

University Reviews Policy

Approving authority	University Council
Approval date	5 December 2016 (5/2016 meeting)
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Next scheduled review	2018
Document URL	http://policies.griffith.edu.au/pdf/University Reviews Policy.pdf
TRIM document	2016/0000215
Description	This policy sets out the principles which guide the University's regular, five-yearly cycle of systematic, independent reviews across its academic and administrative elements.
Related documents	
Framework for Quality Assurance Research Centres and Institutes Policy University Reviews Guidelines	
[Context] [Purpose and Scope of Reviews] [Developing a Review Schedule] [Terms of Reference] [Review Committee Membership] [Role of the Review Committee] [Preparing for the Review] [Budget and Organisational Responsibility]	

1. CONTEXT

The University is committed to the systematic review and evaluation of all its activities to achieve performance improvements through a process of self-review, benchmarking, critical reflection, forward planning, strategic positioning, internal/external peer review, continuous improvement and accountability.

Reviews are a core part of the University's planning and quality assurance frameworks and provide valuable input into the University's strategic planning activity with the implementation of review recommendations required to be integrated into Group and Division plans.

With their emphasis on continuous improvement and accountability, reviews are an important part of the University's quality assurance framework as they help to embed a culture of continuous improvement, leading to improved processes and performance across the University.

Reviews may focus on an Academic Group, School ("Academic") and/or Division within the University. Alternatively, a thematic review is one that focuses on a service, process and/or operation, the delivery of which may be conducted at the Academic Group/Division level or span organisational boundaries, and which may be the responsibility of more than one organisational area.

Though essentially cyclical in nature, reviews may be prompted by particular organisational or environmental factors applying at a given time.

2. PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF REVIEWS

The purpose of an Academic, Divisional or a thematic review is to:

- Critically evaluate the performance and future plans of the element under review or themed activities occurring within the University;

- Ensure that the activities of the element or themed activities are supporting the directions of the University as articulated by strategic and core activity plans;
- Encourage and assist the growth of an organisational culture that is committed to continuous improvement; and
- Identify and implement actions to improve performance relative to strategic objectives.

In the case of Academic reviews, the element to be reviewed may be a Group, a School/Department or other organisational cluster, and will include any constituent Schools/Departments or Research Centres. In the case of Division reviews, the element to be reviewed may be a Division, an Office or other organisational cluster, and will include any constituent Sections or Units.

The Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic) shall determine the level or cluster for which the review will be conducted by considering the following criteria:

- The level more likely to have a strategic University focus;
- Areas of weakness in performance and how a review can best contribute to improvements;
- Size and/or scale of organisational unit (e.g. student numbers, client base, multi-campus base etc);
- Breadth, complexity or complementarity of service mix;
- Interdependence of the organisational approach;
- The level more likely to create opportunities to benchmark across comparative units internal and external to the University;
- Minimisation of the level of administrative support required to support the review process.

The terms of reference may be modified to reflect the level or cluster determined.

3. DEVELOPING A REVIEW SCHEDULE

The Vice Chancellor, through the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic), discharges the University's responsibility for the overall implementation of reviews and, in consultation, determines a schedule of reviews.

In the case of Academic and Division reviews, these are normally undertaken on a five-yearly cycle. Thematic reviews may be undertaken on an as needs basis.

The Vice Chancellor may request that the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic) initiate a review out of sequence from the schedule.

4. TERMS OF REFERENCE

Each review will be carried out according to the terms of reference. The relevant Deputy/Pro Vice Chancellor may propose additional, modified or more focused terms of reference for the element under review, depending on the strategic objectives of the review and the strengths and weaknesses of the area being reviewed. The Vice Chancellor may add to or modify these terms of reference.

The terms of reference for Academic and Divisional reviews should be addressed within the context of the University's strategic planning framework and its future vision and in response to national and international contexts.

The review committee will provide an objective assessment of the element's performance and future plans, and where appropriate, recommend change.

For Academic reviews

The Review Team should consider the School's strategic plans and overall direction, and provide advice on the alignment with the University's Strategic Plan, and key sub-plans including the Research Plan, Academic Plan, Engagement Plan, and Internationalisation Strategy.

- 1 Review the School's implementation of recommendations arising from the previous review of the School and assess the extent to which the subsequent actions have addressed the recommendations.
- 2 Review the School's performance and proposed future directions in **research and research training** with reference to increased end-user-focussed research collaboration programs; evidence of the impact of such research in terms of economic, social and other benefits of that research; coordination and collaboration with cognate research centres and institutes; increased research and consultancy income; improvements in the volume and quality of research publications and outputs (including creative outputs); and sustained increase in on-time completion rates of HDR candidates.
- 3 Review the School's performance and proposed future directions in **learning and teaching and student satisfaction** with reference to the *Griffith 2020* strategy, including the quality of learning and teaching; course and program design and delivery; graduate employability; and technology-enhanced learning.
- 4 Review the alignment of the School's **staffing profile** and work force plan with the University's future directions and strategic priorities; review the School's approach to supporting the professional development and career progression of all staff.
- 5 Review the School's performance in **equity and diversity** and future plans and strategies to give effect to the University's equity and diversity goals and objectives.
- 6 Review the School's development of **partnerships** across industry and related professions; the community; schools and pathways providers; donors; and alumni and future plans for extending such partnerships nationally and internationally.
- 7 Review the School's contribution to the development and delivery of the University strategic directions and goals as they relate to **internationalisation** including partnerships; the student experience; interculturalisation of the curriculum; and furthering the University's international reputation for research and education excellence.

For Divisional reviews

Review the division's current performance and future plans regarding:

- 1) Previous Review Recommendations - the extent to which recommendations arising from the previous review (where appropriate) have been implemented and the impact of that implementation
- 2) Alignment with University's strategic priorities - the extent to which the element's key priorities, structure and distribution of resources is aligned with the University's Strategic Plan
- 3) Efficiency and Effectiveness - the extent to which the element operates as efficiently and effectively as possible
- 4) Use of Technology - the extent to which the element makes optimal use of technology in its operation
- 5) Client Focus - the extent to which the element displays a clear and strong client focus in its operation
- 6) Collaboration - the extent to which the element displays clear and strong collaboration with other support elements and academic groups to deliver service to students and/or staff
- 7) Staff - the element's performance and future plans in equity and diversity, succession planning, and the extent to which the element has established an appropriately focussed and targeted development program for its staff.
- 8) Additional element specific terms of references are to be incorporated, as appropriate.

For Thematic reviews

The terms of reference for thematic reviews will be developed to reflect the particular characteristics of the service/process and/or operation which is the subject of review. Each set of thematic terms of reference will be approved by the Vice Chancellor.

5. REVIEW COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Successful reviews maximise the use of key leaders in the relevant field who provide expert advice on performance and direction in the relevant disciplinary/administrative areas, coupled with a small number of Griffith staff with appropriate understanding of internal University processes.

For Academic reviews:

The Vice Chancellor will appoint a committee of up to a maximum of seven members:

- Externals 2-4 members who are distinguished academics in a relevant field and with international standing. One of the external members will Chair the Committee.
- Internals
 - A Dean (or equivalent) from outside the Group
 - A Senior Academic from outside the Group
 - The Vice President (Corporate Services) shall appoint a Secretary

For Division reviews:

The Vice Chancellor will appoint a committee of up to a maximum of seven members:

- Externals 2-4 members who are recognised experts in a relevant field. One of the external members will Chair the Committee.
- Internals
 - A Senior Academic from outside the Group/Division
 - A Senior Administrator from outside the Division
 - The Vice President (Corporate Services) shall appoint a Secretary

For Thematic reviews:

The Vice Chancellor will appoint a committee of up to a maximum of seven members to reflect the particular characteristics of the service/process and/or operation which is the subject of review.

Committees are required to approach reviews with a high-level and wide purview and so, while discipline/specialisation representation may occur through the appointment of particular members, absolute representation is not attempted.

The final composition of the review committee is determined by the Vice Chancellor in consultation with Deputy/Pro Vice Chancellor(s) and by member availability, gender balance, and member expertise and strengths. The Vice Chancellor may approve alternative arrangements for a review committee.

6. ROLE OF THE REVIEW COMMITTEE

The review committee is charged with providing an objective assessment of an Academic Group, School or Division, or thematic area's performance and future plans and with making recommendations for future action and development. The committee reports to the Vice Chancellor. The committee's report is considered by Executive Group, and forwarded with an Implementation Plan to Academic Committee and to University Council.

Following endorsement by University Council, the relevant Deputy/Pro Vice Chancellors are responsible with the Head of Element for ensuring the implementation of the Review recommendations and Implementation Plan. An eighteen month implementation progress report is considered by Executive Group, Academic Committee and University Council.

The Review Committee's procedures will include the following:

- Consideration of the review portfolio prepared by the element and relevant data provided by the Office of Planning Services (OPS);
 - A general invitation to the University community to make written submissions to the committee;
 - A visit to the University of 3-5 days (depending on the size and complexity of the area under review);
 - Interviews and/or focus group sessions with key stakeholders and staff of the area under review;
 - Preparation of a written report, including recommendations where appropriate.
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7. PREPARING FOR THE REVIEW

The review process provides an opportunity for self-review by the element prior to the development and submission of the review portfolio.

Step 1 - Self-review

The self-review process provides an opportunity for critical self-assessment by the element under review and should identify areas of achievement/success and areas of deficiency/weakness. Self-assessment focuses on current and future performance and is a critical examination of how the element under review can contribute most effectively to the University's strategic directions. The self-review considers performance in relation to the terms of reference of the review, drawing on appropriate benchmarking data, including that provided by Office of Planning Services (OPS).

The self-review process normally commences twelve months before the expected date of the review and culminates in the preparation and submission of a review portfolio.

Step 2 - Preparing the Review Portfolio

The review portfolio will:

- Address the terms of reference (including reporting on progress of implementation of previous recommendations);
- Present the element's performance on performance indicators in key areas provided by Office of Planning Services (OPS);
- Benchmark performance in key areas, in line with the terms of reference, in comparison to national data-sets and against at least one national and one international institution relevant for their reputation in the field (where appropriate);
- Focus on future performance through an analysis of the element's areas of strength and those requiring development;
- Utilise centrally available data on performance indicators in key areas provided by Office of Planning Services (OPS);
- For Academic Reviews, articulate with existing program review processes and professional accreditation processes;
- For Division Reviews, address the policy framework within which they operate.

Heads of Element are responsible for the preparation of the review portfolio and the associated self-review(s) and planning processes in line with the Guidelines for University Reviews.

For Thematic reviews:

The Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic) shall assign responsibility for the preparation of the review portfolio and the associated self-review(s) and planning processes in line with the Guidelines for University Reviews.

8. BUDGET & ORGANISATIONAL RESPONSIBILITY

Overall responsibility for the review process rests with the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic). The direct cost of the review (travel and honorariums for external reviewers) is met from the budget of the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic).

Support for the review process is provided by Corporate Services through the Office of Planning Services.