External Unit Reviewer Guidelines

I. Ball State University academic units routinely engage in self-evaluation. Those units that hold or seek accreditation from a national accrediting organization will follow the guidelines set forth by that organization for the selection of the external reviewer(s). Units that are not wholly or partially accredited by a national organization may seek evaluation by a qualified external reviewer or team of external reviewers.

II. The reviewer(s) will be chosen through consultation between the unit head, college Dean, and Provost or his or her designee.

III. The reviewers, or at least one reviewer, will be engaged in an academic career and trained in the discipline(s) or areas being evaluated. The reviewer(s), or at least one reviewer, should be from an institution similar in size and scope to Ball State University. If possible and in the interest of impartiality, reviewers should not be Ball State alumni, friends, or collaborators with any members of the academic unit under review. If not possible, relationships between the reviewer and the unit under review should be disclosed.

IV. The schedule for evaluations will be decided upon by the Provost or his or her designee, in consultation with the unit head and college dean.

V. A time line for a unit evaluation will include the following:

A. In the semester prior to the visit

The unit is expected to prepare a list of possible reviewers with as much information concerning their qualifications as possible. The unit head, Dean, and Provost or his or her designee, then choose an external reviewer or review team, and the Dean invites the reviewer to participate. A date for the campus visit is selected depending on the availability of the provost and the dean. Visits that require the participation of the President should allow for extra scheduling time.

B. Two months prior to the visit

1. The unit’s materials to the reviewer should contain the following: copies of the mission statement and the unit learning outcomes, unit assessment plan, copy of the self-study report, copy of the unit's course offerings, c.v.’s of unit members, recent patterns of enrollment, and a list of questions to which the unit wants the reviewer to direct particular attention.
2. The unit develops a plan for the visit, which will ordinarily last 2 days, plus travel.

C. The visit by the Reviewer or Review Team

Ordinarily, the review team meets with unit members; with students; with the Dean, with the Provost; and with any other people whose work at the university makes them particularly relevant to the unit’s evaluation. (For example, Information Technology Services liaison, College development officer, unit alumni organization representative, Dean of the Graduate School.)

D. Follow-up to the visit

1. The reviewer submits her/his report to the unit head, who makes copies available to the Provost or his or her designee, the Dean, and all members of the unit under review.

2. The unit will prepare a written response to the report, indicating in particular how it proposes to deal with the recommendations. This may include suggestions, where relevant, for administrative support from the College and/or University.

3. The Provost or his or her designee, Dean, and unit head meet to discuss the findings and develop an annual action plan.
Philosophy Statement to the Reviewer

Reviewers should visit campus to

1) determine the accuracy of the unit’s self-study report

2) evaluate the unit via national standards including relevance of the curriculum

3) evaluate the unit via the university’s mission, vision, and strategic plan

4) offer suggestions for unit improvement

5) provide reinforcing information and evidence for continued college and university support of the unit