The following are basic steps in the review of centers/institutes/programs, along with their administrative directors, that report to the Office of the Vice President for Research (OVPR) at the University of Georgia. Note that OVPR centers/institutes/programs and their leaders are routinely reviewed on a five-year cycle according to an established schedule. In each case, the unit and respective leader are reviewed simultaneously. Each review is completed within the respective academic year. These reviews are integral to the SACS reaccreditation process and they also drive OVPR investment decisions.

1. In September, the VPR notifies all directors of units scheduled for review in the current academic year. The VPR invites suggestions for potential faculty reviewers who do not belong to the unit being reviewed, provides instructions to the director for preparation of the unit self-study, clarifies the procedures to be used in the review, and sets a deadline for receipt of the Self Study.

2. Soon thereafter, the VPR assembles a list of potential reviewers and identifies three faculty members who agree to serve as the review team. Reviewers predominantly include established senior and mid-level faculty and are chosen to include faculty who are not members of the Unit under review. A chair of the Review Team is also identified at this time. The Review Team is provided the same list of questions that were provided to the unit leader to guide the writing of the self-study. These questions frame the review, though it should be emphasized that each center/institute/program has unique attributes and issues.

3. Prior to the review, the VPR meets with the Review Team to provide the charge, discuss the process and the form of the final report, and answer any questions the Review Team might have. The Review Team is instructed to identify a date that can be devoted to the review. OVPR offers logistical support as necessary. The Review Team is encouraged to meet with the unit director ahead of time to facilitate communication and input, and to announce the review and invite comments via the UGA faculty listserv.

4. By the established deadline, the unit under review submits the Self Study electronically to Lauren Sisko, lsisko@uga.edu. Electronic copies will be distributed to each reviewer, retained by the OVPR, and sent to the UGA Office of Academic Planning.

5. The Review Team will have a minimum of four weeks to read the Self Study and conduct their review. The Review Team is strongly encouraged to interview a broad spectrum of administrators, faculty and staff – both within and external to the unit under review, and to tour physical facilities if deemed advantageous to the process. The Review Team may also request additional documentation from either the unit or OVPR.
6. Following the review, the Review Team must submit its report following the guidelines provided by OVPR. The Review Team is instructed by the VPR to keep its report concise and to the point, and to include thoughtful and specific recommendations pertaining to the unit and (separately) the director. These should include but not be limited to explicit recommendations as to whether the unit should be continued and also whether the director should be reappointed. The Review Team is specifically reminded that renewal of units and reappointment of directors should not be considered automatic or the default mode. Units should be demonstrated to be fulfilling an important need at the University, and directors should have demonstrated leadership and have broad support to continue in their roles. The VPR may meet with the review team at this point depending on the complexity of the review or issues raised by it.

7. A copy of the Review Team report is provided to the unit director, with the question “are there any errors or misconceptions in the report that might have colored the review?” If the director responds in the affirmative and clarifies the error/omission/misconception, then the review is returned to the review team along with the director’s comments for their consideration and possible revision. If revised, the review report is then returned to the unit director for his/her response(s).

8. Unit directors, presumably after consulting with other unit leadership, provide OVPR with specific written responses to the recommendations of the Review Team.

9. The Review Team reviews the responses of the unit director and provides OVPR with a written assessment (this may be brief and essentially say “we have reviewed the director responses and defer to OVPR for ultimate assessment”).

10. The VPR writes a final memo describing his/her assessment of the responses to the review team’s recommendations and other relevant observations. When appropriate or helpful, the VPR may choose to meet with the Review Team and possibly the unit director to discuss the report, the recommendations and the unit’s responses.

11. Copies of all written materials pertaining to the review are provided to the Office of Academic Planning at this time.

12. One year after completion of the review, OVPR notifies the unit director that he/she must submit a follow-up report describing progress in responding to the recommendations of the Review Team. The follow-up report is reviewed by the VPR and if deemed necessary and appropriate, also shared with the chair of the Review Team. A copy of the follow-up report is also sent to the Office of Academic Planning. Meetings with the VPR, unit director, members of the Review Team and other administrators are scheduled at this time if progress is deemed insufficient or to address other concerns.