

TENNESSEE TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY

Information for Program Reviewers

WHY PROGRAM REVIEWS?

Tennessee Technological University reviews its undergraduate programs and graduate programs that do not undergo accreditation review on a regular cycle.

All public higher education institutions in the state are required to participate in an instructional assessment program administered by the Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC), known as Quality Assurance Funding (QAF). Each academic program must undergo regular external reviews to assess quality as part of the QAF process. To encourage strong performance, an additional 5.45% of each university's state appropriation is directly tied to the results of these annual evaluations, reinforcing the state's commitment to continuous improvement in higher education.

WHAT IS TO BE REVIEWED?

A program reviewer will evaluate the academic program based on six broad categories: curriculum, economic development/program sustainability, faculty, learning outcomes, learning resources, and student engagement. The Program Review Rubric outlines 30 standards across these categories. The Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC) will use assessment scores from these standards, collected from programs evaluated during the academic year, to allocate points toward annual Quality Assurance Funding. For each standard, the program must provide evidence of meeting or exceeding expectations through a Self-Study Report. Supporting documentation will be made available for review as referenced in the report.

The on-site visit schedule is developed in consultation with the reviewers by the department chairperson or school director, faculty, college dean, and associate provost. For graduate programs, the dean of graduate studies and the associate vice president for research are also involved in the planning process. In addition to the Self-Study Report and the THEC Program Review Rubric, the external reviewer will receive supplemental materials about the department and the program prior to the visit. Requests for additional data may be directed to the department and the dean's office before or during the site visit.

THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF PROGRAM REVIEWERS

External reviewers are professionals in the relevant field and are selected in accordance with THEC guidelines and approval.

The primary responsibilities of the reviewers are to thoroughly review the self-study document prior to the on-site visit, identifying any questions or concerns to be addressed during the review, and to complete and sign the THEC Program Review Rubric before the final session of the visit. A brief orientation session will be provided to reviewers before the

evaluation begins. During the site visit, external reviewers meet with various stakeholder groups, conduct interviews, and follow up to clarify or verify any outstanding questions or concerns. At the concluding exit interview, the reviewers present their key findings and recommendations to the department and members of central administration.

Following the visit, the reviewers prepare a separate narrative report, which must be submitted to the Associate Provost and the college dean within 30 days of completing the on-campus review.

TO WHOM DO THE PROGRAM REVIEWERS REPORT?

The program reviewer is hosted by the department whose program is under evaluation. An exit interview session is scheduled for the final day of the visit and includes the Provost, Associate Provosts, college dean, department chair, and departmental faculty. For graduate program reviews, the Dean of the College of Graduate Studies and the Associate Vice President for Research are also invited to both the opening and exit sessions.

The reviewer should submit the completed and signed THEC Program Review Rubric to the Associate Provost during the exit interview session. The narrative report must be submitted to the Associate Provost and the college dean within 30 days of the visit.

HOW ARE PROGRAM REVIEWERS REIMBURSED?

The program reviewer will receive an honorarium after the written report has been submitted, as outlined in the contract with Tennessee Tech University. The reviewer is responsible for all travel-related expenses associated with the site visit.

Honorarium checks are typically mailed within two to three business days after the Dean's office submits a payment request to the Business Office.