Guidelines: Administrative Review for Units Designed to Promote Student Learning and Development

Last Revised April 2017

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Introduction

In 2009, FIT initiated a program to assess administrative units through a comprehensive self-study and external review process. This administrative review process was developed in order to:

- create an institutional culture that embraces continuous process improvement and best practices;
- comply with the Middle States Commission on Higher Education's mandate to develop a comprehensive program of assessment of institutional effectiveness; and
- provide managers and staff the opportunity to review operations and services, assess effectiveness, and develop improvement plans.

The following document describes the components of the administrative review process. This set of guidelines has been adapted for administrative units that are designed to promote student learning and development and significantly enhance student learning. These guidelines are reviewed and revised each year based on feedback from participants. These guidelines are in effect for all reviews starting in January 2017 and thereafter.

At a minimum, each administrative unit is required to undertake at least one review over a seven-year cycle.

The Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness welcomes comments, as this process continues to be refined to better achieve the goals of the College's institutional effectiveness program.

Dr. Darrell E. Glenn, Assistant Dean of Institutional Research and Effectiveness
Fashion Institute of Technology
333 7th Avenue, 16th Floor, Room 14
New York, NY 10001
Office: 212-217-4075
Darrell_Glenn@fitnyc.edu

Dr. Carolyn Comiskey, Executive Director of Assessment
Fashion Institute of Technology
333 7th Avenue, 16th Floor, Room 17
New York, NY 10001
Office: 212-217-3596
Carolyn_Comiskey@fitnyc.edu

Administrative Review Guidelines Overview

Administrative review consists of three phases:

Phase 1 - a unit self-study,

Phase 2 - a review conducted by professionals external to the College who understand the unit's functions, and

Phase 3 - a Use of Results process, which provides an opportunity for the unit's representatives, the respective Vice President, and staff from the Division of Strategic Planning and Institutional Effectiveness to consider all of the information gathered during the review process and develop an action plan that will be used to improve operations as well as for future planning and decision-making.

An outline of the components of the self-study is provided below, followed by detailed instructions for completing the review.

Phase 1 - Self-study

Unit profile:

a. Mission, stakeholders, history, description of services, future directions, and resources
b. Unit functions, student learning and development outcomes, and assessment approaches
c. Assessing key functions and student learning and development outcomes
d. Pulling it all together – Conducting a SWOT analysis
e. Specific areas to be addressed by external reviewers
f. Preliminary action plan
g. Appendices

Phase 2 - External Review

a. Selection of reviewers
b. Reviewer tasks
c. Site visit
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f. Revisions to action plan (if warranted)
g. Reviewers' Scope of Work document

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a. Distribution of materials
b. Wrap-up/Action Plan meeting
c. Final action plan

Phase 1: Instructions for Completing the Self-Study

a. Unit profile

The unit profile provides essential background information and describes the unit to those who are not familiar with it. Among the first readers of the profile will be the external reviewers who are engaged to review the unit's self-study and conduct a site visit.

Keeping the purpose of the profile in mind, describe the unit in the context of its mission, stakeholders, history, services provided, future direction, and resources.

Mission

State the unit's mission, as approved by the appropriate divisional Vice President.

Please briefly explain how it links to the College's mission (fitnyc.edu/mission), the divisional mission and the strategic plan (fitnyc.edu/strategic plan). Further information on writing a mission statement can be found in **Attachment 1**. Units covered by the CAS Professional Standards, particularly those located in Enrollment Management and Student Success, may want to refer to these standards in creating the mission statement.

Stakeholders

Using the chart below, identify the primary stakeholders served by the unit, listing no more than 12. Stakeholders are parties that are directly affected by the unit's operations, having a "stake" in its performance. Internal stakeholders and those external to FIT should be listed in the first column. In the column to the right of the stakeholder, briefly note the connection between the stakeholder and the unit.

For example, the Purchasing Office's stakeholders include:

- vendors who are external stakeholders who bid on RFPS issued through the Purchasing Office and/or seek business from FIT through other means.
- FIT departments are internal stakeholders who rely on the Purchasing Office to procure items and/or services.

Stakeholders	Connection Between Stakeholder and Unit
Internal	
External	

(add additional rows as needed)

If the ability of the unit to operate effectively relies strongly on other support services, programs, and/or administrative units, briefly discuss how these relationships impact the unit's operations.

Unit history

In the review process, it is helpful to understand the unit's history and how it has evolved over the past five to ten years. Briefly discuss significant events that have affected the unit's operations. These could include mergers, expansions, and notable changes in mission or operating methods. Please note that information technology should not be addressed in this section. The use of technology should be described the Resources/Information Technology section on Page 5.

Narrative description of services

Provide a brief narrative describing the core services provided by the administrative unit. If you were an external reviewer, what information and relevant data about the unit would you need in order to evaluate it? For example, a reviewer for the Academic Advising Center might want an overview of how students make appointments, information on the advisor caseload, and to know whether visits to academic advisors are required, etc. A reviewer for Human Resources might want a description of how new positions are approved and information on how many new hires are processed each year. In an appendix to the self-study, attach any up-to-date procedure manuals or other process documentation that would assist the reviewers in providing feedback. Units that follow the CAS Professional Standards for Higher Education may want to refer to the standards for guidance on what information external reviewers may find relevant.

Future Vision and Planned Initiatives

Outline the aspirational vision for the unit as well as any future initiatives that have been planned and/or are in beginning stages of implementation. Where does the unit see itself in five years?

Resources (staffing, specialized skills, budget, facilities and equipment, and technology)

Staffing

Current staff

Describe where the unit resides within the College's organizational structure. Provide the most current unit organization chart. List all staff members and include the following information for each:

- Employee name
- Classification (full- or part-time)
- Title
- Number of years working in the unit
- Area of specialization or expertise (if applicable)

Provide position descriptions for each employee in an appendix.

Specialized skills
Describe the expertise or specialized skills of current staff members and discuss whether these meet all of the unit's needs. Discuss the staff's mix of knowledge, experience, and disciplines and whether any improvements in these areas are recommended.

Vacancies and/or future lines
Identify any vacant positions and, if applicable, potential hiring or reorganization plans.

Succession planning and cross-training
Evaluate the unit's exposure to risks associated with staff and management turnover. Does the unit have critical, complex functions (which might be less than completely documented) that only one or two staff can perform?

Report on how the risks arising from the potential turnover of critical staff are mitigated or managed.

Facilities and Equipment
List the equipment and facilities currently used by the unit, noting any specialized features. Discuss how well they meet the unit's needs. Discuss long-term space requirements and any need for proximity to other departments. Describe how these needs have been addressed in the College's Master Plan.

Information technology
- List software packages utilized by the unit (e.g., Banner, Hyperion) and describe how the software is used to support the unit's major function(s).
- Discuss how the utilization of information technology (e.g., hardware, software, operating and application systems, networks) has changed and/or improved the quality of the unit's services in recent years.
- Evaluate the unit's use of technology. What is working well and what could use some improvement?

Budget
Report on the total budget for the unit in the most recent fiscal year. This should include operating dollars broken out by Personal Services (PS) and Other than Personal Services (OTPS) as well as any restricted accounts managed by the unit. Discuss the sufficiency of the budget to meet the unit's operational needs.

b. Unit functions, student learning and development outcomes, and assessment approaches

Units that offer services to students and also aim to promote student learning and development must consider their effectiveness in two ways that are related but distinct. Historically, units assessed their programs and services by evaluating students' participation in and satisfaction with these programs and services. However, this type of assessment did not directly address student learning and development. Knowing the number of students that participated in an activity and whether they liked it did not demonstrate how the activity contributed to student learning or development. It is now recognized that it is also important to gather evidence on how programs and services contribute to students' learning, which requires different assessment questions and methods. For example, in addition to reporting, "How many students participated in the campus-wide event?", a unit should also examine, "What did students learn by participating in the campus-wide event?"

As the first step in in thinking about assessment of effectiveness, units identify the **key functions**, which is a list of the most important functions that the unit performs in order to fulfill its mission. In order to capture the effect of the unit upon student learning, the unit will also articulate **Student Learning and Development Outcomes** for the unit, or for programs within the unit. **SLDOs** articulate the knowledge, skills, competencies, developmental changes, or attitudes that students are expected to gain through a particular educational experience, including co-curricular, extra-curricular, and student support activities. Units in student services may align these SLDOs with the student learning and development domains defined in the CAS standards, if relevant. **Attachment 1** provides resources for identifying key functions and for writing and assessing SLDOs, along with examples.

In the first chart, units identify the most important functions that the unit performs in order to fulfill its mission. For each function, identify the kinds of data or other information regularly collected to assess the unit's performance of the function and the perceptions and attitudes of the unit's clients. In addition, list the key performance indicators (KPIs) that **could** be used to assess how well the unit is performing each core function, and indicate whether the data is currently collected for each. These indicators should be specific, measurable metrics from which you can assess if the function is performed successfully. They may relate to the quality of service, the quantity or volume of service, or other aspects of effectiveness. More information on identifying functions and selecting assessment approaches can be found in **Attachment 1**.

A few examples are below:

Key Functions	**Assessment Approach/Performance Indicators and Status**
Providing students with disabilities with access for curriculum and co-curricular activities (Office of Disability Services)	Track number of students requesting accommodations (currently collected), when they completed the intake process, and when they received their accommodations letters. (potential method)
Manage the administration of student, staff, and faculty surveys within the IRE office and coordinate surveys undertaken by other offices campus-wide. (Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness)	Monitor and report on response rates for NSSE, SOS, Alumni Survey, and ad hoc surveys; count of surveys and number of students surveyed.(Currently collected)
Introduce students to the resources and support services available at FIT (Orientation)	Track attendance at all orientation sessions and determine percent of students participating.(Currently collected)
Support students who take online, blended, or Web-enhanced face-to-face courses	Track visits to student support pages on website. (Potential method) Monitor annually the number of students who receive help from the office and from the helpdesk by counting resolved tickets. Report on the number of students met with in person and by phone each year. (Currently collected)

In the chart below, list the Student Learning and Development Outcomes for the unit. As with the chart above, there is an "assessment approaches" column. In this column, identify the information regularly collected as well as possible approaches that could be implemented in the future, and indicate the current status.

Student Learning and Development Outcomes	**Assessment Approach/ Current Status**
After attending orientation, students will be able to identify academic resources and student support services available to them.	Results of quiz given at end of orientation on resources and services (not currently implemented); student self-report in survey (currently implemented)
Students participating in the career services workshop will be able to design an effective job search strategy based on interests, skills, values, and job market trends.	Student self-report in survey (currently implemented); student job search strategy forms, evaluated by counselor using rubric (not currently implemented).

c. Assessing Key Functions and Student Learning and Development Outcomes

The next step in the review process is to present and discuss data/metrics and assessment results that are on hand, and to work closely with the Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness to design additional assessment, data collection, and analysis activities. In this section, summarize evidence collected since the last review and design and conduct any additional assessments needed in order to fully evaluate the unit's performance of its functions. Conduct an analysis of this information to assess the unit's strengths and weaknesses in terms of carrying out its core functions and in supporting student learning.

Presentation of Past Assessments and Findings

Using the chart below, list all assessment and data collection activities related to effectiveness in performing the key functions completed during the last five years, prior to this self-study. Assessment information gathered and analyzed for this self-study will be discussed further on. Indicate how the results of these activities have been used to inform decision making and/or effect improvements or changes in operations. How has the unit assessed the student learning fostered by its activities? Enter a description of the methods used, the functions or SLDOs assessed, a brief summary of findings, and a brief notation of improvements or changes made as a result. The unit may go into more depth regarding findings, analysis, and changes below the chart.

Assessments of Key Functions:				
Metrics/Data or Other Assessment Activity	**Year Implemented**	**Functions Assessed**	**Findings (in brief)**	**Improvements or Changes Made as a Result (if applicable)**

(add additional rows if necessary)

Assessments of Student Learning:				
Assessment Evidence Collected	**Year Implemented**	**SLDOs assessed**	**Findings (in brief)**	**Improvements or Changes Made as a Result (if applicable)**

(add additional rows if necessary)

Please go into more depth if important information cannot be succinctly captured in the charts.

Assessments Conducted for Self-Study: Presentation of Results and Analysis

The self-study process is an opportune time to develop additional assessment measures and to gather additional data to ensure that the unit has robust evidence about its effectiveness, both in terms of key functions and student achievement of SLDOs. Units should work closely with the Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness to identify and design additional assessment methods, and /or collect relevant data. Regarding the unit's key functions, in what areas is more information required in order to assess effectiveness? In terms of student learning, what questions does the unit have about its impact upon student learning that could be gathered through additional assessment?

List the assessments conducted here; below the table, the findings should be discussed.

Functions	Describe the assessments that have been conducted and/or additional data that has been collected and/or analyzed to assess Key Functions. Be sure to include details necessary to understand the assessment methodology, such as time frame, number of people surveyed, etc.

(add additional rows if necessary)

SLDOs	Describe the assessments that have been conducted to assess SLDOs. Be sure to include details necessary to understand the assessment methodology, such as time frame, number of people surveyed, etc.

(add additional rows if necessary)

Prepare a summary of the results and an analysis of their meaning for the unit's operations, or in terms of student learning, for each assessment.

Future Assessment/Data Collection for Key Functions and Assessment of Student Learning:
How will the unit regularly assess its effectiveness, both in terms of key functions and in terms of student learning? What kinds of data will regularly be collected to provide the unit with the information related to its effectiveness and the perceptions and attitudes of the users of the unit's services?

Using the chart below, provide brief descriptions of the assessment method, including relevant details. For example, if a function will be assessed by determining the satisfaction of users, "survey" is not a detailed enough description of an assessment approach. "Survey administrators and staff who received services provided by the department in the prior year to gather information on the timeliness and perceived quality of the work done" is closer to the mark.

Key Function	**Assessment Method**	**Frequency/Schedule**
SLDOs	**Assessment Method**	**Frequency/Schedule**

(add additional rows if necessary)

d. Pulling it all together: Conducting a SWOT analysis

At this point in the review process, a wide variety of information has been compiled. The next step is to analyze this information and present it in a way that can help formulate an action plan for improvement. A SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis is one method of accomplishing this. In a SWOT analysis, the available information is placed into four categories. Aspects of the unit's internal operations can be classified as strengths or weaknesses and aspects of the external environment can be classified as opportunities or threats. The primary purpose of this part of the review is to understand these internal and external factors and to begin developing strategies to effect improvement or mitigate problems. Units that use the CAS standards, or other standards relevant to the area (such as NACADA for academic advising or Quality Matters for online learning), may want to refer to the standards in thinking about the SWOT analysis.

Please answer the following questions as part of this analysis:

- What are the unit's <u>strengths</u> that contribute to fulfilling its mission and/or performing its functions?
- What are the unit's <u>weaknesses</u> that inhibit it from fulfilling its mission and/or performing its functions?
- What are the external <u>opportunities</u> that the unit might benefit from in the short and long term?
- What are the external <u>threats</u> that might make the unit's mission difficult to fulfill going forward?

A detailed guide to conducting a SWOT analysis is available as Attachment 2.

e. Specific areas to be Addressed by External Reviewers

In Phase 2 of this review, external reviewers will be engaged to evaluate the unit's operations and prepare a report with recommendations for possible improvements. Reviewers will be sent a scope of work that describes the areas they should address in their report. Details on the scope of work can be found on page 14. If external reviewers should use CAS or other standards in the review, please discuss how reviewers should make use of those standards here.

List any specific questions or issues outside of the general scope of work that the reviewers should address during their visit.

f. Preliminary Action Plan

Using the chart on page 10, develop a preliminary action plan based on all of the information gathered in the unit profile, the assessment process, and the analysis of the results of the SWOT analysis. Identify areas to focus on for continuous improvement in order to fulfill the unit's mission and perform key functions. In the preliminary action plan, list the initiatives proposed in the next 3 to 4 years, considering budgetary impact. Outline steps for implementation, and consider potential obstacles. Ultimately, all actions should relate to the unit's key functions, and the action plan should map this relationship. At this point, the action plan reflects only preliminary ideas since reviewers' input, as well as feedback from the unit's vice president, are required before making final decisions. Include any actions/initiatives already planned or recently implemented.

Action Steps	**Action Status** New as a result of self-study; currently planned; recently implemented	**Connection to Key Function or SLDO:** List the key functions that this action step supports.	**Budgetary Impact** List items requiring additional resources	**Implementation Plan and Timeline**	**Potential Obstacles or Other Factors to Consider**

(add rows as necessary)

After the site visit has taken place and the report has been received from the external reviewers, a meeting will be scheduled with the unit vice president and staff from the Division of Strategic Planning and Institutional Effectiveness to determine final action steps. At that point, a final action plan will be developed that includes specific information about responsible personnel, an implementation schedule, and plans for assessing changes.

The final action plan should be a "stand alone" document that can be used to explain why a particular course of action is warranted. Components of the action plan include:

- A summary of key findings;
- Identification of areas where improvements are needed;
- Description of actions that can be taken to effect the desired improvements, or that are already planned or recently implemented to address these issues.

The plan should be viewed as a framework for ongoing assessment, and some thought should be undertaken about how to measure the impact of the actions in the plan.

g. Appendices

Please include appendices, as applicable, that you believe will contribute significantly to the understanding of your unit and its operations. For example, organizational charts (illustrating how your unit aligns with the College's overall organizational structure), major process flow charts, policies/procedures (provide links if policies are available online).

Phase 2: The External Review

Early into the self-study process, efforts should begin to secure external reviewers. Reviewers are professionals with expertise in the unit's area(s), but who have no meaningful prior relationship with the unit.

External reviewers must be carefully chosen. Suggested reviewers may be eliminated from consideration either for lack of expertise or a close relationship with the unit head or any staff members. No financial relationship can exist between an external reviewer and the College. External reviewers can be professionally known by unit members, but personal associations will result in disqualification.

The reviewers will be asked to provide evaluative feedback regarding alignment of the self-study with the unit's action plan and areas needing strengthening or improvement. Obtaining professional insights from those external to the College can yield multiple benefits. External reviewers can be objective about the unit's strengths and weaknesses and can provide valuable insight into the effects of external factors and standards on the unit.

a. Selection criteria and selection process

The selection of appropriate external reviewers is key to the success of the review. Assess the external landscape and identify three to five individuals with expertise in the field who have no meaningful current relationship with personnel in the unit. At least one reviewer should have expertise in the application of the unit's work in an academic setting. The second individual may have such experience in a non-academic setting (e.g., industry professional).

Forward the names, contact information, credentials and a rationale for selecting the individuals to the Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness which will then forward the information to the unit's vice president. The vice president will select two reviewers. The Office Institutional Research and Effectiveness will ensure that the reviewers meet the guidelines set forth above, and will notify the unit of the selections.

b. Reviewer tasks

The reviewers will:

- Review self-study materials and other materials as needed;
- Conduct a site visit to meet with unit staff and stakeholders; and
- Prepare a report summarizing findings.

Components of the reviewers report include:

- Recommendations for enhancing unit efficiency and effectiveness;
- An evaluation of how well the unit's mission and functions support FIT's mission , the division's mission and the goals in the strategic plan;

- An evaluation of how well the unit’s action plan addresses the findings in the self-study; and
- An assessment of whether the unit’s recommendations are reasonable and achievable.

A complete description of what is expected in a reviewers’ report can be found in the Scope of Work section on page 14.

c. Site Visit

The purpose of the site visit is to give the reviewers a more complete view of the unit’s operations and procedures than can be provided through the self-study alone. During the site visit, the reviewers will have opportunities to gather additional information, from unit representatives and FIT constituents outside the unit.

Forward the self-study to external reviewers at least two weeks prior to the site visit. Other relevant materials may also be forwarded as needed.

In most cases, the site visit can be completed in one day. Since units vary in terms of size, structure, and physical environment, there is some flexibility in how the day is scheduled, and in terms of whether a second day is needed to complete the review. In general, the schedule should include:

- Meetings with the unit’s leadership team and those within the unit who had significant roles in producing the self-study;
- Meetings with the senior managers (vice presidents, associate vice presidents, assistant vice presidents, etc.) to whom the unit reports;
- Meetings with managers who have close interactions with the unit;
- A meeting with staff from the Division of Strategic Planning and Institutional Effectiveness;
- A tour of the offices and physical working spaces of the unit; and
- Time allotted for conferring with each other throughout the day as needed.

A sample site visit schedule is included in **Attachment 3**.

d. Reviewers’ report

Reviewers may choose to submit individual reports or a joint report. The external reviewers’ report should be completed within two weeks of the site visit and sent directly to the Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness. Upon receipt of reviewers’ report, the Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness will forward copies to the unit head and the respective Vice President. The Scope of Work supplied to the reviewers to guide their report(s) can be found at the end of this section.

e. Unit's response to reviewers' report

As stated previously, the external reviewers' report should be received within two weeks of the site visit and the next step is to review the report. This is best done by the unit head and members of the team who have participated in the process. Prepare a written response to the reviewers' report which addresses each of their observations and recommendations.

f. Revision of action plan (as needed)

Revise the unit's original action plan if necessary based on the findings in the external reviewers' report.

g. External Reviewer's Scope of Work, Administrative Unit Review

External reviewers are an essential part of FIT's administrative review process, providing independent and informed perspectives as to how a unit compares to others in the field. Reviewers evaluate and offer constructive recommendations for a unit based upon an analysis of its strengths and weaknesses. This helps ensure that FIT's administrative units meet the needs of their internal and external stakeholders and align with FIT's strategic goals.

The engagement to conduct an external review at the Fashion Institute of Technology consists of three components:

1. Review of the unit's self-study, the FIT Strategic Plan, and other materials as needed.
2. A site visit, which usually lasts a full working day, from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. However, the timing and length is flexible, depending on the unit's needs.
3. Preparation of a report (either individually or jointly with a second reviewer), to be submitted within two weeks of the site visit.

A stipend is provided to the reviewers to compensate them for the work related to review of materials, the site visit, and the preparation of the report. In addition, FIT will reimburse the reviewers for travel, lodging, and meals expenses associated with the site visit.

External Reviewer's Report:

In a report of approximately 6-9 pages, reviewers will comment upon the strengths and weaknesses of the unit, with reference to the self-study report and site visit. Reviewers may choose to write one report together, or to submit separate reports. The areas listed below should be addressed; in each area there is at least one guiding question to consider. Reviewers are encouraged to address other topics that arise during the course of their review that they see as relevant to the unit's success.

Mission, Past History, Key Functions and Processes, and Future Vision and Planned Initiatives

- Is the unit's mission clear and appropriate? Does it align with FIT's mission, the division's mission and the strategic plan and the professional standards in this field?
- Do the unit's key functions and processes align with its mission and conform to the standards of the profession/field?
- Does the unit's self-study align with what you observed in your visit to the campus and discussions with various stakeholders? Why or why not?

Resources and efficiency

- Does the unit have adequate personnel and budgetary resources to accomplish its key functions?
- Can the unit increase its effectiveness and efficiency through improved use of technology, changes in organizational structure, or increased staff training? If so, suggest how this could be accomplished.

Evaluation of self-study and assessment evidence

- Has the unit gathered sufficient assessment evidence to evaluate its operations? If not, suggest additional evidence that might be required.
- Has the unit drawn the right conclusions from the evidence presented in the self-study?

Overall Evaluation, Recommendations and Action Plan

- Please evaluate the unit in terms of best practices in the field. If there are widely accepted standards for the field, please use those as a general guide to the evaluation (no need to evaluate criteria by criteria, but keep the standards in mind). CAS standards may be relevant for many student services areas.
- Evaluate the unit's action plan. Are the recommendations supported by evidence? Are the items included reasonable and achievable?
- Please respond to any specific questions or issues for which the unit or College has asked for feedback.
- With only current resources or a modest infusion of new ones, what specific recommendations could improve the program, marginally or specifically? What recommendations do you have to help the program improve or strengthen?

We welcome other comments on topics not noted above.

Phase 3: Use of Results

The final phase of the administrative review process is closing the loop which includes:

- The distribution of all informational materials (self-study, reviewers' report, latest version of action plan) to closing the loop meeting participants and other interested parties;
- A wrap-up meeting; and
- The development of a final action plan.

Participants in the Use of Results process includes unit representatives, the respective vice president, and staff from the Division of Strategic Planning and Institutional Effectiveness.

The meeting will include a discussion of the following topics:

- the meaning and significance of the assessment results;
- the findings of the self-study and conclusions of the reviewers; and
- the actions that should be taken in light of the findings of the review process.

The wrap-up meeting should result in an agreement on the proposed outcomes and a commitment to move forward on the agreed upon action plan recommendations.

Notes will be taken during the meeting and minutes prepared by Institutional Research and Effectiveness staff. These minutes, after review by the participants, will be maintained as a record of the discussions and recommendations made during the meeting.

Unit representatives will prepare a final action plan based on the recommendations.

Note: Actions that have budgetary implications must go through the college budget planning process, with the administrative review results provided as supporting materials.

The action plan will be included with the final report and presented to the unit's vice president, who will present it to the president.

Results from the administrative review process may be used in the goal-setting and performance evaluations for senior administrators.

Administrative Review: Final Action Plan and Executive Summary

The final action plan serves as the documentation for completing the self-study and assessment process. It is posted for the College community on MyFIT, along with a brief summary of the self-study process and the findings.

Overview of Self-Study: Provide the timeline for the self-study (including dates of visit and wrap-up meeting) and reviewers' names and affiliations.
Brief Summary of Key Findings:
Overview of Action Items: Explain rationale behind selection of the agreed-upon action items.

No.	**Action Steps:** In addition to the action step, please note whether this action is: New as a result of self-study; currently planned; recently implemented	**Lead Responsibility**	**Implementation Plan with Timeline**	**Budgetary Impact.** List items requiring additional resources	**Intended Outcomes:** What observable changes are expected as a result of the action step?
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					

Note: Version published on MyFIT will only include the Action steps and Intended results; other columns will be hidden.

Attachments

1. Mission Statement, Key Functions, Assessment Methods, and Assessing Student Learning
2. SWOT Analysis Instructions
3. External Review Process
4. General Timeline for Administrative Reviews

Attachment 1—Mission Statement, Key Functions, Assessment Methods, and Student Learning Assessment

Writing a Mission Statement

A **Mission Statement** is a concise statement outlining the general purpose, functions, and principles guiding the practices of an institution, school, an academic department, or an administrative department. It is a broad statement of what the unit is, what it does and why, and for whom.

A mission statement should be no more than a few sentences in length. While it should be clear and concise, it should also be distinctive. If the name of the unit was removed, the mission statement should not be applicable to another office at FIT or elsewhere. In contrast to a vision statement, which looks to a unit's future aspirations, a mission statement clearly and concisely defines the current purpose and primary functions.

Relationship of Unit Mission Statement to College and Division Mission Statements

All units at FIT contribute to the mission of the Fashion Institute of Technology:

> FIT prepares students for professional excellence in design and business through rigorous and adaptable academic programs, experiential learning and innovative partnerships. A premier public institution in New York City, FIT fosters creativity, career focus, and a global perspective and educates its students to embrace inclusiveness, sustainability and a sense of community.

Units do not need to directly state that they support the FIT mission. Instead, the phrases and ideas used in unit mission statements will "align" with FIT's institutional mission and the division's mission by reflecting certain aspects of it. For example, some areas of student services are likely to bring in the concepts of inclusiveness and community, whereas a unit such as Career and Internship Services would emphasize the aspects of career focus and New York City partnerships. Units that support the mission but do not directly interface with students might emphasize their purpose within a public higher education institution.

Below are two examples of mission statements from offices at FIT:

Center for Excellent in Teaching:

> With the goal of improving teaching and student learning through professional development, the FIT Faculty Development Program, anchored by the Center for Excellence in Teaching, assists and supports faculty in the development, use and assessment of effective instructional and curricular strategies. The CET provides

support for innovative, educational exploration across the curriculum, and seeks to foster a community of teaching practice. CET also works collaboratively with faculty to incorporate student-centered, pedagogically-sound technology into the classroom.

Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness:

The Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness collects, manages, and analyzes data and information to support internal planning, decision-making, and accreditation activities and to meet the reporting requirements of external constituencies. The Office promotes continuous improvement by providing leadership in the periodic program review for academic programs and administrative units as well as in assessing student learning.

Mission statements should periodically be reviewed, since purpose and functions can evolve over time. If the mission is no longer stated in a way that seems accurate and relevant, it should be revised or even rewritten.

Identifying Key Functions

The purpose of the assessment component of an administrative review is for a unit to evaluate itself in terms of how well it performs its key functions and to gather information to inform action steps for improvement, if necessary. Key functions are defined as the main activities that a unit performs in order to fulfill its mission. They should not be confused with goals (as in the strategic plan) which are those things we want to accomplish.

Below is an example of a key function and associated action steps for improvement in the Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness. This demonstrates the difference between a key function and a shorter-term goal or initiative.

Key Functions	Action Step
Manage the administration of student, staff, and faculty surveys within the IRE office and coordinate surveys undertaken by other offices campus-wide.	A. Investigate new survey software as alternative to current SurveyMonkey account to identify better options
	B. Begin a campus-wide effort to improve and better manage alumni contact information to improve alumni survey response rates.

As action steps are identified, it is important to think about how to assess the success of the results. However, the assessment component of an administrative review should mainly address assessing the key functions, since this review focuses on the unit overall. What evidence can the unit compile about how well it performs its basic functions? Assessment evidence can also help units identify their strengths and weaknesses, and point to areas of improvement.

Assessment Approaches

For each key function, list the possible assessment methods for measuring or otherwise evaluating its performance. For administrative units, assessment approaches should ideally include metrics that measure volume of the unit's activities as well as assessments that are more evaluative, providing information about quality and satisfaction. The chart below provides examples of these two types of assessment evidence.

Transactional Metric	**Evaluative Assessment Measure**	**Comment**
Number of students seen at Academic Advising Center each term	*Survey of students *Focus groups with students *Metric that relates to effectiveness of advising (e.g. # of students who report advising mistake)	The number of students advised provides important information about unit workload and ability to handle its mission but does not capture whether or not students receive effective advising
Number of teaching workshops offered to instructors; number of attendees to workshops	*Survey or focus groups with attendees * Metrics relating to effectiveness of workshops (e.g. # of instructors who adopt new pedagogy, etc.)	Tracking the number of workshops and attendees is important information, but it is also necessary to try to determine whether the workshops are effective at improving instruction and are meeting faculty needs

Assessment Methods:

The information below provides additional ideas for brainstorming assessment evidence of unit effectiveness:

Adapted from Oregon State University (2006). *Assessment: A thinking person's process*, pp. 7-8, 37-41.

Type of Indicator of Success	**Definition**	**Indicators of success**
Quality	The quality of service provided by the unit	*Access*: providing approachability and ease of contact. *Communication*: listening to stakeholders and acknowledging

		comments; using easy-to-understand messaging. *Courtesy*: showing consideration, politeness, and respect. *Credibility*: maintaining honesty and trustworthiness. *Empathy*: making an effort to know and anticipate stakeholders' needs. *Security*: ensuring stakeholders' freedom from danger, doubt, or risk; confidentiality. *Tangible*: maintaining appearance of facilities, equipment, staff, and materials.
Quantity	Statistics regarding the services the unit provides and stakeholders' use of and/or satisfaction with them.	Examples include numbers of materials produced, workshops presented, or stakeholders served within a given timeframe, percentage of stakeholders satisfied with their experience.
Action	Measurable result of a unit effort.	*Application*: stakeholders demonstrate ability to access and use unit services. *Comprehension*: stakeholders demonstrate understanding of unit function(s) and policies.

These are just a few examples. Other indicators may relate to accuracy or efficiency of a unit. The Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness can work with units to determine suitable assessment approaches.

Methods of Data Collection

There are a number of ways to measure the success of a desired outcome. Below is a list of possible methods, adapted from the work of evaluation specialist Ellen Taylor-Powell.

- **Case study**: an in-depth examination of a particular service or undertaking (e.g., a specific program or stakeholder group), case studies use multiple sources of information and data-collection methods to provide as complete a picture as possible.

- **Document analysis**: the analysis and summary of existing materials (e.g., a review of a unit's communications materials).

- **Expert review**: an examination by a panel of experts in related field(s).

- **Interview**: conducted in-person or by telephone, interviews can range from tightly structured or open-ended and conversational.

- **Group assessment**: anonymous balloting, brainstorming sessions, community forums, and focus groups of stakeholders are all examples of group assessments.

- **Logs**: chronologically kept records of data and/or observations by relevant unit member(s).

- **Observation**: the collection of information through seeing and listening.

- **Photographs, slides, or videos**: any unwritten documentation that provides evidence of an outcome should be considered (e.g., before-and-after photographs of a renovated space).

- **Portfolio review**: a collection of materials encompassing the breadth and scope of an activity or program.

- **"Secret shopper"**: an anonymous evaluator of unit service(s).

- **Survey**: the collection of standardized information through structured questionnaires. Surveys may be completed on site, online, by telephone, or through mail or email.

- **Testimonials**: statements, provided by stakeholders, expressing their personal experiences with unit services.

- **Tests**: the use of established standards to assess knowledge, skill, or performance. These can include tests of unit members' understanding of policies, procedures, and specialized technology and tests of stakeholders' understanding of unit policies and procedures.

- **Unobtrusive measures**: the gathering of information without the knowledge of people in the setting (e.g., wear and tear on a mat placed in front of a display).

Assessment of Student Learning

Writing Student Learning and Development Outcomes

Student Learning and Development Outcomes are written in clear, concise statements that describe an observable achievement a participant will be able to demonstrate. SLDOs can be written at a variety of levels, such as an entire program or for a particular event. For the self-study, units should articulate SLDOs for the entire unit or for the key programs within the unit. Unit-level outcomes are supported by the events, workshop, and activities offered by the unit, in the same way that learning outcomes for academic degrees are taught through individual courses.

This simple formula can help you write an appropriate learning outcome:

Through participation in this FIT program, students will be able to
_____ACTION VERB_____ + __WHAT STUDENT WILL LEARN/HOW STUDENT WILL DEVELOP___.

As discussed below, learning outcomes should be written in explicit and observable terms.

Here are some hypothetical examples:

Through participation in the Leadership Workshop Series, students will be able to explain FIT's approach to leadership through the LEAD framework and articulate what leadership personally means to them.

Through participation in the Leadership Workshop Series, students will be able to accomplish a task in a group setting and successfully navigate challenges when working with others.

As a result of RA training and experience working in the dorms, RAs will be able to resolve conflicts in a fair and respectful manner.

FIT-ABLE, FIT's Office of Disability Services, connected its learning outcomes to CAS Domains and Dimensions. Here are a few examples:

Learning Outcomes	CAS Domain	CAS Dimensions
Students will be able to engage in reflective conversations with the FIT-ABLE office and periodically reevaluate their accommodation needs, making adjustments as required	Cognitive complexity	Reflective Thinking
Students will be able to use knowledge of other resources on campus to seek out the assistance they need	Knowledge acquisition, construction, integration and application	Connecting knowledge to other knowledge, ideas, and experiences.
Students will be able to use the database system to schedule appointments, exams, and new accommodation requests	Practical competence	Technical competence

Characteristics of Effective SLDOs:

<u>They are stated in clear terms and describe specifically what students should be able to demonstrate</u>

- *Poor:* Students will appreciate diversity of students at FIT.
- *Better:* Students will be able to explain the educational benefits of interacting with a diverse set of students at FIT, providing examples from their own educational careers.

- *Poor:* After going to the job search workshop, students will understand how to search for a job.
- *Better:* After participating in the job search workshop, students will be able to describe a job search strategy that is suitable for their field and interests.

- *Poor:* Students will demonstrate the skills needed to serve as a Resident Assistant.
- *Better:* Students will be able to organize well-attended community building events on their hall.
  - *Explanation: Learning outcomes are supposed to define exactly what it is that students will demonstrate, in terms of knowledge, skills, or personal development. It is necessary to be specific about what students will be able to do. Avoid the term "demonstrate" since it is already implied in the concept of a learning outcome.*

They are framed around the learning result and not the learning process, assignment or activities

- *Poor:* As a result of the time management workshop, students will become better at time management.
- *Poor:* Students will learn time management.
- *Poor:* Students will participate in a time management workshop.
- *Better:* Students will be able to discuss time management strategies, identify those they find most appropriate for themselves, and describe a plan to implement them.
  - *Explanation:* Avoid framing learning outcomes around "improvement" or around the learning activity; instead, state what students will be able to do.

They can be reasonably observed and measured.

- One advantage of well-written goals is that they help guide the choice of assessment methods. In the "poor" examples above, it would be difficult to determine how to assess whether a student "appreciates" diversity or "understands" how to search for a job. It is easier to determine whether a student can describe a job search strategy or can organize a successful event.

Similar types of learning can be bundled together into the same outcome if they are accomplished in the same activity and can be assessed or observed at the same time.

Choosing Action Verbs

As may be evident, choosing the appropriate verb is the most important aspect of writing an effective student learning outcome. Learning outcomes phrased with concrete verbs will help guide the choice of assessment methods. It is much easier to assess whether a student can "define" something than whether he or she "appreciates" something. There are certain verbs that are fuzzy, passive, or unobservable…and are best avoided in learning outcomes. The "SINISTER Sixteen":

Understand Appreciate Comprehend Grasp Know See Accept

Have knowledge of Be aware of Be conscious of Learn

Value Apprehend Be familiar with Perceive

Bloom's taxonomy is widely used in education as a framework for cognitive learning, and is the most frequent resource faculty turn to when constructing student learning outcomes statements. The taxonomy categorizes six levels of cognitive thought in order of increasing complexity; learning at the higher levels is dependent on having attained prerequisite knowledge and skills at lower levels. The categorization of these verbs into levels is useful to help faculty choose verbs appropriate to the educational degree and situation. While this taxonomy covers the cognitive domain, most programs will also have learning outcomes in other areas, such intrapersonal development, practical competence, and more.

Action Words for Bloom's Revised Taxonomy (Revised by Anderson and Krathwohl 2001)

Knowledge	Understand	Apply	Analyze	Evaluate	Create
define	explain	solve	analyze	reframe	design
identify	describe	apply	contrast	criticize	compose
describe	interpret	illustrate	distinguish	evaluate	create plan
list name	paraphrase	modify	separate	order	formulate
state	summarize	calculate	select	appraise	invent
match	classify	sketch	categorize	judge	hypothesize
select	compare	complete	connect	support	substitute
locate recall	differentiate	interpret	divide	compare	write
reproduce	discuss	teach	prioritize	discriminate	construct
tabulate	distinguish	administer	subdivide	recommend	integrate
enumerate	estimate	employ	survey	assess	modify
	translate	establish	conclude	choose	produce
	generalize	examine	correlate	convince	rearrange
	give examples	list	diagram	defend	rewrite
	group	predict	dissect	find errors	adapt
	order	simulate	estimate	grade	anticipate
	report		outline	measure	collaborate
				predict	devise
				rank	make
				test	negotiate
				critique	originate
				justify	propose
				persuade	reorganize

Assessment Methods for Assessing Student Learning

Assessment methods for assessing student learning generally differ from those used for assessing student effectiveness. Surveys can be used as evidence regarding student learning, as long as the questions are designed to capture what students think they've learned or how they've developed, rather than whether they were satisfied.

Assessment methods that more directly capture whether a student knows or can do something, rather than simply says he or she can, are generally more compelling. Possible tools to collect this sort of "direct" evidence include:

- Pre- and post-tests, or just post-tests
- Minute papers from activities or events
- Observations of student behaviors
- Demonstrations by students that they are able to do something (e.g. # of students who can do something)
- Evidence of changes in student behavior
- Assessment of student behavior through rubrics or checklists applied by faculty or staff
- Peer assessment of student behavior

Attachment 2--SWOT Analysis Instructions

There are a variety of ways to conduct a SWOT analysis. An approach should be adopted that fits the unit's circumstances and personnel.

A SWOT analysis is not meant to be completed by a single person, such as a director, sitting alone and documenting his or her views of the unit. It is important to consider who will add most value to this exercise and the best ways to secure their input. For example, you may want to consider representation of views from within the unit, students and/or alumni if appropriate, and other FIT departments if needed. Options for getting input include tabulation of written responses or surveys, open group discussion, and development of a "straw man" SWOT that is thrown out for reaction. The most effective mix will depend on the number of participants, their temperaments, and level of engagement in the process.

For example, a small number of well-informed, highly engaged, and equally vocal participants could do very well with an open discussion. However, in other situations it could be beneficial to gather information on participants views through an informal or formal collection process, with a summary of responses provided to the group. That summary could then provide the basis for a discussion.

As part of the SWOT analysis, use the questions listed in the section below, *Questions to Ask During a SWOT Analysis,* for guidance.

After completing the analysis, create a final, prioritized version of the SWOT analysis and list the factors in each category (S, W, O, or T) in order from highest priority to lowest. These can be prepared as a simple list or summarized as shown in the SWOT template below.

Questions to Ask During a SWOT Analysis

These are meant as guidance or starting points; there are many other questions to ask and factors specific to the unit's mission to consider.

Strengths *(internal, positive factors)*; these describe the positive attributes, tangible and intangible, internal to the unit. They are within your control.

- What do you do well?
- What internal resources that are strengths do you have? For example:
  - *Positive attributes of people*, such as knowledge, background, education, credentials, network, reputation, or skills.
  - *Tangible assets of the unit*, such as funding, effective procedures, or technology.
- Do you have strong capabilities in redesigning or improving ways of doing the unit's work?
- What other positive aspects, internal to your unit, add value or offer you an advantage in fulfilling your goals?

Weaknesses *(internal, negative factors)*; these are aspects of the unit that detract from the value you offer or place you at a competitive disadvantage. These areas need to be enhanced areas in order to fulfill the goals and mission.

- Are there sufficient staff members and/or do the staff have appropriate training, skills and attributes to carry out the work?
- Are the goals and mission of the unit unrealistic?
- Have there been incidents or negative events that have resulted in a poor reputation for the unit?
- Is the technology lacking or inappropriate in some way?

Opportunity *(external, positive factors)*; these are external attractive factors that represent reasons your unit is likely to excel. An important part of conducting this part of the SWOT analysis is an environmental scan, gathering information within FIT and in the broader community, state, nation and world.

- What opportunities exist outside of the unit or outside of FIT that you can benefit from?
- Is the perception of the unit positive?
- Has there been recent growth or other changes in the environment that create an opportunity?
- Is the opportunity ongoing, or is there just a window for it? In other words, how critical is your timing?

Threats *(external, negative factors)*; these include external factors beyond the unit's control that could place the unit's strategy, or the unit or FIT itself, at risk. The unit has no control over these, but may benefit by having contingency plans to address them if they should occur.

- What factors beyond the unit's control could place your unit or FIT at risk?
- Are there challenges created by an unfavorable trend or development that may lead to deteriorating likelihood of meeting the goals of the unit or FIT?
- What situations might threaten the unit's efforts?
- Have there been shifts in students' or others' behavior, the economy, or government regulations that could negatively affect the unit's work? Are such shifts anticipated to occur in the future?

SWOT Template

The template on the next page is designed to help in the brainstorming component of the SWOT preparation. In the self-study, list the elements in each category, along with a sentence or two that explains them.

Strengths	Weaknesses
Opportunities	**Threats**

Attachment 3. External Review Process

Section II of these Guidelines focused on the purpose and components of the external review portion of the administrative review process. This attachment focuses on the timing, logistics, and the delegation of responsibilities of the various departments involved in the external review.

Selection of reviewers

Units are strongly advised to start searching for potential external reviewers very early in the administrative review process.

As noted in the guidelines, forward names, contact information, credentials and a rationale for selecting the individuals to the Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness which will forward the information to the unit's vice president. The vice president will select two reviewers. The Office Institutional Research and Effectiveness will notify the unit of the selections. The Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness will then contact the reviewers to arrange the details of the engagement.

It is recommended that the unit contact potential reviewers to gauge their level of interest and suitability for the reviewing engagement. Units can use the External Review Scope of Work to describe the nature of the work to potential reviewers, and to inform them about FIT's reimbursement and compensation policies.

Materials to be sent to reviewers

After receiving confirmation from the reviewers that they are willing and able to undertake the review, the Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness will send the following materials to the reviewers at least one week prior to the site visit:

Unit self-study
External reviewer's Scope of Work
Link to FIT Strategic Plan on www.fitnyc.edu
Contract/payment information
Directions to campus
Agenda

Arranging the Site Visit

The agenda for the site visit will be developed jointly by the unit and the Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness. In cooperation with the unit, the Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness will schedule the meetings and other activities that will take place during the site visit.

The Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness will serve as the overall guide and time keeper during the visit, adjusting the schedule as needed.

Example of site visit schedule

Over the course of the site visit day, the reviewers will have opportunities to meet with the unit leadership team, senior managers (vice presidents, associate vice presidents, assistant vice presidents etc.) to whom the unit reports, managers who have close interactions with the unit being reviewed, and Institutional Research and Effectiveness staff. They should also have opportunities to tour the unit's offices and physical working spaces and confer with each other throughout the day as needed.

Below is an example of a site visit schedule:

8:00 am – 9:00 am	Breakfast meeting with unit leadership team
9:00 am – 9:30 am	Tour of unit offices and work spaces
9:30 am – 10:30 am	Meet with senior managers (vice presidents, associate vice presidents, assistant vice presidents etc.) to whom the unit reports
10:30 am – 12:00 pm	Meetings with customers/constituents
12:00 pm – 1:30 pm	Lunch and discussion
1:30 pm – 3:00 pm	Meet with unit
3:00 pm – 3:30 pm	Meet with Institutional Research and Effectiveness staff
3:30 pm – 4:30 pm	Reviewers' meeting

Reviewers' report

The external reviewers' report should be completed within two weeks of the site visit and sent directly to the Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness which will forward copies to the unit head and the respective vice president.

Reimbursement and compensation

Costs for the external review and site visit will be paid through the Institutional Research and Effectiveness budget; with payments being made to the reviewers after their report is received.

Attachment 4—General Timeline for Administrative Reviews

Note: Depending on the workload and circumstances in the units, administrative reviews may start at different times of the year. Typically, an administrative review will take about a year to complete. The following is an example of how a unit whose review begins in January could complete the review process over the course of a year.

In the early stages of the review process, staff from the Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness will work with the unit to create an individualized timeline for the review.

1. Administrative review schedule for the upcoming calendar year is determined. Division and unit heads are notified.	fall semester preceding the start of the review
2. Kick off meeting with staff from the Division of Strategic Planning and Effectiveness	January
3. Self-study	
a. Unit profile	January-March
b. Unit functions and assessment approaches	January-March
c. Develop (and conduct) additional assessments	April-June
d. Pulling it all together (SWOT)	July/August
e. Action Plan	September
g. Complete self-study	September
4. External Review	
a. Selection of reviewers	Begin selection process early in calendar year. Reviewers should be approved at least three months before the planned date for the site visit.
b. Site visit and report	October
c. Unit's response to external reviewers' report	November
d. Revisions to action plan	November
5. Wrap-up meeting	December