



# Graduate Program Comprehensive Review Template

*Revised January 2024*

This self-evaluation is intended for four audiences: for your own program, for your department, for the outside evaluators, and for internal use by APIC.

Please note the following formatting and submission guidelines:

1. Please submit your self-study as a single Word document, if possible.
2. Please do not submit documents as part of this report that are scanned pdf versions of other documents.
3. Please include page numbers on your report and refer to items in the addenda by page number in your narrative.
4. The written review should include contributions from all members within the program.



## Simpson College's Mission & Philosophy

**In the Spring of 2018, Simpson College began a campus-wide process to review and update the college's mission, vision and value statements.** To facilitate this important work, feedback from students, staff, faculty and alumni was sought. This process resulted in the development of themes from the community about who Simpson College is and why the vital work we do matters to our community, state, region and world. The following statements went through multiple rounds of community feedback and were approved by the Board of Trustees at their February 2020 meeting.

### **Our Mission**

Through **innovative** learning opportunities, **individual** student attention, and an unwavering commitment to **inclusive** educational access, Simpson College cultivates a diverse community of learners to lead lives of meaning and purpose.

### **Our Vision Statement**

To be nationally recognized as the quintessential liberal arts college of the Greater Des Moines area, transforming students through welcoming communities, exceptional programs, and distinctive opportunities.

### **Our Core Values**

Grounded in the liberal arts tradition and drawing from our Methodist heritage, Simpson College affirms these values as guiding principles that create our cultural foundation.

**Discovery** - We design learning opportunities in which curiosity and creativity flourish, where students venture outside their comfort zone to explore their identity and place in the world.

**Access** - We extend higher education opportunities to all types of learners, empowering students to pursue intellectual, personal, and professional growth.

**Citizenship** - We prepare students for global and local leadership through broad liberal arts education, experiential and service-learning, and civic engagement.

**Belonging** - We engender communities of radical hospitality where all are welcome and unique identities are embraced.

**Justice** - We defend the dignity and worth inherent in all human beings, creating an atmosphere where equity and inclusion are hallmarks of our community.

**Integrity** - We recognize a moral responsibility to respond to ethical challenges through our religious, secular, and spiritual identities.

*Approved by the Board of Trustees on February 7th, 2020.*



## **Our Diversity and Inclusion Statement**

We, the members of the Simpson College community, recognize as an essential component of its mission and history that Simpson College is committed to creating and maintaining a creative, diverse, just and inclusive community in which all develop their abilities to live and thrive in a complex and interconnected world. Consistent with our educational mission, we recognize ourselves as a community that respects individual identities linked to varying socio-cultural characteristics including, but not limited to: race, ethnicity, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, national origin, citizenship, first language, religious or spiritual tradition, age, functional ability, socioeconomic status, physical attributes or familial status.

Further, we recognize that diversity of identities exists in a context of differential power and privilege that we as a community must critically evaluate and engage.

At Simpson College, we strive to create a socially just world that honors the dignity and worth of each, and we seek to build a community centered on equality, mutual respect, and openness to ideas - one in which individuals value cultural and intellectual diversity and share the responsibility for creating an affirming safe and inclusive environment. We recognize that our community is most inclusive when all participate to their full capacity in the spirited, and sometimes challenging, conversations that are at the center of the College's educational mission to develop personal integrity, moral responsibility, social justice, and global citizenship.

**Title Page** (include title, date, department chair, lead author of report and contributors)

**Section I: Description of the Program’s Role within the Department and the Institution**

- A. Program’s mission statement and its relationship to the college’s mission statement
- B. Relationship between the program mission statement and the college’s strategic plan
- C. Service provided by the program to the undergraduate major and minor

**Section II: Program’s Established Goals**

- A. Please review and reevaluate the goals listed by the program in its previous review. Note what progress has been made towards these goals and identify which goals are no longer relevant.
- B. List your current program goals (e.g., increase number of students, become more involved in regional research, hold more recruiting events). Discuss how the goals will help the department meet the mission of the college, the department, and the program.

**Section III: Student Learning Objectives**

State all masters, concentrations and certificates offered by the program and the student learning objectives for them (e.g. Graduates with an M.A. in \_\_\_\_\_ will be able to...” as stated on your assessment plan).

**Section IV: Assessment**

*Please review the annual assessment reports filed by your department since your last departmental review before completing this section.*

You should discuss multi-year trends and data as part of this review. Extensive data tables, if necessary, should be placed in Addendum 1 and referred to by page number.

- A. Students in Degree Program
  - i. Provide a profile of your current students, including their educational and professional backgrounds, their geographic distribution, their reasons for entering the program, and their professional aspirations. Provide any other pertinent data as necessary.
  - ii. Describe current recruitment strategies for students.
  - iii. Describe admissions requirements and admissions procedures for current students in the master’s program.
  - iv. Provide graduation data for the last 5 years of students graduating with your degree: average time to graduation, retention rates, graduation rate within 3 years.
- B. Student Learning
  - i. Describe and evaluate the following:
  - ii. Student learning as related to the program’s goal and learning objectives
    - a. The program’s efforts to assess student learning
    - b. How the program ensures that its course offerings and content meet the unique needs of graduate students in preparing them for their profession:
      - 1. content of graduate seminars
      - 2. quality of the research experience
      - 3. productivity and professional involvement of graduate students
      - 4. professional contributions of graduates of the program

- c. the program's curriculum / resources and degree requirements compared to relevant competing institutions

## C. Closing the Loop

Describe how the department has used its collected assessment data to make curricular or other program changes to improve student learning. Discuss the extent to which you have carried out your improvement plans since the last review and the success of the improvements. Data from the final column of the SLIC assessment grid can be used as one source for this answer.

## D. Pedagogy and Effective Teaching

- i. Indicate the ways each of the faculty members in the department demonstrates effective teaching and pedagogical practices in their courses.
- ii. Explain how each student learning objective is supported by the teaching practices of the full-time and part-time faculty members of the program.
- iii. Detail how the program's faculty members engage with a wider, off-campus professional audience in order to keep current in both the content of their discipline and the best practices of teaching within their discipline (e.g., professional contacts with colleagues at other institutions, conferences, performances, workshops).

## E. Ethical and Responsible Use of Knowledge

In the context of the college's mission, evaluate the methods the program employs to ensure that students understand the ethical implications of their discipline.

## F. Alumni

- i. Describe broadly what your students do after graduation. In what ways are students applying their learning from your program in their lives after completing your program?
- ii. Provide a narrative summary of the following information about the past five years' alumni of the department.
  - a. those who have gone on to another graduate program
  - b. those who are working in the field
  - c. those who are working outside of the field
  - d. unknown
  - e. other
- iii. Please supply a table of the past five years' alumni of the department with their current status in the Addendum 1.
- iv. Please reflect on the above data. Consider questions such as, but not limited to, the following: Does the department feel its content and teaching are appropriate to where its alumni are going? Do you receive feedback from your alumni or their employers suggesting making changes to your curriculum or teaching practices? What conclusions can you draw based on the data you provide for your alumni?

## Section V: Staffing

The Higher Learning Commission provides “Institutional Policies and Procedures for Determining Faculty Qualifications” available at [https://download.hlcommission.org/FacultyGuidelines\\_OPB.pdf](https://download.hlcommission.org/FacultyGuidelines_OPB.pdf)

As noted in the document, “The factors that an institution considers as part of these policies and procedures could include but are not limited to: the achievement of academic credentials, progress toward academic credentials, equivalent experience, or some combination thereof. The institution’s obligations in this regard extend to all instructors and all other entities to which it assigns the responsibility of instruction.”

It is also noted that faculty teaching in higher education organizations should have completed a significant program of study in the discipline they will teach and/or for which they will develop curricula, with substantial coursework at least one level above that of the courses being taught or developed.

Faculty teaching in a graduate program typically hold the terminal degree determined by the discipline.

Please comment on the staffing of the graduate degree program in light of the preceding best practices.

- i. Faculty members teaching in the graduate program are generally engaged in scholarship, research and leadership in the profession for which they are preparing their graduate students. Please comment on how the programs’ faculty members are involved in such ways with the profession.
- ii. What is the supervisory structure of the master’s program? Who is responsible for supervising instructors in the program? What is the relationship of the director to the chair of the department? How are responsibilities for the decisions affecting the program divided among responsible parties within the master’s program and in the department as a whole?
- iii. Who is responsible for advising graduate students and what is the total advising load of this person or persons within the graduate and undergraduate programs?

## Section VI: Resources

- A. Evaluate how the resources at the disposal of the program are allocated to deliver the program’s curriculum. (e.g budget, dedicated classrooms, labs, or specialized equipment) In what way are resources allocated to preserve the quality of instruction of both the graduate program and the department of which it is a part?
- B. Evaluate how faculty and staff load affects the program’s ability to fulfill its mission.
- C. Evaluate the program’s use of general college learning resources (e.g. classroom and laboratory facilities, Dunn Library, Center for Academic Resources, Career Development, Information Technology Services, work-study and undergraduate assistantships, residence life, etc.)
- D. Evaluate the program’s use of computer and information technology to meet goals and objectives.
- E. List additional resources, in order of priority, that the program feels it needs in order to fulfill its mission.

## Section VII: Looking to the Future

- A. Provide a plan for the upcoming 8-year review cycle for achieving your program goals with resources at the current level. Please list specific goals, and for each goal list its rationale, the time frame for accomplishing the goal, and a brief sketch of how your program will accomplish it.
- B. What enrollment trends are predicted for the future and how will the program respond to them? Information about employment trends can be obtained from the Bureau of Labor Statistics at <http://www.bls.gov/emp/>. (Other sources may be used if you prefer—please provide appropriate references.)
- C. Discuss how faculty and staff structure will impact future plans for the program.
- D. What pedagogical or content developments in your discipline merit consideration in future planning?
- E. What institutional support will be needed to meet program goals and learning objectives?
- F. Identify any changes needed and/or planned in the department's assessment plan.

## Section VIII. Questions for Outside Reviewers

List five or six specific questions or issues that you would ask the outside evaluators to address in addition to the general review of your program. These items should cover areas in which you would like the evaluators' targeted advice.

**NOTE: Addendum 1 and addendum 2 are required. Addendum 3 is optional and could be especially useful for external audiences.**

### Addendum 1

(Factual data about department to be supplied by the department chair and Registrar's Office)

- A. List of current full-time faculty (include ranks, dates of hire, and tenure decisions). Also provide a **brief** resume for each faculty member.
- B. Program support staff
  - v. Status (full or part time)
  - vi. Job descriptions
- C. Dedicated or specialized teaching facilities (e.g., labs, practice rooms)
- D. Equipment (list of equipment)
- E. Curriculum
  - i. Courses offered for dual enrollment
  - ii. Courses offered for graduate student enrollment only
  - iii. Required courses
  - iv. Elective offerings
  - v. Research opportunities, professional placements, or other co-curricular learning opportunities.
- F. Frequency of course offerings
  - i. List every course with how often it is taught and where (i.e., day program, summer school and Continuing and Graduate Program (CGP))
- G. Other offerings (programs, certificates, conferences, etc.)
- H. Enrollments in courses in the last 3 years (list all courses taught in the last 3 years; provide enrollments in all sections of all courses for *each* of the last 3 years)

- I. Enrollment numbers in program per year for the past ten years
- J. Number of graduates per year for the past ten years
- K. Teaching loads of faculty. Please supply names and loads for current and previous year; include regular loads, overloads, and course releases.
  - i. Full-time tenured or tenure-track faculty
  - ii. Full-time visiting faculty
  - iii. Affiliate faculty
  - iv. Adjuncts teaching in the day program
  - v. Adjuncts teaching in CGOE program
- L. Advising loads by faculty member for the current year. Give the number of advisees for each faculty member who advised students in the current year.
- M. Work-study students and undergraduate assistants
  - i. Total hours of work-study and undergraduate employment for the program
  - ii. Job descriptions
- N. Budget
  - i. Annual operating program budget
  - ii. Endowment income
  - iii. Earned income
- O. Assessment Data. Place any extensive data tables you have for Section IV here.
- P. Alumni Data

## **Addendum 2: Relevant Documents**

- A. Copy of the previous Program Review (including the response of the department)
- B. Copies of the Annual Department Assessment Reports (since the previous Program Review)

**Addendum 3: Other documents as necessary to provide a well-rounded view of your program, its curriculum, and its activities.** (Addendum 3 is optional –consider what could be especially useful for external audiences.)

*When the outside evaluator's report becomes available, it will be forwarded to your program. The department should prepare a step-by-step evaluation of the reviewers' comments. This evaluation should be submitted in a timely manner to the chair of the APIC and the administrative assistant of the Academic Dean.*