



# **Educational Quality Improvement: A Handbook for the Academic Audit**

## **2006-2007 Cohort**

Tennessee Board of Regents  
September 2006 Update

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## Academic Audit: An Overview

The Academic Audit, like more traditional program reviews, is a peer review process including a self-study and a site visit by peers from outside the institution. However, the similarities end there. Unlike the traditional approach to program evaluation, this process emphasizes self-reflection and self-improvement rather than compliance with predetermined standards. The purpose of an academic audit is to encourage departments or programs to evaluate their “education quality processes” – the key faculty activities required to produce, assure, and regularly improve the quality of teaching and learning. An audit asks how faculty approach educational decision-making and how they organize their work, using the resources available to them and working collegially to provide a quality education in the best interests of the discipline and student learning.

### I. Elements of the Academic Audit:

#### The Self Study:

- ❖ Departments examine the following five focal areas of the educational process by asking common sense questions:
  - *Determining Learning Objectives*
    - Have we consciously considered what students who complete our courses/program should know and be able to do? For employment? For their abilities/responsibilities as citizens? Do we use and document information gathered from employers, former students, senior institutions? Do we identify and learn from best practice, evaluate student outcome goals of comparable departments in other institutions?
  - *Designing Curriculum and Co-curriculum*
    - How do we determine what is taught, in what order, from what perspective? Do we work collaboratively on curriculum design? How do we decide what resources and resource materials will be used as content vehicles? Do we consciously consider how the course design relates to other courses students will take as part of this program? Do we consider out-of-classroom activities that could complement or be integrated into the curriculum? Do we identify and learn from best practice, evaluate curricula of comparable departments in other institutions?
  - *Designing Teaching and Learning Methods*
    - How are teaching and learning organized for students? What methods will be used to expose students to material for the first time? To answer questions and provide interpretation? To stimulate student involvement with the material? To provide feedback on student work? Do we analyze teaching and learning processes on a regular basis? Do we strive for coherence in the department’s curriculum and educational processes? Do we work collaboratively on process design? Do we identify and learn from best practice, evaluate teaching and learning methods of comparable departments in ours and other institutions?

- *Developing Student Learning Assessment*
    - What measures and indicators do we use to assess student learning? Have we defined indicators or measures of achievement based upon our stated learning objectives? Do we assess performance only at the end of the course/program or do we compare beginning and ending performance to ascertain value added? Who is responsible for assessment? Do we work collaboratively on assessment design, implementation, and analysis? Do we base decisions on facts? Do we identify and learn from best practice, evaluate assessment practices of comparable departments in ours and other institutions?
  - *Assuring Implementation of Quality Education*
    - Are we organized to ensure that our mutual departmental objectives and priorities are implemented consistently? How do we assure ourselves that content is delivered as intended, that teaching and learning processes are being implemented appropriately and consistently, that assessments are conducted as planned and the results used effectively? Do we work collaboratively to implement improvement initiatives? Do we identify and learn from best practice, evaluate quality assurance practices of comparable departments in ours and other institutions?
- ❖ Departments write a self-study report (maximum 20 pages):
- Describing the current state of their efforts to improve student learning and the academic quality of their programs
  - Describing their strengths and weaknesses in the five focal areas
  - Citing and briefly describing documentation supporting exemplary practices
  - Describing initiatives to address practices that need improvement
  - Describing implementation plan(s) for improvement initiative(s) with the highest priority

**The Peer Review:**

- Auditors are volunteers (primarily faculty) who receive training on education quality processes and audit methodology.
- Audit teams (3-4 members) will most likely come from other TBR institutions.
- Because the auditors will be focusing on quality processes, they do not have to come from the academic discipline of the department being audited though TBR strives to have faculty from the discipline on the team.
- Audit visits are typically one day per department.
- Auditors meet with departmental leadership, faculty, and students.
- Auditors ask questions similar to the self-study questions cited above.
- Auditors write a report:
  - highlighting examples of exemplary practice,
  - noting areas for improvement, and
  - evaluating a department's approach to educational quality practices.

**II. Principles of the Academic Audit:** While there is no “hidden agenda” and no “right way” to approach the Academic Audit process, the Academic Audit openly advocates the following principles as foundations of good educational practice.

- Define quality in terms of outcomes
  - Learning outcomes should pertain to what is or will become important for the department’s students.
  - Learning, not teaching per se, is what ultimately matters.
- Focus on process
  - Departments should analyze how teachers teach, how students learn, and how to best approach learning assessment.
  - Departments should study their discipline’s literature and collect data on what works well and what doesn’t.
  - Experimentation with active learning should be encouraged.
  - Faculty should be encouraged to share and adopt their colleague’s successful teaching innovations.
- Work collaboratively
  - Teamwork and consensus lead to total faculty ownership of and responsibility for all aspects of the curriculum and make everyone accountable for the success of students.
  - Dialogue and collaboration should be encouraged over territoriality and the “lone wolf” approach.
- Base decisions on evidence
  - Departments should collect data to find out what students need.
  - Data should be analyzed and findings incorporated in the design of curricula, learning processes, and assessment methods.
- Strive for coherence
  - Courses should build upon one another to provide necessary breadth and depth.
  - Assessment should be aligned with learning objectives.
- Learn from best practice
  - Faculty should seek out good practices in comparable departments and institutions and adapt the best to their own circumstances.
  - Faculty should share best practices and help “raise the bar” for their department.
- Make continuous improvement a priority
  - Departments should continually and consciously strive to improve teaching and learning.

Based upon *Education Quality Improvement: A Handbook for Departments* by Dr. William Massy, Professor emeritus of education and business administration at Stanford University and president of the Jackson Hole Higher Education Group.

# **General Timeline for Academic Audit**

<b>Orientation Session for Next Academic Year's Cohort</b>	<b>June</b>
<b>Worksession for Self-Study Teams</b>	<b>October</b>
<b>Recommendation of Auditors &amp; Review Date Due to TBR</b>	<b>November 15</b>
<b>Self-Study Due to TBR</b>	<b>January 31</b>
<b>Chairs and Audit Teams Formally Appointed</b>	<b>January 31</b>
<b>Training for Audit Team Members (Regional Sessions)</b>	<b>February</b>
<b>Audit Team Visit to Campus</b>	<b>April</b>
<b>Audit Team Report Due to TBR</b>	<b>May 15</b>
<b>Audit Team Report Submitted to Chief Academic Officer</b>	<b>June 1</b>
<b>Program Response and Followup Report</b>	<b>Following Fall</b>

# Guidance Notes for Self Studies

Updated 6/06

The self-study should be organized into the four sections listed below. We have set the length of the self-study at a maximum of 20 single-spaced pages of 12 point type plus up to 10 appendix pages. In addition to making the auditors' task easier, the page limit places a premium on crisp communication. Below, we elaborate on what should be included in each section and why. *The self-study should be submitted to TBR as one document and as an Adobe PDF file.*

## 1. Introduction [One page summary]

We suggest you begin this section with a few paragraphs in which you introduce the reader to your program. This might include such elements as an overview of current student demographics, the role and scope of the program, a very brief history if applicable to an understanding of the program's current status, etc. Not only will this introduction be helpful to the peer auditors, but it can also serve faculty team members as the first step in the process of widening their focal lens beyond the classroom toward a more holistic view of the program and its students

## 2. Overall Performance [About 3 pages not counting any appendix tables]

We suggest you begin this section with an overall assessment of your unit's education quality and how you work together as a faculty to improve quality. The audit team will ask about the logic and evidence behind your assessment, but it will not collect additional evidence nor substitute its judgment about education quality for yours. Your objective is to convince the auditors that the statement is insightful, not necessarily that you deliver exemplary education quality. For example, candid descriptions of weakness, buttressed by evidence, will be received better than unsupported or puffed-up claims of excellence.

## 3. Performance by Focal Area [About 2 or 3 pages per focal area]

Here you reflect on your performance in each of the five focal areas. For reference, the focal areas are: (1) Learning Objectives; (2) Curriculum and Co-Curriculum; (3) Teaching and Learning; (4) Student Learning Assessment; and (5) Quality Assurance. We suggest that your team discussions proceed back and forth among the focal areas and sub-questions as a means of gaining insight regarding the interconnectedness of the focal areas and your unit's strengths and weaknesses in applying the quality principles to these focal areas. This section represents the heart of your self-study report and provides groundwork for consideration of improvement initiatives.

Please provide the following for each focal area.

- A short narrative that describes your department's quality processes as they pertain to the focal area. The list of questions developed by Bill Kirkwood and Cynthia Burnley and provided in the document, *Academic Audit Focal Areas: Questions for Faculty Discussion*, is useful starting point for your reflections.

- Feel free to write the narrative in whatever form works for you—for example, it is not necessary call out the questions as separate sub-headings.
- Please evaluate your quality processes in each focal area in light of the seven quality principles (wherever applicable). The quality principles should be integrated into your discussions of the focal areas not treated as separate areas to address.
- ***Important note:* If your department or program is participating in the Academic Audit process as a means of fulfilling a requirement in Tennessee’s Performance Funding Program, please pay particular attention to the additional criteria on the Academic Audit Summary Sheet found on pages 18 and 19 of this document. Your onsite review team will be asked to judge if the department has achieved these standards.**
- If your exploration of a focal area reveals weaknesses or opportunities for improvement in that focal area, say so in your report. The purpose of the self-study is to identify successes and areas for improvement. You do not have to find that all is well in each focal area.

**4. Potential Recommendations and Associated Initiatives** [The description of each initiative should not exceed 1 page.]

Now the focus becomes strictly formative. Having assessed your overall performance and your education quality processes, you are asked to formulate some specific initiatives for improvement. If you have identified a specific, significant weakness in a focal area, you **MUST** indicate how you plan to correct the weakness. If you see an opportunity to improve on already good performance in a focal area, you **MAY** present an idea for achieving this improvement. The goal is to sketch out actions that would have a strong positive impact on education quality.

As you describe initiatives, please demonstrate that you:

- Clearly state what needs to be accomplished and why.
- Outline the tasks required to accomplish the objective(s).
- Indicate how you will gauge whether the initiative is being implemented as planned.
- Demonstrate that your unit is capable of carrying out the initiative, especially in light of other demands on your time and resources. If you need additional support to accomplish the initiative, say so.

In short, you should provide enough information to demonstrate that the initiatives are well thought out and feasible. Above all, your plan should confirm the participants’ enthusiastic commitment to move forward and the department’s support of the effort.

**5. Matrix of Improvement Initiatives** [About 1 page.]

Self-studies will conclude with detailed commitments for improvement and a structure for assessing progress. Please provide a matrix which provides the following information for each initiative discussed in section 4 that is being put forward as a formal recommendation by the department/program. It is important that the self-study be clear in this section as the review team



will work from these details as they affirm the recommendations of the department and consider other recommendations that are merited.

1. Department recommendation
2. Brief description of the recommended initiative and its end result
3. Who will have overall responsibility for the initiative
4. Who will participate
5. When work on the initiative will begin
6. How long the work is expected to take

# Academic Audit Focal Areas: Questions for Faculty Discussion

Updated 11/05

The following questions are designed help faculty examine the processes by which you are pursuing your goals for student learning in a program of study. Although most of these questions seem to call for “yes” or “no” answers, they are meant to prompt wider discussions. If you answer “yes” to a question, your self-study should briefly describe the “who, what, when, where, and how” of that answer, and you should be prepared to provide more details or examples when the Audit team visits. If you answer “no,” the self-study should discuss whether you wish to improve in this regard and how you plan to do so.

Note: Some of the questions below are modified versions of those in The Jackson Hole Higher Education Group, Inc. (July 24, 2004). *The Tennessee Board of Regents Academic Audit Project: Guidance Notes for Self Studies.*

## Learning Objectives

- ▶ Have we explicitly defined what we want students who complete our program to know and be able to do? (e.g., as employees, as graduate students, as citizens)
- ▶ Do we work collaboratively to define program learning objectives, or is the task delegated to one or a few individuals?
- ▶ Do we consult sources beyond our own faculty when defining program learning objectives? (e.g., employers, students or graduates, comparable programs in other institutions, professional associations)
- ▶ Do we communicate program learning objectives to students, employers or other stakeholders?
- ▶ Do we periodically review program learning objectives to see how they might be improved?
- ▶ (See also questions in the remaining focal areas on how we use program learning objectives.)

## Curriculum and Co-curriculum

- ▶ Do we consciously design the curriculum and co-curriculum to achieve program learning objectives?
- ▶ Do we work collaboratively to design the curriculum and co-curriculum, or do they reflect our individual preferences or decisions?
- ▶ Do we consider out-of-classroom activities that could complement or be integrated into the curriculum?
- ▶ Do we consult sources beyond our own faculty when designing the curriculum and co-curriculum? (e.g., employers, students or graduates, comparable programs in other institutions, professional associations)
- ▶ Do we clearly communicate curricular and co-curricular requirements and the reasoning behind these requirements to students?
- ▶ Do we periodically review the curriculum and co-curriculum to see how they might be improved?

## Teaching and Learning Methods

- ▶ Do we consciously consider program and course learning objectives when deciding which teaching methods we will use in our courses?
- ▶ Do we discuss our teaching practices with each other and work collaboratively to improve teaching and learning, or is teaching primarily an individual responsibility?
- ▶ Do we consult sources beyond our own faculty when selecting our teaching practices? (e.g., employers, students or graduates, comparable programs in other institutions, professional associations)
- ▶ Do we identify best practices in teaching and use this information to improve our teaching?
- ▶ Do we periodically review our teaching methods to see how they might be improved?

## Student Learning Assessment

- ▶ Are we measuring the degree to which our students are achieving program learning objectives?
- ▶ Do we work collaboratively to develop and implement assessments of program learning objectives, or are these tasks delegated to one or a few individuals?
- ▶ Do we consult sources beyond our own faculty when designing assessments of program learning objectives? (e.g., employers, students or graduates, comparable programs in other institutions, professional associations)
- ▶ Do we discuss assessment data and use our findings to improve our curriculum, co-curriculum and teaching practices?
- ▶ Do we identify best practices in assessment of program learning objectives and use this information to improve our assessments?
- ▶ Do we periodically review our assessment methods to see how they might be improved?

## Quality Assurance

- ▶ How do we assure ourselves that each course in the curriculum addresses agreed upon content, that sound teaching practices are carried out appropriately and consistently, that assessments are conducted as planned, and that agreed upon plans to improve courses or the program as a whole are implemented by those responsible?
- ▶ How do we assure ourselves that other faculty activities affecting students, such as academic advisement, are being performed appropriately and consistently?
- ▶ Do we provide meaningful, timely feedback and recognition to faculty regarding how they are performing work related to the curriculum, teaching and learning, assessment, and other practices affecting students?
- ▶ Do we identify best practices in quality assurance and use this information to improve how we assure that the work of the program is performed appropriately and consistently?
- ▶ Do we periodically review our quality assurance practices to see how they might be improved?

# Academic Audit Focal Areas: Sources of Evidence

Update 11/05

## Learning Objectives

- Student demographics: Major and/or educational objective; age; gender; GPA and/or results of placement tests
- Enrolled student surveys (institutional or targeted) or interviews
- Alumni/graduate surveys (institutional or targeted) or interviews
- Employer surveys (institutional or targeted) or interviews
- Advisory board/committee meeting minutes
- Feedback from faculty teaching courses for which yours are pre-requisites
- Peer feedback from senior/graduate institutions
- Competencies/outcomes (syllabi) of senior/graduate programs in your discipline
- National standards for your discipline: competencies, outcomes
- Syllabi

## Curriculum and Co-curriculum

- Departmental/institutional policies for curriculum development
- Minutes/notes from faculty meetings, curriculum development/textbook selection committees, etc.
- Curricula from peer programs in the discipline and from senior/graduate programs
- National standards for curriculum in your discipline
- Feedback from stakeholders (students, graduates, employers, advisory boards)
- Documentation of curriculum revision (course inventory forms)
- Syllabi

## Teaching and Learning Methods

- Current research/literature on effective teaching methodology in the discipline
- Minutes/notes from faculty meetings
- Feedback from stakeholders (students, graduates, employers, advisory boards)
- Learning styles inventory assessments
- Evaluations by students; supervisors
- End of course surveys
- Peer mentoring; classroom observations
- Annual personal goals and objectives
- Course analysis documents
- Assessments of student success in different instructional settings (web vs. traditional); other types of student success analysis – withdrawal rates, grade distribution, success in subsequent courses
- Professional development (internal or external); disciplinary or pedagogical
- Ongoing professional memberships

## **Student Learning Assessment**

- Documentation of key learning quality indicators
- Feedback from stakeholders (students, graduates, employers, advisory boards)
- Minutes/notes from faculty meetings
- Pre-and-post tests
- Exit testing through departmental/programmatic final assessment (national, collaborative or local instruments)
- Foundation testing such as MAPP (Academic Profile)
- Student portfolios, capstone course projects, coop or internship supervisor evaluations
- Test item analysis
- Test/assessment bank or library
- Job placement rates
- Acceptance into senior/graduate programs
- Success (GPA/retention) in senior/graduate programs

## **Quality Assurance**

- Departmental/institutional policies that support collaboration, assessment, professional development
- Assessment plans, review schedules, meeting calendars, etc.
- Benchmarking for national comparison (NSSE/CCSSE, NCCBP, etc.)
- Regularly published and shared information about progress on improvement initiatives, use of results

# Preparation for On-site Visit

Updated 6/06

The following notes represent suggested activities for the team prior to the on-site visit and a general timeline (if applicable) for completing these activities. Though the chair of the visiting committee (to be appointed by TBR) will lead most of these activities, it is certainly suggested that other team members oversee one or more of the specific items. Questions regarding these steps should be addressed to the TBR Office of Academic Affairs. Dr. Houston Davis, AVCAA, will work with chairs and visiting team members to ensure proper preparation and receipt of appropriate resources. Contact him at 615/366-3975 or [houston.davis@tbr.edu](mailto:houston.davis@tbr.edu).

1. **Recommendation of Auditors and Setting of Review Date.** Each campus should submit the names of faculty members from other TBR institutions that would be particularly suited to serve on the onsite audit review team(s) in April. Each program may select up to two faculty in the discipline that they would like to have on the audit team. These nominations should be submitted to Houston Davis by no later than **November 15** with a brief description of the nominees' academic credentials. Please also provide contact information (email and phone number) so that they can be included in auditor training sessions in January and early February. At this same time, each program/department that is being audited should put forward its proposed date in April that the on-site visit will occur.
2. **Tentative Academic Audit Schedule.** Each campus should submit a tentative academic audit schedule when the self-study document is submitted to TBR. For the current year, this due date is set for **January 31, 2007**. In addition to the date for the campus visit and the planned agenda, this tentative schedule should include information about hotel accommodations and contact information for the designated Campus Contact.
3. **Assignment of Chairs and Teams.** TBR will assign the chairs and teams for each program's academic audit with teams including the recommended faculty noted above in #1. The board will pay for travel costs and any necessary hotel accommodations for the team members. Any meals will be provided by the host campus during the Academic Audit on-site visit.
4. **Program Self-Study.** The self-study document will be provided to the Audit Team at least four weeks prior to the scheduled visit. This document will be emailed to the chair and team members by the TBR Office of Academic Affairs. Included in this email will be the tentative schedule for the visit and a copy of the Academic Audit Handbook.
5. **Local Arrangements.** The chair of the visiting team should make contact with the designated campus contact at least three weeks prior to the scheduled visit. This conversation should assure that both parties are aware of local arrangements, meeting rooms, tentatively scheduled meetings with faculty and students, and available work space/materials for the visiting team.
6. **Audit Team Communication.** If at all possible, the team should find time for a conference call to discuss questions surrounding division of work and any other pre-visit details. If a phone call is not possible, it is recommended that email exchange between the team members and the chair be open and circulated to all members.
7. **Assignment of Responsibilities.** Many of the audit team members from the past two years advised that all teams should assign a specific "focal area" to each team member. This allows that team member to focus on that area in their reading of the self-study document as well as their planning for questions and exploration during the site visit.
8. **Initial Meeting of the Team.** It is ideal for the team to be able to get together the evening/night before the visit. If this is not possible, the schedule for the site-visit should remain flexible to allow a breakfast meeting of the team at the hotel prior to going over to the campus for the initial meeting with campus officials.

# Suggested Academic Audit Schedule

Updated 6/06

Academic Audit Schedule  
Academic Department Name, Institution  
Date of Visit

<u>Session</u>	<u>Time/Attendees</u>	<u>Location</u>
Breakfast and Team Meeting at Hotel	7:30am – 8:15am Audit Team	Hotel, Room/Location
Opening Session & Introductions	8:30am – 9:00am Audit Team Faculty and Administrators	ABC Bldg, Room 1
Small Group Meeting #1	9:00am – 10:00am Audit Team Faculty Members	ABC Bldg, Room 2
Small Group Meeting #2	10:15am – 11:00am Audit Team Students	ABC Bldg, Room 2
Small Group Meeting #3	11:15am – 12:15pm Audit Team Faculty Members	ABC Bldg, Room 2
Working Lunch	12:15pm – 1:30pm Audit Team	ABC Bldg, Room 1
Flexible Meeting and Work Time	1:30pm – 3:30pm Audit Team	ABC Bldg, Room 2
	<i>-Possible time for materials review, tours, or additional meetings with faculty or students</i> <i>-Time for group to discuss observations and work on reports</i>	
Exit Session	3:30pm – 4:00pm Audit Team Faculty and Administrators	ABC Bldg, Room 1
	<i>-Brief report of initial commendations, affirmations, and recommendations</i> <i>-If the performance funding summary sheet is required, a copy of that sheet must be left with the campus contact prior to departure</i> <i>-Department and campus will get opportunity to respond to the written report.</i>	

## Logistics Information

**Campus Contact for Academic Audit**– Name, Position, Phone, Email

**Hotel Accommodations** – Hotel Name, Address, Phone

# Academic Audit Onsite Evaluation Checklist

Institution: \_\_\_\_\_

Program: \_\_\_\_\_

CIP Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Degree Level:  Certificate  Associate  Baccalaureate  Master's  Doctoral

## Instructions for Audit Chairs and Teams

### Part I: Academic Audit Visiting Team Report -- Record of Commendations, Affirmations, and Recommendations

This form must be completed by each audit review team prior to concluding the visit. The original will be forwarded to TBR but a copy must be left with the department prior to departure. All observations included on this form should be represented as commendations, affirmations, or recommendations. Please be concise in your descriptions as you will have opportunity to expand upon your justification for each item in your written report due to TBR by May 15th.

### Part II: Academic Audit Summary Sheet (only for use if program is being reviewed for Performance Funding purposes)

This form is only to be completed if the program review is serving as the performance funding review. Using the Academic Audit Summary Sheet complete the 25 elements on the evaluation results checklist (marking "met" or "not met"). This exercise must be completed and signed by the team prior to the Exit Session. The original will be forwarded to TBR but a copy must be left with the department prior to departure.

### Part III: Narrative Evaluation and Written Report

The Audit Chair and Team will use their evaluations indicated on the Audit Visiting Team Report and Academic Audit Summary Sheet (if used for Performance Funding purposes) as the basis of a written report. Summarized findings from the self-study report and on-site visit will represent a narrative report of the team's conclusions and the final responsibility of the visiting team. The template for completing this report (limited to 10 pages) is attached. This report is due to TBR on May 15.

The Audit Evaluation will become part of the record of the academic program review and will be shared with the academic department/unit, the college, and the central administration, as well as the Tennessee Higher Education Commission. Each department/campus will be provided opportunity to respond and comment on the written report.

Audit Chair's name, title, and institution: \_\_\_\_\_

Audit Chair's signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Names, titles, institutions, and signatures of other Audit Team members:

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# Academic Audit Visiting Team Report

## Record of Commendations, Affirmations, and Recommendations

This form must be completed by each audit review team prior to concluding the visit. All observations included on this form should be represented as commendations, affirmations, or recommendations. Please be concise in your descriptions as you will have opportunity to expand upon your justification for each item in your written report due to TBR by May 15th.

This document should serve as the outline of information to be disclosed during the exit session with the department. The original signed copy is to be forwarded to TBR with one copy left with the campus audit contact or department chairperson prior to leaving campus.

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### Total Number of Commendations

Commendation #1 –

Commendation #2 –

Commendation #3 –

Commendation #4 –

\*\*\*\*\*

### Total Number of Affirmations

Affirmation #1 –

Affirmation #2 –

Affirmation #3 –

Affirmation #4 –

\*\*\*\*\*

**Total Number of Recommendations**

Recommendation #1 –

Recommendation #2 –

Recommendation #3 –

Recommendation #4 –

**Academic Audit Summary Sheet**  
**Effective Fall Semester 2005 and Required for Performance Funding Exercises**

**Institution:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Program:** \_\_\_\_\_  
Program Title CIP Code

**Instructions for External Reviewers:**

In accordance with the 2005-10 Performance Funding guidelines of the Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC), each non-accreditable undergraduate program undergoes either an academic audit or external peer review according to a pre-approved review cycle.

The criteria used to evaluate a program appear in the following "Academic Audit Summary Sheet." The Summary Sheet lists 25 items grouped into eight categories. THEC will use the items designated with an asterisk (\*) to assess Standard 1C when the Academic Audit process is used. The criteria in the eighth category, Support, may be used by the institution and submitted as part of the Performance Funding report. If the Academic Audit process did not include information about items 8.1 - 8.3, they should be marked N/A. These items will not be included in the THEC Performance Funding points.

These summary items have been selected based on the Academic Audit Focal Areas to be consistent with the spirit and process of the Academic Audit. The program faculty has provided a self-study document that includes information for each item within the Focal Areas. Supporting documents will be available as specified in the self study. As the Academic Audit Team Leader, you should assess this and other evidence observed during the site visit to determine whether the process has met each item within a category. A checkmark should be placed in the appropriate box to indicate whether you believe that a program has "met" or "not met" each item in the table. If a particular item is inappropriate or not applicable to the program, the item should be marked "NA".

This Academic Audit Summary Sheet will be sent to the appropriate campus official for inclusion in the Annual Performance Funding Report. When combined with the self study and the written report prepared by the visiting team, the Summary Sheet will facilitate institutional development of a program action plan to ensure continuous quality improvement.

Your judgment of the criteria designated by an asterisk on this form (see categories 1-6) will be used in allocating state funds for the community college or university's budget.

**Name, Title, and Institutional Affiliation of Visiting Team Chair:**

**Name:**

**Title:**

**Institution:**

**Signature and Date:**

## Academic Audit Summary Sheet

Summary Items for			Evaluation Results	
<b>1. LEARNING OBJECTIVES</b>			<b>Met</b>	<b>Not Met</b>
*	1.1	The faculty completed an honest analysis of their process for developing learning objectives for the program, considering measurability, clarity, and what students need to know.		
*	1.2	The faculty have documented or proposed a process for developing learning objectives that are based on realistic and appropriate evidence.		
*	1.3	The faculty have documented or proposed specific plans to take best practices and appropriate benchmarks into account in the analysis of learning objectives.		
<b>2. CURRICULUM AND CO-CURRICULUM</b>			<b>Met</b>	<b>Not Met</b>
*	2.1	The faculty completed an honest analysis of the extent to which they collaborate effectively on the design of curriculum and planned improvements.		
*	2.2	The faculty have documented or proposed a plan for analyzing the content and sequencing of courses in terms of achieving program learning objectives.		
*	2.3	The faculty have documented or proposed a plan for determining the soundness of curriculum and co-curriculum based on appropriate evidence, including comparison with best practices where appropriate.		
<b>3. TEACHING AND LEARNING PROCESSES</b>			<b>Met</b>	<b>Not Met</b>
*	3.1	The faculty examined the extent to which there is focus on the actual process of teaching and learning throughout the program.		
*	3.2	The faculty have documented or proposed a plan that ensures the use of instructional methods and materials for achieving student mastery of learning objectives.		
*	3.3	The faculty have analyzed the extent to which there is true, ongoing collaboration in the design and delivery of the teaching and learning processes of the program.		
<b>4. STUDENT LEARNING ASSESSMENT</b>			<b>Met</b>	<b>Not Met</b>
*	4.1	The faculty have documented or proposed key quality indicators that are based on the learning objectives of the program.		
*	4.2	The faculty have documented or proposed assessments of student learning that are grounded in best practices and appropriate comparisons.		
*	4.3	The faculty have documented or proposed a plan for using student learning assessments that lead to continuous improvements in the program.		
*	4.4	The program plan for improvement will use multiple measures to assess student learning and program effectiveness.		
<b>5. QUALITY ASSURANCE</b>			<b>Met</b>	<b>Not Met</b>
*	5.1	There is a evident commitment to making continuous quality improvements in the program a top priority.		

*	5.2	The faculty have documented or proposed ways to ensure that quality assurance will be a systematic and regular process.		
<b>6. OVERALL ASSESSMENT</b>			<b>Met</b>	<b>Not Met</b>
*	6.1	The Academic Audit process was faculty driven		
*	6.2	The Academic Audit process (self-study and visit) includes descriptions of the program's quality processes, including all five domains.		
*	6.3	The faculty accurately identified the program's level of Quality Process Maturity as a result of the Academic Audit process.		
*	6.4	The process resulted in a candid description of weaknesses in program processes and suggestions for improvements.		
*	6.5	Overall, the visiting team <b>affirms</b> the honesty and thoroughness of the program faculty in completing the academic audit of this program.		
<b>7. FOLLOW-UP OF PREVIOUS ACADEMIC AUDIT</b>			<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
	7.1	An action plan was developed as a result of the previous Academic Audit.		
	7.2	Recommendations from the previous Academic Audit have been completed.		
<b>8. SUPPORT</b>			<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
	8.1	The program regularly evaluates its equipment and facilities, encouraging necessary improvements within the context of overall college resources.		
	8.2	The program's operating budget is consistent with the needs of the program.		
	8.3	The program has a history of enrollment and graduation rates sufficient to sustain high quality and cost-effectiveness.		

Revised 9/26/2005

\*Criterion included in the performance funding calculation.

# Audit Report Guidelines

Updated 6/06

## Template for Academic Audit Team's Narrative Report

**NOTE: The report must be limited to ten (10) pages.**

### *General Report Outline*

- I. Introduction -- Briefly describe the unit/program evaluated, the date of the Audit, the protocol observed by the auditors, and other relevant information.**
- II. Overall Performance - What is the team's overall summary conclusion about the state of the unit/program?**
- III. Performance in the Focal Areas – How does the unit/program's work in each focal area measure up against the quality and evidentiary principles?**
  - A. Learning Objectives
  - B. Curriculum and Co-Curriculum
  - C. Teaching and Learning Methods
  - D. Student Learning Assessment
  - E. Quality Assurance
- IV. Conclusions. Briefly indicate the team's conclusions regarding the following by providing each in bulleted or numbered sequence:**
  - A. Commendations – What processes, practices, initiatives, and commitments are particularly commendable and merit recognition?
  - B. Affirmations – What processes, practices, or plans warrant the team's affirmation and encouragement?
  - C. Recommendations – What are some areas for improvement identified by the team on the basis of the unit/program's self study and site visit?

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### *Key Themes and Tips for Writing Audit Reports and Report Template*

It is important for respondents to observe the following suggestions when developing the Audit Report.<sup>1</sup>

1. The purpose of the report is to summarize findings from the self study report and the visit.

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<sup>1</sup> Key themes taken from materials provided by Dr. Bill Massy during work with Tennessee Board of Regents in the 2004-05 Pilot Phase of Academic Audit.

2. Keep the tone of the report developmental – focus on how the department can improve on its own. Address what it will work on as a result of the review.
3. The report is the synthesis of the teaching and research focal areas pulled together by the team leader.
4. Provide feedback on all five themes in focal areas in summary form and give overview perceptions.
5. Reports are written by the audit team and assignments are made at the visit, and members provide bullet-type comments.
6. Use the debriefing time to gather ideas from members and create an overview of the report.
7. At the visit, agree on a report format and how long each section should be. Find some consensus from the group and develop a strategy for the report (e.g. bullet comments only).
8. At the visit there is an oral debriefing with the department/unit before the team arrives. The team decides on overall points. Use these themes to provide the context for the report and the executive summary.
9. Ask for evidence as you gather impressions. Don't build summary points around comments from one faculty member or one small group of students – look for confirming evidence.
10. Keep it simple and tell them what they did well as well as what they can do to improve. Point out what they can do in other areas to use the same strategies to improve other areas.

NOTE: Write the report so that it is helpful for the department, but also write it as if others will read it (i.e., be sensitive to language and tone of comments).