

Academic Unit Review Terms of Reference

Faculty of Business, Law and Arts
2023



**Southern Cross
University**

Contents

| | |
|---|---|
| 1. Justification for an Academic Unit Review..... | 3 |
| 2. Scope of Academic Unit Review..... | 3 |
| 3. Aim of Academic Unit Review..... | 3 |
| 4. Role of the Independent Review Panel..... | 4 |
| 4.1 Chair of Review Panel | 4 |
| 4.2 Review Panel | 4 |
| 5. Conduct of the Academic Unit Review | 4 |
| 5.1 Planning..... | 4 |
| 5.2 Preparation of Review Submission | 5 |
| 5.3 Consultation Process..... | 5 |
| 5.4 Desk top review..... | 5 |
| 5.5 Review visit | 5 |
| 5.6 Review Report..... | 6 |
| 5.7 Post review..... | 6 |

1. Justification for an Academic Unit Review

Southern Cross University is committed to quality assurance to maintain the expectations of a self-accrediting Australian University, including compliance with the [Higher Education Standards Framework \(Threshold Standards\) 2021](#).

Southern Cross University undertakes systematic management and review procedures to monitor performance against national and transnational quality assurance standards. Scheduled, independent review of academic and organisational units against threshold standards, key performance indicators, and quality improvement strategies, as set out in the [Organisational Review Policy](#), are foundational to the University's assurance of compliance with the Standards and ongoing evaluation and improvement processes.

2. Scope of Academic Unit Review

These Terms of Reference apply to the review of an Academic Unit according to the [Organisational Review Policy](#). When the Academic Unit Review is conducted at the same time as a Comprehensive Course Review, the Course Review Terms of Reference must be considered concurrently to ensure alignment with the [Academic Quality Standards and Integrity Policy](#) and [Course Review Procedures](#).

The Academic Unit Review of the Faculty of Business, Law and Arts will assess the following:

- A. The overall viability, financial position, and performance of the Faculty.
- B. The course profile of the Faculty, including its effectiveness and efficiency and the quality of its delivery; together with its student profile including entry criteria, social inclusiveness, retention and attrition and graduate outcomes.
- C. The Faculty's performance in scholarship of teaching and learning.
- D. The appropriateness of the staffing profile of the Faculty, including teaching, research, administration and technical support.
- E. The appropriateness of the Faculty's organisational structure.
- F. The clarity of the Faculty's plans for its future directions and the appropriateness of these plans for the Faculty and the University.
- G. The contribution of the Faculty to the University's operations and development.
- H. The relationship of the Faculty with related industries and the community more widely, and activities and events that engage local to global communities.
- I. The quality and appropriateness of the Faculty's national and international activities.
- J. The efficiency and effectiveness of utilisation of physical infrastructure, technologies and other assets available to the Faculty.
- K. Any other matters deemed relevant in enhancing the Faculties contribution to the University

3. Aim of Academic Unit Review

At Southern Cross University, Academic Unit Review are conducted according to a 5-year rolling schedule, forming an integral part of the University's strategic planning and quality assurance frameworks. The central purpose of the Academic Unit Review is developmental, with the intended outcome being the identification of key actions that the Academic Unit will undertake to look forward, improve its achievements and outcomes, and to enhance its quality and performance. To this end the reviews will:

- involve critical self-review and rigorous internal and external scrutiny of the Academic Unit with particular emphasis on recent performance, current activities and proposed strategic directions;
- assess the direction, leadership, management, innovation and outcomes of organisational areas or activities;
- act as an agent for managed change and continuing quality improvement across the University.

4. Role of the Independent Review Panel

4.1 Chair of Review Panel

The primary role of the external Review Chair is leadership - of the Review Panel, of the site visit and review meetings, and of preparation of the final Review Report.

The Chair's responsibilities include:

- Engage with the Office of the Pro-Vice Chancellor (Academic Quality) and the Office of Business Intelligence and Quality's Reviews team to lead and facilitate the Review;
- Attend a site visit to one or more SCU campus locations;
- Lead communications with Panel Members prior, during and following the Review visit, as required;
- Chair discussions and interviews with stakeholders during the Review visit;
- Lead the Review close-out session with SCU executive representatives;
- Appraise documentation, submissions and stakeholder interviews against the Terms of Reference, and
- Prepare and submit the final Review Reports in consultation with the Panel Members, outlining Review outcomes and recommendations.

4.2 Review Panel

In addition to the Chair, the Review Panel includes at least one additional external senior reviewer, and one senior academic internal to Southern Cross University.

The Review Panel member's responsibilities include:

- Support the Chair to facilitate the Review;
- Attend a site visit to one or more SCU campus locations (where feasible);
- Communicate with the Chair and other Panel Members prior, during and following the Review visit, as required;
- Engage proactively in the Review visit and interview sessions;
- Appraise documentation, submissions and stakeholder interviews against the Terms of Reference; and
- Consult with Chair of Review Panel to finalise the Review Reports.

5. Conduct of the Academic Unit Review

The Academic Unit Review follows the following process as stated in the [Organisational Review Policy](#).

5.1 Planning

1. The Terms of Reference for the Academic Unit Review are announced by the Vice Chancellor. The Terms of Reference will relate to the particular characteristics and strategic positioning of the Faculty under review.
2. The Review Panel will comprise appropriate academic, strategic and industry-oriented expertise and gender balance, appointed by the Vice Chancellor following input from the relevant Executive Dean and other senior staff. A Review Administrative Officer will be appointed to

support the process, take notes during the site visit, and provide guidance to the Faculty and Review Panel.

5.2 Preparation of Review Submission

3. Under the general direction of the Executive Dean, the Faculty will prepare a Faculty Review Submission for consideration by the Review Panel. The Submission will be structured to reflect the University's overall strategic Quality philosophy of PLAN - IMPLEMENT — REVIEW — IMPROVE.
4. A Data Portfolio will be provided to the Faculty by the Office of Business Intelligence and Quality to assist the Faculty to address the clauses A-K of section 2 of this document.

A template developed by the Office of Business Intelligence and Quality should normally be adopted for preparation of the Review Submission. The Submission should be limited to a maximum of 30 pages (plus any supporting documentation). It will address the Faculty's self-assessment of performance as evidenced in annual plans, and include as appropriate:

- the context in which the Faculty operates including a brief history of the Faculty;
- minutes or reports from advisory committees;
- outcomes of benchmarking projects;
- feedback from students or client groups;
- feedback from any internal and external reviews;
- a summary of performance since the last review and intended developments.

5.3 Consultation Process

5. The Review Administrative Officer will issue a call for Stakeholder feedback from staff and students and other relevant interested parties (such as Alumni, professional groups, industry partners and government agencies). The notice will include the dates for the review, the Terms of Reference and an invitation for submissions from interested parties in relation to the specific terms of reference for the review.

5.4 Desk top review

6. The Review Panel will be provided with the Review Submission, any stakeholder feedback received, and other supporting documents prior to the site visit. The Panel is asked to review the documentation and consider whether the Faculty meets expectations for good practice, including reference to national and international benchmarks where appropriate.

5.5 Review visit

7. The Review Panel will be convened at an appropriate SCU location and normally meet for a period of two to three days. The Review Administrative Officer will support the Panel during the visit including note taking during interviews.
8. The Panel will conduct interviews with the Executive Dean, selected Faculty staff, students and other stakeholders (as appropriate). At its discretion the Review Panel may seek to interview any persons of interest and /or seek additional documentation to support their inquiries.
9. The Executive Dean will normally be invited to present a brief overview highlighting:
 - significant achievements;

- follow up action with regard to areas for improvement or opportunities identified in the previous review;
 - performance in relation to major objectives within the University [Strategic Plan](#) and other top level plans and if appropriate, Organisational Unit and Service Level Plans;
 - progress with actioning significant recommendations from other reviews (such as self-initiated reviews of Faculties, Colleges or other units or functions within the Organisational Unit);
 - special projects; and
 - any proposed developments and key priorities for the short and mid-term future;
 - consideration of macro and micro issues affecting the Unit such as barriers, constraints, financial circumstances, staff profile, performance and other relevant matters.
10. At the conclusion of the Review Meeting, the Panel may engage in discussion on issues arising from the Review with the Executive Dean as deemed appropriate.

5.6 Review Report

11. The Chair of the Review Panel, in consultation with the Panel members, will prepare the Review Report outlining review outcomes and rationale for consideration.
12. As required, the Chair of the Review Panel may contact the Review Administrative Officer to seek additional information, as required by the Panel, in order to make an informed assessment
13. The Review Report should assess the Faculty against clauses A – K in section 2 of this document, in relation to:
- affirmations and commendations of significant strengths which have been identified (and examples of outcomes);
 - gaps and opportunities identified for improvement and recommendations for addressing them.
14. When available, a copy of the Review Report will be forwarded to the Executive Dean to provide a Management Response on matters of fact or emphasis, and for implementation of recommended actions.
15. The Review Report and the Faculty's Management Response will be provided to Pro Vice-Chancellor, Academic Quality who will present both documents to the Vice Chancellor and the Vice Chancellor's Group.
16. The Vice Chancellor will respond to the report and indicate responsibility for implementation of agreed recommendations. The report will be made available to the University community as appropriate.

5.7 Post review

17. Actions identified for implementation from the Review Report are added to a Review Action Register. Actions are managed within the Faculty with the Executive Dean Deans responsible for implementing actions and keeping accurate records of completed actions.
18. 12 months after the endorsement of the report and management response by the Vice Chancellor, the Executive Dean will provide a report to the Vice Chancellor's Group reporting progress towards the implementation of recommended actions.