

External Review

If your program is **not** accredited by an external accrediting agency (e.g., NASM, CCTC, ABET), you are required to engage an external reviewer—someone outside of Westmont—who will evaluate your program materials and submit a written analysis as part of the program review process. This external reviewer will serve as a member of the program review team assigned to your department and will co-author the team's formal response to the department's Seven-Year Program Review Report in collaboration with the PRC members.

It is both important and beneficial for your department to carefully select a qualified reviewer who can effectively evaluate your program and provide meaningful insights into student success.

Timeline for Selection of an External Reviewer

In the spring semester prior to submitting the Seven-Year Program Review Report, department chairs are responsible for identifying 3–4 qualified external reviewers and submitting their names to the Dean of Curriculum and Educational Effectiveness by **April 1**, using the **External Reviewer Request and Authorization Form**.

Qualifications of External Reviewers

When submitting external reviewer recommendations, please ensure that candidates meet the following criteria:

- Possess the appropriate terminal degree.
- Are employed full-time as faculty or administrators at a higher education institution.
- Have substantial college-level teaching experience.
- Have experience with program administration.
- Are knowledgeable about assessment of student learning outcomes, program review, and accreditation processes.

It is also beneficial if external reviewer candidates:

- Have worked at an institution similar to Westmont.
- Are familiar with Westmont's mission and purpose.
- Understand WSCUC accreditation requirements and standards.

To maintain an objective external perspective, departments should avoid recommending reviewers who have current personal ties to Westmont. Examples of such ties include:

- Being a recent Westmont employee or related to a Westmont employee.
- Having recently interviewed or applied for a position at Westmont.
- Having children currently enrolled at Westmont.
- Having been previously employed at Westmont.

All relationships between proposed reviewers and department faculty or staff must be disclosed in the recommendation.

The Dean of Curriculum and Educational Effectiveness will contact potential candidates to confirm their availability and suitability. In consultation with the Provost when necessary, the Dean will make the final decision regarding the selection of the external reviewer from the department's recommended candidates.

Compensation for an External Reviewer's Expenses

Compensation for an external reviewer's expenses is determined by the Provost's Office. Once a reviewer is selected and approved, the Provost's Office will handle the necessary paperwork.

For their participation in the program review process, each reviewer will receive an honorarium and reasonable reimbursement for local travel from the Provost's Office. If the reviewer is not local, the department chair should discuss available resources to support the site visit with the Provost.

Additionally, the Provost's Office will reimburse the department up to \$40 per person for the department's dinner with the external reviewer. If the total bill exceeds this amount, the department may cover the difference using department funds. Please note that alcoholic beverages are not covered by Westmont; any such expenses must be paid separately by individuals using their personal credit cards.

Program Review Materials

At least four weeks before the visit, the Dean of Curriculum and Educational Effectiveness will send the following documents to the external reviewers:

- The Seven-Year Program Review Report, including all appendices;
- Links to the departmental website containing information about the program, faculty, mission statement and goals, student learning opportunities, Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs), Multi-Year Assessment Plan, and Curriculum Map;
- Evidence of student learning and other relevant artifacts;
- A link to the College Catalog for course descriptions;
- A link to the Campus Map.

Site Visit

During the external reviewer's campus visit, they may verify materials referenced in the program review report and interview faculty, students, and administrators to gather accurate and comprehensive information. Campus visits should be scheduled approximately six weeks after the reviewer receives the Seven-Year Program Review Report and accompanying materials—typically in October or November—and should not exceed two days.

The Department Chair, Program Review Team Leader, and Executive Assistant to the Provost will collaborate to construct the site visit schedule. As a standard practice, the visit should begin and end with a meeting between the program review team, the Provost, and the Dean of Curriculum and Educational Effectiveness.

As the host, the department under review is responsible for:

- Submitting the Seven-Year Program Review Report and all relevant or requested materials in a timely manner.
- Collaborating with the Program Review Team Leader and the Provost's Office to develop the site visit schedule. Once review dates are confirmed, please contact the Provost's Office as early as possible to schedule the welcome and exit interviews. While these meetings typically depend on the reviewer's travel plans, early coordination can influence travel arrangements to ensure availability. *Please avoid scheduling these meetings on Wednesday afternoons or the fourth Friday of October.* The Program Review Committee asks all departments to prioritize scheduling with the Senior Administrative Assistant to the Provost.
- Designating a private, secure workspace for the external reviewer during the visit.
- Reserving rooms for all program review team meetings with students, alumni, faculty, staff, and administrators, and providing the finalized site visit schedule to the Provost's Office.
- Informing students, staff, and faculty about the site visit and preparing them to participate in individual and group meetings with the external reviewer.

Departments are encouraged to:

- Schedule individual meetings between the external reviewer and each faculty member, including faculty from other departments the program serves, as well as lab coordinators, where applicable.
- Organize meetings with current students in the major.
- Include opportunities for classroom observations and other relevant activities that will help the external reviewer understand both the strengths and challenges of the program.