

Appendix I
Memorandum of Understanding to Guide the
Academic Review of Terminal Graduate Programs in _____

The Academic Program Review process consists of on-going, high quality, peer reviews of all terminal graduate degree programs offered at USC. The purpose is to foster academic excellence at all levels, to determine how to raise quality to a higher level, and to provide guidance for administrative decisions in support of continued future improvement. Academic program reviews are not an unrestrained opportunity to request additional resources.

Program reviews at USC have the following characteristics:

1. Reviews provide a concise, honest appraisal of an academic program's strengths and weaknesses.
2. Reviews are forward looking. While assessment of a program's current status is important, priorities for continual future improvement are of greatest concern.
3. Reviews are evaluative, not just descriptive. Plans for improvement require academic judgments about the quality of the faculty, academic program(s), students, curricula, resources and future directions.
4. Reviews incorporate expert assessment provided by reviewers from other high quality institutions.

Each program review must include consideration of the issues described in the Guidelines for Academic Program Reviews. In particular, Section V of the Guidelines includes the topics for the Review Committee, consisting of internal and external members, to assess, and Appendix II provides an outline for the program's self-study. Section V of the Guidelines states:

The Review Committee should thoroughly and candidly evaluate:

1. The mission and intellectual profile of the program, with particular regard to doctoral programs.
2. The reputation of the program among peers in the discipline, including national rankings, and the extent to which the program is regarded as a leader in the field.
3. The likelihood that the program can become pre-eminent in the field. Review Committees should recommend the priorities and strategies that are needed to achieve the University's goal of academic excellence and eminence.
4. The stature and diversity of the faculty, and whether specific faculty members have been duly recognized in their field or by their peers for their accomplishments and promise.
5. The extent to which the program under review contributes (or could contribute in the future) to interdisciplinary research and teaching, and whether there are interdisciplinary ties that currently are underdeveloped.
6. The alignment between program learning outcomes and course learning outcomes along the progression from introductory to advanced levels.
7. The effectiveness of the program's assessment plan to evaluate student learning and quality of teaching.

8. Improvements that are possible without the need for massive infusions of University resources.
9. Improvements that are possible only with additional resources.
10. Whether there are entrenched or irreconcilable issues within the program that constrain its effectiveness, and whether there might be more effective ways of working together.

This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) sets forth additional issues that the Provost, the Dean, and the program Head have identified as questions of particular importance for the program under review. Please be aware that the additional issues are in addition to, and must not supplant, the ten specific areas for evaluation listed above. Both the program, in its self-study, and the Review Committee should provide their analyses of these issues during the review process. We note that the review itself may raise additional issues during the process of assessing a program's strengths and weaknesses.

The additional questions identified as important to address during this review are the following:

- *To be discussed at the MOU meeting*

The MOU also outlines the general composition of the Review Committee, including its size, and the range of disciplines and/or sub-disciplines to be represented. The following provides guidance with regard to the composition of the Review Committee:

The Review Committee should include representatives from institutions with the following types of programs:

- *To be discussed at the MOU meeting*

Institutions from which Review Committee members could be drawn:

- *To be discussed at the MOU meeting*

The internal member of the Review Committee might be drawn from the following programs at USC:

- *To be discussed at the MOU meeting*

The following are collaborating units, centers, or groups of faculty that might be included in the site visit and/or particular groups within the collaborative partnership which should meet separately with the Review Committee:

- *To be discussed at the MOU meeting*

The self-study should be completed no later than _____. If the program needs any information that is gathered centrally for use in its self-study, it should contact the Provost's office or the Dean's office for that information. During this time, the Provost's office will work with the UCAR Chair and members to select the appropriate internal reviewer(s) and to invite external consultants to participate in the site visit.

Signed:

Elizabeth Graddy
Executive Vice Provost
Provost's Designee

Dean

Head of the Program