Reviews of Schools and Institutes Procedure

Version 2 –Approved 16 May 2022

Contents

Purpose

The purpose of this Procedure is to outline the processes for formal quality and strategic review of the University's academic Schools and other academic units.

A reference to 'School' in this Procedure also applies to 'Institute'.

This Procedure reflects the University's commitment to systematic review and evaluation of its activities.

Applicable governance instruments

Instrument	Section	Principles
Quality Assurance Policy	All	All

Procedure

1   Guiding Principles

a) The University will conduct a program of reviews of Schools as an integral part of its strategic planning and quality assurance process and its commitment to transparency, accountability and improvement.

b) The University is committed to a review process that involves rigorous self-assessment prior to the review as well as structured evaluation after the review period.

c) Reviews will involve a substantial self-assessment process by the unit under review and an assessment by a panel comprising members of the University and external reviewers.

2   Governance

- A School review is formally commissioned by, and the outcomes reported to, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic).

- Review outcomes are reported to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) through Academic Quality and Standards.

- Reviews of Schools will not usually recommend on perceived accommodation or other resource issues, but reviews may draw attention to such issues where the panel judges them to be incompatible with achieving excellence in teaching and/or research or in meeting our other institutional obligations in respect of compliance with the *Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards), 2015 Cth*.

3   Terms of Reference

- The review will provide a basis for quality assurance of a School in relation to its academic activities, organisation and management and the resourcing of these to ensure most effective alignment with the University's Strategic Plan.

- The review will consider and report on the School's progress in relation to the School's strategy (including its agreed indicators of performance).

- Reviews of Schools are to focus on:

    a) strategic and operational planning priorities and their alignment with those of the College and the University;

    b) the quality of teaching and learning, support for the student experience and educational outcomes;

    c) the quality, impact and productivity of research and research training;

    d) the management of external relations, including strategic relations with government and industry, and community engagement; and

    e) the management of overall resources (financial and staffing).

- The review will provide an evidence-based assessment of the academic performance of a School and its contributions to the strategic objectives of both the College and University. It will generate commendations highlighting areas of exceptional progress and performance, and recommendations to guide current and future action to improve strategic alignment, performance and other relevant outcomes.

- Reviews will consider the effectiveness of the internal management and operations of the School.

- Reviews will also provide advice on the future direction of the School, including course portfolio, research development and staffing profile, noting developments within the University, relevant academic disciplines and wider industries/ professions and the community.

- Generic Terms of Reference for reviews are included in **Schedule 1**.

- The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) will issue formal invitations to panel members and approve any customisation of the Generic Terms of Reference

4   Scheduling

- Reviews are cyclical in nature, with each School typically being reviewed once in each five-year period.

- The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) may decide to review a School more frequently, as prompted by particular factors applying at a given time, or at the request of the Vice-Chancellor.

- A schedule of planned reviews will be published each year and may be varied at the discretion of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic), typically only in extraordinary circumstances.

- The timing of reviews will take account of planned professional accreditation visits and other external reviews.

- The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) will inform the University Executive Team and the Academic Senate of any changes to the approved schedule following the review of the schedule each year in March.

5   Review Panel

5.1   Composition

- Review panels will comprise members external to the School undergoing review.

- Panel members will be requested to sign a confidentiality agreement.

- Each review panel will include:

    a) a senior member of academic staff as Chair (typically, an Executive Dean from another College, another member of the University Executive Team, or senior role-holder);

    b) a Head of School or discipline, from outside the School under review;

    c) a senior professional staff member, from outside the School under review;

    d) an academic staff member from outside the School under review;

    e) at least one external senior academic or senior executive from another University;

    f) one or more industry representative/s, if applicable; and

    g) a student representative.

5.2   Appointment

- The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) will appoint each review panel.

- The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) may seek advice from the College Executive Dean and the Head of School under review regarding external panel membership but is not limited by any recommendations.

- The College Executive Dean and Head of School will be invited to provide comment to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic), in confidence, to identify any potential conflicts of interest.

- The proposed panel members will be invited to comment, in confidence, on any potential conflict of interest between themselves and the other proposed panel members.

- Academic Quality and Standards will provide support for this process.

5.3 Responsibilities

The review panel will:

a) consider the self-assessment report prepared by the School;

b) participate in a teleconference prior to the site-visit to identify key areas of focus;

c) liaise and/or meet with the Director, Academic Quality and Standards throughout the review process to discuss/seek any required additional guidance;

d) consider any additional information it may wish to request of the School;

e) issue a general invitation to the University community to make written submissions to the panel;

f) invite submissions from particular members of the University community and from external groups and individuals as appropriate;

g) meet with the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) and the Vice-Chancellor (or Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) only) at the outset of the site-visit;

h) actively participate in a site visit (typically three days) to conduct interviews with key stakeholders including University management and School staff, students, and review relevant documentation;

i) draft commendations and recommendations on the final day of the visit;

j) meet with the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic)and the Vice-Chancellor (or Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic)only) at the conclusion of the visit to discuss preliminary findings and recommendations; and

k) with the assistance of the Review Executive Officer, prepare and submit a final written report to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) and then the Vice-Chancellor within eight weeks of the site visit.

6 Support for Reviews

6.1 Review Costs

Costs associated with the review, including the travel, accommodation (if applicable) and any other associated costs of the review panel, will be borne by the School under review.

6.2 Executive Officer

An Executive Officer is appointed to support each review. The appointed Executive Officer will be available full-time for the duration of the review, and on call for a designated period of two months both before and after the review.

Executive Officers are drawn from a pre-nominated pool of professional staff members (HEO 6/7 or above). This pool comprises:

a) two pool members from each College (except the College of Business and Economics – one member only); and

b) one pool member from each Division.

The Executive Officer will ensure that the Terms of Reference for the review are made available to University of Tasmania staff via the University intranet.

The Executive Officer will:

a) throughout the review, provide professional advice to the panel to ensure the University's expectations of the process are fulfilled;

b) support the panel in the development of an appropriate site visit schedule and liaise with the School in practical arrangements for interviews;

c) work with the Administrative Officer identified by the School being reviewed to ensure that calendar invitations are made in accordance with the agreed site visit schedule, and that other necessary logistical arrangements (such as catering, inter campus travel (if any)) are made;

d) ensure University of Tasmania staff are advised of the option of providing a written submission to the reviewers, and assembling and providing this material to the panel prior to the site visit;

e) coordinate the provision of information and answers to questions that the panel may have prior to and during the site visit;

f) participate in the site visit, taking notes of interviews and supporting the panel's work;

g) draft the review report, taking account of panel member's feedback and noting any major dissent from any recommended actions; and

h) finalise the review report to the satisfaction of the review panel Chair

6.3 School Administrative Officer

The Head of School will nominate a local Administrative Officer who will be allocated to work with the Executive Officer to support the logistics for the review.

The nominated School Administration Officer will work with the panel Executive Officer to make detailed arrangements for the smooth-running of the panel site visit, including calendar invitations, panel member travel and accommodation bookings (if applicable), room bookings, catering and other administrative duties as required.

6.4 Academic Quality and Standards

Academic Quality and Standards will assist by providing general advice on the requirements of the self-review report, including suggestions on the data and information which may serve as appropriate evidence for the self-review.

Academic Quality and Standards oversees the work of the Executive Officer and provides support to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) in all aspects of the reviews process.

6.5 Data and Analytics Team

The School will receive support from the Data and Analytics team in the provision of data to underpin the self-assessment report portfolio, including comparative data where available.

7   Self-Assessment Report Format and Contents

7.1   Format

- The self-assessment process provides an opportunity for critical self-assessment by the School, and should identify areas of achievement and success, as well as opportunities for improvement.

- Rigorous self-assessment focuses on both current and future performance and includes a critical examination of how the School can contribute most effectively to the College's and University's strategic objectives.

- The School being reviewed will prepare a self-assessment report to summarise its performance in relation to the review's Terms of Reference, drawing on appropriate comparative data.

- The self-assessment report is not a marketing document. It should provide a frank, evidence-based analysis of strengths and opportunities for improvement.

- The Head of School has overall responsibility for the preparation of the self-assessment report.

- The self-assessment report must be submitted to the panel via the Executive Officer at least 8 weeks prior to panel's site visit.

- The self-assessment report will:

    a) address the Terms of Reference for the review;

    b) compare the School's performance in key areas (with evidence), in line with the Terms of Reference, against national data-sets and against at least two comparable Schools at other Australian universities; and

    c) focus on future performance through an analysis of the School's areas of strength and those requiring development.

- The self-assessment report must be no longer than 30 A4 pages, excluding appendices, and must address the Terms of Reference for the review.

- The self-assessment report allows the School to reflect upon and analyse operations in order to optimise future performance. Consequently, the focus of the submission is to identify future directions and strategic intentions for the School.

- However, to set the context for the review, it is important to briefly address the School's history and its present circumstances, with a focus on factors that have contributed to the current operating environment and potential future outlook of the School.

Contents

- The self-assessment report should include:

    a) an Executive Summary of the submission;

    b) the history of the School;

    c) the present circumstances of the School;

    d) frank self-evaluation (with supporting evidence) of the current activities and outcomes of the School and its future plans for improvement and development against each Term of Reference; and

    e) appendices (as outlined below).

- The self-assessment report should also be used to demonstrate compliance with relevant national standards.

- Core performance data will be sourced with the support of the Data and Analytics team. Five-year trend data should be provided as a default, with relevant comparative data wherever possible.
- The following information should be included in the self-assessment report as appendices:

Core Documents

a) Current year School Strategy and performance indicators being used to assess progress;

b) Current year School budget;

c) The School Safety Plan;

d) The School People Plan;

e) Analysis of end of year financial outcome for last three years;

f) Most recent report against School performance indicators; and

g) A report on the implementation of recommendations from any previous School reviews or relevant discipline reviews conducted in the past five years.

Staffing Profile

a) Organisational chart showing key academic and administrative leadership positions in the School (with position titles and names, level and FTE);

b) Staff demographic data showing age, gender and length of service for both academic and professional staff;

c) For academic staff only, staff qualifications and skill-base and identifying Established Productive Researcher/Early Career Researcher status;

d) Staff professional development/training/career development plans;

e) Most recent Academic Workload Planning System data;

f) Staff succession plan (where available); and

g) Report of most recent Staff Climate Survey data and summary of actions taken.

Course Portfolio

a) Summary of coursework profile at sub-bachelor, bachelor and postgraduate levels, and strategy for its ongoing development, including strategy for increasing flexibility and distinctiveness of offerings;

b) Summary analysis of recent market research into the positioning, differentiation and profile of the School's courses;

c) Terms of Reference and membership of Course Advisory Committees operated by the School, and minutes for past three meetings;

d) Course performance data including trends in load (all liability categories) against target, enrolments, student equity measures, student preferences, median ATAR and number of ATAR 80+, retention, all surveys which comprise the Quality Indicators for Learning and Teaching (QILT) (last three years);

e) List of course titles of all professionally accredited courses and status of accreditation;

f) List of low enrolment units and any current plan for consolidation;

g) Relevant QILT data over the past five years, School targets in relation to QILT surveys and progress against those targets;

h) Summary report of student feedback on unit results (last three semesters) and teaching improvement priorities; and

i) List of internal and external teaching awards/grants received in the past five years showing name, purpose and amount.

j) De-identified data relating to breaches of academic integrity in the past five years, including discipline area, student year level and level of breach.

Research and Research Training

a) Statement of School research strengths and their relationship to University research priorities;

b) Trends in School research income and research publications (last five years) and relevant ERA data;

c) Performance in national competitive grant rounds including number of applications submitted, success rate and dollar value of grants secured;

d) Trends in HDR student load against target and student satisfaction (last three years); and

e) Number and names of staff qualified to act as principal supervisors of HDR candidates.

Engagement

a) Summary of community engagement activities and outcomes (last three years), and their alignment to strategy.

Infrastructure

a) Asset register including major equipment and IT infrastructure; and

b) Space report showing floor area, space utilisation and space quality.

8   Submissions to the Review

- All written submissions to the review panel will be treated as confidential unless the author/s indicate otherwise. They will be made available to the review panel only, at least <u>one week</u> before the site visit.

- <u>Four weeks</u> prior to the review, a University-wide announcement will be made by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic), inviting written submissions in response to the review terms of reference.

- Respondents may seek to make an oral submission to the review panel in the course of its site visit. Intending respondents must keep in mind, however, that in view of severe time constraints, a hearing cannot be guaranteed and will be brief.

- Applicants seeking to make an oral submission will be prioritised and may be clustered in thematic groups. Any application for a confidential hearing must be made <u>four weeks </u>in advance to the review panel Chair via the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic), for a determination to be made.

9   Site Visits

- The panel's site visit schedule is prepared by the Executive Officer, with input from the School under review and the review panel members. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) approves the final site visit schedule.

- The site visit appointments, room bookings, catering and other logistics will be coordinated by the Executive Officer and supported by the allocated School Administration Officer.

10   Review Panel Report

- Within <u>three weeks</u> of the site visit, the draft report and recommendations will be submitted to the Director, Academic Quality and Standards.

- The Director, Academic Quality and Standards will invite the Head of School to check the report for matters of fact and emphasis. The Director, Academic Quality and Standards may circulate the draft to other staff at their discretion, for factual checking. This process should take no longer than <u>one week</u>.

- Comments from the Head of School will then be referred back to the panel Chair for final consideration and amendment of the report as appropriate. This process should take no longer than <u>two weeks</u>.

- The panel Chair and panel will then endorse the final report and submit it to the Director, Academic Quality and Standards for transmission to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic), College Executive Dean and Head of School.

- The Head of School will make the report available to members of the School and consult with School staff as appropriate in the development of an Action Plan in response to the report's recommendations.

11   School Action Plan

- The School Action Plan will respond directly to the recommendations made by the panel and will be prepared in accordance with the proforma provided by Academic Quality and Standards.

- The draft School Action Plan will first be submitted by the Head of School to the Executive Dean and Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) for consideration no later than <u>four weeks</u> after the Head receives the final report.

- The final version of the School Action Plan, including any revisions will be submitted to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) within <u>two weeks</u> of the draft report being returned to the Head of School.

- The College Executive Dean and the Head of School under review have a responsibility to monitor the implementation of the Action Plan.

- Items in the Action Plan will be incorporated into the School Strategic Plan. Reporting on the Action Plan will be integrated into the School's annual reporting against Plan objectives.

12   Progress Reports

- The School will provide the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic), through the Director, Academic Quality and Standards, a consolidated report of progress against each review recommendation at <u>12 months</u> and <u>18 months</u> and each <u>following 12 months</u> until such time as the School is due for another cyclical review.

- The 12 and 18 monthly Progress Reports will be provided to the University Executive Team for noting; and the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) will provide a summary report to the Council and Academic Senate for noting.

- This process will be facilitated by Academic Quality and Standards.

13   Reporting on Review Outcomes

- The School Action Plan and the panel's Review Report will be presented to the Vice-Chancellor for approval and to the University Executive Team for information.

- The Vice-Chancellor will provide the School Action Plan and the panel's Review Report to Council, for information.

- A copy of the School Action Plan and the panel's commendations and recommendations will be provided to Academic Senate for information and discussion.

14   Record Keeping

- All confidential submissions, drafts of the review report, and notes taken during the review, will be returned by panel members to the Executive Officer upon completion of the review for confidential disposal (or confidential storage if deemed necessary).

- Records Management will retain a copy of the core self-review document and the final panel report.

Versioning

Versions	Action	Approved by	Business Owner/s	Approval Date
1	Approved	Provost	Director, Academic Quality and Standards	3 Dec 2020
1	Reconfirmed, unchanged	Provost	Director, Academic Quality and Standards	21 Feb 2022
2	Minor amendment approved (position title changes)	Director Governance and Compliance	Director, Academic Quality and Standards	16 May 2022

Definitions

Executive Dean | College |

Schedule 1 – Generic Terms of Reference for Reviews of Schools and Institutes

Terms of Reference for the <name of School / Institute>

Purpose

A review provides an evidence-based assessment of the performance of a School or Institute and its contributions to the strategic objectives of the College and University, including an assessment of performance relative to comparable entities nationally and over time.

Reviews also consider the effectiveness of the internal management and operations of the School or Institute.

This document should be read in conjunction with the Reviews of Schools and Institutes Procedure.

The resulting recommendations from a review should provide a clear guide to future action to improve strategic alignment, performance and another relevant outcomes for the unit, while commendations should be used to highlight areas of exceptional progress and performance.

Specific Terms of Reference

For the review of the School of <insert name>, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) has identified the following specific terms of reference or focus areas, in addition to the generic Terms of Reference:

<Specific Term of Reference 1>

<Specific Term of Reference 2>

Generic Terms of Reference

1. SCHOOL MANAGEMENT

1.1 Management and Planning

The Panel should consider the effectiveness of the management of the School including:

a) leadership, planning and administration within the School;

b) extent to which the School's business plan is appropriately aligned to the College and University objectives;

c) internal structure for management of academic and administrative functions;

d) effectiveness of operation across the campus network (where relevant);

e) School relationship to other organisational units within the College and within the University; and

f) extent to which sustainability principles are embedded within planning and operations throughout the School.

1.2 Commitment to Continuous Improvement

The Panel should consider the effectiveness of practices for quality assurance and improvement across all areas of operation, including:

a) the collection and analysis of relevant comparative data and student/stakeholder feedback; and

b) the systems and processes to use this data to implement systemic improvements.

1.3 People Management

The Panel should consider the effective management of the School's people, including:

a) workforce and succession planning;

b) leadership capability building;

c) training and professional development of academic and professional staff;

d) School communication, consultation and decision-making mechanisms; and

e) management of occupational health and safety.

1.4 Resources

The Panel should consider the effective management of the School's financial and capital assets including:

a) trends in financial performance;

b) generation of non-government income streams;

c) the adequacy of ICT infrastructure;

d) asset management plans;

e) space quality and utilisation; and

f) management of tangible assets.

2. ALIGNMENT WITH UNIVERSITY STRATEGY

2.1 Learning and Teaching

2.1.1 Course planning and the School's coursework profile including:

a) for courses in professional areas, the professional accreditation status of courses and effectiveness of mechanisms for engagement with relevant accreditors;

b) performance of courses including trends in student load (all liability categories) against target, enrolments, student equity measures, student preferences, median ATAR and number of ATAR 80+, assessment of the School's course profile in relation to University strengths and strategic direction, market demand and competitor behaviour;

c) effectiveness of mechanisms for seeking and utilising advice from external course advisory boards (including industry/profession, discipline and employer input);

d) vision for sub-bachelor, undergraduate, postgraduate coursework and non-award courses, including the mix of offerings across locations, by mode, and to various student cohorts (including domestic fee-paying and international students); and

e) understanding of and responsiveness to current and changing trends in market demand across all cohorts.

2.1.2 The implementation and embedding of the University of Tasmania's curriculum framework:

a) learning enrichment activities, including experiential and place-based learning;

a) performance in blended and online delivery;

b) demonstrated commitment to interdisciplinary and/or inter-College collaboration in learning and teaching; and

c) relevance and outcomes of assessment practices, including approaches to authentic assessment.

2.1.3 Provision of resources and learning experiences to maximise opportunities for student participation across the academic year.

2.1.4 Provision of student support services.

2.1.5 Management and outcomes of student complaints and matters relating to academic integrity.

2.1.6 Adequacy of learning and teaching infrastructure, including staff and student access to space and equipment.

2.2 The Student Experience

The Panel should consider the School's strategies aimed at enhancing the student learning experience, and the outcomes achieved including:

a) the appropriateness of the student engagement activities of the School, given the discipline, mode of study and other characteristics of the student cohort;

b) patterns and trends in student retention and success, compared with national field of education benchmarks;

c) the School's approach to the systematic analysis and use of student feedback data for improvement purposes, and the extent to which the School 'closes the loop' with students who provide feedback;

d) patterns and trends in student feedback on Unit Evaluate and the surveys which comprise the Quality Indicators for Learning and Teaching (QILT); and

e) responses to results from the International Student Barometer (ISB).

2.3 Research and Research Training

The Panel should consider the School's:

a) vision for research and assessment of research strengths;

b) research performance including income, publications and quality against appropriate national and international benchmarks;

c) mechanisms for supporting staff in research, including profile of the Career Researchers / Established Productive Researchers within the School;

d) assessment of 'fitness for purpose' of research infrastructure;

e) effectiveness of partnerships with industry, government and other bodies to progress research objectives and in the commercialisation of research; and

f) quality of research training, including provision of high-quality supervision.

2.4 Globalisation

International activities of the School including:

a) strategy for recruitment of international students and involvement in offshore teaching partnerships;

b) effectiveness of support services provided to international students;

c) international study experiences provided to domestic students;

d) status of internationalisation of the curriculum; and

e) scope, nature and outcomes of international research collaborations.

2.5 Community Engagement

Engagement activities of the School including:

a) scale, scope and effectiveness/impact of community engagement activities; and

b) the School's interaction and connections with the Student Recruitment, Marketing and Advancement.