

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 departments¹, 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 #					

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.