Cape Cod Community College
DISCIPLINE REVIEW PROCESS

Discipline review/assessment is a systematic and introspective process designed to ensure a curricular area’s continuous improvement. Under the leadership of a division dean, department chair and/or program coordinator, the process should be completed in collaboration with discipline faculty. In addition to faculty collaboration, the review process must include input from current and former students, upper division faculty from transfer institutions, and a spectrum of graduate employers, advisory committee members, and business representatives. Other appropriate college personnel may also participate as needed.

PURPOSE
Discipline review’s purpose is to examine, through both internal and external perspectives, a discipline’s effectiveness. The review assesses and evaluates a curriculum, its stated outcomes, and its supporting resources in order to determine if that discipline fulfills its purposes within its and the overall curriculum. The process necessitates documenting successful efforts, identifying needs, and ensuring compliance with the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) criteria. The results of the review process will serve as a tool for continuous discipline improvement and will impact the planning and budgeting activities at both the institution and department level.

PLAN
Discipline review is, in fact, a self-study conducted by discipline personnel. The process is an opportunity to support division deans/department chairs/program coordinators and faculty in determining and documenting their discipline’s effectiveness. The process addresses areas including curriculum, graduates’ competencies, transferability, and linkages to business and industry, if appropriate, to determine if a discipline’s stated mission, goals, and objectives are being met.

Discipline personnel will answer questions included in the Review Instrument and collect supporting documents to attach to the self-study. Responses to the instrument’s questions and its supporting attachments must document the effectiveness, currency, and community need for the discipline’s stated outcomes.

CRITICAL SUCCESS INDICATORS, MEASURES AND STANDARDS
The following critical success indicators, measures and standards for successful discipline operation have been developed to support NEASC requirements and the college’s goals and objectives.

Identified Critical Success Indicators include:
   I. Discipline Mission
   II. Discipline Design
   III. Discipline Outcomes
   IV. Discipline Resources
   V. Discipline Support Services

The review instrument is structured so that these five indicators become the major sections of the self-study; each section contains particular measures and standards critical to the success of the discipline. A complete, detailed description of the self-study instrument can be found in the document Critical Success Indicators, Measures and Standards.

PROCEDURE: IMPLEMENTING DISCIPLINE REVIEW
The procedure for implementing Discipline Review includes: 1) selecting disciplines (annually); 2) orienting division deans/department chairs/program coordinators; 3) writing the self-study; 4) gathering and documenting evidence; 5) completing the documents; 6) reviewing drafts with college president and vice president; 7) arranging a visit by the review team; 8) writing the recommendations; 9) developing the action plan; and 10) closing the loop.

1. Selecting the Disciplines — The president, in conjunction with the vice president, division deans, and department chairs/program coordinators, will identify disciplines to be reviewed during each academic year.
Disciplines will conduct reviews during the fall semester, beginning in September, in order to complete the self-study by mid-January, prior to the beginning of the planning/budgeting processes. After the first cycle, disciplines will be placed on an automatic schedule for subsequent reviews.

2. Program Orientation for the Review Process — Department chairs/program coordinators and faculty will attend an orientation session along with their division dean to review the process and the instructions for completing the review. The Vice President of Academic and Student affairs will identify the members of a Discipline Review Team. The Office of Academic Research will conduct the training. Mentors will be identified who will be able to provide assistance in responding to the self-study documents.

3. Writing the Self-Study — Writing the self-study necessitates using the Discipline Review Instrument. Each question should be answered as it pertains to the area. If a question does not pertain to a specific discipline, the response would be “non applicable.”

All sections of the review instrument must be completed; answers should be concise. Appropriate supporting documentation should be attached. Extensive documents such as all discipline syllabi and course outlines should be retained in the division dean/department chair/program coordinator’s office and made available to the External Consultant. To facilitate writing the self-study, forms are provided for check-listing attached items and items provided as evidence.

The Office of Academic Research will provide statistical data for those measures or standards requiring responses that include enrollment numbers, graduates, contact hours, etc. However, the discipline is responsible for reviewing the data for accuracy and for contacting Academic Research concerning any discrepancies.

Division deans/department chairs/program coordinators and faculty are expected to interact directly with representatives from transfer institutions, employers, advisory committee members, current students, and former graduates. These interactions should address the ongoing need for the discipline in the community as well as the graduates’ levels of competency.

Once the review instrument is completed, the division dean/department chair/program coordinator will summarize the discipline’s strengths and weaknesses and then list and prioritize the recommendations made as a result of the self-evaluation. These recommendations are extremely important and will be considered by the Review Team in making their final recommendations for discipline improvement or change.

Division deans/department chairs/program coordinators must complete the self-study’s documentation in electronic format. They will be provided with a disk containing files for the review instrument, all forms, checklists, summary sheets for strengths, weaknesses and recommendations, and cover page. In addition, the disk will include the following files:

- the review process (this document);
- a checklist for completing the process;
- the college’s mission and goals;
- the critical success indicators, measures and standards.

4. Providing Attachments and Evidence — Attachments or evidence may be required for each of the critical success indicators. Instructions to attach documents or provide evidence are printed in bold in the Review instrument when such documentation is required.

5. Assembling and Submitting the Document — Once the self-study with attachments is complete, hard copies should be made for the division dean/department chair/program coordinator, the vice president, and the president. (The original disk and hard copy will remain with the division dean/department chair/program coordinator.) Hard copies should be organized in three-hole binders with tabs identifying the major sections of the self-study. (See Coordinators/Department Chair’s Checklist for Document Completion for details.)

Once the president and vice president (as verified by their signatures) review the self-study, copies of the completed signature page should be inserted as the cover page in each of the binders. After the required
signatures are obtained, one hard copy and one disk copy of the self-study is to be submitted to the Academic Research Office.

6. **Reviewing the Documents** — The vice president and college president review the discipline’s self-study. The Academic Research Office will review the documents for completeness, contact the External Consultant and provide copies of the Discipline Review materials. The External Consultant will review the self-study and plan the on-site visit with the division dean/department chair/program coordinator.

7. **The External Consultant and Program Visit** — The External Consultant should be a content expert from the discipline will review the program self-study prior to its on-site visit.

8. **Recommendations** — The External Consultant will examine the recommendations contained in the self-study report. After the Team’s on-site visit, they will write a final written report of the findings, recommendations, and/or commendations to submit to the division dean/department chair/program coordinator, with copies to the vice president, president, and dean of academic research.

9. **Planning Action** — The division dean/department chair/program coordinator will work with the vice president to prepare an action plan that addresses discipline weaknesses (if any), review the team’s recommendations, and prepare a list of priorities for improving the discipline. A copy of the action plan must become part of the discipline’s planning and budgeting processes.

10. **Closing the Loop** — Annual review/reports may be required to address the Review Team’s recommendations. The division dean/department chair/program coordinator and vice president will complete these reports. The annual report should reflect specific actions and progress towards improvement. Copies of the annual reports should be sent to the president, vice president, and the dean of academic research.

In the fifth year, the process begins again.

**RESPONSIBILITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY**

The College assumes responsibility and accountability for the Discipline Review Process.

**College**

*Presidents and Vice presidents*: Determine, in conjunction with division deans/department chairs/program coordinators, the specific disciplines to be reviewed each year; reviews and signs off on completed self-studies; vice president collaborates with division deans/department chairs/program coordinators on action plan; reviews and signs off on action plan.

*Division Deans/Department Chairs/Program Coordinators*: Determine, as stated above, the year for completing the discipline review; research, write, and document the self-study; select, in conjunction with the vice president, the visiting review team members; sign off on the completed, documented self-study; analyze the discipline’s strengths and weaknesses as identified in the self-study; submit the self-study and its supporting documentation to the appropriate parties; and write, along with the vice president, the action plan for the next planning and budgeting cycle; maintain accurate records associated with Discipline Review in his/her office.

*Office of Academic Research*: Distributes appropriate disks for the review; arranges/schedules site visits; conducts training for reviewers and site visit teams; maintains records of Discipline Review, including a copy of the original document submitted by the division dean/department chair/program coordinator maintains the External Consultant’s Recommendations for Improvement and the follow-up action related to these recommendations.

*Office of Institutional Research*: Provides and interprets institutional data.