

CAMPUS VISIT OF EXTERNAL REVIEWER(S)
GUIDELINES FOR DEPARTMENTS & PROGRAMS (rev. 12/5/24)

OVERVIEW

The visit of the external reviewer(s) is an important part of the program review process, and one that involves a considerable amount of coordination between the academic program or department (or academic-support program) and the Division of Academic Affairs.

- For the academic program or department, coordination of the process is usually the responsibility of the program director or chair and the departmental administrative services coordinator (ASC), unless another faculty or staff member is designated.
- For the Division of Academic Affairs, it is the responsibility of the Vice Provost of Academic Programs (Interim: Pei-Fang Hung); for schedule crafting guidance or other questions, the Coordinator of Program Review (Jody Cormack); for contract, travel, and meeting logistics, the Vice Provost's administrative assistant (Jamie Custodio).

SELECTION AND CONTRACTING PROCESS

Generally there are two external reviewers, one from a CSU with a similar program and one from a doctoral degree-granting program within California. In the case of large departments with multiple degrees, the number can be increased; for small departments/programs, the number may be decreased in consultation with Academic Affairs and the college Dean. Academic-Support Programs generally have one reviewer.

The Division of Academic Affairs will begin the process by soliciting nominations for external reviewers from the department or unit and from the college dean or administrator. Academic Affairs will make the final choice of reviewers from a pool of potential reviewers that includes the nominations from the department. Once the external reviewers have been identified, a formal letter and contract will be issued by the Division of Academic Affairs.

The Division of Academic Affairs will handle all the paperwork to pay the honorarium and to reimburse the external reviewers for the expenses of transportation and lodging. Reimbursement will include airfare, hotel, and car rental or airport transfers to and from the hotel or campus, or mileage for the use of a personal vehicle. Also included is the cost of meals and/or other incidentals incurred while in transit as well as any meals (breakfast or dinner) for the reviewer that are not sponsored by the department.

ARRANGING THE ON-CAMPUS VISIT

1. **SCHEDULING THE VISIT** – The Coordinator of Program Review consults with the Vice Provost’s office and the external reviewers to find mutually agreeable dates for the visit, and then provides the dates to the department. The department then creates a schedule of meetings based on the attached template, which normally requires a two-day visit on campus. If there are two reviewers, their visits must be coordinated to coincide. Both reviewers should participate in all the campus visit activities together and jointly contribute to the external reviewers’ report.

2. **HOTEL RESERVATIONS** — The Assistant to the Vice-Provost (Jamie Custodio: jamie.custodio@csulb.edu) assists the external reviewers with making travel plans and lodging. Reviewers are encouraged to lodge at the **Ayres Hotel in Seal Beach**; Academic Affairs pays the hotel directly so that reviewers do not need to be reimbursed. The department will need to organize and coordinate who will meet the reviewers and bring them back and forth from hotel to campus. It is also possible that reviewers will need a ride from and to the airport, which is also the department’s responsibility to coordinate.

REVIEWER FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES — The reviewers have the option of paying the cost of transportation and hotel up front and being reimbursed by the Division of Academic Affairs, or allowing AA to make travel/lodging reservations for them (and thus avoiding any need for reimbursements). While the department might assist in providing dinner arrangements for the reviewers, members of the department should not join them. Reviewers will be reimbursed for dinners if staying overnight, and reimbursement will be to the individual only. Reimbursement checks can take four to six weeks for delivery, so reviewers are encouraged to fill out a form for Direct Deposit.

3. **DEPARTMENT HOSTING RESPONSIBILITIES** – The department enquires as to the external reviewers’ needs and provides the external reviewers with office space, administrative support such as a computer or copy machine access, a secure location for reading files, or an area to hook up a personal computer with internet and/or printer access.

- a) **Escorts** – The department provides a campus escort for the external reviewers at all times, for example, to and from the hotel and / or airport, meetings with the Vice Provost and Dean, faculty, students, and/or other campus entities.
- b) **Parking** – If reviewers drive, the department needs to arrange for parking permits and be ready with an escort at the appropriate parking lot.
- c) **Lunch** – Typically, the department hosts a working lunch with the external reviewers and UPRC.
- d) **Document availability**—During the visit, the department provides any documents that the reviewers may request that are relevant to the visit. Reviewers may request information on class size, grade distribution, assessment of student learning, samples of student work, and so forth. For any questions about documents, please contact Jody Cormack.

4. DEPARTMENT SCHEDULING (see template) – The department schedules interviews and meetings as well as meeting space for the external reviewers. These meetings include:

- a) Check in with Academic Affairs
- b) Entry meeting of the External Reviewers with the Vice Provost for Academic Affairs, the College Dean or appropriate administrator (always in BH 300)
- c) Meeting slots with different stakeholders (e.g. faculty, staff, directors, students)
- d) Any additional meetings requested by the External Reviewers
- e) Exit interview of External Reviewers with the Vice Provost for Academic Affairs and the College Dean (always in BH 300)

This list is meant to be as comprehensive as possible. However, departments should check with the external reviewers as to their preferences. For example, external reviewers may wish to meet with faculty as a whole, in small groups, or individually. Most external reviewers want to meet with students outside a regularly scheduled class, but they may also want to observe a class being taught. They may also wish to visit the program's classrooms, laboratories, or other campus facilities (e.g., library). **Meetings between the external reviewers and stakeholders should be scheduled in the department's or college's conference rooms or meeting space.**

5. DEPARTMENT COMMUNICATION WITH REVIEWERS – The department communicates to external reviewers via the Coordinator of Program Review for all non-accredited external reviews (traditional). The department should ensure the following documents are available for external reviewers at least three weeks prior to the visit:

- copy of schedule for campus visit;
- current departmental self-study;
- previous program review reports if available (from internal and external reviewers);
- review guidelines (from accreditation or professional association);
- any other relevant documents.

6. HONORARIUM DISBURSEMENT—The Division of Academic Affairs assembles the paperwork to pay honorarium to each external reviewer. The honorarium is processed upon receipt of the written final report of the external reviewers. Please allow four to six weeks for delivery.