

# Operational Assessment Reviewer's Guide

## Overview

The University of North Texas Health Science Center (UNTHSC) conducts Operational Assessments of each of its academic and academic support departments once every five years. The purpose of an Operational Assessment is to identify strengths and opportunities for improvement through a thorough, comprehensive, and objective review process of department operations. All operational activities in support of the department's normal scope of administrative, academic, research, clinical, and/or service activities are to be considered in the review, including budget and capital resources. The operational assessment should be seen as developmental and should result in continuous improvement of services, processes, and performance without being threatening in any degree or form. Specific operational assessment objectives may be identified for a particular department and recommended by the department to the Review Committee. The Operational Assessment is not intended to evaluate the curriculum of academic programs or departments.

## Review Committee

The Review Committee consists of at least two external reviewers and one internal reviewer with a maximum number of five members. A member of the department under review acts as a resource to the Review Committee by serving as the Operational Assessment Coordinator. He or she is the point of contact to provide the Review Committee with necessary background information on the department under review.

The department under review should contact Review Committee members to schedule the site visit and set up conference calls prior to the site visit to answer any of their questions about the Operational Assessment. The conference calls will provide the Review Committee the opportunity to ask questions about the Operational Assessment process, select a chair, and discuss any other issues relevant to the review.

The department under review will prepare a self-study using a standardized template and may choose to ask the Review Committee to focus on specific issues as part of the operational assessment. The Review Committee will conduct its review by analyzing the departmental self-study and conducting a one- to two-day site visit. The departmental self-study should be provided to Review Committee members prior to the site visit to allow members the opportunity to review the self-study in advance.

A typical site visit takes two days of time for Review Committee members, who may arrive on site by mid-day of day one, conduct meetings on the afternoon of the first day and morning of the second day, and conclude the site visit by early afternoon of the second day. An alternate format may have the Review Committee arrive later in the day and conduct the entire site visit the next day. During the site visit, the Review Committee typically meets with the respective dean/vice president, department leadership, faculty, staff, students, and/or other parties as arranged with, and agreed to in advance by, the chair/director of the department. The last meeting of the site visit is typically an exit briefing between the Review Committee and the

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department chair/director and respective dean/vice president to provide preliminary findings of the Review Committee.

Within four weeks of completion of the site visit, the Review Committee will submit its written report to the department chair/director. The written report should begin with an Executive Summary that summarizes the Review Committee's general observations, the department's strengths and opportunities for improvement, and responses to any specific questions/issues posed by the department. The report should contain the Review Committee's more detailed, aggregated answers to the "Questions to Guide Reviewers" listed below along with other observations that might contribute to increased efficiency and effectiveness. The Review Committee is free to assign responsibilities among the members, e.g., assigning members to be primary or secondary reviewers for specific sections.

### Questions to Guide Reviewers

#### 1. Programs, Services, and Organization

- 1.1. Describe the main programs and services provided by the department.

*Does the department adequately describe the main programs and services it provides, e.g., education, research, accounting, admissions, clinical care, etc.*

- 1.2. Attach a copy of the department organizational chart that shows how it is linked to other UNTHSC and UNT System components as appropriate.

*Does the administrative structure of the department support the accomplishment of its mission?*

*Are the reporting lines of the department adequate and is the department appropriately linked to other UNTHSC entities?*

- 1.3. List the department faculty and/or staff by position. Link to faculty profiles and/or attach CVs or resumes of faculty and professional staff.

*Do department faculty and/or staff appear to be qualified to allow the department to achieve its mission and goals?*

- 1.4. Attach copies of the department budget for the current year and previous four years.

*Does the department appear to have appropriate resources, both past and present, to accomplish its mission?*

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### 2. Strategic Planning

- 2.1. Describe how department faculty and/or staff are involved in creating and updating the department's Assessment Plan.

*Are department faculty and/or staff adequately involved in creating and updating the department's Assessment Plan?*

- 2.2. Describe how the department Assessment Plan is disseminated and communicated to department faculty and staff.

*Are department faculty and/or staff knowledgeable of current goals, performance measures, targets, and tactical initiatives?*

- 2.3. Describe the strategic challenges currently faced by the department.

*Do the department's strategic challenges appear comprehensive and realistic?  
Does the department state how it will address its strategic challenges?*

- 2.4. Describe the department's strategic advantages.

*Do the department's strategic advantages appear comprehensive and realistic?  
Does the department state how it will use its strengths to its advantage?*

- 2.5. Attach a copy of the current department Assessment Plan from TracDat.

*Are the department's mission, goals, performance measures, and targets stated clearly?  
Does the department's assessment plan support the departmental and institutional missions?*

### 3. Stakeholders (e.g., students, patients, other departments, external stakeholders)

- 3.1. List the main stakeholders, e.g., beneficiaries and constituents (internal and external) served by the department.

*Does the department's list of stakeholders appear to be comprehensive?  
Are there stakeholders that appear to be missing from the list?*

- 3.2. Describe how the department learns about the needs, expectations, and priorities of its main stakeholders.

*Do the methods used to learn about the needs, expectations, and priorities of both internal and external stakeholders appear to be adequate to provide appropriate information for planning and decision making?*

- 3.3. Describe how the department ensures information gathered from stakeholders is analyzed regularly and used to improve programs and services.

*Does the department adequately analyze information collected from constituents and beneficiaries to improve programs and services?*

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### 4. Learning and Growth

- 4.1. Describe how the department identifies departmental faculty and staff education and performance needs.

*Are the processes used by the department to identify and assess departmental faculty and staff education and performance needs appropriate to allow the department to achieve its mission and goals?*

- 4.2. Describe how the department ensures that departmental faculty and staff education and performance needs are met.

*Are the processes used to ensure that departmental faculty and staff education and performance needs are met appropriate to allow the department to achieve its mission and goals?*

### 5. Measurement and Analysis

- 5.1. Describe the processes used by the department to ensure that the programs and services it offers are of the highest quality.

*Are the processes used to evaluate and assess the quality of the department's programs and services appropriate and of high quality?*

*Does the list the key performance indicators for the department appear to be adequate and appropriate?*

*Does the department disseminate adequate performance assessment information to its faculty and staff?*

- 5.2. Describe how the department uses results from performance measures and key performance indicators (KPIs) to maintain and improve the quality of the services it provides.

*Does the department use adequate performance assessment tools to maintain and improve programs and services provided by the department?*

*Does the department use the results from its performance measures and KPIs to implement change?*

### 6. Achievements and Outcomes

- 6.1. List the results that reflect the operational performance of your departmental objectives.

*Do the achievements and results reported by the department reflect progress toward the mission and goals of the department?*