School Reviews - Procedures

1. Purpose of procedures

1.1 These procedures specify requirements and processes associated with external reviews of Schools as required under the School Reviews – Operational Policy and should be read in association with that policy.

2. Scope and application

2.1 These procedures apply to each School of USC.

3. Definitions

Please refer to the University's Glossary of Terms for policies and procedures.

4. Co-ordination of School reviews

4.1 The Quality Office has overall responsibility for co-ordinating School reviews, including:

(a) drafting schedules for School reviews for approval by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic);

(b) providing timely notice to the relevant Head of School of a forthcoming review of a School;

(c) providing a Quality Officer for each School review who will liaise with the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic), Head of School, School review personnel and the appointed review panel in order to progress and co-ordinate the review;

(d) providing advice and information on the organisation and conduct of reviews; and

(e) liaising with each School in relation to reporting, record-keeping and other data-capture related to a School review.

5. Scheduling of reviews

5.1 School reviews will be held at least every seven years and the schedule for these reviews, as approved by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic), will include milestone dates for each review.

5.2 Any changes to scheduled dates for School reviews require the approval of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic).

5.3 The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) may approve the conduct of a School review at a time other than a scheduled seven-yearly review or in addition to a scheduled review.

5.4 The schedule for School reviews will be updated by the Quality Office as required by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic), and on conclusion of each School review will be automatically updated to include the next seven-yearly review of a School.

5.5 The Quality Office will publish the latest approved schedule on MyUSC.

6. Advance notice and reminders of review

6.1 At least 12 months prior to the first milestone date for a School review, the Quality Office will provide the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic), the relevant Head of School and relevant School professional staff with:

(a) written advice of a forthcoming School review, together with details of the relevant University review personnel and milestone dates;

(b) copies of the School Reviews policy documents, and other relevant review support materials such as handbooks; and

(c) a proposal for convening an initial meeting of the relevant University review personnel to plan for and progress the review.

usc.edu.au/policy

University of the Sunshine Coast | CRICOS Provider Number: 01595D | Correct as at 17 April 2024
Hard copies of this document are uncontrolled and may not be current.

6.2 At least six months prior to the first milestone date for a School review, the Quality Office will consult the Head of School or nominee to ascertain progress with review preparations and, if necessary, remind all review personnel of the milestone dates for the review and initiate appropriate action to expedite review preparations.

7. Review planning meetings

7.1 Review planning meetings involving (as appropriate) the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic), Head of School or nominee, the relevant School professional officer and the Quality Officer should be held well in advance of the first milestone date for the review, and thereafter as needed, in order to:

(a) develop a common understanding of the review's purpose, nature, scope, processes and stages;

(b) clarify the roles and responsibilities of University and School staff consider the need for any additions to the standard set of terms of reference for a School review (refer to Appendix A);

(c) identify and discuss potential review panel members including a Chairperson;

(d) determine the overall structure and contents of a School review portfolio;

(e) develop a timeline of key events and activities for the review, including the proposed dates for a review panel site visit;

(f) agree on a broad indicative program for the site visit that, among other things, identifies likely interviewee groups and potential interviewees from multiple campuses, including external stakeholders;

(g) identify any groups or organisations to be specifically invited to make confidential submissions to the review panel;

(h) clarify that the relevant School is responsible for funding all review-related expenditure; and

(i) reach agreement on the amount of any honoraria to be offered to external panel members and the panel Chairperson.

8. Terms of reference for School reviews

8.1 A standard set of terms of reference for School reviews will be developed from time to time and must be approved by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic).

8.2 No element in the standard set of terms of reference (refer to Appendix A for current set) may be excluded except with the approval of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic).

8.3 The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) may require the incorporation of additional elements in the terms of reference for a specific review.

8.4 The Head of School may make a written request to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) for the inclusion of additional elements in the terms of reference and, subject to the approval of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic), these will be incorporated in the terms of reference for a specific School review.

8.5 The final set of terms of reference for each School review will be subject to written approval by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic).

8.6 Information and standard forms for development and approval of terms of reference are produced by the Quality Office and will be provided to Head of Schools at the first review planning meeting and will also be available on MyUSC.

9. Appointment of review panel

9.1 After the terms of reference for a review have been approved, the Head of School will initiate action for recommending appointment of a panel to undertake the review.

9.2 The panel membership should:

(a) be sufficiently broad to allow for a range of perspectives and expertise amongst the reviewers;

(b) include persons with the understanding, skill, experience or capability needed to undertake the review; and

(c) comprise no fewer than three (3) persons, external to the University who have no current or past formal association with the School or the University and who have no close professional or personal association with any member of the School under review.

9.3 The panel Chairperson will have recent high level leadership and management experience in or of a School elsewhere that has a similar focus or orientation.

9.4 The Head of School or nominee will:

(a) document a short list of persons considered appropriate to be appointed as members or as the Chairperson of the review panel, including full contact details and information on why each person would be an appropriate appointment, and including a statement that none of the persons on the list has a current or past formal association with the School or the University and has no close professional or personal association with any member of the School;

(b) seek approval from the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) to contact persons on the short-list to ascertain their interest in becoming members or the Chairperson of the review panel; and

(c) following contact with potential panel members, use the standard panel approval form to recommend to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) the appointment of the Chairperson and other members of the review panel.

9.5 The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) will appoint the review panel members and Chairperson and provide the Quality Officer with a copy of the signed review panel appointment letters.

9.6 Members and the Chairperson of the review panel will be:

(a) required to notify the University of their acceptance of membership of the panel and enter into an agreement to protect University intellectual property and maintain the confidentiality of any corporate or personal information made known to them during the review process

(b) reimbursed for all out-of-pocket expenses, and members other than employees of the University may receive an honorarium for their contribution to the review.

10 Review portfolio

10.1 The Head of School will arrange for the preparation and production of a review portfolio for submission to the review panel by the relevant milestone date in the review schedule.

10.2 The portfolio is the starting point for the formal review, should be structured to reflect the terms of reference for the review, and will contain sufficient information about the School, with supporting evidence, to enable the review panel to address each of the terms of reference.

10.3 The portfolio will incorporate information applicable to all relevant campuses and include standard data from the Strategic Information and Analysis Unit, People and Culture and the Office of Research as applicable.

10.4 Separate evidence that supplements or substantiates information and statements made in the portfolio may be provided to the review panel as appendix documents.

10.5 Any confidential information should be provided as a separate appendix document, marked "Confidential", and should not be included in the main body of the portfolio.

10.6 The Head of School should ensure that senior School personnel and the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) have been given opportunity to provide input to the structure and contents of the portfolio, and the Head of School may also seek input from any other source.

10.7 The final draft of the review portfolio must be submitted to the Quality Officer no later than six weeks prior to the scheduled site visit.

10.8 The Quality Officer will provide feedback as required to facilitate finalisation of the review portfolio.

10.9 The final portfolio must be:

(a) submitted by the Head of School to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) for approval no later than five weeks prior to the site visit;

(b) following DVC (Academic) approval sent by the School to the Quality Officer; and

(c) provided by the Quality Officer to each member of the review panel, in the requested format, no later than four weeks prior to the site visit.

10.10 Once the portfolio is submitted to the review panel, the Quality Officer becomes the primary conduit for communications between the University and the review panel concerning the substance of the review.

10.11 The Quality Officer will:

(a) provide the School under review with guidance to assist in development of a review portfolio;

(b) make the portfolio and non-confidential supplementary materials available to the University community via MyUSC by no later than two working days after their submission to the review panel;

(c) advise persons invited to participate in interviews with the review panel of its availability on MyUSC; and

(d) provide the review portfolio to any external interviewees.

11. Confidential submissions to review panel

11.1 As soon as practicable after submission of the review portfolio to the panel, the Quality Officer arranges for an announcement about the review to be made to the University community and calls for confidential submissions to the panel.

11.2 The Head of School will provide the Quality Officer with names and contact details for any external stakeholders who should be invited to make a confidential submission to the review panel.

11.3 All submissions are confidential to the review panel members and the Quality Officer and are disposed of appropriately upon receipt of the final review report.

12. Site visit

12.1 The Quality Officer, in consultation with the Head of School or nominee, will develop the site visit schedule, which will be submitted to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) for consideration and approval no later than six weeks prior to the site visit.

12.2 A School review will normally include a three day site visit by the review panel to the University.

12.3 During the site visit, the review panel:

(a) will interview a range of persons with a stake in the School under review;

(b) may inspect physical and other facilities and resources that support the work of the School; and

(c) will identify key findings and indicative recommendations to make in relation to the terms of reference for the review.

12.4 The Quality Officer, in consultation with the Head of School or nominee, is responsible for organising the arrangements for the participation of persons identified for interview by the review panel.

13. Review report

13.1 The review panel Chairperson will submit a draft report (through the Quality Officer) to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) on the panel's findings in relation to the terms of reference, including any recommendations, usually by no later than six weeks after conclusion of the site visit.

13.2 If the draft report identifies, or the review panel has separately identified, matters that potentially pose significant risk to the University, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) should bring those matters to the attention of the Vice-Chancellor and President.

13.3 As soon as practicable after receipt of a draft review report, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) (through the Quality Officer) will advise the panel in writing of any matters in the report that appear to be in need of correction or reconsideration.

13.4 Where a draft report is regarded as containing matters significantly beyond the terms of reference for the review or to pose serious risk to the University if made public, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) may request the panel in writing (through the Quality Officer) to remove reference to those matters from the review report and advise that, if the panel wishes, it may present a separate issues paper to the Vice-Chancellor and President in relation to those matters.

13.5 The review panel Chairperson will submit a final report (through the Quality Officer) to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) as soon as practicable after receiving feedback on the draft report.

13.6 The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic), after considering the final report, will provide the Vice-Chancellor and President with a copy of the report and, if appropriate, discuss the findings with the Vice-Chancellor and President.

13.7 The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) will provide members of the USC Executive, and the Head of School of the relevant School, with a copy of the final report and will discuss the findings with the Head of School.

13.8 The Head of School will provide senior staff of the School with a copy of the final report.

13.9 When advised by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) that the final report may be released to the wider university community, the Quality Officer will arrange for the final report to be made available via MyUSC and for advice to be given to the University community of its availability.

13.10 The Head of School may provide a copy of the final report to external stakeholders if thought appropriate.

usc.edu.au/policy

University of the Sunshine Coast | CRICOS Provider Number: 01595D | Correct as at 17 April 2024
Hard copies of this document are uncontrolled and may not be current.

14. Response and action plan

14.1 Guides and templates for development and documentation of the response and action plan will be produced by the Quality Office, provided to Head of Schools and made available on MyUSC.

14.2 The Head of School of the School will:

(a) initiate discussion of the review report, across all applicable campuses, by relevant School staff, School committees and senior members of other University entities upon which recommendations or findings contained in the report may impinge;

(b) develop a draft response and action plan addressing the recommendations and other matters of significance in the review report; and

(c) within eight weeks of receipt of the review report, submit the draft response and action plan to the Quality Office for feedback.

14.3 The Head of School will finalise the response and action plan for approval by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic).

14.4 The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) will provide the response and action plan to the USC Executive for feedback.

14.5 On approval of the response and action plan by the e Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic), the Quality Office will provide it to the Audit and Risk Management Committee and the Academic Board for noting.

14.6 The Quality Office will arrange for the School's response and action plan to be made available via MyUSC.

15. Reporting and monitoring progress with action plan

15.1 The Head of School will provide six-monthly progress reports to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) for the monitoring of progress in implementing the action plan, until such time as the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) is satisfied that all matters in the plan have been addressed appropriately. Implementation must be finalised within two (2) years.

15.2 After each progress report has been considered and approved by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic), the progress report will be provided to the USC Executive and the Academic Board

for monitoring of progress.

15.3 When the Head of School is satisfied that all recommendations have been satisfactorily addressed, the Head of School will present to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) a final progress report for approval.

15.4 The Quality Office will arrange for a copy of each progress report to be registered in the relevant file in the University's corporate records system and the Quality Officer will make each progress report available on MyUSC.

16. Review support materials

16.1 The Quality Office will develop and make available review support materials such as a review portfolio template, handbooks, forms, indicative role statements, checklists and flowcharts to assist personnel involved with School reviews.

17 Official review records

17.1 The Quality Office will arrange for the creation of a discrete University file in the corporate records system for each School review in accordance with University's Information Management Framework – Governing Policy.

17.2 Records of key review documents will be registered in the review file by the Quality Office.

END

Appendix A - Standard Terms of Reference

REVIEW OF THE SCHOOL OF <insert name>, <insert year>

Preamble

The University seeks feedback from the review panel on areas of good practice, and advice and recommendations on improvements that could be made in relation to the School to strengthen its effectiveness in pursuing University priorities and objectives, and in ensuring that the School is complying with the requirements of the Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2015 and any other relevant legislation or codes.

usc.edu.au/policy

University of the Sunshine Coast | CRICOS Provider Number: 01595D | Correct as at 17 April 2024
Hard copies of this document are uncontrolled and may not be current.

Terms of Reference

1. The review panel will undertake an evidence-based review and evaluation of the extent to which, and the effectiveness of the means by which the School:

(a) operations and outcomes have contributed to achievement of the University's strategic objectives and targets;

(b) practices and processes are consistent with higher education sector norms and expectations;

(c) operates effectively in the multi-campus environment; and

(d) has contributed to the University's ongoing compliance with relevant national Higher Education Standards and legislation.

2. The review panel will provide independent advice and recommendations, through evaluation of evidence, including trend and comparable data, to assist the School in identifying:

(a) School strengths, good practices, positive outcomes and productive improvements in performance in recent years; and

(b) areas in which School practices, performance, and outcomes could be enhanced or improved, including in relation to comparable practices, performance and outcomes in the sector, approaches to assuring and improving quality, and maintaining compliance with relevant Higher Education legislation.

3. The review panel will consider the effectiveness of the following main areas in undertaking the evaluative review:

- School structure, leadership and management - including School Board and other committees
- Processes for workforce planning, budgeting and resource allocation
- Effective processes for program and course planning, development, management, delivery, monitoring and evaluation
- Where appropriate, processes for external professional accreditation of programs
- Extent to which School processes support equivalent student outcomes at different study locations and by different study modes
- Process for development, management and evaluation of a School Research agenda
- Facilities and equipment for current and planned future teaching and research activities are appropriate
- Extent, scope and outcomes of School's external engagement activities and their contribution to educational and research priorities
- Viability of planned future developments

5. Timing and duration of review

5.1 The review will commence with the receipt by the review panel of the School's review portfolio, expected to be by [date].

5.2 The panel's work will be completed with the presentation of a final review report to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic), within six (6) weeks after the final day of the site visit.

END of Appendix

RELATED DOCUMENTS

• Bachelor Honours Degree - Academic Policy

• Governance Framework - Governing Policy
• Higher Degree by Research Program Accreditation - Academic Policy
• Higher Degrees by Research - Academic Policy
• Planning and Reporting Framework - Governing Policy
• Policy Framework - Governing Policy
• Program Review - Procedures
• Risk Management - Governing Policy
• School Reviews - Operational Policy
• Student Evaluation of Courses and Teaching - Academic Policy

LINKED DOCUMENTS

• School Reviews - Operational Policy

SUPERSEDED DOCUMENTS

• Faculty Reviews - Procedures

RELATED LEGISLATION / STANDARDS

• Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) Act 2000 (Cth)
• Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) Act 2011 (Cth)

usc.edu.au/policy

University of the Sunshine Coast | CRICOS Provider Number: 01595D | Correct as at 17 April 2024
Hard copies of this document are uncontrolled and may not be current.