1. PURPOSE OF THE REVIEW

Reviews proceed most smoothly if all individuals involved (faculty members, department chair, dean, other administrators, and the visiting consultants) understand the reason(s) for the review. At whose instigation - the state, the dean, the chair, the department's faculty, students - is the review occurring? What information will be supplied to the reviewers? To whom will the written report of the review be addressed and delivered? Are there specific aspects of the program that should be reviewed? Faculty members should understand that a review is part of regular faculty and departmental development, not a punitive exercise. Departments almost always benefit from such a review. Although outside evaluators usually do not reveal any problems about which the host institution is not already aware, the value of the review is often that new or different solutions to these problems are proposed.

2. STRUCTURE OF THE REVIEW

Whereas the great majority of reviews include a site visit (the duration of which varies - primarily with size of department and institution), it is possible, but not recommended, for a paper review to be arranged. The latter involves the reviewer(s) receiving a lot of material which is then evaluated from afar. The former type of review is usually much more valuable to the host institution and more rewarding for all faculty members (both those at the host institution and those on the review team). Furthermore, the review team can see the facilities, equipment, and visit with students during such a site visit.

3. SIZE and COMPOSITION of the REVIEW TEAM

We strongly recommend that at least two individuals serve as reviewers for any department, primarily to avoid the bias any single individual brings to bear on the review. We encourage some (usually larger) departments to think about three reviewers - one each in different areas of the discipline, so that the site visit (if one occurs) is not too extended and so that a combination of viewpoints can be blended in the review. The choice of number of reviewers and composition of the team, however, is up to the host institution. The standard operating procedure is for the Divisional Liaison to send several CV's of persons who match the host institution's criteria for reviewers - some institutions specify gender balance, geographic balance, type of institution, sub-disciplinary balance, and/or inclusion of reviewers with administrative experience.

The site visit usually encompasses about **two full days on site**, with some time reserved at the end for the consultant team to meet with one another so as to prepare an oral report of "preliminary findings/recommendations" to deliver to the hosts at the end of the visit. A written report is then prepared, usually finished in another 4-6 weeks.

4. PREPARATION

We usually ask the host department to gather materials and data about their department. Some departments or institutions mandate the set of data and materials to be included in the departmental self-study. For those which do not, we supply a suggested list of items (enclosed sheet entitled “Checklist”). Obtaining these materials may take some time (depending upon departmental organization), we recommend that consultants receive them 3-4 weeks in advance of the site visit.