

**Texas Wesleyan University**  
**Quality Improvement Plan**  
**DEPARTMENTAL**  
**SELF-STUDY AUDIT**  
(Five - Seven Year Cycle)

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## Introduction and Background

**The goal** of an Administrative Department Self-Study Audit is to achieve high-quality student services and administrative support services at Texas Wesleyan University. If colleges and universities do not deliver high-quality education accompanied by high quality services, resolving other important issues such as cost and access will make little difference.

**The purpose** of an Administrative Department Self-Study Audit is to elicit thoughtful conversations among staff about how to produce tangible improvements in the quality of administrative support services without having to spend more money. An audit includes a self-study by the department and a site visit by peers from outside the department or institution. Program auditors evaluate the expected service outcomes established by the department and the department's "service-quality processes"—the key staff activities required to produce, assure, and regularly improve the quality of student support services and administrative support services.

An administrative department audit asks how staff organize their work and the kinds of data they use to make decisions, as well as how staff members can use the resources available to them and work collegially to do better. Good administrative-quality processes systematize a department's approach to quality, instead of leaving it mainly to unmonitored individual initiative. Furthermore, the audit process identifies real problems, generates tangible ideas for improvement and creates conversation with faculty/staff colleagues on and off campus.

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## Overview of Process and Timeline

Process	Timeline
<p><b>A. Departmental Self-Study</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Part I: Service Objectives and Actual Outcomes</li> <li>• Part II: Input from Stakeholders</li> <li>• Part III: Department Discussion &amp; Review of Services/Functions</li> <li>• Part IV: Preliminary Improvement Plan</li> </ul>	<p>Summer and Fall Semester</p> <p>Note: Some departments recommend starting sooner, e.g. spring semester prior to the scheduled self-study audit year.</p>
<p><b>B. Peer Reviewer Identification &amp; Budget</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify potential peer auditor(s)/reviewer(s)</li> <li>• Confirm budget for audit with director/VP</li> <li>• Make tentative contact with peer reviewer(s) after confirmation with Provost Office that self-study is on the right track.</li> </ul>	<p>Fall Semester</p>
<p><b>C. Approval of Self-Study by Vice President and Provost Office</b></p> <p>Submit self-study and proposed agenda/schedule for reviewer(s) to vice president who will forward it to the associate provost for final review and approval to invite peer reviewer(s)</p>	<p>By December 1</p>
<p><b>D. Audit and Report by Outside Peer Reviewer(s)</b></p>	<p>Spring Semester</p> <p>(February – March)</p>
<p><b>E. Departmental Improvement Plan</b></p>	<p>Late Spring Semester/Summer</p>
<p><b>F. Submission of Self-Study Audit Report</b></p> <p>Submit report by peer reviewer and departmental improvement plan with regular annual assessment planning documents.</p>	<p>October</p>

### INSTRUCTIONS:

- Please complete the forms below and provide the information requested.
- You should share drafts of your work (e.g. as each section is completed) and work closely with your vice president and the Associate Provost throughout this process.

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**PART I: SERVICE OBJECTIVES AND ACTUAL OUTCOMES**

**In the boxes provided, include the following for each departmental function audited:**

**-The most recent Service Objectives with Criteria ((Measures) from most recent Standing Requirements and Annual Cycle assessment plans (Goals & Measurements) in TaskStream.**

**-Summary, aggregate results of assessments pertaining to each objective since your last program audit or for the last 3-4 years.**

**-Use of assessment results for program improvement since last audit.**

**If any of the objectives have changed in the last 3-4 year period, please provide an explanation in the “summary results” box.**

***Note: If you do not have assessment data for the last 3 years, STOP and speak with your vice president!***

**Add space, rows, and boxes as needed for additional program objectives and associated learning objectives.**

<p align="center"><b>Service objectives/expected outcomes</b></p> <p align="center"><i>Quote verbatim from standing requirements in TaskStream</i></p>	<p><b>Criteria (Measurement)</b></p> <p>Quote verbatim from most recent cycle of Goals &amp; Measurements in TaskStream</p>	<p><b>Summary Results of Assessment (Actual Service Outcomes)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Were <u>Criteria</u> met? What does your assessment data show? Are students able to do/do they know what you expect them to do/know after being serviced by your department? Include summary data from last 3-4 years' assessment reports.</i></li> <li><i>Do you have additional assessment data for this learning objective in addition to the specified criteria measured? If so, please include here.</i></li> </ul>	<p><b>Use of Results/Improvements to Date</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Describe the changes made to the services as a result of what you've learned through assessments during the last 3-4 years.</i></li> <li><i>Describe actions already taken to improve outcomes and impact—have changes been effective?</i></li> </ul>
<b>1</b>	<b>1-1</b> <b>1-2</b>	<b>1-1</b> <b>1-2</b>	<b>1-1</b> <b>1-2</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>2-1</b> <b>2-2</b>	<b>2-1</b> <b>2-2</b>	<b>2-1</b> <b>2-2</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>3-1</b> <b>3-2</b>	<b>3-1</b> <b>3-2</b>	<b>3-1</b> <b>3-2</b>
<i>Add rows as needed.</i>			

*Add rows and boxes as needed for additional program objectives and associated learning objectives.*

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## PART II: INPUT FROM STAKEHOLDERS

Collecting input from various stakeholders such as students, alumni, faculty, staff, and employers, should be a regular part of departmental assessments to gain feedback on whether service objectives are met and whether the department is effective. Since a department cannot assess all service objectives every year, the self-study audit provides the opportunity to aggregate all information gained since the last self-study or during the past 3-4 years. Some departments have established processes for regular collection of this information, e.g. advisory boards or regular surveys to students; others use the audit as the time to gather such information.

While valuable information may be collected informally from stakeholders, departments should ensure that feedback is also formally collected and documented, e.g. through surveys, interviews, and focus groups.

Types of questions to address with each group:

- Are students (and others) able to do or know what is expected in light of service objectives?
- Are the service objectives relevant/current to today's needs?
- Should the department add service objectives (are there things missing from the department's services as currently designed)?
- Should the department eliminate certain service objectives that are irrelevant?

Whether information has been collected during the annual assessment process and/or whether information is specifically collected for the self-study audit process, please present the information below.

**Please provide summary information below with regards to the types of stakeholders listed. Seek feedback from stakeholders as relevant to the department audited. E.g. to some, information from applicants may be relevant; to others, information from employers may be relevant.**

**Please retain documented evidence of the assessments in the department office.**

i) Current students

1. Method of assessment/instrument(s) used to collect information/data:

2. Information/data gathered:

ii) Alumni

1. Method of assessment/instrument(s) used to collect information/data:

2. Information/data gathered:

iii) Faculty/Staff

1. Method of assessment/instrument(s) used to collect information/data:

2. Information/data gathered:

iv) Other (e.g. advisory boards, graduate programs, employers, vendors)

1. Method of assessment/instrument(s) used to collect information/data:

2. Information/data gathered:

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### **PART III: DEPARTMENT DISCUSSION & REVIEW OF SERVICES/FUNCTIONS**

Part III is the most important section of the self-study audit. While Parts I and II focus on past and current performance, Part III is designed to help the department look towards the future and putting appropriate services in place.

Effective audits require "structured conversation," both within the department while preparing the self-study and then with the site-visit person or team. Conversations are important because that is how ideas become actions and progress occurs, in academe. Structure is critical because it focuses people's attention on the key areas that are important for improving quality.

Keys to Improving Administrative Services have been outlined below. While the Keys outlined below should be discussed on a regular basis by department faculty, the self-study audit process is an opportunity for reassessment.

After the information has been gathered in response to sections I and II, above, the department should find sufficient time to review and discuss the questions below in light of the aggregated assessment data.

**Below, please include a brief statement addressing each of the key areas—add space as needed.**

**Please retain documented evidence in the department office that each of the following questions/statements has been discussed and addressed in departmental meetings (e.g. copies of minutes).**

**Remember to address these key areas for each function within the department audited.**

#### **1. Identify the underlying purpose of the services offered and determine the desired service outcomes**

- What should a student or other user—faculty, staff, vendor, etc.—gain, learn, do, and/or become able to do as a result of using the services?



**2. Consider the design and organization of the service processes as well as administrative procedures.**

- What services will be offered?
- What procedures and processes will staff employ to serve students? How will each of these contribute to the desired service outcomes?
- What information and materials will be provided and in what format? How will these materials/this information relate to other administrative support services? What methods will staff use to introduce the material/information to the student or other user, to answer questions, and to provide interpretation?
- What new roles and responsibilities will staff members need to assume? What other resources will be required, and how will they be used?

**3. Determine how best to assess service outcomes.**

- What will be the measures and indicators, and will they provide information on multiple dimensions of service outcomes? Will they compare performance at the beginning and end of the term to get the value-added dimension?
- How will the long-term outcomes of the services be determined? Will baseline and trend information be available?
- Who will be responsible for assessment and how will the results be used?

Please list the desired service outcomes from #1 and add methods of assessment and targets/indicators for each expected outcome. Include responsibility for assessment.

**4. Determine whether staff are providing services as intended, are using the most appropriate procedures consistently, and are performing assessments and measuring results effectively.**

- At best, each administrative area/department will move to a "learning organization" in terms of service-quality processes with quality embedded in the departmental culture, and the idea of regular improvement in all key areas will be a well-accepted way of life.
- All these steps require planning, diligence, and reinforcement. Most of all, staff need to resist competing demands on their time and the dulling effects of routine. They must be self-disciplined and actively collaborate with colleagues in the work team and department.

Please discuss how your department meets these expectations. Do regular meetings need to be added? Is additional staff training required?

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**PART IV: THE PRELIMINARY IMPROVEMENT PLAN**

After gathering and reviewing data (Parts I – III, above) the department staff should prepare a preliminary improvement plan with the action steps required to move the department from its current design to what the staff has determined it should be. The plan to improve may require changes or modifications in: services; the procedures and processes employed to serve students; the information and materials provided; the methods used by staff to introduce the material/information to the student; the roles and responsibilities of staff; or other actions to reach expected service outcomes or in the departmental goals or service outcomes themselves. This plan will be reviewed by the outside peer reviewer as part of the audit process.

**Please use the table below to present the proposed actions for program improvement.**

It is suggested that one table be used for each function addressed depending on the actions required.

<b>Actions</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
Add rows as needed.	

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## PART V: AUDIT AND REPORT BY OUTSIDE PEER REVIEWER(S)

After completion of Parts I – IV, above, and after Provost Office approval of the self-study using the Self-Study Audit Signature sheet, an outside peer reviewer (or reviewers, depending on the size and mission of the department) should be invited to campus. Peer reviewers should come from institutions and/or departments that are similar in mission and scope to the one being reviewed (and, for the sake of cost savings, should come from the nearby region).

The peer reviewers or peer auditors evaluate the expected outcomes of the services and the "service-quality processes"—the key staff activities required to produce, assure, and regularly improve the quality of services.

<b>There are three steps to the peer review/audit:</b>
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1. Prior to coming to campus, the auditor should review the departmental self-study (Parts I – III). This review will facilitate an understanding of the mission and expected service outcomes of the department and an understanding of the information already gathered by the department about actual outcomes, discussions held, and proposed actions to improve.
2. Once on campus, the auditor will engage in conversations with students, faculty, staff, and others, such as alumni, to learn more about the department, to evaluate the effectiveness of the department and its services, and to engage in a collegial exchange of ideas. These conversations should be facilitated by the department through the development of an agenda/schedule in consultation with the auditor/reviewer.
3. After visiting the campus, the auditor will submit a report to the department regarding the services and outcomes, including suggestions for improvement.

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Please refer to the document titled <i>Departmental Self-Study Audit Site Visit Guide</i> for guidance on how to conduct an audit.</b></p>
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**PART VI: DEPARTMENTAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN**

After receipt of the auditor’s report, the department will prepare a final improvement plan based on the department’s own recommendations in the self-study and the auditor’s recommendations. As noted in Part IV, the plan to improve may require changes or modifications in: services; the procedures and processes employed to serve students; the information and materials provided; the methods used by staff to introduce the material/information to the student; the roles and responsibilities of staff; or other actions to reach expected service outcomes or in the departmental goals or service outcomes themselves. This improvement plan should include a timeline for implementation. Any changes should then be reflected in the strategic and operational and assessment plans that are submitted as part of the regular annual assessment documents, due during fall semester following the Academic Program Self-Study Audit.

<b>Actions</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Timeline/Deadline</b>
Add rows as needed.		

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## **Part VII: AFTER THE AUDIT: CLOSING THE LOOP**

After the Administrative Department Self-Study Audit has been completed, the most important aspect is to act upon the information gained and to implement the improvement plan. As noted in the introduction, the purpose of the Self-Study Audit is to produce tangible improvements in the quality of academic support and student services (without having to spend more money). Upon completion of the self-study audit,

- Update your Standing Requirements in Taskstream as needed upon completion of the self-study audit;
- Submit the completed self-study and auditors report by October 15;
- Follow your improvement plan!

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## SEVEN COMMON-SENSE PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICES

Researchers at the National Center for Postsecondary Improvement at Stanford University have identified seven common-sense principles and practices that can help a department improve its processes. These principles can be applied to administrative support services as well.

The seven common-sense principles and practices are:

1. **Define quality in terms of outcomes.** The quality of student learning, not teaching per se, is what ultimately matters. Learning should pertain to what is or will become important for the students enrolled in the program -- not some "ideal" student. Exemplary departments determine their students' needs and then work to meet them.
2. **Base decisions on facts.** Departmental teams should collect data on student preparation, learning styles, and, where relevant, probable requirements for employment. Team members might obtain feedback from past students and their current employers. They should analyze the data carefully in light of disciplinary standards and their own professional experience, and then incorporate the findings in the design of curriculums, learning processes, and assessment methods.
3. **Focus on teaching, learning, service and assessment.** Programs /Departments should carefully analyze how professors teach, how students learn, how staff serve and how all approach assessment. Departments should consult the literature on pedagogy in their academic disciplines and collect data on what works and what doesn't. They should stress active learning, exploit information technology, and not hesitate to experiment with new teaching and learning methods. Colleagues should be quick to adopt successful innovations, which should become part of the department's modus operandi and form the baseline for future experimentation and improvement.
4. **Strive for coherence in curriculums and educational activities.** Departments should view learning through the lens of the student's entire educational experience. Courses should build upon one another to provide the desired depth and breadth. This also applies to the typical student's "portfolio" of class sizes and learning approaches. For example, a mix of large lectures and small seminars may produce better learning than a succession of medium-size classes that consume the same amount of time.

5. **Work collaboratively to achieve mutual involvement and support.** Professors should demonstrate collegiality in teaching, just as they do in research. Departments should encourage staff and faculty members to work together, hold one another accountable, and bring a broad array of talent to bear on difficult problems. Such teamwork can make the department a "learning organization" with respect not only to disciplinary content, but also to teaching and education.
6. **Identify and learn from best practices.** Audit reports should be shared widely to exchange information and motivate improvement. Departments should seek out examples of good practice and adapt the best to their own circumstances. They should compare good versus average or poor-performing methods and students, assess the causes of the differences, and seek ways to minimize the variation.
7. **Make continuous improvement a priority.** Departments should strive to improve the quality of teaching, learning and service on a regular basis. While most professors will continue to place strong emphasis on teaching and scholarship, faculty and staff should spend enough discretionary time on quality processes to keep the improvement ball rolling. Academic administrators and faculty review committees should make the results of such work, along with teaching and scholarly work, a criterion for promotion and tenure for faculty. While staff supervisors should include such work in criterion for promotion and merit salary increases for staff.

The postsecondary-improvement center's articulation of these principles and practices can help promote audits to improve quality in higher education. Audits can spur improvement and accountability in flexible and inexpensive ways. Faculty from multiple disciplines and staff from different service areas can discuss education/service-quality processes because audit conversations do not require expertise in any particular discipline/service area. Faculty/staff from all fields of study/work can learn and spread exemplary practices by serving on audit teams.

The faculty/staff members and administrators who participate in the audit, the institution, and, most importantly, the students all benefit.



# Texas Wesleyan University Self-Study Audit Signature Sheet

Department: \_\_\_\_\_

Administrative Department Audited: \_\_\_\_\_

Division: \_\_\_\_\_

Scheduled Rotation Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Anticipated Completion Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Recommendations of Outside Reviewer: *(please submit three selections)*

Name of Reviewer	Institution	Brief Bio	VP Approval	Associate Provost Approval

*\*Please initial your reviewer approval*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Department Director*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Date*

Please circle appropriate response below:

**Self-Study Satisfactory**  
YES NO

**Reviewer Approved**  
YES NO

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Vice President*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Date*

YES NO

YES NO

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Associate Provost*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Date*

*Comments:*