

Additional Guidance for Writing Self-Study Report: College Programs

While the following organization of the self-study report is recommended, departments/programs should feel free to make changes to this organization as long as all parts are included. For example, sections may be added that are specific to the department/program or professional frameworks may be adopted to help the department/program evaluate how consistently they are meeting professional standards in their field. Comprehensive Program Assessment provides an opportunity to systematically reflect upon all aspects of your program: mission and outcomes, assessment, program content and effectiveness, resource management, strengths and challenges, and actions to improve the program.

A. Mission and Outcomes

This section is intended to help you to reflect upon your mission, goals (if applicable) and outcomes. Comprehensive Program Assessment provides the opportunity to periodically revisit your mission, goals and outcomes. Additional questions you may want to consider as you write this section include the following:

- How do your mission, goals and outcomes relate to professional standards, when applicable?
- How do you ensure that staff is in agreement about your mission and outcomes?
- How are these outcomes shared with constituents? How are they communicated in the catalogue? How are they communicated on your website?

B. Assessment

This section is intended to help you reflect on how effective your current assessment process is at giving you the kind of information you need in order to make decisions and program enhancements and should be organized around your outcomes. Additional questions you may want to consider as you write this section include the following:

- Have there been any changes in the department or the professional field since the last Comprehensive Program Assessment that would suggest changes to your outcomes may be needed?
- Do your outcomes include both student learning and non student learning outcomes? Are both relevant to your department?
- How are assessment data gathered and interpreted?
- How are assessment data shared and discussed across the department?
- How do you ensure that staff have adequate time to come together and discuss the assessment of the department/program including use of data for program enhancement?
- How well is your assessment process working to help you develop a departmental culture of continual program improvement?
- What changes or support do you need to ensure that the assessment process is meaningful?
- How do you make sure that all changes made annually (major and minor) based on annual assessment data are documented in your Continuous Improvement Reports?
- How is your annual assessment informing your departmental strategic planning and budget requests?

C. Department/Program Content and Effectiveness

This section is intended to help you reflect on the content of your department/program in terms of components and/or services and how effective your department is in meeting your outcomes. This section should be organized in a way that clearly addresses each outcome. Additional questions you may want to consider as you write this section include the following:

- What services and programming are offered and how do these help meet your outcomes?
- Who is served and how effective are you at meeting your outcomes for different populations?
- How do the trends (five to seven year patterns) in factors such as participation, satisfaction, attitudes and program impact help to inform decision making? *Consider reviewing different sources of [institutional data](#) in this section (e.g., CIRP, MSL, NSSE, SSI, alumnae survey data).*
- What major changes have been made to improve outcomes (including student learning outcomes when applicable) based on assessment data since the last Comprehensive Program Assessment? How are annual assessment data used to make decisions about program content? *Consider reviewing assessment data since the last Comprehensive Program Assessment in this section.*
- What special opportunities are required of or afforded to students in the program? How do you ensure they are adequately described and well-communicated to students, and are carefully planned and evaluated? Special opportunities include trips, community service, and leadership opportunities.
- What opportunities do staff members have for professional development? Do these opportunities extend to disciplinary scholarship, programming, assessment, and service? What noteworthy contributions have been made to scholarship in the field, assessment, professional organizations, the Meredith community and the wider community?
- How involved is staff in the department/program, in the life of the Meredith community, in the wider community and in professional associations?

D. Operations and Resource Management

This section is intended to help you reflect on how resources are allocated to meet the operations of the program/department. Additional questions you may want to consider as you write this section include the following:

- How well do facilities, equipment, and the shared resources of the campus (e.g., technology, library resources, campus services) support the work of the department/program?
- What financial resources are available to accomplish the work of the department/program? How might other potential financial resources be pursued?
- What human resources are available to accomplish the work of the department/program? What are the qualifications of the staff and administrators? What leadership is available to ensure on-going attention to program direction and evaluation?
- How are assessment data used when making decisions about resource allocation?
- If there are particular legal, ethical and social responsibilities associated with the department/program, how are these obligations being met?

E. Collaboration in Support of the College

This section is intended to help you reflect on how well you collaborate with other programs within and outside of the institution to meet the needs of your students and the priorities of the College. Additional questions you may want to consider as you write this section include the following:

- In what ways is your department's function integral to the overall functioning of the College? What is your department's place in ensuring the overall health and future stability of the institution?
- Who are your greatest collaborators on campus? How do these relationships help to strengthen the College? With whom could you develop stronger working relationships on campus for the good of the College?
- Who are your greatest collaborators off campus? How do these relationships help to strengthen the College? With whom could you develop stronger working relationships off campus for the good of the College?
- To what extent do you rely on other departments to help provide programming or services? To what extent do other departments rely on your department to meet their programming or service goals? How do these arrangements help to strengthen the overall quality of programming and or services provided at Meredith? Could you make changes to these arrangements in a way that would help to further strengthen programming and/or services?
- With which programs across the College do you share similar outcomes? How might you partner with these programs to assess and enhance these outcomes?

F. Strengths and Challenges

This section is intended to help you to reflect upon your areas of greatest strength and greatest challenge and to develop strategies for building on strengths and minimizing challenges. Additional questions you may want to consider as you write this section include the following:

- What are the current opportunities *internal* to the department/program that might help to build on strengths or minimize challenges?
- What are the current obstacles *internal* to the department/program that need to be addressed?
- What are the current opportunities external to the department/program (e.g., Meredith College, local community, global, professional) that might help the department/program?
- What are the current obstacles external to the department/program (e.g., Meredith College, local community, global, professional) that might impede the progress of the department/program?

G. Actions to Improve Programs and Operations

This section is intended to provide a place to discuss those actions to improve the program you have already put in place or are intending to put in place as a result of the self study. This section will provide an opportunity to get specific feedback from the review committee about the directions you are currently planning to take to address issues that came up in the self-study. Additional questions you may want to consider as you write this section include the following:

- What recommendations/plans has the department/program formulated as a result of the current self-study?
- What other information do you need in order to know how to address the issues noted in the self-study?
- What questions does the department have for the review team?