

# OFFICE OF THE PROVOST



## RISD Academic Program Review (APR) General Overview

RISD's Academic Program Review (APR) process ensures the overall quality and integrity of academic programs at RISD. Its goals are:

- To facilitate regular program assessment, including reflection about program mission, evaluation of learning outcomes, and development of key questions for planning;
- To contextualize program development within broader currents of the relevant field or discipline;
- To use evidence gathered from integrated planning to support decision making in regards to the needs of the program;
- To meet ongoing expectations of institutional accreditation.

Programs are reviewed every 6-7 years; in some cases, professional accreditation reviews substitute for academic program review (Architecture, Landscape and TLAD's MAT are visited by their own licensing agency). The program review schedule is developed and maintained by the Office of the Vice Provost, which also provides necessary staff support and guidance for departments.

The process involves: 1) a self-study, 2) a visit and report by an external review committee, and 3) the generation of a planning document for the program, 4) and final presentation to the division dean and the Office of the Provost. The overall the process, from self-study to final presentations, should take no more than two years.

### 1. Kickoff Meeting

Approximately three semesters before a scheduled visit by an external review committee, the Office of the Vice Provost notifies the Department or Division and the appropriate Dean(s) of the upcoming program review. A kickoff meeting with the Department Head and the Dean(s) is held to review the process, responsibilities, and timeline for the program review.

### 2. Self-Study

In the two semesters preceding the review by the Visiting Committee, the Department or Division conducts a self-study. The program self-study is launched with a gathering of relevant department faculty, who, together, develop general questions for inquiry; conduct a program critique and assessment, based on reflective examination of student work in the program; conduct a contextualized analysis of the program; and revise the program's mission statement and learning outcomes. This work should be completed before the department begins to write the self-study, which will serve as the summary of findings from this inquiry process. In the semester prior to the visit the department head creates the written self-study, following the APR self-study template, for submission to the Office of the Vice Provost and relevant division dean. The self-study should be submitted to the Vice Provost and Divisional Dean at least one month prior to the Visiting Committee's arrival on campus. Once approved, no later than two weeks before the visit, the self-study will be sent to the Visiting Committee.

# OFFICE OF THE PROVOST



## 3. Preparation for the Visiting Committee

Before writing the self-study, the Department Head (or in the case of a Divisional review, the Dean) develops a list of potential members for the Visiting Committee, including a chair for the committee, and submits these to the Vice Provost for approval. In consultation with the department head, the Office of the Vice Provost invites the team members and coordinates the visit schedule, which will include appropriate meetings with campus constituents based on the key questions of the self-study.

## 4. Visiting Committee

The Visiting Committee on-campus review is coordinated by the Office of the Vice Provost. The visit typically lasts 2-3 days and involves meetings with key personnel and constituencies, classroom/studio visits, tours of facilities, as well as time for the Committee to review materials and do their work. The committee's objective is to provide the department with critical insight about the key questions identified in the department's self-study and to offer observations and recommendations that might assist the department to engage in strategic planning for the program. The visiting committee writes a formal report and submits it to the Vice Provost within one month of the visit. This report is distributed to the department head, the graduate program director (if applicable), the dean, and the provost.

5. Department Planning Document: Following receipt of a report, department faculty should meet and reflect on next steps, which build on the key questions identified in the self-study and the recommendations of the Visiting Committee Report. Discussions may also be had with the appropriate division dean and/or the Vice Provost. The department head will then write a planning document within three months of receipt of a Visiting Committee report, consisting of a brief narrative (no more than 5 pages) that outlines the department's key planning goals until the next program review, or at least five years. The planning document is submitted to the Vice Provost and relevant dean. The Provost, the Dean's Council, and the Instruction Committee will review planning documents on a regular basis (typically per year) for the purpose of integrated institutional planning. It is the shared responsibility of the department head and the dean to monitor the progress of program changes and facilitate the proposed implementation.