

Administrative Reviews

Introduction

To complement the existing process of regular reviews of academic areas (Schools, Programs, Units, etc) at the University of Tasmania (UTas), a system of regular reviews of administrative areas has been implemented.

An administrative review may comprise a review of a non-academic division, section, unit, college or area, or a review of an administrative, teaching and learning or research support service or program. Administrative reviews will focus on the quality of services and core activities, the preparedness of the area under review to deal with new challenges or priorities and the ways in which the activities support the achievement of strategies contained within the UTas Strategic Plan.

Each administrative/support area or service should carry out a formal review at least every five years.

The administrative review process will generally follow similar lines to that of an AUQA audit –

- a) A self-assessment document will be prepared by the area or service under review and provided to the independent Auditor(s) conducting the review.
- b) The Auditor(s) will undertake an on-site visit, to validate the material contained in the self-assessment, review benchmarking and other quality assurance processes and outcomes, and meet with key staff, student representatives and other identified stakeholders.
- c) The Auditor(s) will provide a draft report for discussion with the relevant Head of Division.
- d) A final report will be prepared, listing commendations and recommendations. This report will be available to Planning & Resources Committee, Academic Senate and other committees as appropriate.

In addition to scheduled reviews of administrative areas and support services, some ‘special purpose’ reviews may be prompted by other factors at a given time – recent examples include the review of video conferencing facilities and the review of the performance management system.

UTas administration consists of five divisions –

- Vice-Chancellor
- Deputy Vice-Chancellor
- Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research)
- Pro Vice-Chancellor (Teaching and Learning)
- Executive Director, Finance and Administration

A full listing of administrative areas is included as Appendix A, with a proposed schedule of reviews to be developed (see Appendix B).

Guidelines and Procedures for Administrative Reviews

1. Selection of Administrative Areas
 - 1.1 The proposed areas for review over the next five years will be developed (see Appendix B).
 - 1.2 The Vice-Chancellor and Head of Division for the area or service under review will agree on the terms of reference, a detailed template for the self-assessment document, a timeframe for the review and the name of one or more independent expert people (the Auditor(s)) who will conduct the review. [In case of a review of the Vice-Chancellor's Division, the Vice-Chancellor will consult with the Executive Director (Finance & Administration) regarding review details and Auditors.]
 - 1.3 Review arrangements will be reported to Planning & Resources Committee.

2. Selection of the Auditor(s)
 - 2.1 The role of the independent Auditor(s) is to examine and test the administrative area's self-assessment against the agreed template and terms of reference in order to validate or challenge it as appropriate.
 - 2.2 The following characteristics will be considered when selecting an Auditor(s) -
 - Expertise in the area (or some of the areas) concerned
 - Impartiality/objectivity
 - Respect for, and confidence in, the Auditor(s) chosen
 - Consistency/continuity.
 - 2.3 Given the nature of the functions to be reviewed, it is likely that from time-to-time some Auditors will be from outside the higher education sector.
 - 2.4 In some cases, a University staff member from another Division or from a Faculty might be considered to be part of a 'review team', in addition to one or more external Auditors.

3. Administration
 - 3.1 Where required, reviews shall be administered and serviced by the relevant Division.

4. Structure of the Review
 - 4.1 **Preparation**
 - 4.1.1 There will be a call for submissions relating to the review in which stakeholders will be invited to make comments relating to the terms of reference for the review. Where appropriate this will include stakeholders outside the University. All submissions received will be provided to the Auditor/s along with the self-assessment documents.
 - 4.1.2 This stage also involves the compilation of a self-assessment document prepared by the relevant section, which is to be provided to the Auditor(s) through the Head of Section and Head of Division, at least one month in advance of the conduct of an on-site visit. Information provided in the self-assessment document should clearly demonstrate the performance of each section or function within the area under review.

- 4.1.3 The self-assessment document shall be prepared against an agreed template and will typically address the following:
- The area's goals and objectives and how they relate and contribute to those of the University.
 - A report on the planning, service delivery and review/evaluation processes for the area/services and specific achievements/performance against the area's operational plan.
 - For each core function performed by the area, an analysis of roles, evidence of good practice and details of any planned improvements.
 - Where the area under review is responsible for the implementation of University policy, a report on the monitoring of compliance with that policy.
 - Information on benchmarking exercises, internal and external client surveys (covering, for example, client awareness, usage and satisfaction) and similar quality assessment processes implemented by the area, and the outcomes of such processes.
 - Details of organisational and staffing structures and staff development programs.
 - Details of financial management and administration.
 - Details of space and physical resources utilised.

4.2 **The Review**

4.2.1 Terms of Reference

The Auditor(s) will usually be requested to consider and report on:

- The examination and testing of the administrative area's self-assessment.
- The alignment of the area's goals and objectives with those of the University's Plan and the implementation of the area's operational plan.
- Commendations in relation to identified strengths and recommendations for actions that may be taken to improve the effectiveness of operations.
- The capacity of the area to meet likely future challenges related to its functions.
- The quality of the administrative area's management and leadership.
- The appropriateness of the human and financial resources and physical infrastructure of the administrative area.
- The relationship(s) with stakeholders, both within and external to the University, and the assessment by stakeholders of the effectiveness of the area.
- The achievement of service delivery targets, where appropriate.

4.2.2 Timing

Reviews shall be conducted expeditiously in keeping with the following general guidelines:

- Call for submissions – two months prior to on-site visit.
- Delivery of self-assessment document and submissions: one month prior to on-site visit.

- On-site visit – up to 3 working days on campus.
- Submission of draft report: one month (maximum) following on-site visit.
- Submission of final report: within one week of submission of draft report.

A diagram showing the timing of the administrative review process is included as Appendix C.

4.2.3 Submission and Finalisation of Report

- The Auditor(s) will provide a draft report for discussion with the Vice-Chancellor and Head of Division (and Head of Section or person responsible for the function being reviewed) within one month of the on-site visit.
- A final report will be prepared, listing commendations and recommendations, one week after the tabling of the draft report. The Head of Division will present the final report to the Planning & Resources Committee along with comments and an implementation plan developed by the Head of the Section or the person responsible for the function being reviewed, in consultation with staff of the area.

5. Implementation of Review Outcomes

Implementation shall be the responsibility of the Head of Division. The Vice-Chancellor's Executive committee will monitor implementation of the outcomes of the review report.

6. Follow Up Procedures

- 6.1 The Head of Division shall provide a progress report on the implementation of recommendations to the Vice-Chancellor's Executive committee within six months of finalisation of the report.
- 6.2 The Head of Division shall forward a final report to the Planning and Resources Committee within one year of the review, outlining progress made towards implementation, or the timetable for implementation, of the actions agreed as a result of the review.
- 6.3 The Office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor will maintain a register of administrative reviews that will also be used to monitor progress on the implementation of recommendations.

Appendix A – List of Administrative Areas

(Note: The list below needs further refinement – it does not currently include all sub-units/services)

Vice-Chancellor

- Policy & Planning
- Public Relations & University Extension
 - Alumni/Foundation
 - Scholarships

Deputy Vice-Chancellor

- English Language Centre
- Offshore UBE
- International Services Office
 - International Marketing
 - International Student Support
 - International Exchange & Admissions

Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research)

- Research & Development Office
- Commercialisation Unit

Pro Vice-Chancellor (Teaching & Learning)

- Library
 - Help Desk
- Flexible Education Unit
- North-West Centre

Executive Director, Finance & Administration

- University Secretary
 - Legal Office
 - Records Unit
 - Council Secretariat
- Academic Registrar
 - Academic & Information Services
 - Student Administration
 - Student Services
 - Disability Services
 - Student Counselling
 - Student Recruitment
- Asset Management
 - Maintenance
 - Grounds
 - Cleaning
 - Security
 - Parking

- Space Planning
- Convention & Venue Services
- Timetabling
- AV Support
- Design & Acquisition
- IT Services
 - IT Infrastructure Services
 - IT Desktop & Client Services
 - Corporate Systems
- Financial & Business Services
 - Budget & Analysis
 - Financial Operations
 - Financial Reporting
 - System & Control
 - University Services
- Human Resources
 - Employment Services
 - Equal Employment Opportunity
 - HR Operations
 - Occupational Health & Safety

Some administrative activities span more than one administrative unit, section or division. Others are not readily identified through names of sections. Examples include

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- Information Technology (in Schools, Faculties and Administration)
- Student Marketing – Recruitment – Application – Enrolment cycle
- Provision of data for planning and quality assurance
- Scholarships program
- Fundraising activities/mechanisms
- Systems of budget allocations, control, accountability
- Teaching infrastructure
- Administration of Faculties
- Management of compliance
- Staff recruitment – Induction – Development – Retention – Recognition cycle
- Information storage, planning and records
- Senior Committees and administrative processes and systems.

• **Appendix B – Proposed Schedule of Administrative Reviews**

(Note: The List below is incomplete – further areas/services proposed for review to be added)

2000

- Publications for Students
- Video conference Evaluation

2001

- Performance Management System
- Schools with Cross-Campus Responsibilities
- Animal House

2002

- English Language Centre (Financial Management & Administration)
- Ethics Committees

2003

- North West Centre
- Research & Development Office
- Human Resources
- Student Recruitment
- Teaching Infrastructure
- Commercialisation Unit

2004

- Research Higher Degrees Unit
- Management of Compliance

2005

- Flexible Education Unit

2006

2007

- English Language Centre

Appendix C – Timing of Administrative Reviews

