Key Program Evaluation & Quality Improvement Questions

With thanks to the APA Commission on Accreditation Site Visitor Guidebook

Overall Issues:

- How effective is the program in achieving its stated goals and objectives?
- How is students’ overall competence to practice as professionals assessed?
- Including their understanding of:
  o Ethical and other professional issues?
  o Standards of practice?
  o Professional competencies?

- What is the program’s process of self-study/self-evaluation/self-improvement?
  o How is it coordinated with departmental and institutional planning?
  o How is it sensitive to new scientific developments or changes in the practice of psychology?
  o How are students, faculty, & academic administrators involved in program planning?

- Is the program’s mission consistent with local, regional, and national needs for psychological services?
  o How does the program monitor that consistency?
  o Does information about the roles within which graduates function after completion of the program inform the ongoing evaluation of the program?

- What program strengths & weaknesses have been noted in the past few years by initial employers of graduates? (Or by other relevant groups?)
  o How is such information obtained & used by the program?

- What issues, if any, have been highlighted by the Accreditation Panel for further program development?
  o What actions have been taken by the program & what results have been achieved?

- General correspondence between program goals/objectives/competencies & outcomes?
  o Do these goals inform examination of competencies & program success?
  o Do program outcomes influence program goals?
  o Mutual influence of Standard II and Standard IX/VIII

- Does the program or department have any plans that might substantially change its nature or function in the next few years?
- How many faculty and students participated in the preparation of this self-study? What were their roles?

Questions Specific to the Stated Standards

- What data does the program provide as evidence that it has achieved its goals?
- Does the program show, through self-examination & outcome data, that it has achieved its stated goals & objectives?
  - Examine/connect to relevant work samples- for example comps, portfolios, dissertations, etc.

- How is feedback- proximal and distal data- obtained from faculty & staff, current & former students, interns & others involved in the program?
  - Students/interns: How do you provide feedback about the program? Are you heard? What changes have occurred as a result of your feedback?

- What recent programmatic changes have been made based on the outcome data collected?
  - Through what mechanisms did the program become aware or identify that change was needed?

- Are program faculty aware of, and planful about, how the program fits into trends that are affecting the sponsoring institution, career opportunities, and training trends in the region and nation?

- How often are meetings held?
  - Who attends?
  - How much time in meetings, during a year, is devoted to evaluation and planning activities?
  - How are students involved in the self-study process?
  - To what extent and how are faculty directly involved in the program planning and evaluation?