

REPORT WRITING GUIDELINES

EXTERNAL REVIEWERS of ACADEMIC UNITS

Thank you for your willingness to lend your expertise to our continuous improvement efforts. These guidelines are provided to assist you in writing your report following your unit review site visit. If you have questions or concerns not addressed in this document, please contact me, Alvin Sherman, at alvin_sherman@byu.edu or telephone: 801-422-3967 (office) or 801-735-7132 (cell)

TIMING. Please submit your report within **TWO WEEKS** after the on-site visit. This should be one report co-authored by both reviewers. The internal team will use your report to inform its report. They will not be able to complete their report until they receive your external report. We appreciate your efforts to complete and submit your report promptly within that two-week window.

FORMAT/TEMPLATE. The self-study written by the department/unit is organized around four themes:

- Unit Progress and Plans
- Faculty
- Programs and Students, and
- Facilities and Resources.

We invite you to offer observations and comments in these four areas that will assist the department in improving its programs and outreach to the students. We also invite you to provide input on any salient issues that arise during the review process that you deem important and beneficial to the department and its faculty. Many (but not all) external reviewers find it helpful to organize the majority of their report around these four themes.

While we do not provide a specific format for your report, most reviewers:

- discuss their general perceptions of the unit being reviewed
- the unit's strengths, and
- their recommendations for improvement or change.

We do ask you to pay specific attention to two areas that require your expertise.

- Please comment on the curriculum for each program in the department/unit with reference to trends in your field.
- Your feedback on the content of the expected learning outcomes (Table 2 in the self-study) for each academic program is extremely important to our assessment process.

LENGTH. Most external reviewer reports are 7 to 10 pages long. This guideline is not intended to limit the length of your report or to suggest that you need to write more than is necessary. The purpose of your report is to communicate your perceptions and recommendations to the department of ways that they can improve and progress in their administration and delivery of curriculum to their students.

TONE. We intend for our process to be supportive to our units while being helpful to them in their continuous improvement efforts. In order to achieve our objective of supportive helpfulness we strive for a tone of **collegial candor**. It is appropriate to recognize accomplishments and successes of the department as well as to indicate areas of potential improvement and recommendations for change.

QUOTATIONS. Since we promise absolute confidentiality to all interview respondents, we ask that you not quote interviewees in your report, even anonymously. If during the course of the interviews a particular trend may surface, it is appropriate to mention these concerns or issues; however, these issues should be reported in aggregate form.

REPORT USAGE. We provide a copy of your report to the Department Chair for use within the department, to the Dean over the unit, and to the Academic Vice-President and members of his council. We give permission for the report to be copied for department use only. Per our policy, your report will not be digitized nor distributed in a digital format.

SENSITIVE ISSUES. If there are issues that you feel might be sensitive in a report that is released to departmental personnel, you are welcome to submit an additional document that would be kept confidential and would be shown only to appropriate university personnel .

COMPLETED REPORT. Please email your completed report to alvin_sherman@byu.edu.

On behalf of BYU, my office and the Unit you will review, I appreciate your willingness to participate with us in our assessment and review process and look forward to receiving your professional perspective in your report.