



Northwestern's \_\_\_\_\_ process is based on a longstanding commitment to continuous improvement that dates back 40 years to when the University developed and implemented a nationally recognized model. Since 2023, the Office of the Provost has led all reviews of academic units at Northwestern University.

The goals of Academic Program Review are to assess each unit's quality and effectiveness, understand our strategic priorities in teaching, research, and scholarship, and encourage strategic development and planning in ways that further the University's priorities. These goals help ensure that Northwestern maintains the integrity and quality of its academic offerings and is able to anticipate future directions and needs of disciplinary areas.

The review process is designed to give departments the opportunity to both reflect and



When possible, the Office of the Provost will schedule reviews of thematically related disciplines in the same academic year to assess opportunities for collaboration and interdisciplinary academic efforts among these units. These thematic reviews help Northwestern to identify ways to strengthen departmental impact across areas of

Each Academic Program Review team is comprised of three external reviewers and two internal reviewers.

### *External Reviewers*

External reviewers are senior faculty members from peer institutions who are considered to be leaders in the discipline area. External reviewers provide valuable feedback on a unit's academic strategy and operations from leading experts in the field. The external reviewers are responsible for authoring the post-review report, described in further detail below. They should be tenured faculty members and when possible, have leadership experience in their own departments and institutions. External reviewers should represent the unit's aspirational program peers and a diversity of academic perspectives for the discipline.

The department will generate a list of 8-10 potential external reviewers for the Provost and Dean to review; in some cases, the Provost and/or Dean may request additional names for review. An [external reviewer sign-off form](#) is available on the Academic Program Review website. The APR team will coordinate all invitations, correspondence and travel logistics with the external reviewers prior to, during, and after the review visit.

### *Internal Reviewers*

Two internal reviewers, both Northwestern faculty members, are identified to serve alongside the three external reviewers during the review visit. Where possible, at least one of the two internal reviewers will be a current Faculty Advisory Council member; this practice lends expertise to the team and provides continuity of process throughout the review.

Internal reviewers serve as a resource for the external reviewers throughout the review preparation and visit and provide valuable context on Northwestern and its schools. Internal reviewers attend all review visit meetings and provide input on the external reviewers' report before its final submission to the Provost. The internal reviewers will also meet with the Faculty Advisory Council to present the review report recommendations.

The Office of the Provost, in consultation with the Dean, generates a short list of potential internal reviewers for the department Chair to review; the department provides sign-off before internal reviewers are invited.



Each department will identify 4-5 critical issues they would like the review to address and examine in greater depth. These Key Issues may take the form of known challenges that the department is currently facing, or critical issues they anticipate in the future. Key Issues should focus on long-term, strategic issues that are of importance to the department's academic strategy or standing in the field, and that would benefit from external reviewer feedback. Key Issues may cover issues related to faculty operations, research focus and strategy, department governance, undergraduate or graduate teaching and learning, collaborations, operations and facilities, staff support, etc.

Key Issues are generated by the department through a process of dialogue and input. This may take the form of a series of faculty meetings and open discussion, a faculty retreat session, or through small group discussions led by members of the faculty working group. The final list of Key Issues should reflect the input of all full-time faculty in the department. A \_\_\_\_\_ document is available on the Academic Program Review website.

Once the department has agreed on their set of Key Issues, they are submitted to the APR team, who will then share them with the Dean, Provost, and Faculty Advisory Council for their feedback. Occasionally, the Provost and/or Dean may request additional topics be added to the department's list. Any such feedback will be shared with the department Chair for further discussion and to inform the final set of Key Issues for the unit.

The APR team, in partnership with the Institutional Research (IR) team in the Office of the Provost, will administer a Faculty Survey to gather feedback on the strengths and opportunity areas for the department. The IR team will tailor this survey to the department's core faculty audience, depending on the structure and composition of its facul(or)am Th



The survey contains Likert scale questions covering three areas: *Academic Vision and Strategy*, *Department Culture*, and *Department Governance*. A series of open-ended questions is also included.

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circumstance, the review team should discuss this with the Academic Program Review





