

The University of Texas at Tyler

Office of Continuous Improvement and Accreditation



Graduate Programs External Review Handbook



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Introduction

An external review of UT Tyler graduate programs is an essential function of the institution's quality review process and provides perspectives not available on campus. The results of the external program reviews are included with other assessment and evaluation information in determining the quality of instruction, curricular relevance, program efficiency and program impact. Additionally, the self-assessment and systematic program review information contribute to planning for continuous improvement of student learning and program quality. Both qualitative and quantitative criteria are included in the review and the various criteria may be weighted differently for each program. Flexibility in the application of the review criteria is appropriate to accommodate the specialized missions of the individual programs.

Guiding Principles

- UT Tyler is committed to self-assessment and to external reviews as an integral part of strategic planning, institutional effectiveness and to ensure continuing quality enhancement toward fulfillment of the UT Tyler mission.
- All graduate programs fulfill their respective mission and purpose within the context of the UT Tyler mission.
- The external review is considered to be an appropriate assessment effort in the systematic evaluation of program performance and accountability.
- Faculty participation in the review process emphasizes self-assessment and demonstrates a concern about quality, an ability to be self-critical and a willingness to act upon identified concerns.
- Relevant groups within the University are included in the review process, especially when recommendations may refer to or affect particular groups.
- Self-regulation protects institutional autonomy and promotes innovation and accountability.
- The external review process should consider the fundamental principles of "generally recognized practice" in graduate program education using well recognized and credible profession-wide standards specific to the discipline for quality assurance.
- Master's and Doctoral degree programs in the same discipline are reviewed simultaneously. Baccalaureate programs in the same discipline may be reviewed with the graduate program(s).

Graduate programs are reviewed on a decennial scheduled determined with the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) and in compliance with the Texas State Code. The 3-phase process includes: 1) Completion of a comprehensive self-study using predetermined reporting criteria; 2) Reviewed of the Self-Study and program website by the external reviewers prior to a campus site visit; 3) a campus site-visit that includes meetings with faculty, students, and administrators with campus tours to view program facilities and resources; and 4) a single External Review Report completed by external reviewers based on the Self Study and campus site visit. The external review may include commendations for program strengths and recommendations for continuous improvement planning. Programs that are offered only online may complete a virtual site visit. The Self-Study, External Review Report, and the Institution's Response Report are submitted to THECB by August 31 of the review year.

External Reviewer Selection – Summer Preceding Review Year

PLANNING ACTIONS

1. *Graduate Program Coordinator (Coordinator) meets with the AOffice of Continuous Improvement and Accreditation (CIA) and College/School Assessment Professional.*
2. *Coordinator/Department Chair leads program faculty discussions on prospective reviewers.*
3. *Coordinator contacts 3-4 prospective reviewers to confirm interest/availability and collects CVs from those interested.*
4. *Coordinator/Department Chair discuss nominees with dean who may suggest additional individuals.*
5. *Dean sends the Nominee list, CVs, and signed Ethical Obligations Forms to the Provost and Dean of Graduate School who determine the finalists. If the review will include both a master's and doctoral program, may select 3 with Provost approval.*
6. *Coordinator confirms site visit dates, agreed service fees, and schedules an initial planning meeting with reviewers.*

NOTES: Reviewers must be members of a nationally recognized peer program outside the state of Texas and must hold appropriate rank or stature in the discipline. Nominees must affirm that they have no conflict of interest related with THECB, UT System, UT Tyler, or the program. (Appendix A: *UT Tyler Ethical Obligations of UT Tyler External Reviewers*).

Internal Contractual Process

Coordinator completes the UT Tyler Contract Process with the Dean's Office support team following confirmation of the external reviewers. The Dean's Office contacts the Provost's Office to identify funding source.

Fee for Service and Payment of Expenses

External reviewers receive a \$1,000 fee for service plus approved travel and accommodation expenses are reimbursed up to \$1,500. Exceptions for service fees and travel reimbursements may be requested in advance for Provost pre-approval on a case by case basis.

Self-Study Completion – Fall Semester of Review Year

PLANNING ACTIONS

1. *Coordinator meets with CIA Office and College/School Assessment Professional to review self-study requirements and identify campus resources. (Appendix B: Texas Administrative Code and Appendix C: Self-Study Guidelines)*
2. *Coordinator/Department Chair provide regular updates with program faculty throughout self-study stages of completion.*
3. *Coordinator may survey faculty, students, and alumni to include in the Self-Study. (Optional –Example Surveys in Appendix D)*
4. *External Reviewers complete travel arrangements with Coordinator.*
5. *Coordinator completes Self-Study with department chair, faculty and College/School Assessment Professional. The college/school Dean, Provost, Graduate School Dean, Associate Provost for Distance Education, Associate Provost for Continuous Improvement and Accreditation review the Self-Study before it is sent to external reviewers.*

Site Visit and Reports – Spring Semester of Review Year

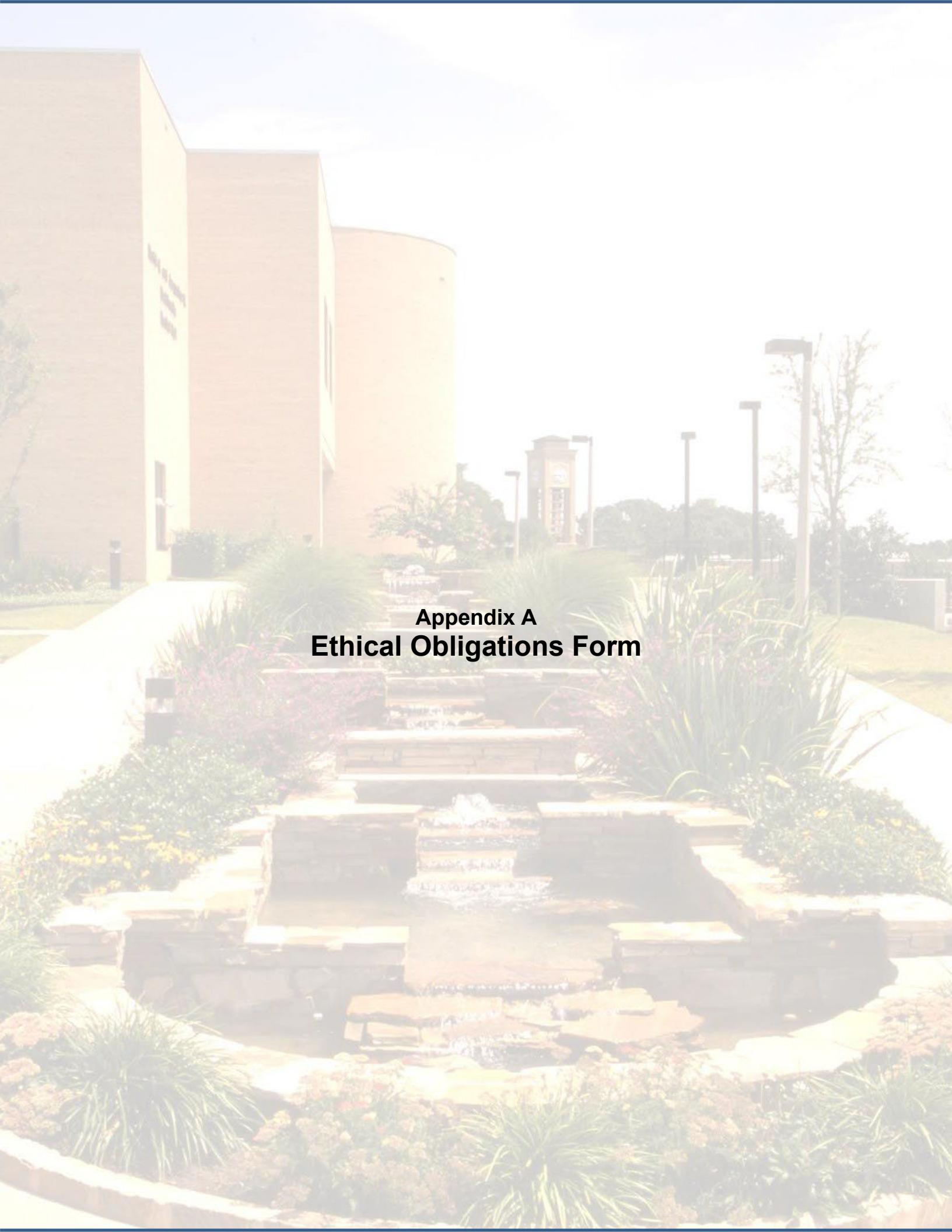
PLANNING ACTIONS

1. *Coordinator sends the Self-Study to the external reviewers **4-6 weeks** prior to the campus site visit.*
2. *Coordinator/Assessment Professional meet with student participants to review external review purpose, student role in interviews, and common questions to expect.*
3. *Coordinator/Assessment Professional meet with faculty participants to review external review purpose, faculty role in interviews, and common questions to expect.*
4. *Coordinator prepares draft site visit itinerary and confirms with external reviewers. Schedules site visit on campus participant calendars. (Sample Itinerary in Appendix E)*
5. *Coordinator/Assessment Professional finalize local transportation, meal arrangements and welcome basket for hotel rooms.*
6. *Coordinator/Assessment Professional adapt itinerary as needed.*
7. *Following the campus visit, the External Reviewers prepare a single report and send to the Graduate Program Coordinator/Department Chair **4-6 weeks** after site visit.*
8. *Coordinator/Department Chair issue fee-for-service and travel reimbursement to each reviewer.*

Institutional Response Report – Summer of Review Year

PLANNING ACTIONS

1. *Coordinator, Assessment Professional, and Associate Provost CIA complete the Institutional Response Report (IRF) draft. Coordinator shares with faculty and dean for comments and revisions.*
2. *The Associate Provost CIA sends the Self-Study, External Review Report, and draft IRF to the Provost, Graduate School Dean, and Associate Provost for Distance Education prior to scheduling a leadership IRF meeting.*
3. *Coordinator and Assessment Professional finalize IRF based on leadership meeting discussions and plans.*
4. *Associate Provost CIA submits all three reports to THECB within 180 days of receiving the External Review Report.*
5. *Coordinator and Assessment Professional include GPR documents and evaluation results in the annual program assessment plan. Institutional responses to recommendations serve as action plans and closing the loop statements are provided in the subsequent assessment cycle.*

The image shows a university campus scene. In the foreground, there is a multi-tiered stone waterfall with water cascading down. The waterfall is surrounded by various plants, including tall grasses and flowering shrubs. In the middle ground, a paved walkway leads towards a large, multi-story brick building with a curved section. In the background, a clock tower is visible, surrounded by more campus buildings and trees. The sky is bright and slightly overcast. The text "Appendix A Ethical Obligations Form" is overlaid in the center of the image.

Appendix A
Ethical Obligations Form

The University of Texas at Tyler

ETHICAL OBLIGATIONS OF EXTERNAL REVIEWERS

UT Tyler graduate program reviews are based upon a peer review process that requires program reviewers to make decisions about the program quality, effectiveness, and relevance. In order to maintain the credibility of those decisions, external evaluators are responsible for conducting reviews that uphold the highest level of integrity in all aspects. Integrity of the process mandates at least the following ethical obligations and understandings. External reviewers must affirm that they have no conflict of interest related to UT Tyler and to the program under review.

Eligibility of External Evaluators and Obligations of UT Tyler Faculty and Administrators

The process for the external review of a UT Tyler program based on the professional judgment of external reviewers demands informed review, thoughtful analysis, and reasoned decision making. External evaluators must have subject-matter expertise and currently serve as a faculty member in a program nationally recognized for excellence in the discipline.

UT Tyler program faculty and administrators have an obligation to select external reviewers with the highest caliber of integrity. It is paramount that evaluators are qualified in their external reviewer role to provide actionable advice based on their review of the self-study information and verified through interviews with faculty, students, administrators, and staff.

Confidentiality

Without a commitment to confidentiality by all external reviewers and in all aspects of the review process, external evaluators cannot freely execute their responsibility to conduct themselves with professional integrity.

External program reviewers must maintain complete confidentiality in all activities and decisions. Confidentiality applies to all documents, correspondence, and discussions relative to all phases of the external program review. External reviewers may not disclose information about the program that includes discussions with the program and institutional representatives before, during, or following the review process. Written documents include but are not limited to the program self-study, program or institutional resource material and support evidence, and the external review report.

External reviewers may not use generative AI to create all or part of the external review report. No UT Tyler documents, including the program self-study report or institutional resource material, may be uploaded to a generative AI platform. Generative AI may not be used to analyze any UT Tyler data provided as part of the external review.

Conflict of Interest

External reviewers should not accept appointment to serve when a conflict of interest or the *appearance* of conflict of interest, exists. External reviewers affirm electronically that they have no conflict of interest with UT Tyler or the program under review as part of the process of accepting a formal invitation to serve.

UT Tyler relies on the personal and professional integrity of individual external reviewers, expects them to be sensitive to potential conflicts of interest in the review process, and assumes reviewers will act accordingly. If it is discovered that a conflict of interest situation may have affected the external program review, the Provost and Graduate School Dean may initiate further program evaluation to determine the validity of the original findings of the external reviewer.

As examples, an evaluator would have a conflict of interest if the individual

- is employed at a Texas higher education institution;
- has been a consultant at UT Tyler within the last ten years;
- has been an employee of UT Tyler;
- has been a candidate for employment at UT Tyler within the last ten years;
- is a graduate of UT Tyler;
- has a close personal or familial relationship with persons at UT Tyler;
- has a strong bias regarding UT Tyler;
- has any other relationship that could serve as an impediment to rendering an impartial, objective professional judgment regarding the program evaluation.

Acknowledgements

I acknowledge that I have read the *UT Tyler Ethical Obligations of External Reviewers Policy* and my signature below affirms that I am eligible to serve as an external reviewer for the [PROGRAM NAME], without conflict of interest as defined in the policy.

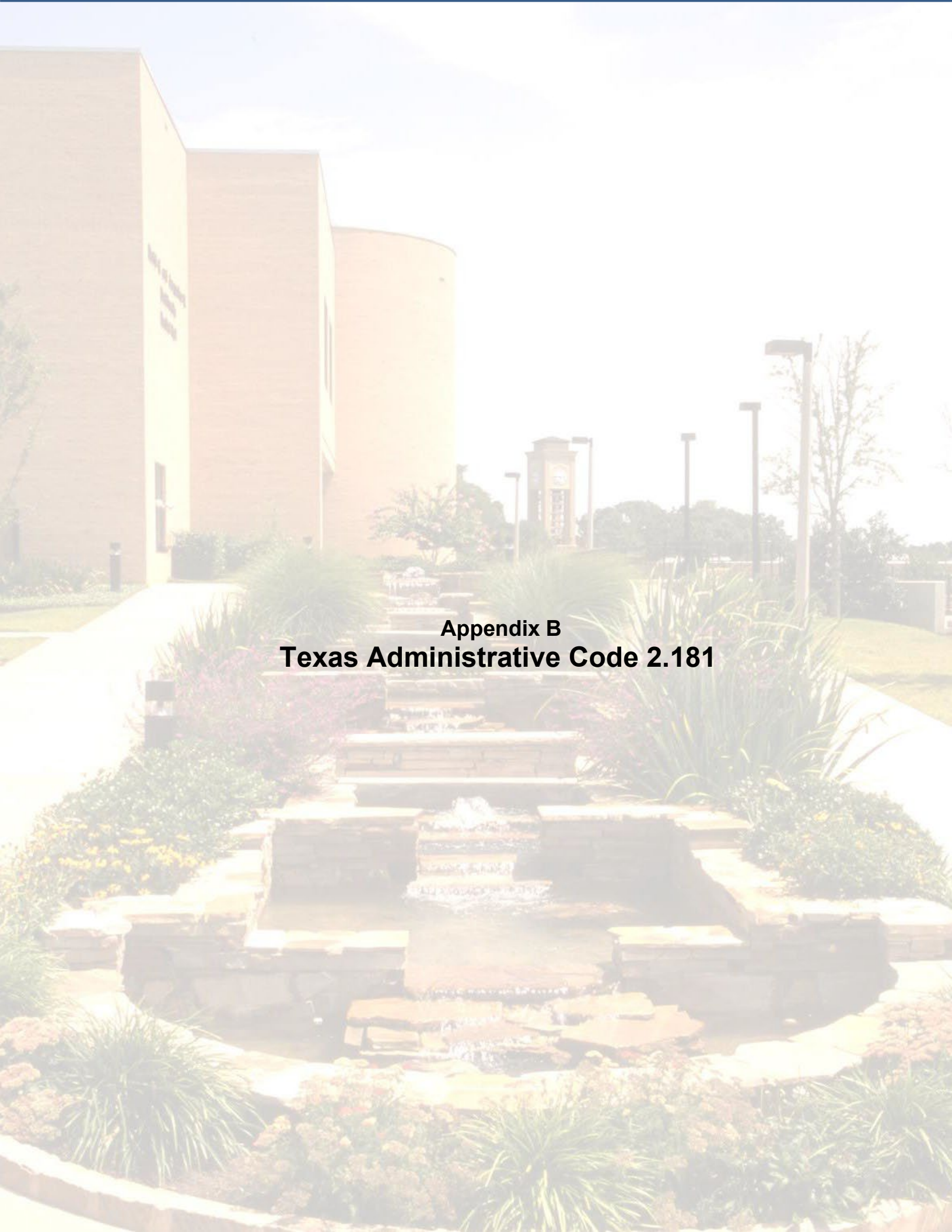
PROSPECTIVE EXTERNAL REVIEWER: _____ DATE: _____

I acknowledge that [External Reviewer Name] _____ meets required eligibility qualifications and no conflict of interest or appearance of conflict of interest exists.

PROGRAM COORDINATOR: _____ DATE: _____

DEPARTMENT CHAIR: _____ DATE: _____

COLLEGE/SCHOOL DEAN: _____ DATE: _____



Appendix B
Texas Administrative Code 2.181

Texas Administrative Code

TITLE 19

EDUCATION

PART 1

TEXAS HIGHER EDUCATION COORDINATING BOARD

CHAPTER 2

ACADEMIC AND WORKFORCE EDUCATION

SUBCHAPTER I

REVIEW OF EXISTING DEGREE PROGRAMS

RULE §2.181

Academic Programs at Public Universities and Public Health-Related Institutions

(a) Each public institution of higher education, in accordance with the requirements of the institution's approved accreditor, shall have a process to review the quality and effectiveness of existing degree programs and for continuous improvement.

(b) Board staff shall develop a process for conducting a periodic audit of the quality, productivity, and effectiveness of each existing master's, doctoral, and professional degree program at a public institution of higher education.

(c) Board staff will meet the requirements of program review established by Texas Education Code, §61.0512(e), by reviewing program data reported in the Accountability System for each undergraduate degree offered by a public institution of higher education in Texas.

(d) Each public university and public health-related institution shall review each of its master's, doctoral and professional degree programs at least once every ten (10) years.

(1) On a schedule to be determined by the Commissioner, each institution shall submit a schedule of review for each graduate program to the Assistant Commissioner with oversight of academic program approval.

(2) Each institution shall begin each review of a graduate degree program with a rigorous self-study.

(3) As part of the required review process, an institution shall use at least two external reviewers with subject-matter expertise who are employed by institutions of higher education outside of Texas. Each institution shall provide its external reviewers with the materials and products of the self-study and must participate in a site review.

(4) Each external reviewer shall be part of a program that is nationally recognized for excellence in the discipline.

(5) Each external reviewer shall affirm that they have no conflict of interest related to the Board, the institution, or program under review.

(6) Each institution may review a closely-related program, defined as sharing the same four-digit Classification of Instructional Programs code, in a consolidated manner at the discretion of the institution.

(7) Each institution shall review a master's and doctoral program in the same discipline simultaneously, using the same self-study materials and reviewers. Each institution may also, at their discretion, review a baccalaureate program in the same discipline as master's and doctoral programs simultaneously.

(8) Each Institution shall submit a report on the outcomes of each review, including the evaluation of the external reviewers and actions the institution has taken or will take to improve the program, and shall deliver these reports to Board staff no later than 180 days after the reviewers have submitted their findings to the institution.

(9) Each institution may submit a review of a master's, doctoral, or professional program performed for

reasons of programmatic licensure or accreditation in satisfaction of the review and reporting requirements in this subsection.

(e) Board staff shall review all reports submitted for a master's, doctoral, or professional degree program and shall conduct analysis as necessary to ensure high quality. The Commissioner may require an institution to take additional actions to improve its program as a result of Board review.

Source Note: The provisions of this §2.181 adopted to be effective November 28, 2022, 47 TexReg 7901; amended to be effective August 15, 2024, 49 TexReg 5958

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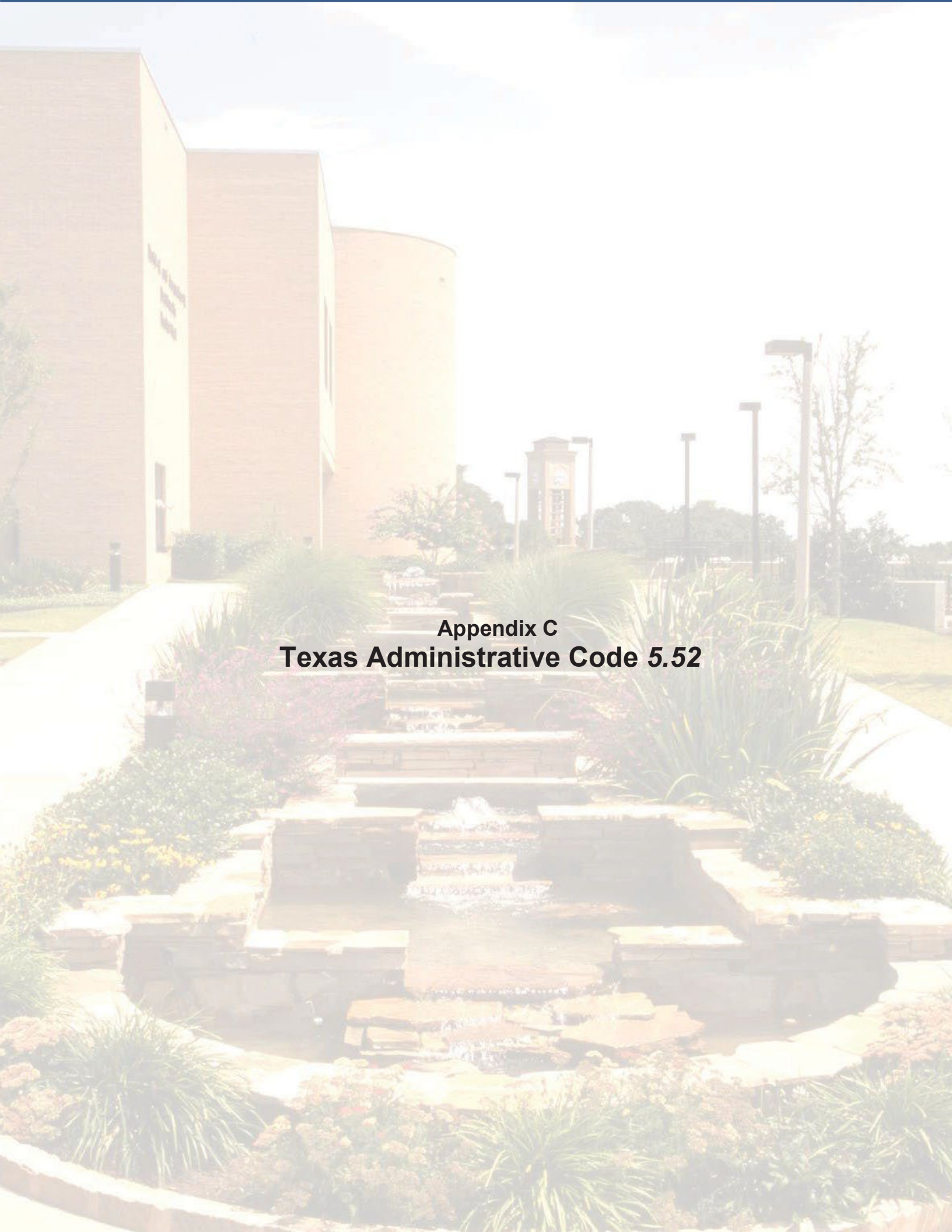
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Appendix C
Texas Administrative Code 5.52

Texas Administrative Code

[TITLE 19](#)

EDUCATION

[PART 1](#)

TEXAS HIGHER EDUCATION COORDINATING BOARD

[CHAPTER 5](#)

RULES APPLYING TO PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES, HEALTH-RELATED INSTITUTIONS, AND/OR SELECTED PUBLIC COLLEGES OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN TEXAS

[SUBCHAPTER C](#)

APPROVAL OF NEW ACADEMIC PROGRAMS AT PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES, HEALTH-RELATED INSTITUTIONS, AND REVIEW OF EXISTING DEGREE PROGRAMS

RULE §5.52

Review of Existing Degree Programs

-
- (a) In accordance with the requirements of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, Commission on Colleges, each public institution of higher education shall have a process to review the quality and effectiveness of existing degree programs and for continuous improvement.
- (b) The Coordinating Board staff shall develop a process for conducting a periodic audit of the quality, productivity, and effectiveness of existing bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degree programs at public institutions of higher education and health-related institutions.
- (c) Each public university and health-related institution shall review all doctoral programs at least once every ten years.
- (1) On a schedule to be determined by the Commissioner, institutions shall submit a schedule of review for all doctoral programs to the Assistant Commissioner of Academic Quality and Workforce.
- (2) Institutions shall begin each review of a doctoral program with a rigorous self-study.
- (3) As part of the required review process, institutions shall use at least two external reviewers with subject-matter expertise who are employed by institutions of higher education outside of Texas.
- (4) External reviewers must be provided with the materials and products of the self-study and must be brought to the campus for an on-site review.
- (5) External reviewers must be part of a program that is nationally recognized for excellence in the discipline.
- (6) External reviewers must affirm that they have no conflict of interest related to the program under review.
- (7) Closely-related programs, defined as sharing the same 4-digit Classification of Instructional Programs code, may be reviewed in a consolidated manner at the discretion of the institution.
- (8) Institutions shall review master's and doctoral programs in the same discipline simultaneously, using the same self-study materials and reviewers. Institutions may also, at their discretion, review bachelor's programs in the same discipline as master's and doctoral programs simultaneously.

(9) Criteria for the review of doctoral programs must include, but are not limited to:

- (A) The Characteristics of Texas Public Doctoral Programs;
- (B) Student retention rates;
- (C) Student enrollment;
- (D) Graduate licensure rates (if applicable);
- (E) Alignment of program with stated program and institutional goals and purposes;
- (F) Program curriculum and duration in comparison to peer programs;
- (G) Program facilities and equipment;
- (H) Program finance and resources;
- (I) Program administration; and
- (J) Faculty Qualifications.

(10) Institutions shall submit a report on the outcomes of each review, including the evaluation of the external reviewers and actions the institution has taken or will take to improve the program, and shall deliver these reports to the Academic Quality and Workforce Division no later than 180 days after the reviewers have submitted their findings to the institution.

(11) Institutions may submit reviews of graduate programs performed for reasons of programmatic licensure or accreditation in satisfaction of the review and reporting requirements in this subsection.

(d) Each public university and health-related institution shall review all stand-alone master's programs at least once every ten years.

(1) On a schedule to be determined by the Commissioner, institutions shall submit a schedule of review for all master's programs to the Assistant Commissioner of Academic Quality and Workforce.

(2) Institutions shall begin each review of a master's program with a rigorous self-study.

(3) As part of the required review process, institutions shall use at least one external reviewer with subject-matter expertise who is employed by an institution of higher education outside of Texas.

(4) External reviewers shall be provided with the materials and products of the self-study. External reviewers may be brought to the campus for an on-site review or may be asked to conduct a remote desk review.

(5) External reviewers must be part of a program that is nationally recognized for excellence in the discipline.

(6) External reviewers must affirm that they have no conflict of interest related to the program under review.

(7) Closely-related programs, defined as sharing the same 4-digit Classification of Instructional Programs code, may be reviewed in a consolidated manner at the discretion of the institution.

(8) Master's programs in the same 6-digit Classification of Instructional Programs code as doctoral programs shall be reviewed simultaneously with their related doctoral programs.

(9) Criteria for the review of master's programs must include, but are not limited to:

(A) Faculty qualifications;

(B) Faculty publications;

(C) Faculty external grants;

(D) Faculty teaching load;

(E) Faculty/student ratio;

(F) Student demographics;

(G) Student time-to-degree;

(H) Student publication and awards;

(I) Student retention rates;

(J) Student graduation rates;

(K) Student enrollment;

(L) Graduate licensure rates (if applicable);

(M) Graduate placement (i.e. employment or further education/training);

(N) Number of degrees conferred annually;

(O) Alignment of program with stated program and institutional goals and purposes;

(P) Program curriculum and duration in comparison to peer programs;

(Q) Program facilities and equipment;

(R) Program finance and resources; and

(S) Program administration.

(10) Institutions shall submit a report of the outcomes of each review, including the evaluation of the external reviewer(s) and actions the institution has taken or will take to improve the program, and shall deliver these reports to the Academic Quality and Workforce Division no later than 180 days after the reviewer(s) have submitted their findings to the institution.

(11) Institutions may submit reviews of graduate programs performed for reasons of programmatic licensure or accreditation in satisfaction of the review and reporting requirements in this subsection.

(e) The Coordinating Board shall review all reports submitted for master's and doctoral programs and shall conduct analysis as necessary to ensure high quality. Institutions may be required to take additional actions to improve their programs as a result of Coordinating Board review.

Source Note: The provisions of this §5.52 adopted to be effective August 26, 2009, 34 TexReg 5678; amended to be effective November 29, 2010, 35 TexReg 10496; amended to be effective May 24, 2011, 36 TexReg 3183; amended to be effective August 15, 2013, 38 TexReg 5063; amended to be effective May 29, 2018, 43 TexReg 3347

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Appendix D
Self-Study Guidelines

Program Self-Study Guidelines

A. Academic Description and Strategic Plan

1. Program description, history, and vision for the future.
2. Alignment of the program with the UT Tyler, college/school, and department mission, vision, and strategic plans.

B. Program Curriculum (Table)

Summary narrative on the respective metrics and information description of post-baccalaureate quality and rigor: a) the program is progressively more advanced in academic content than undergraduate programs; b) the curriculum includes knowledge of the literature of the discipline; and c) the curriculum is designed to ensure engagement in research and/or appropriate professional practices.

1. Describe the alignment of the program with the institutional, college/school, and department mission, vision, and strategic plans.
2. Summarize the procedures for faculty-led curriculum development and modification.
3. Identify Program Student Learning Outcomes and summarize examples of how faculty have used assessment results for continuous improvement planning (Include the program assessment plan with most recent 3-years in appendices)
4. List current program Marketable Skills and identify Marketable Skills aligned with program embedded certificates.
5. Compare program curriculum with Texas Peer Programs (Total SCH, Modality, Term lengths, Embedded academic and/or industry certificates, etc., (May include national peers as appropriate)

C. Faculty Productivity Fall Semester of Review Year and Previous 2 Years

1. Current Faculty Roster (Rank, FT.PT, Demographics, Endowed Chairs)
2. Qualifications (CVs) for *all* faculty
3. Publications/Scholarship/Creative Endeavor/External Grants
4. Awards and Achievements
5. Community/Public Service
6. Professional Development
7. Teaching Load
8. Faculty/Student Ratio (FTE/Student FTE)
9. Teaching Evaluations

D. Students and Graduates

Provide Summary narrative on the respective metrics to precede each table.

Table 1: Student Information (Most Recent 3 Years)

1. Student Enrollment Demographics (Gender/Ethnicity)
2. Admissions (# of Applicants, # Admitted, # Enrolled)
3. Retention Rates
4. Time to Degree
5. Graduation Rates
6. Degrees Conferred Annually

Table 2: Student Achievement (Most Recent 3 Years)

- 1. Publications/Awards
- 2. Licensure
- 3. Graduate Placement
- 4. Tracking Program Graduates

Table 3: Academic and Student Support Services (Most Recent AY)

- 1. Academic and Student Support Services offered by the university, school/college, and department.

E. Facilities and Resources

Provide summary narrative on the respective metrics to precede each table.

Table 1:

- 1. Facilities and Equipment

Table 2:

- 1. Finances and Resources
- 2. Development/Advancement Resources

Table 3:

- 1. Program Administration (Provide UT Tyler Organizational Chart)
- 2. Staff Resources

F. Program Distance Education (Hybrid, Online, Off-Campus)

The program is in compliance with the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board’s (THECB) “Principles of Good Practice” and with the SACSCOC distance education standards and policies. Briefly describe how program faculty ensure ongoing compliance for each of the following criteria. (Initials affirm compliance)

1. Quality and Rigor

- All distance learning courses meet the same standards as an equivalent face-to-face traditional program/course.
- Online and hybrid courses have the same program/course student learning outcomes, course descriptions and expectations.
- The course/ program provides for regular and substantive interaction between faculty and students, students and students, and student and content.
- The faculty assumes primary responsibility for and exercises oversight of distance education, ensuring both the rigor of programs and the quality of instruction.

_____	_____	_____
Program Coordinator	Chair	Dean

2. Faculty Credentialing

- Prior to teaching an online or hybrid course, all faculty have completed the required “Online Instructor Certification” training offered by the Office of Digital Learning (unless faculty have completed nationally recognized online certification).to design online/ hybrid courses and implement best practices of online teaching.
- Faculty recertify the “Online Instructor Certification” training every three years and include current information in Fac180.

_____	_____	_____
Program Coordinator	Chair	Dean

3. Faculty Responsibility

- Faculty members who teach distance education courses are expected to implement best practices of teaching distance education courses and self-assess their distance education courses using UT-Tyler’s Best Practices Checklist rubric.
- Faculty collaborate with instructional designers in the Office of Digital Learning to design online/ hybrid courses and implement best practices of online teaching.
- The U.S Department of Education requires that all distance education courses for which students may use Title IV funds (federal financial aid) “ensure that there is regular and substantive interaction between students and instructors.” Faculty members are expected to provide regular and substantive interaction with students enrolled in distance education courses. This interaction is instructor-driven, frequent, and consistent throughout the semester. Faculty members use a variety of methods and resources appropriate to the course and discipline to facilitate contact with students. Among the strategies, interactions typically include:
 - Providing direct instruction
 - Providing feedback for students;
 - Making weekly announcements;
 - Leading and facilitating discussion boards;
 - Posting instructional materials;
 - Moderating group work;
 - Facilitating student-to-student communication;
 - Providing real-time audio or video conferencing;
 - Holding office hours;
 - Sending emails;
 - Holding review and tutoring sessions; and
 - Meeting face-to-face;
- Distance education courses are considered equivalent to campus courses in terms of workload expectations and contact hours. Therefore, the frequency of the instructor led contact and interactions will be at least the same as would be established in a regular, campus-based course.

Program Coordinator

Chair

Dean

4. Technology & Accessibility

- All courses are delivered via the UT Tyler Canvas Learning Management System and faculty maintain grades in Canvas to ensure student privacy. If external tools are used, the faculty member must ensure that FERPA requirements are met.
- Faculty work with The Office of Digital Learning and Disability Services office to ensure all courses are accessible in compliance with Section 508 of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) to provide equal access to course materials for all students.

Program Coordinator

Chair

Dean

5. Student Support Services

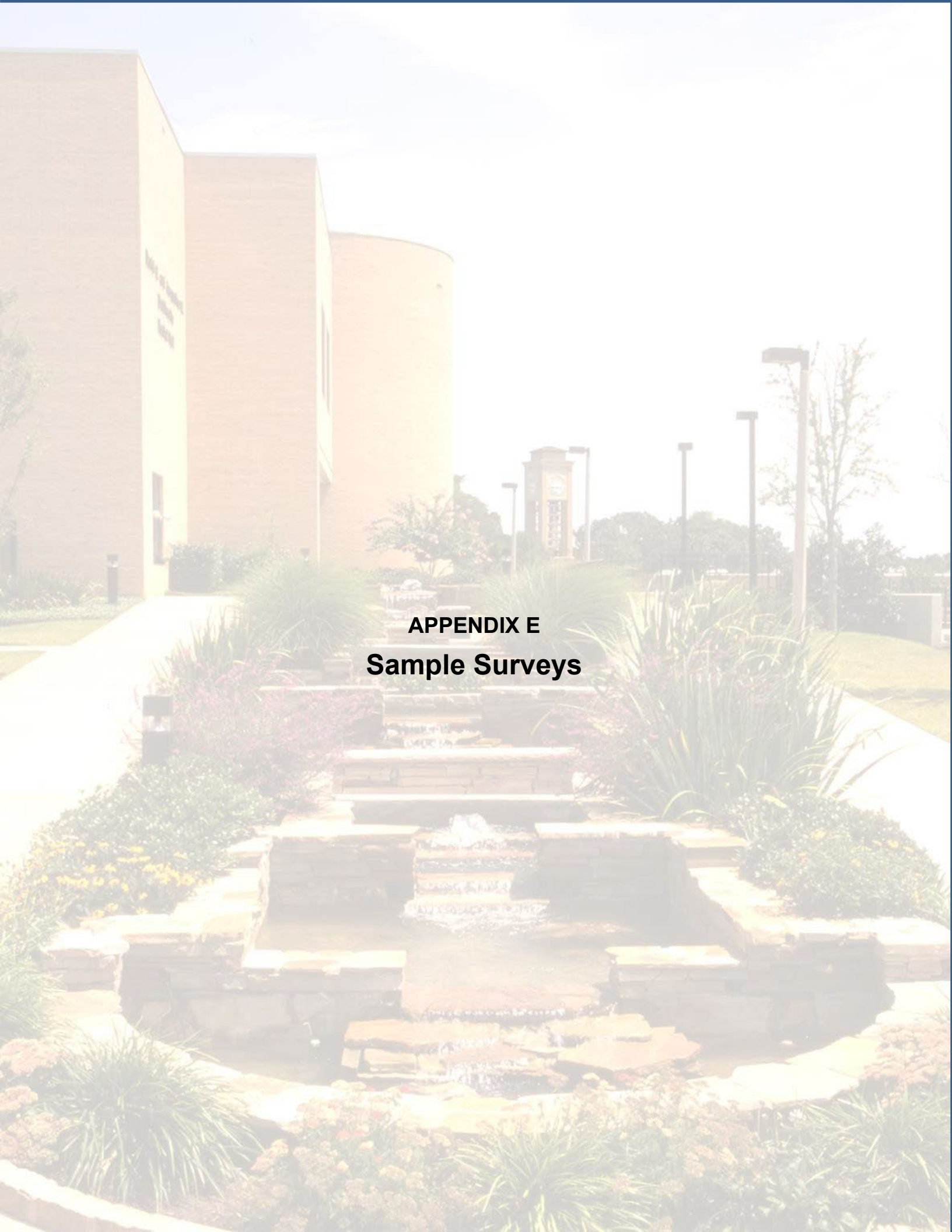
- All associated course expenses are communicated to students prior to enrolling.
- Students are provided with an orientation that specifically prepares them for distance learning at UT Tyler that includes information on academic support services, policies, procedures, etc.
- Students enrolled in online/hybrid courses have access to all support services offered by UT Tyler.

Program Coordinator

Chair

Dean

G. Overall Findings and Evaluation

A photograph of a university campus. In the foreground, there is a multi-tiered stone waterfall with water cascading down. The waterfall is surrounded by various plants, including tall grasses and purple flowers. In the middle ground, a paved walkway leads towards a large, multi-story brick building with a curved section. In the background, a clock tower is visible, surrounded by trees and several tall, thin light poles. The sky is bright and slightly hazy.

APPENDIX E
Sample Surveys

SAMPLES

(Surveys are recommended but optional)

[Program Name] Graduate Faculty Self-Study Survey

Graduate faculty are invited to complete this brief survey as part of the graduate program review Self-Study. Please share your thoughts and recommendations in the short-answer items below. The survey results will be included in the Self-Study as aggregate data and all survey responses are anonymous.

1. Identify program strengths:
2. How do you participate in outreach and recruitment activities?
3. Does program information provide students with salary and placement data for recent graduates?
4. Describe how the current program strengths could be enhanced:
5. Identify program challenges: (4 Forced Choice, 1 Open Choice)
6. Describe recommendations to address the challenges:
7. Recommend one (1) short-term priority you would implement for student and program success with identified resources necessary to accomplish this initiative.
8. Other Comments:

[Program Name] Graduate Student Self-Study Survey

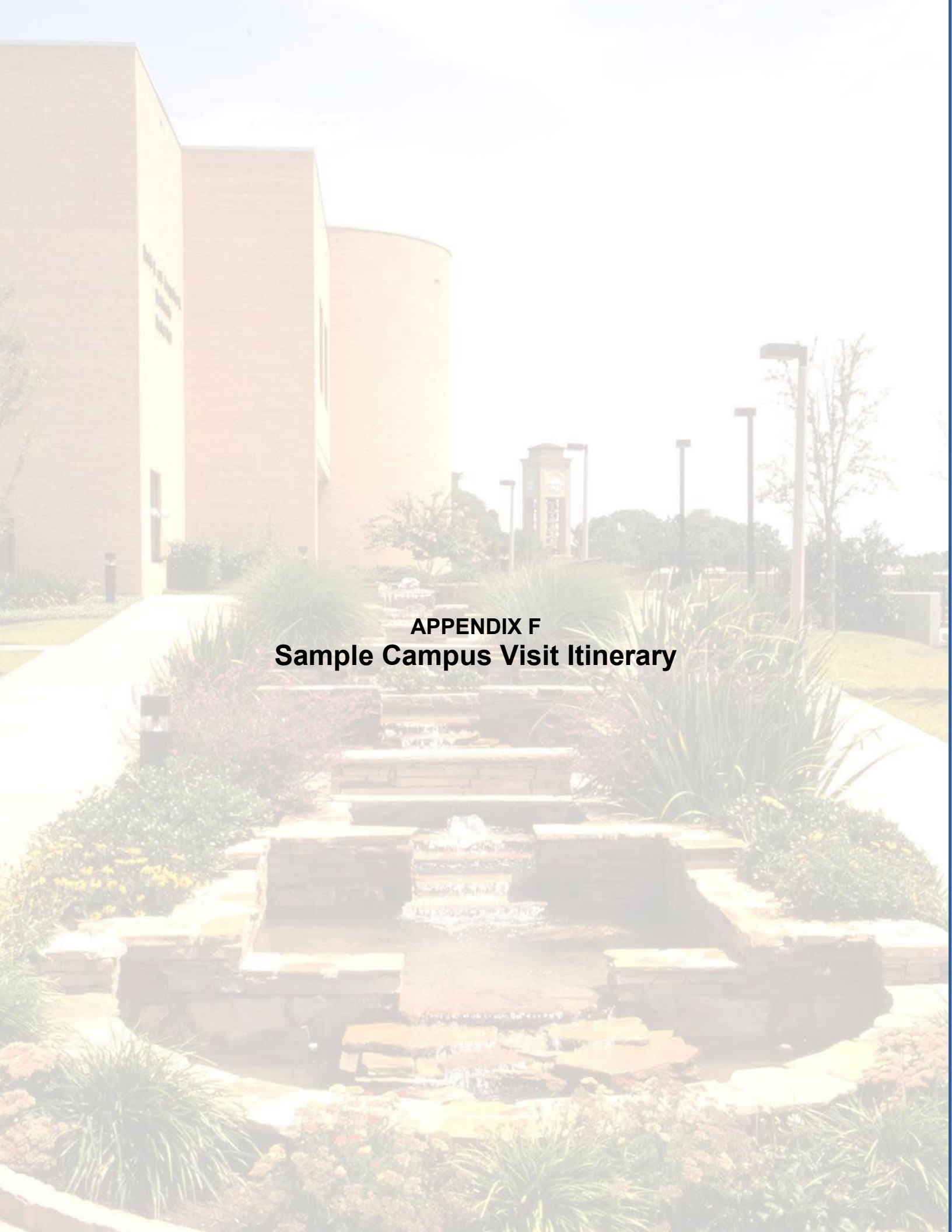
Graduate students are invited to complete this brief survey as part of the graduate program review Self-Study. Please share your thoughts and recommendations in the short-answer items below. The survey results will be included in the Self-Study as aggregate data and all survey responses are anonymous.

2. Identify program strengths:
3. Describe how the current program strengths could be enhanced:
4. Identify program challenges: (4 Forced Choice, 1 Open Choice)
5. Describe recommendations to address the challenges:
6. Recommend one (1) short-term priority you would implement for student and program success:
7. Other Comments:

[Program Name] Alumni Self-Study Survey

Alumni are invited to complete this brief survey as part of the [NAME] graduate program review Self-Study. Please share your thoughts and recommendations in the short-answer items below. The survey results will be included in the Self-Study as aggregate data and all survey responses are anonymous.

1. Describe how well the program prepared you for your current professional role.
2. What were your strongest skills, knowledge, or competencies when you completed the program?
3. What additional professional skills, knowledge, or competencies would be helpful to include in the program for future graduates?
4. Identify new trends in your profession that program faculty could incorporate into the curriculum.
5. Other Comments:

A photograph of a campus landscape. In the foreground, there is a multi-tiered stone fountain with water cascading down. The fountain is surrounded by various plants, including tall grasses and flowering shrubs. In the background, there are several large, modern buildings with a light-colored facade. A prominent feature is a tall, narrow tower with a clock face. The sky is bright and slightly hazy. The overall scene is well-maintained and modern.

APPENDIX F
Sample Campus Visit Itinerary

Program Name
External Reviewer Name
Campus Visit Dates

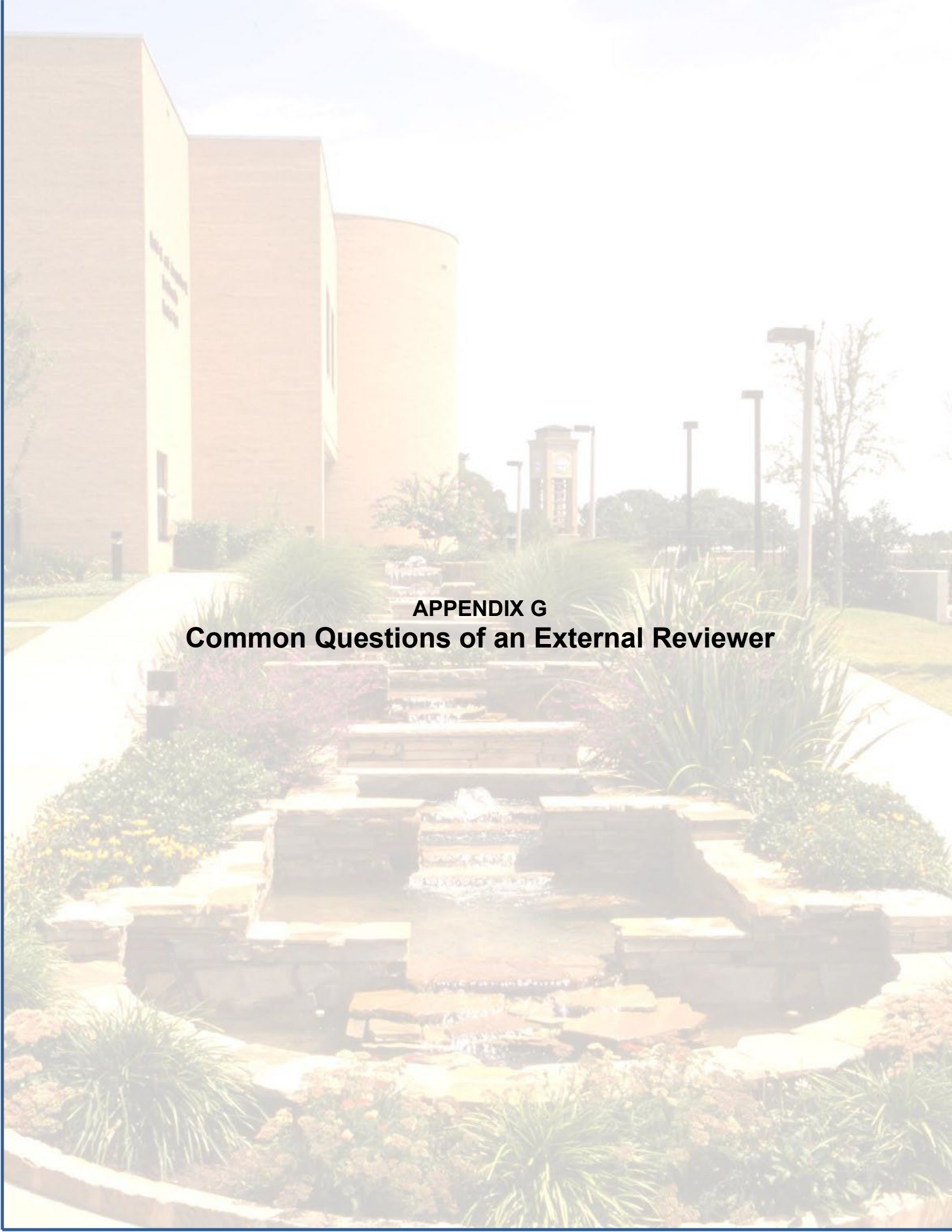
Program Coordinator Contact Information: (Name, Mobile, Office)

Department Chair Contact Information: (Name, Mobile, Office)

Associate Provost of Assessment and Institutional Effectiveness: Dr. Lou Ann Berman, Mobile 903-521-4807, Office 903-565-5955

Day of Arrival			
Time	Attendees (Names)	Event	Location
----		Airport Pick-up	Pounds Fields Airport
----		Drop off at Hotel	Hotel name
----		Dinner	Restaurant name
Campus Visit Day One			
Time	Attendees (Names)	Event	Location
8:00 A.M.	----	Pick up from Hotel	Hotel name
8:30 A.M.	Department Chair/Program Coordinator	Meeting with Chair/Program Coordinator	Room ----
9:30 A.M.	Dean of Graduate School, and Graduate School Staff	The Graduate School	Room ----
10:15 A.M.	BREAK		
10:30 A.M.	Dean of the Library and Program Library Liaison Associate Vice President of Research and Sponsored Programs	Library Resources and Office of Research and Sponsored Programs	Room ----
11:30 A.M.	Students	Lunch with Students	The Met Dining Room
1:00 P.M.	Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs	Executive Administration	STE 314
2:00 P.M.	Associate Provost for Distance and Continuing Education Office of Digital Learning	Distance Education Continuing Education	STE 313

2:45 P.M.	BREAK		
3:00 P.M.	Faculty	Meet with Faculty	Room ---
4:00 P.M.	Associate Provost for Continuous Improvement and Accreditation and College/School Assessment Professional	Program Assessment	Room ---
5:00 P.M.	Program Coordinator or Department Chair	Return to Hotel	
6:00 P.M.	Faculty (Names Listed)	Dinner with Faculty	Restaurant name
Campus Visit Day Two			
Time	Attendees (Names)	Event	Location
8:30 A.M.	Program Coordinator or Department Chair	Pick up from Hotel	Hotel name
9:00 A.M.		Work on Preliminary Exit Report	Room ----
10:15 A.M.	BREAK		
10:30 A.M.	Dean and Associate Dean Department Chair/Program Coordinator Provost and VP of Academic Affairs AVP Research and Sponsored Programs Dean of The Graduate School Associate Provost for Distance and Continuing Education Associate Provost for Continuous Improvement and Accreditation	Exit Interview	Room ----
11:30 A.M.	Program Coordinator or Department Chair	Leave for airport	Pounds Fields Airport

A photograph of a university campus. In the foreground, there is a multi-tiered stone waterfall with water cascading down. The waterfall is surrounded by various plants, including tall grasses and flowering shrubs. In the background, a large, modern brick building with a curved section is visible. To the right of the building, there is a clock tower with a clock face. Several tall, modern light poles are scattered across the campus. The sky is bright and slightly overcast.

APPENDIX G
Common Questions of an External Reviewer

Common Questions of an External Reviewer

To facilitate meaningful analysis of the evidence, it may be helpful to provide guiding questions to structure the self-study inquiry and report. These questions often produce deep discussions among faculty and are considered the most important aspect of the self-study and peer review process. Hence, a set of sample questions is embedded below within each of the core elements typically analyzed in the self-study report. Ideally, program evidence falls into two categories: evidence that addresses questions about program quality and evidence that addresses issues of program viability and sustainability.

I. Program Overview

Department History and Purpose – How are national trends and initiatives considered in the program's planning processes? How does the program align with professional/business trends and practices? Does the Self-Study provide a sound analysis of strengths and areas for improvement? What evidence is provided that the program is increasing student access AND student success?

Future Goals and Planning for Improvement - What are the program's goals for the next few years? Does the program review key outcome measures and performance indicators? Is the quality, use and analysis of program data assessed consistently? What is happening within the profession, local community or society generally that identifies an anticipated need for this program in the future (including market research)? How will the program address any weaknesses identified in the self-study or build on existing strengths? What internal improvements are possible with existing resources? What improvements can be addressed only with additional resources? Where can the formation of collaborations improve program quality and viability?

Alignment with Institutional Mission and Strategic Plan - Are the curriculum, practices, processes, and resources properly aligned with the goals of the program and the institutional mission? What evidence is provided on strategic plan revisions and updates? What is the process for strategic initiative development and review?

Program Delivery Mode(s) – Are courses offered face-to-face only, or does the program include distance education courses?

Evidence in this category might include:

- A detailed narrative on goals for the next 1-5 years including descriptions of resources necessary for goal attainment.
- Minutes or notes from department faculty meetings describing recommendations for improvement.
- Minutes or notes from department faculty meetings describing recommendations on collaborations.
- Evidence of program goals/outcomes aligning with institutional mission and strategic plan

II. Program Administration

The Administrative Environment - The administrative structure of the program should reflect the purposes for which it was established. Well-defined lines of authority with detailed duties and job descriptions should be followed. Policies and procedures should be followed to guide

processes. Capable, credible, knowledgeable and experienced leadership is essential for success. Is there evidence of shared leadership that is innovative, inclusive accountable and flexible?

Evidence in this category might include:

- Organization chart
- Job Descriptions and detailed duties
- Demonstrated success of leading academic programs to promote student success
- Faculty/staff evaluations/surveys of direct supervisors and/or administrators

Staff – Does the current support staffing contribute to the quality of the program? Does support staff participate in systematic professional development opportunities that enhance the quality of the program directly? What is the professional development plan for each staff member for the next 1-3 years?

- Professional and Technical staff FTE supporting program/departmental operations
- Professional and Technical staff qualifications
- Professional and Technical staff professional development plans

III. Allocation of Resources

Financial resources – Has the program experienced any significant changes in budget allocation that have impacted the quality of the program in any way? Is the program budget linked with strategic planning based data-driven decisions? Does the program demonstrate fiscal responsibility and cost effectiveness consistent with institutional protocols?

Evidence in this category might include:

- Operational budget (revenues and expenditures) and trends over a 3-5 year period

Facilities – Do the facilities meet the needs of the program? Are there any plans for modifications or renovations in the near future? Do facilities meet established standards for accessibility to persons with disabilities?

Evidence in this category might include:

- Classroom space
- Instructional laboratories
- Research laboratories
- Office space
- Student study spaces
- Access to classrooms suited for instructional technology
- Access to classrooms designed for alternative learning styles/universal design

Equipment, Information and Technology Resources – Does the program have state-of-the-art equipment/technology that is comparable to what students will use in their chosen professions? Are the existing equipment, information and technology resources adequate to support the mission of the program? Do existing equipment, information and technology resources reflect current best pedagogical practices? Do resources meet established standards for delivery to persons with disabilities? What equipment, information and technology resources exist that are not used regularly by students and/or faculty and why? What equipment, information and technology resources might improve the quality of the programs?

Evidence in this category might include:

- A systematic plan for replacing equipment/technology to ensure state-of-the-art programming
- Library print and electronic holdings in the teaching and research areas of the program
- Information literacy outcomes for graduates
- Technology resources available to support the pedagogy and research in the program
- Technology resources available to support students' needs

Student Support – What support services infrastructure is in place to help students graduate in a timely manner and experience academic success throughout the program? What student support services are available that students engage in the most? What student support services are available that students use infrequently or not at all and why? What student support services might be offered that are not currently provided? What resource requirements would be needed to accomplish providing new services? How does the program utilize distance education and other collaborative processes to promote investment in student access? How does the program ensure seamless transferability?

Evidence in this category might include:

- Academic and career advising programs and resources
- Tutoring, supplemental instruction, and Teaching Assistant training
- Basic skill remediation plans
- Support for connecting general learning requirements to discipline requirements
- Innovative use of technology to engage students in active learning
- Orientation and transition programs
- Financial support (scholarships, fellowships, teaching assistantships, etc.)
- Support for engagement in the campus community
- Support for non-cognitive variables of success, including emotional, psychological, and physical interventions if necessary
- Support for research or for engagement in the community beyond campus, such as fieldwork or internships

IV. Student Information

Students – What is the profile of students in the program and how does the profile relate to or enhance the mission and goals of the program?

Evidence in this category might include:

- Students' gender, ethnicity, age
- GPA from previous institution, types of previous institution
- Standardized test scores
- Student employment status
- Trends in numbers of student applications, admits, and enrollments reflected over a 3 year period

(Note that the specific list of indicators in this category will depend on the goals of the program)

V. Quality of Instruction

The assessment of the quality of instruction is the primary purpose of any self-study and external review. It is helpful to consider that program quality is multifaceted and assessment measures should include all components. While programs may have individual characteristics of excellence, all programmatic areas have identifiable commonalities that are necessary to guide decisions for program improvement. Additionally, the review process should consider the fundamental principles of “best practice” using well recognized and credible profession-wide standards specific to the discipline for quality assurance.

Evidence in this category might include:

- Student – Faculty Ratios by course type
- End of course evaluations
- Student academic performance – use of assessment results for program improvement
- Student performance on licensure/certifying examinations
- Graduate placement rates in employment or education settings
- Student awards and scholarship
- Comparison of peer programs

The Curriculum and Learning Environment – How current is the program curriculum? Does it offer sufficient breadth and depth of learning for this particular degree? How well does it align with learning outcomes? Are the courses well sequenced and reliably available in sequence? Has the program been reviewed by external stakeholders, such as practitioners in the field, or compared with other similar programs? Is the level of program quality aligned with the college/university’s acceptable level of program quality? Are distance education courses given the same attention in terms of quality and integrity as programs and courses offered at the main campus? Are program goals being achieved? Are student learning outcomes being achieved at the expected level?

Evidence in this category might include:

- A curriculum flow chart and description of how the curriculum addresses the learning outcomes of the program (annual program assessment plan and curriculum map)
- A comparison of the program’s curriculum with curricula at selected other institutions and with disciplinary/professional standards
- Measures of teaching effectiveness (e.g., course evaluations, peer evaluations of teaching, faculty scholarship on issues of teaching and learning, formative discussions of pedagogy among faculty)
- A description of other learning experiences that are relevant to program goals (e.g., internships, research experiences, study abroad or other international experiences, community-based learning, etc.), as well as how many students participate in those experiences
- A narrative that describes how the faculty’s pedagogy responds to various learning modalities

Student Learning and Success – Are students achieving the desired learning outcomes for the program? Are they achieving those outcomes at the expected level of learning and how is the expected level determined? Do continuous improvement plans address analysis of distance education assessment results? Are they being retained and graduating in a timely fashion? Are they prepared for advanced study or the world of work?

Evidence in this category might include:

- Annual results of direct and indirect assessments of student learning in the program (could be combination of quantitative and qualitative measures), including the degree to which students achieve the program's desired standards
- Disaggregation of assessment results as appropriate to ensure consistent performance across delivery modes, off-campus instructional sites, and demographics.
- Ongoing efforts by the department to "close the loop" by responding to assessment results
- Student retention and graduation rate trends (disaggregated by different demographic categories)
- Placement of graduates into graduate schools or post-doctoral experiences
- Job placements
- Graduating student satisfaction surveys (and/or alumni satisfaction surveys)
- Employer critiques of student performance or employer survey satisfaction results
- Disciplinary ratings of the program
- Student/Alumni achievements (e.g., community service, research and publications, awards and recognition, professional accomplishments, etc.)

VI. Faculty

Faculty – What is the profile of faculty in the program and how does the profile relate to or enhance the mission and goals of the program? Is support provided to ensure faculty may fulfill their professional expectations including excellence in teaching, scholarship, service, and advising? Are professional development opportunities fostered both on campus and through travel? What professional development opportunities might be offered that are not currently provided? Do distance education faculty participate in curricular decisions and external program reviews? How are distance ed faculty included in professional development opportunities?

Evidence in this category might include:

- Faculty workload
- Faculty review and evaluation processes
- Mentoring processes/programs
- Professional development opportunities/resources (including travel and research funds)
- Sufficient time for course development, research, etc.
- Number of full-time faculty (ratio of full-time faculty to part-time faculty)

Questions adapted from the Montana University System Board of Regents' MUS Strategic Plan 2013; the Program Review Guide, Rev. October 2007, Office of Academic Programs and the Program Review Panel, California State University Dominguez Hills; the Academic Program Review Handbook, 2009, Institutional Research Office, Charles Drew University of Medicine and Science, the CAS Professional Standards for Higher Education 7th Edition, Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education, UT Tyler OCIS General Questions to Guide Visit Preparation, and THECB Principles of Good Practice for Distance Education 2023.

A photograph of a campus landscape. In the foreground, a multi-tiered stone waterfall flows down a set of stone steps. The waterfall is surrounded by various plants, including tall grasses and flowering shrubs. In the background, a large, multi-story brick building with a curved section is visible. A clock tower stands in the distance, and several tall, modern light poles are scattered across the scene. The sky is bright and slightly overcast.

APPENDIX H
THECB Institutional Response Form

**TEXAS HIGHER EDUCATION
COORDINATING BOARD**

Academic Quality and Workforce

Graduate Program Institutional Response Form

Master's Program **Doctoral Program**

Institution:

Department/School:

Academic Program:

Program Review. The [Department/School] hosted an external review team composed of the following scholars: [List First and Last Name, University/College Affiliation]. The external review team [visited the campus on] [Dates][conducted a desk review] and produced an External Review with comments reflecting their overall impression of the graduate program. We thank the external review team for their time and valued comments regarding our program.

The following areas were evaluated: Academic Unit Description and Strategic Plan; Faculty Productivity; Students and Graduates; Facilities/Resources; and Overall Ranking. The external reviewers were asked to give a rating of excellent, very good, appropriate or needs improvement in these areas. **Please note** this Institutional Form must be saved in PDF format when submitted.

1. Academic Unit Description and Strategic plan

- a. Vision, Mission and Goals
 - b. Strategic Plan
-

Recommendations from External Review Team:

Response and Action Plan:

2. Program Curriculum

- a. Alignment of program with stated program and institutional goals and purposes
 - b. Curriculum development, coordination, and delivery
 - c. Student learning outcomes assessment
 - d. Program curriculum compared to peer programs
-

Recommendations from External Review Team:

Response and Action Plan:

3. Faculty Productivity

- | | |
|--------------------------|------------------------------|
| a. Qualifications | f. Achievements |
| b. Publications | g. Profile |
| c. External Grants | h. Community/ Public Service |
| d. Teaching Load | i. Teaching Evaluations |
| e. Faculty/Student Ratio | j. Development |
-

Recommendations from External Review Team:

Response and Action Plan:

4. Students and Graduations

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| a. Demographics | g. Licensure Rates |
| b. Time to Degree | h. Graduation Placement |
| c. Publications/Awards | i. Degrees Conferred Annually |
| d. Retention Rates | j. Admissions |
| e. Graduation Rates | k. Student Support Services |
| f. Enrollment (# of students, SCHS) | l. Alumni Relations |
-

Recommendations from External Review Team:

Response and Action Plan:

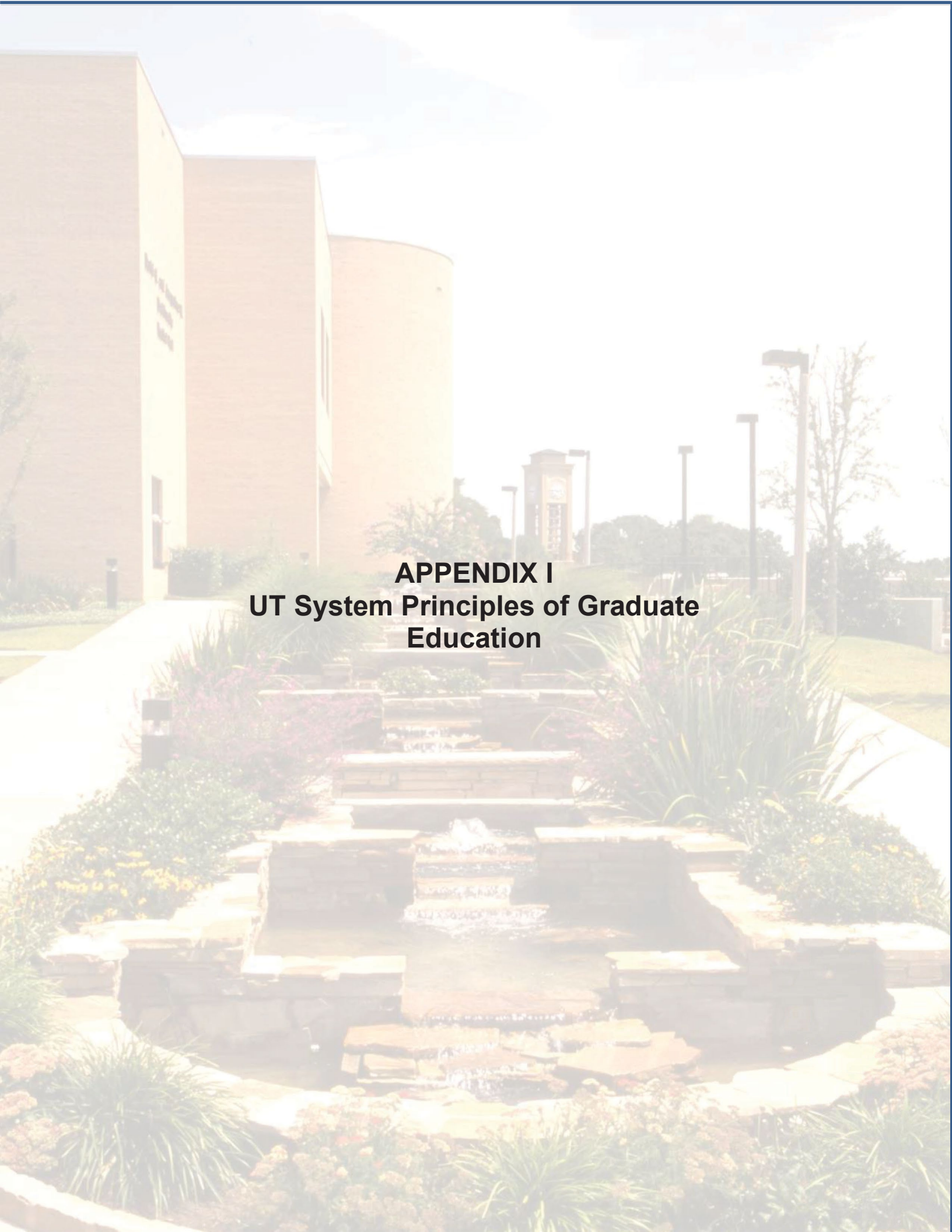
5. Facilities/Resources

- a. Facilities and Equipment
 - b. Finances and Resources
 - c. Program Administration
 - d. Staff Resources
 - e. Development Resources
-

Recommendations from External Review Team:

Response and Action Plan:

6. Overall Findings and Assessment



APPENDIX I
UT System Principles of Graduate
Education

University of Texas System Graduate Deans
Statement of Principles of Graduate Education
March 8, 2022 (Revised November 13, 2023)

The State of Texas acknowledges the importance of higher education and financially supports the University of Texas System and the other Texas university systems that offer undergraduate and graduate degree programs. As articulated by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB), higher education in Texas is imperative, vital to upward social mobility of the state's citizens, and critical to the sustained health of the state's economy: <http://www.60x30tx.com/home/?pnum=2>

“Research shows that someone with a bachelor’s degree can earn nearly double the lifetime wages of a high school graduate.” This earning potential increases further when one earns a master’s degree and still further with a PhD. “And as wages go up, so does the state’s revenue through tax increases. Higher education also helps the state meet its changing workforce needs and spurs new businesses. In other words, when Texas students win, the state wins.”

The priority toward students and their benefit to the state (the nation and the world) is also embraced by the UT System. Consensus is that advanced degree education provides the additional training and specialized expertise that allow students to substantively contribute to improving the human condition, the economy, and the greater community. Graduate programs at UT System institutions underpin the creation of new knowledge. Graduate programs are expected to prioritize the personal career success of program graduates, help ensure that students avoid amassing excessive financial debt while in school, and prepare students to contribute substantively to society. UT System Graduate Schools are expected to commit to the highest standards of quality and be recognized externally for rigor and excellence with programs that empower students to boldly change the world for the better. To ensure graduate students reach their full potential, our programs must recognize and support the diverse backgrounds, skillsets and needs of current and prospective students. Finally, our programs are expected to be good stewards of the state investment in the UT System, evidenced by reasonable average degree completion times (nominally two years for master’s and five years for PhD programs) and high student retention. A degree candidate who does not finish represents a failure to serve that student and an intellectual and financial investment loss for the university and the state.

Consequently, UT System Graduate Schools and their degree programs are expected to incorporate proven practices—such as those reported by the Council of Graduate Schools (CGS) <https://cgsnet.org/best-practices>—that help guarantee the aforementioned objectives are achieved. These practices are organized under the following seven themes.

1. **Outreach and recruitment.** Many undergraduates may not know the benefits of having a graduate degree or the opportunities available for financial and academic support. Therefore, programs have an obligation to reach out to prospective students, especially those from populations traditionally underrepresented in graduate education, and encourage the best and brightest minds to apply within the state, nationally and internationally. Departments and schools should provide online access to current information about each graduate program and engage in community outreach to attract prospective students, which may include in-person events, external networking, social media engagement, and targeted emails. Campuses should encourage their own undergraduate students to consider attending graduate school by providing research experiences and graduate education preparation activities. Programs should also provide prospective students salary and placement data for recent graduates of the program.

2. **Matriculation.** Programs should seek to enroll the most talented class of new graduate students through a *holistic admissions* process that recognizes the benefits of inclusion and the value of educating students within a community of diverse scholars who embody the rich demography of the state, the nation, and the world. Programs should offer to all students competitive financial aid packages that are on par with national averages for each discipline. These competitive packages assist with recruiting talented students and removing financial barriers to attendance for low-income and underrepresented students. Programs should provide clearly written admission letters that enable students to easily compare their offer with offers received from elsewhere.
 3. **Transparency.** Given that students entering graduate school arrive with different backgrounds and levels of exposure to advance degree education, programs should clearly articulate degree requirements and expectations. To this end, programs should offer graduate student orientations for incoming students to assist new students in acclimating to campus. Additionally, programs should review existing policies to ensure equity and clarity and have graduate student handbooks accessible online and updated at least annually. Programs should provide ongoing holistic advising that begins as soon as students are accepted.
 4. **Faculty commitment to success:** Faculty supporting Ph.D. programs should have active research agendas. Faculty supporting professional programs should be engaged in applied research that informs practice. Graduate students should be mentored by engaged faculty who meet with them regularly, advise them academically and prepare them to be successful in the workforce. Faculty members should provide timely feedback on assignments/exams/milestones and monitor student behavior and progress closely. They should be prepared to teach and work with students from diverse backgrounds and to intervene immediately if issues arise to help students succeed.
 5. **Retention and completion.** Programs should take responsibility to ensure that all students are supported academically from start to finish. As part of this effort, programs should administer annual graduate student progress reviews, with the intent of providing students with clear direction about the steps needed to complete the program and the timeframe for doing so. Programs should also have an oversight process to intervene and assist in the event a student is not making satisfactory progress. To ensure they meet expectations, programs should routinely review average graduation rates and time-to-degree rates.
 6. **Career success.** Programs should have a mentoring process and professional skills development program in place for all graduate students, which may include the use of an Individual Development Plan (IDP). Together, these initiatives should instill critical social skills, cultivate leadership and teamwork skills, and develop multicultural competencies that will allow students to excel in a diverse workforce. Programs have the responsibility to track student employment and follow national employment trends within their discipline to provide training and guidance for students in their potential careers.
 7. **Promoting a Culture of Respect and Understanding.** Programs must promote diverse perspectives in research, teaching, learning and artistic scholarship because they are essential to high quality academic programs. Programs should develop and refine equitable and inclusive practices that welcome all scholars and learners, regardless of race, color, national origin, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, pregnancy, disability, genetic information, and/or veteran status. Programs should strive to remove artificial barriers to learning faced by students from historically underrepresented or underserved populations to ensure that historical injustice is not perpetuated. Faculty and administration should pay attention to the various needs of all students and provide them with affirming and inspiring educational experiences through teaching, training, and mentorship.
-