

## **Administrative Unit Review Self-Study Guidelines**

The self-study document is an opportunity for your unit to reflect on its mission, the services you provide, your strengths and challenges, and your future plans. The process of preparing a self-study creates a shared understanding within the unit. A well-prepared report will also provide the external advisors and Steering Committee a foundational understanding of your unit, ensuring that they are able to maximize the campus visit, and enabling them to provide you valuable feedback on your unit and operations.

The outline below should be used as a guideline and not a list of mandatory components. In completing the self-study document, address only the sections that are applicable to your unit.

### **I. Table of Contents.**

**II. Executive Summary.** Give an overview of your report in 2-3 pages, highlighting the following key elements:

- a. Purpose/mission of your unit
- b. Primary/critical services
- c. Significant opportunities/challenges

### **III. Background, Basic Facts, and Description of the Unit.**

- a. **Background of the unit.** Briefly explain (in ~1/2 page) how your unit arrived at its present configuration, highlighting key milestones and major changes in its formation.
- b. **Mission statement and strategic goals.** Share the unit's mission statement (i.e., the purpose of your unit) and long-term strategic goals.
- c. **Services.** Describe the primary services performed by the unit, organizing them into major categories. (Note: a more comprehensive list of services can be included in the appendix.)
  - Indicate how your unit prioritizes its services in terms of importance or effort. Describe the relative magnitude of the major categories (e.g., by department workload or by revenue generated).



- For each service, describe the following:
  - **Critical partners.** Mention your key partnerships with other units inside and outside of the University. Note if there is overlap or duplication of services with other units at Notre Dame.
  - **Customers or end-users of your service.** List your customers (e.g., departments, divisions, organizations/groups inside and outside of Notre Dame, etc.) and include some indication of the relative volume of support provided to each.
  - **Key performance analysis.** Present the most important metrics (in charts, tables, etc.) you track to measure performance. Provide the most recent five years of results, targets, and comparisons to peer institutions, as available. For every metric, provide the corresponding analysis, including a comment on important trends, conclusions, or insights drawn from the data.
  - **Brief assessment.** Highlight (in a couple of sentences) any noteworthy strengths, challenges, or opportunities.
  
- d. **Resources.** Describe your resources as outlined below. Highlight (in a couple of sentences) any noteworthy strengths, challenges, or opportunities related to your resource allocation.
  - **Personnel.** Include an organizational chart of your unit, supplemented with a table that includes titles, a short description of the key functions of each position-type, and the number of people in each position-type (including number of FTEs, if applicable). (The appendix should include an org chart showing how your unit fits into the larger University structure.)
  - **Financials.** Provide a line-item summary of the unit's budgeted and actual expenses (and revenues, if applicable) over the past five years. Briefly explain key takeaways (e.g., causes of budget deficits, trends in expenditures).
  - **Equipment and technology.** If applicable, describe the equipment and technology critical to your unit's operations.
  - **Space.** If relevant to your unit's operations, describe your unit's location(s) and space allocation.

**IV. Assessment of the unit's current state.** Provide an assessment of your unit's top strengths and challenges (~3-5 of each), supported with data and analysis, where available. These may include the general areas listed below, or any other areas you feel are relevant to the review.

- Services (expanding upon any assessment included in Section III, where needed)
- Partnerships
- Customer service
- Talent and organizational structure
- Budget and financial resources
- Equipment and technology
- Space and facilities
- Operational policies and procedures
- Risk management and safety

**V. Future Plans.** This section should provide insight into the future of your unit, based on your goals (referenced in Section I), opportunities you intend to pursue, and/or emerging trends that will likely impact your operations.

- a. Potential changes.** Are there specific ways you are planning for your unit to evolve (e.g., new/discontinuation of services, changes in strategies for how you operate) in the next 3-5 years? If so, what are you planning? Why do you believe this change will be necessary?
- b. Trends.** As you think about factors external to your unit (at Notre Dame, in your field/industry, or nationally/globally), are there emerging trends that will significantly impact your unit (and are not addressed above)? How do you plan to respond?

**VI. Appendix.** Please include appendices, as applicable, that you believe will contribute significantly to the understanding of your unit and its operations. For example:

- organizational charts (illustrating how your unit fits into the University's overall organizational structure)
- unit's strategic plan
- comprehensive list of services (supplementing Section III, if needed)
- policies/procedures
- other performance metrics and analyses (e.g., NDVoice, ImproveND)

## Best Practices for Self-Study Reports

- Overarching concepts:
  - It is critical that your report include **candid assessments** of your work. In other words, this report is not a marketing document, only highlighting the positives. Rather, the report should be a balanced account – inclusive of both positives and negatives – of your perception of the unit, its work, and future plans.
  - The self-study guidelines are intended to help you think about potential components of the report and how they might be organized. In completing the self-study report, **address only those sections applicable to your unit**. It is important to ensure the **document flows as a narrative, and not** a collection of loosely related sections.
  - The document should make significant **use of tables, charts, and lists, supported by a succinct narrative** that provides context and highlights key conclusions.
  - You should **focus on the most critical aspects** of your operations, and not specific details unless necessary to make a broader point.
  - **Keep your division leader apprised** of progress made and setbacks encountered in preparing your report.
  
- Tactical points:
  - Excluding appendices, the report should not exceed 20 pages. Every appendix should be directly referenced in the body of the report.
  - Make sure language/acronyms used are accessible to readers who are not part of the unit.
  - Your self-study report will be sent to the team of external advisors one month in advance of their campus visit. The following is a suggested timeline that might help in your preparations to complete the report.

Due Date	Completion of Components
Week 4	<b>III.</b> Background, Basic Facts, and Description of the Unit
Week 6	<b>IV.</b> Assessment of the Unit's Current State
Week 8	<b>V.</b> Future Plans, <b>VI.</b> Appendix, <b>II.</b> Exec. Summary, <b>I.</b> Table of Contents
Due Date	Review Process
Week 9	Document sent to OSPIR for review
Week 10	OSPIR provide feedback, unit addresses feedback
Week 11	Document sent to Division Leader and Steering Committee for review
Week 12	Division Leader and Steering Committee provides feedback, unit addresses feedback
Week 13	Document sent to External Advisors