

**Pacific Lutheran University
Program Review Guidelines
Year Two: External Review
2020-2021**

The program review process at PLU includes two components: a self-study and external review. This document describes the external review process. Information about the [self-study](#) can be found on the Provost's website.

External reviews incorporate perspectives and insights from someone outside the university community. While external reviewers are typically faculty or administrators from parallel programs at peer institutions, it may also be the case that a particular unit's strategic goals or challenges would best be served with a different set of external lenses (e.g., an employer who recruits, hires, or supervises our graduates). The Program Review Team will work with each academic unit to determine an external review strategy that makes the most sense for them.

In addition to the elements common to all programs, the Program Review Team may designate specific areas of focus for the review, either for the self-study or for the external review.

I. Determination of External Review Strategy

At the conclusion of the self-study review meeting, the department and the Program Review Team will determine the focus of the external review (e.g., curricular revision, external partnerships).

II. Reviewer Selection

The department/program will submit the names of 2-3 options for external reviewers to the Program Review Team. The academic unit and the Program Review Team will collaborate to select the reviewer based on the determined focus.

The department is responsible for inviting the reviewer to campus and arranging the logistics of the visit. (See details below)

Our process calls for one external reviewer.

When selecting a reviewer, consider the advice of the article "[Making the Most of External Review: Part I](#)" that you identify someone who is a bold thinker: "Don't squander your review on someone who will tell you what you already know. That's a waste and a luxury we cannot afford in this higher education moment, when crises abound. Not all reviewers think boldly or strategically." The [same article](#) includes suggestions for how departments might think together about the guiding questions they have, and to use those questions as a springboard for identifying potential reviewers.

III. Organizing the Review

- A. *Content.* Expectations for the written review (in terms of focal areas, format, and length) will be determined by the unit in collaboration with the Program Review Team and communicated in writing to potential reviewers at the time of invitation.
- B. *Timing.* The review may occur anytime over the second year of the program review process, provided it is completed by the end of the academic year. Please coordinate with the Office of the Provost prior to scheduling with the reviewer. A copy of the unit's self-study shall be sent to the reviewer one month in advance of the visit.
- C. *Visit length.* External reviewer's visit should be one day.
- D. *Stipend.* The university will provide a stipend to reviewers using funds from the Provost's Office. In AY 20-21, the stipend will be \$1000. On the day of or prior to the scheduled visit, the department should collect a completed [Form-W 9](#) from the external reviewer. Upon submission and receipt of their *written review*, both the W9 and a completed [Payment Request Form](#) (PRF) should be forwarded to the Provost Office. The date the *written review* was received should be specified in the description section of the PRF; the Provost Office will complete the FOAP section and submit the request for payment to the business office. Payment in the form of a check will be mailed directly to the recipient's home address.
Notes: All forms are available on the [Business Office website](#). Allow 1-2 weeks for processing.
- E. *Arrangements.* The department is responsible for arranging the external reviewer's visit to campus, including creating the visit schedule, booking hotel/airfare if the visit is in-person, reserving campus rooms for conversation, and/or arranging Zoom calls for virtual visits. Any arrangements requiring financial resources (e.g., airfare) should be approved by the Office of the Provost *prior* to purchase.
- F. *Visit schedule.* The schedule for external reviewers should begin and end with 30 minute visits with the provost (or designated member of the Program Review Team). The visit should also include opportunities to engage with program faculty, dean, program staff, current students, faculty from outside the program, alumni, and other administrative or Student Life partners as appropriate. The length and nature of each meeting (e.g., individual or group) shall be determined by the program faculty. Visits may also include campus/facility tours and/or observations of classes, as appropriate. The article "[Making the Most of External Review: Part II](#)" offers useful suggestions about the timing and flow of the visit schedule.

IV. Expected outcomes of the Review

No later than two weeks after their visit, the external reviewer shall submit to the Program Review Team (through the Office of the Provost), with cc to the unit, a written report including commendations and recommendations for the program.

The Program Review Team will utilize the contents to inform their final commendations and recommendations for the program.

