
Academic Reviews and Monitoring Policy

1. Purpose

This policy defines the principles and intentions that underpin the University's academic reviews and monitoring processes. This policy does not limit the ability of a Pro Vice-Chancellor to undertake a review of an academic unit for purposes not covered here.

2. Application of Policy

This policy applies to all credit bearing courses, qualifications and programmes of the University, and to all staff members involved in their delivery. This includes programmes delivered wholly or partly overseas.

Policy Context

3. Principles

3.1 Reviews and monitoring activity will:

- (a) take into account the University's strategic objectives
- (b) take into account the University's commitments to the Treaty of Waitangi.
- (c) incorporate a reflective self-review
- (d) use evidence from a range of sources, including the student voice.
- (e) take into account recent or upcoming monitoring activities with overlapping relevance, including accreditation processes
- (f) take into account any changes or trends in the academic and professional sector(s)
- (g) identify both good practice and areas for improvement.
- (h) be conducted in a way that is appropriate to the size of the programme.

4. Objectives

The objective of academic reviews and monitoring activities is to provide assurance of the quality of the University's academic offerings, including programmes, qualifications and courses. They provide a basis for on-going quality improvement to assist in achieving excellence in learning, teaching and research at the University.

5. Reviews

5.1 Academic Programme Review (APR)

All programmes in the University will be regularly reviewed through an APR process that examines the content and structure of the curriculum including the regulations, as well as the learning opportunities provided, and the connection with the research in the discipline.

All APRs will be guided by terms of reference, included as appendix 1. The Terms of reference may be amended with agreement by the Vice-Provost Academic and the relevant PVC/Dean. The procedures for APRs are included as appendix 2.

Note: Programme reviews are usually conducted of cognate disciplines/subject areas that contribute to one or more qualifications

5.2 Graduating Year Review

The Committee on University Academic Programmes (CUAP) require all new qualifications and majors to undergo a review to assure the Committee that “programmes are meeting their original objectives and an acceptable standard of delivery” (CUAP Handbook page 50).

Note: GYRs are required when proposals introduce new qualifications and new parts of qualifications that make up at least 40% of it.

5.3 Special Purpose Reviews

A special purpose review of an academic programme may be requested by a member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT). The SLT member is responsible for working with the Vice-Provost Academic to establish appropriate terms of reference and ensure resources are available for the review.

6. **Monitoring**

6.1 Initial Monitoring Report (IMR)

New qualifications/majors will undergo an Initial Monitoring Report after the first full year of delivery. IMRs provide a snapshot-in-time of the enrolments and achievement of students as well as identifying issues and successes of the programme’s first year of operation.

6.2 Progress Reports

Following an APR, the programme that was reviewed must develop a response that describes what actions are to be taken as a result. This report will be provided to the Academic Board and regularly updated.

Related Documents

Education Act 1989

CUAP Handbook

Assessment Handbook

Student feedback on courses and tutors policy

Terms of Reference for Academic Programme Reviews

Procedures for Academic Programme Reviews

Guidelines for Academic Programme Reviews

Procedures for Graduating Year Reviews

Guidelines for Graduating Year Reviews

Procedures for Initial Monitoring Reports

Guidelines for Initial Monitoring Reports

Master's Thesis policy

Doctoral Policy: for PhD and other Doctorates with Theses

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Appendix 1: Terms of Reference for Academic Programme Reviews

The following questions and evaluation indicators provide the framework for what the Academic Programme Review process at the University seeks to understand, evaluate and improve in each programme. Programmes and Panels should use the terms of reference as the basis of their reflection.

Consideration of these questions and indicators should lead the Programme and Panel to develop a series of commendations of good practice, and identify areas for improvement. Areas for improvement may be identified as suggestions, which are areas the programme could improve, or recommendations, which are areas that the Programme must address.

The terms of reference are grouped into seven Domains, under each domain are a set of evaluation indicators. These indicators are designed to help programmes and panels answer the key question in each domain (i.e. these are not measures).

Domain 1 – Design

How effective is the design of the programme?

Evaluation Indicators:

1. All courses contribute to students achieving the graduate outcomes.
2. The programme's offerings cover topics that are contemporary and provide knowledge and skills that are necessary and valued for professional and/or academic careers.
3. Teaching is informed by staff research, particularly at higher levels of study.
4. The programme has clear mapping of content and skills development pathways that is communicated and understood by students and staff.
5. The programme ensures that there are opportunities for all students, from a range of backgrounds and situations, to succeed in the programme (and thus, meets the goals of universal design).
6. The programme incorporates and nurtures interdisciplinary links where appropriate.
7. The programme's offerings take account of the current trends in the discipline, both academic and professional.
8. The programme places emphasis on the role and methods of research in creating knowledge.

Domain 2 – Delivery and Assessment

How does the programme ensure that students are able to achieve the goals of the programme?

Evaluation Indicators:

1. There is an appropriate range of assessment tasks that effectively measure student's achievement of the learning outcomes in the programme.
2. Students receive timely formative and summative feedback throughout their courses.
3. The delivery of the programme provides students with opportunities to engage in activities that support their learning and development (e.g. tutorials, labs, use of digital technology, work integrated learning)
4. The learning objectives and learning opportunities in courses are clearly communicated to students.
5. Postgraduate supervision is of good quality and well balanced between support and fostering independence.
6. Postgraduate students are trained or supported to navigate the administrative aspects of the University.
7. Students are encouraged to progress to higher levels of study in the programme.

Programme Review Terms of Reference

8. The degree to which staff are engaged with scholarship on learning and teaching practice in their discipline.
9. Adequate learning resources are provided for students (e.g. teaching facilities, Library and IT resources)

Domain 3 – Evaluation and Quality

How does the programme use information and feedback in order to improve?

Evaluation Indicators:

1. Assessments are moderated appropriately, including external moderation for postgraduate programmes (and take account of any professional body requirements).
2. The programme regularly reviews student data and uses it to identify and respond to trends in enrolment and retention.
3. The programme understands how well it is performing and has plans or strategies for further development.

Domain 4 – Programme’s Community

How well does the programme foster a sense of community for its students (undergraduate and postgraduate), and staff, that reaches across the programme?

Evaluation Indicators:

1. Undergraduate students are included in appropriate activities to enable them to work in a collaborative learning environment.
2. Postgraduate students have events to discuss their research and are invited to programme-level events such as seminars and visiting lecturers.
3. International students are supported to be an integral part of the student community.
4. Staff working in similar sub-disciplines have collegial relationships and collaborate on teaching and/or research.
5. The Programme as a whole has appropriate opportunities for collaboration on learning & teaching and research within and external to the programme.

Domain 5 – Māori

How well does the programme demonstrate commitment to the Treaty of Waitangi by including Māori focus in its design, delivery, assessment and evaluation?

Evaluation Indicators:

1. The programme includes Māori content/perspectives, as appropriate to the discipline, in its offerings and assessment.
2. Staff in the programme are culturally capable and:
 - a. provide a learning environment in the programme that is culturally inclusive to Māori students.

Programme Review Terms of Reference

- b. engage in Māori-related teaching and research.
3. The programme monitors enrolment and retention of Māori students, and takes immediate action to resolve issues.
4. The programme is involved in the development of reciprocal relationships, opportunities and partnerships with Māori communities

Domain 6 - Pasifika

How effectively does the programme provide opportunities for Pasifika students to engage in their learning and progress to further study?

Evaluation Indicators:

1. Staff in the Programme are culturally able to provide a learning, teaching and research environment which is inclusive to Pasifika students.
2. The programme includes Pasifika content and/or perspectives in its offerings, assessment and other applicable areas.
3. The programme monitors and utilises Pasifika student data on:
 - a. enrolment, to improve recruitment into the programme
 - b. retention and achievement, to ensure that students receive timely and effective support in their studies .
4. The programme collaborates with Pasifika students, staff, families and communities to facilitate input to the discipline and provide reciprocal opportunities.

Domain 7 – Stakeholder Engagement

How effectively is the Programme linked to and responsive to its relevant academic, social and professional communities?

Evaluation Indicators:

1. Staff in the programme have links to staff at other universities who teach/research in the discipline and are engaged in a wider academic community (nationally and internationally).
2. The programme clearly identifies who its external stakeholders are.
3. The programme is engaged with its external stakeholders to enable discussion of potential changes and trends in the workforce and in the discipline(s).
4. The programme has evidence that it is acceptable to its external stakeholders.
5. The programme identifies career opportunities/pathways for graduates and informs students of these.

The PVC/Dean and Vice-Provost Academic may agree to amend the Term(s) of Reference as required.

Appendix 2: Procedures for Academic Programme Reviews

1. Purpose

These procedures outline how the University conducts its monitoring and review of academic programmes.

2. Application of Procedures

These procedures apply to staff members, students and visiting panel members.

Academic Programme Review Processes

3. Planning Reviews

3.1 An annual schedule for Academic Programme Reviews (APRs) is established by the Director of the Academic Office in discussion with PVCs and notified to the Academic Board in the year prior. The schedule for reviews ensures that all programmes are part of an APR every seven years.

3.2 The Academic Office co-ordinates the timing of reviews and their organisation (e.g. room bookings, meetings, panel travel and accommodation) in consultation with Faculties/Schools/programmes.

3.3 A special purpose programme review request may be made by an SLT member to the Academic Office. The terms of reference for a special purpose review of a programme will be agreed between the Vice Provost (Academic) (VPA) and the relevant SLT member.

4. Developing the self-review

4.1 The PVC/Dean or Head of School will appoint a self-review team to lead the self-review process. This group must include the Programme Director (or equivalent) and at least one senior academic staff member who teaches on the programme.

4.2 The self-review team is responsible for engaging with all staff associated with the delivery and management of the programme(s), including those in other schools or faculties where appropriate.

4.3 Advice for the development of the self-review can be found in the guidelines. The Centre for Academic Development is available to help with this process.

4.4 The self-review document must be checked for accuracy, signed off by the PVC/Dean and be submitted to the Academic Office six-weeks prior to the panel visit.

4.5 The self-review will be sent to the panel. Prior to the panel visit, a copy of the self-review will be sent to senior staff in the university who will meet with the panel (e.g. PVC/Dean, Associate Dean(s), Toihuarewa, AVC-Pasifika).

5. Review panel composition

5.1 The membership of the review panel is approved by the VPA. The standard panel recommendation form is included in the guidelines.

5.2 The Academic Office nominates the convenor who:

- (a) Is a senior academic or recently retired academic from a different faculty; and
 - (b) Has relevant experience in university management; and
 - (c) Ideally has previously served as a member on at least one quality assurance Review Panel at a university.
- 5.3 The Faculty and School are responsible for nominating external members of the review panel with the agreement of the PVC/Dean. Panels should have as a minimum:
- (a) One academic staff member from an overseas university; and
 - (b) One academic staff member from another New Zealand university
- 5.4 In the case of reviews of either large or several cognate programmes, additional panel members may be needed to ensure that all disciplines are represented. This should be discussed with the Director of the Academic Office before establishing the panel.
- 5.5 Where programme(s) have key stakeholders from industry or a profession, it is strongly suggested that there is a panel member from that industry/profession
- 5.6 The following should be considered when nominating external panel members:
- (a) Impartiality/objectivity
 - (b) Expertise in the relevant discipline(s)
 - (c) From a university with a strong reputation in the discipline
 - (d) Expertise in academic leadership
 - (e) The representation of Māori and Pasifika people
 - (f) The gender balance of the panel
- 5.7 None of the panel members can have been involved in the management or teaching of the programme(s) under review within the previous 5 years.
- 5.8 All of the panel members will be asked to complete a conflict of interest form to ensure transparency in the panel appointment process.

6. Administrative support for the Panel

The review panel will be supported by a staff member from the Academic Office.

7. Review Portfolio

- 7.1 The review portfolio is the complete set of documentation about the programme(s) provided to the review panel prior to the panel visit. This includes:
- (a) the reflective self-review conducted by the programme (refer to the guidelines)
 - (b) the University's Strategic Plan
 - (c) prior review documents
 - (d) written submissions from members of the university community and any external stakeholders identified by the programme or PVC/Dean. Submissions will be invited by the Academic Office and remain confidential to the panel.
 - (e) student submissions, which are provided through consultation between the Academic Office and VUWSA. Students may also choose to make confidential written submissions as an individual or as a group.

- (f) Benchmarking information. This can be provided as part of the self-review (7.1.(a)) or as a separate document. Further details around benchmarking can be found in the guidelines

8. Panel visit

- 8.1 Reviews are normally conducted face-to-face at one of the University's campuses, but technology may be used to facilitate the engagement of one or more panel members, staff, students or other stakeholders.
- 8.2 The timetable for the panel visit is developed by the Academic Office in conjunction with the Convenor and the PVC/Dean or Head of School. Panel visits normally take place over three days.
- 8.3 The panel should meet with the following groups:
 - (a) The senior staff of the Faculty e.g. PVC/Dean, Associate Deans
 - (b) Student and alumni representatives
 - (c) The academic staff involved in the programme
 - (d) Representative(s) of Toi huarewa, as decided by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Māori)
 - (e) Pasifika Representative(s), as decided by the Assistant Vice-Chancellor (Pasifika)
 - (f) Representatives of relevant central service units and administrative areas identified as necessary by the Panel
 - (g) Interested senior staff in other faculties (e.g. for interdisciplinary opportunities)
 - (h) (where possible) Relevant external stakeholders

Note: Individuals or groups may request to the Academic Office for an opportunity to make an oral submission to the review. This will be accommodated if it fits within the panel's timetable.

- 8.4 At the end of the panel visit, the panel must provide an oral presentation of their preliminary findings (commendations and recommendations) to the programme. The panel may decide to precede this with a de-brief for the PVC/Dean and/or Head of School.

9. Panel Report

- 9.1 The review report must address each of the Terms of Reference in relation to the evidence presented in the review portfolio and the meetings with the panel.
- 9.2 The person providing administrative support to the panel is responsible for drafting the preliminary report within 2 weeks of the panel visit.
- 9.3 The Convenor is responsible, with the assistance of the Academic Office, for refining the report and ensuring that all panel members agree with the contents. The draft should normally be finalised within 6 weeks of the review visit.
- 9.4 The final draft is then released to the PVC/Dean and Head of School for a check of factual accuracy. If the recommendations relate to other parts of the university (e.g. FGR, CSU's), the Academic Office may also seek their input to ensure accuracy in the report.
- 9.5 If there are any parts of the report that require amendment due to inaccuracies or misunderstandings it may be necessary for a face-to-face meeting to be held between the PVC/Dean, Convenor and the Academic Office support person to resolve.
- 9.6 If significant changes are requested these will be agreed by all panellists.

10. Faculty response to the report

- 10.1 Once released, the finalised review report is submitted to the University Academic Committee, who provide comment and advice to the Faculty and School for the development of their response.
- 10.2 The Dean and Head of School are responsible for developing the Faculty response to the review report. This must systematically address each of the panel's recommendations. See the guidelines for a template.
- 10.3 The Faculty response should be completed within two months of receiving the advice of the Academic Committee. Where the Dean is not also the PVC, the PVC must approve the Faculty response to the report before it is submitted to the Academic Office.
- 10.4 The Faculty Response (alongside the final report) will be submitted by the Academic Office to the Provost for approval prior to forwarding to the Academic Board. The Report and Faculty Response will then be submitted to be received by the Academic Board.
- 10.5 The Dean or delegate is responsible for overseeing the implementation of the actions to be taken as a result of the review.
- 10.6 The Academic Board should receive an update 6-months following Academic Board receipt and annually following that until all actions are completed.

11. Alternative arrangements

- 11.1 Where a course or a Faculty holds professional accreditation where many of the Terms of Reference for academic programme reviews have been covered, then the VPA may agree to alternative arrangements for the review. These may include:
- (a) A review scoped to include only the Terms of Reference that may not have been covered by the accreditation
 - (b) Acceptance that the accreditation replaces the university's requirements for on-going review
 - (c) A panel with a different composition than normal.
- 11.2 A request for alternative arrangements must be made in writing to the Director of the Academic Office, specifying the changes that are being requested and a clear strategic, pedagogical and operational rationale for the change.

12. Annual Review Seminar

- 12.1 Each year, the VPA will host an event to reflect on the process and outcomes of reviews held in the previous year and what lessons can be learned by the University as a result.
- 12.2 Commendations from reviews will be published online (e.g. VicNews and similar).

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Appendix 3: Procedures for Graduating Year Reviews

1. Purpose

These procedures outline how the University conducts its Graduating Year Reviews (GYRs).

2. Application of Procedures

These procedures apply to staff members and students.

Graduating Year Review Process

3. Overview of GYR Process

- 3.1 A GYR report will normally be required within three years after the graduation of the first cohort of students. The Committee on University Academic Programmes (CUAP) ultimately determines the yearly schedule (e.g. a qualification's first cohort graduating in 3001 would have a GYR due by 3004).
- 3.2 The Academic Office advises the relevant Pro-Vice Chancellors/Deans, Heads of School, Associate Deans and Programme Directors which programmes are scheduled to submit a GYR. Where there is a strong reason, a request may be made through the Academic Office to CUAP for a change to the timing of a GYR.
- 3.3 The relevant faculty organises the GYR because it has administrative and academic oversight of its programmes.
- 3.4 The GYR is prepared on a template that is revised periodically by CUAP. The Academic Office provides a version of the template adapted for the University.
- 3.5 GYRs should be informed by the Initial Monitoring report of the programme run after its first calendar year of teaching
- 3.6 The Academic Office submits the GYR to CUAP for review and moderation.

4. Student involvement in the GYR

- 4.1 The Academic Office notifies the VUWSA Student Representation Coordinator of the programmes due for a Graduating Year review early each year, to enable early collection of student feedback. The Programme should work with both VUWSA and the Academic Office to arrange for appropriate inclusion of student views into the GYR document. This usually involves one or more of the following:
 - (a) Student survey results provided to the programme director for inclusion in the self-reflection section, and/or to the evaluation group.
 - (b) The VUWSA Student Representation Coordinator runs a student focus group, and is included as a member of the evaluation group to represent the student views discussed.
 - (c) A current student who has been in the qualification for at least two trimesters or a graduate of the programme, is included as a member of the evaluation group.
 - (d) An alternative arrangement agreed to by VUWSA and the Academic Office.

5. Preparing the self-reflection section

- 5.1 The preparation of the GYR presents an opportunity for discussion and reflection on whether the newly introduced programme(s) have accomplished what they were intended to do. This includes whether the students are adequately developing the graduate attributes and whether changes were or may be needed. They encourage programmes to reflect on their successes, identify areas for improvement, and highlight to an external audience their achievements in offering a successful qualification.
- 5.2 The Programme Director (or equivalent) working in consultation with programme staff completes the self-reflection section using the GYR template and collects any additional material that needs to be presented to the Evaluation Group.
- 5.3 When preparing the self-reflection section, care must be taken that all the instructions in the GYR template are addressed to ensure it meets the CUAP criteria for GYRs.
- 5.4 The Academic Office provides the data for the required tables in collaboration with the Programme, which advises on the data parameters.
- 5.5 On completion of the self-reflection section, the Programme submits it to the Evaluation Group.

6. Evaluation Group review

- 6.1 The Evaluation Group is established by the Pro Vice-Chancellor/Dean in consultation with the Head of School and the Associate Dean(s). CUAP requires that the GYR process must include an evaluation group with at least one panel member from another disciplinary area.
- 6.2 The following membership is recommended for the Evaluation Group:
 - (a) The Associate Dean (or similar) of the relevant Faculty, acting as Convener
 - (b) A senior academic from a different school (ideally from another faculty)
 - (c) A representative of student views, unless other arrangements for including student views in the evaluation group discussion are agreed by VUWSA (see section 4.1).
 - (d) Where applicable, a professional/industry representative
 - (e) Where applicable, an additional staff member from outside the discipline
- 6.3 The Evaluation Group may require assistance from a faculty administrator such as the academic programmes manager/coordinator.
- 6.4 The Evaluation Group considers the self-review material presented by the programme using the evaluative questions (see guidelines). Where required, the Evaluation Group meets relevant academic staff, students, the Head of School and Programme Director(s) to gather further information or evidence.
- 6.5 The Evaluation Group adds its comments to section 3 of the GYR report in the form of boxed text under each section 3 heading. The Convener completes section 2 of the GYR template, which explains the composition and role of the Evaluation Group, including the titles and positions of its members.

7. Faculty review and approval

- 7.1 The GYR report, i.e. the version augmented by the Evaluation Group, is shared and discussed between the Head of School and Programme Director.
- 7.2 The report is then discussed at the relevant Faculty committees and must be approved by the Faculty Board and PVC. Once approved the GYR is provided to the Academic Office, which arranges for it to be reviewed by Academic Committee.

8. University review and approval

- 8.1 The Academic Committee discusses the GYR report at its August meeting. If required, the GYR report is sent back to the Faculty for revision, and is re-submitted at the September meeting.
- 8.2 The Academic Office submits the GYR to SLT. This will normally be for noting, but if significant resourcing issues are identified the Academic Office will highlight the GYR for SLT.
- 8.3 The Academic Office arranges for the GYR to be presented at the October meeting of the Academic Board. After Academic Board approval, the Academic Office submits the GYR to CUAP.

9. External review and approval

- 9.1 CUAP arranges the review and moderation of all universities' GYRs through a peer scrutiny process. Universities are split into pairs and each pair is responsible for scrutinising the GYRs of another pair, which involves providing comments on each individual GYR and comments on the overall GYR process carried out at each university. The Academic Office manages Victoria's scrutinising of other universities' GYRs.
- 9.2 CUAP discusses the GYRs and scrutineers' reports at its next meeting (most commonly in mid-November) where representatives may have to respond to comments about their university's GYRs or their GYR process. The scrutineers' report for Victoria's GYRs is provided to the next Academic Committee for discussion.

10. Timeframe

The timeframe shown below is based on the standard process for GYRs, although CUAP can adjust deadlines and so the exact timeframe may change each year.

January-Feb	Academic Office confirms schedule of GYRs and template with CUAP, and arranges briefing with the relevant Associate Deans from faculties completing a GYR.
March	Decision is made on how to incorporate student input to the review. The Academic Office and the Programme Director collaborate to determine the data required; the data reports are prepared.
March-April	The Programme Director prepares the self-review and the Evaluation Group is formed. The Evaluation group must meet the requirements as set out under section 6
May	Evaluation Group considers self-review (i.e. draft GYR) and adds its comments, seeking further information if appropriate and/or requesting amendments to the draft GYR.
June	Faculty Board approves GYR.
30 June	PVC and Dean approves GYR and any evaluation group recommendations/advice.
July	GYR presented to Academic Committee for initial review.
August	GYR presented to Academic Committee for final review and approval. GYR presented to SLT (for noting, unless significant resource issues are indicated).
August-Sept	GYR submitted to Academic Board for approval.

30 September Academic Office submits GYR to CUAP.

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Appendix 4: Procedures for Initial Monitoring Reports

1. Purpose

These procedures outline how the University runs initial monitoring reports (IMRs) on new programmes.

2. Application of Procedures

These procedures apply to staff members and students.

Initial Monitoring Reports Process

3. Scheduling Initial Monitoring Reports

3.1 Initial Monitoring Reports are run after any new programme (qualifications, majors) has been running (teaching students) for one full calendar year.

3.2 Programmes will be scheduled based on their date of approval by CUAP in the year prior. In cases where the programme has delayed its introduction (i.e. it has not begun teaching in the next available academic year), the IMR will be deferred to after the programme has been running for one full calendar year.

4. Developing the report

4.1 Each year, the Academic Office will notify the relevant PVCs, Deans, Associate Deans, Heads of School and Programme Directors of the relevant programmes that will go through an IMR.

4.2 The Academic Office will compile enrolment and EFTS data on the programme to provide quantitative data for the IMR.

4.3 The Academic Office will meet with the Programme Director (or equivalent) to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the programme, to provide qualitative data for the IMR.

4.4 The Academic Office will combine the quantitative and qualitative data into a draft of the IMR. This draft will be provided to the Programme Director (or equivalent) for comment and discussion before submission to the PVC.

5. Submission of the report

5.1 The IMR will be sent to the relevant PVC for information and comment.

5.2 All of the IMRs will be provided by the Academic Office to SLT for noting, alongside a covering memo that details some overall observations and if any programmes have delayed their teaching (as per section 3.2) and have been deferred.

5.3 IMR's will be provided to programmes when they undergo a GYR process.

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