I. Overview

Reviews of graduate programs are conducted by the Graduate Council, usually with the aid of extramural review teams. The process has the approval of the Riverside Division of the Academic Senate. The primary aim of the review process is to help improve graduate programs or, if necessary, to close programs found to be undesirably weak.

The Graduate Council determines the sequence and schedule of reviews. The sequence of upcoming reviews is discussed at least annually and can be altered by action of the Council. Normally, six to eight programs are scheduled for review each year. This pattern typically yields a 7-9 year cycle between reviews.

II. Preparation for Council Review

The graduate program is notified approximately 6-12 months prior to the scheduled review. At the time of this notification the program is asked to prepare the following information regarding its program for submission to the Graduate Council and to outside reviewers.

1. A concise report detailing the program’s strengths and weaknesses, long-range goals, major changes since last review, and anything the program wishes to bring to the attention of the visiting team or the Graduate Council. Guidelines for the report are given in Appendix 1. The report is the vehicle by which the review team will first understand the philosophy, goals, and scope of your program and thus, in turn, provide constructive and accurate feedback to you. It will comprise a major portion of the basis for the site visit interviews. It will also become an appendix to the report and recommendations arising from the review. Thus, your own presentation of your program will be available to everyone who receives the review report and recommendations. As a rule of thumb, the report should be 5-10 single-spaced pages for small and medium size programs and 10-15, for large programs.

2. Program material distributed to graduate students (handbook, program description, procedures, statement, etc.).

3. A list of faculty members with digested biographies (abbreviated version of full biography)
4. A summary of current and pending research support should be provided for every faculty (see appendix 2).

5. Placement data for all Ph.D.s awarded since the last review, arranged by date of award of degree, listing dissertation director, first position and current position.

The Graduate Council gathers statistical information from sources around the campus. The Office of Institutional Planning provides:

1. Departmental expenditures.
2. Faculty (ladder and budgeted) as of Fall (current year).
3. All courses taught per year (ladder FTE and headcount) for past three years.
4. Graduate courses offered during past three years and enrollment in each.
5. Non-faculty instructional personnel for (current year).
6. Staff personnel for (current year).
7. All course enrollments for last three years.
8. Student workload FTE and faculty FTE justified for last two years.
9. Headcount majors for last two years.
10. Courses taught by faculty from other departments for last three years.
11. Summary of degrees for last three years.
12. Summary of financial support provided all graduate students for last two years.

The Graduate Division provides:

13. Admissions profiles, enrollment data, degrees awarded (and time to degree), dropout rate, and historical statistics including fraction of UCR undergraduates and international students admitted to each program.
15. Catalog copy of all graduate courses taught by the program.

The program, with the help of the Graduate Council and Graduate Division, should summarize the data to make it most useful for the external review team. Items 1-15 are sent to the program before dissemination to anyone else so that any differences concerning the statistics can be resolved.

A questionnaire dealing with academic program quality matters including space for written comments is sent to each faculty member. A separate questionnaire is sent to present graduate students and Ph.D. awardees since the last review (masters awardees in the case of a masters only program). Statistical summaries are provided where appropriate, and a compilation of all comments, copied verbatim, is included in the review materials.
III. Composition of Extramural Review Team

When first notified of the pending review, the program is asked to provide a list of distinguished, neutral reviewers as shown in the following excerpts from a letter of request:

... 15 names of distinguished potential extramural evaluators. Please include names from the following categories: 1) faculty from other UC campuses; 2) faculty from other institutions throughout the U.S. If you could arrange these names in groups which cover your program’s major areas and include their specialties, it would be helpful. Please indicate research areas that should be covered in the appointment of reviewers...

The Graduate Council Review Subcommittee asks that it be assured in writing that the proposed extramural reviewers can carry out an “arms-length” review in the sense that they are not closely allied to UCR members in the program under review. The Graduate Council Review Subcommittee is specifically concerned about the following indicators: (1) personal friendships; (2) visitor and UCR faculty member present in same graduate (or postdoctoral) program at the same time; (3) graduate research advisors or postdoctoral mentors; and (4) cooperative research efforts or joint textbook writing. If any of these four items apply to a proposed reviewer, the individual should be eliminated or the Graduate Council Review Subcommittee should be informed of the facts of the relationship. This paragraph is inserted in all requests for nominations from programs under review; it is not pointed specifically at your program.

The Graduate Council obtains published biographies from standard sources, communicates with related programs elsewhere to ask about scholarly reputation and probable utility in the review process. Other names may arise from these queries; they are sent to the program for comment. The combined lists are examined by the Graduate Council Review Subcommittee, and (typically) a list of three names is selected by the subcommittee, along with a list of alternate names for each area of expertise selected. The Graduate Council typically contacts and assembles the review team and coordinates their travel arrangements. Team members receive travel expenses and an honorarium.

The Graduate Council formulates a ‘standard’ set of questions that the Extramural Team may (not “must”) use to guide its deliberations; most of the questions are used for all programs, but some are program specific. The program examines the questions before they are sent to the Extramural Team.

About thirty days ahead of the scheduled visit, the information above and a current catalog are sent to each member of the Extramural team (contents of package follow below). An identical information package is provided the members of the Graduate Council Review Subcommittee. The Program, College Dean, and Executive Vice Chancellor receive a copy of the package from which
The questionnaire responses have been deleted for purposes of student/faculty confidentiality.

The following items are included in packets sent to extramural review team members:

1. Tentative schedule/campus map.
2. Questions for reviewers and Table of organization.
3. Program review statement.
4. Graduate program handbook and other publications related to the graduate program.
5. A list of faculty members with digested biographies (abbreviated version of full biography).
6. Faculty grant activity.
7. Graduate Council admission data/program history.
8. Graduate student support for last year.
9. Graduate student placement data.
11. Questionnaires.

IV. Extramural Review Team Visit and Report

A typical team visit begins Monday morning with a briefing by the Graduate Council Chair and the Graduate Council Review Subcommittee. The team then meets with the Graduate Dean. The briefing includes discussion about the strengths and weaknesses of the program being reviewed and any particular areas of concern. The team then meets separately with the relevant College Dean. The reviewers are asked to provide an assessment of the quality of faculty, students, and the program; areas of strength and weaknesses; advice on areas to remove or strengthen; adequacy of facilities, morale, and any other issues they wish to address. They are asked to participate in an exit interview and to furnish a written report of 10-15 pages within 30 days of their visit.

Following the morning meetings, the Team meets to organize itself and select a chair, and then meets the program chair and graduate advisor, after which the Team begins to meet with faculty and students in the program. At noon the Team usually meets with chairs of closely related programs. These chairs are chosen by the Associate Dean in consultation with the Chair of the program being reviewed. After lunch, the team meets with faculty/students and examines the physical facilities. The second day of the visit continues with more interviews with faculty and students. The reviewers have a working lunch on this day. The last on-campus activity is the exit interview. At 4:00 p.m. on Tuesday, the Team meets together with the College or School Dean, Graduate Dean, Associate Dean, Graduate Council Chair and Graduate Council Review Subcommittee to discuss their findings. In this meeting Team members usually present their findings, followed by free questioning by Graduate Council Review Subcommittee
members and members of the administration. Sometimes the whole session is devoted solely to question-and-answer. The Chair of the Graduate Council chairs this exit interview.

When the Team report is received, the honoraria are sent. The Team report is reviewed by the Graduate Council for matters of confidentiality, and the report (redacted if necessary) is sent to the Program with a three week response deadline for preliminary comment about factual inaccuracies and misperceptions.

V. Graduate Council Findings and Recommendations

The Graduate Council Review Subcommittee integrates its knowledge of the history and status of each program, together with the information and material generated by the program during the review process (including the extramural team report), to formulate a draft of the Findings and Recommendations -- a cohesive plan of action for improvement of the program. The writer of the first draft is usually the Graduate Council Subcommittee Chair or designate, with revisions or redrafting by the Graduate Council Review Subcommittee. If the draft Findings and Recommendations appear to be seriously detrimental to the program under review, the Graduate Council Review Subcommittee usually meets with the Chair and/or graduate advisor of the program to discuss the matters in the preliminary document. On occasion, the Graduate Council Review Subcommittee has met with the College Dean and limited numbers of faculty members to discuss the Findings and Recommendations. Where the Findings and Recommendations appear to be non-controversial, the Graduate Council Review Subcommittee does not usually meet with program chairs or other representatives. When the Graduate Council Review Subcommittee has prepared a draft set of Findings and Recommendations that meets with its approval, the document is sent to the Graduate Council for its approval.

For its consideration of the draft Findings and Recommendations, the Council is provided with copies of the extramural team report and the program’s preliminary response to the extramural team report. Not usually sent to all individuals on the Council, but available to members upon request, are all other data available to the Graduate Council Review Subcommittee. If substantial problems are anticipated, arrangements are made to have all members of the Council become familiar with the entire data set. When a draft acceptable to the Council is achieved, it is sent to the program as a working document with a request for a detailed response, either outlining plans for implementing the recommendations or detailing reasons for not doing so. The Findings and Recommendations are a policy document, and failure to comply or to provide justification for noncompliance can lead to a moratorium on graduate admissions or other actions.
When the Graduate Council is satisfied that changes are being implemented by the program as provided by the *Findings and Recommendations*, Graduate Council will close the review and provide the program with a letter so stating.

Copies of the unedited extramural team report, the program preliminary response, the Graduate Council *Findings and Recommendations*, and program final response are sent to the Chancellor, Executive Vice Chancellor, College or School Dean and Academic Senate office. A brief summary of the programs reviewed and Graduate Council actions are included in the Graduate Council Annual Report to the Riverside Division of the Academic Senate.

The review of the master's level programs follow the same format, but the Graduate Council Review Subcommittee may play the role of the extramural team at the option of the Council.

Graduate programs may be asked to provide Graduate Council with a progress report 3 to 4 years after a review has been closed.

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