

External Reviewers for Assessment of Student Learning
California State University, Stanislaus
Office of Assessment and Quality Assurance

Purposes for an External Review

The purpose for the external reviewer is to provide support to academic programs in their efforts to assess and enhance student learning. An evaluation by an external reviewer provides benefits to the department, college, university, students, and the external community: improving academic programs and student learning, demonstrating quality to current and prospective students, providing quality assurances internal to campus, and demonstrating accountability to regional professional accrediting agencies.

Selection and Qualifications of the External Reviewer

The college dean works with the department chair(s) to select the external reviewer. External reviewers' qualifications normally include the following or their equivalency:

1. The highest degree in the relevant discipline
2. Rank of associate professor or professor
3. Distinguished record in related teaching, research and scholarly activity, and service
4. Normally an experienced CSU faculty who holds faculty rank in the same or similar programs on their respective campuses
5. No conflict of interest
6. Ability to complete the review and report within the prescribed timeline

If requested, the Faculty Coordinator for the Assessment of Student learning may assist in identifying an external reviewer.

Responsibilities

The external reviewer's primary responsibility is to provide an honest, unbiased, and confidential professional judgment when assessing student work. The external reviewer performs the following responsibilities:

1. Evaluates the quality of student learning and attainment of program learning objectives.
2. Reviews sample student work as appropriate, with student and faculty identification removed from all documents.
3. Employs strategies appropriate to the discipline.
4. Provides feedback (on campus or via a conferencing medium) to the department chair, dean, and program faculty.
5. Submits a written summary of findings to the department chair.

Timeline

The review is conducted over a specified period (usually 1-2 days), resulting in a written summary document submitted to the department chair within three weeks of the review.

Review Process

The department chair or designee coordinates the external reviewer's schedule. The department chair provides to the external reviewer a copy of the visitation schedule, guidelines for the assessment project and appropriate materials (e.g., course syllabi, rubrics). It is essential that examples of student work are available for review as consistent with accreditation standards for assessment of direct student work and completed in accordance with the university's principles for the assessment of student learning.

Remuneration and Expenses

The department chair or designee coordinates the travel arrangements with the external reviewer, in accordance with university travel policy. Consultant paperwork is prepared (in accordance with the human resource policy), and a consultant contract is issued to the external reviewer (normally \$200 per day), plus transportation and one-night lodging as required. The remuneration and refunds for travel

expenses are processed upon completion of the review and receipt of documented accommodation and travel costs as previously approved. Depending upon fund availability and with prior approval by the college dean and vice provost, funds are provided through the university-wide assessment account. Funding may also be provided directly by the college dean.