The Office of Research reviews each of its centers, institutes, and interdisciplinary programs (C/I/P) on a rotating five-year schedule. The performance of the responsible director is reviewed coincidentally but separately as part of the process. These reviews are integral to UGA’s SACSCOC reaccreditation process and they drive Office of Research administrative and investment decisions. While some details vary with the specific C/I/P, the basic procedures used in these reviews are as follows.

1. In late summer, the Office of Research notifies the directors of C/I/P scheduled for review during the coming academic year. The Vice President for Research (VPR) offers each director an opportunity to suggest potential faculty reviewers, while noting that suggestions may or may not be used. The VPR then names a three-member review team with a designated lead. Review teams may include one or even two members who are affiliated with the program, particularly in the case of large, multidisciplinary C/I/P. Reviewers are predominantly established senior and mid-level tenured faculty.

2. The Office of Research provides instructions to the director for preparation of the C/I/P Self Study, which include a list of universal questions meant to guide the writing, while also acknowledging that each C/I/P has unique attributes and issues that may merit discussion. Procedures to be used are clarified and a deadline established for receipt of the Self Study. The Review Team is provided the same list of questions given to the unit leader.

3. The C/I/P under review submits the electronic Self Study to the Office of Research by the appointed deadline and these are distributed to the review team.

4. Prior to the review, the VPR meets with the Review Team to provide the charge, discuss the process and the report format, and answer questions. The Review Team is instructed to identify a date that can be devoted to the review and the Office of Research offers logistical support as needed.

5. The review team has until the end of the academic year to read the Self Study, request any additional information through the Office of Research point of contact, and conduct and complete the review. The review team is strongly encouraged to interview all important stakeholders for the relevant C/I/P, including administrators (from the C/I/P or affected academic units), faculty members, and if relevant, staff and students. The team is also encouraged to tour physical facilities if doing so would inform the review.

6. After the review, the review team submits its report following the guidelines provided by the Office of Research. The review team is encouraged to keep its report concise and to the point (a maximum of 3-5 pages is suggested), and to include: (1) a description of the value added by the C/I/P over and
above relevant academic units, and (2) a set of thoughtful and specific recommendations pertaining to the C/I/P and, separately, its director. These may include recommendations as to whether the C/I/P should be continued and/or whether the director should be reappointed. Although not typical, the VPR may meet with the review team at any point depending on the complexity of the review or issues raised by it.

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

8. The director, presumably after consulting with other C/I/P leadership (and/or membership), provide the Office of Research with formal and specific written responses to the recommendations of the review team.

9. The review team reviews the responses of the director and provides the Office of Research with a written assessment (typically, this is a brief email that says “we have reviewed the director responses and defer to the Office of Research for ultimate assessment”).

10. The VPR writes a final memo describing his/her assessment of the recommendations and the responses to them, along with any other relevant observations. When appropriate or helpful, the VPR may choose to meet with the review team and possibly the director to discuss the report, the recommendations and the C/I/P responses.

11. Copies of all written materials pertaining to the review, including but not limited to the notification letter, self-study, review report, director responses to the report, and the VPR’s final memo, are provided to the Office of Accreditation and Institutional Effectiveness, concluding the review.

12. One year after completion of the review, the Office of Research notifies the C/I/P 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 Accreditation and Institutional Effectiveness. Meetings with the VPR, C/I/P director, members of the Review Team and other administrators may be held if progress is deemed insufficient or to address other concerns.