PROGRAM REVIEW and ASSESSMENT HANDBOOK

Table of Contents

CHAPTER 1: Overview of Assessment at Whittier

   1.   **Key Terms and Concepts**

PROGRAM REVIEW is a process that serves Whittier College students and the Whittier College community by helping to ensure the meaning, quality and integrity of Whittier College degrees. It combines multiple years of departmental/program assessment of student learning outcomes (i.e. **ANNUAL ASSESSMENT**), periodic data-driven self-reflection and analysis of the department/program's curriculum and program (i.e., **THE SELF STUDY**), and **EXTERNAL PEER REVIEW**. It cannot be stressed enough that program review is most beneficial to students, departments/programs, and the College when undertaken with an eye towards improvement.

The singular goal of program review is to promote positive outcomes for our students through processes which ensure and enhance the **meaning, quality and integrity of our degrees** (MQID). For WASC, MQID means the following: "A degree that is of high quality and integrity is one in which appropriately relevant and challenging learning goals are met by students who are offered a rich and coherent educational experience that is designed, delivered, and assessed by appropriately qualified faculty and supported by other institutional personnel as needed to ensure student success in achieving those goals" (WSCUC CFR 2.2).

At Whittier, program review and self-studies address meaning, quality and integrity in multiple areas. For example:

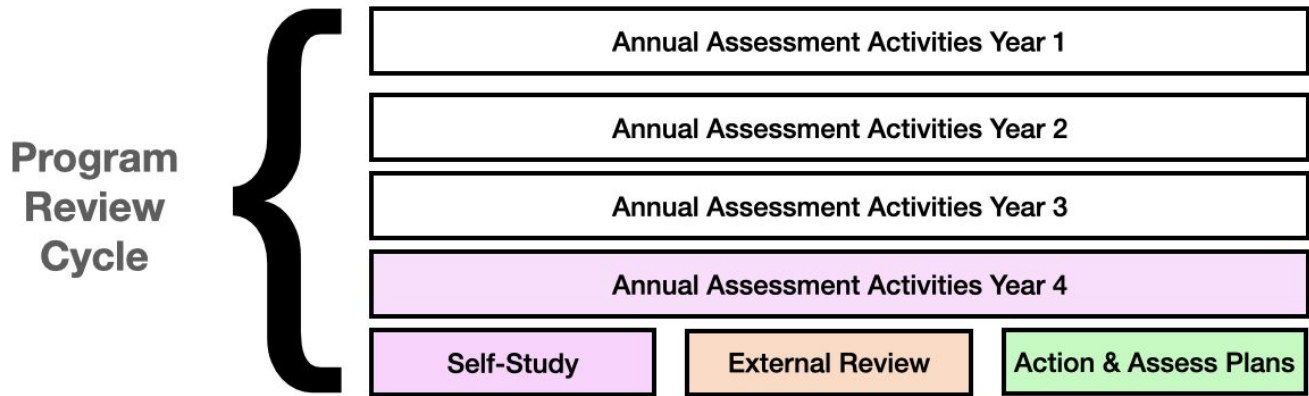| MQID Areas	Self-Study and Program Review Components
Meaning	Mission, goals
	Disciplinary values, knowledge and practices
	Contribution to College and Lib Ed
Quality	Department personnel qualifications
	Curriculum
	Student learning outcomes
	Self-reflection
	Planning and improvement
	Independent review
	Administrative and institutional support
Integrity	Assessment activities
	Data-driven decisions
	Self-reflection
	Culture of inquiry and honesty

If program review lies at the heart of the meaning, quality and integrity of a Whittier degree, then evidence of student success through **ANNUAL ASSESSMENT** is foundational to program review. Each year departments/programs are required to perform and report upon some assessment activity that measures and/or augments the department/program's success in ensuring the meaning, quality and integrity of Whittier's academic programs. In most cases, the **ANNUAL ASSESSMENT REPORT** analyzes an activity that measures the degree to which students are exceeding, meeting or failing to meet common benchmarks in the discipline. These benchmarks should reflect the **STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES** agreed upon by each individual department/program. Departments should strive to integrate assessment of Student Learning Outcomes into their regular work schedules in order to ensure that multiple outcomes are assessed during the period between two Self-Studies. The Assessment Committee responds each year with **FEEDBACK ON ANNUAL ASSESSMENT** to commend the department/program on its work and/or to recommend more effective assessment activities.

Each department program is charged with periodically producing a 25-40 page **SELF-STUDY** designed to provide a comprehensive and thoughtful overview of the current department/program, its recent history, and its future plans in the context of their discipline, or, in the case of auxiliary departments, their area of responsibility or expertise. After an **INTERNAL REVIEW** by the Assessment Committee to assure that the document includes includes all required components, the Self-Study is shared with an independent expert in the field (usually an experienced department chair from another similar school), who is asked to read the Self-Study, conduct a **CAMPUS VISIT** and prepare an **EXTERNAL REVIEW REPORT**.

The final step in the departmental/program review process is known as **CLOSING THE LOOP.** In this step, the department reflects upon previous feedback on Annual Assessment, the Self-Study, and the External Review Report to create a 2-3 page **ACTION AND ASSESSMENT PLAN** for the next five years. This comprises a to-do list and provisional plans for the next five years' assessment and lays the groundwork for departmental change, resource allocation, and yearly assessment activities. On the basis of this plan and the External Review Report, the Assessment Committee will propose for the Dean's approval the length of the department/program's next **PROGRAM REVIEW CYCLE** (3,5 or 7 years).

2.   **The Assessment Process at a Glance: What department chairs and committee members need to do and know**

A.   All degree programs must participate in assessment of student learning outcomes and program review to satisfy accreditation standards.
B.   Departments and programs submit annual assessment reports to https://acad.whittier.domains/tools/ no later than June 30 (going into effect 2022).
C.   Departments/Programs due to submit a self study provide a list of external reviewers to the Dean by September 15 and submit a self-study to https://acad.whittier.domains/tools/ no later than mid-November.
D.   The Assessment Committee will review the self-study and approve that it is complete and ready to share with an external reviewer before the semester break.
E.   In coordination with the department/program, the Dean's office will share the self study with an external reviewer and plan a spring semester date for the reviewer's campus (or virtual) visit.
F.   Upon receiving the external reviewer's report, the department/program prepares and submits to the Dean and the Assessment Committee a department/program an action and assessment plan comprised of a to-do list and provisional assessment plan for at least five years.
G.   The Assessment Committee determines a due date for the department/program's next self study.
H.   The Dean approves the Assessment Committee's proposed due date.

	Annual Assessment Activities Year 1
Program Review Cycle	Annual Assessment Activities Year 2
	Annual Assessment Activities Year 3
	Annual Assessment Activities Year 4
	Self-Study External Review Action & Assess Plans

Typical 5-year PROGRAM REVIEW cycle representing four years of ANNUAL ASSESSMENT plus one year dedicated to reflection, external review and planning for next cycle.

Departments may choose to incorporate the final year of ANNUAL ASSESSMENT into their SELF-STUDY instead of an additional fourth-year submission. However, each year of ANNUAL ASSESSMENT should be represented in the report.

CHAPTER 2: Annual Assessment

ANNUAL ASSESSMENT refers to the yearly performance by all departments/programs at Whittier College of conducting and reporting upon some activity that measures and/or augments the department/program's success in ensuring the meaning, quality and integrity of Whittier's academic programs. In the model for continuous assessment, annual assessment projects will follow a five-year assessment plan developed during the closing the loop process of the previous Program Review Cycle. This plan is based on feedback on previous assessment plans, the External Reviewer's report, and discussions between the department/program and the Dean of the Faculty. However, a department/program may depart from this plan as new priorities arise. In most cases, annual assessment projects are designed to measure the degree to which students are exceeding, meeting or failing to meet common benchmarks in the discipline. These benchmarks should be reflected in the Student Learning Outcomes adopted by the department/program.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES should reflect the core competencies that students are expected to develop while completing coursework in the discipline. The number of Student Learning Outcomes adopted by an individual department may vary depending upon the needs of a department, however it is recommended that the list of outcomes not exceed six in order to ensure that each may be assessed on a regular, periodic basis. They are typically enumerated in a set of phrases that could each follow logically a phrase such as "Students will be able to . . ."

Departments should strive to integrate **DIRECT ASSESSMENT** of student learning outcomes into their regular work schedules in order to ensure that all departmental outcomes are assessed at least once during the program review cycle, be it 3, 5 or 7 years. However, the overall goal of assessment is to ensure the meaning, quality and integrity of Whittier's academic programs. The Assessment Committee therefore welcomes annual reports that discuss indirect assessment (surveys, etc.) or departmental planning activities when done in balance with direct assessment.

An **ANNUAL ASSESSMENT REPORT** is typically 3-7 pages in length, incorporating the assessment tool used (e.g., a quiz, an assignment prompt, a survey, etc.) and a summary and analysis of the data produced.   The Annual Assessment Report should be submitted to the Online Assessment Portal by June 30th, and each report produced in a Program Review Cycle should be subsequently incorporated into and intended to inform the department's or program's upcoming Self-Study.

The format of the annual assessment report may vary depending upon the needs of the department/program, but faculty are welcome to follow one of the simple templates for assessment reports provided in Appendix A.

Though work may be distributed within departments/programs, it is the responsibility of the department chair or program director to submit the plans and reports. The faculty Assessment Committee, the Director of Assessment, and the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment should be viewed as resources for facilitating this process.

The matrix presented below offers a variety of assessment possibilities, indicating which comprise direct and which indirect forms of assessment.. While direct assessment focused on Student Learning Outcomes (Blue) is often most valuable, followed by direct assessment focused on other measures of success or engagement (Green), this list is not

meant to be comprehensive, prescriptive or limiting but rather to inspire the development of whatever assessment tools best aid the department.

	Focus on Student Learning Outcomes	Focus on Other Measures of Success or Engagement
Direct Assessment: involves looking at actual samples of student work produced in our programs	· Rubric scores for writing, oral presentations, research projects, portfolios, exhibits, performances, Capstone projects, or senior theses. · Analysis of pass rates or scores on licensure, certification, or subject area tests · Results of identical quizzes taken at the beginning and end of a unit or class. · Performance on tests of writing, critical thinking or subject area knowledge · Portfolio evaluations	· Student self-reflections on learning (e.g., asking students to name the three most important things they have learned in the program) · Student publications or conference presentations · Employer and internship supervisor ratings of students' performance/skills · Observations of field work, internship performance, service learning, clinical experiences
Indirect Assessment: gathering information through means other than looking at actual samples of student work	· Analysis of course evaluation findings related to SLOs · Results of focus group related to SLOs · Data measuring percent of class time spent in active learning related to SLOs · Records of student attendance at intellectual or cultural activities related to SLOs · Employer or alumni survey results concerning skills related to SLOs · Locally developed, commercial, or national surveys of student perceptions or self-report of skills	· Grades that are not based on explicit criteria related to learning goals · Results of focus group related to student interests, learning environment, etc. · Student perception surveys · Comparison of program requirements with counterpart program at peer institutions · Alumni survey · Locally developed, commercial, or national surveys of student perceptions or self-report activities · Transcript studies examining patterns and trends of course selection and/or grading · Reflection on course enrollment information · Percent of students who study abroad, use CAAS or SDS · Graduate school placement rates · Job placement

The Assessment Committee responds to each department/program's report each fall using the **RUBRIC FOR FEEDBACK ON ANNUAL ASSESSMENT** below to commend the department/program on its work and/or to recommend more effective assessment activities.

Annual Assessment Rubric

1. Y N   The Assessment Committee has received a report on your departmental assessment for the 20xx-20xx academic year.

2. Y N   The report describes a project designed to assess the department's success in fulfilling one or more specific departmental learning outcomes (i.e., direct assessment).

    and/or

   Y N   The report describes an assessment project unrelated to departmental learning outcomes but directed toward the goal of continuous program improvement (indirect assessment).

3. Y N   The report includes a brief analysis of, and plan to act upon, the assessment project's findings.

4. Y NA   Where pertinent, the report indicates any changes made to departmental learning outcomes.

   The Assessment Committee recommends that . . .

   a.   the department continues its commendable assessment practices.
   b.   the department continues its ongoing assessment practices related to program improvement but directs its efforts toward assessment of departmental learning outcomes in its next annual report.
   c.   the department updates its report to elaborate further on the significance of the data gathered in order to render it more useful for a future program review.
   d.   the department schedules a meeting with a member of the Assessment Committee in order to discuss omissions, revisions and/or future assessment plans.

Resources designed to guide departments/programs in their annual assessment appear on pp. xx-xx of the Assessment Committee Handbook. The committee is also happy to provide for interested colleagues recent examples of simple but productive direct and indirect assessment at Whittier.

Departments should strive to integrate direct assessment of student learning outcomes into their regular work schedules in order to ensure that all departmental outcomes are assessed at least once during the program review cycle, be it 3, 5 or 7 years. However, the overall goal of assessment is ensuring the meaning, quality and integrity of Whittier's academic programs. The Assessment Committee therefore welcomes annual reports that discuss indirect assessment (surveys, etc.) or departmental planning activities when done in balance with direct assessment.

CHAPTER 3: The Self-Study

1. Purpose and Components

The Self-Study should provide a comprehensive and thoughtful summary of current programs, their recent history, and future plans in the context of the discipline, or, in the case of auxiliary departments[1], their area of responsibility or expertise. The Self-Study will have both internal/non-expert (Assessment Committee, administration) and external/expert (peer reviewer colleagues, accreditors) audiences and we encourage departments/programs to consider their readers.

Not including the appendices, a typical self-study is 25-40 pages and answers all of the questions below. OIRA will provide Departments with data and can do custom queries for departments/programs. The data is provided in a Power BI Dashboard, but more data can be requested. The Assessment Committee can provide for departments copies of recent, successful self-studies produced by other departments.

Mission and Goals
●   What do you do, for whom, and why? How does it align with the College's mission?
Department History
●   Provide a brief (1-2) page summary of your department/program focusing on important trends or changes since your last self-study, including how you addressed questions from your last self-study.
Department Personnel
●   Who is currently serving full-time in your department and what are their qualifications?
●   What are the personnel trends in your department/program such as ratios of T/TT faculty to adjuncts and visitors? Are faculty deployed in specific ways? What percentage of the department's teaching is devoted to serving programs beyond the major such as lib ed, Whittier Scholars or other interdisciplinary programs?
Curriculum, Student Learning Outcomes and Curricular Map
●   Explain your curriculum briefly, providing an updated curricular map (see below) and student learning outcomes so that readers understand your students' developmental path and its intersection with your student learning outcomes. Your mission explains the what and for whom, this explains the *how.*
●   How does your curriculum and program compare to similar programs at liberal arts colleges?
●   How does your curriculum intersect with the college's general education program?
●   How does your curriculum and/or your activities (advising, mentoring) support Whittier's commitment to inclusion and diversity?

Curriculum Map

	Learning Outcome 1	Learning Outcome 2	Learning Outcome 3	Learning Outcome 4	Learning Outcome 5
Course #					
Course #					
Course #					
Course #					
Course #					
Course #					

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[1] Auxiliary programs are departments that do not offer a degree, but which serve students and other constituents on campus: Office of International Programs, CAAS, LEAP, Business Office, Registrar, etc. While these departments may not have specific learning outcomes, their operations impact students.

*I = Introduced the concept; P = Primary course of instruction; R = Reinforcement of the concept/outcome

Student Data and Student Outcomes in the Curricular and Learning Context
- Evaluate the department's educational effectiveness in terms of student learning outcomes. Are your students achieving the outcomes you expect? Discuss your annual assessment data cumulatively and how you have used it.
- Discuss enrollment and demographic trends. [Note: OIRA will provide you with data for your department/program. Review it carefully and feel free to request other data as needed.]
- Discuss intersection of curriculum, personnel and student audience. Do you have choke points? Trouble delivering some classes?

Learning and Operational Environment
- Discuss the physical context as well as administrative and budgetary support.

Successes and Challenges in Delivering Your Educational Mission
- Reflect on what is working and areas that you believe should be improved.
- Propose an action plan and benchmarks that can be assessed in the coming years.

Appendices
- Faculty CVs
- Syllabi (provided by OIRA from prior uploads)
- Departmental Guidelines for Tenure and Promotion
- Annual Assessment Reports

2. **Delaying a Self-Study**

Departments may request up to a one-year delay for submitting their self-study in order to insure a current and accurate representation of the program. The request and a justification should be sent to the Assessment Committee Chair, who will then bring it to the Assessment Committee. All requests are considered on a case-by-case basis and give special weight to circumstances beyond the department's control. Following consideration, a recommendation will be forwarded to the Dean.

Annual Assessment remains a requirement during the delay, effectively adding one more year of data to the report. Departments who request a delay may not be eligible for a seven-year renewal cycle and may forfeit other perquisites or be subject to extra scrutiny until submission is deemed complete.

CHAPTER 4: Internal Review

The faculty Assessment Committee along with the Associate Dean of Academic Planning conduct the Internal Review upon the submission of the self-study. The purpose of internal review is to assure the self-study is complete and reflects the standards of the college. The committee should use the rubric below to assist its evaluation of the self-study; the rubric is not intended for communication between the committee and departments/programs. Depending on the workload of the full Assessment Committee, a sub-committee may be assigned to review a department/program self-study and report their findings to the full committee and the Dean. Communication between the committee and the department/program should be undertaken by the Assessment Committee Chair who will identify areas of the self-study that stood out for their quality or need improvement, and either confirm that the self-study is ready to send out to the external reviewer or advise the department/program about omissions or shortcomings that could impede comprehensive review.

Department or Program Name:

Date of Last Review:

C = Complete, IP = In Progress, U=Unsatisfactory or Absent

Activity during prior assessment cycle beginning with most recent report				
Annual assessment report (Year: 20__-20__)	C	IP	U	n/a
Annual assessment report (Year: 20__-20__)	C	IP	U	n/a
Annual assessment report (Year: 20__-20__)	C	IP	U	n/a
Annual assessment report (Year: 20__-20__)	C	IP	U	n/a
Annual assessment report (Year: 20__-20__)	C	IP	U	n/a
Annual assessment report (Year: 20__-20__)	C	IP	U	n/a
Annual assessment report (Year: 20__-20__)	C	IP	U	n/a
Current self-study report…				
Mission and Goals	C	IP	U	n/a
Department personnel	C	IP	U	n/a
Curriculum, Student Learning Outcomes and Curricular Map	C	IP	U	n/a
Student Data and Outcomes in the Curricular and Learning Context	C	IP	U	n/a
Learning and Operational Environment	C	IP	U	n/a
Successes and Challenges in Delivering Your Educational Mission	C	IP	U	n/a
Appendices	C	IP	U	n/a
Progress Report, if requested (Date _____)				

CHAPTER 5: External Peer Review

The External Peer Reviewer is selected by the Dean of Faculty from a list of three potential reviewers provided by the Department/Program to the Office of the Dean by September 15. For each candidate, provide a brief biography and/or CV, and identify any potential conflicts of interest between the external reviewer candidates and the department/program or its members (e.g., former employee, former student, graduate school adviser or classmate, co-author or research collaborator, applicant for employment, immediate family member affiliated in the department/program, served as External Reviewer in the last review, etc.) An External Reviewer should

- Be a full-time, part-time or emeritus faculty member at an accredited institution (WASC, SACS, etc.)
- Have an educational and/or practice background that is similar to the curriculum reviewed
- Have a minimum of 7 years of teaching, administrative, or practice experience related to the curriculum reviewed

The Department/Program under review has the right and responsibility to:
- Clarify roles and responsibilities with the External Reviewer
- Provide feedback to the Dean of the Faculty regarding External Reviewer's Performance

The Self-Study should be sent to the External Reviewer by the end of January in preparation for a campus visit during the spring term. The External Reviewer is asked to submit within three weeks of the campus visit a report including the following:

1. Executive Summary

    Provide a brief executive summary of major findings for this program. Include:

    - General observations and comments on the program and curriculum, quality of student learning and the achievement of student learning outcomes, the assessment plan, faculty, students, facilities and resources
    - Responses to questions posed by faculty

2. Commendations and Recommendations

    Provide comments about what the program is doing well and provide comments to guide future direction for faculty to use to improve student learning and achieve departmental goals. Suggested topics include the following:

    - Provide feedback/suggestions on any learning outcome
    - Analyze/evaluate direct and indirect evidence of student learning
    - Offer suggestions to improve the assessment process
    - Evaluate assessment projects and impacts

3. Discussion
Provide evaluative feedback that would improve any aspect of the program and recommendations that require no new resources as well as those that do. The report may note recommendations that have been shown to be effective elsewhere.

Templates for correspondence with the External Reviewer appear in Appendices B-D. A sample schedule for the campus visit appears in Appendix E.

CHAPTER 6: Closing the Loop

The final, closing-the-loop step in the departmental/program review process involves the department/program creating an Action and Assessment plan and the Assessment Committee and Dean of Faculty determining the length of the next review cycle.

The department/program must submit to the Assessment Committee by June 30 a brief (2-3 page) **ACTION AND ASSESSMENT PLAN**. The Action and Assessment Plan should include (1) a narrative summary of the chief findings of the self-study and external review; (2) a short list of actions the department plans to take on the basis of those findings; and (3) a five-year assessment plan updated in response to the same findings. The purpose of is document is to facilitate discussion between the Dean and the department/program about personnel and resource allocation decisions and also to aid the Assessment Committee in making a determination about the length of the department/program's next review cycle.

The five-year assessment plan may be as simple as the following table:

Learning Outcome/Curricular Component	Year of Assessment
Student Learning Outcome or Curricular Component #1	20XX
Student Learning Outcome or Curricular Component #2	20XX
Student Learning Outcome or Curricular Component #3	20XX
Student Learning Outcome or Curricular Component #4	20XX
Student Learning Outcome or Curricular Component #5	20XX

*Departments interested in longitudinal assessment may repeat an assessment project.

In the fall following the submission of the Action and Assessment plan, the department/program will receive official word from the Assessment Committee and the Dean of Faculty about the length of the next **PROGRAM REVIEW CYCLE** (3, 5 or 7 years). In cases where the closing the loop stage carries over into the next academic year, departments/programs remain responsible for completing annual assessment responsibilities for the next review cycle.

Program Review Cycles

Each department/program, at the conclusion of the closing the loop process, will be notified by the Assessment Committee of the due date for the next program review and/or any additional requests for materials. If your due-date is 21-22, that means that your self-study is due in SEPTEMBER OF 2021 and that your external review and closing the loop process should happen during that year as well. Delay of a self-study usually removes the possibility of consideration for a seven-year cycle.

Benchmarks for Review Cycles and Typical Timelines

Three-year Review Cycle

A three-year cycle may be recommended for new programs, for departments/programs undergoing substantive change in scope or personnel, which are therefore in essence "new." Three years may also be recommended for departments/programs having trouble complying with College processes and policies (i.e., program review, assessment, personnel, budget, etc.), departments/programs seeking extra coaching and development opportunities, or departments/programs struggling with achieving and documenting performance in critical operations. A three-year review cycle is usually focused on organizational issues such as implementing student outcomes, hiring, or curriculum development rather than on longitudinal study of student outcomes.

A typical three-year cycle timeline:

- Year 1: annual assessment and follow-through with action plan
- Year 2: annual assessment and follow-through with action plan
- **Year 3: complete self-study or other required document, external peer review and closing the loop.**

Five-year Review Cycle

Five years is a typical cycle at Whittier College and reflects a stable department/program with a history of serving college requirements and/or graduating students with the necessary skills for their discipline, mentoring junior faculty and overall compliance and satisfactory performance in areas of program review, annual assessment, personnel policies and procedures, budgetary responsibility, etc.

A typical five-year cycle timeline

- Year 1: annual assessment and follow-through with action plan
- Year 2: annual assessment and follow-through with action plan
- Year 3: annual assessment and follow-through with action plan
- Year 4: annual assessment and follow-through with action plan
- **Year 5: submit self-study; host external peer review; submit action and assessment plan**

Seven-Year Review Cycle

A seven-year cycle for departments/programs reflects a stable department/program with a history of on-time and successful program review and assessment activities as defined by well-written and regularly assessed student learning outcomes. These departments/programs also have attributes such as solid enrollments across their curriculum, projected stability in faculty, staff and student enrollments, and well-developed action plans that strive for continuous improvement. Like departments/programs with a five-year review cycle, these departments/programs also have a history of graduating students with the necessary skills for their discipline, mentoring junior faculty and overall

compliance and satisfactory performance in areas of program review, assessment, personnel policies and procedures, budgetary responsibility, etc.

A typical seven-year cycle timeline:

- Year 1: annual assessment and follow-through with action plan
- Year 2: annual assessment and follow-through with action plan
- Year 3: annual assessment and follow-through with action plan
- **Year 4: annual assessment and follow-through with action plan and mid-cycle report (usually short)**
- Year 5: annual assessment and follow-through with action plan
- Year 6: annual assessment and follow-through with action plan
- **Year 7: submit self-study; host external peer review; submit action and assessment plan**

Progress Report

If the Committee is recommending a mid-cycle progress report, please briefly explain the area(s) of focus. All departments/programs on a seven-year cycle should include a brief 1-2 page mid-cycle report in year 4 covering progress on assessment, their action plan, etc. Failure to submit a substantive mid-cycle report may result in moving to a 5-year cycle.

Appendix A: Optional Template for Yearly Assessment Report

Academic Year: _____
Learning Outcome/ Curricular Component Assessed: _____

1.   Introduction: Question Posed

2.   Method: method & criteria to assess outcomes

   A. Schedule

   B. Population and sampling

      ● All students

      ● Student Cohort (at risk, under-represented, graduating class)

      ● Random Sampling

   C. Members of the Interpretation Team

3. Results: describe the data --qualitative, quantitative, portfolios, longitudinal. Tables and graphs should go here. Talk about the results in a systematic way: a) are your objectives being met; and b) what are the strengths and the weaknesses of your students.

4. Analysis/Discussion: What does the data mean to the department? What does it mean for students?

5. Conclusions: summarize most important findings. Establish benchmarks or talk about developing them if this is initial research

6. Final Report: Determine how and with whom you will share the results. Document the suggested recommendations and changes from the results.

Appendix B: Introduction Letter to External Reviewer

Dear Professor XXX,

Based on your professional qualifications, we have identified you as a potential reviewer for Whittier College's _____ department's comprehensive [virtual/in-person]program review. All academic programs go through the review process to confirm compliance with Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WSCUC) standards. We would like to ask you if you would be interested in participating as the External Reviewer for this department.

If you agree to participate, we will send you an outline of the criteria for evaluating the program and your responsibilities and expectations as an External Reviewer. At least one month prior to your visit, we will send you a copy of the departmental/program self-study. During your virtual/in-person visit, you will have the opportunity to interview and meet with department members, key administrators, and students. Following the visit, you will be asked to submit a final report summarizing your findings, commendations and recommendations.

For your assistance, the college offers an honorarium and [other] expense reimbursements related to the visit. If you agree to participate, we will follow-up with more details and advise you about hotel accommodations and transportation.

We look forward to hearing from you (please reply to all).

Sincerely,

Vice President of Academic Affairs and Dean of Faculty

cc. Office of Institutional Research and Assessment

cc. Department Chair of _____

Appendix C: Invitation Letter to External Reviewer

[On Whittier College letterhead]

Date
Address
Dear

Whittier College requests a comprehensive program review of all academic programs. Our _____ department is scheduled for a program review during this academic year. We would like to formally invite you to participate as the external reviewer for this department.

As an external reviewer:

1. Whittier College and the Department ask you to examine the program's self-study to confirm compliance to WSCUC (Western Association of Schools and Colleges) standards.

2. Prior to the virtual/in-person visit, you will receive a letter of instruction that will outline the criteria for evaluating the program and your responsibilities and expectations as an External Reviewer. The department also receives a copy of this letter.

3. At least one month prior to your visit, the department chair will forward a copy of the self-study and supporting documents.

4. In order to obtain as accurate an assessment as possible, you have the authority to examine all records relevant to these instructions. You are further authorized to seek additional information from personnel relevant to the department's self-study.

5. Your final report should include a summary of your findings, identifying areas of strength and making suggestions for continued growth and development. You will be provided a template to formulate your findings, commendations, and recommendations. This report will be forwarded to the Dean of Faculty, the Department, the Faculty Assessment Committee, and the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment.

6. Prior to your visit, the department chair will create an agenda for your virtual/in-person visit that will give you the opportunity to interview/meet department members, key administrators, and students.

7. Elizabeth Ibarra, Executive Administrative Assistant to the Vice President of Academic Affairs will advise you if hotel accommodations and transportation are needed.

We look forward to hearing from you about your participation as the external reviewer for the _____ department at Whittier College.

Sincerely,

Vice President of Academic Affairs and Dean of Faculty
cc. Office of Institutional Research and Assessment
cc. _____Department Chair

Appendix D: Confirmation to Letter to Participate as an External Reviewer

[On Whittier College ltr. Head]

Date
Address
Dear

As I mentioned to you [on the telephone / by e-mail] on [date], Whittier College requests a comprehensive program review of all academic programs about every five years. Our _____ department is scheduled for a program review during this academic year. [The program is preparing or has prepared] its self-study and will be ready for an External Reviewer - [during the XXXX semester or on Month-Date-Year]. This letter verifies that you have agreed to participate as the External Reviewer for the _____ program.

Responsibilities

The responsibilities of an External Reviewer include reviewing the departmental self-study, confirming the information through dialogue with department members and constituents during the[virtual/in-person]visit, and preparing a minimum five page report according to the provided guidelines. The report is shared with the Dean, the department faculty, the Faculty Assessment Committee and the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment. As you are aware, department reviews are very important for student and college level planning; your report will influence the future direction of the program.

Criteria for the Report

In preparation for your visit to Whittier College, please review the enclosed criteria and guidelines for the visit and report.

External Reviewers are asked to write a report that:

- Includes an **executive summary** of general comments, singles out features of the program that merit **commendations**, and makes **recommendations** for improvement.
- Varies in length, at **minimum five pages**.
- Is completed within three weeks of the visit.

1. Executive Summary

Provide a brief executive summary of major findings for this program. Include:

- General observations and comments on the program and curriculum, quality of student learning and the achievement of student learning outcomes, the assessment plan, faculty, students, facilities and resources
- Responses to questions posed by faculty

2. Commendations

Provide comments about what the program is doing well. Note suggested topic areas below.

3. Recommendations

Provide comments to guide future direction for faculty to use to improve student learning and achieve departmental goals.

4. Discussion

Provide evaluative feedback that would improve any aspect of the program and recommendations that require no new resources as well as those that do. The report may note recommendations that have been shown to be effective elsewhere. Note suggested topic areas below.

Educational Effectiveness Topic Areas for Commendations and Recommendations sections:

- Provide feedback/suggestions on any learning outcome.
- Analyze/evaluate direct and indirect evidence of student learning
- Offer suggestions to improve the assessment process
- Evaluate assessment plan
- Evaluate assessment impact

Role of the External Reviewer

The External Reviewer discusses with the department the strengths and the challenges identified in the self-study, and provides suggestions that enhance departmental growth. We ask you, as evaluator, to focus on program strengths and ways we can build upon them, rather than prescribing mandates about curriculum content and/or departmental functions. Examples of role misunderstandings and boundaries violations include:

1. Advocating for particular readings, curriculum, and pedagogy;
2. Entertaining "side bar" conversations from student, faculty, or other community members without the knowledge and consent of the department/program chair;
3. Expanding the scope of the review beyond the areas of the letter of invitation and the review guidelines;
4. Identifying individuals rather than focusing on departmental actions; and
5. Failing to disclose conflicts of interest, including status as a former or current mentor or friend of faculty members, faculty members or administrators who are currently or formerly employed at Whittier College, intention to apply for a faculty or administrative position at Whittier College or other institutions in immediate competition with the academic programs of Whittier College.

In the event that there are violations of the boundaries of the External Reviewer role, we have the right to ask you to clarify and revise the report you submit.

Process and Procedures

We appreciate the time and talent you have agreed to invest in the program review process. Please note the procedures following your visit and review:

1. Submit your written report within [three] weeks of the site visit. Please submit electronic copies to the individuals below, and mail a signed paper copy to the Vice President of Academic Affairs and Dean of Faculty.
   a. sal Johnston Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean of Faculty, sjohnston@whittier.edu
   b. Susana Santos, Director of Institutional Research and Assessment, ssantos3@whittier.edu
   c. [Name], _____ Department Chair, [email address]
2. Upon receipt of your report, the College may take up to three weeks to review the document and/or request revisions.
3. The College offers a $XXX honorarium.
4. The honorarium and any expense reimbursement related to the visit will be paid upon acceptance of the report. Elizabeth Ibarra, Executive Administrative Assistant to the Vice President of Academic Affairs, will assist you.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

XXXXXXXX
Vice President of Academic Affairs and Dean of Faculty
Enclosure:
Department/Program Self-Study and WC Fact Book

Cc: Department Chair
Office of Institutional Research and Assessment

Appendix E: Sample External Review Schedule for Off-Campus/In-person visit

(* Remember to allow time for walking from meeting to meeting)

Whittier College Department/Program

Name of External Reviewer College/University

Date

9:30   Meet with Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean of Faculty
        Mendenhall/Zoom

10:00   Meet with Department/Program Chair
        Room/Zoom

11:00   Observe Class
        Room/Zoom

12:00   Meet with Professor(s)
        Room/Zoom

12:30   Lunch with Students
        Chef's Table at the CI/Zoom

1:30   Observe Class
        Room/Zoom

2:30   Meet with Professor(s)
        Room/Zoom

3:00   Meet with Professor(s)
        Room/Zoom

3:30   Break

4:00   Meet with Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean of Faculty again to wrap-up
        Mendenhall/Zoom

5:00   [Possible Dinner with Faculty]