I. Purpose

Regular, periodic reviews of academic departments and schools provide a formal process for thorough, fact-based documentation and evaluation of academic programs, the infrastructure supporting them, and the plans for their growth and improvement. The distinctive features of these reviews are that they focus uniquely on evaluation of the academic department as an integrated whole, including the way unit’s resources are managed to promote the unit’s overall success.

II. Review Cycle

Departments/schools whose degrees are accredited by an external professional accreditor (such as ABET, AACSB, SAF) will be reviewed by those accreditors according to the accreditor’s regular cycle. The final report submitted by the external accreditor and the unit’s response to that report will constitute the unit’s Report of Results of Periodic Review that will be submitted to the provost and the cognizant dean (for the case of departments in a college).

Departments or schools with programs that are not professionally accredited will be reviewed on a six-year cycle.
Undergraduate and graduate programs within a department/school should be addressed as part of a single review process whenever possible. If a department/school is reviewed by an external professional accreditor that does not review graduate programs, the graduate programs should be reviewed as soon as possible following the completion of the Report of Results of Periodic Review for the undergraduate program.

The plan for upcoming reviews shall be reviewed annually by the academic deans and provost to accommodate changes in accrediting timelines, schedules, or cycles.

III. Responsibility and Locus of the Review

Departments/schools are responsible for ensuring that all reviews are conducted at the specified times. Departments and schools are also responsible for preparation and submission of all documentation associated with the review process.

Professionally accredited programs follow the accreditors’ review guidelines.

Reviews of other programs are initiated by the provost through a memo to the cognizant dean(s). Deans will work with their school, or the cognizant department chair(s) (in the case of reviews of departments within a college), to establish a timeline, identify specific expectations for the review, and identify external and internal reviewers.

IV. Schedule

Departments and schools accredited by a professional accreditor will follow the accreditors’ schedule for selection of reviewers, submission of self-study documents, on-site reviews, etc.

If graduate programs housed within departments or schools with professional accreditation are not considered by those professional accreditors, the graduate programs will be covered by these procedures.

Departments, schools and programs (including graduate programs) that are not reviewed by an external professional accreditor will follow the schedule outlined here:

i. Departments/schools to be reviewed in the upcoming academic year will be notified during the fall semester preceding the review year.

ii. During the academic year preceding the review, departments and schools will prepare their self-study documents.

iii. Self-study document must be submitted to the provost and the cognizant dean (for departments within colleges) by the end of the fall semester of the review year.

iv. The self-study will be provided to the provost and cognizant dean (for departmental reviews) by the second week of the spring semester. The provost’s office will provide the self-study to the external and internal reviewers.
v. The campus visit by external reviewers will be completed by the eighth week of the spring semester of the review year, and reviewers’ reports will be due in the provost’s office by the end of the eleventh week of spring semester. Copies of the reports will be provided by the provost to the cognizant dean and department chair (for departments within a college).

vi. The school dean and provost (for schools) or the department chair and college dean (for departments within a college) will meet with the faculty of the school/department to discuss the reviewers’ reports before the end of spring semester.

vii. The school or department will provide the provost and the cognizant dean (in the case of reviews of departments within a college) its Report of Results of Periodic Review (described below) by October 15 during the academic year following the review. Each report should be preceded by a cover letter from the dean of the school or college that contains a summary of that dean’s analysis of the review’s process and outcomes.

viii. The provost reports the findings of the review to the Board of Trustees in a timely fashion.

V. The Self-Study

Each department or school under review prepares a self-study. Departments/schools with accredited programs conduct the self-study following the accreditors’ guidelines. For other departments, the principal author may be the department chair or a committee. The final document should represent a departmental consensus whenever possible.

i. Data: The self-study shall contain, but not be limited to, the following information and analyses:

- Departmental mission and vision statements and program learning goals
- Quantitative data: Basic information that should include categories such as faculty (number, ranks, demographics), staff (roles), facilities, budgets, students (number, degree programs, demographics), retention and degree completion, placement after graduation, scholarship (publications, presentations, funding). Institutional Analysis will provide basic data using a uniform template. The department may provide additional data as needed.
- Results of assessment of student learning outcomes, analyses of results, and evidence that result are used for continuous improvement.
- Results of surveys of graduates and their employers, as appropriate
- Recent initiatives and their effects
- Goals for the future
ii. The self-study shall conclude with responses to the following questions:

- In what ways does your department/school support both the University’s and your college’s/school’s mission and vision statements?
- In what ways do the activities and programs in your department/school align with the University’s strategic plan?
- In what ways are the activities of the department/school contributing to an increase in awareness of the quality of Michigan Tech’s educational offerings and research capabilities within the state, nationally, and internationally?
- How are undergraduate and graduate education integrated with research and scholarly activities in your unit?
- What are the principles that guide decisions regarding the allocation of resources in your unit?

iii. Additional questions: Additional questions may be added by the cognizant deans (for departments within colleges), the dean of the Graduate School (for units with graduate programs), or the provost to gain information from reviewers that will support the University’s ongoing continual improvement processes.

iv. Appendices: Additional information may be presented in appendices that are referred to in the main body of the document.

VI. External and Internal Reviewers

i. Composition of review team:

- Departments and schools with accredited programs follow the accreditor’s guidelines for selecting external reviewers.
- For departments and schools that are accredited by a professional accreditor at the undergraduate level but not at the graduate level, the review of the graduate programs will involve a minimum of two external and one internal reviewers.
- For programs that are not accredited by a professional accreditor at any level (undergraduate or graduate), a minimum of three external reviewers and two internal reviewers is required. The internal reviewers must be tenured members of the graduate faculty at Michigan Tech. Internal reviewers may not be members of the unit being reviewed.

ii. Qualifications of reviewers:

- External reviewers should be senior academic faculty members, department chairs, deans or individuals of similar professional stature. External reviewers should have experience with both undergraduate and graduate education in all of the disciplinary areas represented by the programs under review.
The internal reviewers must be tenured and members of the graduate faculty at Michigan Tech. Internal reviewers may not be members of the college (for reviews of departments) or school being reviewed.

iii. Selection of reviewers:

• For the case of departments within a college, the departments being reviewed will recommend a slate of at least five potential external and at least five potential internal reviewers to the cognizant dean. The dean will invite the reviewers to serve.

• For the case of schools, the school being reviewed will recommend a slate of at least five potential external and at least five potential internal reviewers to the provost. The provost will invite the reviewers to serve.

• Selected reviewers must submit a copy of their curriculum vitae to the dean of the college (for department reviews) or provost (for school reviews) prior to conducting the review.

iv. Incentives:

• The reviewers are to review the self-study prior to visiting the campus and conducting their on-site review. Travel expenses for external reviewers will be paid in accordance with university travel policy and an appropriate honorarium will be provided to external reviewers following completion of the review and submission of a report on findings. Internal reviewers will be provided with an appropriate honorarium.

• Participation of internal reviewers is intended to improve University-wide appreciation of the aspirations of each the academic unit. Internal reviewers will also be able to assist external reviewers in accessing additional information, which will improve the efficiency of the review process.

VII. Process

Departments and schools with accredited programs should adhere to the accreditor’s guidelines for conducting reviews if those guidelines deviate from the process outlined below.

The reviewers will read the self-study prior to the on-campus visit and review.

Each visit will include meetings with the chair/dean, the dean of the Graduate School (if graduate programs are involved), faculty, staff and students. Each visit should include a visit to relevant facilities, including research laboratories, classrooms, and offices.

At the conclusion of their visit the reviewers will prepare a report addressed to the chair or dean of the unit being reviewed. A standard set of questions, which will be addressed in every review, will guide development of the reviewers’ report. These questions will be reviewed on an annual basis by the deans, associate provost(s) and provost and updated
as necessary. School deans and/or department chairs may supplement the standard questions with additional queries, and the reviewers will be encouraged to provide additional information that is not specifically requested (e.g., recommendations) in order to provide useful feedback to the unit being reviewed.

VIII. Review Summary Report

Following receipt of the reviewers’ report, the department will prepare for the dean, or school for the provost, a report (Report of Results of Periodic Review) that contains the following sections: a one-page executive summary, the reviewers’ report, a listing of the principal observations, comments, and recommendations made by the reviewers in their report, the department’s/school’s response to the reviewers’ reports, and an action plan.

The department’s/school’s response should bring together everything that has been learned through the review, and outline plans for the future. The action plan should include a timeline for completion of specific milestones. The action plan should specifically outline a strategy for aligning and/or reallocating resources (if necessary) to support completion of milestones.

IX. Dean’s Evaluation

The cognizant dean will provide the provost with a copy of the unit’s Report of Results of Periodic Review. Each report should be preceded by a cover letter from the dean of the school or college that contains a summary of the dean’s analysis of the review’s process and outcomes.

X. Provost’s Report

The provost will communicate the findings of the review to the Board of Trustees in a timely fashion.

XI. History of Revisions or Changes

8/25/04 Initial Procedures Adopted

01/19/2016 Revised Procedures open for Review and Comment