Self-Review for Higher Education Institutions

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and

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Introduction

The origin of this publication was a workshop organised in 2006 by the Australian Universities Quality Agency called 'Self-Reviews for Effecting Change'. The Workshop, one of a series of events designed to enhance the quality assurance approaches of Australian higher education institutions, was led by Robyn Adams and Jenny Strong. It produced a genuine sharing of experiences among the participants and some ideas about codifying the underlying principles and good practices.

Subsequently, AUQA approached Robyn and Jenny to prepare a manuscript that would be informative and helpful for anyone considering the best ways in which to undertake self-review activities in the specific context of Australian higher education. We asked them to reflect on their own personal experiences to identify potential pitfalls and lessons that have been learnt about productive self-reviews.

The publication is presented in two parts. Part A is a general account of principles and processes, with some personal reflections and insights from the literature, by Robyn Adams. Part B provides an extended account of program and school review processes at the University of Queensland by Jenny Strong, Louise Mattick, Michael McManus, Kelly Matthews and John Foster.

The general principles described in the publication are applicable to higher education institutions of all sizes, not only universities and larger institutions. While the processes need to be scaled to take account of the size, complexity, range of disciplines and types of students at the individual provider, the following principles in particular are important for any successful self-review:

- Clarity of purpose and scope
- An emphasis on review for improvement
- Appropriate timing and resourcing
- Authenticity
- Engagement of stakeholders and building the trust needed for active reflection and self-disclosure
- More than one reviewer
- Transparency in processes and in reporting outcomes
- Normalising expectations around self-reviews (i.e. self-review as a standard feature of institutional practice).

As non self-accrediting higher education providers now undertake self-reviews prior to quality audit or as part of their ongoing activities, AUQA hopes this publication will be timely and of particular benefit to them.

AUQA thanks all the authors for their contributions.

Jeanette Baird
Series Editor, AUQA Occasional Publication

PART A: Designing and Conducting a Successful Self-Review

Robyn Adams

The keys to needed educational improvement lie in systematic, multi-methodological, and sustained self-assessment at both institutional and department levels.

(Schmitz and Whitworth, 2002:134)

Self-review can play not only a critical role for institutions committed to learning and improvement, but it can also underpin the capacity of an institution to meet external quality assurance requirements. When self-reviews are conducted well, they can result in enhanced (and shared) understanding of performance against set objectives, formulation of improved institutional practices and outcomes, and better-founded response to changes and future directions.

While it is commonly acknowledged that there is no one model or appropriate frequency for self-reviews, there are nevertheless some general principles on how to design and conduct effective self-reviews. This chapter considers some of these principles, pitfalls and challenges drawn from the literature, the practical experience of the author, and the collective insights from some 30 participants at a workshop conducted by the Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA) in March 2006. Further, it provides an overview of the main stages involved in conducting an effective self-review as context for the case studies that follow.

1 About Self-Review

1.1 Definitions

Self-review (which may also be referred to as 'self assessment', self-evaluation', self-study', or 'self-reflection') can be defined as 'the process of critically reviewing the quality of one's own performance and provision' (Harvey 2004–2008).

Watson and Maddison (2005:6) have defined 'self-study' in the context of universities as:

> *… collective reflective practice carried out by a university with the intention of understanding better and improving its own progress towards its objectives, enhancing its institutional effectiveness, and both responding to and influencing positively the context in which it is operating … it is directly undertaken to influence action.*

It has been argued that self-evaluation is integral to the management of change, improving the learning capacity of organisations and so enabling them to respond to change more effectively (Jackson, cited in Watson and Maddison, 2005:7).

It is important to distinguish between self-review and reflective practice. Brew (1999:160) offers a useful comparison between self-review and reflection, noting that '…both involve focusing on learning and experience, but self-assessment [review] is usually concerned with the making of judgments about specific aspects of achievement which are publicly defensible … whereas reflection tends to be a more exploratory activity which might occur at any stage of learning and may not lead to a directly expressible outcome. All assessment involves reflection, but not all reflection leads to self-assessment.'

In summary then, self-review provides an opportunity to 'reality test' an institution's performance and identify opportunities for improving and/or sustaining desired practices, processes and outcomes.

Self-review should consider several important questions:

- What are we doing (what are the institution's aims and objectives)?
- Why, and how, are we doing this?
- Do we achieve what we want to achieve?
- How do we know? How could it be better?
- How can we ensure that the current performance can be improved and/or sustained over time?

Self-review can either be undertaken as a discrete exercise or it can form the basis of information which is then validated through a broader audit/review process.

1.2 Rationale for Self-Review

There are a range of reasons for undertaking a self-review process. External events that may trigger the need for a self-review include: accreditation/certification (such as ISO or the European Foundation for Management Education); compliance audits (e.g. against relevant legislation); quality audits (such as AUQA audits); or reporting requirements (such as to government departments) in which a self-review report forms the basis of review and validation. Other reasons for undertaking a self-review may include: an institutional commitment to ongoing review cycles (examples are noted in section 3.1 while case studies from The University of Queensland are contained in the following chapter); strategic planning; an identified need to change (e.g. redesigning a function, resource allocation); or developing an award submission (such as to the Australian Learning and Teaching Council). The purpose of a self-review will determine whether it is an 'event' or part of ongoing practice to support an institution's quality assurance and improvement processes.

Primarily, self-reviews are conducted to identify improvements and efficiencies in support of identified organisational objectives and to validate strengths based on formalised analysis. They also often provide information not known to everyone and support a collective understanding of current (and desired) practices and outcomes. Kells (1995:30) has stated that the chief benefits to any institution in undertaking a self-review are staff members' meaningful participation in clarifying and solving problems, enhancement to institutional openness, and improving overall institutional effectiveness.

More specific outcomes can include[1]:

- Verifying that processes are in place, and whether these are operating effectively
- Determining whether existing policies and procedures are effective in meeting institutional goals, and identifying any gaps
- Providing information that may not normally be evident (such as localised innovative practices in teaching and learning)
- Enhancing understanding (across staff, student and/or other stakeholders) of organisational processes and outcomes
- 'Reality testing' achievements toward strategic goals
- Increasing engagement with change
- Disclosing weaknesses and forcing confrontation
- Promoting honest communication
- Encouraging benchmarking, internally and/or externally
- Providing a base for ongoing comparison and benchmarking
- Identifying activities that are misaligned with organisational goals/objectives
- Providing evidence of quality processes in place
- Promoting empowerment and engagement of participants
- Promoting an evidence-based culture
- Promoting learning
- Enabling self-identification of improvement gaps and development of associated strategies to address these prior to external audit.

1.3 Scope and Orientation

The scope of a self-review may range from whole-of-institution, to whole-of-faculty/ division, to whole-of-school/department, to individual committees, program/courses, or to unit/topic level. There is no one unit of analysis for self-reviews, and the appropriate frequency and depth of self-review processes will be unique to each institution.

Depending on the purpose, a self-review process may be oriented as either: formative, supportive and for improvement; or summative, evaluative and for assessment.

[1] Based on material from Workshop participants, AUQA Self-Review Workshop, March 2006

External validation may or may not form part of the self-review process (e.g. external peers interviewing stakeholders; one external 'expert' reviewing documentation and/or interviewing stakeholders; or use of existing advisory committees with industry/community representatives).

Barnett (1994, summarised in Watson and Maddison, 2005:73) offers 'a taxonomy for looking at any method of evaluation that relates method to purpose:

- Fitness for purpose or measurement against a standard
- Summative or formative evaluation
- Accountability or self-learning
- Quality control or assurance
- Criterion or norm referencing
- Customer satisfaction or producer norms'.

Irrespective of the orientation, a continuous improvement focus should inform design of the process.

> *The review may be restricted to an exercise in data-gathering and self-description, resulting in a snapshot of the current state of the subject. While this has its value, it usually fails to generate the institutional improvement that can come from critical self-analysis of strengths and weaknesses. A review that is structured as an analytical self-evaluation is likely to reveal possibilities for enhancing the strengths and remedying the weaknesses, regardless of the core purpose of the review. If the review is for external purposes, the consequent improvement strengthens the institution's case vis-à-vis the external audit, assessment or accreditation.* (Woodhouse, 1998)

1.4 Approaches to Self-Review

While there is no one model for self-review, King (1998) identifies four main approaches to conducting self-review exercises, and Frye, et al (2006:101) have provided comments on some of the advantages and disadvantages of each approach.

- *Surveys* – such as mail (e.g. the Australian Course Experience Questionnaire), telephone surveys, internal questionnaires, and random samples. Surveys can be relatively inexpensive, usually easy to administer (although not always) and can reach participants over a wide area. Surveys can provide quantitative and qualitative data that is readily analysable and can be tabulated to reflect currency of opinions. Achieving adequate response rates can be problematic but future online surveys may offer improved response rates. Other disadvantages include possible evasive answers, central tendencies in scoring, and difficulties in interpretation of responses.
- *Guided assessment workshops* – such as semi-structured discussion sessions guided by criteria and/or key questions. Examples include focus groups with staff/students, or individual interviews. While these can be resource and time intensive, they can provide a rich source of evidence through the exploration of

issues in depth, and revealing new insights. The success depends ultimately on the skills of the facilitator(s) to ensure there is active listening, objectivity in judgments and a range of viewpoints sought. External facilitation is one way to manage respondent perceptions of lack of privacy and anonymity. While focus groups allow in depth discussion, it can be difficult to prioritise issues and engender trust to allow open group discussion of sensitive issues.

- *Assessment teams* – information summarising and analysing the area/course/issue under review is considered by a team of assessors, who may all be internal or may include external expertise relevant to the scope of the review. If there is more than one reviewer, there may not be adequate consistency in collecting and analysing the data.
- *Structured learning* – analysis of existing evidence/documentation and reflection on results, either in a group or individually. An example would be reflection by senior management on trend data related to organisational key performance indicators and targets.

Self-review processes may (and in my experience generally do) draw on more than one of these approaches. The approach adopted will depend not only on the purpose and scope of the self-review, but also to a large extent on the timeframes, culture of the organisation, and resources available.

For example, one university, in conducting a self-review as an ‘event’ in preparation for an AUQA quality audit, identified a small core group of staff who acted as facilitators in guided assessment workshops with each school and area. Each workshop session (generally lasting around three hours) was based on structured questions linked to the university’s core areas and aligned to its strategic plan (including teaching and learning, research, international activities, and staffing). Facilitators were provided with a template outlining a set of questions and some examples of the responses (or evidence) expected. These questions were informed by historical performance data, including student survey outcomes, and covered key processes and policies aligned to the strategic plan. Sessions involved staff, students and management, and were designed to encourage reflection on current practices and their effectiveness (including against essential elements/practices that were expected in institutional policies).

Opportunities for improvement, as well as strengths, were identified and reported back to the school. Strategies to address gaps were then developed as part of the school’s wider planning process. One of the critically important elements that helped ensure the success of the process was to relate the questions to the university’s objectives using meaningful and relevant language that engaged participants. The information was then used within the performance portfolio and validated by external peers prior to submission to AUQA. Outcomes (identified strengths and opportunities for improvement) for each school and area were reported to the responsible line manager, who followed through on identified issues through ongoing work planning.

Another university, in its cyclical annual program[2] review process, uses a combination of surveys, structured learning and assessment teams. Program teams are asked to reflect on existing performance measures for the program and the program manager then completes a brief template (or survey) based on this information gathered, identifying strengths and opportunities for improvement. This is then assessed by the head of school and senior executive responsible for teaching and learning, who endorse actions to address issues arising.

The case studies in the following chapter include further examples of the differing approaches to self-review.

1.5 Challenges and Potential Pitfalls of Self-Reviews

Drawing on the insights of participants in the 2006 AUQA Workshop, a number of challenges and potential pitfalls in conducting self-reviews are listed below. The following section on designing a self-review outlines some strategies to address these issues and minimise potential negative influences.

Challenges and potential pitfalls include:

- An unclear purpose for the self-review (or unclear communication of its purpose)
- Putting a public relations 'spin' on outcomes reported, thus losing opportunities to identify improvements. (The extent to which this might occur is likely to be influenced by the audience and the perception of consequences of bringing to light shortcomings to external reviewers/audiences.)
- Creating perceptions of a bureaucratic process (this can sometimes result in a 'tick and flick' exercise rather than a deeper and pervasive process which encourages critical reflection and assessment)
- Perception of review 'fatigue', which can make engagement difficult
- Duplicated processes
- Information overload
- Misinterpretation of outcomes, or outcomes (recommendations) that are impossible to implement or too numerous/trivial
- Potential (and perception) for outcomes to be used punitively
- Inability to identify good evidence/information as a basis for self-review
- Disconnected staff/areas (for example, different values/objectives, preference for different processes, and seeking different ends).
- Non-alignment to individual staff outcomes
- Reliance on individual(s) to conduct process (for example, a head of department undertaking the whole self-review and not engaging other staff members in the process)

[2] Program in this context refers to a course of study leading to the award of a qualification, such as a bachelor degree.

- Over-reliance on individuals to implement outcomes
- Resistance to change (tips to encourage ownership of outcomes are discussed below).

Done well, and using an inclusive process in which there is participation from a range of stakeholders (staff, students, industry/community), self-reviews are inevitably a resource-intensive process. This is particularly so for self-reviews covering a wide scope, such as whole-of-institution self-reviews.

2 Process of Self-Review

2.1 Main Stages

Self-reviews are not linear processes. My experience in designing and developing review processes and in managing and participating in around 30 reviews indicates there are several major stages that need to be taken into account. Adopting a project management approach to the process that considers each of these stages, and in which timeframes, resources, roles and responsibilities, risks, potential barriers, clear terms of reference, and key milestones and deliverables are clarified, will help ensure a successful process.

The main stages for self-review can be summarised as:

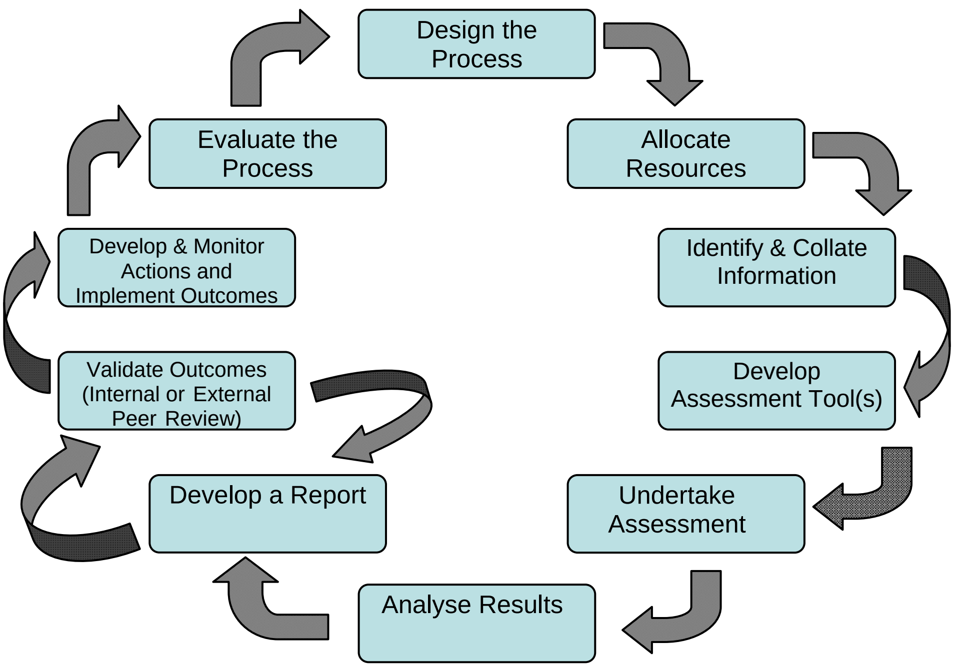

Diagram 1: *Main stages of a Self-review process* (adapted from Kells, 1995:33 and Murdoch, 2003:4)

2.1.1 Designing the process

Watson and Maddison (2005:20–21) highlight a number of desirable features of a self-review:

- It is a habitual part of institutional management
- Ownership is defined through both executive and academic functions of the institution
- There is focus on reflection and learning, using sensible tools and approaches in an intelligent manner
- It is a bottom up activity, and truly collective, engaging staff and students
- There is clear definition of roles and responsibilities relating to the process
- Its focus is aligned to institutional goals and culture
- Its primary goal is understanding and enhancing student learning and the quality of the student experience
- It is kept in proportion, taking account of other institutional activities and priorities.
- Its momentum is sustained.

Harvey (2002) considers that 'the less threatening the evaluation process, the more open, honestly reflective and useful is the self-evaluation process'. Against this background, there are a number of factors that should be taken into account when designing a self-review process, including the following:

- Ensure consensus on the need to conduct a self-review – be clear *why* a self-review is being undertaken, its emphasis (what are the key issues) and the expected outcomes and benefits to be derived from staff/stakeholder time and resources.

  Clear terms of reference and process guidelines effectively communicated are critical elements to any self-review process. I have found it useful to conduct briefing sessions well in advance of self-review processes, involving staff who have previously undertaken the process wherever possible, to provide their perspective and to share learnings, outcomes and benefits (as well as providing a reality check on the timeframe and resources required).
- Secure executive and management 'buy-in' in order to: help shape internal motivation for the process; provide support (resources and other); give priority to the review; and provide leadership for resulting changes. I consider this to be arguably the most critical element in ensuring a successful self-review process.
- Be cautious about the frequency of self-review, so as to avoid 'ritual' reviews that can lead to a culture of review fatigue. Build cyclical self-review into existing processes where possible. For example, an agenda item for the final meeting of a committee each year may be a brief questionnaire and/or facilitated discussion on performance against terms of reference and/or workplans.
- Ensure appropriate resources are in place (including appropriately skilled staff, budget and information). Consider resources for providing incentives for

participation in and implementation of improvements identified through the process, for example by linking self-review improvements to performance planning and recognition, publication of improvements aligned to key performance indicators, or showcasing process improvements across the institution (such as through workshops, ceremonies or acknowledgement by senior executive through staff newsletters or similar).

- Plan the process, including clear responsibilities and tasks for coordination, data collection methods, and establishment of realistic timeframes in which to conduct the review. Ensure that there is one person with responsibility for coordination and oversight, rather than delegation of all aspects to different people. Ensure clarity of tasks and responsibilities of those involved in conducting the self-review.
- Provide adequate training/information for participants and coordinator(s) to ensure that the process is conducted professionally and efficiently.
- Ensure that the self-review is evidence-based, drawing on existing data and information wherever possible. For example, for reviews involving teaching and learning in an Australian context, student demand data across the state/territory, and/or benchmarking outcomes using the good teaching scale of the Course Experience Questionnaire (CEQ) are basic data that should be used.
- Ensure that all relevant stakeholders have opportunity for meaningful participation through the process. Kells (1995:18) notes the importance of participative self-evaluation processes in order to 'allow those with the responsibility to implement changes to discover the need for those changes and to formulate them'.

  I have found that self-review processes which have involved just one or two people (normally the manager) producing a document that outlines their perspective on the performance and operations of an area (or course/program) have had limited impact in engaging staff to identify with, and support, improvement initiatives.
- Consider other competing priorities and previous experiences that may shape expectations and likely staff commitment, and may negatively influence self-review outcomes. Examples include concurrently undertaking professional accreditation processes, new course developments, introduction of new systems, and structural changes.
- Ensure that the process is based on honest and candid evaluation. The level of honesty and openness of participants is likely to be shaped by the purpose of the review and the organisational culture, as well as leadership commitment for the process, and confidence that the outcomes will not be used punitively. Where possible, briefing sessions involving staff from other areas who have had previous experience in the self-review process can provide a level of comfort about the purpose and outcomes of the review. Communication that reinforces a focus on findings relating to the performance of processes and systems, not individual performance, can also be beneficial.
- Ensure that there is adequate time for reflection and input to the exercise as well as analysis of findings.

In processes I have been involved with, the relevant school/department/area is normally provided with a minimum four months notice of the self-review process. Available statistical and benchmarking data is discussed well in advance to enable preparation and analysis of the information, and for the school/area to then be able to consider these materials for at least six weeks prior to the self-review report being prepared. Various approaches can be used, but generally those that are effective involve several focus group sessions that comprise staff, students and external stakeholders to contribute to the analysis and reflection. In some cases, external support has been secured to facilitate the focus groups, secure wide input, and write up the findings.

- Be clear about how the self-review findings will be reported, what will happen with the findings and outcomes, how (and to whom) they will be communicated, and who will be responsible for actioning and for monitoring their completion. Particularly where self-reviews are cyclical, it is useful to develop detailed guidelines for the process that include this information.
- Identify the impact for students and other stakeholders of conducting the self-review (both during and after the process).
  - For example, plan for students to provide input at non-critical times of semester, when they may have more time to participate. Conversely, don't schedule student feedback for times when students are away from campus on full-time industry experience or vacation. Likewise, don't schedule review activities involving academic staff in peak times of the semester, such as during examination marking.
- Develop clear communication mechanisms, for example:
  - To those involved in or affected by the process (before, during and after) – about why and how the process will be conducted, by whom, when, and expectations from their involvement. Provide adequate explanation of the purpose and rationale for self-review, and how the findings will be used.
  - To other relevant parties – ensure that they are kept updated on the progress. Strategies may include regular reports to relevant committees, emails on progress, or for more significant reviews, a regular newsletter or similar.

  Effective communication strategies I have experienced include:

  - Briefing sessions for managers and staff of the school/department/area concerned to clarify terms of reference, expectations, process steps and resourcing requirements, involving senior management and staff from areas who have recently experienced the review process.
  - An open invitation to staff notifying them of the review process and inviting written submissions.
  - Provision of example self-review reports, guidelines on the self-review process, and example approaches used by other areas.
  - Briefing sessions for participants (including students) who are meeting with the review panel (held around one week prior to the review visit) to ensure that they are familiar with the self-review report, process steps, panel

composition, and likely areas to be covered in the review interview session. Briefing notes are also circulated.

- Debriefing sessions just after meeting with the panel to distribute formal feedback tools and provide an opportunity to discuss the experience.
- Circulation of the review report to students and staff.
- Publication of review reports and associated action plans on the institution's intranet.

These factors have been adapted from the AUQA Workshop outcomes (March 2006) and from King (1998:43) and Kells (1995:26).

2.1.2 Allocate resources

The scope and purpose of the self-review will guide resource allocation (financial, human, physical and information). Consider the following tasks, not all of which will be applicable to every review process.

- Design of self-review process
- Coordination of process (e.g. steering group/project manager[3])
- Design and development of self-review tools (e.g. surveys, questionnaires, structured workshops)
- Data collection, collation and presentation (consider local, institutional and external)
- Administration of self-review tools (for example through facilitation of focus groups or workshops, use of existing committees, seeking written submissions, using survey instruments)
- Analysis of results and information (including recording outcomes of workshops if applicable)
- Writing up reports and/or preparing for and making presentations (including appropriate consultation in its development)
- Preparation for report publication (e.g. printing costs)
- Seeking resources to address main findings
- Factoring in external validation costs (e.g. audit fees, consultancy costs, travel and accommodation expenses for external participation)
- Consideration of the opportunity cost of participation by key stakeholders (e.g. students, staff, external community members).

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[3] In addition to appointing a coordinator for the process (ideally one who is widely respected and competent), many institutions establish a steering group with representation appropriate to the area/course/process under review. Its role can include providing overall leadership to the process, determining key issues for self-review, designing the approach, overseeing completion of the final report and communicating to stakeholders.

2.1.3 Identify and collate information

This can be a difficult stage of the process. Often educational processes are hard to measure and effects upon students are often intangible and delayed (Schmitz and Whitworth, 2002:135).

However, clear information including performance measures and outcomes on which to base judgments is fundamental in ensuring a successful self-review. Information (whether facts or opinions) should generally reflect both processes and outcomes, and depending on the scope of the review, may cover both institutional-wide and local (operational) activities. External (benchmarking) information can provide comparative evidence of performance relative to other organisations, evidence performance over time, facilitate an objective assessment of strengths and weaknesses, and provide ideas to stimulate thinking.

Information gathering may involve conducting individual or group interviews, observing systems and procedures, or reviewing data in order to find examples of actions and practices that meet/don't meet assessment criteria or desired outcomes.

Kells (1995:25) notes three general approaches to the use of measures, which may be used in combination depending on the purpose of the review:

1. Use of 'measures of the achievement of stated intentions (objectives, goals, etc.)'. For example, progress toward a goal to increase research productivity might be measured by information including the number of research publications, and amount of competitive grant income.
2. Use of 'measures of the adequacy of functioning of the processes' (for example level of participation in and satisfaction with training and professional development activities)
3. Use of measures to demonstrate 'the extent of compliance' with standards/other expectations (for example percentage student attendance required by the Australian *Educational Services for Overseas Students Act 2000*).

In selecting measures for use in self-reviews, there are a number of characteristics that should be considered:

- Intentional (meaning and relevance clarified)
- Purposeful (in relation to the review being conducted)
- Interpreted (analysis to support assessment, not raw data)
- Integrated in the context of other information
- Coherent, accurate and reliable
- Cumulative and timely (trend data where available)
- Qualitative and quantitative
- Representative of what is (not just of isolated cases). (Adams, 2004)

Ideally, the self-review process should not create further documentation, but should gather and analyse existing evidence that will encourage informed dialogue and assessment of performance. Consider how existing documentation and other information (including benchmarking) from previous assessment (such as external accreditation/reporting/audit requirements) relevant to the general or specific focus of the self-review may be used and cited in order to minimise creation of additional documentation. There may still be the need to conduct new research (including gathering opinions through such mechanisms as staff/student focus groups) during the self-review process to supplement existing data.

Existing documentation/information to inform self-reviews in a tertiary institution may include:

- Reports (such as annual reports, previous reviews, audits, government data, e.g. the Australian Institutional Assessment Framework portfolios)
- Strategic, business and operational plans
- Policies, procedures and guidelines
- Stakeholder feedback outcomes (e.g. summary reports)
- Committee minutes/agendas
- Organisational charts
- Handbooks
- Staff lists and qualifications
- Course/program guides
- Program/course approval and review documentation
- Samples of assessment results
- Benchmarking outcomes
- Staffing plans
- Statistical trend data against key performance indicators.

Performance data for self-reviews covering activities across schools/departments might typically include trends and information relating to:

- Student satisfaction outcomes (qualitative and quantitative)
- Graduate outcomes, e.g. the Australian Graduate Destination Survey
- Student preferences
- Student progress rates
- Target/actual student load
- International offshore program completions
- Research completions by program
- Weighted publications
- Research income

- External grant success rates and income
- Student/staff ratios
- Staff profile (including numbers, ages, gender, levels)
- Staff qualifications
- Staff turnover rates.

2.1.4 Develop assessment tool(s)

Assessment tools (whether administered as a survey or used as the basis for structured workshops/discussions) guide the self-review process and can assist in formulation of prompting questions for consideration against items/areas being assessed. Questions are developed to elicit strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities by focusing on processes and outcomes related to the items/areas. It is important to ensure that all areas of enquiry (such as standards/criteria, processes) are covered, and to provide a starting point for analysis and reporting. Importantly, questions need to be relevant to the institution's objectives, and framed in language so that they are meaningful and engaging to the participants. The questions should ensure that they stimulate thinking about important issues, and require evaluation and judgment (as opposed to purely descriptive responses). Questions that elicit a yes/no answer or for which there are obvious answers should generally be avoided. A balance between future orientation and past achievements is also necessary. Assessment tools may also contain examples of evidence to consider in reflecting on the questions.

Collection of some trend/background data (such as the information noted above) prior to development of the assessment tool can inform development of relevant questions that will facilitate an informed dialogue and an effective assessment tool.

External quality frameworks can provide guidance in developing the self-review tools by outlining key elements/criteria relevant to processes or 'themes' (such as research) under review. Examples include: the European Quality Improvement System (EQUIS) through the European Foundation for Management Education (efmd) (see http://www.efmd.org[4]); the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence, which are available at: http://www.quality.nist.gov/Education_Criteria.htm[5]; and the Business Excellence Framework (http://www.businessexcellenceaustralia.com.au[6]).

Criteria and specific items for focus within a self-review should ideally be related to the institution's strategic goals and objectives and its operating context. The scope of criteria/items may be broad (e.g. across all teaching and learning processes, research training, staffing – such as in the appended example) or more specific (for example against set standards such as the Australian Qualifications Training Framework). The AUQA has developed a framework for standards, evidence and outcomes, which includes examples of key policies and processes and indicative outcomes and

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4 Accessed 28 July 2008
5 Accessed 28 July 2008
6 Accessed 28 July 2008

measures, that can be used to guide self-reviews (AUQA Audit Manual version 5.0, Appendix E, http://www.auqa.edu.au/qualityaudit/auditmanuals[7]).

When external standards/criteria exist against which to conduct the assessment, key questions against each should include:

- What are our achievements against the standard/criterion? Are these likely to change in the foreseeable future?
- What evidence do we have?
- What processes and outcomes relate to this standard/criterion?
- How well are we performing across the main elements of these (and is there comparison or benchmarking data to compare this performance with that of others?)
- How could we improve – over the short-term and longer term?

Irrespective of the orientation, a useful framework for designing the review tools and informing assessment questions is to use a continuous improvement cycle, such as ADRI (Approach, Deployment, Results, Improvement). A summary ADRI model is:

- *Approach* – considers two core elements of an organisation's intent in respect of a topic/item – what it proposes to do and how it will achieve this. Broad questions include: What are the institution's mission, vision, goals and objectives (either at the strategic level or in relation to a specific item/area)? How were they established? How well disseminated are they?
- *Deployment* – considers how an organisation is implementing its approach, or whether its planned objectives and intent happen in practice, and how consistently. Broad questions include: How does the institution put its planned objectives into practice? Are staff suitably enabled (trained, empowered) to undertake their work? Does the organisational structure help or hinder deployment? How is deployment monitored? Where the approach is not being implemented, why not?
- *Results* – considers what the approach and deployment are actually achieving, usually through quantitative/qualitative performance results. Should these be benchmarked and/or trended where possible to aid interpretation? Broad questions include: What are the results? How do they stack up against targets and benchmarks/standards? Is there an understanding of how the results were achieved?
- *Improvement* – considers how an institution is using what it knows about its approach and deployment to bring about changes that will lead to better results. Broad questions include: How does the organisation review its approach, deployment and results? Does this incorporate appropriate internal and external perspectives/ideas? What happens with the findings and recommendations from these reviews? To what extent is such learning endemic throughout the organisation? (Adapted from AUQA publications e.g. AUQA, 2008:6)

[7] Accessed 28 July 2008

Examples of assessment tools covering the areas of teaching and learning, planning and quality, staffing, research and development, community/industry engagement and international for use in higher education institutions are contained in **Appendix A** of this chapter. These tools have been developed and expanded from initial material generated by participants at the AUQA Workshop in March 2006 and are included as a guide to the types of reflective questions and evidence of processes and outcomes that might be considered within a self-review of the areas noted.

2.1.5 Undertake assessment

Depending on the approach chosen, assessment against the questions and data presented may occur through mechanisms such as: surveys/questionnaires; interviews; workshops; focus groups; or existing meetings/forums. Alternatively, various working groups may be convened with relevant expertise to consider specific issues/items within the self-assessment. What is important is to consider current activities and outcomes against those that are desired – whether these are planned institutional objectives/targets, alignment with policy provisions, external reference points (such as accreditation standards/criteria, or legislation) or identified good practice in other institutions. Ideally, this information should be included in an assessment tool, as discussed above.

2.1.6 Analyse results

Analysis of results can be done in various ways and will be contingent on whether assessment has been undertaken using qualitative or quantitative means (or both). The analysis needs to focus on identifying the key strengths and opportunities for improvement.

It can be beneficial to use a rating scale or scoring guide for self-reviews conducted over a number of areas, or across the whole institution, where large amounts of data and records of assessment workshops/meetings need to be analysed to distil major trends (for example to develop a performance portfolio for external audit). Care is needed to manage variations in scoring and to ensure that results are not used for punitive purposes. An example is contained in **Appendix B**, which is most relevant for review of specific topics but could be easily adapted to apply to reviews with a different scope, such as themed reviews (for example internationalisation).

2.1.7 Develop a report

As with the self-review process, there is no one model for a self-review report. The goal of a self-review process should be a report that fairly and honestly portrays the institution, area or program reviewed, avoids personal agendas, and warrants broad support amongst institutional stakeholders. In order to achieve this, ideally report content should be informed by wide input from across affected stakeholders and be analytical, contain judgments with associated rationale, and be forward-looking. This is opposed to a report that is merely descriptive, overly obsequious (or a public relations document), containing assertions without evidence, or defensive. That is not to say that reports always need to be in a formal written form. Outcomes of brief self-review processes may be best served by a presentation to the school/department/area concerned on major results to prompt further discussion and formulation of action about the items covered.

The first and most important step in preparing the report is to define its purpose:

- Who is the audience (for example, an accrediting body, external funding agency or internal planning/curriculum or management committee)?
- What do they want to know (for external decision-making or for internal change and improvement)?

The purpose of the report will also define the extent to which it is descriptive or analytical, operational or strategic, as well as appropriate levels of contextualisation.

Clearly the extent to which the report is written in a 'warts and all' style in which all observations from the self-review are included will be contingent on the audience and the perception of consequences of bringing to light shortcomings to external reviewers/audiences.

Irrespective of the audience, the report should be used to identify problems and develop solutions to them, as well as to identify opportunities for growth and development. For external audiences, the report should also demonstrate that the institution has robust processes in place. The report can also be a valuable resource for other processes such as: staff induction; staff training sessions; to inform other activities (such as grant applications); and to inform future review processes.

A possible report format is outlined below.

Executive Summary

- Brief description of major findings and recommendations (including areas of strength) of the self-review
- In cases where external standards (such as professional accreditation) are relevant, provide an overview of those standards applicable to the self-review.

Introduction

- Overview of the institution/area/program/course/issue (for example, history, size, characteristics, areas of focus)
- Description of the self-review process undertaken
- Overview of monitoring and implementation processes to be adopted for recommendations arising from the self-review.

For each topic/standard in the report:

- Description of the topic/standard under review
- Areas of strength
- Overview of evidence considered, including any triangulation of information where applicable

    - relevant institutional objectives/plans/policies
    - implementation processes and evidence of effectiveness
    - outcomes/results
    - improvements
- Cross-references to other relevant materials in the report
- Analysis of relevant strengths and challenges
- How the situation might be changed/improved or further strengthened
- Recommendations for improvement.

Conclusions

Summary of major conclusions reached and recommendations (i.e. areas in which action is required) offered in the report. In developing recommendations, it is useful to contain the number of recommendations, and to ensure that they are non-trivial and able to be implemented (e.g. according to resource availability). In cases where a self-review is focused on specific departments/areas, consider the capacity of that area to actually act on recommendations that involve responsibilities external to their remit (e.g. structural changes to facilities/buildings).

2.1.8 Validate outcomes

Validation, particularly by people independent of involvement in conducting the review, can enhance the acceptability and credibility of self-review outcomes and recommendations.

Validation of the self-review outcomes (normally in the form of a report) may be undertaken using a variety of mechanisms. Examples include: internal peer evaluation (e.g. across faculties/schools, or by a committee); use of external expertise (e.g. an external panel, based on interviewing stakeholders; or an external expert, based on a review of the documentation); or a mixture of both. Existing structures, such as advisory/industry committees could also be used.

As indicated by the loop in the diagram on page 9, validation at this stage may necessitate some changes to the self-review report.

Many external validation processes that I have participated in have involved a panel comprising both internal and external expertise. The panel considers background documentation and data, including the school/department/area's self-review outcomes and a summary of the major implications and areas for attention according to the senior line manager, as well as any written submissions received from the wider university community. Interviews are then conducted with a variety of relevant stakeholders (staff, students, industry and community representatives) to check assertions and issues raised in the self-review. Interviewees include senior management, line management, staff within the school/area (academic/teaching, administrative and technical), students, and industry stakeholders. A brief verbal feedback session to relevant managers is then provided prior to development of a formal review report containing commendations on strengths and recommendations for improvement.

2.1.9 Develop and monitor actions and implement outcomes

Once the self-review is finalised, the results need to be communicated. If recommendations for change have been made (as is normally the case), it is critical that clear responsibilities and accountabilities for actions to address these are identified by the area reviewed. Development of an action plan, using a format similar to that outlined below, can be an effective tool to ensure that this is clarified.

Regular monitoring of progress of implementation is essential. This may be achieved through line management review, or regular reports through existing committees (such as academic board). The importance of this follow through stage cannot be over-emphasised. Failure to do so will generally mean reduced benefit to the institution from what is normally a resource-intensive process. Moreover, the lack of outcomes is likely to instill in staff little faith in the process and resistance to participating in future reviews.

An example action plan template is:

Recommendation/Finding	**Response**	**Action(s) Proposed**	**Responsibility**	**Timeframe for Completion**	**Expected Outcome**

Self-review outcomes can be most effectively implemented when achievement of outcomes is directly linked to recognition and reward systems. Some self-review outcomes may also be relevant to include and manage through existing systems, such as occupational health and safety or risk management frameworks. Other strategies to encourage implementation of findings and recommendations can include use of staff as 'champions' to guide the change required.

Ownership of self-review outcomes by those that are affected, and the effectiveness of implementation, can be enhanced by ensuring that[8]:

- There is broad participation in the self-review process from the outset
- Needs and expected outcomes of those involved in the review are clarified
- There is wide support for the process leading to the outcomes
- 'Resisters' to the process are identified upfront in order to more effectively manage their reactions
- People can see evidence that they have been heard through the self-review process

[8] Adapted from participant feedback, AUQA Workshop, March 2006

- The process is widely promoted and there is understanding of its advantages and benefits
- Incentives for participation are incorporated
- The input of stakeholders is recognised – successes are reported and celebrated
- The self-review approach starts small and builds on existing information and processes
- There is leadership support for recommendations arising and allocation of clear responsibilities and accountabilities for each one
- Recommendations are prioritised and adequate resourcing for implementation is in place
- Outcomes at key stages through the process are communicated, and input along the way is facilitated in order to ensure there are no major surprises when the final recommendations are made
- Outcomes are embedded in performance agreements
- There is commitment to timeframes for monitoring and implementation.

In my experience, use of line management to ensure that there is follow through on outcomes is critical. For example, one approach that I have experience with is to require schools/departments/areas that have been reviewed to develop an action (or implementation) plan, with involvement of staff, setting out required action, responsibilities and timeframes necessary to address the review recommendations. This agreed plan is then signed off by the relevant senior manager, prior to endorsement by the university's senior executive committee and consideration of academic matters by the academic board. Regular six monthly progress reports against the action plan are then monitored by the senior executive committee and annual reports on progress are provided to the university's governing body. Reporting on progress continues in this way until the relevant senior line manager makes a recommendation to the senior executive committee that the plan has been completed or that outstanding action items are no longer relevant given changed circumstances.

2.1.10 Evaluate the Self-Review Process

Consistent with quality improvement principles, evaluation of the self-review process by participants and other stakeholders provides valuable lessons for the design and development of future self-review processes. Evaluation may be done informally (e.g. through verbal feedback) or more formally (e.g. by the administration of questionnaires/surveys).

3 Coordination and Systematisation of Reviews

As discussed above, the purpose of a self-review will determine whether it is an 'event' (such as in preparing for a specific external audit/accreditation process), or part of ongoing practiced to support an institution's quality assurance and improvement process. The appropriate frequency and depth of process will be unique to each institution. There are numerous universities in Australia that, in embedding a culture of habitual self-review, have introduced systematic, cyclical review processes, normally each five to seven years (with some such as reviews of courses at the University of Sydney as frequently as three years). Many processes involve external panels validating self-review reports and supporting statistical/performance documentation that have been prepared by the school/area under review through a review visit involving interviews with key stakeholders. Panels normally comprise external academics from the relevant fields to provide expert advice on performance and direction in the relevant disciplinary areas, together with internal staff with an understanding of internal processes. Review processes may cover courses (programs), schools, faculties, support service divisions, or themes involving various areas such as the use of educational technology or research training. Management and coordination of review processes is normally handled through a university board (academic secretariat) or by the institution's quality and planning area (or similar).

3.1 Guidelines and Resources

Many universities have developed useful guidelines to assist in preparing self-review reports as a key input to cyclical review processes and which are publicly available for reference. For example, the University of Western Australia reviews its schools and areas on a seven-year cycle and provides guidelines for preparation of self-review documents as part of this process, including questions designed to prompt reflection and critical assessment of performance. These guidelines are available from http://www.secretariat.uwa.edu.au/home/policies/reviews?f=103783[10].

The main review website also provided linkages to previous review reports and provides an account of the process for course reviews (see http://www.secretariat.uwa.edu.au/home/policies/reviews[11]).

Similarly, Griffith University has introduced a five-yearly review process of current activity and future plans of academic and administrative areas to improve planning and performance 'through a continuing cycle of self-assessment, benchmarking, critical reflection, forward planning and internal/external peer review'[12].

9 Accessed 28 July 2008.
10 Accessed 28 July 2008.
11 Accessed 28 July 2008
12 From http://www.griffith.edu.au/office-quality-planning-statistics/reviews (accessed 28 July 2008)

Griffith University's review process and characteristics of the (self) review submissions for support service divisions are outlined at: http://www62.gu.edu.au/policylibrary.nsf/mainsearch/73eaecaef31228084a256f010063e639?opendocument[13].

Guidelines for faculty self-review submissions are available at: http://www62.gu.edu.au/policylibrary.nsf/mainsearch/acc66660f313872e4a256f6c0063ebba?opendocument.[14]

The University of Sydney also has a cyclical review process of its faculties. Detailed guidelines for a self-evaluation report to support these reviews draw on the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence (referred to at section 2.1.4 above) and are available at: http://www.usyd.edu.au/quality/Reviews/docs/P3_SER_Guidelines_DETAILED_24jul07.pdf[16].

Further details of the process are at: http://www.usyd.edu.au/quality/Reviews/abr_phase3.shtml.

Descriptions of other cyclical review processes, such as those at Edith Cowan University and the Australian Catholic University, can be found through AUQA's Good Practice Database website at www.auqa.edu.au/gp/.

Overseas institutions also provide useful references to guide self-review processes. An example is the self-study overview and materials prepared for institutional accreditation processes by the Centre for Teaching, Learning and Assessment at Southern Oregon University (http://www.sou.edu/ctla/Accreditation.html[18]).

3.2 Cyclical Self-Review in Practice

As indicated earlier, self-reviews are not linear processes. Adopting a project management approach to the process that considers the stages outlined at section 2 above, and clear communication of expectations, outcomes and impact will assist in supporting an effective review process.

Some of the practices that have helped shaped effective cyclical review processes in my experience have included:

- Senior management commitment to and involvement in the process, through process ownership including: approval of review panel membership; meeting with review panel members; involvement in review visits; and presentation of final reports and recommendations to decision-making committees.

[13] Accessed 28 July 2008
[14] Accessed 28 July 2008
[15] Accessed 28 July 2008
[16] Accessed 28 July 2008
[17] Accessed 28 July 2008
[18] Accessed 28 July 2008

- Ensuring that reviews are conducted in the context of the institution's strategic priorities and directions and focus on current as well as future requirements.
- Ensuring sufficient administrative support for review processes are in place to address the important support required for a smooth process, such as: coordination of background information; travel/accommodation and meeting arrangements; support for the report writing process; advice to staff on the process; and coordinating reports and updates on action plan progress.
- Developing clear and detailed guidelines which articulate purpose of the review, terms of reference, steps in the process, clear roles and responsibilities, and examples of types of information to be included in self-review reports.
- Obtaining relevant and accurate background statistical data, with benchmarking outcomes where possible, which has been analysed to identify trends and issues, and is provided to the panel in a user friendly format (taking into account other review outcomes).
- Reviewing the proposed schedule annually to take account of changed circumstances such as restructuring, and other external processes such as professional accreditation.
- Providing review panel members with an opportunity to meet prior to the review visit in order to: clarify their understanding of the task; discuss plans for the conduct of the review; allow the chair to establish their role and expectations and consider breadth of experience; request any additional information necessary; agree on the schedule for the review visit; and generally identify how best to work as a team.
- Obtaining formal feedback from participants, panel members and senior management on the review process, following this through, and regularly making necessary enhancements/changes to the process as a result.
- Including internal representation on review panels to provided organisational context and perspectives.
- Producing the review report as soon as possible, while enabling sufficient panel deliberation and involvement in drafting and opportunity for the area/school under review to comment on the draft in respect of errors of fact or emphasis prior to finalisation.
- Using staff and managers who have had previous experience with the review process for communications, briefing sessions, and as 'champions' for the process.
- Wide communication and publication of the process – before, during and after the review that includes all stakeholders involved (e.g. advising the students who participated of the report outcomes).
- Regular monitoring and evaluation of actions to address recommendations arising from the review process, involving senior management.

4 Summary and Reflections

This chapter has drawn on the literature and practical experiences to outline some of the key considerations in conducting an effective self-review process. What is clear is that there is no one 'model' for self-reviews, and that the purpose, scope and culture of an institution will significantly influence the process used. However, the chapter has highlighted some common issues to be considered in order to conduct self-review processes that are robust, engage staff, and inform improvements.

Embedding a culture of self-review takes time. Critical to success is senior management commitment to improvement, clarity of purpose of the review, adequate resourcing (including appropriately experienced staffing) and meaningful, honest and critical reflection informed by relevant information. Arguably the most critical aspect of an effective self-review process is communication of and during the process (including of learnings and purpose), senior management commitment, and managing the effective implementation of outcomes to generate change and improvement.

As Schmitz and Whitworth (2002:135) argue, 'modern universities must iteratively question the suitability of existent processes and alter strategies to meet changing goals… Such processes are intensely dependent upon communication and persuasion in their finest sense'.

While resource intensive to conduct, effective review processes can provide significant benefits to an institution. Outcomes from reviews that I have been involved with aligned with five main areas:

- Impetus to bring staff together
- Improvement of processes and outcomes
- Improved awareness of practices and processes in place
- Changes to structures and systems, and
- Positive feedback from participants.

Reviews have provided **impetus to bring together** staff across an area to collectively identify strengths, opportunities and risks of the school/department/area under review, to shape future directions and strengthen group cohesion and staff engagement. (In some areas this has been one of the only times that all staff have had an opportunity to meet collectively.)

Improvements to processes and outcomes include a diverse range of examples, such as:

- Development of workforce plans that identify strategies to manage an ageing staff profile
- Curriculum and teaching and learning enhancements, with improved student satisfaction resulting
- Identification of indicators to monitor performance outcomes

- Introduction of graduate employment programs
- Rationalisation of programs and courses
- Introduction of formal client feedback processes
- Strengthened strategic and individual work planning processes
- Improved communication of feedback outcomes to students
- Strengthened research training outcomes
- Enhanced industry engagement processes, and
- More effective implementation of policies and procedures at the operational levels.

Improved awareness of practices and processes in place, such as: identification and sharing of teaching practices across areas; collaboration in industry engagement; and adoption of staff induction practices.

Changes to structures and systems have included: amalgamation of functions and areas to realise greater efficiencies, clarification and/or revision of staff roles and responsibilities; and enhancements to information technology and communication systems to improve user friendliness and/or effectiveness.

Positive feedback from participants, including students and industry stakeholders, has indicated an appreciation of the opportunity to be involved in the process and to shape future priorities, support for external validation of self-review outcomes, and an enhanced understanding and awareness of the institutional and area strategic priorities and directions.

In summary, self-review processes can play a key role in supporting a sustained culture of continuous improvement by providing a mechanism for periodic reflection and evaluation of processes, systems and outcomes to support institutional objectives and future priorities.

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APPENDIX A: EXAMPLE SELF-REVIEW TOOLS

THEME: TEACHING AND LEARNING

Category	Areas for consideration	Types of Evidence
Assessment	- What is the approach to assessment? How do you know that this is effective? - What is the approach to moderation of assessment? How do you know this is effective? - How is consistency in marking practices assured? - How is assessment aligned to learning outcomes/course objectives? - What policies/procedures/manuals are in place to guide assessment and moderation practices? - How are staff inducted in assessment? - How are staff trained in assessment? - How is assessment evaluated? - How is timely and adequate assessment feedback assured? - What appeals against assessment process is in place? - What initiatives are taken to ensure that assessment remains effective and appropriate? - How are standards of assessment assured? - What validation processes are in place to check equivalence of expected learning outcomes across different locations?	- Marking criteria - Range of assessment methods - Assessment policy/charter and/or policies and procedures - CEQ assessment scale outcomes - Outcomes of student progress committees (or similar) - Course/program guides that outline assessment expectations - Mapping of assessment to learning outcomes - Clear responsibilities for moderation of assessment - Validation of assessment practices externally - Timeframes for assessment feedback - Extent of assessment feedback provided to students
Staff Quality	- What recruitment and selection strategy is in place for academic staff, and how does it link to the Strategic Plan? - How are staff supported in teaching across different locations (eg offshore)? - What induction and professional development opportunities for teaching exist? How do you know these are effective? How many staff take advantage of these opportunities? - What administrative support is provided to academic staff to support teaching	- Position Descriptions and review - Performance Management processes - Records of participation in staff development & induction processes - Evaluation outcomes of staff development and induction processes - International/national

Category	Areas for consideration	Types of Evidence
	and learning outcomes? - How is good teaching recognised and rewarded? - How are staff supported in effective teaching?	recognition and staff awards - Proportion of staff with PhDs
Curriculum Design and Delivery	- What are your accreditation processes/delegations? How do you ensure that these are followed consistently? - How do you ensure curriculum coherence? (e.g. across programs and locations) - What sort of consultation with key stakeholders occurs in curriculum development? - What validation processes are used for curriculum design and development? - Is there a clear design to the course structure and curriculum plan aligned to the intentions of the program? - Who do you benchmark against and why? What were the most recent results and what did you do with them? - How do you determine the appropriate learning methods for your students? - What market analysis is undertaken to inform curriculum design? - What professional accreditation exists? How are accreditation reviews followed through? - What approval process for courses and programs is in place? How effective is this? - What processes are in place for amendment to curriculum content/program structures? How effective is this? Is it always used as intended? - How well do students normally achieve the course objectives? - How are research outcomes integrated into curriculum design and delivery? - How are legislative provisions governing copyright adhered to? - Do delivery methods meet the needs of a diverse range of students and are they	- Program Approval processes, AQF - Accreditation, effectiveness of Academic Board - Benchmarking results - Outcomes of Industry advisory panels or similar - Legislative compliance - Approval documentation - Student input to curriculum design - Outcomes compared across delivery locations - Attendance rates - Progress rates - Completion rates - Generic skills scale outcomes of CEQ

Category	Areas for consideration	Types of Evidence
	flexible enough? - Do students have the opportunity to develop educational skills as an adult learner, including access to a variety of learning activities that may be self-directed?	
Course/Program Management and Review	- How are staff made aware of their responsibilities in course/program management? - How are courses/programs reviewed? How frequently? What happens with the outcomes? What criteria/issues are covered? - How are course management records kept? - What involvement is there from industry or other community stakeholders in course/program review? - How is student feedback taken into account in course/program review processes? - How are course/program review amendments communicated? - How do you assure that programs and courses remain relevant to industry and market demands?	- Changes to programs/courses resulting from student feedback - Review reports - Industry/staff/student involvement in program/course review - Position descriptions for course/program managers - Induction to course/program management positions and evaluation of effectiveness - Procedures for course/program record management
Resources	- What physical and virtual resources and facilities are available to support teaching and learning? - How do you know you have the balance right? - What access do student have to online learning resources? - What access do students have to adequate library resources? - How frequently are teaching facilities and equipment reviewed for adequacy?	- Student feedback on teaching facilities - Proportion of courses/ programs with online support - Ratios of computers to students - Quality of classrooms - Professional development to staff and students in online learning
Student Experience	- What processes are in place for managing student feedback on teaching and learning? - How are outcomes from student feedback reported back to students? How are they communicated to staff and used to make changes? - How would you define your student	- Student evaluation of teaching results - GDS/CEQ (Good Teaching scale) - Clear Enrolment process and effectiveness (e.g. accuracy of enrolments)

Category	Areas for consideration	Types of Evidence
	experience? - What support is provided to students to support their learning outcomes? - How are entry standards managed? Is this effective? - How is timeliness, accuracy and integrity of student data and records assured? - How are students supported to make program and course selection and enrolment decisions? - How are student expectations identified and managed? How are students made aware of their responsibilities? - What support is provided for commencing students, for example those transitioning to higher education? - What processes are in place to support integration of international and domestic students? - What orientation and induction activities are provided to students? - What learning support and pastoral care activities are in place? - What specialist learning support services are available? - What opportunities are provided to build a vibrant student social community? - What career and employment advice and support is provided to students? - How are students made aware of academic policies and procedures such as plagiarism, complaints and grievances, student progress, appeals against assessment and their respective responsibilities?	- Attrition trends - Support for students identified 'at risk' - Student administration processes and procedures - Information provided to prospective students and on enrolment - Student Charter and effectiveness of communication - Feedback on effectiveness of orientation and induction; participation rates - Learning support activities available and extent of student uptake - Student leadership programs, participation rates and evaluation - Social activities and participation rates - Career and job application materials; advisory services, and extent of use by students - Student information provided on academic policies

THEME: QUALITY AND PLANNING

Category	Areas for consideration	Types of Evidence
Planning	- What are goals for the future? Where are they outlined? How are priorities communicated? - What plans are in place to give effect to the strategic plan? - What process was used to develop these? - How have stakeholders been involved? - What market/industry intelligence/environmental scanning has been used in the development of strategic directions? - What policies/procedures or projects support this? - What are linkages to resource (capital/space, budget, ICT, staff) planning? How do these planning processes support the strategic plan? - How are plans monitored? How is progress toward goals/targets monitored? - How are planning processes evaluated? - How frequently are plans updated? - What initiatives are taken to improve outcomes? - Does performance planning (for individual staff, faculties and schools/areas) and review line up with plans? - How are staff informed of planning priorities? - How can you check that planning for (e.g.) new courses has taken into account planning for other resources? - How is risk management aligned with planning processes?	- Strategic Plan - Planning procedures - KPIs reporting (and alignment up and down through plans) - Planning process map - Benchmarking activities and outcomes - Performance review documents/processes - Individual workplans - Planning framework - Staff Plan - Market intelligence/ benchmarking/environment al scanning activities - Planning templates and guidelines - Committee documents and records - Business case framework - Course outlines - Risk management framework
Quality	- What systems/standards do you have in place that identify existing standards or accreditation? - How well are standards and expectations communicated? - How are policies and procedures developed, reviewed and communicated? How do you know that there is clarity	- EQUIS, ISO, AACSB, AQTF, benchmarking, policies and procedures - Policy/procedure implementation plans - CEQ, GDS, 1^{st} year experience, employer opinion survey,

Category	Areas for consideration	Types of Evidence
	about roles and responsibilities for implementation? - How are you getting feedback? How are you interpreting and using feedback to close the loop? - How do you ensure that response rates for student/staff/ employer/stakeholder surveys are maximised? - How do planning and quality interact with the committee structure of the University/College? - How do you ensure that decision-makers are armed with the right information? (anecdotal vs evidence and data) - How are areas/schools, faculties, programs and courses/units reviewed? Is this regular? - What is the university's/college's approach to benchmarking? Is this systematic? - How are benchmarking outcomes used to make improvements? - How do you ensure that there are clear roles and responsibilities in governance and management structures? - How do you identify, assess and manage risks? How is risk management linked to planning processes? - How effective are communication structures and processes throughout the institution?	Student/Staff focus groups, industry/employer/ professional groups, benchmarking - Committee membership, terms of reference - Committee outcomes, understanding of the role - Committee annual reports - Benchmarking policy and procedures - Records management - Annual reports - Signoff of data - Delegations of authority - Position descriptions - Roles and responsibilities for policies/procedures development and implementation - Risk management framework - Communication strategies; staff feedback on effectiveness
	- How do you demonstrate that you have made improvements to quality processes? - Have you involved the right stakeholders? (not just senior managers) - In the context of quality and planning, do review processes inform the cycles of planning and review? - How do we know that review outcomes are implemented? - Planning, quality and reviews – are processes happening at correct levels? Does documentation apply to correct levels?	- Document/version control - Retention of earlier versions - Documenting reasons for changes - Evaluation of changes - Website - Forums (students, staff, externals); staff surveys - Review outcomes - Quality management framework Implementation plans

Category	Areas for consideration	Types of Evidence
		- Range of reporting mechanisms - Analysis of documentation - Plans cascading through levels

THEME: STAFFING

Category	Areas for consideration	Types of Evidence
Staff Development	- What is the institutional framework/approach to staff/workforce development? How does this cascade down the university/college? - How are staff development needs identified? - How is staff development resourced? - How do you know staff development is effective? - How are staff inducted? - How are development needs and promotional criteria linked?	- Staff development framework - Evidence of development activities offered - Staff development plans - Staff Development expenditure - Evaluation of activities - Records of participation in, and level of satisfaction with, staff development activities - Proportion of staff with PhDs - International and national recognition of staff, staff awards
HR and Strategy/Planning	- How synchronised is HR to the rest of the University's/College's work? - How does your core business strategy (e.g. in Research) link directly to HR's work? - How do you know your staffing strategy is working well? - Do you have a systematic approach to: (a) Staff Development (b) Recruitment (c) Promotion (d) Induction (e) Performance and workload management (f) Skills training - Do you have a database on satisfaction and impact of your staff strategy? - What forms of support are staff given in relation to: (a) counselling (b) health (c) grievances/complaints (d) feedback - How are staff involved in setting and implementing key strategic directions?	- Staff turnover rates - Academic/General staff ratio - Appropriateness of qualifications, fit to key needs - Efficiency – no. of staff in each unit, benchmarked - Workloads benchmarked - Staff productivity – eg. No. of articles per annum, benchmarked - Student feedback on staff – benchmarked - Level of industrial disputes - Staff satisfaction survey results - Workforce planning processes and outcomes

Category	Areas for consideration	Types of Evidence
	- How are you handling succession planning, given an ageing cohort in Australia?	
Occupational Health and Safety	- Do you have a policy on OHS? - How well is it implemented? - How do you ensure that all staff and students are aware of their responsibilities in OHS?	- Injury/OHS rates/sickness rates
Job Design & Review	- What is your approach to reviewing job specifications? - How frequently are position descriptions/job specifications updated? Who is responsible? - What support/training is provided to ensure that job descriptions are updated and appropriate? - How do individual work plans and job descriptions align?	- Policy on Position Descriptions - Review processes - Training and induction processes for job specifications - Records management procedures
Redundancies	- What is your approach to managing redundancies? - How well are staff informed of the process? What support and training is there for staff and managers involved in the process? - How effective is the process? - How does it compare to other redundancy processes across the sector?	- Redundancy outcomes - Redundancy policy/procedures - Evaluation and review processes - Benchmarking outcomes
Workloads	- How do you validly measure/monitor workloads? Is this consistent across the University/College? - How is workload management reviewed for effectiveness? - What improvements have been made? How have these been communicated?	- Workload allocation model/framework - Review outcomes

THEME: RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

Category	Areas for consideration	Types of Evidence
Research Training	- What policies/procedures support research training? - How are staff trained and accredited as research supervisors? What ongoing support and training is then provided? - How is research supervision performance monitored and managed? - What support, resources and facilities are there for research students? How do you know that these are appropriate? - How is effectiveness of research training evaluated? - How are timely research completions being supported? - What initiatives are taken to improve research training? - How are research examiners selected? What guidance is provided to them in examining higher degree by research theses? - How are research training processes throughout the institution reviewed?	- Policies and procedures (eg minimum resources for research students) - Student feedback on research supervision (e.g. PREQ) - Attendance records/feedback on training offered - Regular reports (e.g. 6 monthly) - Seminar/presentations by candidate and feedback from supervisor - Benchmarking outcomes - Monitoring of KPIs such as completion rates; student satisfaction
Teaching/Research Nexus	- How is research informed by teaching within the institution? - How is teaching informed by research? - What strategies are in place to encourage/support this?	- Use of research centres - Involvement of PhD students in teaching - Use of visiting lecturers - Statistics on field activities - Promotion criteria
Commercialisation of Research	- What are the policies in place (e.g. Intellectual Property, Consultancy) - Is there an institutional plan/staff training, etc. to support commercialisation? - What have been the outcomes? - How is intellectual property managed to facilitate research collaborations and knowledge transfer with outside parties?	- Business contracts - Strategies for development - Policy and procedures for intellectual property - Evidence of outputs (e.g. no. of patents, spin off companies)

Category	Areas for consideration	Types of Evidence
Research Priorities	- How is research managed in relation to institutional priorities? - How is funding/resources/staffing allocated to support research? - What are the incentives and rewards for research? - What are the research outputs? - How do policies/procedures/outcomes validate the objective of the institution in terms of its Mission regarding research activities? - What are the different requirements/issues for validation of research across disciplines/faculties/different institutions	- Research Training Management Plan - Policies - Promotion/Study leave/trends - Release from teaching to research - $ from research activities - KPIs including output measures such as research publications, journals, etc. - HDR completion rates - HDR student numbers - Impact on Government funding
Fostering a Community of Scholars	- How do research students effectively interact with staff/supervisors? - What collaborative research activities are undertaken in the discipline area/faculty/across faculties/across institution? - How are students supported to complete the practicalities of completing their research thesis? - What criteria is used to appoint examiners? How do these compare with standards in other institutions?	- PG Research seminars - Research Centres with visiting scholars - Policies for visiting scholars, etc. - Policies/procedures for training support/resources allocation

THEME: COMMUNITY/INDUSTRY ENGAGEMENT

Category	Areas for consideration	Types of Evidence
Intent	- How is 'community' defined by the institution? - How well is this definition articulated and promulgated throughout the institution?	- Strategic Plan/Corporate Plan - Planning documents
Community Engagement Priorities	- What are priorities for community/industry engagement? - What policies/procedures support this? How well are they communicated and implemented? - How are staff encouraged to engage with communities? - How do communities engage with the institution? - How is engagement evaluated? - What initiatives are taken to improve outcomes?	- Community Relations Plan - Industry Advisory Committee composition and Terms of Reference, minutes of meetings - KPIs applicable to community engagement goals - Databases and communication processes - Promotion criteria relating to community/industry engagement - Industry based training and research activities
Community Relationships	- What is the nature of the relationship between the institution and various elements of community, e.g. - industry - member States/other campuses - Alumni - Potential students - General public - Internal vs external communities - How are competing demands prioritised? - How are activities/community engagement projects coordinated across the institution?	- Policy and planning documentation - Minutes from industry advisory committees or similar - Alumnus activities - Governance and management structures for community engagement
	- What are mechanisms for engagement including: - external representation on Boards and committees - strategic alliances - industry advisory groups	- Minutes of meetings and forums - Numbers of industry/adjunct staff teaching and reports of

	- local consultative committees - How are external members of industry used in teaching activities? - How do you ensure that all programs/courses have linkages to industry/community to inform curriculum development and review?	effectiveness
Student Activities in the community	- How are students involved in community service/activities? - How are they encouraged to become involved in community service activities? - How are they acknowledged and supported for their contributions?	- Media exposure - Graduate Destination Survey question - Community projects/placements undertaken by students - Credit for community engagement activities within program/course structures

THEME: INTERNATIONAL

Category	Areas for consideration	Types of Evidence
Offshore Activities	- What is the objective of offshore activities? - How are relationships with offshore collaborators monitored, reviewed and evaluated? - How do you ensure that clear responsibilities and authorities of the institution and the offshore collaborator are articulated, understood and reviewed? - How do you know offshore delivery is effective? - How are staff supported in implementing international objectives? - How do you ensure equivalence of learning outcomes? - What processes are in place for assessment and moderation? - How are staff trained and inducted for offshore delivery? - How are senior faculty staff involved offshore? - How are staff offshore trained and inducted? Is this equivalent to opportunities onshore? - How do you assure teaching facilities and equipment are adequate to facilitate equivalence of learning outcomes? - How are graduate capabilities/attributes developed for student offshore? - How do you ensure that host country legislative and regulatory approvals are in place? - How is adequate access for students to books and other learning materials and resources assured? - How do you ensure that legislative provisions governing copyright are adhered to offshore? - Are requirements of externally	- Internationalisation Plan/Strategy - MOUs/Agreements with offshore partners - Due diligence/risk management - Outcomes (reports) of review processes - Equivalence of learning outcomes, recognising local contextualisation - Profits generated - Student feedback - Student outcomes - Benchmarked qualifications and experience for teachers - Local quality satisfied (eg local QA frameworks) - Assessment and moderation arrangements - Standards for student support services - DEST transnational quality audits outcomes - Compliance with local legislation - Market intelligence offshore (demand, etc.) - Staff development and induction processes, evaluation (e.g. cross-cultural training) onshore and offshore

Category	Areas for consideration	Types of Evidence
	accredited courses or programs met? - How well are academic policy provisions communicated to offshore partners and offshore students? - Are exit strategies clearly articulated to provide for protection and support of student interests?	
International Strategy	- How are staff supported in implementing international objectives? - What policies and procedures are in place to give effect to the strategy and objectives? How do you know they are effective? - How are staff made aware of the international strategy? How is it given effect operationally (e.g. through workplans)?	- Internationalisation Plan/Strategy - Policies and procedures review and implementation
Online Delivery	- What professional development and technical support for staff is available for online instruction and multimedia courseware? - What support is in place for students for online instruction? - What evaluation and assessment processes for educational media/multimedia are in place? How do you know that they are effective? - What quality assurance processes for online instruction are in place? - What quality assurance processes for distance education are in place? - What governance structures support online and distance learning? - How frequently is online content reviewed and updated? Who has responsibility for this?	- Training courses in online learning and evaluation of effectiveness - Review outcomes of online delivery - Access to services to support online delivery - Student feedback
International students onshore	- How is compliance with the *ESOS Act* assured? - What support is in place for international students, including: - language - induction and orientation - academic learning support - opportunities to integrate with domestic students	- Entry scores (IELTS) - Bridging courses - *ESOS Act* reviews - Communication/support for implementation of *ESOS Act* - Attendance records for international students

Category	Areas for consideration	Types of Evidence
	- How are entry standards assured?	
Curriculum	- What approach is in place to internationalise the curriculum? - How widely is this implemented in practice? - How effective is this?	- Evidence of global case studies/material in curriculum - Curriculum reviews - Course approval processes that embed internationalisation of the curriculum requirements

APPENDIX B: EXAMPLE RATING GUIDE

EXAMPLE RATING GUIDE

1	• No processes, policies or procedures documented, unplanned/reactive approach to problems • Little or no evidence of implementation of objectives/policies • No review processes in place • No improvement activities evidenced • No evidence available on performance/results. No monitoring activities exist.
2	• Informal, ad hoc processes exist, no documentation available • Implementation of planned objectives/policies evident in a limited number of areas • Ad-hoc reviews are undertaken, outcomes frequently not followed through • Positive trends in some areas • Ad hoc improvements evidenced
3	• Processes, policies and procedures documentation being developed • Implementation of planned objectives/policies evident in some areas • Cyclical reviews undertaken by most areas • Positive trends in most areas against relevant indicators • Systematic process of identifying improvements exists, used periodically
4	• Documented processes, policies and procedures are in place, communication and review patchy, some training provided • Planned approach used in most areas • Proactive system of review exists, leading to identification of improvements by some areas • Positive trends in most areas, against relevant indicators. Favourable benchmarking comparisons exist • Systematic process to identify improvements exist, implementation strategies generally in place
5	• Well documented, current and accepted policies, procedures and processes exist that are widely understood, communicated and supported through necessary training • All areas use planned approach, which is integrated into mainstream processes, and consistently implemented • Proactive system of review exists, leading to identification of improvements. System used by all areas. • Positive trends exist in all areas, benchmarking suggests good practice • Systematic process to identify improvements exist, implementation strategies generally in place

(Adapted from Australian Quality Council, using ADRI approach)

PART B: Self-Review in Higher Education: Experiences from the University of Queensland

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Introduction

Self-review forms an important part of the external review process embedded in practice at the University of Queensland (UQ) since 1985. The self-review, which is preparatory to an external evaluation, is one part of the quality improvement cycle. In this chapter, we describe the evolution of the review system at UQ, the framework for the review process, and present two case studies to illustrate the principles and purposes of self-review. The example case is of an academic unit within the University, whilst the second is of a large generalist undergraduate degree program. While the scale of each self-review differs and the processes used in self-review vary in complexity, there are a number of important principles common to the reviews which helped contribute to successful outcomes.

Self-reviews should occur regularly, and be comprehensive in scope, covering both the organisation's activities and their results (Brereton, 1996). The review should ask what the unit is doing and how and why it is doing it. Also, the review should ask if there is something it is not currently doing that it should be doing. A key point to be noted is that the self-review should be seen as leading to demonstrable improvements in the organisation, and not a report that explains the current state of practice (Kells, 1995). Participation in improvement-oriented self-reviews can help staff to feel more valued and committed to the organisation, as well as enhance openness and improve the effectiveness of the organisation (Kells, 1995).

The University of Queensland

The University of Queensland, the first university in the State, was founded in 1909. In 2008, it has just over 37,500 enrolled students, drawn from over 113 counties, including 9,900 students enrolled in postgraduate programs. The University has seven faculties and six research institutes. Students can study a wide range of programs at the undergraduate level including, associate degrees, single or dual bachelor degrees and honours, through to post-graduate masters and PhD degrees. The University employs approximately 5,600 staff. In 2006, UQ received $215 million in research income. The University can be described as a modern university with an integrated approach to: (1) teaching and learning; (2) research; (3) community service; and (4) innovation and commercialisation.

Evolution of Reviews at the University of Queensland

In 1985, a formal review system was initiated at UQ. This arose from the recommendations made by an Academic Board[1] Committee on Staff Development and Reviews of Academic Performance, and in response to views expressed by the Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission. Under the auspices of the Vice-Chancellor, eleven reviews of academic departments were undertaken during 1985–1986. In October 1986, the Academic Resource and Planning Committee (a committee no longer in existence at UQ) and the Academic Board Standing Committee[2] jointly assessed the effectiveness of the University's review procedures.

In 1989, the University Senate approved the *Guidelines for Reviews of Academic Departments*, which were based on the evaluation of the procedures used in the eleven reviews. The guidelines advised that the purpose of departmental reviews were: to examine the aims and to justify the existence of departments; to determine the extent to which the collective goals and programs were being achieved; and, where appropriate, to suggest other possible aims that could be pursued and the means by which they could be achieved. Reviews under this system were to be conducted under the formal auspices of the Academic Board. Continued refinements were made to review procedures over the ensuing years. In May 1994, the National Committee for Quality Assurance in Higher Education advised that the University's departmental review process was comprehensive and was a strength of the quality assurance mechanisms of the University. In April 1996, the University Senate approved the *Review of the Departmental Review Process — Report of the Review Panel*. This review had sought to clarify the purposes of the review process and to suggest procedural improvements to better serve the defined purposes of the reviews.

In August 2000, the University moved to a school-based faculty structure. This consolidated 65 disciplined-based departments into 35 multi-disciplinary schools, and precipitated the need to revise the departmental review process. Concomitant with these university changes, the federal government had established a national quality assurance body (the Australian Universities Quality Agency) and the national council of ministers for education, MCEETYA, had approved National Protocols for Higher Education Approval Processes in 2000 (Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs, 2000). In 2001, Academic Board received a *Report on Reviews of Academic Departments* which observed that the current process being used provided a robust mechanism for quality assurance and improvement within the university. The process was revised in so much as to focus on the school as the unit of review, rather than the department.

Another important development at UQ in the 1990s was the establishment of research centres and institutes, and from 2000 these were included in the schedule

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[1] Academic Board is constituted by the University of Queensland Senate to provide authoritative academic advice to the Senate and the Vice-Chancellor. It currently has a membership of approximately 125 members.

[2] Academic Board Standing Committee is a committee of 10 members drawn from each faculty, the student group and the President and Deputy President of the Academic Board. It is chaired by the President of Academic Board. This Committee functions as a de-facto executive committee of Academic Board.

of reviews. In March 2003, a formal policy for the review of all research institutes, centres and units was approved by the University Senate.

In September 2003, AUQA's Audit Report of UQ commended the school review process. It stated that:

> *AUQA commends UQ for its long-standing school review process, the central guidelines, the control exercised over the process by the Academic Board Standing Committee, and the continual attention to the ways in which the process may be improved. (AUQA, 2003:9).*

In October 2003, a parallel review process for the review of academic and administrative service units was approved by the University Senate. It should be noted that these periodic reviews form just one part of the University's quality management and assurance framework (The University of Queensland, 2003).

Framework for the Review Process at the University of Queensland

Hence, since 2003, there have been procedures for reviews of: (1) schools; (2) research institutes, centres and units; and (3) academic and administrative services units. These reviews have been conducted on a rolling septennial cycle. The reviews are governed by three key UQ Senate approved policies each under the auspices of different governing bodies (**Table 1**). Policy 1.40.2 is reproduced in the **Appendix**.

Table 1: Reporting structure and policies for reviews at UQ

Reviews of organisational units	Governing body for reviews	UQ Policy for reviews	Web address for policy
Schools	Academic Board	1.40.2 Review of Schools and Academic Disciplines	http://www.uq.edu.au/hupp/index.html?page=24982&pid=24963
University research institutes, centres and units	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research)	1.30.6 Policy and Procedures on the Establishment, Approval, Administration and Review of Institutes and Centres	http://www.uq.edu.au/hupp/index.html?page=24979&pid=24963
Academic & administrative service units	University Secretary & Registrar	1.40.3 Review of Academic and Administrative Service Units	http://www.uq.edu.au/hupp/index.html?page=24983&pid=24963

Since the inception of the review system at UQ, the process has been responsive to the national bodies governing higher education quality assurance in Australia, and in most instances UQ has been a step ahead of national policies. The framework around reviews at UQ is flexible, adapting as the institution evolves. Over the past two decades, the University has grown in size and the organisation has become increasingly complex, particularly with the introduction of research centres and institutes. The student population has also increased dramatically, resulting in greater demands on the academic units. In the global climate of greater competition amongst tertiary institutions for quality students and staff, the roles of reviews in improving the various organisational units within UQ have become paramount. To better understand the review process, the following section will elaborate further on the process of school reviews at UQ before providing two case studies.

The Review Process for Academic Schools

School reviews at UQ require a process of self-assessment, benchmarking, reflection, strategic and operational planning and external peer review, occurring on a seven-year cycle. A generic set of terms of reference is provided to the academic school. In consultation with the Academic Standing Committee, the school can modify these to suit the needs within their unit. Additionally, an external review committee is formed with the members being either external to UQ, including the chair, or internal to the University but external to the School itself. The schedule of upcoming reviews are released in a timely manner so that Schools have adequate time to conduct their self-reviews and prepare the necessary documentation for the external review committee.

Early each year, a training workshop is held to assist the heads of those schools to be reviewed in the following calendar year. The workshop covers the benefits of reviews and possible self-review strategies. At this workshop, one session is dedicated to having a head of school from a recently reviewed school speak on her or his experiences, elaborating on what worked and did not work for them in their preparation and self-review stages. Issues relating to the timing of, and time needed for, self-review activities along with resourcing needs are frequently discussed in this workshop. In this way, instances of best practice are shared with other units about to embark on their own reviews.

The President of Academic Board or an Academic Board Standing Committee member is assigned to the external review committee to assist in the review. Following the workshop for heads of schools, this senior academic will visit each school, speak individually to the head of school, and then address a whole school meeting regarding the objectives and processes of the review. An important part of this address is to illustrate to the school community the value of the review process, and the importance for them to genuinely engage with the process. Additionally, expectations for self-reviews and the activities to be engaged in as part of the self-review are articulated. The intention is to provide a framework to guide the process, whilst allowing freedom for the schools to drive their own self-review.

Given this freedom within a broad framework, the schools must determine their own mechanisms for self-review with most relying on a combination of strategies. Typically, the head of school will take charge of the process, selecting a core team to plan and implement the self-review. In many instances, this core team will consist of both senior and more junior members of the school, as well as staff with different functions (for example, research-only, teaching and research staff, and administrative staff). Where schools are multi-campus, it is important to involve personnel and students from across the campuses in the self-review activities.

Typically, a whole-school retreat will be held early in the process. In most cases, this retreat will be held at an off-campus venue, signalling the seriousness of the activity for all members of staff. Targeted workshops will then be held with particular groups of stakeholders around performance and planning of: (1) learning and teaching; (2) research (3) innovation and commercialisation; and (4) community engagement. Because international student fee income is becoming increasingly important to Australian universities, organisational units are also asked to explore this in depth as part of the review process. Focus groups of employers and students will be held, along with surveys to elicit information on specific issues. These strategies align with observations from King (1998) that it is usual for a combination of strategies to be used in the self-review process.

As Meade and Woodhouse (2000) observed from experience in reviewing the effectiveness of the New Zealand Universities Academic Audit Unit, the more thorough the school's self-review activities, the more successful the overall review or audit. Using self-review as a transformative process ensured greater returns. Those schools which embraced the self-review process, and saw this stage as a means of advancing the mission and success of the school, gained much more and received more advantageous review recommendations. Meanwhile, those schools that regarded self-review as another compliance check were more likely to have reviews which found problems and recommended major, and often, unwanted changes. The willingness to seek improved approaches, determine the efficacy of something previously untried, test hypotheses, and resist complacency is a sign of institutional vigour (Middle States Commission on Higher Education, 2002:4)

The self-review culminates with the submission of a review document, which along with other submissions from interested internal and external parties, form the written preparatory material for the external review committee. The committee visits the university to conduct its review, and meets with senior officers of the University and the faculty, staff and students of the school, and key external stakeholders. Constituent student groups are invited to participate in the interviews, including undergraduate students, postgraduate coursework students, higher degree research students and international students. A review report is then planned, the thematic points of which are first discussed with the President of the Academic Board, the Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor and the executive dean of the faculty, prior to delivering verbal feedback to the school on the final afternoon of the review week. It is usual practice for a first draft of the report to be written before the external review committee disbands and leaves the University.

A comprehensive written report is then prepared within the next month under the stewardship of the external review committee chairperson, with feedback from all other members of the committee. This final report is delivered to the President of the Academic Board. This report is then discussed with the senior executive of the University, and the school is asked to consider and respond to the review report. The school's response, in combination with the review report, is then considered by a combined meeting of the Standing Committee[3] and the Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor, and the planned action conveyed to the Academic Board, and to the University Senate. Where changes have impact upon students, such as in the case of discontinuing a particular specialty post-graduate degree, plans for the accommodation of currently enrolled students are developed. Schools may be required to develop a six-month implementation plan that addresses how they will meet all, or some of the recommendations. This is especially likely to be the case where recommendations of some complexity are suggested. Then, at 18 months, schools are required to submit an implementation report on the outcomes of the recommendations made in the review report. In some cases, prior to reporting through Academic Board to the University Senate, some schools have been required to attend to some recommendations or make further changes prior to acceptance of their implementation report.

Review of the School of Economics at The University of Queensland

The UQ School of Economics has recently become the largest and most comprehensive teaching and research unit of its kind in Australia. It has grown significantly since its previous review in 2001 and benefited greatly from the recommendations made to the University by the review committee at that time. Over the past decade, a large number of economics schools/departments in Australia have either been closed or absorbed into business schools. This has usually occurred because of declines in numbers of students choosing to undertake programs specifically in economics.

The discipline of economics is not closely linked to a professional association but, instead, produces graduates with strong analytical and statistical skills that are applicable in a range of organisational contexts, both in the public and private sectors. The absence of a close link with a professional association poses challenges which can only be overcome by first class quality assurance in programs, carefully targeted marketing, close connections with secondary schools and strong external relations with potential employers and alumni. The necessary reliance upon significant enrolments of international fee paying students, given the particular Australian system of university funding, poses a special set of challenges with regard to admission standards, student advice, student welfare and the maintenance of academic standards.

Given these challenges, the seven yearly review process at UQ has been particularly valuable for the School over the years. Not only have external review committees made important recommendations but the ratification of School goals by these committees has led to support from the University for new initiatives that would have been less likely without review committee support. There is a growing tendency for academic schools to be ranked and assessed in terms of the quantity and quality of research outputs and this can have costs in terms of teaching and program quality in research intensive universities. The review process is a welcome counterbalance to this tendency because it provides external assessment of all

[3] Standing Committee has a student member who is particularly attuned to student issues which may arise from recommendations of the review report.

aspects of a school's activities. Review committees rarely lose sight of the fundamental importance of teaching in the mission of a university.

In the School of Economics, the production of a review submission (i.e. a report developed from the detailed self-review process undertaken in the School) is very much a team effort, led by the Head of School. Two priorities dominate in the construction of a submission: first, everything must be as evidenced-based as possible and, second, an explicit set of goals and targets over the coming years must be developed and clearly identified. The process is quite simple: members of the School Executive are allocated particular areas of the School's activities. These are generally chairs of School committees who already have in-depth knowledge of particular areas. They begin developing databases and associated commentary about nine months before the review. After about three months their drafts are submitted to the Head of School. At that point, a decision is made whether to have particular task forces to discuss identified problem areas in more detail. If required, this can involve all members of the School. These days, much more of this feedback and discussion is undertaken by email which has the advantage that comments are written down and are not just expressed verbally in a meeting. A staff retreat is only organised when there is a large problem to be discussed. Meetings with identified stakeholders are arranged and other schools/departments in Australia and overseas are contacted to provide information for benchmarking purposes.

Six months before the review, the School Executive Committee meets again to discuss how the draft commentaries on data and other information can be translated into submission chapters and what goals and targets should be identified given the School's mission statement and the terms of reference of the review. The next three months involve an iterative process with email interactions and meetings leading to the creation of draft chapters. This involves a wide range of staff in the school with considerable interactions with the Head.

The emphasis is on flexibility and informality in this process with heavy reliance upon administrative staff, particularly the School Manager, in ensuring that what is being produced is consistent and properly organised. All draft chapters are available on the school network on a shared drive. Members can access the draft chapters and suggest modifications.

Three months before the review, a draft of the whole submission is put together, including benchmarking comparisons which most staff will not have seen up to that point. Staff are all requested to look at the submission draft in its entirety and to provide feedback and comments on the draft as a whole, as well as detailed comments in parts of the draft that they may not have previously looked at very carefully. Where necessary, meetings are organised to clarify issues, correct data, alter interpretations and add missing material. At that time, the appendices to the submission are brought together by administrative staff and accurately linked in. After an intensive two-week period, a final draft of the submission is produced and sent off for desktop publishing.

Although the production of a comprehensive submission is a great deal of work for both academic and administrative staff, it provides a valuable opportunity for self-evaluation and the formulation of new strategies. The critique and further development of strategies by an external review committee is essential and a key factor in getting strategies understood and accepted elsewhere in the University. Engagement in the process brings home its importance and it becomes clear that academic units that run into trouble do so when there is no proper review process in place. Academics see themselves as, first and foremost, teachers and researchers; they are not, by training and instinct, managers and business strategists. However, if strategic thinking is made a priority, through the existence of a formal review process, academics can be highly effective in formulating strategies over the medium term, for example, a decade. As suggested earlier, this is particularly important in disciplines that are not kept constantly on their toes by professional associations. There is little doubt that the comprehensive, externally assessed, review process at UQ has given the School of Economics advantages over its competitors in other universities which do not review academic units in such an effective manner.

Review of the Bachelor of Science Degree at the University of Queensland

In 2005, the UQ Academic Board expressed a wish for the Bachelor of Science degree (BSc) to undergo a major review. This reflected its new policy of reviewing the large, generalist degree programs at UQ on a seven-year rolling cycle. While most degree programs are administered within a single school, the large generalist degrees at UQ, the Bachelor of Arts and the BSc, involve several schools across differing faculties. The process of review for these major degrees is similar to that of the school review although it is more complex in nature given the various organisational units involved.

This whole of program review approach provided a timely opportunity for the three faculties that teach into the degree to focus in a holistic manner on all aspects relating to the BSc, ranging from its contribution towards achieving the broad academic vision of the University to specific details of the structure, content, pedagogy, academic advising and the student experience. The review also presented an opportunity to consider recommendations arising out of the rolling seven yearly Academic Board reviews of the schools within the University that teach into the BSc. Over the years, many of these reviews have made important recommendations about discipline specific areas and this exercise was seen as an important step of integrating such recommendations in a systematic way into the degree. Additionally, the review of the BSc was timely considering the rapid advances occurring in the sciences, particularly at the interdisciplinary boundaries. Given that only distinct disciplinary areas of the degree had been reviewed over the last ten years, a whole of program approach for reviewing the BSc was needed.

In carrying out the review there was an acute awareness that in general the BSc had three broad student cohorts, reflecting the different career trajectories of UQ graduates: (1) those students who are present to obtain a general science-based education; (2) those students who are positioning themselves to enter a professional degree (e.g. medicine, pharmacy, physiotherapy, psychology, engineering, law, primary and high school teaching, etc.); and (3) those students who see science as a career path and will proceed to honours, masters and probably a PhD. The first category comprised the bulk of students and therefore, in designing a new science degree for a research intensive university like UQ, special emphasis was given to the enabling sciences such as chemistry, physics, mathematics and biology to underpin a generalist education. To enable students to develop their special interests and to be excited by the recent developments in the sciences, a more streamlined set of majors was developed. The intention here was to provide students with the opportunity of 'doing science' and thereby, seeing science as a worthwhile career choice.

In addition to UQ-specific considerations, the changing state of science education from both the primary/secondary schools and higher education sector was taken into consideration. The leadership team was informed by the many reports outlining the importance of a vibrant science education system in underpinning a knowledge-driven economy. Unfortunately, the same reports also highlighted a 'flight from and fright of science' at all levels of the education system from primary through to university. While a number of these reports documented an Australian crisis, they also emphasised that it is an international phenomenon (Dekkers and De Laeter, 2001; Goodrum and Rennie, 2007a; Goodrum and Rennie, 2007b; Lyons, 2006; Rennie, Goodrum and Hackling, 2001; Tytler, 2007).

The lack of popularity and the quality of science education in schools has also had the flow on effect of causing a demand for remedial teaching at university. Adding to this, the massification of the higher education sector over last two decades in Australia (441,074 students in 1989; 634,094 students in 1996 and 978,000 students in 2006) and the concomitant blow out in student-to-staff ratios at UQ [13:1 in 1989 to 20:1 in 2006], meant that in designing a new degree the same level of thinking that delivered the current degree could not be used in planning for the future. As well, advances in information technology, pedagogies and the disturbing fact that much of the teaching infrastructure had barely changed over the last two decades necessitated a rethink of how a modern science degree should be delivered.

There was also an awareness that both industry and government were seeking students with better developed generic skills (leadership, teamwork, problem-solving, analytical thinking, global consciousness, ethical thinking, quantitative reasoning, information skills, reading, writing and oral communication) along with the requisite content knowledge in a chosen area. The type of content knowledge to be taught further challenged the discussions, as many of the break throughs in science are now happening at the interdisciplinary boundaries. The review process at UQ stimulated critical thinking about these factors and how best to educate students in a holistic manner that crossed the traditional disciplinary boundaries.

Guidelines for the Review Process

The review of an academic program that spanned three faculties and seven multidisciplinary schools was unprecedented at UQ. **Table 2** summarises some of the critical literature that helped formulate a template for conducting the review of the BSc degree.

Table 2: Seminal publications that help guide the review of the Bachelor of Science degree

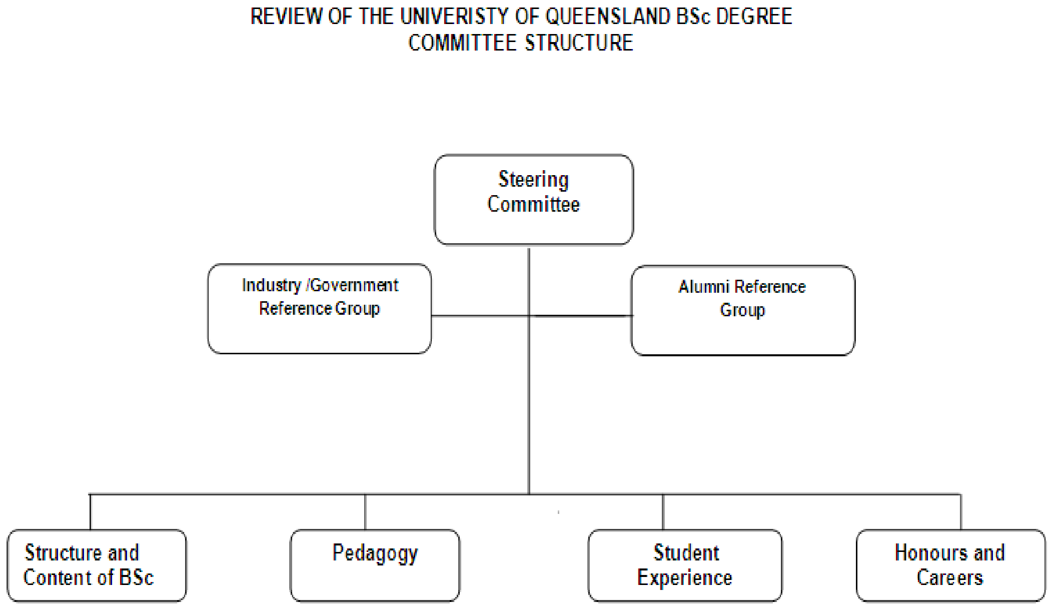
Title	Reference
The Boyer Report Reinventing Undergraduate Education: Blueprint for America's Research Universities	http://naples.cc.sunysb.edu/Pres/boyer.nsf/ Accessed 28 January 2008
Review of the Harvard College curriculum	http://www.fas.harvard.edu/curriculum-review/ Accessed 28 January 2008
Bio2010: Transforming Undergraduate Education for Future Research Biologists	Committee on Undergraduate Biology Education to Prepare Research Scientists for the 21st Century, Board of Life Sciences, Division of Earth and Life Studies (National Research Council of The National Academies, 2003)
Our Underachieving Colleges: A candid look at how much students learn and why they should be learning more	D. Bok, Princeton University Press, 2006.
The Future of Higher Education: Rhetoric, reality, and the risks of the market	F. Newman, L. Couturier and J. Scurry, John Wiley & Sons, Inc, 2004.
Science Teaching and Research – Which way forward for Australian Universities?	http://espace.library.uq.edu.au/collection/UQ:152846 Accessed 28 August 2008

This literature led staff to begin questioning what parts of the current BSc curriculum represented best practice and what parts required renewal. To help stimulate debate, an overarching list of questions was developed. These questions are summarised in **Table 3**. In addition, four Working Parties that reported to the overarching BSc Steering Committee were established: (1) Structure & Content of BSc; (2) Pedagogy; (3) Student Experience and; (4) Honours & Careers (**Figure 1**). To enable these Working Parties to get started, a set of questions specific to each of their tasks, were prepared (http://espace.library.uq.edu.au/collection/UQ:152846).

The questions were simply provided as a starting point and the development of this approach was influenced by the review of the Harvard College curriculum. Books by Bok (2006) and Newman et al. (2004) provided important background information about curriculum review as well as the overall educational role of a modern university. As the self-review progressed, the United States National Research Council publication, *Bio2010: Transforming Undergraduate Education for Future*

Research Biologists (2003), became an important reference, which emphasised the need for an interdisciplinary approach to undergraduate science education. An interesting outcome of the review was that the principles underpinning *Bio2010* were adopted as much by members of the physical sciences as the biologists, which we attribute to the strong emphasises on the need for quantitative reasoning and the enabling sciences in an undergraduate science education.

Figure 1: Committee Structure for the Review of the BSc*



*It was resolved at the Review Retreat on 8–9 June 2006 that the Pedagogy and Student Experience Working Parties should merge, and prepare a joint document for the final submission to Academic Board

Table 3: Higher Order Issues/Questions to Guide the Review of the Bachelor of Science Degree

What is the UQ Bachelor of Science degree seeking to deliver?	What is required to educate a person in the rapidly expanding and changing sciences of the 21st century?	Is the way the BSc is run at UQ consistent with producing graduates that have the following attributes?	Does the UQ BSc satisfy the six characteristics of a learning focused institution?[1]
• Is the mission of the UQ BSC to deliver the best quality undergraduate science experience? • Are we committed to pedagogical excellence within a rich research environment? • Do we recognise the important role of science education in underpinning a knowledge economy (Backing Australia's Ability[2] and the Smart State[3] initiatives) and do our courses reflect this goal?	• How do we enable a student to become broadly educated and at the same time gain in-depth knowledge in a particular field? • How do we capture advances at the interdisciplinary boundaries within a science curriculum? • Do we know the brand of our Bachelor of Science degree? • Do we know the market position of the UQ BSc within the state, nationally and internationally (no boundaries)?	• Are part of and contributors to, the knowledge society? • Have the skills and capacity to learn and grow intellectually throughout their lifetime?	• Clearly defined outcomes for student learning • Student participation in a diverse array of learning experiences • Systematic assessment and documentation of student learning • Emphasis on student learning in the recruitment, orientation, deployment, evaluation, and award of faculty and administrators • Institutional and individual reflection about learning outcomes leading to action aimed at improvement • Focus on learning consistently reflected in key institutional documents, policies, collegial effort, and leadership behaviour

1. Newman, F., Couturier, L. & Scurry, J. (2004). *The Future of Higher Education: Rhetoric, reality and the risks of the market place.* San Francisco: John Wiley & Sons.
2. Backing Australia's Ability– Building Our Future Through Science and Innovation, http://backingaus.innovation.gov.au/ (2004).
3. Smart State Strategy: Queensland's smart future 2008 – 2012, www.smartstate.net/strategy/strategy08_12/

Involvement of Stakeholders

An essential requirement for realising the overarching goals of the University and those of the BSc review was ensuring active involvement from all stakeholder groups, including students, alumni, academics, research institutes, industry, primary and secondary schooling systems, and government. The process of curriculum renewal was seen as a form of change management and a comprehensive consultation process was put in place.

A detailed account of the different activities that were undertaken during the self-review phase to prepare the submission to the external review committee of the BSc are included in the introduction section of the BSc review submission, which can be viewed at http://espace.library.uq.edu.au/collection/UQ:152846[4]. The preparation for the review started on 18 November 2005 and culminated in the visit of the external review committee to the University from 20–23 November 2006. To start the formal discussions, each school was asked to submit a position paper on the future of science education at UQ (these papers are available at: http://espace.library.uq.edu.au/collection/UQ:152846[5]). These were used to inform the discussions of the four Working Parties and over the period from February to September 2006, the Working Parties provided reports on their respective areas to the BSc Steering Committee.

The Working Parties also provided the position papers that drove the BSc Curriculum Retreat held at an off-campus venue on 8–9 June 2006. This retreat was facilitated by Dr Norman Swan of Radio National and involved 83 academics and seven student representatives. Following this, a decision was made to combine the Pedagogy and Student Experience Working Parties. This combined Working Party, along with the Honours and Careers Working Party, were subsequently asked to prepare their submissions for a BSc Review Symposium held on campus from 30–31 August 2006. However, it was clear from the Retreat that the Structure and Content Committee had much unfinished business, and they were asked to continue their discussions. The BSc Review Symposium also was facilitated by Dr Swan and was open to all academics and general staff within the three faculties. Representatives of the other faculties at UQ were also invited. Students were again invited to attend and contribute to this event.

To gain student input into teaching and learning programs, and to enable identification of trends in student satisfaction, it is University policy that programs are subjected to formal evaluation using: (1) course experience questionnaires; (2) UQ student experience surveys; and (3) course evaluation questionnaires. These sources of information were accessed to inform the review and were capable of providing trend data over an approximate five-year timeframe. Focus groups were also held and a comprehensive survey developed specifically for the self-review was administered electronically to all BSc students and answered by over 900 participants.

[4] Accessed 28 October 2008
[5] Accessed 28 October 2008

Summary

In developing the new BSc, the leadership team has re-emphasised the importance of the core disciplines to ensure students are well-educated in the fundamental aspects of biology, chemistry, physics and mathematics. The new degree follows the spirit of 'Bio2010' in being much more quantitative. An attempt was also made to integrate those elements of the above enabling sciences to foster in students the ability to actively engage and understand interdisciplinary areas of science (e.g., genomics, biodiversity, climate change, regenerative medicine, earth systems, systems biology, information systems, neuroscience, materials [chemical and physical] sciences, infectious diseases, structural biology, drug design and computational science). There was also a significant reduction in the number of majors from 40 to 16, and an overall course number reduction of approximately 30%. Further, discipline specific streaming commences much later than at present, in the second semester of second year.

Over all, the leadership team worked hard to promote a culture that values educational research to guide pedagogical reform in all aspects of its activities. A Science Teachers Centre is being planned to further nurture teaching excellence and to ensure all science programs are evidence-based. Special attention has been given to the 'science of learning' as through such an approach, the transfer of knowledge and understanding between disciplines can be effectively facilitated, and the student experience significantly enhanced.

Key Features for Successful Reviews

While the scope and nature of the two self-reviews detailed here clearly varied, a number of important similarities can be distilled that were pivotal for their success.

Leadership

In both cases, the heads of the organisational units recognized the value of undergoing a comprehensive self-review process. They provided the vision and scope, implemented a structure that allowed for staff at all levels in their units to become actively involved, and then they facilitated the process. As the reviews progressed, they allowed others to step into leadership roles and drive various facets of the process. This leadership approach allowed others to buy-in and own the process, which requires an experienced leader who understands the delicate balance between 'leading from the front' versus 'leading from the back'.

Planning and Preparation

A feature of the review process at UQ is scheduling reviews well in advance so that units can have adequate time to prepare. In both cases, the organisational units took advantage of the time and began the self-review process early. This allowed for appropriate resources to be allocated with structures established that would facilitate a comprehensive evaluation process. Additionally, existing data could be complied and analysed with time available to gather further data where needed.

Utilising the time allotted allowed mechanisms to be set up early in the process to ensure collective ownership and stakeholder engagement, affording staff the opportunity to constructively contribute in their areas of interest and expertise. In both cases, all available time was maximised to ensure the most was achieved out of the review process.

Intention

In both cases, the intent of the review to improve the organisational unit was made clear. The review process was viewed as an opportunity in these two cases, when they could easily have been interpreted as a burden of compliance. Evidence to inform the self-review process was featured prominently in both cases, demonstrating an underlying culture that seeks objectivity and values truth, which can be confronting during an evaluation process. While it was implicit in both cases, the intention of the reviews was focussed as much on identifying strengths to build on, as well identifying weakness to be addressed. Finally, both cases looked beyond the scope of their own institutions, striving for national and international comparisons. How can an organisation know how well it is performing unless it is open to interrogation, reflection, and benchmarking against other institutions?

Conclusion

In this chapter, we have briefly described the evolution of the review system at UQ, explored the framework for the review process at UQ, and presented two case studies of self-review at UQ. The examples of the review of the School of Economics and the 2006 review of the Bachelor of Science degree have been used to identify the key features for successful self-reviews. While the cases differed in scope and complexity, both highlighted the role of leadership, the need for timely planning and preparation, and the importance of clearly articulating the intent of the self-review as a vehicle for improvement.

Self-reviews, as part of an institution’s overall quality management system, have the potential to deliver enormous gains to the units under review. Therefore, the planning and management of the self-review process is of the utmost importance. The level of sophistication of this planning will vary, according to the size and complexity of the unit under review and its operations. Yet, the overall goals remain the same. A good self-review can shape the tenor of the external review, and can deliver exponential outcomes for the unit being reviewed.

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APPENDIX

UNIVERSITY OF QUEENSLAND[6]

POLICY 1.40.2

REVIEW OF SCHOOLS AND ACADEMIC DISCIPLINES

Policy Number: 1.40.2
Contact Officer: Senior Manager, Academic Administration
Date Approved by Senate: 24/7/2008
Date last Amended: 28/07/2005
Date for Next Review: 24/07/2011
Related policies: 1.30.6

1. Overview

Academic Board, through its Standing Committee conducts reviews of schools, university centres and institutes on a septennial basis. This policy statement concerns reviews of schools and is also applicable to cross-school academic disciplines. For policy on the review of university centres and institutes, see HUPP 1.30.6 *Policies and Procedures on the Establishment, Approval, Administration and Review of Institutes and Centres*.

This statement includes the purpose of reviews together with a summary of procedures used to conduct reviews.

Guidelines for the conduct of reviews, roles of the members of review committees and a summary of the review process are found in the appendices.

2. Policy

2.1 Purpose

The purpose of reviews is to improve the performance of a unit, with a view to attaining best practice by international standards, and to focus on strategic planning matters that may impact on the unit.

The review process involves a self-analysis, benchmarking and an external assessment of the School's academic, strategic and operational plans incorporating teaching and learning, curriculum development, research and research training, service and external relations, equity issues, and internationalisation.

The process is undertaken in the context of the faculty, and the University as a whole, and considers relationships of course offerings and research programs within and between

[6] The University of Queensland has approved the reproduction of this Policy for this publication. The Policy is available on the UQ website in the Handbook of University Policies & Procedures (HUPP) at: www.uq.edu.au/hupp/. The Policy reprinted here was accessed on 8 December 2008. Its contents were correct at the time of publication but may change subsequently.

schools and, where relevant, with centres and institutes. The process also involves a consideration of the most appropriate utilisation of the school's organisational structure and resources to enhance its performance and to fulfil its academic goals and objectives.

The review committee's task is to provide an objective view of the school's perceptions and plans developed through the self-assessment process, and either confirm or recommend changes to those plans. The majority of school reviews are expected to result in incremental changes in schools. However, it is recognised that significant change might result from some reviews.

2.2 Principles

The following principles underpin school reviews–

- The core focus is academic performance and planning.
- External assessment is a valuable and integral part of the process.
- The review process is transparent and clearly documented.
- Reviews are normally conducted every seven years.

2.3 General terms of reference

Reviews address general terms of reference, as set out below, that are read in the context of the University's mission, goals and objectives. Additional specific terms of reference may be suggested. Terms of reference are approved by Academic Board Standing Committee on advice from the Head of School, Executive Dean and the Vice-Chancellor's Executive.

The terms of reference provide the opportunity for analysis of the school's performance (and that of its centres) since the previous review and its plans to meet future performance targets, using national and international benchmarking.

The general terms of reference include the following–

1. to review the quality, scope, focus, direction and balance of the school's curricula and teaching at undergraduate and postgraduate levels in the light of enrolment trends, success rates, student and graduate satisfaction and the perception of key external stakeholders, the availability of alternative programs elsewhere in Queensland and Australia, and future developments in the discipline/s; within the context of current University policies and practices;
2. to review the research performance of the school and its constituent disciplines, including their research activity, research quality and impact, research outcomes, and the quality of research training, in light of future developments in the discipline/s;
3. to review the role played by the school and its constituent disciplines in relation to its relevant industries and in service to the profession and the community;
4. to review the success of the school's internationalisation strategies in relation to undergraduate and postgraduate program development, international student enrolments and collaborative research projects; and the school's support services for international students;
5. to review the performance of the school in providing equity in employment, working, and learning for staff and students; and
6. to review the organisational structure of the school in the context of its functions, current programs and anticipated developments in the constituent disciplines, internal

administration, support structures and staffing arrangements; and the effectiveness of the School's use of resources in relation to accommodation, facilities, allocation of teaching/research/equipment funds, and potential to generate additional external resources.

3. Procedures

3.1 Timetable for reviews

1. Academic Board Standing Committee prepares a tentative schedule for reviews to be held in the next seven years.
2. In consultation with the Executive Deans, Academic Board Standing Committee prepares the review timetable for a particular year no later than the end of first semester in the preceding year to give schools adequate time to plan for the review including preparing the school submission.
3. The review schedule is presented to the Vice-Chancellor's Executive for endorsement. The Head of School and Executive Dean identify a range of dates for the review to be held.
4. Early steps to secure the services of the external members are taken to give the school maximum notice of the exact timing of the review. Invitations to join the review committee are sent out by the President and, once availability is established, the final dates for the reviews are determined.

3.2 Composition of review committees

1. The composition of each review committee is determined by Academic Board Standing Committee in consultation with the senior executive, the relevant Executive Dean, and the Head of School.
2. The composition of a school review committee is:
    - two to three external members (depending on the size of the school) with nationally/internationally recognised discipline expertise and knowledge, whose expertise covers the disciplines in the school;
    - the relevant Executive Dean;
    - a representative of the Academic Board Standing Committee, or equivalent; and
    - a representative of a cognate school.
3. The Academic Board Standing Committee representative and the cognate school member on the review committee do not normally belong to the same faculty as the school under review.
4. The overall composition of a review committee provides as broad a coverage as possible of all the major disciplines offered by the school.
5. Where it is relevant to the core functions of the school, one of the external members has strong industry links.

6. On the recommendation of the President, Academic Board Standing Committee appoints one of the external members to chair the review committee. The President considers–
   - discipline expertise;
   - impartiality;
   - experience in managing organisational units of a comparable size; and
   - experience in the conduct of similar reviews.

The Executive Officer of the faculty to which the school belongs, normally serves as the Secretary to the review committee.

3.3 Preparation for review

1. Schools are given the approved terms of reference together with a set of guidelines regarding the review approximately 12 months in advance of the review.
2. The President presents a workshop for Heads of School and relevant support staff to inform them of the process and to discuss any concerns.
3. The school prepares a submission to the review committee. Schools are encouraged to begin self-assessment exercises 12 months before the expected date of the review.
4. Approximately 9 – 12 months before the review, the Academic Board Standing Committee member appointed to the review committee briefs the school to explain the review process.
5. Before the visit, the Head of School–
   - issues an invitation to all school staff, including general and research staff, to attend the briefing; and
   - briefs the Academic Board Standing Committee member on any recent developments in the school.
6. The President invites interested parties (including all school staff, and undergraduate and postgraduate students) to make a written submission to the review.

3.4 The review report

1. The review committee considers the school submission and other submissions received. The committee interviews University staff, students, and other parties (e.g. industry representatives) as it sees fit.
2. The review committee conducts the review expeditiously so that a complete draft of its report is prepared prior to the departure of external members.
3. Prior to finalisation of the review report, the recommendations will be discussed with the Executive Dean and the Head of School, and the thrust of the major recommendations is presented separately to:
   - the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) and the President of the Academic Board; and
   - a full meeting of the school.

4. Initially, copies of the review report are given to–
    - members of the Vice-Chancellor's Executive;
    - the relevant Executive Dean;
    - the relevant Head of School;
    - members of the school reviewed; and
    - members of Academic Board Standing Committee.
5. Following approval by Senate (see 3.5 below), the review report, together with a composite statement from the Academic Board, is distributed to those people who made written submissions and to other interested parties.

3.5 Approval

1. Academic Board Standing Committee is responsible for considering the recommendations of the review committee's report within the broader context of the University, by–
    - consultation with those affected by the review; and
    - coordination of the adjudication of any particular recommendations.
2. Following consideration of the review committee's report, Academic Board Standing Committee prepares a report to Academic Board which accompanies the review report, setting out Academic Board Standing Committee's comments on the recommendations.
3. The review report, together with a statement from the Academic Board is sent to Senate for approval.

3.6 Implementation

1. The relevant Executive Dean and the Head of School are responsible for implementation of the adopted recommendations.
2. Academic Board Standing Committee is responsible for monitoring the implementation.
3. Academic Board Standing Committee may request a 6-month implementation plan addressing some (or all) recommendations.
4. Schools submit (via the Executive Dean) an 18-month implementation report within 18 months of Senate approval of a review report. This report is submitted via the Academic Board to Senate.

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Robyn is currently Principal Consultant, Quality at RMIT University. In this role she is responsible for managing institutional wide processes and systems to assure and improve processes and outcomes across higher education and vocational education and training operations, including preparation for external audit activities such as those involving the Australian Universities Quality Agency and the Australian Quality Training Framework. In 2006, Robyn worked as Audit Director with the Australian Universities Quality Agency where she took responsibility for two audits and assisted with the design of the cycle 2 audit process. Prior to her appointment to RMIT in 2003, Robyn held senior management positions at Curtin University of Technology, coordinating planning and quality management frameworks and in human resources and industrial relations. Robyn has assisted several universities in their preparation for audit processes and has undertaken international consultancy activities related to quality assurance.

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Professor John Foster is Head of the School of Economics, The University of Queensland (1991-2008). He is a Fellow of the Academy of Social Science in Australia (since 2001), President Elect of the International J.A. Schumpeter Society (since 2008), Member of the Federal Treasury Academic Consultative Panel (2007-8) and Life Member of Clare Hall College, Cambridge (since 1995). He has served on three UQ Review Committees: the former Department Commerce, the School of Sociology and Anthropology and the School of Physical Sciences.

Michael McManus
Professor Mick McManus was Executive Dean of the Faculty of Biological & Chemical Sciences at the University of Queensland (UQ) from 1998-2008 and prior to this he was Head of the Department of Physiology & Pharmacology from 1993 to 1997. From 2005-2008 Mick led the review of the Bachelor of Science degree at UQ and is currently working with Education Queensland on the future of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) education in Queensland. From 17 January 2009, he will assume the role of Acting Deputy Vice-Chancellor International at the University of Queensland.

Kelly Matthews
Kelly Matthews is the Student Experience Manager for the Faculty of Biological and Chemical Sciences at the University of Queensland (UQ). She is involved in several UQ funded teaching and learning projects including (1) Multidisciplinary Science in the new BSc, (2) Enhancing Student Learning Experiences in Large, First Year Chemistry Courses, and (3) Developing a program for the professional development of tutors within the research-focussed Bachelor of Science Degree Program. Kelly is currently pursuing a PhD from The University of Queensland, researching the quantitative skills of science students in the new BSc program.

Louise Mattick

Dr Louise Mattick received her BSc with Honours from Monash University and her PhD in the field of molecular microbiology from the University of Melbourne. She then worked in human molecular genetics at the University of Cambridge, Department of Genetics, and in human genetic epidemiology at the Queensland Institute of Medical Research. Since 2001 she has held an academic position at the University of Queensland, undertaking special projects for the Faculty of Biological and Chemical Sciences on the development of special resources for high school students and in the re-structuring of the science degree, majors and curriculum. In particular, Louise's experience in the area of Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics (STEM) has involved managing two international meetings Both of these conferences informed the subsequent Review of the Bachelor of Science degree at UQ and Louise has been involved in all aspects of curriculum development and implementation as part of her appointment as Manager, BSc Review in 2006.

Jenny Strong

Professor Jenny Strong is the Professor of Occupational Therapy in the School of Health & Rehabilitation Sciences at The University of Queensland. She is the former President of the Academic Board at The University of Queensland (2002-2005), the former Deputy President of Academic Board (2001-2002), and Head of the Department of Occupational Therapy (1997-2000). She was appointed Professor of Occupational Therapy at UQ in 1997. In her previous role as President of Academic Board, Prof Strong chaired 7 Academic Board Committees, was a member of 15 other University Committees, and a member of The University of Queensland Senate. She was responsible for the set-up, and conduct of the external review process of Schools, University Centres and Institutes at UQ, and the policy which guides such reviews and implementation of recommendations.