Doctor of Philosophy Board
PhD Program Review Protocol

Overview of the Doctor of Philosophy Board

The Doctor of Philosophy Board (DPB) is a standing committee of the Johns Hopkins University that reports to the Provost and is responsible to the graduate faculty of schools granting the Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degree. It is composed of faculty and students from PhD granting schools as described in its bylaws.

Beyond the statutory responsibility for approving the awarding of degrees on behalf of the Trustees, the DPB reports to the Provost and to the PhD granting schools on the status of the PhD programs and tracks changing academic philosophies and emerging technologies that affect PhD studies. The DPB also provides advice regarding University-wide PhD degree requirements and on policy matters related to the well-being of doctoral education generally. To do so, the DPB has developed a framework for existing doctoral program reviews that leverages interdivisional PhD program review in order to identify and share best practices.

Overview of PhD Program Review

Periodic review institutionalizes the process of analysis and planning for PhD programs. Typically, PhD programs are reviewed every 6-7 years in coordination with the division's program review cycle. The review provides a means of benchmarking both within the University and against outside peer programs. Inherent in the process is the opportunity for self-study, reflection, and the challenge to improve. Findings from the review may also help the program justify requests to School/University administrators for additional support and delineate their longer-range plans.

The Deans and the Provost should ensure that these reviews are routinely completed. The Provost's office should collaborate with Schools and Departments to ensure that these reviews are coordinated with ongoing program reviews. In situations where a doctoral program is not part of a routine School or Department review, the DPB should determine a time for that program to be reviewed.

Following the protocol depicted in Appendix A, the program collects, verifies, and reviews quantitative data (e.g., admissions data, attrition and time to degree) and qualitative input (e.g., placement data, student attitudes) and produces a self-study. The Review Protocol and Resource Document provide the program with a framework for faculty reflection on successes, challenges and opportunities. Feedback from the Provost, based upon advice of the DPB, provides programs with an overview of the program's strengths, areas for improvement, and any required action.

The DPB serves as the review body that advises the Provost regarding each program's strengths, areas of improvement, and needs based upon discussion of the data and information provided in the self-study. Upon receipt of advice in the form of a written report from the DPB, the Provost provides timely written feedback to the respective Dean and Vice Dean, copying the Department Chair and Graduate Program Director. After review of feedback, the program is encouraged to provide the Provost with a written response, including an action plan to address any significant concerns highlighted during the review.

APPENDIX A: Timeline for DPB PhD Program Review (pilot for 2025-2026)

July before review: DPB provides written notice to program of the date of the DPB meeting and self-study due date. Additionally, **DPB requests a student self-study document be completed by the program's PhD students** to be included in the program's prepratory materials for the review. One document with input from many students should **be emailed to doctorofphilosophyboard@jhu.edu early September.**

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3 months before review: DPB provides PhD program with student self-study document and OIRA report including program's Retention, Attrition and Completion trends, Time to Degree, Enrolled Student and Exit Survey Results

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~3 months before review: Department Chair and Program Director meet with Vice Provost for Graduate and Professional Education to discuss review process and key areas of review focus

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6 weeks before review: PhD Program submits completed Resource Document, along with relevant supporting materials, to the DPB

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2-6 weeks before review: DPB members leading the review may reach out to program to ask clarifying questions

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1 week before review: DPB Chair emails program representatives to confirm logistical details for DPB meeting and provide list of questions to be discussed at the meeting

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DPB meeting when review occurs: DPB members all review the Resource Document and program data and discuss these at DPB meeting with representatives from the PhD program

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1-2 months post review: DPB drafts an advisory report, finalizes it at next DPB meeting and submits it to the Provost

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2-3 months post review: Provost provides written feedback to the respective Dean and Vice Dean for Education, copying Department Chair and Graduate Program Director describing findings from the review. Followup responses may or may not be required within the subsequent year.