

Consultant Criteria/Report Guidelines (as per 2019-2020 Academic Issues Committee Manual)

All institutions proposing a new degree program must engage an independent external consultant to conduct a site visit, review the proposed program and prepare a written report. The consultant should be engaged prior to the program being reviewed by any internal curriculum committees in case substantial curricular changes are suggested. The information below reflects the most recent guidelines prepared by the Academic Issues Committee of the NJ Presidents' Council, which reviews and recommends approval of programs at the State level. (See AIC Manual for more information)

All faculty proposing new degree programs should consult with their Dean when selecting/recommending program review consultants. The Provost/Associate Provost for Academic Programs & Assessment gives the final authorization of the choice of candidate to be brought to campus. Failure to adhere to these guidelines may result in approval delays or potential program rejection by the Academic Issues Committee.

Consultant Criteria: The selected consultant **MUST** have no past or present professional relationship with the institution proposing a new program that might imply a (perceived or real) conflict of interest. For specific criteria see page two - ***AIC Consultant Selection Criteria***.

Consultant Report: The written report must be a thoughtful and thorough analysis of the quality of the program, not merely a detailing of the specifics of the proposed program. The narrative of the report should cover the following areas: objectives, need for the program, educational programs, students, faculty, support personnel, finances, physical facilities, library, computer facilities, administration, and evaluation. The report must include the sections listed and answer the questions posed. For more detailed instructions see page three – ***Consultant Report Guidelines***.

Institutional Response to Consultant's Report:

The institutional response should be a thorough and thoughtful report specifically addressing each concern/recommendation raised by the consultant's report.

TABLE 1 – AIC Consultant Selection Criteria

The following criteria should be considered in the selection of an external consultant:

1. Conflict of Interest:

There must be no conflict of interest or appearance of a conflict of interest with the institution under review. There is a conflict of interest when the potential consultant:

- a. is a present or former employee, student, member of the governing board, owner or shareholder of, or consultant to, the institution that is seeking program approval;
- b. is a spouse, parent, child, or sibling of an individual or persons listed in (a) above;
- c. is seeking or being sought for employment or other relationship with the institution under review;
- d. has a personal or professional relationship with the institution under review that might compromise objectivity; and/or
- e. has a competitive relationship with the institution that might compromise objectivity.

There must be a five-year period between the end of the relationship and any engagement with the institution to serve as a consultant. (The only exception to this restriction is that the institution can hire the consultant to review additional programs within the five-year period.)

2. Appropriate terminal degree in relevant field from an accredited institution.
3. Academic or appropriate professional experience (administration and/or teaching) in the field.
4. Research experience (where appropriate):
 - a. Publications such as books and articles in refereed journals.
 - b. Recipient of research grants from external funding sources such as government agencies and foundations.
5. Appropriate professional experience in relevant field(s) if program to be reviewed has professional orientation (e.g., engineering, social work, law).
6. Knowledge of the state of the art of the field.
7. Familiarity with standards for academic programs developed by professional accrediting agencies.
8. Familiarity with existing programs.
9. Awareness of employment possibilities of graduates.
10. Knowledge of budgeting and financial matters - of critical importance if program to be reviewed would be expensive or represent a major shift in an institution's educational mission.
11. Experience in evaluating academic programs.
12. Except in circumstances where specialized expertise is required, out-of-state consultants should be selected.

CONSULTANT REPORT GUIDELINES

The consultant should submit a written evaluation of the program and include a specific recommendation to the Institution. The consultant may recommend:

- Approval.
- Approval upon minor modification by the institution.
- Non-approval unless major modifications are implemented.
- Non-approval for stated reasons.

The written report must be a thoughtful and thorough analysis of the quality of the program, not merely a detailing of the specifics of the proposed program. The report must include the following sections and answers the questions posed:

A. Objectives

1. Describe whether or not the objectives and underlying principles of the program are sound and clearly stated.
2. Discuss whether or not the program is consistent with the institution's programmatic mission and educational goals.

B. Need for the Program

1. Analyze the need for this program (e.g., student demand), and indicate why it is likely or unlikely that students will be able to secure employment and/or continue advanced study upon graduation.
2. In the case of career programs:
 - a. Do the results of market surveys indicate a sufficient level of student demand to justify the creation of the proposed program? [Please explain.]
 - b. Do employment projections indicate a sufficient number of job opportunities in the region and the State to justify the creation of the program? [Please explain.]

C. Educational Programs

1. Is the learning outcomes plan adequate?
2. Does the program fit well into the institutional strategic plan and has the institution considered any impact the new program might have on existing programs at the institution?
2. Discuss the distribution and nature of required courses, electives, and research (if appropriate) in terms of meeting the objectives of the program. Compare and contrast the proposed curriculum with recognized programs of quality at other institutions, if appropriate.
3. Are the instructional modes and credit distribution consistent with the objectives of the curriculum? [Please explain.]
4. Does the curriculum represent a suitable approach to professional study in the particular field, if appropriate? [Please explain.]
5. Does the curriculum meet certification and/or accreditation standards, if appropriate? [Please explain.]
6. Are the requirements for admission to the program clearly defined and appropriate to ensure a student body capable of meeting the objectives of the program, without such requirements being artificially strict, rigid, or discriminatory? [Please explain.]
7. Discuss whether or not standards for completion of the program are clearly defined and consistent with the objectives of the program.

9. Discuss whether or not an appropriate mechanism for transfer of students to enter the program exists and comment upon the suitability of any articulation arrangements between this and other existing programs.
 10. If other academic units within the institution are to provide educational services to the program, describe whether or not their commitment to participate is consistent with offering a program of quality in this field.
 11. If a program has a clinical component, discuss the adequacy of facilities and the arrangements to support the objectives of the program.
- D. Students
1. Is the enrollment plan realistic?
 2. Is the percentage of part-time students projected for the program consistent with the goals of the program? [Please explain.]
 3. Comment upon the adequacy of provisions made to ensure successful target population (e.g., minorities and women) participation in the program.
 4. Comment upon the adequacy of counseling and advisement to be provided to students enrolled in the program.
- E. Faculty
1. Describe whether or not the faculty possess the appropriate (terminal) degrees and other academic credentials to provide a program of high quality.
 2. Comment on the faculty's involvement in research, teaching, scholarship, creative activity, and community service and whether or not it is appropriate to the discipline and to the proposed program.
 3. Discuss whether or not the number of faculty and the amount of time to be devoted by each to the program are compatible with the goal of offering a program of quality.
- F. Support Personnel. Discuss the adequacy of support personnel to be associated with the program, e.g., secretaries, administrative assistants, bookkeepers, technicians, as appropriate.
- G. Finances
1. Discuss the institution's commitment to provide the resources necessary to guarantee a program of high quality (e.g., faculty, equipment, library support staff for the program, below-the-line support for faculty travel, research).
 2. Discuss the possible need for significant additional financial support from the State of New Jersey.
- H. Physical Facilities
1. Discuss the adequacy of laboratory, special facilities, and equipment intended to support the program and indicate if they are consistent with offering a program of high quality.
 2. Comment upon the adequacy of classroom facilities.
 3. Comment upon any evidence to suggest that an existing program at the institution will be adversely affected in terms of resources by the implementation of them program under review.
 4. Comment upon the accessibility to program facilities by the handicapped.
- I. Library. Discuss the adequacy of library holdings and other library resources available to support the program and indicate if they are consistent with offering a program of high

quality.

- J. Computer Facilities. Discuss the adequacy of computer facilities and other information technology resources available to support the program and indicate if they are consistent with offering a program of quality.
- K. Administration.
 - 1. Comment on the administrative structure of the program and indicate if it is sufficiently defined and reasonable.
 - 2. If interinstitutional or intrainstitutional cooperation is involved, describe whether or not the administrative and budgetary responsibilities for the program are clearly defined and adequate.
- L. Evaluation. In what way has an appropriate mechanism been developed to evaluate the success or failure of the program