External Review

If your program is **not** accredited by an external accrediting agency (e.g. NASM, CTC) you are required to utilize an outside (external to Westmont) reviewer who will review program materials and submit a written analysis as part of your program review process. The external reviewer will be a member of a program review team assigned to your department who will co-write a review response with the PRC Team to the department's six-year report. It is important and beneficial for your department to identify the right person to review your program and its student success.

Timeline for Selection of an External Reviewer

In the Spring semester prior to submitting the six-year program review report, the department chairs are responsible for identifying 3-4 qualified reviewers and submitting the list of eligible candidates to the Dean of Curriculum and Educational Effectiveness by April 1 using the External Reviewer Request and Authorization Form.

Selection/Qualifications of External Reviewers

When submitting external reviewer recommendations, please ascertain whether they meet the following criteria:

- possess the appropriate terminal degree
- have substantial teaching experience at the college level
- have experience with program administration
- have experience with assessment of student learning outcomes, program review, and accreditation.

It would be helpful if the external reviewer:

- has worked at a campus similar to Westmont
- is familiar with Westmont's mission and purpose
- is familiar with WSCUC accreditation requirements and standards.

To ensure a truly external perspective, the department should avoid reviewers with 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, and having children currently enrolled at Westmont. In any case, all relationships between a proposed reviewer and the department faculty and staff should be noted in the recommendations.

The Dean of Curriculum and Educational Effectiveness will contact potential candidates to verify their availability and suitability and, with the Provost, make the final determination of which external reviewer is selected from the department's recommendations list.

Compensation for an External Reviewer's Expenses

Compensation for an external reviewer's expenses is determined by the Provost Office. Once a reviewer is selected and approved, the Provost Office manages the necessary paperwork.
For his or her participation in the program review process, the Provost Office will provide each reviewer with an honorarium and reimbursement for local travel. If a candidate is not local, the department chair and Provost will have a discussion regarding resources to support the site visit. The Provost Office will also reimburse the department for the faculty dinner with their external reviewer. This will be coordinated with the Provost Office approval.

Program Review Materials

The Dean will send the following documents to the External Reviewer at least four weeks before his/her visit:
- six-year program review report with all appendices;
- links to the departmental website with the information about the program, departmental faculty, program mission statement and goals, learning opportunities for students, PLOs, Multi-Year Assessment Plan and Curriculum Map;
- evidence of student learning and other appropriate artifacts:
- link to the College Catalog for course descriptions;
- link to the Campus Map.

Site Visit

During an External Reviewer's visit to campus, he/she may choose to verify materials referenced by the program and to interview faculty, students, and administrators in order to obtain the most accurate information. Campus visits should be scheduled approximately six weeks after the Reviewer receives the six-year report and other relevant materials, typically in October or November. Campus visits should not exceed two days. The Department Chair, Program Review Team Leader and Senior Assistant to the Provost will collaborate on constructing the site visit schedule. As a rule, the External Reviewer's site visit begins and ends with a program review team meeting with the Provost and Dean of Curriculum and Educational Effectiveness.

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

- submitting the six-year program review report and all relevant or requested materials in a timely manner;
- collaborating with the Program Review Team Leader and the Provost Office on constructing the site visit schedule. Please refrain from scheduling the external reviewer's meeting with the Provost during standing E-team meetings or [Trustees' activities.](#) The PRC asks all departments to prioritize scheduling with the Provost Office Administrative Assistant.
- designating a private, secure office/workspace for the External Reviewer to use during his or her site visit;

- scheduling rooms for all program review team's discussions with students, alumni, faculty, staff, and administrators and providing the Provost Office with a site visit schedule; and
- informing the program's students, staff and faculty about the site visit and preparing them to participate in individual meetings and group discussions with the External Reviewer. We recommend scheduling the External Reviewer's meetings with individual faculty members, including faculty from other departments if your departments serve them, and lab coordinators; meetings or focus groups with your major students; classroom observations; and other activities that will help your External Reviewer to better understand the strengths and challenges of your program.

Program Review Committee's Evaluation of Six-Year Reports:

Each six-year report will be evaluated by a team of three members who will co-write a single response in conjunction with the External Reviewer. The program review team typically consists of one faculty and one staff PRC members and an External Reviewer for the program. External Reviewers will be identified and confirmed by the end of the spring semester preceding the six-year report submission. If the department under review is accredited by an external agency (such as NASM or CTC), the Dean of Curriculum and Educational Effectiveness will serve on the team instead of an External Reviewer. For all teams, the Dean will coordinate program review schedules, contract External Reviewers, and work with Team Leaders on schedule construction, compiling lines of inquiry, site visit logistics, and finalizing the team report. The framework for the team analysis is the college's standards of the six-year report evaluation and guild standards of the discipline.

The Role of the Team Leader

A faculty or staff member of the PRC will serve as the Team Leader. The Team Leader will:

- work with the Department Chair, External Reviewer, and Provost Office to construct the site visit schedule;
- set the date for the program review team worksheet submission;
- schedule conference calls with all team members prior to the External Reviewer's site visit to review the combined PR Team Worksheet and identify further lines of inquiry;
- assign which response sections each team member will be responsible for writing;
- provide support and information for an External Reviewer as needed;

- compile sections of the program review report written by team members into a single document according to the Program Review Team's Response to Six-Year Report and submit it to the Dean; and
- participate in the External Reviewer's exit meeting with the Provost and Dean, and
- participate in the departmental program review meeting with the Provost and Dean.

The Role of the Team Member

Members of the program review team work together to create an effective and thorough review of the program and its six-year report. Every team member:

- reads the six-year report in its entirety;
- completes and submits the Program Review Team Worksheet by the due date;
- participates in the team's conference calls organized by the Team Leader;
- develops and submits appropriate lines of inquiry prior to the site visit;
- if possible, attends the External Reviewer's exit meeting with the Provost and Dean;
- completes and submits assigned sections of the team response within four weeks of the site visit; and
- promptly revises and provides feedback on the final draft of the program review team's report.

The program review team member may participate in the departmental program review meeting with the Provost and Dean.

The Role of the External Reviewer

External Reviewers are utilized after the six-year program review report has been written and filed. They serve as members of the program review team assigned to the department under review. Their contribution to the program review team's report focuses on insights from the six-year program review report, other relevant documents, and site visit evidence. It also includes recommendations from the perspective of an expert in the program's discipline. The External Reviewer will use the criteria from the Program Review Team's Response to Six-Year Report and Site Visit template as the base for his/her submission to the report.

External Reviewers participate in all activities pertinent to the program review process. Specifically, they:

- read the program review report in its entirety and provides their responses in the "Worksheet" document;
- participate in a conference call (approx. 1.5 hours) with their fellow PRC Team members prior to the site visit to review and discuss the compilation document of the "Team Worksheet;"
- participate in all assigned meetings designated in the site visit schedule;
- write and submit designated report portions as assigned by the Team Leader based on the Program Review Team's Response to Six-Year Report and Site Visit template,

additional documents, and site visit observations by the deadline agreed upon with his or her team members;

- review and comment or approve the final draft of the PRC report in a timely manner before submission of the report to the department.

Upon consultation with a Team Leader and the Dean, an External Reviewer may request additional materials [1] from a program before or during his/her site visit in order to:

- review curricular offerings for relevance, currency, and quality;
- review the appropriateness and effectiveness of strategies used to assess student learning and program outcomes;
- ensure decisions and actions taken by the department/program, based on assessment, are in keeping with best practices in the academic discipline;
- evaluate the quality of faculty teaching and breadth of faculty scholarly activities and accomplishments;
- evaluate the program's effectiveness at recruiting and retaining successful students and faculty;
- provide an evidence-based analysis of the program's strengths and areas in need of improvement relative to comparable programs.

The department will take the program review team's report into consideration while developing their Action Plan and Multi-Year Assessment Plan and articulating their Key Questions for the next program review cycle.

If department faculty disagree with the program review team's evaluation of the program or their recommendations, the faculty may submit a formal written response to the program review team's report, which will be considered at the department faculty meeting with the Provost and the Dean of Curriculum and Educational Effectiveness.

Program Review Team's Report Template

The following template is used program review teams for providing response to the six-year program review report and external reviewer's site visit. All team members contribute to the team's report also seek the input of the Dean of Curriculum and Educational Effectiveness and Vice President for Administration and for Research, Planning and Implementation and WSCUC ALO.

Westmont College _____ Department
Team members:
Date:

Introduction to be written by Westmont team member.

I. Previous Program Review Committee Recommendations and Action Plan

- **Small section addressed by Westmont team member**

This section comments on how completely the report addresses all items that were previously identified.

II. Evidence and Analysis of Student Learning

- **Section addressed by Westmont team member; External Reviewer's remarks welcome**

This section may elaborate whether the criteria and standards of achievement for the PLOs adequately match disciplinary/professional standards; whether student achievement is adequate for the degree and discipline/profession; whether assessment methods are effective; whether closing the loop activities have been identified and implemented; and whether assessment practices are yielding the needed information to determine how well students are learning the PLOs. Relevant suggestions and recommendations are welcomed.

III. Alumni Satisfaction

- **Section addressed by Westmont team member: External Reviewer's remarks welcome.**

This section may include comments on the alumni survey questions, interpretation of the alumni survey results, and on how data will be used for program improvement. We would like to hear comments whether alumni are well-prepared for careers in their chosen majors and the life after college.

IV. Major, Curriculum and Co-curricular Offerings

- **Section addressed by External Reviewer**

This section may address whether the current curriculum *content* and *design* (required depth and breadth of study, flow of courses, frequency of course offerings, overall coherence, alignment with desired learning outcomes, etc.) are appropriate to the level and purpose of the

program and enable students to develop the skills, as well as attain the outcomes needed for graduates of this program.

It would be helpful for us to learn whether students/alumni are satisfied with the overall quality of their learning experience; that they are adequately supported through the curriculum, advising and student support services to ensure their learning success; that the program provides adequate opportunities for internships, practice, professional development, and/or field experiences, as appropriate.

V. Program Sustainability and Adaptability

- **Section addressed by External Reviewer**

This section may outline the major strengths and weaknesses of the program. We would like to hear whether

faculty specialties correspond to program needs and to the concentrations in which they teach and whether faculty are adequately supported and engaged in ongoing professional development.

It would be helpful for us to know whether he program has accurately identified and prioritized the program's most pressing resource needs; whether the program's student recruitment and retention processes are adequate; whether the program has adequate administrative and technical support (e.g., administrative assistant; laboratory coordinator; laboratory manager) and whether overall program administration is efficient, effective and meets professional standards. The section may include comments on whether the program demonstrates a commitment to diversity in its curriculum, as well as a commitment to diversity in its student and faculty composition.

We would also like to hear whether the facilities (e.g., classrooms, laboratory sizes and spaces) are adequate to support teaching and faculty and student research and whether the existing equipment is adequate to support teaching and research goals of faculty and students.

Finally, we would like to hear about national trends and projections for enrollment in the program and what may constitute a thoughtful and appropriate response to external and/or internal challenges and opportunities. We would like to hear what goals you would suggest the program set for the next six years (please list in order of priority, the most important goal first) and how these goals comport with those identified in the most current six-year report. We would like to know what goals would require additional resources and what level of resources these goals would require. How might the program secure these resources? Considering budget constraints, what are the most realistic and important strategies the program can use to achieve the highest priority goals?

VI. Contribution to Diversity

- **Section addressed by Westmont team member; External Reviewer's remarks welcome**

This section documents various activities (i.e., revising course syllabi so that they r**epresent a diverse set of perspectives and experiences;** participating in diversity reading groups and colloquia; mentoring students of color and female students; recruiting and supporting female

colleagues and faculty of color) aimed at strengthening diversity and inclusiveness in the department and at Westmont.

VII. Other Observations

- **Appropriate place for External Reviewer (and Westmont team member) to mention anything else that doesn't quite fit in previous sections**

This section may include comments on the departmental website; faculty dynamics and cohesiveness; library resources, etc.

VII. Completeness and Rigor

- **Small section addressed by Westmont team member**

We would like to hear whether the six-year report is clear, well-written, and complete (all required sections are included, required attachments are attached, and the Inventory of Educational Effectiveness Indicators clearly and convincingly demonstrates how faculty expectations for student learning align with student performance).

VIII. Recommendations

- **Section addressed by both External Reviewer and Westmont team members. Can be bulleted or numbered.**