

Appendix 1:
Possible Questions to Answer in a Departmental Self-Study for An External Review

Departments conduct external reviews for a variety of reasons. Often these are mandated to comply with accreditation requirements. Many institutions provide departments with their own template and set of questions that departments are required to answer in their self-study. Yet even within these constraints, departments may have some flexibility about the information that they provide to reviewers. The questions and categories below are provided as samples of the kinds of information you might want to include in your report. This is a very long list, and no report will include all of this. One way to think about what to include is to think about this in terms of the biggest challenges facing your department, and the questions you hope that the reviewers can help your department to answer.

1. INSTITUTIONAL AND DEPARTMENTAL MISSION AND GOALS

Articulating the mission and goals of the institution and the department is critical to a self-study to provide the context for assessing a program. Departments are urged to provide this information by preparing a statement that addresses both the institutional and departmental mission as well as both short- and long-term departmental goals.

A. INSTITUTIONAL AND DEPARTMENTAL MISSION

- 1) Identify the institution's mission. Describe the mission in terms of research, education, and service to the community, as appropriate.
- 2) Identify the department's mission. Describe research, education, and service components, as appropriate.
- 3) For education, discuss the objectives of the undergraduate and graduate education programs, if both are offered.
- 4) Identify any recent changes in the mission of the institution and department and what steps have been taken and completed toward realizing these changes.

B. SHORT- AND LONG-TERM DEPARTMENTAL GOALS AND IMPLEMENTATION PLANS

Goal setting

- 1) What process is used for regularly reviewing goals, courses, and curricular structures?
- 2) Is this a process that involves all faculty members in the program or at least a broadly representative cross-section of the faculty?
- 3) Has this external review process or a previous formal program review resulted in any changes in the program?

Goals

- 1) What are the departmental short-term goals?
- 2) What are the departmental long-term goals?
- 3) What modifications, if any, have been made recently in the goals or in the program?
- 4) How do the goals of the program compare with the goals of similar programs at

other institutions?

Planning

- 1) What plans are in place to achieve these departmental short-term goals?
- 2) What plans are in place to achieve these departmental long-term goals?

2. FACULTY RECRUITMENT AND EVALUATION

A. FACULTY RECRUITMENT

- 1) Describe the procedure by which new faculty members are recruited. You may attach hiring guidelines. Are the same guidelines followed for all faculty hires? Are the president, dean, or other institutional members involved in faculty recruitment?
- 2) How do faculty recruitment procedures attend to the diversity of the department?

B. FACULTY CATEGORIES

How does the faculty break down in terms of the following:

Rank	White		Minority		Total	%
	M	W	M	W		
Full professor, tenure-track						
Associate professor, tenure-track						
Assistant professor, tenure-track						
Non-tenure-track, full-time faculty						
Non-tenure-track, part-time faculty						
TOTAL						

C. MENTORING

- 1) Describe all formal and informal mentoring and professional development activities for faculty. Please indicate any special initiatives for underrepresented groups, women, untenured tenure-track, tenured tenure-track, and non-tenure-track faculty. Include those activities provided by the department and the institution.

D. EVALUATION

- 1) Describe the procedure by which faculty are considered for promotion and tenure.
- 2) Describe the standards and materials used to evaluate faculty. Attach any forms used by faculty to report on professional activities and accomplishments.
- 3) Does your department have standards to address inequities and biases towards underrepresented groups and women during the promotion and tenure process?
- 4) Does your department have policies in place to address inequities and biases in citations practices?

3. PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

1) During the past two years, how many members of the department:

	N	%
Published a paper in a peer-reviewed journal?	_____	_____
Published a book review in a peer-reviewed journal?	_____	_____
Published a book?	_____	_____
Coauthored with a faculty colleague (at this institution)?	_____	_____
Coauthored with a graduate student colleague (at this institution)?	_____	_____
Attended a professional conference?	_____	_____
Presented a paper at a professional meeting?	_____	_____
State or regional	_____	_____
National	_____	_____
Chaired a session at a professional conference?	_____	_____
Developed new instructional materials or software?	_____	_____
Supervised student research?	_____	_____
Graduate	_____	_____
Undergraduate	_____	_____
Supervised student thesis?	_____	_____
Graduate	_____	_____
Undergraduate	_____	_____
Served as editor of a journal?	_____	_____
Received external funding?	_____	_____

Served as consultants, provided testimony, or authored a brief? _____

For an institution of higher education _____

Private corporation or foundation _____

State agency _____

Federal agency (e.g., NSF, NEH, US Office of Education) _____

Legislative branch (federal or state) _____

Judicial branch (federal or state) _____

- 2) How many political science faculty members have outside employment during the academic year? What kinds of positions do they have? What are the regulations concerning extracurricular faculty employment during the school year?
- 3) Describe briefly what the faculty does during the summer. (Teach? Full-time research? Study? Work at other jobs?)

4. DEPARTMENTAL GOVERNANCE

- 1) Describe the procedure by which the departmental chair is selected. (By faculty election? By the dean?)
- 2) Does the chair serve for a definite term? If so, what is the term? Can chairs succeed themselves?
- 3) How frequently are departmental faculty meetings held? Identify the issues discussed by faculty at these meetings.
- 4) Does the department have a long-range plan? If such a plan is available, append it to this questionnaire.
- 5) Append a list of the names, purposes, and members of the department's committees for the past three years.
- 6) Estimate the percentage of time a faculty member spends on committee work:

Departmental committee	_____
Institution-wide committee	_____
- 7) What is the department's budget? How is it determined?
- 8) What kinds of departmental space, facilities, or equipment would your department like to acquire if it had the resources?

Space:	
Facilities:	
Equipment:	

Table: **INVENTORY OF FACULTY TEACHING LOADS** (from a recent academic year or semester)

Name of faculty member	Name and number of each class taught	Number of students enrolled in each class	Number of credits each class carries	Number of student credit hours

5. TEACHING QUALITY

Does the program encourage high-quality teaching in any of the following ways:

- 1) Are there incentives and rewards (such as teaching awards, salary increases, funds to attend conferences on teaching) provided to promote and recognize excellence in teaching? Please describe these.
- 2) Are there mechanisms for mentoring new and temporary faculty members in teaching and in local customs and expectations? Please describe these.
- 3) Are there mechanisms to assist experienced faculty members who wish to improve their teaching? Please describe these.
- 4) If graduate students teach in the program, are they well trained and well supervised? Please describe how.
- 5) Are records and reports on teaching, peer evaluations, student evaluations, self-evaluation, and reviews of syllabi included in the evaluation process? Please describe how.
- 6) How does the department or institution attend to subtle discrimination in teaching evaluations?
- 7) Are teaching evaluations by students taken into account in making teaching assignments? Please describe how.
- 8) Are teaching evaluations by students taken into account in promotion and tenure decisions? Please describe how?
- 9) Are procedures in place to provide counseling for faculty members whose teaching is recognized as not being effective for many students? Please describe these.
- 10) How does the department identify and address gender or racial discrimination in course evaluations?¹

6. CURRICULUM*

As appropriate, please answer the following separately for undergraduate and graduate education:

- 1) List (by course number and number of credit hours) the departmental requirements for undergraduate majors. Include requirements in cognate or supporting areas (e.g., economics, history, statistics, sociology, foreign languages, etc.)

Departmental requirements:

¹ [Chávez, K., & Mitchell, K. \(2020\). Exploring Bias in Student Evaluations: Gender, Race, and Ethnicity. *PS: Political Science & Politics*, 53\(2\), 270-274. doi:10.1017/S1049096519001744.](https://doi.org/10.1017/S1049096519001744)

Cognate, or supporting, requirements:

- 2) List (by course number, title, and number of credit hours) any additional courses that are strongly recommended.
- 3) Describe the plan for the curriculum and how it was determined.
- 4) Is the plan understood by all faculty members teaching courses in the program? Please explain.
- 5) Is the plan communicated to students? If yes, how?
- 6) Is the plan reflected in course rationales, syllabi, and assignments? Describe the rationale for how this is done.
- 7) Does the program begin with survey courses or with more specialized introductions to the field?
- 8) Do beginning courses serve both majors and non-majors? If so, is there evidence that these courses serve both constituencies well? Please explain.
- 9) Are students introduced early to the modes of inquiry and methodology of the discipline? If yes, how? Are these modes and methods then utilized in assignments for subsequent courses? If yes, how?
- 10) Do the middle-range courses build significantly on the introductory courses? If yes, how?
- 11) Does the program offer students specific concentrations, namely, recommended sequences of courses in a specific field or for a pre-professional degree, e.g., international relations, public administration, pre-law? List these sequences or special degrees:
- 12) How many of your department course offerings in a given include some hands-on work by students?
- 13) Is there a capstone experience (e.g., a senior seminar, a senior project, a thesis, and comprehensive examinations) that provides students with an opportunity to integrate the learning that has occurred throughout their college experience? Please describe this course.
- 14) Is there an honors program? If so, describe briefly.
- 15) What opportunities exist for undergraduate research in the department? For example, are there special research carrels to assist faculty members' research?
- 16) Do special internships or training programs exist with governmental agencies, legislative bodies, or political organizations? If so, describe briefly.
- 17) What is the total number of credit hours required for graduation?
- 18) Indicate how the program's courses relate to the institution's general education curriculum or to the curriculum of other programs by listing the political science courses required or recommended for these curricula.
- 19) List by title the political science courses:
- 20) Institutional or other departmental programs:
- 21) Are there interdepartmental, or joint, teaching or research programs, joint courses, joint degrees? Describe briefly.

7. ENROLLMENT, DEGREES, AND STUDENT ADVISING

A. ENROLLMENT

1) What is the total student full-time equivalent (FTE) enrollment for the current year?

B. ENROLLMENT TRENDS AND DEGREES GRANTED

Total number of students (excluding duplicates) enrolled in the department during the regular academic year for the last five years, full-time and part-time, as defined by the institution.

Please provide these data as gender disaggregated and, if appropriate and available (particularly for graduate students), disaggregated by underrepresented groups as well.

	20____ -	20____	20____	20____	20____
First year					
Sophomores					
Juniors					
Seniors					
Summer					
Non-Degree Students					
Masters Students					
Doctoral Students					
Total Students					

- 3) In Column A, list the average number of degrees granted by the institution as a whole annually during the last three years. In Column B, list the average number of degrees granted in political science annually over the last three years.

	Column A	Column B
AA	_____	_____
BS or BA	_____	_____
MAT or MST	_____	_____
MS or MA	_____	_____
PhD	_____	_____
EdD	_____	_____
Other	_____	_____

- 4) How many junior-senior students are studying political science?

Majors _____
 Minors _____

- 5) What percentage of the non-majors take a political science course for a social sciencerequirement? As an elective (independent of social science)? _____

- 6) What proportion of majors:

Completed their first two years at your institution? _____

Transferred from a two-year college? _____

Transferred from a four-year college? _____

Entered political science courses with advanced standing (i.e., advanced placement, credit by examination, etc.)? _____

- 7) Approximately what percentage of the undergraduate political science students (majorsand/or minors):

Go on to law school? _____

Enter secondary school social science teaching? _____

Enter graduate school in political science? _____

Enroll in another graduate or professional program? _____

Go into business or industry? _____

Enter the federal civil service or state/local government agencies? _____

Enter Teach for America or the Peace Corps? _____

Enter nonprofit employment? _____

Other (explain): _____

- 8) How many honor scholarship (National Merit Scholars, etc.) students are in the department?

C. STUDENT ADVISING

- 1) Does the program actively seek to learn about the characteristics of its students? If yes, describe how.
- 2) Is there a regular effort to assess the academic preparation that students bring into the program? If yes, describe how.
- 3) Is there a regular effort to determine the students' aspirations, beliefs, and expectations with respect to the program? If yes, describe how.
- 4) How are students in the program advised?
- 5) Does each student meet on a regular basis with a faculty member to discuss the student's plans and progress? Is advising mandatory for registration? Please describe the process.
- 6) Do these discussions include attention to questions that transcend the requirements of the program, such as the rationale for the program, the culture of the field, the totality of the undergraduate experience, and student goals and expectations?
- 7) Are there also less formal opportunities for faculty/student interaction? If yes, please describe.
- 8) Are there student clubs, seminars, or interest groups associated with the program? If yes, list these.
- 9) Do departmental faculty members support these activities?
- 10) Are faculty members expected to participate in advising students? If no, indicate who advises students.
- 11) What is the average number of student advisees assigned to each political science faculty member?

Majors _____ Undergraduate _____

Non-majors _____ Graduate _____

- 12) What percentage of an average political science faculty member's time is spent advising students?

D. GRADUATE STUDENT RECRUITMENT AND PLACEMENT

- 1) How does the department determine graduate student admissions?
 - Attention to field diversity?
 - Attention to gender diversity?
 - Attention to ethnic diversity?
 - Based on external support secured by faculty?
 - Other?
- 2) Please provide student: faculty ratio by subfield:
- 3) Please describe graduate student funding. Do all students receive funding? For how many years? Do they compete for funding?
- 4) Describe departmental support for conference travel, methodological institutes, or other professional development.
- 5) What methods courses are offered for graduate students, which courses are required?
- 6) Does the department offer workshops, seminars, or other forums for professional development (e.g., careers in political science, publication strategies, the job market)
- 7) Does the department offer workshops, courses, or other means of pedagogical training?
- 8) Does the department organize opportunities for graduate students to present work in progress to faculty and students? If so, are these well attended by faculty and students?
- 9) Does the department organize social events for graduate students with faculty? Are children and family welcome at such events?
- 10) Please list the current employment of PhD students who graduated in the last five years.

8. OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT

- 1) Are there processes for measuring the achievements of the program's intended outcomes? If yes, please explain and indicate if there are any institutional requirements for assessment.
- 2) What kinds of information about student learning and achievement are gathered by this assessment?
- 3) Do these processes reflect faculty discussion and decisions about the kinds of evidence appropriate to their program's goals, strengths, and emphases?
- 4) Do students take part in assessment activities and receive feedback on their performance? If yes, please describe.
- 5) Who else is involved in making judgments about the outcomes of assessment?
- 6) Do faculty members use assessment evidence in making judgments about curriculum development and revisions?
- 7) Who else uses the results of the assessment?
- 8) If the program does not now provide for an assessment of outcomes, is there any institutional interest in doing so? If yes, how will the department respond to this interest?

9. DEPARTMENTAL VISIBILITY ON CAMPUS AND BEYOND CAMPUS

- 1) How does the department present itself on campus and beyond campus? How does

the department utilize traditional communication vehicles, including the departmental homepage, departmental brochures, institutional publications, and so forth, to present itself?

- 2) What does the department do to augment these communications to increase its visibility on campus by means of participation in events and programs, lectures, panels, and so forth?
- 3) How do these internal and external communications present the value of studying politics and the value of a political science degree?

10. WORK ENVIRONMENT

- 1) Do departmental opportunities and responsibilities accommodate working families? For example, what time are department and committee meetings?
- 2) What is the parental leave policy?
- 3) How does the department accommodate diversity, particularly with respect to underrepresented groups, non-US citizens, sexuality, and gender?

NOTE:

*All of the questions marked by an * have been adapted from the monograph, *Program Review and Educational Quality in the Major: A Faculty Handbook*, prepared for the Project in Liberal Learning, Study in Depth, and the Arts and Sciences Major of the Association of American Colleges, Washington, DC 1992.

For a list of external reviewers, please send an email to dsp@apsanet.org. If you would like to receive a specific list of reviewers (such as reviewers from only small liberal arts colleges, reviewers from only PhD-granting institutions, or reviewers with a certain political science subfield), please specify that desire.