

University Reviews - Procedures

1. Purpose

1.1 Consistent with the University's Quality and Standards Framework, the University undertakes external reviews as part of its commitment to quality assurance and quality improvement, contributing to its alignment and compliance with the Higher Education Standards Framework.

1.2 These procedures specify requirements and processes associated with University Reviews and should be read in conjunction with the University Reviews – Academic Policy.

2. Scope and application

2.1 These procedures specify requirements and processes associated with all forms of university reviews and apply to all staff members, external panel members, students and external stakeholders.

3. Definitions

3.1 Refer to the University's Glossary of Terms for definitions as they specifically relate to policy documents.

Program Coordinator: refers to the nominated Program Coordinator for coursework programs, and to the Dean of School in the absence of a specific Program Coordinator for a higher degree by research at the time of review.

Program Cluster means programs in a cognate discipline, or similar type, that are grouped for the purposes of a program review.

Portfolio Manager means the member of the University Executive to whom a Dean of School or the Director of an organisational unit reports.

Review Lead is the senior staff member or program coordinator assigned to coordinate the review on behalf of the organisational unit, and who is responsible for developing key review documentation.

Organisational unit means the operational support areas of the University identified in the functional organisations chart.

Thematic Review is a review focusing on an identified strategic priority area or institutional wide issue not addressed through other review processes.

4. Scheduling and Coordination

4.1 The Quality Office has overall responsibility for coordinating reviews, including:

- (a) drafting review schedules for approval by the relevant Portfolio Manager, consistent with the approval authorities as set out in the University Reviews – Academic Policy;
- (b) drafting and maintaining review schedules that are published and available to the university community via MyUniSC;
- (c) appointing a Quality Office staff member for each review who will liaise with the relevant staff and the appointed review panel in order to progress and coordinate the review; and
- (d) providing advice and information on the organisation and conduct of reviews.

4.2 The frequency and scheduling of reviews will be established and conducted as set out in the University Reviews – Academic Policy.

4.3 Cyclical reviews are scheduled on a rolling basis, and on conclusion of a review the schedule will be automatically updated to include the next five-yearly review.

4.4 Commissioned reviews be scheduled as required with priorities established annually by University Council, Academic Board or conducted at the discretion of the Vice-Chancellor and President (VCP).

APPROVAL AUTHORITY

Vice-Chancellor and President

RESPONSIBLE EXECUTIVE MEMBER

Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic)

DESIGNATED OFFICER

Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic)

FIRST APPROVED

24 June 2019

LAST AMENDED

1 July 2024

REVIEW DATE

1 July 2029

STATUS

Active

4.5 Thematic reviews, that consider institutional wide issues not addressed through other review processes, may be commissioned, within their area of responsibility, by University Council, Academic Board or the VCP.

4.6 Program Reviews will typically be conducted as part of a cluster of related programs, with review clusters identified and approved as part of the review schedule. For programs that are professionally accredited, where possible, reviews will be scheduled to align with and support professional accreditation submissions.

4.7 Amendments to the review schedule, including significant deferrals or requests for 'out of cycle' reviews, and changes to identified program clusters, require the approval of the relevant Portfolio Manager.

4.8 Review planning meetings will be coordinated by the Quality Office in order to:

- (a) develop a common understanding of the review's purpose, nature, scope, processes and stages;
- (b) clarify the roles and responsibilities and consider the need for any additions to the standard set of terms of reference for Program Reviews (refer to Appendix A);
- (c) determine the overall structure and contents of a review portfolio;
- (d) develop a timeline of key events and activities for the review, including the proposed dates and mode for review panel interviews;
- (e) agree on a broad indicative program for the schedule of interviews that, among other things, identifies likely interviewee groups, including external stakeholders;
- (f) identify any groups or organisations to be specifically invited to make confidential submissions to the review panel;
- (g) clarify that the relevant cost centre is responsible for funding all review-related expenditure; and
- (h) reach agreement on the amount of any honoraria to be offered to external panel members and the panel Chairperson.

5. Terms of Reference

5.1 A standard set of terms of reference have been established for Program Reviews, as set out in Appendix A. Variations to the standard terms of reference, including requests for additional or excluded elements, are subject to the written approval of the Portfolio Manager.

5.2 The Academic Board will develop proposed terms of reference for each external review of the Board and its Standing Committees and recommend the proposed terms of reference to the VCP for approval.

5.3 For all other review types, the terms of reference will be developed by the Review Lead in consultation with the Portfolio Manager and will provide clear guidance to the review panel on the specific matters that are to be addressed in the review. For these reviews, the final set of terms of reference will be as approved in writing by the Portfolio Manager.

6. Panel Composition, Nomination and Appointment

6.1 After the terms of reference for a review have been finalised and approved, the Review Lead will initiate action for recommending appointment of a panel to undertake the review.

6.2 In liaison with the Quality Office, the Review Lead or nominee will:

- (a) document a short list of up to six persons considered appropriate to be appointed as members or as Chairperson of the review panel, who meet the criteria specified in 6.3
- (b) include a brief statement on why each person would be an appropriate appointment.

6.3 The panel membership must:

- (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;
- (c) comprise no fewer than three persons, external to the University, who have no current or past formal association with the University and who have no close professional or personal association with any member of the area under review; and
- (d) the panel Chairperson will have recent senior leadership and management experience elsewhere that has a similar focus or orientation.

6.4 Considering panel composition, balance and equity, the Portfolio Manager will determine and appoint the panel members and Chairperson via the approval of the panel appointment form.

6.5 Members and Chairperson of the review panel will be:

- (a) required to accept membership of the panel in writing 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; and
- (b) reimbursed for all out-of-pocket expenses and may receive an honorarium for their contribution to the review.

7. Review Portfolio

7.1 The Review Lead is responsible for the production of the Review Portfolio within a six-month time frame. The review portfolio is intended to be an honest self-reflection and critical evaluation process that is collegial and consultative. The Quality Office will provide the Review Lead with guidance to assist in production of a review portfolio.

7.2 The Review Lead should ensure that relevant senior personnel have been given opportunity to provide input to the structure and contents of the portfolio.

7.3 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 and supporting evidence, to enable the review panel to address each of the Terms of Reference.

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

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

7.6 The final draft of the review portfolio must be submitted to the Quality Office no later than ten weeks prior to the panel interviews. The Quality Office will provide feedback as required to facilitate finalisation of the review portfolio.

7.7 The final portfolio must be:

- (a) submitted for endorsement to the Dean of School or Organisational Unit Director by no later than eight weeks prior to the panel interviews;
- (b) submitted to the Portfolio Manager for approval no later than six weeks prior to the panel interviews; and
- (c) provided by the Quality Office to each member of the review panel no later than four weeks prior to the panel interviews.

7.8 Once the portfolio is approved and released to the review panel, the Quality Office becomes the primary conduit for communications between the University and the review panel concerning the substance of the review.

7.9 The Quality Office will announce the review to the University community and call for confidential submissions to the review panel. The confidential submission process allows individual staff or students to provide their own comments to the review panel, with any submissions received remaining confidential to the Quality Officer supporting the review and the review panel.

8. Panel Visit and Stakeholder Interviews

8.1 During the panel interviews, the review panel will:

- (a) interview a range of persons with a stake in the review;
- (b) identify key findings and indicative recommendations to make in relation to the terms of reference for the review; and,
- (c) inspect physical and other facilities and resources where relevant.

8.2 The Quality Office, in consultation with the Review Lead, is responsible for organising the arrangements for the participation of persons identified to be interviewed by the review panel.

8.3 At the conclusion of the panel interviews the review panel will present their preliminary findings to the Portfolio Manager, School Dean or Organisational Unit Director and other relevant senior staff.

9. Review Report

9.1 The panel Chairperson will submit a draft report (through the Quality Office) to the Portfolio Manager on the panel's findings in relation to the terms of reference, including any recommendations, no later than six weeks after conclusion of the panel interview.

9.2 Program Reviews will provide one of the below recommendations:

- (a) the program should continue to be offered in its present form;
- (b) the program should continue to be offered only on condition that recommendations for actions are implemented; or

(c) that the program should be discontinued.

9.3 When the draft report identifies, or the review panel has separately identified, matters that potentially pose significant risk to the University, the Quality Office will bring those matters to the immediate attention of the Portfolio Manager.

9.4 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 Portfolio Manager may request the panel in writing (through the Quality Office) 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 VCP in relation to those matters.

9.5 As soon as practicable after receipt of a draft review report, the Quality Office will advise the panel in writing of any matters in the report that appear to require correction or reconsideration.

9.6 The panel Chairperson will submit a final report (through the Quality Office) to the Portfolio Manager as soon as is practical after receiving feedback on the draft report.

10. Response and Action Plan

10.1 Each review must result in the Review Lead developing a response to the review findings, an action plan to address review recommendations. The Review Lead will:

(a) initiate discussion of the review report by relevant staff, any relevant committees/reference groups, and senior members of other areas of the University impacted by recommendations or findings contained in the report;

(b) develop a draft review Response and Action Plan addressing the recommendations and other matters of significance in the review report for endorsement by the School Dean or organisational unit Director; and

(c) within eight weeks of receipt of the review report, submit the draft review Response and Action Plan to the Portfolio Manager for consideration and approval.

10.2 On approval of the Response and Action Plan by the Portfolio Manager, the Quality Office will coordinate submission of the Review Report and response plan to the relevant committees, as set out in Table 1. For Program and School Reviews, additional reporting to School Committees will be initiated by the School as deemed appropriate by the School Dean.

Table 1: Committee Reporting

REVIEW TYPE	COMMITTEE	PURPOSE
Committee/Board	University Council / Academic Board	Noting
Organisational Unit	University Executive	Endorsement
Research Centre/Institute	Research Committee	Noting
	Academic Board	Endorsement
Program	Program and Course Committee or Research Degrees Committee	Noting
	Academic Board	Endorsement
School	Audit and Risk Management	Noting
	Academic Board	Endorsement
Thematic	University Executive	Noting
	Relevant commissioning body (Academic Board or University Council)	Endorsement

10.3 For Program Reviews, consistent with the curriculum evaluation and improvement cycle outlined in the Coursework Curriculum – Procedures, the Quality Office will arrange for actions contained in the approved Response and Action Plan to be captured in the register of planned action for ongoing monitoring and reporting to ensure completion.

10.4 For all other review types, implementation of planned actions will be managed directly between the Review Lead and the Portfolio Manager.

11. Reporting on Outcomes – Program Reviews

11.1 The Quality Office is responsible for the coordination and reporting of monitoring implementation of planned actions arising from Program Reviews.

11.2 Progress updates against planned actions will be collected from the Review Lead bi-annually until such time as the Portfolio Manager is satisfied that all matters in the plan have been addressed appropriately.

11.3 Following approval of updates by the relevant School Dean and Program Manager, summary reports for each School will be prepared by the Quality Office and submitted to the relevant Committee as set out in Table 1. For Program Reviews, additional reporting to school committees will be initiated by the school as deemed appropriate by the School Dean.

11.4 Implementation of all actions would normally occur within two years following approval of the Response and Action Plan.

12. Records and Information Management

12.1 The Quality Office will ensure that all records are captured in the University's records management system in accordance with the University's Information Management – Governing Policy.

12.2 The Quality Officer will ensure that any confidential submissions received as part of the review process are appropriately disposed of following receipt of the Review Report.

13. Review Support Materials

13.1 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 reviews.

14. Roles and Responsibilities

ROLE	RESPONSIBILITY
Portfolio Manager	Has responsibility for approving key aspects of the review, including composition of the panel, the review portfolio, response and action plan and progress reports.
Review Lead	Has primary responsibility for populating the review portfolio in consultation with the Quality Office. For Program Reviews, this will be supported by the Academic Support Unit (ASU). Provides feedback on the review schedule and recommends a list of stakeholders for invitation to meet with the panel.
Quality Office	Provide guidance and support to the Review Lead, Portfolio Manager, ASU and members of the Panel regarding review processes.
Academic Support Unit	Provide support to the Schools to compile relevant review documentation including portfolios and associated supporting documents (Program and School Reviews).

Appendix A: Standard Terms of Reference – Review of Coursework and Higher Degree by Research Programs

END

RELATED DOCUMENTS

- Coursework Curriculum - Academic Policy
- Governance Framework - Governing Policy
- Information Management - Governing Policy
- Planning and Reporting Framework - Governing Policy
- Policy Framework - Governing Policy
- Policy Framework - Procedures
- Risk Management - Governing Policy
- University Reviews - Academic Policy
- USC University Research Centres and Research Institutes - Operational Policy

LINKED DOCUMENTS

- University Reviews - Academic Policy

SUPERSEDED DOCUMENTS

- Review of Academic Board and its Committees - Procedures
- Program Review - Procedures
- School Reviews - Procedures
- Organisational Unit Reviews - Procedures

RELATED LEGISLATION / STANDARDS

- Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) Act 2011 (Cth)
- Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021 (Cth)