

# Program Review and Quality Assessment

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# University of Michigan

- Large public University
- Graduate School responsible for 104 Ph.D. programs, 90 master's programs in 17 schools and colleges
- ~8000 Rackham graduate students
- ~7500 Other graduate and professional students on campus

# Why should a graduate dean measure quality of graduate programs?

- To help to improve quality
  - Address poor quality in a systematic way
  - Encourage improvement
- To assess the validity of student concerns
- To ensure that campus priorities are taken seriously
- To respond to external raters and rankers
- To assure University leaders about quality

# Measuring quality is harder than it appears

- Graduate education is multidimensional
- Differences among degrees
- Differences among disciplines and fields of study
- Indicators are subject to distortion

# Who determines quality?

- Faculty?
- Students?
- The “market”?
- Raters and rankers?
- University leaders?

# Possible Measures of Quality

- Admissions
  - Selectivity / Yield
  - GRE and GPA scores
  - National fellowships/ traineeships
- Faculty quality
- Comparison to peers
  - Competing for new students
  - National rankings
- Career Success
  - Short run
  - Long run
- Quality of program
  - Mentoring practices
  - GPA of students
  - Diversity
  - Competitive for external funding
  - Honors and awards
  - Completion rate
  - Time to degree
  - Publications
  - Conference presentations
  - Professional development

# Variation by Degree Level

## Doctoral

- Emphasis on academic credentials
- Academic experiences
- Engagement in discipline
- Often aimed at academic placement

## Master's

- Emphasis on prior preparation (both work and academic)
- Focus on placement
- Leadership in the profession
- Student satisfaction

# Variation by Discipline

- Some quality measures widely shared
- Some quality measures are given much more emphasis in some disciplines than others

# Ask Faculty for their Measures

- You learn what is important in their program
- You give legitimacy to the process of quality measurement
- You avoid holding programs to inappropriate standards

# Molecular, Cellular & Developmental Biology

- Reputation among peer institutions
- Selectivity
- Proportion of students who are supported by external or university funding
- Number and quality of peer reviewed manuscripts
- Proportion of graduates in academic / scholarly / research / leadership positions

# Aerospace Engineering

- Reputation among peer institutions
- Selectivity / Yield
- GREs and GPAs of student who enroll
- Number of new students
- Competitive fellowships / traineeships
- Proportion of students who are supported by external or university funding
- Proportion of graduates with tenure-track positions

# Combined Program in Education and Psychology

- Selectivity / Yield
- Diversity of race/ethnicity and gender in graduate students
- Honors and awards to students
- Quality of graduate training experiences
- Proportion of graduates in academic / scholarly / research / leadership positions

# Comparative Literature

- Reputation among peer institutions
- Diversity of race/ethnicity and gender in graduate students
- Quality of the intellectual engagement between faculty and students
- Honors and awards to students
- Proportion of graduates in academic / scholarly positions

# Measuring Quality in the Context of Program Review

- If goal of program review is program improvement, then measures need to be customized to the program
- If goal of program review is resource allocation, then measures need to be standardized across programs

# Institutional Process for Program Review

- Variation among universities
- Role of school/college deans
- Role of Institutional Research office
- Role of external reviewers
- Connection between undergraduate and graduate education
- Frequency of review

# Products of Program Review

- Report
- Conversation
- Action Plan
- Resource Allocation
- Communication to the constituent groups that care about quality

# Gaining Acceptance for Recommendations

- Use measures endorsed by faculty
- Hold conversations about why the data look as they do, to give faculty a chance to explain patterns
- Invite school/college deans to participate in the conversation
- Include the voices of students

# Program Review can make you a better Graduate Dean

- You learn about your graduate programs
- You have a context to interpret external ratings and rankings
- You can make better decisions about policies and services to the programs
- Working with other University leaders, you can allocate resources toward the greatest needs and the greatest opportunities to serve graduate education