Step 2: External Review

After the review is confirmed by the supervising administrator (Dean or Associate Dean), the department should forward the names of 5 potential reviewers with their credentials to the Dean/Associate Dean and Graduate Dean if the unit offers graduate programs. Individuals recommended as program reviewers should have prior experience on at least one review team and should be active in their professional organization(s). In addition, because of the institution’s commitment to affirmative action and cultural diversity, women and persons of color must be included in the list of potential reviewers. After consultation with the Graduate Dean (if necessary) the Dean/Associate Dean identifies preferred reviewers and notifies the department/program of approval.

External Review Timeline:

The timeline for the program review process will vary depending on its size and the number of programs within the department, whether analysis by the Graduate Dean is required, and the availability of the selected reviewers. However, the general timeframe should fall within these guidelines:

1. Preparation of the department self-study report is begun in spring of the year prior to the review and completed by December 15 of the review year.
2. Review Process (consultants' visit, departmental response, etc.) to be completed by May 15 of the review year.

Steps to Follow for an External Visit:

1. After the reviewer(s) have been agreed upon, the department chair should make initial contact with the individuals and identify one as the team chair responsible for writing the report. The home address and social security numbers of both individuals must be obtained so that a contract can be issued.
2. The department must establish tentative dates for the on-campus visit. Calls should be made to determine the availability of the Dean(s)/Associate Dean for the tentative chosen dates.
3. The department contacts the Dean with firm dates so that the Dean can communicate with the reviewers at least two months, prior to the on-campus visit. Departments will be responsible for providing documents, such as the university catalog, relevant brochures, and the self- study report to reviewers (see Appendix F, p. 32).
4. The department prepares the contracts at least two months prior to the on-campus visit. Contracts are prepared in consultation with the Dean/Associate Dean. All reviewers' expenses must be included in the honorarium. The Business Office will not process separate expenses for reviewers. In some cases, expenses may be reduced if the reviewers can stay over a Saturday night. The university will cover the additional hotel/living expenses for a Saturday stay as long as the end result is a savings. Expenses for department members at luncheons and dinners are not covered. The department or individuals will be reimbursed for trips to the airport under normal travel management policies.
5. Copies of all departmental correspondence with the reviewer(s) should be sent to the Dean/Associate Dean. In turn, the Dean/Associate Dean will send the department copies of all of his/her correspondence with the reviewer(s).
6. The department will make the necessary social arrangements and take care of logistics such as housing and transportation to and from the airport. The department should make it clear to the reviewers that they are expected to pay their own expenses up front, but they will be reimbursed according to MnSCU travel policies.

7. One copy of the departmental self-study report must be sent to the Dean before it is prepared for final printing. The Dean/Associate Dean will review the self-study for comprehensiveness. Based on the review by the Dean/Associate Dean, the department makes any necessary corrections or additions and sends the self-study to Printing Services for printing. The department will send the final copy of the report to the reviewers at least four weeks prior to the visit, along with other appropriate materials (faculty contract, bulletins, handbooks, etc.) The department sends two copies of the self-study to the Dean/Associate Dean and one copy to the Graduate Dean if the department has a graduate program.

8. A tentative schedule of meetings and activities for the on-campus visit should be developed. Generally a reception is planned for the first evening which includes members of the unit and the reviewers. One and a half hours should be allowed early on the first day for a discussion with the Dean/Associate Dean and Graduate Dean (if appropriate). The final hour and a half of the visit should be scheduled with them, as well. It is important that the reviewers have a full day here on the second day. They should be on campus until at least 2 p.m.

9. A finalized schedule should be sent to the Dean/Associate Dean and Graduate Dean at least one week before the review.