Introduction

The Texas Administrative Code requires that all graduate programs be periodically reviewed (Texas Administration Code: Title 19, Part 1, Chapter 5, Subchapter C, Rule §5.52). Every master’s and doctoral degree program will be reviewed once every then (10) years according to the due date schedule established by the Dean of the Graduate School and submitted to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB).

There are three components of the review process that are submitted to the THECB:

- **Self-study.** Each program prepares this document based and an analysis of their program. This analysis is guided by a common framework and data, much of which is provided by CIERP.
- **Feedback from External Evaluator(s).** The external evaluator(s) prepare this document based on their analysis of the self-study and site visit (if necessary). Master’s programs require one evaluator and do not require a campus site-visit, though a virtual site visit is recommended. Doctoral programs must have two external evaluators and a campus site-visit.
- **Institutional Response.** The Dean of the Graduate School works with the Program Chair/Director, Academic Dean, and Provost to create this document. It provides a brief overview of the reviewers’ main points and steps that will be taken to address any concerns and improve the program.

Graduate programs that undergo an accreditation review may use the self-study, accreditation report, and institutional response to satisfy the THECB review. If you have a program with an accreditation, please see the section entitled, Procedure for Programs that Undergo External Accreditation.

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Program reviews for doctoral programs require two external evaluators and a campus site-visit. Program reviews for master’s programs, which cannot be combined with a doctoral program review, require one external evaluator. A campus site visit is NOT require for master’s programs but a virtual site-visit is recommended. Master’s and doctoral programs that have the same Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) codes will be reviewed together. Graduate programs within a department that do not share CIP codes may be reviewed together if appropriate.

**Review Timeline**

**September – October**

- Dean of Graduate School (DGS) requests list of core faculty for each program from the Center for Institutional Evaluation, Research and Planning (CIERP).
- The DGS contacts notifies directors/department chairs and academic deans of programs scheduled for review and requests that each:
  - Verify and make corrections to list of core faculty from CIERP, and
  - Identify individuals who should have access to the CIERP program characteristics data.
- The DGS provides CIERP any corrections to core faculty and list of faculty in each program who should have access to the graduate program data. CIERP updates data tools and faculty access.
- The DGS schedules a meeting with all Directors/Chairs to discuss: review process, core faculty, program data, timeline, external evaluator(s), and template for self-study.

**November – December**

- Chair and/or Program Director:
  - Verifies access to the CIERP data and reviews data for any inaccuracies (e.g., core faculty), and
  - In consultation with Academic Dean (AD), begins process of identifying a list of 3-6 potential external evaluators and collects curriculum vita (CV) for these individuals.
- After consulting with the AD, Chair and/or Program Director sends the DGS:
  - A list of potential external evaluators and CVs,
  - A few dates in spring/summer when a campus or virtual site visit can be conducted, and
  - A copy of the Graduate Handbook (and/or Department/Program Operation Procedures that pertain to the graduate program), and
  - A proposed timeline (if the program/department wants to request a timeline that differs from the timeline outlined here).
- Department or Program initiates the self-study.
  - The self-study should include meetings with all relevant faculty members to review data, discuss trends, assess strengths and opportunities, discuss next steps, et cetera.
January – February

- Department/Program continues work on the self-study, entering narrative into the Program Review tool.
- The DGS contacts and finalizes external evaluator(s) for each program and establishes a preliminary time for a campus or virtual site-visit (if appropriate).
- The DGS reviews Graduate Handbook and provides feedback to Chair & Program Director.

March – April

- Chair/Program Director indicates when self-study is ready for review by the AD.
- The AD reviews self-study in program review tool, provides feedback and notifies the DGS when ready.
- The DGS reviews self-study and provides feedback to the Department/Program and the AD, through Program review tool.
- Once self-study is approved, the DGS sends external evaluators:
  - An electronic copy of the self-study;
  - A copy of the Graduate Student Handbook (and/or Department/Program Operation Procedures that pertain to the graduate program);
  - Other critical documents that may be relevant (e.g. strategic plan, marketing materials, etc); and
  - The Authorization for Personal Services (APS) and the Supplier Information Form (SIF) so reviewer can be reimbursed.
  - The Chair/Program director contacts the external evaluator(s) to assist them in coordinating final details of a campus or virtual site visit (see Site Visit Guidelines).

May – July

- The external evaluator(s) conduct a virtual or campus site-visit (see Site-Visit Guidelines).
- The external evaluator(s) writes the report and sends it to the DGS.
- The DGS shares the external evaluators’ review with the AD and Chair/Program Director.
- The DGS issues the honoraria to the external evaluators after the report(s) are received.
  - The honoraria for each reviewer is $1000 for Master’s review and $2000 for PhD review.
  - In cases where the same external evaluator reviews related programs (e.g., MA in History, PhD in History), the reimbursement is $2000. The DGS may approve slightly higher rates if warranted for external evaluators who review a few programs.
  - It is very important to complete the review prior to the end of the fiscal year. Programs that do not finish the review before this deadline may have to help pay for the review if the Graduate School budget cannot accommodate this shift to the next fiscal year.

September – October

- The Chair/Program Director in consultation with the AD prepares a document with recommendations for the institutional response.
November – December

- The GD in consultation with the AD and Provost prepares an institutional response.
- Following the President’s approval, the Provost’s Office uploads the self-study, the external evaluator’s CV, the external evaluator’s report, and the institutional response to the THECB’s reporting Web site, with an electronic copy sent to the UT System.

Instructions for Accessing Data for your Program

1. Go to Graduate Program Reviews Page on the Graduate School Website (Faculty > Graduate Program Reviews)
2. Click “CIERP Graduate Program Characteristics” button which takes you to this page
3. Login using UTEP credentials and accept security statement
4. Select Level, College, Department and Major for your program.
5. Click on “Get Report” button.
   a) you should see a set of tables with the 21 characteristics of your program.
6. Verify the core faculty in your program by clicking “details” in Table 11 Number of Core Faculty
   a) Contact the Graduate Dean if any core faculty should be added or excluded from this list
7. Use the “details” links in each of the tables to identify any anomalies or outliers in the data that may need to be revised or explained.

External Evaluators

Two external evaluators are required for doctoral programs. A single external evaluator is sufficient for master’s programs

The External evaluators must meet the following qualifications:
- Be affiliated with a peer or aspirational institution with a comparable program outside Texas and must have expert knowledge of and experience in the success of graduate programs.
- Hold tenured status in a department/program that awards terminal degrees.
- Be nationally recognized and have an active publication record in the discipline.
- Have administrative experience as a graduate program director, departmental chair, associate dean, or dean.
- Have no perceived or real conflict of interest. For example, an external evaluator who has collaborated with a member of the program/department or served on a program/department member’s dissertation committee is unacceptable.

Peer Institutions

When selecting external external evaluators, your primary focus should be on evaluators whose department/program is comparable to your own. That being said, it is also useful to identify evaluators who come from institutions that are relatively comparable to UTEP. The institutions listed below are ones that are relatively close to UTEP in Carnegie Classification System (2018 analysis). A few of the

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institutions are classified as R2 but are close to R1, the remainder are classified as R1 and relatively
close to UTEP in the overall analysis (please note that Texas institutions were excluded from this list
because external evaluators cannot be from Texas). If you want to check the Carnegie Classification
for an institution please go to this page.

Arizona State University-Downtown Phoenix
Binghamton University
Boston College
Brandeis University
Colorado School of Mines
CUNY Graduate School and University Center
Dartmouth College
Drexel University
Kent State University at Kent
Mississippi State University
Montana State University
New Jersey Institute of Technology
North Dakota State University-Main Campus
Northeastern University
Old Dominion University
Oregon State University
Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute
Saint Louis University
Syracuse University
The University of Alabama
Tufts University
Tulane University of Louisiana
University of Alabama at Birmingham
University of Alabama in Huntsville
University of Arkansas
University of California-Santa Cruz
University of Colorado Denver/Anschutz Medical
Campus
University of Dayton
University of Delaware
University of Louisville
University of Memphis
University of Mississippi
University of Nevada-Las Vegas
University of Nevada-Reno
University of New Hampshire-Main Campus
University of New Mexico-Main Campus
University of Southern Mississippi
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee
Utah State University
Virginia Commonwealth University
Yeshiva University

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Site Visit Guidelines

A one-day campus site visit is required for all doctoral programs. For doctoral program reviews, the Graduate School will cover the cost of travel and housing for two external evaluators. Departments/Programs should plan on covering the costs of meals. Departments are responsible for arranging for airfare and hotel accommodations.

Each itinerary must include (at a minimum) the following activities:

- Orientation Meeting with the Dean of the Graduate School
- Meeting with Department Chair and Graduate Program Director(s)
- Meeting with program faculty
- Tour of relevant facilities
- A meeting with a group of representative doctoral students
- Lunch and/or dinner, dependent on the duration of the program review.
- One hour period for reviewers to talk before the exit interview
- Exit Interview that includes the Department Chair, Graduate Program Director(s), Academic Dean or Associate Dean.

A virtual site-visit is recommended for master’s programs.

Procedure for Programs that Undergo External Accreditation

When creating the schedule for the THECB Graduate Program Reviews, we attempted to schedule each program’s THECB review about a year after the program’s accreditation review/renewal. This allows us to easily use the accreditation process for the THECB review and make the THECB process relatively easy and painless. In the sections below, we briefly discuss how to use the accreditation process to generate the three documents that are required for the THECB.

Self-Study
The self-study should be a single PDF that is less than 15 MB in size. You can use the same file or files that were submitted in your accreditation self-study. If the size of the file is less greater than 15 MB, you can eliminate “non-essential” sections or try reducing the quality of images and/or scanned documents. If you have any questions about how to reduce the size of the file, please communicate with the Dean of the Graduate School.

Feedback From External Evaluator(s)
Create a single PDF that has the feedback from your accreditation review. If the review had multiple letters, you should combine these into one file and add a brief introduction and/or a table of content or to help the THECB review understand what has been combined to create this PDF. Be sure to include the site visit report that may have some specific commentary, not just the final letter of accreditation.

Institutional Response

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The institutional response should contain a brief summary of the accreditation process, including information about the individuals who conducted the external review (if applicable). It should also include a brief summary of any responses made to the accreditors that are discussed in a way that helps the THECB reviewers understand the context of the responses. Finally, it is very important to provide some overall strategic direction for the program because the THECB wants to see a plan for moving forward.