

IUPUI Program Review Considerations in Selecting a Review Team

Program reviews at IUPUI are periodic, improvement-oriented processes aimed at enhancing the program's effectiveness. The process is intended to be both reflective and regenerative for the program; we do *not* take a “justify your existence” mentality with program reviews. As such, the composition of review teams is intended to provide important perspectives and insights for the program under review. Teams typically consist of two external experts in the discipline or functional area, two IUPUI faculty or staff members from other programs, and one community representative, all of whom have relevant perspectives to share on the issues that will provide the focus for the review.

The membership of our review teams reflects our goal to improve our programs along with two additional goals. First, we hope the reviews will increase collegiality and collaboration within the discipline—as well as among faculty and staff from our various schools—and thus encourage interdisciplinary collaboration. Second, given IUPUI's status as an urban campus, we also seek to strengthen ties with the various communities with which we interact.

Each program has its own unique context, activities, outcomes, and stakeholders. As a result, we provide flexibility in the composition of the review. To aid in the identification of potential members of the review team, we provide the following considerations for selecting reviewers.

Consider Experience and Expertise

Helpful peer reviewers bring content knowledge and professional expertise to the review process. This may include perspectives on curriculum and sequencing, disciplinary standards and norms, interaction with and contribution to scholarship, industry engagement (as appropriate), etc. It is helpful to have reviewers with experience and expertise who can evaluate the program against accepted norms and provide helpful insights and recommendations. As such, you may consider individuals from your discipline, field, or functional area who are leaders at the national level, either through scholarship, leadership, or engagement with professional organizations and associations. You may also consider individuals in similar positions at peer institutions or situated within peer or aspirant programs or departments.

Consider Objectivity

Helpful peer reviewers make rational judgments and recommendations about a program, entity, activity being reviewed, often maintaining neutrality and objectivity during the process. Reviewers with too close of a connection to the program—or its personnel—run the risk of being unlikely to provide critical feedback or constructive recommendations to the program. As such, it is worth considering acquaintances—or even strangers—through recommendations from trusted peers or colleagues. A “critical acquaintance” is more likely to provide insights that are regenerative for the program.

Consider Diversity & Representation

Reviewers with a diverse range of professional and life experiences are more likely to provide a broad array of useful observations and recommendations during program review. A diverse team is also likely to provide critical insights and priorities to aid in the longevity and relevance of the program. Consider a range of identities (e.g., gender, race, ethnicity) when suggesting reviewers.

Consider “Critical Friends”

Internal reviewers—IUPUI faculty or staff members from other programs—serve an important role on the review team. Not only can they provide useful context for external reviewers, such as insights into IUPUI policies and practices, funding models, and campus jargon, but they also serve to provide useful feedback from the perspective as individuals within the institution. This “arm’s length” perspective can be helpful in commenting on the program’s reputation, recognition, cross-campus collaboration, etc.

Consider Conflicts of Interest

Reviewers with real or perceived conflicts of interest may have difficulty providing unbiased, objective feedback to the program undergoing review. As such, when recommending reviewers, it is important to consider potential conflicts of interest. Individuals who have recently applied for a position with the program likely have a conflict of interest. Individuals from a competing institution or program may have a conflict of interest; consider if information shared through the program review process is likely to provide any operational or competitive advantage.

Consider the Role of the Team Chair

The chair of the review team is an important role during the program review process. The chair is expected to lead and engage the review team in discussion and activities to ensure a successful visit resulting in a meaningful report for the program. Consider selecting a team chair who not only has meaningful professional experience and expertise within your discipline, field, or functional area, but who also has the leadership experience necessary to steer a team of reviewers. You might also consider the professional role of the candidate to be the team chair; often, programs find it helpful to have a chair situated in a peer—or somewhat comparable—program, department, or unit, as they are able to suitably filter and contextualize the review team’s feedback in a manner that is valuable to the program under review.