

Office of the Provost

AY 2022-2023

Academic Program Review Guidelines

For Academic Units Writing their Self-Study Report in AY 2022-2023

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Introduction

Purpose of the Self-Study

Preparing a Self-Study Report presents academic units with a tremendous opportunity for self-reflection and evaluation of its performance against the standards of the academic profession. The Self-Study Report is the product of focused, collaborative work by the faculty and staff of the academic unit and ideally, incorporates contributions from the academic unit's students and alumni. When the entire academic unit is involved in its discussion and creation, the document more effectively communicates the essence and nuances of the academic unit that are so critical to a thorough and useful evaluation by the unit's reviewers. The academic unit may designate a self-study committee to assemble the Self-Study Report.

A Self-Study Report presents a comprehensive picture of an academic unit's strengths, challenges and potential, and serves as a roadmap to its future. It addresses any specific limitations or weaknesses cited in previous Self-Study Reports, Action Plan, Annual Curriculum & Assessment Reports, and Mid-Cycle Progress Reviews, while also describing what the academic unit does best and how it could do better in both the immediate- and long-term. The report is the primary document used by [Faculty Senate-charged committees](#) and External Reviewers to evaluate the academic unit's use of human and fiscal resources to create and maintain quality academic programs, research, and service to the university.

The feedback the Self-Study Report generates from students, faculty, administrators, review committees, and external reviewers lends greater clarity to the academic unit's goals and objectives while illuminating its accomplishments and opportunities for growth. Academic units that write the most effective Self-Study Reports are those that recognize and use it as a valuable tool in defining and implementing their own goals for continuous improvement.

Institutional Accreditation, ABOR Requirements, and University Policy

[Higher Learning Commission](#) (NAU's institutional accreditor)

The Higher Learning Commission requires institutions to engage in regular academic program reviews to ensure the quality of its educational offerings.

ABOR Requirements

[Arizona Board of Regents](#) policy (ABOR 2-225) requires review of all academic programs every seven years. The Provost may schedule an earlier review in response to changes or for other reasons. Similarly, a Dean may request an earlier review. On rare occasions, Academic Program Review (APR) may be delayed at the request of a Dean to the Associate Vice Provost for Curriculum and Assessment (AVP-CA), and subject to the approval of the Provost.

Unit of Review

An academic unit (department or school) is typically the basic unit of review. Normally, all programs within an academic unit are reviewed simultaneously. In some instances, particularly if a unit has one or more degree programs with discipline-specific specialized accreditation(s), sections of the APR may be done separately for academic programs within the unit. Programs that do not reside within an academic unit, including programs such as Liberal Studies or the Honors Program, are reviewed independently of academic units. Expectations for the unit will be clarified during the initial planning phase of the review.

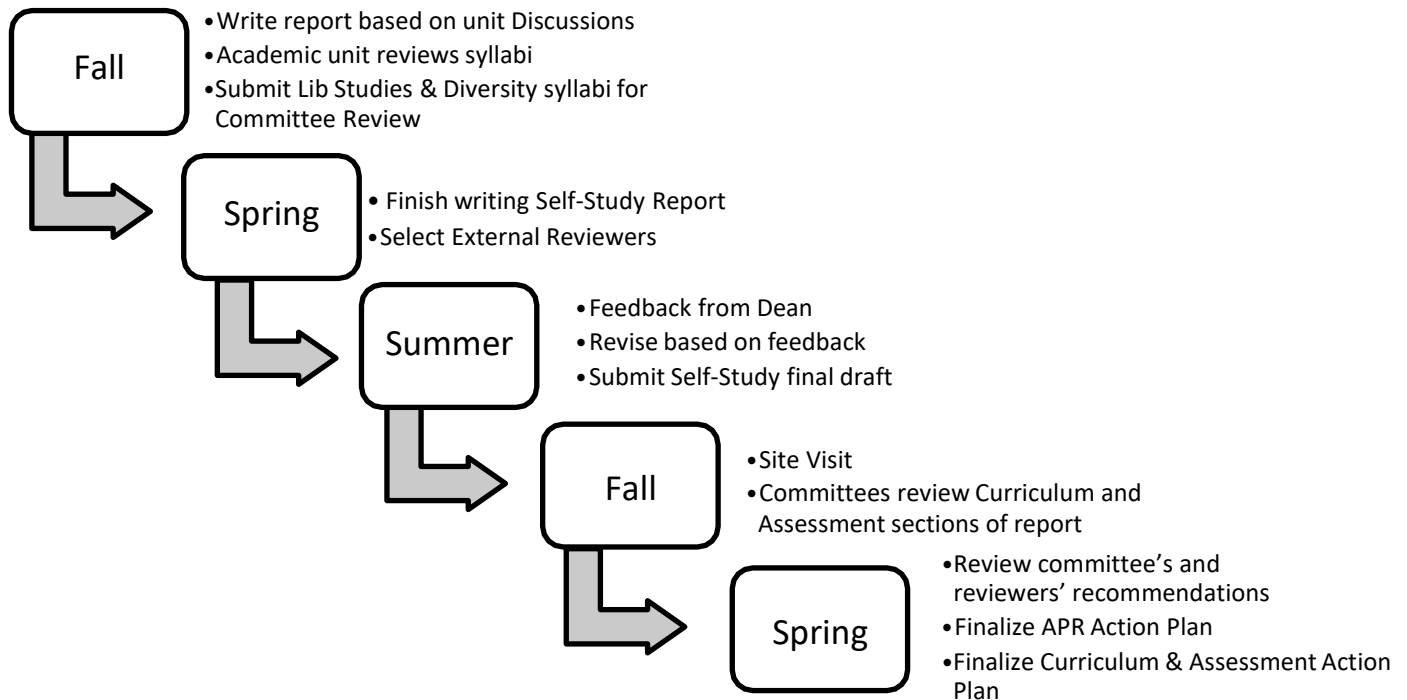
Programs with a Discipline-Specific Specialized Accreditation

Degree programs engaging in a discipline-specific [specialized accreditation](#) are reviewed in compliance with the standards and procedures established by the accrediting organization and following the accrediting organization’s calendar of review. A supplement to the accreditation review may be required in cases where the accrediting body does not fully address university expectations (e.g., Degree Program Expectations). When an accreditation review does not apply to all of a unit’s programs, the regular APR process is required for the programs not covered by the accreditation. In all cases, programs engaging in specialized accreditation will develop action plans and submit progress reports as described in these guidelines.

The Academic Program Review Process

In its entirety, the Academic Program Review is typically a two-year process that includes completion of a self-study, a site visit by external reviewers, a review of [Degree Program Expectations](#) by [Faculty Senate-charged committees](#), a compilation of feedback from internal and external reviewers, and the development of a Curriculum & Assessment Action Plan and an APR Action Plan in collaboration with the Provost Office, college Dean, and Graduate College Dean (when appropriate).

Figure 1



Initial Planning

Careful planning for the Academic Program Review will ensure a smooth, effective process that is typically completed within a two-year timeframe.

Notification of the Review: The unit chair, director, or executive director (hereafter referred to as Chair) and college Dean of the academic unit scheduled for review are contacted by AVP-CA to discuss the timing of the review. The AVP-CA office maintains and posts the [schedule of reviews](#).

APR Orientation Meeting and Selection of Strategic Questions: The APR process is initiated with an orientation meeting between the Chair, interested academic unit representatives, and the Provost's Office. The orientation will serve as an introduction to APR, its processes and purposes, and provide guidelines for successful completion. Together with the AVP-CA, the unit will identify sections of the template that are appropriate for analysis and remove sections that are not applicable. Introduction to the Strategic Questions section will occur, and the unit leader and representatives will consider potential Strategic Questions with their college Dean. Strategic Questions decided upon by the college Dean are to be submitted for review to AVP-CA.

Formation of the Self-Study Committee and Development of the Self-Study Plan: The Chair consults with the college Dean regarding an appropriate composition for the self-study committee. The composition of the self-study team committee is unique to the composition of each unit's faculty, types of academic programs, and teaching, research, and service obligations. For large units having undergraduate and graduate programs, a promising practice has been to engage a representative (or two, if there are many undergraduate and/or graduate programs) on the self-study committee who leads a committee of faculty related to that level or program. Units with multiple programs at the same level frequently have representation for each program. Units with a heavy teaching agenda of service-related courses frequently engage faculty from those courses in writing various sections of the report; units with heavy research agendas typically engage faculty from those areas in writing the research sections of the report. Based on the breadth and depth of the strategic questions selected by the unit and/or Dean, representation would likely reflect the conversations and issues of importance to the unit. It is recommended that at least three academic unit faculty participate who have a good understanding of the academic unit and the discipline/ profession. The self-study committee should also include staff and student representatives, where possible.

After establishing the committee, the Chair should lead its members in development of a plan and timeline for completion of the self-study within a one-year timeframe. Units without realistic plans for self-study completion frequently extend the completion of the report. It's best to develop a plan, commit to it, and complete the process within the recommended timeframe.

Procedures and Timeline for Writing the Self-Study Report

The Self-Study Report provides basic information about the unit, addresses the strategic questions important to the unit, includes an evaluation of its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, and identifies the unit's important Future Goals for review and evaluation by the college Dean, Provost's Office, and external and internal reviewers.

Write Self-Study Report Sections: History/Context, Descriptive Analyses, Strategic Questions
The academic unit's faculty members discuss and prepare a descriptive and evaluative self-study using the [Self-Study Report Template](#), applicable student and faculty data, and other evidence.

Keep the following in mind as you write the self-study:

- The self-study is the faculty's opportunity for self-evaluation.
- The resulting report should be comprehensive but concise.
- It is essential that the process and results be open and available to all members of the academic unit (faculty, students, and staff).

The self-study process allows for detailed review and discussion by the faculty within the academic unit. The model timetable in Figure 1 on page three allows sufficient time for the completion of a comprehensive report in balance with an individual's other teaching, research, and service responsibilities.

Program Data Reports: In preparation for writing the Self-Study, the Chair will receive data reports from the Provost's Office and have the opportunity to consult with Academic Affairs representatives to discuss the data and its implications. In addition, Cline Library will provide a standard library report while the unit is writing its self-study report. Budget reports are available through the Budget Office.

Collection and Review of Academic Unit Syllabi: Consistent with the [University's Syllabus Requirements Policy](#), during the first semester of the self-study period, the academic unit leader or designee(s) shall review faculty members' class syllabi to ensure alignment with the Master/Common/Syllabus of Record and determine whether course purpose or learning outcomes have changed substantially to warrant re-submission through the [curriculum approval process](#). Additionally, academic units are expected to ensure alignment with characteristics of [Strategic Course Design](#) (e.g., the course's purpose aligns with its learning outcomes and its assignments/ assessments).

All academic units are encouraged to submit new courses for the new [General Studies](#) program. If no new courses are being proposed, for already designated Diversity-designated courses, complete the [Essential Course Design](#) requirement forms (with syllabi of record) to transform courses to the requirements of the new program. These are submitted to the [Office of Curriculum and Assessment](#) to coordinate the review by the Liberal/General Studies Committee and/or Diversity Curriculum Committee.

Write the SWOT Analysis and Future Goals Sections of the Self-Study Report: A strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) analysis and reflection shall be written based on what the academic unit learned reviewing aspects of the unit's performance in relation to teaching, learning, research and service, the distribution of resources to achieve its goals, and the findings in relation to the unit's strategic questions. Sharing, discussing, and collaborating in the writing of this section is vitally important to the development of a set of future goals for the unit. The Future Goals section provides a list of the actions the unit will take to maintain its strengths, address its weaknesses, seize upon opportunities, and address potential threats. The future goals will be reviewed and considered by the college Dean, Provost's Office, and reviewers, who will give feedback concerning goal viability based on resources. The Future Goals section becomes the groundwork for the Action Plans that are created the semester following the site visit.

Selecting the Review Team (additional information can be found in Appendix A): External reviewers should be selected based on the questions and analyses being raised by the academic unit. Once the final selection is completed, the review team typically consists of two external reviewers selected by the academic unit and one internal (NAU faculty) consultant selected by the Provost's Office. The purpose of the external and internal reviewers is to provide insights and

feedback to assist the unit in achieving its future goals. For example, if the unit is thriving, and foresees few changes in the future, they will likely focus on reviewers from universities with similar goals and programs. If the unit finds weaknesses in one or more of its academic programs, reviewers should be selected who have strong programs and can provide insights into how to strengthen its programs.

Strategic questions might garner specific focus by reviewers. For example, if a unit is looking to expand its academic programs, it might obtain a reviewer who has recently expanded a program successfully. If a unit is facing a particular challenge, obtaining a reviewer or specialist who has successfully overcome a similar challenge would be beneficial.

The academic unit will submit a list of six to eight potential external reviewers, ranked according to preference, and provide up to three sentences stating the reasoning for choosing each external reviewer. The list is submitted to the college Dean for initial review and approval. The AVP-CA will review the recommendations and select the external reviewers, subject to the approval of the Provost. The AVP-CA will send formal letters of invitation to the selected external reviewers. Individuals on the list are contacted until two reviewers provide an affirmative response.

In the case of discipline-specific accreditation review, the external reviewers are typically selected by the accrediting agency.

Drafts and Revisions of the Self-Study: Units will submit a draft of the Self-Study Report to the unit college Dean by the agreed upon date. The Dean will provide feedback to the academic unit by an agreed upon date. The Chair or their designee will incorporate feedback into revisions. The draft of the Self-Study is due to the AVP-CA by the agreed upon date for review.

Distribution of the Final Self-Study Report: Once the self-study is finalized, the AVP-CA will forward the final version of the report to the college Dean, Provost, Vice Provost and Dean for NAU Online and Innovative Educational Initiatives, Dean of the Graduate College (if the unit has one or more graduate programs) and Vice President for Research (if the unit has a Ph.D. program and/or research-intensive mission). The Provost's Office will distribute the self-study report to the internal and external reviewers at least one month in advance of the site visit. NAU's review committees, including the [University Undergraduate Committee and University Graduate Committee](#), will receive the Curriculum and Assessment section of the Self-Study Template that pertain to the area of their charge for review and feedback during the semester of the site visit.

The Site Visit

The site visit is typically scheduled for the semester following the submission of the self-study. The site visit consists of entry/exit meetings with members of the Provost's Office, various meetings with the college's Dean, the Chair, faculty members and students, and tours of academic unit facilities. In addition, curriculum and assessment aspects of the academic unit are evaluated by faculty serving on [Faculty Senate-charged Committees](#): the Diversity Curriculum Committee, the Liberal/General Studies Committee, the University Graduate Committee, and the University Undergraduate Committee.

Site Visit Preparation: The schedule for the site visit should be developed in consultation with the AVP-CA to ensure that all appropriate personnel are available during the site visit. If the unit offers one or more graduate degrees, the Dean of the Graduate College should be included in the

site visit schedule. If the unit offers online programs, the Vice Provost and Dean for NAU Online and Innovative Educational Initiatives should be included as well. Details regarding scheduling of the site visit and a sample site visit itinerary are provided in Appendix A.

External Reviewers' Travel, Reimbursement and Service Payment The external reviewers' travel arrangements (flight, hotel, etc.) should be made by the [service team](#) to ensure compliance with policy. Use of the service team is not optional. The unit should submit an individual service ticket for each member of the external review team. The finance service team will work with the external reviewers to make travel arrangements. Reviewer travel, lodging, and meal expenses should be paid for by the unit (collect necessary forms and receipts during the visit). The external reviewers shall not bear any of the costs associated with their travel to NAU. The Provost's office will pay the external reviewers' payment (\$1000 each) upon receipt of their written report. Subsequently, the Provost's office will reimburse the unit for travel expenses. See Appendix A for additional information.

Review of Academic Programs Quality by Faculty Senate-charged Committees: Typically, during the semester prior to the site visit, the Liberal Studies- or Diversity-designated course syllabi are reviewed by the appropriate committee to ensure their alignment with characteristics of [Designation](#) and [Strategic Course Design](#) (the course's purpose aligns with its learning outcomes and its assignments/ assessments). [This step in the process is on hold during the planning and implementation phase of the new General Studies program.]

In the semester of the site visit, the University Undergraduate Committee and/or University Graduate Committee are provided the Curriculum and Assessment (Degree Program Expectations) sections of the Self-Study Report. Committees will use reviewers' guides to evaluate and provide feedback and recommendations to the academic units concerning each degree program's curriculum and assessment efforts since the previous review period. The Purpose Statements and Learning Outcomes for minors and certificates will also be reviewed by university committees.

Compilation of Reviewers' Findings

The academic unit, Dean, and AVP-CA will receive findings and feedback from the external reviewers, the internal consultant, and review committees (the Diversity Curriculum Committee (DCC), Liberal Studies Committee (LSC), University Graduate Committee (UGC) and/or University Undergraduate Committee (UUC)).

Review Committee Responses: The Office of Curriculum and Assessment coordinates and collects the feedback from Faculty Senate-charged committees engaged in the review of the units' report and syllabi. The findings are used, in conversation, to develop the Curriculum & Assessment Action Plan.

External and Internal Reviewers' Report(s): External reviewers have the option of submitting a combined reviewer's report authored by both reviewers, or submitting multiple reports authored by each individual reviewer. The internal reviewer/ consultant has the option to provide useful feedback to the academic unit and the Provost's Office. Within six weeks following their visit, the external reviewers should submit their completed report(s) to the AVP-CA, who will distribute it to the Provost, Dean of the Graduate College (if relevant), the college Dean, and Chair. After the Chair receives the report, the Chair should, in turn, distribute the report to the unit faculty and discuss the evaluation and recommendations made by the external reviewers and internal consultant. If the

external reviewers submit their report to the unit Chair or college Dean, that individual should distribute it as described above.

Development of Action Plans

Following the site visit and receipt of reports from reviewers and committees, the Chair, in consultation with the college Dean and the AVP-CA, should work with the unit representatives to create Action Plans.

Action Plan Orientation: The AVP-CA and Assistant Director of Assessment and Curriculum Design (AD) will meet with the Chair to discuss process and timelines for completing the Action Plans. After the orientation, the Chair will be provided with a timeline, template, and sample Action Plans.

The purpose of developing Action Plans is to review the feedback from the external reviewers and Faculty Senate-charged review committees, incorporate perspectives and analyses into the unit's future goals, and prioritize efforts over the coming years to maintain current strengths, address challenges, and achieve or maintain the Degree Program Expectations in preparation for the next Academic Program Review (APR). Two Action Plans are required: 1) Curriculum & Assessment; 2) APR. The Curriculum & Assessment Action Plan is developed to plan the curriculum design and assessment activities of the unit, while the APR Action Plan focuses on the achievement of college-related goals of the unit (e.g., advising, enrollments, replacing laboratory or other equipment or facilities, hiring faculty, changing marketing approaches).

APR Action Plan Development: The Chair will facilitate discussion of the self-study and the reviewer's feedback among the unit's stakeholders. Through these discussions, the academic unit will revise the Future Goals section of the Self-Study report to incorporate the feedback from reviewers and committees and prioritize the goals. This compilation is sent to the Dean by the date agreed upon during the orientation (typically in the semester following the site visit).

The Chair and Dean will use the Future Goals section to determine the following:

- Confirm the priority of the goal;
- Develop the efforts or actions that will be taken to achieve the goal; and
- Identify the timeframe needed for goal completion.

In this manner, the APR Action Plan will contain the priorities and efforts the unit will assume to maintain their current strengths, address challenges, and achieve the unit's priorities in preparation for the next Academic Program Review.

Curriculum & Assessment Action Plan Development: The academic unit will work with the AD from the Office of Curriculum and Assessment to draft a Curriculum & Assessment Action Plan, which is provided back to [Faculty Senate-charged committees](#) for final review to ensure feedback was addressed.

APR Action Plan Leadership Meeting: The college Dean will send the draft APR Action Plan to the AVP-CA for review. An action plan meeting will be scheduled including the Chair, college Dean, Provost, AVP-CA, and Dean of the Graduate College, Vice Provost and Dean for NAU Online and Innovative Educational Initiatives, and Vice President for Research (if appropriate). By the conclusion of the meeting, all participants should agree upon the actions to be taken and any revisions needed to the draft action plan. If revisions are needed to the Curriculum & Assessment

Action Plan based on these meetings, the revisions will be submitted as part of the academic unit's next Annual Curriculum & Assessment Report.

Finalized APR Action Plan: The Chair should submit the proposed final action plan to the college Dean by the date agreed upon during the orientation. The plan should reflect the discussion among all parties during the action plan leadership meeting. In turn, the college Dean should present the proposed final action plan to the AVP-CA. The AVP- CA will review the document for finalization. The final action plan will be filed and used for reference for annual decision making and during the three-year interim review and subsequent APR.

Permanent Record of the Program Review: The Provost's Office retains copies of the self-study, external reviewers' report, the APR Action Plan, and the Curriculum & Assessment Action Plans.

Progress Reporting Based on Action Plans

Annual Curriculum & Assessment Reports: The academic unit will use its Curriculum & Assessment Action Plan to develop and submit Annual Curriculum & Assessment Reports following the APR by end of May each year, as per the Curriculum Design and Assessment [policy](#).

Mid-Point Progress Reports/Syllabi Review: The AVP-CA will request a progress report three years after the site visit. This report will entail a brief summary of progress relative to the APR Action Plan and any updates that have impacted the implementation of the plan.

Per the [Syllabus Requirements Policy](#), the academic unit leader or designee(s) will review faculty members' class syllabi to ensure alignment with the Master/Common Syllabus and determine whether the course's purpose or learning outcomes have changed substantially to warrant re-submission through the [curriculum approval process](#). Documentation of review, recommended actions, and collection of all class and Master/Common Syllabi is due to the [Office of Curriculum and Assessment](#) by the end of the academic year.

Appendix A: Site Visit Procedures

Selection of External Reviewers

External reviewers, as recognized experts in the disciplinary/professional field of the unit undertaking program review, provide critical judgment, ensure the objectivity of the program review process, and determine how the program compares to other programs in the region and nation. Reviewers should bring an informed and unbiased view to the evaluation of the program. External reviewers should judge whether the plans of the department are appropriate, considering such factors as the current condition of the program, trends in the discipline, nature of the faculty, and characteristics of the students and community the program serves.

Desirable qualifications of the external reviewers include:

- Prior program review service or training for a reviewer's role;
- Expertise in the academic and professional area(s) fitting with the department;
- Experience with similar institutional/departmental context;
- No close relationships with personnel in the unit undergoing review, or other potential conflicts of interest;
- Sufficient time to devote to the task.

National and/or regional associations or professional networks may make available or be willing to provide the names of individuals who are qualified to serve as external reviewers.

The Chair should submit to the college Dean a ranked list of six to eight potential external reviewers, including contact information and some biographical information or other explanatory reasoning for the choices, together with potential site visit dates (see below). The Dean will review and forward a ranked list to the AVP-CA. The AVP-CA will review the recommendations and select the external reviewers, subject to the approval of the Provost. The AVP-CA will send formal letters of invitation to the selected external reviewers. Guidelines, general information about NAU, and potential site visit dates are sent with the invitation. The AVP-CA also selects the internal faculty consultant and notifies the Dean and Chair.

Site Visit Dates and Planning

Around the same time a list of potential external reviewers is being compiled, the AVP-CA will request from the Chair at least three sets of potential dates (two days each) for the site visit. The selected dates should not conflict with national professional meetings or previous program commitments. Additionally, the Chair should verify that essential personnel will be available when sending potential site visit dates to the AVP-CA. The AVP will confirm the Provost's availability during those dates before contacting potential external reviewers.

After two potential external reviewers confirm willingness to serve during specified dates, the AVP-CA contacts the Chair so the unit can begin planning for the site visit. The Chair should confirm that the Dean (or designee) and Provost Office representatives will be available to meet with the external reviewers during the visit. In the case of an accrediting organization, meetings with other personnel (e.g., Registrar, President, etc.) may be expected or required as well.

The Chair should engage in an initial discussion with the external reviewers to determine the duration of the visit (typically 2-3 days, including travel) and any other arrangements critical to the

visit. Subsequently, the Chair, in cooperation with the offices of the Dean, AVP-CA, and others as needed, will formulate an itinerary for reviewers' site visit to include:

- An entrance interview during the first morning of the visit including the Provost, AVP-CA, Vice Provost and Dean for NAU Online and Innovative Educational Initiatives (if applicable) and Dean of the Graduate College (if relevant).
- Interviews with the college Dean and the Chair during the first day of the visit, if possible. This meeting may be a joint meeting (Dean and Chair together) or two separate meetings, depending on the preferences of all involved.
- Interviews with unit faculty, staff, and students and possibly with chairs of supporting academic departments and unit advisory committees (if pertinent).
- Tours of facilities, as relevant and appropriate.
- An exit interview with the Provost, AVP-CA, Vice Provost and Dean for NAU Online and Innovative Educational Initiatives (if applicable), Dean of the Graduate College (if relevant), and college Dean.

Other important considerations in building the site visit itinerary:

- Accrediting organizations may request a private meeting with the Provost or President before or after the larger exit interview, so the schedule should be developed with some flexibility.
- The external reviewers and internal consultant should be provided the opportunity to review the draft itinerary prior to finalization.
- The internal consultant shall be present at all meetings.
- It is advisable to send calendar invites, especially to those involved in the entrance and exit meetings.
- If virtual attendance is offered for any of the meetings, separate links/invites (as opposed to the same link for all meetings) are recommended so that attendees to the subsequent meeting do not interrupt a meeting in progress.

Sample Site Review Team Itinerary

(Accreditation visit itineraries may include additional meetings mandated by accreditation teams)

DAY 1

8:00 – 8:45 a.m.	Breakfast with college Dean and/or Chair
9:00 – 10:00 a.m.	Entrance interview with the Provost, AVP-CA, college Dean, Vice Provost and Dean for NAU Online and Innovative Educational Initiatives (if applicable), and the Dean of the Graduate College (if applicable)
9:45 – 10:15 a.m.	Meet with college Dean or Chair
10:15 – 10:45 a.m.	Meet with self-study committee
11:00 – 11:30 a.m.	Meet with program faculty
11:30 – 12:00 p.m.	Tour facilities
12:00 – 1:30 p.m.	Lunch
1:45 – 2:15 p.m.	Meet with undergraduate and graduate students
2:15p – 2:45 p.m.	Meet with staff
3:00p – 3:30 p.m.	Meet with Chairs from supporting units (if applicable)
3:45p – 4:15 p.m.	Meet with alumni or advisory boards (if relevant and available)
4:30p – 5:00 p.m.	Meet with representatives from Curriculum and Assessment
6:00p – 7:30 p.m.	Dinner (possibly with unit personnel)

DAY 2

8:00 – 9:00 a.m.	Breakfast and reviewers work time
9:00 – 10:00 a.m.	Open forum for faculty, staff, and students
10:15 – 11:00 a.m.	Meet with Chair and/or a program coordinator
11:00 – 12:00 p.m.	Meet with college Dean
12:00 – 1:30 p.m.	Lunch
1:30 – 2:30 p.m.	Exit meeting Provost, AVP-CA, college Dean, Vice Provost and Dean for NAU Online and Innovative Educational Initiatives (if applicable), and the Dean of the Graduate College (if applicable)
2:45 – 3:45 p.m.	Wrap up with Dean and Chair

Expenses

The unit is responsible for initiating a ticket with the [finance service team](#) to plan the external reviewers' travel. External reviewers shall not bear any costs associated with their travel. In addition, the unit is responsible for collecting their receipts and submitting them to the service team to allow for reimbursement of non-prepaid expenses. The Provost's Office will initiate and process the \$1000 payment to the external reviewers upon receipt of the final report in addition to reimbursing the unit for the external reviewers travel expenses. Other expenses (e.g., report preparation, postal costs, catering, local transportation, meals for non-reviewer participants) are the responsibility of the unit and will not be reimbursed by the Provost.

The Provost's Office will coordinate with the external reviewers to obtain a completed vendor registration form and determine their preferred method of payment. The Provost's Office will be the point of contact for the payment of the \$1000 stipend. The department will be the point of contact for all travel arrangements via a ticket with the finance service team. The department is responsible for submitting a transfer of funds form to the AVP-CA, [Yvonne Luna](#), for the reimbursement of allowable travel expenses. All required expense receipts must be obtained by the unit and accompany the reimbursement request. The most convenient time to obtain this information is during the visit.

Reimbursement Notes:

- Reviewers' travel arrangements and any travel related expense reimbursement should be made with assistance from the unit.
- Reviewers' travel, lodging, and meal expenses should be paid for by the unit (collect necessary forms and receipts during the visit). The reviewers may have other receipts (i.e., ground travel) incurred for the visit that will need to be sent to the administrative assistant of the unit hosting the site visit.
- We recommend booking lodging at the [Drury Hotel](#) and ask for the NAU business discount.
- The Provost's Office will handle all vendor registration forms and the payment to the reviewers of the \$1000 stipend.
- After all the expenses associated with reviewer travel are finalized, the administrative associate from the department sends all receipts, with documentation, plus a transfer of funds form to AVP-CA, [Yvonne Luna](#), in the Provost Office for reimbursement to their unit.
- Reviewers should not bear the burden of travel expenses. All travel related expenses should be charged directly to university funding sources.
- Reimbursements (for lunch, dinners, etc.) will be reimbursed at the standard M&IE daily

- rate and ONLY for the external reviewers.
- NO ALCOHOL is allowed and WILL NOT BE REIMBURSED

Guidelines for External Reviewers

The AVP-CA will send the following letter with guidelines to external reviewers:

Letter

Dear Dr. [Reviewer Name]:

Thank you for considering our request to serve as an external reviewer for the Department [School] of [Unit Name] at Northern Arizona University (NAU). Academic Program Review (APR) is conducted under mandate from the Arizona Board of Regents with the most important purposes being to assure the quality of educational programs and to identify opportunities for future development. As an external reviewer you have a critical role in this review process. Your objective input will help the unit and University evaluate its programs and develop strategic plans for program development.

The following information provides background on Northern Arizona University's program review process, specific functions and responsibilities of external reviewers, and suggestions for maximizing the effectiveness and outcome of the site visit and final report.

Guidelines

The primary purpose of academic program review is to evaluate and strengthen academic units and programs in terms of the quality of teaching and design of programs, the contribution of the program to the University's [strategic roadmap](#), to fully understand and outline the program's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, and to identify the best future strategic directions for the program.

Academic programs at NAU are reviewed on a seven-year schedule. Normally, program reviews include evaluation of both undergraduate and graduate degree programs, other educational programming, and scholarly activities housed within the academic unit. The reviews are coordinated and conducted under the auspices of the Provost's office by the office of the Associate Vice Provost for Curriculum and Assessment (AVP-CA).

Academic programs are asked to submit a self-study report that presents a comprehensive picture of the academic unit's strengths, challenges, and potential. It should address any specific limitations or weaknesses cited in previous Self-Study Reports, Annual Curriculum & Assessment Reports, and Mid-Cycle Progress Reviews, while also describing what the academic unit does best and how it could do better in both the immediate- and long-term. The report is the primary document used by Faculty Senate-charged curriculum committees and External Reviewers to evaluate the academic unit's use of human and fiscal resources to create and maintain quality academic programs, research, and service to the university. It is one link in [NAU's regional accreditor's](#) (the Higher Learning Commission) requirements for continual evaluation and improvement of academic programs.

Normally two external reviewers, selected by the Provost's office from a list developed by the

academic unit, are invited to the NAU campus to participate in a two-day site visit. External reviewers, as recognized experts in the disciplinary/professional field of the unit undertaking program review, provide critical judgment, ensure the objectivity of the program review process, and determine how the program compares to other programs in the region and nation. Reviewers should bring an informed and unbiased view to the evaluation of the program. External reviewers should judge whether the plans of the department are appropriate, considering such factors as the current condition of the program, trends in the discipline, the nature of the faculty, and the characteristics of the students and the community the program serves. Additionally, a member of the university faculty is assigned to serve as the liaison to the external reviewers for each program review.

Prior to the site visit, the external reviewers are provided with:

- A copy of the self-study report, the department's website URL, and any other information the academic unit believes will aid the external reviewers in understanding the unit
- Site visit itinerary

External reviewers have the option to submit a combined reviewer's report authored by the reviewers, or submit multiple reports authored by each individual reviewer. Within six weeks following their visit, the external reviewers should submit their completed report(s) to the AVP-CA, who will distribute it to the [Name of the College] Dean, [Unit] Chair, and Provost for review and comments. The evaluation and recommendations are used in future planning by both the reviewed unit and other affected campus units.