Best Practices for Creating and Revising
Department Evaluation Guidelines for Annual Review, Promotion, and Tenure

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1. Purpose of This Document

While the UT System Regents’ Rules and UTRGV HOP provide broad policies that outline the framework for faculty evaluation, it is the Department Evaluation Guidelines document that presents the specific elements that form the basis of faculty evaluation. Combined, all three provide the recognition and support of faculty success (see Figure 1).

![Figure 1]

The department evaluation guidelines are an essential component of faculty evaluation, defining the expectations for faculty of all titles and ranks, and providing the standards, criteria, and procedures used to evaluate faculty work in teaching, research/scholarship, service, and patient care. The purpose of this Best Practices document is to facilitate the creation and/or revision of department guidelines by providing recommendations that align with UTRGV’s HOP policies and procedures and allow for respective academic units to prioritize discipline-specific expectations.

2. Definition of Terms

a. **College** – an academic unit organized within the university, which is usually comprised of many departments or provides programs in multiple academic specialties/professional instruction. This academic unit may be referred to as a college, or school, and is led by a dean reporting to a designated Provost or Vice President (VP).

b. **Department** – an academic unit organized within a college, usually devoted to a particular academic discipline. This academic unit may be referred to as a department or school and the unit’s head (usually a chair or director) reports to the dean of the college.

c. **Department Chair** – administrative leader of an academic unit appointed by the dean with the concurrence of the appropriate Provost or VP; may refer to the chair of a department, the director of a school, or other equivalent academic unit.

d. **Department Evaluation Guidelines** – the guidelines developed by the department or college in accordance with the UTRGV HOP policy that specify performance criteria, requirements and procedures related to the performance reviews of faculty.

e. **Guidelines Committee** – An elected committee of full-time faculty charged with developing and/or revising the department evaluation guidelines (see Appendix A in the HOP, 1.a.). Eligibility requirements for membership on this committee will be specified in the approved department or college policies or
procedures. Departments may create a committee specifically for this task or utilize an existing elected policy committee or other elected group; herein, the committee will be referred to as the Guidelines Committee.

f. **Departmental Review Committee** - The department committee or committees elected by full-time faculty which is charged with reviewing faculty performance in teaching, research, service, and patient care, as applicable, each academic year following the schedule set forth in Pathways (As in Appendix E in the HOP). Although departments may use one or more committees (or subcommittees) for this work, herein this committee will be referred to as the Departmental Review Committee.

g. **Annual Evaluation** – In this document, “Annual Evaluation” serves as a blanket term to describe all yearly reviews, including Annual Reviews for Tenured and Non-Tenure Track faculty and Tenure-Track Reviews (years 1, 2, 4, and 5). Note that an Annual Evaluation is considered “annual” because it happens every year, not because it is a review of a single year.

h. **Cumulative Review** – Cumulative reviews include Comprehensive Periodic Evaluation and Promotion to Full for Tenured faculty, Third-Year Review and Tenure and Promotion for Tenure-Track faculty, and Non-Tenure-Track promotion reviews.

3. **Who should read this document?**

   The primary audience for this document is the Guidelines Committee whose charge is to create and revise the department evaluation guidelines. It is also valuable to deans, associate deans, chairs, and department faculty for reviewing and providing feedback on the guidelines.

4. **Heuristic for Creating and Revising Department Evaluation Guidelines**

   a. **Helpful Principles to Frame the Guidelines Committee’s Work**

      Creating and/or revising department evaluation guidelines is an important task because the resulting work will benefit all faculty. However, accomplishing this task can be complex. To help the Guidelines Committee frame their work, this document provides three principles (see Figure 2): 1) Ensure alignment with HOP policies, 2) Strive for Clarity and Organization, 3) Prioritize Fairness, Inclusivity, and Equitability, 4) Prioritize Efficiency in the Creation and Review Process.

   **Figure 2**
1) Ensure alignment with HOP policies
While it might seem obvious, it is worth emphasizing that the Guidelines Committee must ensure the department evaluation guidelines document it creates, or revises, aligns with current and approved HOP policies.

2) Strive for Clarity and Effective Organization
Clarity and Effective Organization means that simplicity and conciseness should be a priority for the committee to ensure the best use of the time of the stakeholders involved, and so faculty and reviewers can find the information they need efficiently. This principle extends to the formation and organization of the Guidelines Committee, as well as the creation, revision, and implementation of the Department Evaluation Guidelines.

3) Prioritize Fairness, Inclusivity, and Equitability
In the spirit of shared governance, it is imperative that the Guidelines Committee prioritizes fairness, inclusivity, and equitability in all types of faculty reviews. It is also important that all full-time faculty, of all ranks, who will be evaluated using the guidelines have opportunities to provide input into department review criteria and processes via safe avenues of discussion.

4) Prioritize Efficiency in the Creation and Review Process
Recognize that the Department Evaluation Guidelines (DEG) will need to go through several layers of approval, including the faculty, chair, dean, and ultimately the provost (see Figure 3). It is important that the guidelines committee be aware of the time needed to request feedback and acquire approval at each level in order to implement new policies for the upcoming academic year. Full details are outlined in HOP Appendix A, 1.b and 1.c.

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b. Creation and Content of Department Evaluation Guidelines
This section addresses issues and recommendations regarding the creation and revision of the Guidelines document and is divided into three subsections: 1) the creation of the document, 2) the content of the document, and 3) approval of the document and revision cycle.
1. **Creation of The Document and Formation of the Guidelines Committee:**

   a. **Getting Started: Formation of the Guidelines Committee**

   The purpose of the Guidelines Committee (or an equivalent policy committee if departments already have established one) is to develop and revise (as needed) the department evaluation guidelines, including the criteria for all types of review and promotion for all faculty titles in the department (note that the Guidelines Committee is distinct from the Departmental Review Committee which conducts the department reviews).

   This committee plays a significant role in defining department guidelines and expectations, and attention should be given to its formation to ensure an effective and inclusive committee. The election of the Guidelines Committee must align with Appendix A in the HOP and with the approved department or college policies or procedures. Below are recommendations for the composition and election of the committee.

   - **Appendix A, 1.a.** in the HOP policy states that “An elected committee of full-time faculty will develop the department evaluation guidelines. Eligibility requirements for membership on this committee will be specified in approved department or college policies or procedures.” Best practices for the composition and election for the committees typically include:
     - A well-defined and documented election process so that it is clear how the Guidelines Committee members are nominated and elected, and who is eligible to serve.
     - Representation by all full-time faculty ranks in the department on the Guidelines Committee (Tenured, Tenure Track, and NTT Faculty).
     - Voting eligibility for all full-time faculty of all ranks in the department.
     - Conducting elections via Qualtrics or other trackable survey platform to ensure that votes are counted accurately.
     - Reporting of the election survey reports/tallies by the chair to the appropriate dean or associate dean, and access to election results by the department faculty.
     - Codification of the specifics of Guidelines Committee election, membership, and responsibilities in the appropriate department policies and procedures.

   Figure 4 gives a visual representation of how to facilitate the formation of the Guidelines Committee that ensures transparency.
b. Establishing Organization and Function of the Guidelines Committee
After the Guidelines Committee is formed, it is important that it organizes itself. In what follows, a list of recommendations is provided:

• It is recommended that the Guidelines Committee have an initial meeting to:
  o Elect a chair. The chair will serve as the liaison between the department chair and the guidelines committee members and will ensure the completion of the revisions.
  o Devise a timeline and plan of action to complete tasks in an efficient way. A timeline and plan of action could include what form of leadership the committee would like to have, how the committee will communicate and share resources, skills and strengths among committee members, how decisions will be made, and how often the committee will meet.

• Members of the Guidelines Committee must familiarize themselves with UTRGV and UT System policies and procedures regarding periodic performance evaluations of faculty (see References and Resources). Doing this will help align department evaluation guidelines with institution and System policy.

c. Faculty Feedback and Shared Governance
While creating and revising Department Evaluation Guidelines, the Guidelines committee should keep the following principles in mind:

- Department Evaluation Guidelines must reflect the needs, activities, and priorities of your department.
- Department Evaluation Guidelines must comply with UTRGV and UT System Policy. Chairs and deans should work closely with the Guidelines Committee to ensure all requirements comply with UTRGV and UT System Policy.
- Department Evaluation Guidelines must provide a clear and transparent process for determining ratings and outcomes.
- The Guidelines Committee must ensure that faculty of all ranks have opportunities to provide input into department review criteria and processes, and safe avenues for discussion.
Figure 5 below shows a process the Guidelines Committee could follow to ensure that faculty of all ranks have opportunities to read and respond to the document and provide feedback.

**Figure 5**

Gathering and providing feedback should be a central element in the creation, development, and implementation of the Department Evaluation Guidelines. Here are some helpful recommendations to consider:

- The Guidelines Committee should solicit input from department faculty before creating the Department Evaluation Guidelines (DEG).
- While developing the department evaluation guidelines, the Guidelines Committee should view the document as a draft that will undergo changes.
- The Guidelines Committee should collect feedback from the department faculty, chair, and dean. Feedback should provide clarification about the directions and goals for the guidelines and faculty questions or interests.

Once the document is approved by the chair, it will follow the approval process detailed in HOP Appendix A, 1.b and 1.c for approval by the dean and the provost.

2. **Content of Document**
   It is imperative that department guidelines be fair, inclusive, equitable, clearly written, organized effectively, and in alignment with UTRGV HOP policies.

   As stated in Appendix A, 2.a, of the HOP policies and procedures, “The Department Evaluation Guidelines must articulate performance criteria and standards for each applicable evaluation for tenured faculty (annual, comprehensive periodic and promotion), tenure-track faculty (annual and tenure and promotion) and non-tenure-track faculty (annual and promotion). The guidelines must be in accordance with the general policy principles, including those for tenure and promotion, as applicable, and institutional goals.”
Below is a suggested outline for the Department Evaluation Guidelines:

**Suggested Format**

1) **Introduction/Overview**
   a) Statement on the Purpose of Faculty Review
   b) Department Evaluation Committees
   c) Overall Performance Rating *describe how the overall rating will be determined*
   d) Guidelines for Peer Observation of Teaching
   e) Guidelines for Student Course Evaluation data and Student Comments
   f) Guidelines for Selection of External Reviewers for Tenure and Promotion and Promotion to Full Reviews

2) **Criteria for Annual Evaluation, Tenure, and Promotion**
   a) Tenure-Track Faculty
      i) Annual Review Criteria
      ii) Third Year Review
      iii) Tenure and Promotion
   b) Tenured Faculty
      i) Annual Review Criteria
      ii) Comprehensive Periodic Review
      iii) Promotion to Full Professor
   c) Non-Tenure Track Faculty *be sure to include specific criteria for all relevant titles*
      i) Annual Review Criteria
      ii) Promotion Criteria

3) **Outcomes/Remediation and Action Plans** *see the appropriate HOP policies*

4) **References and Resources** *(Including UTRGV, UT System, and other helpful resources)*

While these criteria will vary based on the needs and priorities of each department, all department criteria must consider differences in workload, title, and rank to ensure that all faculty are represented in the document’s evaluation criteria. The following recommendations are arranged from general (guidelines that may apply to all faculty) to more specific (guidelines that may apply to specific faculty by title and workload).

a. **General Guidelines for Expectations and Performance Criteria**

   *Appendix A, 2.a.i.* of the HOP states that department evaluations guidelines must “describe the performance criteria for each applicable evaluation category in accordance with Appendix B – Evaluation Categories (e.g., teaching, research, service, patient care).” In developing these performance criteria, departmental guidelines must:

   - Describe the criteria and method for evaluating the scope, significance, and impact of faculty activities.
   - Provide a clear methodology to account for differences in workload allocations.
     Guidelines must specify how performance expectations relate to workload — including course releases, administrative assignments, overloads, and other exceptions (further expanded in the “Expectations based on Workload” section below).
   - Provide examples that illustrate achievements and different levels of accomplishment in each area of review (Teaching, Research, Service, and Patient Care).
At a minimum, Departmental Guidelines must detail requirements for meeting expectations in each of the areas of review (departments may also include requirements for exceeds, does not meet, and unsatisfactory).

Relate annual review expectations to criteria for tenure/promotion/comprehensive review.

Provide guidance for evaluating a faculty member’s progress over time.

b. Expectations based on Workload
For most departments, workload allocations may determine appropriate performance expectations and criteria more than faculty title or rank. Therefore, a Department Evaluation Guidelines document must specify how expectations relate to differentiated workloads, and what methodology will be used to account for different workload allocations in teaching, research, service, and patient care (Appendix A, 2.a.ii). 

Teaching: Department Evaluation Criteria must specify how differences in the teaching workload allocation (e.g., course releases) affect expectations and criteria. While the teaching workload allocation will affect expectations for how much a faculty person is expected to teach, it does not change the expectations for the quality of the instruction. Departments may wish to consider special circumstances such as course overloads in their determination of ratings for teaching.

Research and Creative Activity: Department Evaluation Criteria must specify and provide a clear methodology for how differences in research workload allocations affect short- and long-term expectations for the quantity and significance of research and creative activities for annual evaluations, cumulative reviews, tenure, and promotion.

Service: Department Criteria must specify how differences in the service workload allocation affect expectations for the quantity, type, and significance of service activities.

Patient Care: As determined by the School of Medicine.

c. Expectations for Periodic Performance Evaluations for All Faculty
The Department Evaluation Guidelines must set clear standards for all types of reviews including annual performance evaluations such as Annual Reviews (tenured and non-tenure-track faculty) and Tenure-Track Reviews (tenure-track faculty), and cumulative reviews such as Tenure, Promotion, and Comprehensive Periodic Evaluation, for faculty of all titles. The appropriate reviews will often be determined by faculty title (Tenured, Tenure-Track, Non-Tenure Track).

General Considerations for Annual Evaluations – All faculty titles and ranks

- Guidelines must have a clear methodology for determining overall ratings (Exceeds Expectations, Meets Expectations, Does Not Meet Expectations, or Unsatisfactory) based on the applicable ratings for Teaching, Research, Service, and/or Patient care (see Appendix A, 2.a.iv).
- Guidelines must specify methodology for differences in workload as stated in section 4.b.2.b.
- Guidelines should clearly specify the process for developing action plans for remediation for faculty who earn ratings of “Does not Meet Expectations” or “Unsatisfactory.”

Annual Evaluation and Cumulative Reviews (including Promotion) by Title
In addition to annual evaluations, all full-time faculty will periodically undergo cumulative reviews, including reviews for promotion. Department Evaluation Guidelines must specify
expectations and criteria for each type of review in alignment with the appropriate HOP policy. The chart below details specific considerations for each type of annual evaluation and cumulative review by faculty title.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1. Annual Reviews, Cumulative Reviews, and Promotion by Title</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tenured Faculty</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Annual Review</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual Review criteria for Tenured Professors should relate to stated professional goals and department/school expectations for Comprehensive Periodic Review and/or Promotion to Full.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Comprehensive Periodic Evaluation</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Every six years, tenured faculty undergo a Comprehensive Periodic Evaluation. Thus, department evaluation guidelines should provide criteria for meeting or exceeding expectations for Comprehensive Periodic Evaluation and describe how the faculty member’s annual reviews contribute to the comprehensive evaluation.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Promotion to Full Professor</strong> (also see External Review Policies below)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The evaluation guidelines should provide specific performance expectations and criteria in all areas of review (teaching, research, service, and patient care) for Promotion to Full Professor. Department guidelines should specify the scope of materials required for promotion applications, and whether expectations are affected if faculty apply after the usual six years post-tenure.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
External Review Policies

Note that reviews for Tenure and Promotion and Promotion to Full reviews will also require an External Review of Research in accordance with department guidelines or in accordance with university guidelines if the department guidelines do not exist. Departments are encouraged to develop their own policies for external review addressing:

- The process and criteria for selection of external reviewers, including the expected level of education (what degree is required) and rank.
- What should be included in the dossier that will be sent to the external reviewer specifying the appropriate materials to evaluate the faculty member’s research, and whether the faculty member may or should include teaching and service materials as well.

Department guidelines for External Reviewers must comply with the UTRGV Guidelines for the Selection of External Reviewers for Faculty Promotion and Tenure and other UT System policies, and may be more stringent, but not less.

Non-Tenure-Track Evaluation and Workload Policies

- Non-tenure-track faculty have defined workload allocations which create the parameter of their evaluation. Department Evaluation Guidelines should specify how different workload allocations affect criteria for all non-tenure-track titles within the department (see above), and how these allocations factor into Annual Review and Promotion outcomes. Departments should address how non-tenure-track faculty can define the roles of teaching, research, patient care, and service in their individual workloads.
- Departmental Evaluation Guidelines must specify criteria and evaluation guidelines for each area of workload allocation (teaching, research, service, or patient care) that the department’s workload policy allows or requires for each non-tenure-track faculty title represented in the department.
- Department Evaluation Guidelines for Lecturer faculty cannot require a standard research workload allocation nor imply that research is necessary for a successful review or promotion; such requirements are in violation of Regents’ Rule 31001 – Faculty Appointments and Titles and UTRGV policy. Lecturer faculty may include research as part of their workload allocation in consultation with and approved by the Department Chair and College Dean.
- Non-tenure-track faculty of any title may not be evaluated on, nor can promotion decisions be informed by, duties outside of the agreed upon workload allocations.

d. Other Considerations for Review Criteria

This section includes a list of other important considerations for developing review expectations and criteria applicable to all faculty and review types.

Teaching

The Department Evaluation Guidelines should specify how Peer Observations of Teaching and Student Evaluations will be used to evaluate faculty in the area of teaching. The guidelines document should also include any other activities that contribute to the value and impact of the faculty member’s instruction, and the success of the students, the department, and the university.
Peer Observation of Teaching
The UTRGV Guidelines for Faculty Peer Observation of Teaching state that guidelines for the peer observation process should be developed and voted on at the department level. These guidelines may be developed separately from the Department Evaluation Guidelines; however, the Department Evaluation Guidelines should specify how Peer Observations of Teaching are used to evaluate faculty, and what needs to be included in the dossier. Departments should address the following questions in the department guidelines:

✓ What is the purpose of the evaluation (evaluative, formative, or both?)
✓ Is a Peer Observation Summative Report required for the dossier (see the Guidelines for Faculty Peer Observation for definitions)?
✓ Who is eligible to evaluate faculty at various ranks?
✓ What reports or forms are required in the dossier?
✓ How are peer observers selected?

Note that department guidelines for Peer Observations of Teaching must comply with UTRGV policies outlined in the Guidelines for Faculty Peer Observation and other UT System policies, and may be more stringent, but not less.

Student Evaluations
Department evaluation guidelines should specify the formative and evaluative role of student evaluations. Student evaluations are only one component of a faculty member’s teaching activities and achievements and should not be the sole criterion for the faculty teaching evaluation.

Note that Peer Observations and Student Evaluations, while important, are not the only measures of teaching. Departments should also consider evidence of student success, faculty development, and other special circumstances.

Dossier Requirements
The Guidelines committee should consult the Dossier Requirements that are listed in Appendix D of the Evaluation HOP Policies. While many of these items are standard and required for all dossiers, departments can and should set expectations and provide guidance for required summaries, supporting documentation, and development plans, as well as specify expectations for qualitative and/or quantitative data. Some things to consider are:

✓ Criteria for supporting materials and data will vary across units, however, Department Evaluation Guidelines should provide guidance and specify expectations for the types of documentation required with the objective of streamlining the process.
✓ Required materials and supporting data should be sufficient to present a comprehensive picture of the faculty member’s activities and progress.
✓ Conciseness and simplicity should also be a priority to ensure the best use of the time of the faculty member and the reviewers. Consider what documentation is essential and helpful in providing appropriate support and context for each review type.
✓ Department criteria should include a description of what ‘summaries’ means without being prescriptive.
Department criteria should specify different expectations for different types of review within the department. For instance, a Tenure-Track dossier or a comprehensive dossier for Tenure and Promotion or Promotion to Full calls for more detailed summaries, while a bullet-point list with salient details might be more acceptable for a Tenured faculty member undergoing an Annual Review.

Departmental Review Committee Election and Process
The Guidelines Committee should include guidelines for the election and composition of the Department Review Committee or Committees. The Guidelines Committee should address the following questions.

- Who is eligible to serve on the departmental committee or committees? Does your committee structure provide for consideration of faculty of all titles (Lecturer, Clinical Faculty, Tenure/Tenure-Track) being reviewed (note that this will also be dependent on the availability and ability of faculty to serve)? (See Appendix E, 1.a.iii.)
- Who is eligible to vote to elect the department committee or committees? Are all full-time faculty who will be reviewed by the committee eligible to have a vote on committee membership? (See Appendix E, 1.c.ii.)
- Is the expected workload of the committee or committees realistic in terms of the time frame set out by the Pathways document? Is there a more effective way to distribute the workload between committees?

The work of departmental review committees is essential to the fairness, integrity, and effectiveness of the faculty review process. Best practices to ensure the integrity and value of the review process typically include:

- A well-defined and documented election process so that it is clear how the Department Evaluation Committee members are nominated and elected, and who is eligible to serve.
- Conducting elections via Qualtrics or other trackable survey platform to ensure that votes are counted accurately.
- Reporting of the election survey reports/tallies by the chair to the appropriate dean or associate dean, and access to election results by the department faculty.
- Providing and encouraging mentoring and training for members of review committees.
- A meeting of the Departmental Review committees prior to the review process to review, discuss, and calibrate departmental criteria and standards.
- Providing personalized qualitative feedback to faculty on their dossiers. Feedback should include statements that will help the faculty members understand in what areas of review (teaching, research, service), they are doing well, what areas need attention and suggestions and/or questions that can help the faculty member to progress.
- Close work between chairs, deans, and departmental review committees to ensure compliance with UTRGV and UT System Policies. Faculty with concerns that proper departmental and university review procedures are not being followed should consult with their chair, dean, or the Office of the Faculty Ombuds

College Policies
If Annual Review, Tenure, and Promotion policies are developed and approved at the college level as an alternative to the department level:
The evaluation criteria should be applied equally across the departments or units of the college; and
College-level review criteria should strive for equity of expectations across all academic departments (units, areas, programs, etc.), while addressing the specific expectations and activities of disciplines within the college.

3. **Approval of Document and Revision Cycle**
   After the Guidelines Committee ends drafting and revising the Department Evaluation Guidelines, the finished document will be submitted for approval to the voting faculty, chair, dean, and provost as per the process outlined in Appendix A, 1.b and 1.c. in the appropriate HOP policy. The elected faculty Guidelines committee must review the Guidelines no less than every six years (Appendix A, 1.c).

5. **References and Resources**

   **a. UTRGV Policies**
   - Tenured Faculty Evaluation (ADM 06-504)
   - Tenure-Track Faculty Appointments, Evaluations, and Reappointments (ADM 06-503)
   - HOP ADM 06-503 and ADM 06-504 Appendices
     - Appendix A, Department Evaluation Guidelines
     - Appendix B, Evaluation Categories and Standards
     - Appendix C, Definitions of Performance Ratings
     - Appendix D, Dossier Requirements
     - Appendix E, Review Committee Composition and Requirements Regarding the Review
   - Annual Faculty Evaluation (ADM 06-502)
   - Guidelines for Faculty Peer Observation of Teaching
   - Guidelines for the Selection of External Reviewers

   **b. UT System Policies and other Texas State Codes**
   - The University of Texas System Board of Regents’ Rules and Regulations Rule 10901, Statement of U. T. System Values and Expectations
   - The University of Texas System Board of Regents’ Rules and Regulations Rule 30501, Employee Evaluations
   - The University of Texas System Board of Regents’ Rules and Regulations Rule 31001, Faculty Appointments and Titles
   - The University of Texas System Board of Regents’ Rules and Regulations Rule 31008, Termination of a Faculty Member
   - The University of Texas System Board of Regents’ Rules and Regulations Rule 31102, Evaluation of Tenured Faculty
   - Texas Education Code Section 51.942, Performance Evaluation of Tenured Faculty
   - Texas Government Code Section 552.102, Public Information Exception: Confidentiality of Certain Personnel Information

   **c. Additional Resources**
   Please follow this link for additional resources and information which may be helpful in drafting and revising the Department Evaluation Guidelines. This folder will be updated as new resources are added.