

California State University, Stanislaus
Guidelines for Graduate Council Evaluations of Academic Program Reviews
for Master's Degree and Doctoral Programs

Purpose:

Graduate Council designed the following guide to aid in its evaluation of graduate programs at CSU Stanislaus as part of the APR process. The document embodies Graduate Council's values and its sense of priorities concerning graduate education, and also provides our reviewers with a structure to ensure consistent evaluation of the various programs that we are charged to oversee. One goal of this process is to help colleagues in various graduate programs learn from one another and to use information from individual APRs to get a more complete understanding of graduate education on campus, as well as to better equip our graduate programs, as a collective, to better serve the university and the region as a whole. Council members understand that quality APR reports should, as a matter of course, assess programs in light of the six Graduate Learning Goals and also assess PLOs. However, we are also interested in learning about the strengths and challenges facing individual programs so that we can offer advice to help programs better address strategic planning priorities.

Selection of Evaluators:

Once an academic program review has been drafted and before it is forwarded to the appropriate college, the Graduate Council will evaluate the academic program review. Common practice shall be to, first, seek volunteers to write the evaluation from among the members of the Graduate Council; second, if less than three volunteers come forward, to select by lottery from among the members of the Graduate Council the additional faculty necessary to write the evaluation, with the understanding that once a Graduate Council member has served on one evaluation committee, his or her name will be withdrawn from the lottery until all members have served on one committee. Finally, the program under review shall have the right to veto the presence of any member or members of the evaluation team if for any reason that program believes that one or more members of that team may not act in the best interests of the program.

Format:

Four substantive sections shall compose the formal Graduate Council evaluation: 1) program quality; 2) commendations; 3) recommendations for carrying out the program's implementation plan and for program improvement beyond those items identified by the program, if any; and 4) an overall recommendation for either program continuance, continuance with specified conditions, or discontinuance. For the "program quality" section in particular, the Graduate Council evaluation will specifically address the following five areas: 1) program improvement from last academic program review; 2) enrollment trends; 3) commitment to student learning; 4) curriculum and instruction; and 5) faculty. The Graduate Council evaluation will consider specific information, but will provide a holistic review of the academic program that will be most useful to the program under review.

Process:

Following approval of the evaluation by the Graduate Council, the chair of the Graduate Council shall forward the evaluation to the graduate director and department chair of the program under review. At this point, the program may revise the academic program review and resubmit it to the Graduate Council (which would result in a new, briefer response that addresses only those changes) or forward the academic program review and the Graduate Council evaluation to the appropriate college.

Appendices (included for further assistance in identifying criteria that may be considered for the evaluation of the APR and for structuring the evaluation):

1. Previous version of “Guidelines for the Graduate Council’s Evaluation of Academic Program Reviews,” which is available in the Blackboard forum for Graduate Council under Resource Documents, Academic Program Review Procedures.

(This previous version was deemed by the Graduate Council to be too exhaustive—and hence was replaced by the current document—but it can provide ideas for relevant criteria to consider).

2. The document, “Graduate Education Strategic Planning Indicators of Program Health,” which contains criteria under the Viability, Excellence, Contribution, and Opportunity sections that may be relevant to the evaluation of the APR in question. This document is available on Blackboard under [Graduate Program Health Indicators.doc](#) found under Numbered Items (#3), Strategic Plan and Priorities for Graduate Education.

3. A brief “Sample Template of Headings for Graduate Council Evaluations of APRs,” available on Blackboard under Resource Documents, Academic Program Review Procedures.

Approved by Graduate Council 2/19/15