

# INSTRUCTIONS—GRADUATE PROGRAMS ONLY

## ALL GRADUATE PROGRAMS—EXTERNAL REVIEWS

**Review of Graduate Certificates.** Reviews are not required for graduate certificates when the majority of courses are currently part of a master's degree.

One external review is required when a stand-alone certificate with new courses is proposed, or when unforeseen circumstances arise that require a review. It is not necessary for the university to conduct this external review. When necessary, this review will be arranged by the office of the chancellor and conducted by a member of the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities Graduate Council or an expert from outside the state. A site visit to the university by a reviewer is not required.

**Review of Master's Proposals.** Master's program proposals require two reviews. (1) The first review must be conducted by consultants from outside the state of Minnesota. The reviewer is proposed by the university and approved by staff of the office of the chancellor. The cost of this review is borne by the university. Preference should be given to representatives of the profession or professional accrediting bodies, individuals knowledgeable in the program area proposed, and/or individuals experienced in assessing institutional capacity to deliver graduate level programming. The reviewer's report, addressing all program approval criteria outlined in the New Program Application, becomes part of the application. (2) An anonymous second review, by the office of the chancellor, will be conducted by a member of the Graduate Council or an external reviewer.

**Review of Doctorate Proposals.** Doctoral program proposals require a total of three reviews: (1) Two "on-site" reviews by consultants from outside the State of Minnesota. The reviewers are proposed by the university and approved by staff of the office of the chancellor. Preference should be given to representatives of the profession or professional accrediting bodies, individuals knowledgeable regarding the proposed program area, and/or individuals experienced in assessing institutional capacity to deliver graduate level programming. The cost of these reviews is borne by the university. For a university's first proposed doctoral level program, the office of the chancellor strongly recommends selection of individuals with experience as consultant evaluators for the Higher Learning Commission. The consultants shall make independent assessments and submit separate reports to the university. Their reports, addressing all program approval criteria outlined in the New Program Application, become part of the application. (2) An anonymous external desk review arranged by the office of the chancellor. A summary of the report from the anonymous reviewer will be shared with the university.

## DOCTORAL PROGRAM INSTITUTIONAL READINESS

**Evidence of Organization of Graduate Education.** A discussion of the university governance structure should include

- Focused and effective leadership in graduate studies as demonstrated by a designated administrator with appropriate authority and resources, graduate council and a separate graduate-level curriculum recommendation process
- Policies for graduate faculty status appropriate for doctoral level studies
- Supporting policies regarding admissions, students' academic performance, supervision of graduate students, and associated policies and procedures appropriate for doctoral studies.

**Evidence of Institutional Capacity to Deliver Doctoral Level Education.** This section should also include a broad discussion of institutional capacity and impact of degree beyond the program offering the degree. It will include

- Description of the institution's quality assurance processes
- Discussion of relationship with the professional field of study and related fields to assess the need for and acceptance of the program
- Discussion of the financial impact on the institution and the institution-wide planning undertaken to support the program
- Discussion of appropriate committee responsibilities for graduate education,
- Discussion of the capacity to support staff dissertation and capstone committees (within the department offering the degree, and other departmental faculty who might serve on committees).

Identification of other support and consultation needs (such as support for student research design and computer time, etc.), graduate student advising, and student support services.

### **DOCTORAL PROGRAM—GUIDELINES FOR THIRD YEAR REVIEW OF NEW PROGRAMS**

**Documentation of need for the review.** Chancellor's Procedure 3.36.1, Part 7, Subpart B specifies that "all new doctoral programs must be reviewed at the end of the first three years of operation and a report submitted to the chancellor. Elements to be reviewed include:

- outcomes for goals and objectives described in the application,
- achievement of specialized accreditation if required for operation,
- enrollment levels and resources for sustainability,
- unanticipated problems or developments, and
- plans for improvement."

In addition, applications for new doctoral programs require a plan for assessing the progress and achievements of the proposed program after its initial three years.

**Purpose of the review.** The third-year review would be a formative assessment that would serve the purpose of providing information that could be used to a) identify strengths and weaknesses of the program, b) alert university faculty and administrators to emerging problems and issues, c) improve the program, and d) advise the Office of the Chancellor regarding the development and viability of the program.

**Characteristics of the review.** At the end of the third year of program operation, a university offering a new doctoral program would conduct a review, based on a self-study that addresses a) the questions specified in Procedure 3.36.1, and b) the plans for the third-year review that were submitted with the initial program application. The university also may include other questions that may be raised on campus, e.g., "How well is the program working?" "Can faculty support the research expectations?" "What is the demand for the program?"

- Other than the questions identified in Procedure 3.36.1, the Office of the Chancellor will not pose additional items for the review. However, it is expected that the university will address any items that were identified in the assessment plan submitted with the new program application. Institutional self-study materials prepared for the Higher Learning Commission or program accreditation organizations may be submitted to the Office of the Chancellor in lieu of a separate report or as part of the review report.
- The report of the third-year review shall be submitted to the Office of the Chancellor within twelve months after the end of the third year of program operation. After receiving the

report, staff from the Office of the Chancellor will meet with university representatives to discuss the findings.