in the PROC minutes.

8. Program Self-study

The role of the program self-study is to facilitate the program's development of a shared understanding of its present circumstances and direction and communicate that understanding to PROC, to the external review team, and to campus stakeholders and leadership. The self-study also initiates the program's strategic planning in regards to the review, connecting the program's long term planning to its institutional context.

The self-study becomes a part of the permanent record of the program review and is filed together with the charge, the review team report and the action plan.

Guidelines and Requirements for the Program Self-study

The self-study concisely presents the faculty's thorough and evidence based evaluation of the program, strengths, areas to strengthen, and future directions in light of larger disciplinary and educational trends, institutional plans, and priorities. Evidence directly bearing on the program's self-evaluation include its annual assessment reports and institutional data. Information on disciplinary trends as published by professional disciplinary societies or in the literature may also be relevant.

All program faculty⁴ must be consulted and given the opportunity to provide meaningful input to the development of the self-study. In the best of circumstances, faculty, students, staff, and alumni are involved in planning and writing the document.

The composition of the self-study is the responsibility of the faculty, and not that of the staff, although staff are available to support faculty as they develop the document (see Support for the Self-study, below).

In drafting its self-study, the program should respond to the scope of the review, established by PROC and communicated in the notification letter. [Appendix F: Template for the Self-study](#) provides guidance for the organization and content of the document.

The program self-study may be organized in a way that makes sense to the program, especially for programs undergoing concurrent accreditation. However organized, the self-study should address the key elements of the self-study as outlined in the appendix. Excluding supporting materials, the self-study should be no more than 25 pages, single spaced.

Submission of the Self-study

The self-study, including supporting materials, is submitted by the program leadership electronically in PDF format to PROC via the PROC analyst, with copies to the graduate assessment coordinator, lead dean, and academic senate office.

Submissions should include a transmittal cover letter, that

- briefly describes the program faculty consultation process (the faculty in the program should be asked to provide their input or comment(s) prior to the self-study being edited in a final form)
- reports the results of the faculty vote on the final draft of the self-study, including the vote tally.

⁴ Programs that have both core and affiliate faculty will decide the extent to which affiliate faculty are involved in drafting the self-study.

Confidential Surveys

PROC may, at its discretion or at the request of program leadership, the lead dean, or the Vice Provost and Dean of Graduate Education, design and conduct confidential surveys of students and faculty for a program under review. The Office of Institutional Research and Decision Support (IRDS) will provide assistance with the design and implementation of the surveys.

Surveys must give those surveyed the option of reporting some information as confidential, and therefore to be shared only with the external review team. Survey questionnaires must explain that all responses will be summarized to protect the identities of respondents, but that, generally, these summaries will be available to the program under review and to appropriate administrators. If respondents wish to share information or opinions with the external review team but wish to keep such information from other campus groups, they may use those portions of the survey instrument designated as confidential.

PROC summarizes the results of student and faculty surveys, identifying which summarized results may not be shared beyond the external review team.

Support for the Self-study

The program should direct any questions concerning the review to the PROC analyst. The graduate assessment specialist will assist and support faculty during the preparation of the self-study.

9. Charge to the External Review Team

The charge is the means by which PROC communicates the campus' priorities for the review to the external review team. As such, the charge shapes the site visit and the external review team' report.

The charge becomes a part of the permanent record of the program review and is filed together with the self-study, the external review team report, and the program's action plan.

Process for Developing the Charge and Related Requirements

PROC develops the charge after receiving and reviewing the program's self-study. The charge consists of a letter, articulating campus priorities for the review and/or important related context, together with a standard set of questions to guide the review team's inquiry (see [Appendix G: Example Charge to the External Review Team](#)).

Senate input to the charge is the responsibility of the senate representatives to PROC. These individuals provide input on behalf of their committees. Likewise, the administration representatives to PROC provide input to the charge on behalf of campus leadership.

PROC reviews the standard list of constituents to meet with the external review team during the campus visit and note any additions or changes in the charge.

The charge is drafted by the PROC analyst, incorporating the input of the PROC representatives, and shared with the lead dean with an invitation to comment. The charge is approved by PROC and shared with the external review team at least 30 days prior to their site visit.

Dissemination of the Charge

Once approved by PROC, the charge is sent to the external review team and PROC senate liaison at least 30 days prior to the start of the site visit. The charge is also provided to campus stakeholders who agree to meet with the external review team to help them prepare for the discussion.

10. Site Visit by the External Review Team

The site visit is a key step in the external review team's execution of its charge. Through interviews with program representatives and stakeholders, the external review team clarifies its understanding of the program in relation to the program's own strategic direction, that of the campus, and that of the discipline. Evidence gathered through the interview process is used in conjunction with the program's self-study to formulate the team's report – its formal response to the charge.

Preparation

Organization of the Site Visit and Schedule

The review team visit is scheduled by the PROC analyst on behalf of PROC (see [Appendix H: Example Agenda for Review Team Site Visit](#)). The PROC analyst also coordinates external review team travel, travel expense reimbursements, and consultation fee payments.

Toward this end, the program provides a list of stakeholders to meet with the external review team, which is reviewed and approved by PROC. The PROC analyst issues invitations to stakeholders and tracks those who agree to participate and who will, in turn, receive materials relevant to the review (see below, Distribution of Charge and Self-study; see also [Appendix I: Example Invitation to Participate in Site Visit](#)).

Confidential Email Account

A confidential email account is created by PROC to allow stakeholders who either cannot meet with the team or prefer not to give their input in a group setting to comment confidentially to the team (see [Appendix J: Example Notification of Confidential Email](#)). The email address is sent to all individuals initially invited to meet with the team.

The account is established by the PROC analyst approximately two weeks before the site visit, and is closed and deleted upon conclusion of the site visit. Communications to this email address are read only by the external review team. Communication with the team is one-direction only; the team does not respond to email it receives.

External Review Team Pre-visit Conference Call

Two weeks before the site visit, external review team members and the PROC senate liaison participate in a conference call, no more than one hour long, to prepare for the visit. Led by the review team chair, the call orients the external review team to the review, supports team planning for the site visit, and for writing the report, and provides an opportunity to request additional information from the program via the PROC analyst. The call is organized by the PROC analyst, who participates in the call as administrative support. (see [Appendix K: Example Agenda for External Review Team Pre-visit Conference Call](#))

Distribution of Charge and Self-study

At least thirty days prior to the scheduled visit, the PROC analyst provides to the external review team and senate liaison:

- the program's self-study, including data appendices
- PROC's charge to the external review team
- the draft schedule for the site visit
- a summary of the results of the confidential surveys of faculty and students, as relevant

This information, except for the results of a confidential survey, is also provided to

- all individuals who have agreed to meet with the review team
- the lead dean(s)
- the VPDGE
- PROC

Structure of the Site Visit

The typical duration of a site visit is one and one-half days. The visit generally begins with a dinner, which precedes the first day of meetings on campus, and concludes with the exit interview in the afternoon of the second day.

Dinner with Campus Leadership

The night before the first full day of the site visit the external review team, including the senate liaison, dines with campus leadership. In addition to greeting the team, the dinner is intended to deepen the team's understanding of the charge and the institutional context of the review.

The initial dinner should include the review team, the PROC senate liaison, the PROC co-chairs, the appropriate dean(s), the VPDGE, the VCR, and a representative of Student Affairs; other people may be included as relevant to the program's context and/or future direction.

Meetings with Stakeholders

The first morning of the visit begins with a team meeting, including the PROC senate liaison, to review procedures and note any special issues for the review. As appropriate, there may be a tour of the facilities.

Meetings are scheduled with

- the Provost/EVC
- the Vice Provost and Dean of Graduate Education (VPDGE)
- the Vice Chancellor for Research
- the dean and the appropriate associate dean for the program
- the GC chair
- a representative of the Diversity and Equity Committee
- a representative for Student Affairs
- the program lead(s)
- the program's senate faculty as a whole
- program students

Meetings with adjunct faculty, affiliate faculty, and appropriate staff,⁵ and faculty from closely related programs are also scheduled as appropriate.

Team Time to Develop Commendations, Recommendations, and the Team Report

On the second day of the visit, and prior to the exit interview, the team is provided two to three hours to begin drafting the report and to prepare its comments for the exit interview, including

⁵ Staff should be included who support graduate programs (e.g. school graduate support staff, the graduate assessment coordinator) or work directly with program students (e.g. instructional lab staff)

commendations and recommendations.

Exit Interview with Program and Institutional Leadership

The final activity of the site visit is an exit interview. The external review team meets with the PROC co- chairs, the GC Chair, the dean, the associate dean, the VPDGE, the VCR, and the Provost/EVC as well as the program leadership to deliver an oral summary of its findings. This summary should include the major points to be addressed in the external review team report and related commendations and recommendations. The review team may also have confidential information to share during this interview and, upon request, should be provided an opportunity to speak privately with the Provost.

11. Report of the External Review Team

The external review team report is the team's written response to the charge. In its report, the team provides an evidence-based assessment of the program, synthesizing what it has learned through the self-study and the site visit. The report, together with the self-study and input from PROC, forms the foundation for formulating the action plan.

The external review team report becomes a part of the permanent record of the program review and will be filed together with the self-study, the charge, and the action plan.

Development and Submission of the External Review Team Report

The external review team is asked to furnish a written report of approximately 5-10 pages within two weeks of its visit. The basis for the report is the charge to the review team. In developing its report, the team synthesizes the totality of information reviewed and received, through the self-study and interviews, developing an evidence-based assessment of the program in light of the charge. In doing so, the team report provides the analysis and evidence that underpin its findings, including commendations and recommendations, as communicated during the exit interview (see [Appendix L: Template for Review Team Report](#)). Review teams are asked to treat any confidential information with care when articulating findings, commendations, and recommendations.

Recommendations for change and future development should be prioritized by level of significance.

The chair of the external review team is responsible for facilitating completion of, finalizing, and submitting the team report to PROC via the PROC analyst.

Receipt of the External Review Team Report

Review for Factual Inaccuracies

Following the receipt of the external review team report, the PROC analyst forwards the report to the program lead(s), with requests to review the report for factual inaccuracies or misperceptions and to return corrections to PROC within two weeks. The program's corrections are appended to the external review team report. If no corrections are received within two weeks, the report will be considered to be correct as is. The report and the appended corrections are then forwarded to PROC for review and discussion.

Payment of Consultation Fees

Upon receipt of the external team's report, the PROC analyst arranges payment of the consultation fees for external review team members.

12. Action Plan

The action plan is the program and administration's strategic response to the findings of the program review process. The action plan outlines the strategic direction and related actions of the program for the period leading up to the next program review, and defines the resource commitments, formulated as a memorandum of understanding (MOU) between the program and the administration, to realize those plans. The action plan also, through a revised multi-year assessment plan, promotes continued advancement of the program's goals for student learning and success.

The action plan becomes a part of the permanent record of the program review and is filed together with the self-study, the charge, and the external review team report.

Request for an Action Plan

PROC issues a request for an action plan following its review and discussion of the report of external review team, and any correction of fact or misconceptions provided by the program. In its request, which is issued to the program lead(s), the VPDGE, and lead dean, PROC

- forwards the report of the external review team, together with the program's response to the request for corrections of fact or misconceptions
- provides guidance for the program's action plan, including as relates to institutional plans and priorities⁶
- asks the lead dean to organize a meeting with the program lead(s), program faculty, the VPDGE, and others as appropriate, to initiate development of the action plan
- notifies the program and administration of the timeline for submitting the action plan.

The due date for the action plan is normally November 1 of the fall semester following a spring site visit (see [Appendix M: Example Request for Action Plan](#)). The school assessment specialist is copied on PROC's notification.

Development and Requirements of the Action Plan

The action plan is the program and administration's response to the findings of the program review process and any guidance provided by PROC. It is intended to guide the strategic direction of the program through the period to the next review.

The action plan should be developed as a collaborative endeavor between the program and the administration, and should involve at minimum the program's faculty, the lead dean, and the VPDGE. Faculty in closely related programs and other campus decision makers, including the provost and VCR, should be included as appropriate. In developing the action plan, the program is encouraged to solicit input from relevant stakeholders, including students.

In formulating the action plan, the following should be considered

- the report of the external review team
- PROC's guidance regarding the response

⁶ Senate representatives on PROC may, at their individual discretion, share the review team report with their full committee and solicit input into the guidance provided for the program's action plan. Upon member request, PROC shall provide up to one month between the PROC meeting at which the report is discussed and issuance of the request for an action plan to allow for this input.

- the program's own findings and plans as articulated in its self-study

The program is responsible for drafting a program strategic plan together with a revised multi-year assessment plan, and writing its cover letter. The lead dean provides input into the program's strategic plan; with the program, prepares a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to address the resources necessary to the action plan's success; and summarizes this work in a separate cover letter. If resources are provided by other units on campus, the MOU should articulate these commitments as well. (See [Appendix N: Template for Action Plan](#)).

To anticipate the need for coordination and allow completion before the PROC submission date, internal deadlines should be set for sharing the drafted program strategic plan and program's cover letter, including evidence of faculty agreement on the action plan (e.g. a vote), with the dean.

Submission of the Action Plan

The action plan is submitted as a single document by the lead dean to the PROC analyst, with copies to the program leadership and school assessment coordinators.

13. Closing the Review and Years between Reviews

Closing the Review

A program review is closed only when PROC determines that the action plan meets the requirements outlined in Section 10 of this policy and, in doing so, provides adequate strategic direction to the program that is responsive to the findings of the review process and the guidance provided by PROC. This normally takes place by the end of the second year of the review, at the close of the fall semester.

Following a decision to close the review, PROC notifies the program, the Academic Senate, and the relevant members of the administration. In this notification, PROC communicates the date of the next program review. Typically, reviews are scheduled on a seven year cycle, but programs may request a shorter review cycle in order to coordinate with external accreditation. The action plan, and supporting program review findings, serve as the foundation for the next review cycle.

If a review is not closed, PROC, with GC's guidance and input, may require, recommend, or arbitrate actions to achieve closure. If PROC needs to engage actively in closing the review, then with the guidance and input of GC, the VPDGE and Provost/EVC, PROC may identify, implement, and/or recommend sanctions via existing curricular, resource, or other available mechanisms. Any action plan thus activated would provide institutional direction to the program/dean based on the findings of the review process and set expected outcomes and subsequent pathways for the program and/or the dean.

Years between Reviews

In the years between reviews, the program and the administration are expected to implement the action plan as agreed. Progress on the action plan will be reported to PROC annually, as part of the annual assessment process. Both the program and dean are expected to address the program's progress independently. When acknowledging receipt, PROC communicates its evaluation of the program's progress, including, at its discretion, commendations or recommendations specific to the program's circumstance (see [Appendix O: Template for PROC's Acknowledgement of Action Plan Progress](#)).

If a program, the lead dean, or the program and the dean together, determine that a program's progress, or lack of progress, over multiple years requires a response from PROC, the program, the dean, or both together may opt to initiate an interim report, compiling and contextualizing the program's annual progress reports. PROC will request input from the relevant parties (e.g. the program and/or dean(s), and other arms of the senate and administration as appropriate) and provide a written response within four months of receipt, requiring a revised action plan from the program and dean when justified.

If the program does not show progress in implementing an action plan, PROC, with GC's guidance and input from the VPDGE and Provost/EVC, may identify, implement, and/or recommend sanctions via existing curricular, resource, or other mechanisms.

Each year, PROC performs an analysis of the aggregate results and actions of the program reviews completed in that academic year. PROC combines this analysis with a review the last three years of program review results and prepares a report on patterns and recurring issues to be shared with the Academic Senate. Results for particular schools, if relevant, will be shared with the school executive committee or equivalent.

Distribution of Materials Following Closure of a Review

Copies of the action plan, external review team report, and other pertinent documents shall be sent to the Chancellor, lead dean, the UCM Office of the Academic Senate, as well as PROC. File copies of these documents, along with the program's self-study and the summarized results of the student and faculty surveys, are maintained by the Office of Periodic Review, Assessment, and Accreditation Support. A brief summary of the programs reviewed and Senate actions are included in PROC and UGC Annual Reports.

14. Confidentiality and Conflicts of Interest

Confidentiality

Graduate Program Reviews will be treated with confidentiality until they are closed. The self-study, the report of the external review team, and the action plan are open to examination after the review is closed. The results of student and faculty surveys are available only in summary form. Particular documents and sections of the report may be maintained as confidential documents available only as needed for particular reasons at the request of either the program or PROC. Petitions to review confidential material will be reviewed by PROC and GC.

Conflicts of Interest

Conflicts of Interest (Cols) of proposed reviewer(s) are addressed in section 4. Other Cols originating from service on senate committees, other appointments, or overlap of programs or units, also should be declared by those involved in administering the review (as administration or senate). When appropriate, PROC will recuse conflicted individuals and select an alternate to fulfill their role in the review process.

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ACADEMIC SENATE, MERCED DIVISION
PERIODIC REVIEW OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE (PROC)

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, MERCED
5200 NORTH LAKE ROAD
MERCED, CA 95343
209-228-4099

[Date]

[Inside Address, Program Chair]

Re: Formal Notice of Program Review

Dear [Program Chair],

This letter is to formally notify you that the [Program Name] program will undergo academic program review beginning this spring and concluding with the external review team site visit in Spring [Year 2] and program response in Fall [Year 2].

The review will be conducted according to the [Graduate Program Review Policies and Procedures](#), including the timeline on page 4. [Provide the scope for the review, for instance whether a closely related programs will be reviewed together, timing of the review in relation to a corresponding undergraduate program, or how recent or anticipated changes (to the program itself or to its institutional context) may impact the review process.]

The most recent review of the [Program Name] program occurred in [Years of Previous Review]. This was the [Nth] review following the establishment of the program in [Year of Program Establishment].

Key next steps in the review process include

- 1) Confirmation of receipt of notification. Please provide to PROC via the PROC analyst a confirmatory memo which indicates whether PROC's understanding of the program, as represented in this written notification, is correct, and if it is not correct please provide a correction. This memo may also propose changes to the timeline or scope of the review. Proposed revisions should be submitted to PROC by March 1, [Year 1]. The school dean may also propose revisions to the scope of the review.
- 2) Preparation of the list of suggested members of the external review team by the program and school dean. As per policy (see p. 8), the review team is comprised of three individuals external to UC Merced¹; at least one from another UC, and one with assessment expertise. To ensure a full team, we ask that you identify 10 to 12 possible candidates, following the template provided with this letter.

The program will submit the list to PROC via the PROC analyst by April 1, [Year 1] with a cover letter briefly describing how the list was approved by program faculty (e.g. a vote).

¹ The review team will be accompanied during their visit by a PROC Senate Liaison, chosen by the PROC.

- 3) Preparation and submission of the self-study to PROC by September 1, [Year 1]. The self-study should follow the guidelines in section 6 and appendix F of the program review policy.

Materials relevant to the review will be shared at [Link to Materials]. To orient the program to the review process and related support, PROC encourages you to participate in a kick-off meeting with key staff. The program review manager will be in contact organize details for this meeting and ensure that you have access to the materials.

PROC looks forward to working with you and your school dean to make this a successful and productive program review.

Sincerely,

[Co-Chair Signature and Printed Name]
Co-Chair, Program Review Oversight Committee

[Co-Chair Signature and Printed Name]
Co-Chair, Program Review Oversight Committee

Copy: [Lead Dean]
[Associate Dean]
[VPDGE]
[School Assessment Specialist]
[Director of the Academic Senate Office]
PROC
Institutional Research and Decision Support
Graduate Council

Agenda
Program Review Kick-Off Meeting

- 1) Introductions – Program Review Manager (5 min)
- 2) Overview of Purpose of Program Review – Director of Institutional Assessment (5 min)
- 3) Overview of Program Review Timeline – Program Review Manager (10 min)
 - a. Requirements for composition of review team
 - b. Components of self study, site visit
 - c. Importance of response phase
- 4) Review of School Level Data – Graduate Assessment Coordinator (10 min)
 - a. Annual PLO Reports and Feedback, Curriculum Map, etc
- 5) Review of Institutional Data – IRDS Representative (20 min)
 - a. Major Compendium
 - b. Minor Compendium
 - c. UC Undergraduate Experience Survey
- 6) Opportunity for faculty questions and to discuss possible data requests (10 min)

Please use the tables on this and the following page to provide PROC with a slate of potential review team members. Programs should feel free to make adjustments to the table in order to more accurately convey their preferences.

	Program Criteria ¹ :			
1. UC Team Member (note: if a suggested team member is both from a UC and has significant assessment experience, list them in section 3)	Overall Priority: _____	Overall Priority: _____	Overall Priority: _____	Overall Priority: _____
2. Non-UC Peer Institution Team Member	Overall Priority: _____	Overall Priority: _____	Overall Priority: _____	Overall Priority: _____
3. Team Member with Student Learning Outcomes/Program Assessment Experience ²	Overall Priority: _____	Overall Priority: _____	Overall Priority: _____	Overall Priority: _____
4. Candidates Added by the School Dean	Overall Priority: _____	Overall Priority: _____	Overall Priority: _____	Overall Priority: _____

¹ If the program has its own categories of member types that it would like to have represented on the team, for example drawing from different subfields within the discipline or ensuring that at least one team member has a particular type of experience or expertise, use this axis to communicate that information to PROC.

² See handout, "Identifying Review Team Candidates with Assessment Experience"

Name:
Institution:
Link to CV/website if available:
List contributions that candidate could make to a review team ¹ :
List any relationship ² or potential conflict of interests candidate has to program faculty:

Name:
Institution:
Link to CV/website if available:
List contributions that candidate could make to a review team ¹ :
List any relationship ² or potential conflict of interests candidate has to program faculty:

Name:
Institution:
Link to CV/website if available:
List contributions that candidate could make to a review team ¹ :
List any relationship ² or potential conflict of interests candidate has to program faculty:

Name:
Institution:
Link to CV/website if available:
List contributions that candidate could make to a review team ¹ :
List any relationship ² or potential conflict of interests candidate has to program faculty:

¹ Examples: Experience with programs similar or aspirational to program under review, stature/reputation/influence in discipline, specific area of expertise

² Many relationships will not be problematic, but should be disclosed for transparency.

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ACADEMIC SENATE, MERCED DIVISION
PERIODIC REVIEW OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE (PROC)

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, MERCED
5200 NORTH LAKE ROAD
MERCED, CA 95343
209-228-7930

[Date]

[Inside Address, Review Team Candidate]

Dear [Candidate's Name]:

This coming [Semester of Site Visit] the University of California, Merced's [Program Name] program will undergo its [Nth] periodic review. This process, which takes place once every seven years, affords a comprehensive review of the program in support of long-term planning and continuous improvement. We write to ask, on behalf of UC Merced's Periodic Review Oversight Committee, if you would be willing to join the review as [a member/the chair] of the external review team.

The responsibilities of the review team include

- analysis of the program's self-study,
- participation in a pre-visit conference call of no more than one hour approximately two weeks before the site visit
- a one and one-half day site visit (including a dinner the night before the first day) involving interviews with faculty, students, and staff, and
- preparation of a final written report summarizing the team's findings and related recommendations for [Program Name]'s continued growth at UC Merced.

[Include two to three sentences explaining the importance of this review in the current institutional context.]

We hope to schedule the site visit [Range of Dates], depending upon team members' availability.

UC Merced will pay for all travel costs, including lodging and meals, together with a [Consultation Fee Amount] consultation fee. Support and coordination for the visit and review will be provided by UC Merced Staff.

The Periodic Review Oversight Committee feels strongly that the [Program Name] program could benefit from your expertise and hopes you are willing and available to support UC Merced's ongoing development in this review.

Our program review manager, [Program Review Manager Name], is available to answer any questions you may have; you can reach [him/her] at [Program Review Manager Email Address] or [Program Review Manager Phone].

Thank you very much for your consideration of this invitation.

Sincerely,

[Co-Chair Signature and Printed Name]
Co-Chair, Program Review Oversight Committee

[Co-Chair Signature and Printed Name]
Co-Chair, Program Review Oversight Committee

EXAMPLE TRANSITION DOCUMENT

Program Name: _____
 Review Period: _____

Hyperlink to supporting documents in the PROC Box folder as applicable.

Additional lines may be added as appropriate to reflect process.

YEAR 1**NAME OF PROC LIAISON:****PROGRAM NOTIFICATION**

DATE: [PROVIDED BY PROC ANALYST]

SCOPE OF PROGRAM REVIEW: [PROVIDED BY PROC ANALYST]

KICK-OFF MEETING

DATE: [PROVIDED BY PROC ANALYST]

SLATE OF CANDIDATES FOR THE EXTERNAL REVIEW TEAM

DATE DUE: [PROVIDED BY PROC ANALYST]

DATE RECEIVED: [PROVIDED BY PROC ANALYST]

DATE APPROVED BY PROC: [PROVIDED BY PROC ANALYST]

EXTERNAL REVIEW TEAM COMPLETE

DATE OF SITE VISIT: [PROVIDED BY PROC ANALYST]

YEAR 1 PROC LIAISON COMMENTS FOR YEAR 2 LIAISON:**YEAR 2****NAME OF PROC LIAISON:****PROGRAM SELF-STUDY**

DATE DUE: [PROVIDED BY PROC ANALYST]

DATE RECEIVED: [PROVIDED BY PROC ANALYST]

DATE REVIEWED BY PROC: [PROVIDED BY PROC ANALYST]

DATE DRAFT CHARGE SHARED WITH LEAD DEAN FOR INPUT: [PROVIDED BY PROC ANALYST]

DATE INPUT RECEIVED FROM SCHOOL DEAN: [PROVIDED BY PROC ANALYST]

CAMPUS' PRIORITIES FOR THE REVIEW AS COMMUNICATED IN THE CHARGE: [PROVIDED BY PROC ANALYST]

EXTERNAL REVIEW TEAM SITE VISIT

UPDATE TO PROC FOLLOWING COMPLETION OF THE SITE VISIT: [PROVIDED BY PROC ANALYST]

REQUEST FOR ACTION PLAN

DATE SENT: [PROVIDED BY PROC ANALYST]

SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS COMMUNICATED TO PROGRAM FOR ACTION PLAN: [PROVIDED BY PROC ANALYST]

YEAR 2 PROC LIAISON COMMENTS FOR YEAR 3 LIAISON:

YEAR 3

NAME OF PROC LIAISON:

ACTION PLAN

DATE DUE: [PROVIDED BY PROC ANALYST]

DATE RECEIVED: [PROVIDED BY PROC ANALYST]

DATE REVIEWED BY PROC: [PROVIDED BY PROC ANALYST]

Template for the Program's Self-Study

How to use the template: This template outlines the required elements of a program's self-study. For each major section of the self-study, the template includes a brief description of the purpose (Purpose), the content to be addressed (Content) and the relevant documents or evidence to be referenced in the narrative as appropriate. Excluding supporting documents, the self-study should be no more than 25 pages, single spaced.

The self-study may be organized in a way that makes sense to the program. However organized, the self-study must address each section and the content as that section as outlined below. If a different format is followed, it is the program's responsibility to describe in the cover letter accompanying the self-study where the required content is addressed in the document.

In drafting its self-study, a program responds to the scope of the review established by PROC and communicated in the notification letter.

Audience: While drafting, the self-study, programs will want to keep in mind the audiences for the document. Of particular importance is the external review team, which consists entirely of faculty external to the campus, and therefore is likely unfamiliar with the program and the campus.

Template

I. Table of Contents

II. Contact Information – Provide the contact information for the program lead

III. Date of Preparation

IV. Introduction

Purpose: Orient the reader to the program and the self-study.

Required Content: Provide a concise history of the development of the program. If the program has undergone a substantial revision since its last program review, briefly describe the reason and intent of the revision. Describe the internal and external contexts that have and are likely to shape the program going forward. Briefly describe the organization of the remainder of the self-study, and the process by which the self-study was developed. For programs with both core and affiliate faculty, include a list of any affiliate faculty who contributed to development of the self-study.

Appendix materials that may be useful to reference in this section: Materials from the most recent periodic review, the program's CCGA approval, or approved revisions to the program.

V. How does your program envision its work: Program Mission, Goals, and Learning Outcomes

Purpose: Describe the educational intentions of your program, including intended students and impacts. Relate these intentions to your discipline and to the mission, priorities and directions of Graduate Division and UC Merced.

Required Content: Describe the educational intent of your program, including its mission, goals, intended program learning outcomes, and program philosophy and the program's contributions to the larger educational good at UC Merced. This includes the program's relationship to the discipline, the larger institutional context, such as overarching institutional graduate outcomes, relevant undergraduate program(s) and/or Organized Research Units at UC Merced, and to the mission, priorities, and directions of Graduate Division and UC Merced.

Relevant foci may include:

- (1) The program's context in the disciplinary research and higher education landscape, including how it relates to the direction of the field and to peer, including aspirational, programs at other institutions. This may include, as relevant, important similarities to and differences from other programs in the discipline(s), a discussion of national rankings, program of study, research areas, and/or professional development.
- (2) The intended population(s) of graduates from the program. This may be expressed in terms of learning (demonstrated skills, knowledge, dispositions, etc.), normative time-to-degree, preparation for post-graduate success (within academia and elsewhere), and diversity (in all its dimensions).
- (3) The current and ideal size of your program. This may include a discussion of the factors that will determine the program's size.

Appendix materials that may be useful to reference in this section: Catalog description of the program, including mission statement and program learning outcomes; other relevant planning documents; program brochure(s) or other marketing materials

VI. How does program accomplish its goals?

Purpose: Describe how the program is designed, resourced, and assessed to realize the educational intentions outlined in Section V.

Required Content: Describe how the degree program is designed and resourced, and its structure communicated to its students, to cultivate the educational intentions described in Section V. Through what program of study, advising, mentoring, professional development opportunities, andragogy¹ and assessment-as-planning processes does it to give rise to the population of graduates described above? This section will also describe the program's processes for assessing student learning and success, including for subpopulations as a means to steward diversity. What planning documents (e.g. multi-year assessment plan) and program practices (e.g. assessment committee, faculty meetings, etc.) are in place to regularly examine student learning and success, and advance the program's goals in these areas?

Relevant foci may include:

- (1) How the program is organized and implemented to develop intended program learning outcomes. This may include the logic driving the selection and timing of required and elective requirements, the extent to which the program of study is appropriate to the mission, and how well the program of study reflects current thinking in the discipline(s) or field(s). Any challenges to delivering the program of study may also be discussed here.
- (2) How the program is organized to enable students to complete the degree by the normative time to degree. This may include: how students are recruited, advised, mentored, and supported for timely and successful degree completion from entry into the program through dissertation and/or thesis filing, and the program's approach for the annual review of doctoral and masters students.
- (3) Practices in place to ensure (1) that students admitted to the program will be highly qualified

¹ the method and practice of teaching adult learners; adult education.

and (2) to support appropriate persistence of students and timely completion of degrees.

- (4) The educational delivery method(s) of the program and the andragogical rationale for that method(s) in relation to program design. Describe any disciplinary guidelines, best practices, or literature on teaching and learning that inform the program of study and faculty's andragogy, including efforts to support diverse students.
- (5) The role of teaching assistantships for the program's students. This may include the opportunities for graduate students to obtain professional development in instruction, and any requirements for oversight, evaluation methods used, division of work activities, and mentoring of TAs by the instructor of record.
- (6) How the program fosters the success of diverse students, including through the design of its program of study, andragogy, advising, professional development opportunities, and assessment processes.
- (7) Practices in place to attract, retain, and support diverse faculty.
- (8) How the program supports and promotes the professionalization of its students as future faculty, as researchers, and in other careers, as applicable, in alignment with the program's mission. This may include a discussion of peer mentoring and the support available for student travel, student publication, etc., as applicable.
- (9) The university resources devoted to the program's delivery, including space, equipment, library acquisitions, computing costs, staff support, and IT/software costs, as applicable, as well as financial support available to students through teaching assistantships, contextualized in a discussion of the appropriateness of current and planned allocations in light of intended educational outcomes.
- (10) The types of financial support packages are offered to entering students and the procedures for allocating them.

Appendix materials that may be useful to reference in this section: The program's most recently approved Policy & Procedures; program curriculum map; sample plan(s) for timely completion of the degree; mentoring guidelines; multi-year teaching schedule; summary of financial support available to graduate students, TA assignment policy and training procedures, multi-year assessment plan; syllabi for required courses; list of students participating on campus committees; institutional data on program admissions

VII. Who are the primary individuals/teams taking responsibility?

Purpose: Describe the individuals, and the governance structure, designed to guide and realize the educational intentions identified in Sections V and VI.

Required Content: Describe the program's faculty and their deployment in support of the program's educational intentions. This includes core and affiliated faculty.

Relevant foci may include:

- (1) Faculty contributions to the program, including the distribution of instructional, mentoring, advising, and service responsibilities. This may include student to faculty ratios (separated for Ph.D. and masters students), the distinction between responsibilities of core and affiliate faculty, and, as relevant, discussion of any challenges to delivering the program of study, e.g.

the frequency of delivering required and elective courses.

- (2) Faculty qualifications, including a summary of faculty accomplishments in the areas of teaching/advising, research/creativity, and service (with particular reference to the educational intentions of this program) as well as the mentoring and evaluation processes for assistant professors (also with particular reference to the educational intentions of this program) and any professional development opportunities available to faculty, and any incentives or encouragement faculty receive to participate.
- (3) Faculty participation, per the program's bylaws, in governing and stewarding the program, including participation in program-level assessment, strategic planning, etc. This may include how instruction-related decisions are made and how they are communicated to faculty and staff, as well as any strengths and weakness of the program's governance structure.
- (4) Participation by program faculty in thesis and dissertation committees, as well as external thesis and dissertation committee member qualifications and contributions to the program, including, as relevant, any use of non-Senate members for master's thesis committees.
- (5) The extent to which current administrative structures foster and recognize faculty contributions to the program and graduate education.
- (6) Faculty and staff diversity in relation to the field, and the program's efforts to foster the success of diverse students.
- (7) Contributions made by related units (such as Graduate Division, the Center for Engaged Teaching and Learning, Office of Research, Library, etc) to the program's success
- (8) The staff support available to the program, which may include references to staff to student ratios.

REQUIRED TOPIC FOR PROGRAMS USING NON-SENATE THESIS COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

- (9) How the graduate program chooses thesis committee members and ensures that members will be of appropriate caliber. If non-senate committee members have been used, describe the benefits these members have contributed to the program.

Appendix materials that may be useful to reference in this section: Comprehensive list of participating faculty, median number/distribution of students per faculty member, summative ratio of faculty to students, abbreviated CVs for program faculty; program by-laws; names of current and past officers for the program's committees; faculty participating on qualifying/dissertation committees; faculty workload policy; TA assignment policy; staff FTE; staff-student ratios. Course offerings for the last five years organized by required and elective.

VIII. How well are you doing it and how do you know?

Purpose: Engage in an evidence-informed appraisal of the extent to which your program is meeting its intentions for student learning and student success outlined in sections V and VI, as well as ambitions for national and/or international distinction within the discipline. Identify strengths and areas to strengthen.

Required Content: Drawing on the results of annual assessments and student success data for your

program, comment on the success of your program in realizing your program's aspirations for student learning achievement (demonstrated skills, knowledge, dispositions, etc.), preparation for post-graduate success (both in academia and otherwise), diversity (in all its dimensions), number, time-to-degree, and program size. As relevant, relate this success to the program's ambitions for national and/or international distinction.

Relevant foci may include:

- (1) The extent to which evidence demonstrates that students are achieving the program learning outcomes and in turn achieving success in research/scholarship and professional preparations, including teaching. This may include outcomes for the program's students as a whole, as well as the extent to which all student populations are achieving success.
- (2) How the results of annual assessment have been used to improve student learning, to improve teaching, the learning environment, student support, and the program of study.
- (3) How the program of study prepares students for teaching responsibilities in ways that enable knowledgeable and productive support of student learning in relation to the educational goals and outcomes of the undergraduate programs they support, and the campus as a whole. This may include, as relevant, reflection on the adequacy of institutional support for improving teaching, learning, professional development, etc.
- (4) The program's record of preparing students for post-graduate success, including the extent to which students are able to successfully compete for placements after graduation (employment, admission to further graduate education, post-doctoral appointments) that align with the intentions and goals of the program.
- (5) The extent to which the program's success advances campus priorities.
- (6) The extent to which students receive appropriate support, including funding opportunities and access to advising and mentoring, in the program. This may also include a discussion of the efficacy of the program's efforts to foster the success of diverse students, including through the design of its program of study, andragogy, mentoring, advising, professional development, and assessment processes.
- (7) Consideration of the ways in which students are benefitting from faculty research productivity, i.e., how is faculty research contributing to the success of students in the program? This may include a discussion of the funding, research, publication and external collaboration opportunities provided by faculty research grants.
- (8) The extent to which students are achieving the program's normative time to degree and reaching key program milestones in a timely fashion (as relevant, disaggregate for specific student populations). This may include noting any challenges that prevent students from meeting these benchmarks, and the extent to which the program is satisfied with current attrition/persistence rates and patterns.
- (9) The development and effectiveness of the multi-year assessment plan, and the adequacy of institutional support for assessment.

Appendix materials that may be useful to reference in this section: Annual program assessments reports and PROC feedback; student enrollment data; student success data (disaggregated data on enrollment, publications, student grant funding, time-to-degree, degree completion rates, persistence, graduate

student teaching, grade point average, etc.); institutional survey results; alumni data.

IX. Future directions and planning: What does success look like?

Purpose: Drawing on the program's self-evaluation (Section VIII) and disciplinary and institutional directions, initiate planning for the strategic direction of the program for the period leading up to the next program review. This section will inform the program's action plan.

Required Content: Articulate the strategic direction of the program and the expected hallmarks of success, including, as relevant, national and/or international distinction and rankings, taking into consideration the strengths and areas to strengthen identified in Section VII as well as disciplinary and institutional priorities and directions. Planning should reflect on enrollment trends in the program and prospective growth, necessary institutional support of graduate students (i.e. funding), goals for student learning, student success, areas to be strengthened as identified by learning outcomes assessment, diversity, current student/faculty ratios and necessary institutional support. This section will also describe the relationship between the program's proposed strategic directions and campus academic planning, discuss any implications for closely related programs, and the extent to which necessary resources will align with campus priorities. Programs may benefit from making comparisons to peer programs, including aspirational peers. Programs are encouraged to identify, as relevant, any issues they would like to see specifically addressed by the review team.

Note: If in the course of the self-study a program begins to think about changes to its program of study, we recommend that these be outlined here, but not submitted to GC for review until after the action plan has been completed.

Appendix materials that may be useful to reference in this section: Relevant institutional and/or program or unit planning documents.

X. Recommended Supporting Documents and Data:

Not included in the 25 page limit for the self-study, these documents serve as reference materials for the external review team and provide evidence to support the narrative of the self-study.

- A) Program Policy and Procedures
- B) Catalog description of the program, including mission statement;
- C) Graduate Student Handbook/Policy and Procedures
- D) Program's Mentoring Guidelines
- E) TA Appointment Procedures
- F) Professional Development Opportunities for Students
- G) Teaching Evaluations (program faculty and teaching assistants)
- H) Program brochure(s) or other marketing materials
- I) Curriculum Map
- J) Syllabi for required courses
- K) Multi-Year Assessment Plan
- L) Annual PLO Assessment Reports
- M) Teaching Schedule/History of Course Offerings including Instructors
- N) Student Demographics and Outcomes, including IRDS data
- O) Institutional Survey Data
- P) Alumni Information
- Q) Program Resources (instructional FTE, staff, space, equipment, library acquisition, computing costs, and IT/software costs as applicable)

- R) Bylaws
- S) Faculty List and Abbreviated CVs
- T) Faculty Research Grants and Related Support
- U) Student Financial Support
- V) Materials from Program Approval or Previous Program Review
- W) Metrics relevant to national rankings

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ACADEMIC SENATE, MERCED DIVISION
PERIODIC REVIEW OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE (PROC)

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, MERCED
5200 NORTH LAKE ROAD
MERCED, CA 95343
209-228-7930

[Date]

Dear External Review Team,

Thank you very much for your willingness to participate in the first program review of UC Merced's [Program Name] program. This process, which takes place once every seven years, affords a comprehensive review of [Program Name] in support of long-term planning and continuous improvement.

As the external review team for this review, you are charged with making an independent assessment of the program's strengths, opportunities for improvement, and its future plans/strategic direction. This evidence-based assessment will draw on (1) the program's self-study (including data appendices), (2) interviews conducted during the site visit and (3) national trends in the discipline.

As the team makes its assessment, we also ask that you consider [Program Name]'s achievements and future directions in light of UC Merced's long term strategic plans. [Communicate the campus' priorities for the review].

To facilitate your work, a set of review questions are included with this letter. The questions are drawn from the program review policy and input from the Periodic Review Oversight Committee, and so reflect considerations typical of a program review process. These questions are intended to both guide the review team and to assist the program members in their preparation for the review. Only those questions relevant to the program need be considered.

We look forward to your visit and your subsequent report. We anticipate that your evaluation and recommendations will be pivotal to the future growth of the [Program Name] program and an invaluable contribution to our campus planning processes.

Sincerely,

[Co-Chair Signature and Printed Name]
Co-Chair, Program Review Oversight Committee

[Co-Chair Signature and Printed Name]
Co-Chair, Program Review Oversight Committee

UC Merced is interested in your overall assessment of the teaching and research accomplishments and potential of the program you are reviewing. We are interested in the evaluation of the educational program and assessment practices, as well as comparisons to peer programs and consideration of the program's potential to achieve national and/or international distinction. Recommendations to increase resources may follow from your review, but are not in themselves the primary responsibility of the reviewers.

It might be helpful to think of your review with the following questions, organized according to the structure of the self-study, in mind:

How does the program envision its work?

- To what extent are the program goals clear and explicit in regards to what students should be learning, and how students will attain necessary skills and knowledge through coursework, advising, mentoring, and research? Do program goals address all of the students that it serves, including, as applicable, doctoral and masters students?
- How does the program relate to national trends within the discipline, including aspirational peer programs?
- How well does the program align with and demonstrably support UC Merced's mission and goals?

How is the program accomplishing its mission?

- Are the program's efforts in the areas of teaching, advising, mentoring, and research for its students consistent with the stated program goals?
- Is the program of study adequate in scope and depth to ensure education is appropriate for the degree awarded?
- To what extent do students receive consistent information regarding program requirements? Are there clear pathways for completing the degree within normative time to degree?
- To what extent are course offerings and class sizes supporting program learning outcomes and student graduation? Are course offerings reflective of a cohesive program? Does the program of study adequately prepare students for teaching responsibilities in related undergraduate programs?
- Are the students being mentored and advised in a manner that is appropriate for the discipline?
- Is the program of study and/or andragogy¹ informed by disciplinary resources and/or scholarship on teaching and learning as appropriate to the discipline?
- Describe the strategic use, if applicable, of non-senate faculty to teach in the program and any implications for the program's needs.
- To what extent are annual reviews conducted to provide students frequent opportunities to assess their skills and knowledge, and receive feedback to help them reflect on what they have learned and what they still need to learn? Are students provided frequent opportunities to

¹ the method and practice of teaching adult learners; adult education.

complete and receive feedback for written work? Does the program motivate students to participate fully in inquiry in the discipline?

- Is the program doing enough to recruit and retain students that will contribute to the diversity of the field?
- Does the program provide sufficient financial support for its students, including an adequate number of multiyear fellowships? Are there a sufficient number of research assistantships? Is the nonresident tuition support adequate for the number of international students in the program?
- Are there appropriate support facilities for faculty and students such as libraries, teaching, research, and work space, computer labs and training? Is the program as productive as possible given the resources allocated to it?

Who are the primary individuals/teams taking responsibility?

- To what extent does the distribution of decision-making responsibilities foster effective stewardship of the program? Are students encouraged to participate in decision-making, planning, and program organization?
- Is there broad faculty participation in planning and assessment for this program?
- Is the faculty quality and breadth of coverage adequate for a sustainable graduate program?
 - Areas that should (must) be strengthened or added?
 - Areas that should (must) be de-emphasized or removed?
 - In which area(s) should the next appointment (resources permitting) be made?
 - What is the state of faculty morale?
- To what extent is the program using best practices to attract, retain, and support diverse faculty?
- Do the current administrative structures at UCM foster graduate education in the program you are reviewing? Do the faculty receive appropriate credit for their contributions to graduate education?
- Is there sufficient administrative and technical support? What is the state of staff morale?
- Are there closely related units (such as Graduate Division, the Center for Engaged Teaching and Learning, Office of Research, Library, etc.) at UCM or other UC campuses with which more collaboration should be undertaken? Are students sufficiently informed of grant opportunities and research facilities?
- To what extent do the graduate group's standards and process for constituting thesis and dissertation committees ensure that members are of an appropriate caliber?
- As relevant, what benefits have non Senate thesis or dissertation committee members added?²

How well is the program doing it and how does it know?

- Is the program meeting its goals in regards to what students should be learning, and in turn achieving success in research/scholarship and professional preparation? To what extent are students benefiting from faculty research? Does the program of study prepare students for teaching responsibilities in ways that enable knowledgeable and productive support of student

² Graduate Council asks that this question be addressed in the external review team report for all programs using non-Senate thesis or dissertation committee members. To this end, the PROC analyst will provide specific instructions to the review team in applicable reviews.

learning in relation to the educational goals and outcomes of the undergraduate programs they support, and the campus as a whole?

- How well does this program prepare graduates for careers it says it supports? Are students able to compete for placements after graduation (employment, admission to further graduate education, post-doctoral appointments) that align with the intentions and goals of the program?
- To what extent do the program's educational goals and outcomes advance the university's mission and institutional priorities?
- To what extent do the program's educational goals and outcomes align with its ambitions for national and/or international distinction?
- Do students feel welcome in the program and is there adequate advising to meet their needs? What is the state of student morale? To what extent is the program achieving an equitable and inclusive climate for all groups?
- To what extent are students in fact completing the degree within the stated normative time to degree?
- Are students knowledgeable about program and course learning outcomes? The team may also wish to comment on its appraisal of student learning in the program, based on both examples of student work and the program's assessments. Evaluate the program's assessment of students' learning outcomes. Is the assessment plan appropriate? Effectively administered? Is it used to improve teaching and learning?

Future Directions/planning

- Does the program provide an imaginative, workable long-range plan that will allow it to prepare students and make major contributions to the discipline and to pursue appropriate specializations with distinction?
- What would be needed for this program (or some component) to achieve national and/or international distinction giving due consideration to present UCM resources (e.g. faculty and facilities) compared to those available at top ranked programs elsewhere?
- Have annual assessments or the program review process up to this point revealed undeveloped areas within the program that should be a focus for future planning?
- Has the program had adequate support (from faculty, staff, administration, etc) in developing and responding to its assessments?

**[Program Name] Program Review
Site Visit Agenda**

Review Team

[Name of External Review Team Chair]

[Names of External Review Team Members]

[Name of PROC Senate Liaison]

[Two weeks before Site Visit]

[Time, Time Zone] **Review Team's Pre-Visit Conference Call**

[One Day before Site Visit]

Arrive and check in at [Lodging]

6:00 p.m.

Welcome Dinner, [Location]

[PROC Co-chair Name] PROC Co-chair and Provost/Executive Vice
Chancellor

[PROC Co-chair Name] PROC Co-Chair and Division Council Vice Chair

[Lead Dean Name] Dean, [School]

[VPDGE Name] Vice Provost and Dean of Graduate Education

[Representative Name] Representative of Student Affairs

[VCR Name] Vice Chancellor for Research

[Day One of Site Visit]

7: – 7:45 a.m.

Breakfast at hotel

7:40 – 8:00

Travel to campus

8:00

Arrive on campus

8:15- 8:45

[Room]

Team Orientation & Planning

8:45 – 9:30

[Room]

[Program Leadership]

9:30 – 10:15

[Room]

[Provost/EVC and Representative of Student Affairs]

10:15 – 10:30

Break

10:30 – 11:00

[Room]

[GC Chair]

11:00 – 12:00

[Room]

Lunch with [Lead Dean], [VPDGE], and [VCR]

12:00 – 12:15

Break

12:15 – 1:15

[Room]

Open Session with Assistant Professors

1:15 – 2:00

[Room]

School Support Staff

[Name] [Job Function]

[Name] [Job Function]

[Name] [Job Function]

2:00 – 3:00

[Room]

Open Session for Tenured Faculty

3:00 – 3:15

Break

**[Room] Open Session for Graduate Students
Team Dinner, [Location]**

[Day Two of Site Visit]

Team arrives, greeted by [Program Review Manager]

[Room] Tour of Teaching and Research Labs
Guided by **[Name]**

[Room] Open Session for Adjunct/Visiting Faculty

[Room] Team Lunch and Time for Writing Report and Preparing for Exit Interview

[Room] Exit Interview

[PROC Co-chair Name] PROC Co-chair and Provost/Executive Vice
Chancellor

[PROC Co-chair Name] PROC Co-Chair and Division Council Vice Chair

[VPDGE Name] Vice Provost and Dean of Undergraduate Education

[GC Chair Name] Chair, Graduate Council

[Lead Dean Name] Dean, [School]

[Associate Dean Name] Associate Dean, [School]

[Program Chair Name] Chair, [Program Name] Program

Dear [Invitee]:

The [Program Name] program is undergoing its first periodic review [Site Visit Dates]. This process, which takes place once every seven years, affords a comprehensive review of the program in support of long-term planning and continuous improvement.

On behalf of the Periodic Review Oversight Committee, I write to invite you, or another [Unit] representative, to meet with the external review team on [Meeting Date], from [Meeting Time], in [Meeting Location]. This meeting is also expected to include [Other Meeting Participants].

The discussion will focus on [brief description]. The team will be interested in your perceptions of current context as well as future needs in light of [institutional planning].

Please let me know as soon as possible if you, or a representative, are able to attend.

Additional details will be provided before the visit, including [Program Name]'s self-study, the charge to the team, and the final site visit agenda

I am happy to answer any questions you may have and look forward to your RSVP.

Sincerely,

[Program Review Manager Name]
Program Review Manager & PROC Analyst
Office of Periodic Review, Assessment, and Accreditation Support
[E-mail]/[Phone]

TO: [Program Name] Program Stakeholders

FROM: [Co-Chair Name], Co-chair, Periodic Review Oversight Committee
[Co-Chair Name], Co-chair, Periodic Review Oversight Committee

RE: Notification regarding Confidential Email Account in Support of the [Program Name] Program Review

As you many know, the [Program Name] program is undergoing program review, with a site visit by an external review team to take place [Site Visit Dates]. This process, which takes place once every seven years, affords a comprehensive review of the [Program Name] program in support of long-term planning and continuous improvement.

Meetings with the review team have been scheduled for [List Participant Types] and all stakeholders have been invited^[1] (see [Link to Agenda]).

We understand that not everyone who may wish to participate in the review is able. **As such, a confidential email account has been established to give all stakeholders the opportunity to comment to the external review team.**

The email account was established by a member of the Office of Periodic Review, Assessment, and Accreditation Support. Only this individual and the review team members have access to it. The emails are not viewed by any representative of the [Program Name] program.

The account is established for the site visit only and will be closed and deleted immediately after the visit. Only comments made before or during the day of the team's visit ([Site Visit Dates]) will be considered as part of the review process.

Please note that the review team will not respond to emails submitted to the account. However, the comments, along with other forms of information, will be considered as the team undertakes its work and develops its report, including recommendations to the program and administration.

The team is not able to meet individually with members [Program Name] program community, so please do not request private appointments.

To communicate to the review team, please address your email to: [Confidential Email Address]

Please direct any questions you may have to [Program Review Manager], [Program Review Manager Email Address].

^[1] If you did not receive an invitation and would like to participate a meeting please contact [Program Review Manager] at [Program Review Manager Email Address].

Agenda for [Program Name] Review Team Phone Call

[Date]

[Time]

Call-in Information

[Conference Call Number]
[Conference Call Access Code]

1. [Chair]: Introductions & Overview of Agenda (5 mins)
2. [Program Review Manager]: Overview of the process, charge & review guidelines (5-10 mins)
3. [Chair]: Team discussion (35 – 40 mins)
 - a. Discussion of team members' preliminary thoughts about the self-study in relation to the charge and guidelines.
 - i. Identify emerging questions or areas to follow up on during site visit meetings.
 - ii. Identify, as relevant, any additional materials (easily gathered) that might help the team better understand the program in preparation for the visit.
 - b. Review draft visit schedule.
 - i. Are there meetings you would like to have that are not scheduled? Do the groupings seem appropriate?
 - ii. Identify what team members will attend what meetings or will all team members attend all meetings?
 - c. Consider report drafting assignments – who will be the lead on what elements of the report?
4. [Chair]: Other? (5 min)
5. [Program Review Manager]: Next steps. (5 min)

**Report of the Review Team for the Program Review of [X],
University of California, Merced**

[Date of report submission]

Members of the Evaluation Team

Chair, [X]
[Title]
[Institution]

[Team Member Name]
[Title]
[Institution]

[Team Member Name]
[Title]
[Institution]

[Team Member Name]
[Title]
[Institution]

[Team Member Name]
[Title]
[Institution]

The external review team report is the team's written response to the charge. In its report, the team provides an evidence-based assessment of the program, synthesizing what it has learned through the self-study and the site visit.

I. Introduction:

- a. Brief overview of the program under review including history, faculty FTE, students served, and other context necessary for interpreting the review. (Draw from program's self-study.)
- b. Brief description and evaluation of review process, including the thoroughness and representativeness of the program's self-study and nature of the site visit (length, participants, etc.)
- c. Brief overview of the organization of the remainder of the report

II. Review team findings:

In these sections, provide the context, rationale, and reasons for the review team's recommendations and commendations.

- a. Students: Discuss the program's goals for student learning, and the evidence of how well they are meeting those goals, in the context of national trends within the discipline, the expectations for a masters and/or doctorate degree, and student needs.
- b. Program Faculty and Leadership: Discuss the organization of the program, including its coherence, its ability to present clear and explicit goals, effectively administer assessment, and engage in long-term planning. Discuss whether the program's needs are adequately met by administration and support staff, and how well the program utilizes the available resources.
- c. The Institution: Discuss the program's alignment with institutional priorities, its efforts to serve the distinctive graduate population at UC Merced, and its contributions to and reliance on closely related programs. Discuss any potential within the program to achieve national distinction or contribute to the national distinction of the campus as a whole.

III. Conclusion:

In the final step of program review, the program and school dean collaboratively prepare an action plan. This report, together with the self-study and input from PROC, forms the foundation for formulating the action plan.

- a. Overarching findings and conclusions
- b. Commendations/strengths
- c. Priority recommendations

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ACADEMIC SENATE, MERCED DIVISION
PERIODIC REVIEW OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE (PROC)

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, MERCED
5200 NORTH LAKE ROAD
MERCED, CA 95343
209-228-4099

[Date]

To: [Program Chair], [Lead Dean]

From: [Co-chair Name] Co-Chair, Periodic Review Oversight Committee
[Co-chair Name] Co-Chair, Periodic Review Oversight Committee

Re: [Program Name] Program Review

The Periodic Review Oversight Committee voted unanimously to accept the report of the external review team for the [Program Name] program, which is shared with you here.

We ask the program to now, in collaboration with the lead dean, begin preparing an action plan in response to the findings of the program review process.

To initiate development of the action plan, [Lead Dean's Name] is asked to organize a meeting with the program lead(s), program faculty, the VPDGE, and others as appropriate.

[Include comments from PROC relating program review findings to institutional priorities, providing guidance to assist the program in aligning its own strategic planning with that of the institution as a whole.]

The completed action plan will include the following:

- cover letters from the program and school dean
- the program's strategic plan
- the revised multi-year assessment plan
- the memorandum of understanding between the program and administration regarding resourcing of the steps/actions outlined in the strategic plan.

As per policy, the submission date for this action plan is November 1, [Year 2].

Copy: [Associate Dean]
Graduate Assessment Specialist
[Director of the Academic Senate]
Graduate Council
Periodic Review Oversight Committee

Template for Action Plan

Required Elements of the Action Plan

1. **Program Cover Letter.** Briefly describes the process employed to create and approve the action plan, and provides evidence of faculty agreement on the action plan, e.g. a vote. This includes a description of how the strategic and assessment plans are informed by
 - a. The report of the external review team, including findings, commendations and recommendations.
 - b. The PROC memo accompanying the report of the external review team.
 - c. The program's own findings and plans as articulated in its self-study
2. **Dean's Cover Letter.** Briefly provides the dean's analysis of the strategic plan as a response to the review in light of school and institutional priorities. It also describes the dean's role in developing the action plan.
3. **Program Strategic Plan:** A holistic vision and description of the strategic direction of the program for the years until the next review. It should include clear goals, actions to achieve those goals, and a concrete timeline for implementation, and be responsive to current institutional directions and priorities. The program's plan draws on the program's own findings and plans as articulated in its self-study and responds to the findings of the review process and PROC's guidance.
4. **Revised Multi-year Assessment Plan:** A plan for assessing the program's learning outcomes, and other objective goals established in the strategic plan. The multi-year assessment plan should cover the period until the next review.
5. **MOU:** An agreement between the program and administration (school dean and other programs, administrative units) regarding resourcing of the steps/actions outlined in the strategic plan. This agreement facilitates the implementation of the strategic plan by clarifying and documenting the mutual commitments of the participants together with the resource commitments, new and/or re-prioritization of existing, needed to achieve intended ends.

Annual Report and Evaluation of Progress on Action Plan: Part I – Program’s / Dean’s report

Program Name: _____

Current Year: _____

Year Action Plan Submitted to PROC: _____

Completed by (Name): _____

Completed by (Position): _____

This form is to be completed annually, concurrent with annual assessment, by the relevant undergraduate program chair and by the school dean.

Copy and past action items verbatim from the Program Review Action Plan into the left-most column.

Briefly summarize (in no more than 200 words) the progress made prior to the current year on each action item.

Briefly summarize (in no more than 200 words) the progress made during the current year on each action item.

Briefly summarize (in no more than 200 words) the plan for each action item for the coming year.

Submit the completed form along with the Annual PLO Assessment Report.

Action Items from Program Review Action Plan (include expected dates for relevant actions)	Summarize progress made <u>previous</u> to current year	Summarize progress made in current year (may be n/a if action was completed before current year)	Self evaluation of progress to date			Summarize plan for the coming year (may be n/a if action is completed)
			E	S	U	
1.						
2.						
3.						
4.						
5.						
6.						
[add more rows as needed per plan]						

Annual Report and Evaluation of Progress on Action Plan: Part II – PROC’s response

Program Name:

Current Year:

Year Action Plan Submitted to PROC:

Completed by (Name):

Completed by (Position):

Using the program’s and dean’s reports, briefly comment (in no more than 200 words) on the progress made on each action item to date and evaluate.

In the context of progress to date, comment, if deemed useful, on the plan for the coming year.

Comments on progress to date (may be n/a, commendation, or recommendation)	Evaluation of progress to date		
	E	S	U
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			
[add more as needed per plan]			

Overall progress by the program and school dean towards completing the program review action plan has been:

- ___ Exemplary
- ___ Satisfactory
- ___ Unsatisfactory

Comments: