ADMINISTRATIVE UNIT REVIEW GUIDELINES

As directed by the President, the administrative unit review process will be overseen by the Academic Vice President. Each administrative unit/department will be reviewed approximately every seven years through a self-study and external review process. The self-study and external review are intended to assist both the unit/department and the Academic Vice President’s Office in determining the progress of a particular unit/department toward meeting its goals, assessing its quality, and assessing its contribution to the advancement of the Academy’s mission. This self-study and external review process pertains only to administrative units and departments (e.g., Student Services, Technology and Library Services, Admissions)¹ and is separate from the Academy’s academic degree program review process.

In addition to providing information on the effectiveness of a unit/department, this process will fulfill the New England Association of Schools and Colleges accreditation requirement. In Standard Two of NEASC’s Standards for Accreditation (effective July 1, 2016), section 2.1 reads, “Planning and evaluation are systematic, comprehensive, broad-based, integrated, and appropriate to the institution. They involve the participation of individuals and groups responsible for the achievement of institutional purposes and include external perspectives.”

TIMELINE:

1. The individual who will have ownership over the self-study process for the unit/department will be designated by the spring term preceding a self-study. The commitment to owning a self-study is substantial; any compensation will be agreed to prior to the year of review.

2. The unit/department will conduct the self-study in the fall semester (i.e., the semester before an external reviewer is invited to campus) in accordance with applicable standards under NEASC. The self-study will be submitted to the Academic Vice President by 31 December.

3. The unit/department leader will recommend to the Academic Vice President a minimum of two external review candidates, one of whom will visit the campus no later than thirty calendar days after the start of the following semester. External reviewer candidates should have demonstrated skills and knowledge relative to the area of the self-study. The Academic Vice President may add names to the reviewer list in consultation with the unit/department leader. The individual will be selected by the leader with the Academic Vice President’s approval.

¹ Because of the occurrence of regular audits, the Office of Finance – with the exception of Financial Aid and Purchasing – is exempt from this process but may choose to participate on a voluntary basis.
4. The unit/department leader will arrange the external review visit and the necessary contractual documents. The Academic Vice President, with the unit/department leader, will outline the itinerary for the external review visit. A minimum of a one-day visit will include individual and/or group meetings with all department staff, meetings with relevant unit/department stakeholders, and visits to departmental resources such as offices, facilities, etc.

5. A report from the external reviewer is due thirty calendar days after the site visit and will be submitted to the Academic Vice President.

6. The Academic Vice President will share the review with the unit/department leader and staff who will have a chance to respond to the report.

7. Under the direction of the unit/department leader, the unit/department will prepare a Review Response Report, which will be due at the start of the fall semester. Any action items as a result of the review process should be addressed in the Review Response Report. Action items should also be addressed in the unit/department’s next year end report for inclusion in the Academy’s strategic plan.
SELF-STUDY FORMAT:

- Executive summary
- Mission statement
  - State the mission of the unit/department and describe how it aligns with the institutional mission
- Goals/standards
  - State the goals for the unit/department and the indicators that have been established to monitor progress towards goals. Describe the degree to which goals are being met. Describe any improvements and/or substantial accomplishments over the past seven years that have helped to ensure progress towards goals.
- Unit/department profile/overview (this section of the self-study should, at a minimum, address the areas listed below and reference any related changes over the past seven years)
  - Staffing/personnel
    - Current staff (include organizational chart, if available/relevant)
    - Résumés of professional staff
    - Job descriptions
  - Key functions/activities/services
  - Resources (e.g., budget, offices, facilities, technology, equipment)
  - Key “customers” and stakeholders (i.e., both internal and external clients served by the unit/department)
- NEASC standards
  - Address the key standards relevant to the unit/department and discuss how the unit/department meets the standards; include/reference any supporting evidence.
- SWOT analysis
  - Describe the main strengths and weaknesses of the unit/department as well as the related key opportunities and threats. Strengths and weaknesses reflect internal factors (e.g., human resources, physical resources, financial resources) while opportunities and threats reflect external factors (e.g., future industry trends, governmental mandates, demographic changes).
  - Identify proposed strategies to capitalize on strengths, act on identified opportunities, and address possible weaknesses or threats over the next seven years.
- Concluding statement
EXTERNAL REVIEWER GUIDELINES: The unit/department may add to this list any specific evaluation interests it chooses.

The external reviewer will be provided copies of the unit/departmental self-study and asked to evaluate the self-study and address the following:

1. Determine how well the unit/department is reaching its goals and in what ways they are consistent with the mission of the Academy.

2. Describe the overall excellence of this unit/department relative to its peers at similar colleges. Identify the strengths and weaknesses of the unit/department.

3. Evaluate the resources available to the unit/department. This would include staffing, offices/space, facilities, technology, equipment, and funding to meet the unit/department mission and to ensure overall excellence.

4. Provide recommendations for short- or long-term action steps that will help the unit/department better fulfill its mission and meets its goals. Reference specific evidence to support recommendations. These recommendations will form the basis of the unit/department’s Review Response Report.