School Reviews

Guidelines for Schools and Review Panels

1.0 The Purpose of School Reviews

School Reviews are regulated by the University's Academic Quality Management Policy (SED08/115).

School Reviews form part of the University's continuing cycle of planning, development and improvement. The overall aim of School Reviews is to achieve improvement in the performance of a school through a process of self-assessment, benchmarking, critical reflection, forward planning and external peer review.

Schools are reviewed to ensure their regular renewal, to improve the quality of their teaching and research activities, the allocation of resources, the management of their strategic priorities and their future development. School reviews also provide information to assist the University in evaluating its performance against strategic priorities and targets, in planning future directions and in demonstrating the quality of its activities.

The principles which underpin the School Review process are:
- School Reviews have an external focus, with substantial membership from outside the University;
- The Review is to encompass all of the School's major activity areas – teaching, research, community service, links with particular professions or disciplines;
- In reviewing the School's teaching and learning progress, a review of the courses which are taught in the School, or which form a major component of the School's teaching, should form an explicit part of the School review process and terms of reference;
- In reviewing courses which have an external professional accreditation requirement, due regard should be given to the findings and requirements of professional accreditation bodies;
- Centralized oversight of the schedule, execution, and implementation of review processes and outcomes is provided by the University's senior executive and Academic Board structures, in order to strengthen the conduct of reviews and the implementation of recommendations / outcomes;
- School Reviews occur on a 5-yearly cycle.

1.1 Links to the University's Academic Quality Management System

School Reviews are an important element of the University's continuous quality improvement system. Monitoring and review of the quality of the University's courses and units, based on assessment of a set of teaching and learning performance indicators, occurs through the following integrated processes:
- **Annual Curriculum Monitoring** of units and courses undertaken by the unit and course coordinators under the direction of the Heads of Schools;
- Periodic or as required **Course Reviews**;
- Periodic **School Reviews** (including reviews of the courses or programs of study taught within the School).

The focus of these processes is the formulation of action plans and recommendations for improvement, within the context of the University's strategic priorities.

2.0 Scheduling and Oversight of the School Review process

The School Review process is managed through the office of the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic). The PVC (A) is responsible for ensuring the School review schedule is established and maintained, and for assisting in the overall administration of the School review process, on behalf of the University. The PVC (A) is also the senior executive liaison point between the School and the Vice-Chancellor's Committee.

Senior executive oversight for School reviews is provided by Vice-Chancellor's Committee. VCC is charged with:

- setting the review schedule,
- establishing and approving the terms of reference for each review,
- approving the composition of the review panels,
- guiding the implementation of actions arising out the review recommendations,
- following up with Schools on implementation activities,
- ensuring Faculty PVC/Deans are supported in their implementation of the review recommendations,
- following up with PVC/Deans on progress in a School towards achievement on approved recommendations and
- reporting to Academic Board (and through Academic Board to Council) on the outcomes of each School Review.

2.1 Timetable for School Review

An annual timetable for School Reviews is approved by the Vice-Chancellor's Committee. Ideally this should occur up to a year prior to the Review date. Consultation between the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic) and the Head of School, and the relevant Faculty PVC/Dean, should commence up to 9 months prior to the review, to establish appropriate membership panels, terms of reference, timing of the review week visit, and to assist the School in its preparations for review. The following timetable is indicative of the phases of a School Review, and the relative timing of review activities, both prior to and following the review week visit:

TIMETABLE FOR SCHOOL REVIEW ACTIVITIES

Phase	Phase	Timing	Communication Strategies
1	**Confirm Review Schedule for the Following Year** VCC considers the schedule for reviews of Schools on an annual basis, and approves the review schedule and dates for the following year by the April of the preceding year.	May (of preceding year)	VCC notifies the relevant Schools
2	**Terms of Reference** VCC approves the terms of reference for each School Review, amending where necessary to take account of School circumstances.	May (of preceding year)	VCC notifies the relevant Schools

Phase	Phase	Timing	Communication Strategies

3	**Preparation for Review –Schools complete a self assessment** Using the terms of reference and the *Guidelines for School Review* the School commences preparing its self-assessment for the School Review Panel.	at least 6 months prior to Review	PVC/Dean to communicate on behalf of VCC with the Head of School and with all School staff
4	**Preparation for Review – Schools discuss process with their staff** A meeting of the whole School is convened to discuss the process and address concerns. – all School staff (general and academic) are invited to attend. The PVC/Dean of the relevant Faculty facilitates the briefing on behalf of VCC.	At least 6 months prior to Review	PVC/Dean to communicate on behalf of VCC with the Head of School and with all School staff
5	**Composition of Review Panel** VCC establishes the Review Panel, in consultation with the Head of School and PVC/Dean. The panel comprises: • At least two (not more than three) external members with nationally / internationally recognized expertise from relevant disciplines or professional fields; • One Head of School from another Faculty of the University; • The PVC/Dean of the Faculty in which the School is situated; • At least one (not more than two) representatives of relevant professions or employer groups.	6 months prior to Review	VCC requests the PVC/Dean consult with the Head of School on possible members of the Review Panel and propose a list of names.
6	**Invite Submissions from Interested Parties** Submissions will be called from all interested parties, including internal (School staff, students, the senior executive, other Schools, and Administrative Directorates) and from selected external stakeholders of the School (eg, employer and industry groups).	at least 4 months prior to Review	The Faculty initiates a range of communication strategies (eg letter, email, UNE Officials, announcements on the School website) to advise the University and interested external parties of the timing of the proposed review and inviting submissions.
7	**Copies of the Self-Assessment and School Review Submissions prepared for the Review Panel** The Faculty collates all submissions, including the self-assessment, for the Review Panel.	6 weeks prior to Review	Copies of all papers prepared for the Review Panel.

Phase	Phase	Timing	Communication Strategies
8	**Review Panel meets and presents preliminary findings** The Review Panel meets to consider the self-assessment and to interview School staff – including: • Head of School • School staff (general and academic) • Students • Other stakeholders A draft of the Review Report, including the completed Recommendations, is prepared prior to the external members' departure. Verbal feedback sessions are held with the Head of School and other relevant staff, and with the VC/DVC	Review Week	Review panel meets and interviews the relevant School members. Meetings with the Head of School and the VC/DVC are held on the final day of the Review week.
9	**Written Report provided to Head of School and PVC/Dean** Copies of the written report provided to: • PVC/Dean • Academic Director • Head of School • Vice-Chancellor • DVC and PVC's • Members of the School reviewed • Quality Team	within 6 weeks of Review	VCC is responsible for ensuring that copies of the review report are circulated to each of the appropriate recipients.
10	**Report and Response Considered by VCC** The School works with the PVC/Dean and the Quality Team to compile its response to the review report, including the development of an implementation action plan. VCC receives a copy of the final Review Report and the School's response. The Head of School is invited to VCC to discuss implementation plans.	within 12 weeks of the Review	PVC/Dean presents report and School's response to VCC. Head of School is invited to VCC to discuss the implementation plans.
11	**Report Presented to Academic Board** Review Report and Implementation Action Plan presented to Academic Board for endorsement	to the next Academic Board meeting	VCC submits report to Academic Board
12	**Report Presented to Council** Review Report and Implementation Action Plan presented to Council for approval	to the next Council meeting	Academic Board submits report to Council

Phase	Phase	Timing	Communication Strategies
13	**Implementation: Project Management Report** Implementation of the review report action plan is the responsibility of the Head of School, under the direction of the PVC/Dean.	6 months after VCC approval	Written report provided to VCC
14	**Follow Up** Within 12 months of approval by Council VCC to request a follow-up implementation report from the Head of School, to show progress against each of the review recommendations.	12 months after Council approval	VCC requests the implementation report from the School. Following consideration by VCC a report on progress is made to Academic Board and thereafter to Council for noting

2.2 Accommodation and Travel Arrangements

Accommodation and travel for external members of the School Review panel are organized centrally, through the Office of the Pro Vice-Chancellor.

2.3 Responsibilities of the School in the lead up to the Review

The School has the following responsibilities in the lead-up to a School Review:

• Communicating with the School staff – ensuring all staff are aware of the School Review dates and have the opportunity to be involved in the School's preparation for review;

• Coordinating the School's review preparations – developing a process which is consultative and collaborative. For example, the School may establish a small Committtee to coordinate data gathering, information sessions and report writing.

• Ensuring the involvement in preparations by a balance of representatives of the different activities of the School (eg teaching and learning activities, research activities, Staff and Students, undergraduate and postgraduate representatives)

• Maintaining clear and open records management procedures

Responsibility for staffing the Review, including provision of secretariat services to the Review Panel, will be provided by a member of the relevant Faculty.

3.0   The School's Internal Self-Review Report

The first stage for a School will be the commencement of a self-study or internal review, analyzing the strengths and weaknesses of the School and opportunities for the future, and prepare a submission to the Review Panel based on this internal review. As well, submissions should be called from all interested parties within the University and from selected external stakeholders of the School.

3.1   The Self-Review Process:

The review will commence with a self-study or internal review, carried out under the leadership of the Head of School. The Head of School will coordinate the internal review and write the report on its outcomes, which will be presented to the relevant PVC/ Dean and forwarded to the Vice-Chancellor's Committee.

The internal review report will make a critical and analytical assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the School as well as suggestions for future directions. The report should be comprehensive yet concise, with the main body of the report not exceeding 15,000 words. Appendices should be kept to a minimum necessary to support discussions in the report.

The full report must be forwarded to Review Panel members at least four weeks prior to the visit of the Review Panel.

School's Submission is a self-review document (15,000 words, excluding appendices). The Submission should contain:
- An overview / summary
- A history of the School
- Detail of the present circumstances of the School – eg a SWOT analysis, constraints facing the School, current or future collaborations, QA processes underway within the School, data to provide evidence of achievement in the various activity areas of the School (eg teaching, research, community activities, financial and human resource management)
- Benchmarking against appropriate comparators (national / international)
- Future plans of the School for improvement / to address issues arising from previous discussions
- Supporting information contained in relevant appendices

3.2   Preparing the Submission

While the Head of School is responsible for preparing and submitting the School's Submission, it is recommended that a small working group be formed to undertake the data gathering and submission-writing exercise. The working group should be representative of all activity areas within the School (teaching, research, administration) and should also represent the discipline groups within the School. The Submission should cover three main topics – the history of the School, the present circumstances of the School and the future directions of the School. An overview of the types of information which should be included in each section of the submission is included below, including any data on outcomes and measurements used to evidence achievement.

Section1: History of the School

This section is the opportunity for the School to reference the origin of the School and its composite discipline groups. Previous iterations of the School (including any discipline arrangements prior to the current School structure) should be outlined. The School should provide an account of changes which have occurred in the School's organization since its most recent review. If a previous review had been undertaken and there had been significant recommendations with regard to the organization of the School, these should be detailed here.

Section 2: The School at Present

This section provides the School with the opportunity to analyse the School's current performance across all of its major activity areas (teaching and learning, research, community engagement, links with the local, regional, national, international and professional community, and management of its own resources). These areas closely correlate with the School Review Terms of Reference.

An important aspect of the information provided in this section is the need for evidence, including performance data, to support claims made in the Submission. A range of data will assist the School to assess its own performance, although analysis of the data in the particular School context will still be required. Data should be provided at the School or discipline level, where available. Given the Review cycle is five-yearly, time series data should be provided which covers the scope of the review period is important, to demonstrate trends over time. As well, Schools should take the opportunity to benchmark their performance against selected comparators and against national trends.

Following is a breakdown of the types of data, information, outcomes measures and other evidence which should be provided against each of the Terms of Reference.

Section 3: The School in the Future

In this section the School is asked to identify how it seeks to develop itself going forward, on the basis of the performance data provided in Section 2 and with regard to the University's Strategic Plan. The School should summarise its efforts towards improvement, and demonstrate how these assist in realising the Faculty and University Strategic Plans. This section should include plans for the future development and improvement of the School (over a 3 – 5 year time period), and may include an operational plan showing how strategies will be implemented. It would be appropriate to develop a plan of action which addresses each of the Terms of Reference.

The Review Panel will be asked to make an objective assessment of the School's plans, and to state clearly whether they are based on a sound assessment of the data to hand, and are clearly linked to achieving the University's.

The Review Panel will have the opportunity to feed back to the School on:
• how and where its perceptions and plans fall short of meeting performance targets;
• the extent to which School's assessment of its strengths and weaknesses is supported by evidence;
• areas of potential growth or disciplinary change upon which the School is in a unique position to capitalize;
• areas of declining or negative potential; and
• recommended changes to School

Term of Reference 1.   Teaching and Learning

Term of Reference:

Achievements relating to teaching will particularly focus on the quality, scope, focus, direction, balance and content of discipline courses and teaching at undergraduate and postgraduate levels, including any current or future collaborative teaching arrangements, in light of teaching and learning indicators, which may include (but not be limited to):
- enrolment trends,
- attrition rates,
- success rates,
- student and graduate satisfaction,
- the perception of key external stakeholders,
- student requirements (cultural, language or otherwise),
- comparisons with alternative programs within Australia, and
- teaching grants (internal and external) awarded to the School and its members, and the purposes for which grant monies have been spent.

The panel will assess the extent to which courses and units currently make use of appropriate flexible learning techniques (including the LMS presence, the degree of online development and student usage, the extent of podcasting and other relevant teaching aids, and the currency of online materials).

The panel will further assess the extent to which strategies have been implemented to address enrolment, attrition, and learning issues, and otherwise improve quality outcomes of courses within the School.

Data and other Information to be provided:

The Student Profile	• EFSTL (Load), and Number of students enrolled, for each course administered through the School
	• Equity group participation, by course – eg:
	   o rural/regional
	   o SES data
	   o Indigenous status
	   o Disability status
	   o International students
	• Entrance scores and basis of admissions data

Student Progress and Retention rates	• Pass Rate (total successful EFTSL / Base EFTSL), by course and / or discipline • GPA (mean & distribution), by course and / or by discipline • Number of completions, by course • Attrition rates, by course / discipline
Student Satisfaction	• Unit Evaluation surveys for units in the School • CEQ (quantitative and qualitative data)
Student Outcomes	• Graduate Destination Survey (FT/PT employment and further study data)

Courses and Curriculum	• Internal and External reviews of courses, including any reports from accrediting bodies, recommendations and implementation plans • Integration of e-learning into courses, including the level of online development • Student usage data
Student Learning Support Scholarship of Teaching	• Data for student usage of learning support initiatives within the School (include reference to support initiatives for equity students) • Major research activities in the field of teaching and learning (eg Carrick projects, teaching development grants undertaken) • Carrick awards / citations • UNE teaching awards • Other grants to support teaching and learning developments, including the achievement of UNE strategic goals

Term of Reference 2.   Research

Term of Reference:

Achievements relating to research will particularly focus on the research performance of the School and its constituent disciplines, including any collaborative research activities, with regard to their:
- research activity, quality and impact, outcomes,
- awarded research grants,
- research publications,
- consultancies; and
- research training quality

Data and other information to be provided:

Research Grants	• Total number and value of research grants held by School staff
	• Number and value of research grants per FTE academic staff member
	• Value of total research income generated by the School
	• Ratio of research income to total revenue
	• Research income by source (eg Australian competitive schemes, public sector, industry-funded)
Research Publications	• Number of research publications per FTE academic staff member
	• Weighted value of research publications using the DEST publications points system
	• Productivity Profile - % of academic staff with 1,2,3 etc publications over the previous 5 years
	• Citations (list)
HDR Students	• Scholarships awarded by the School / discipline, by year
	• HDR student load in the School / discipline, by year
	• HDR completions in the School / discipline, by year
	• Progression rates for HDR students / average completion times – by School / discipline, by year
Research Activity	• Involvement in CRC's, Centres of Excellence, other national research centres or initiatives
	• Involvement in spin-off companies and technology transfer activities
	• Externally funded research fellows and post-doctoral places
	• Numbers and research involvement of honorary and adjunct research staff
	• Consultancies and collaborations undertaken – list organizations

Term of Reference 3.   Community Service

Term of Reference:

Achievements relating to service to the University, the community and the constituent discipline/s will particularly focus on the role played by the School and its constituent disciplines in relation to its relevant industries, professions, professional associations, partners and the community;

Data and other information to be provided:

External Relationships
- Number and duration of MOU's with community / industry partners
- Number and overview of collaboratively developed courses, and number of students participating in collaboratively developed courses
- Feedback from students on satisfaction with collaboratively developed courses
- Feedback from partner organizations on success and value of collaboratively developed courses
- Number and value of joint research grants
- Revenue generated by external consultancies

Links between the School and constituent Professions
- Professional / industry placements undertaken by students in the School's courses
- Staff involvement in continuing professional education
- Number of staff serving on community / industry / professional bodies (and type of involvement)
- Financial support from professional or industry bodies (eg scholarships / prizes)

Community involvement in the School
- Community representatives involved in School advisory boards / governance processes around teaching and learning / research activities
- Feedback from community representatives on value and success of their involvement with School activities

Term of Reference 4.   Financial, Organisational, Staffing and Resource Management:

Term of Reference:

The Review Panel will assess the School's management of its resources, and will recommend improvements in the organization, staffing profile and resource management of the School in the context of forward estimates, budgetary and resource constraints, School staffing profile, discipline expertise, anticipated developments in the constituent disciplines, and the strategic plans of the University, Faculty and School.

The Review Panel will assess:
- the organizational structure of the School;
- administration and staffing arrangements of the School;
- the effectiveness of the School's use of resources in relation to accommodation, space, and teaching and research equipment and other facilities;
- the financial management of the School, its budgetary strategies and financial allocations; and
- the performance of the School in providing an effective working and learning environment for staff and students in each of its disciplines.

Data and other information to be provided

Organisational Structure	• Structure of the School, including management roles, and numbers of staff (general and academic) at various levels of responsibility • Committee structure and roles of various committees
Budget	• Budget for past 3 – 5 years • Projected budget for next three years • Breakdown of funding sources • Salaries of
Resources – teaching and learning	• Staff : Student Ratios • Activity-Based Costing (total costs of running a unit / total number of students)
Resources – Staff	• FTE staff – five year time series • Age, classification levels of staff • Salaries as % of revenue • Surveys of staff satisfaction • Strategies to manage staff regeneration (in light of disciplinary advances, changes to focus, staff retirements)
Resources – Facilities, Teaching and Learning Space, Research	• School equipment inventories, including any major equipment purchases • Asset management plans • Accommodation – the area of the School and major categories of space utilization – offices, laboratories, teaching space • Off-campus teaching sites

Term of Reference 5.   Any further issues as the Review Panel may determine

Term of Reference 6.   Strategic Directions for the School's Future:

The Panel will provide recommendations for the School's future strategic directions.

Draft for Comment

The Review Panel meets to consider the Self-Review submission and to interview the Head of School, School staff, students and other stakeholders. The PVC/ Dean and the Head of School will also be available at call during the entire period that the Panel meets, to answer any questions and provide any additional information the Panel may require.

The Review Program and Timetable

A School Review typically takes place over a 5 day working week. The following is a broad overview of the activities which are likely to occur in that week, and their relative timing during the week.

Monday - Wednesday
Typically the Vice-Chancellor or representative would welcome the Review Panel to the University, providing an overview of the University's current strategic plans, with particular reference to the School. Briefings from senior executive staff would follow:

- members of the senior executive (The Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Chief Operating Officer, Chief Development Officer, Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic) and Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research) would provide information on the issues associated with their portfolio which are impacting on the School;
- the Pro-Vice-Chancellor of the relevant Faculty would provide a formal briefing on current strategic, directional and operational imperatives in the School, including any broad strategic plans for the School's future

The Head of School would be formally interviewed. The Panel should tour the School facilities, with perhaps an informal meeting with school staff to which all staff (academic and general) are invited. Tours to off-campus facilities should be arranged for this time.

During the Tuesday and Wednesday the Panel will interview School academic, general and research staff, representatives of external bodies, especially employer groups or professional bodies, and groups of students (undergraduate, postgraduate coursework and research).

By Wednesday the Panel should commence writing the report, and may wish to schedule time for preliminary report writing.

Thursday
Any outstanding or extra interviews can be conducted, but the main task on Thursday is to write the report. The draft recommendations should be ready to be presented to senior executive and the Head of School by the next day.

Friday
It is important that the report continue to be drafted on Friday morning and that draft recommendations be prepared for presentation to (a) the Head of School and (b) a meeting of the full School by Friday afternoon. A polished draft version of the Report should be ready prior to external members' departure.

6.0   The Review Report and Response

Phase 1 – Initial Feedback

A draft of the Review Report, with completed recommendations, should be prepared prior to the external Panel members' departure. At the finalization of the review period verbal feedback (including recommendations) will be provided to the Head of School and the PVC/ Dean and other relevant staff and, (separately) to the Vice-Chancellor and the Deputy Vice-Chancellors.

Phase 2 – Written Report

The Chair of the Review Panel, with the assistance of the Secretary, will provide to the PVC/ Dean and the Head of School, within 6 weeks of the review, a brief written report commenting on the Self-Review report and the discussions held, and including the recommendations of the Review Panel.

Copies of the written report will be provided to:
- the PVC/Dean, Academic Director and Head of School within six weeks of the review;
- the Vice-Chancellor
- the Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Pro-Vice-Chancellors
- members of the School reviewed

Phase 3 - Response to the Report

The Head of School, in consultation with the staff of the School, will provide to the PVC / Dean, within 6 weeks of receipt of the report, a written response to the report which includes a set of proposed actions in response to the recommendations. The response may also, where applicable, correct errors of fact and / or challenge perceived occurrences of inappropriate emphasis in the review report.

After incorporating his/her comments the PVC / Dean will forward to the Vice-Chancellor's Committee for consideration the Review Panel Report, the Response by the Head of School, together with actions proposed by the School.

Approval Process

Following receipt of the Review Report and the Response by the School, the Vice-Chancellor's Committee will meet with the Head of School and PVC/Dean to formulate an implementation action plan, setting out the action to be taken on each of the recommendations.

The Vice-Chancellor's Committee will forward the Review Report and Implementation Action Plan to Academic Board for consideration. Academic Board will forward the Report and Plan to Council for approval. Following approval by Council, copies of the written report should be distributed to all people who made submissions to the review.

Implementation of Review Recommendations

The Head of School, under the direction of the PVC/Dean, is responsible for implementation of the adopted recommendations.

Implementation of the recommendations will be monitored through the follow-up processes (see *Follow up*, below).

Follow up

Within 12 months of approval by Council of the Review Report, the Vice-Chancellor's Committee requests a follow-up Implementation Report from the Head of School to show progress against each of the recommendations of the Review Report.

The Implementation Report will be forwarded to VCC, and thereafter to Academic Board and to Council for noting.