

California State University, Stanislaus
Office of Academic Programs

External Reviewer for NEW ACADEMIC PROGRAM PROPOSALS

Overview

In accordance with campus practice for the development of new academic program proposals, department chairs and deans seek external reviews as a means to improve the quality of proposed programs.

To accomplish this purpose, external reviewers are provided a copy of the program proposal and other relevant supporting documents and are asked to submit an evaluation within three weeks. A list of the external reviewers and a summary of their evaluation are included in the program proposal as is a summary of the modifications made to the program proposal as a result of the external review. The evaluation documents from the reviewers normally are included as an appendix to the proposal.

Selection of External Reviewers

The department chair works with the college dean to identify potential external reviewers. In consultation with the vice provost, the dean selects the reviewers and sends a letter of request to the reviewers.

A minimum of three, desirably four, external reviews should be secured. These individuals should possess experience and knowledge relevant to the new degree program being proposed and should be individuals able to provide an honest critique of the proposal.

External reviewers' qualifications include the following:

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

Responsibilities

The external reviewer's primary responsibility is to provide an honest, unbiased professional judgment of program quality and student learning outcomes. The external reviewer performs the following responsibilities:

1. Reviews the draft proposal document.
2. Writes a summary of overall academic rigor and program quality, with specific findings of strengths and areas for improvement related to curriculum and its distinctiveness, student learning outcomes and assessment of student learning, course syllabi, need for the program, student demand, faculty qualifications and scholarship, diversity, library and academic technology, competitors, resources, and other special emphasis requested by the department chair and college dean.

Timeline

The review is conducted normally over a three-week time period, resulting in a written document submitted to the department chair and college dean. (See sample letter of request)