

Guidelines for Department-Level Plans

The most important attributes of department-level plans are as follows:

1. **Conciseness:** A department's plan should be short enough to encourage department members, department heads, deans, and vice presidents to read it, to identify the most important points, and to refer to it through the entire five-year planning period.
2. **Significance:** The plan should identify action items that have clear ties to the department's mission and aspirations or to institutional issues. The action items should address important matters facing the department, and they should be sufficiently concrete that faculty members and administrators can verify progress in implementing them.
3. **Realism:** An action item is not, per se, a request for resources. It may identify priorities for using new resources if they become available as well as strategies for using existing resources. The latter category includes measures aimed at clarifying or redirecting people's teaching, research, service, or administrative activities as well as strictly fiscal measures. Also, a department's action items need not be large in number. A plan that contains a half dozen crisply stated, coherent action items that have meaningful, verifiable impact is far better than a scattershot plan that lists a large number of action items that are ill defined or that the department has little power to implement.

There is no *mandatory* format for department plans. As a guideline, a three- to five page document having the following structure will suffice.

Section	Suggested Length	Description
Mission and aspirations	1/3 page	A well crafted paragraph or two is enough
Previous planning accomplishments	1/3 page	A table will suffice.
Relevant institutional issues	1/3 page	One or two paragraphs is enough. For prominent institutional issues, refer to the <i>Creation of the Future</i> series.
Action items	1 1/2 pages	These should be well defined, and for each one there should be a short rationale that links the proposal to the department's mission and aspirations, to issues identified in the <i>Creation of the Future</i> series, or to both
Implementation	1/2 page	Identify a time line or implementation plan for the action items.