Program Reviews – An Approach to Stakeholder Engagement

The program review process is aimed at addressing future prospects and enhancement through formative self-evaluation and participatory stakeholder engagement. The concept of an internal and external stakeholder-led process permeates all aspects of the revised review processes. It is embedded in the revised TOR for a program review.

Consultation

A key part of developing the Self-Evaluation Report (SER) is consultation with a broad range of relevant stakeholders.

Stakeholders should be identified by the self-evaluation Internal Team and will include individuals or groups especially those most affected by the program. They may either be internal to the University or an external participant or consumer. Potential stakeholders include:

Internal

- students – prospective, current and graduates (alumni). Current students should include students from each year level inclusive of international and domestic students and where relevant, may also involve student associations and clubs;

- University teaching staff – teaching into the program including graduates as tutors, teaching assistants, demonstrators, researchers, etc;

- Staff with teaching expertise and knowledge of contemporary pedagogy, technologies and analytics; ;

- Discipline representatives – as exemplified by Discipline leaders and those who set threshold standards;

- researchers – in the Discipline and related fields;

- recruitment staff – those recruiting prospective students.

External

- employers – including (but not limited to) those in the related professions and professional accrediting bodies as well as employers and other agencies providing placements for students;

- alumni and community members;

- policy-makers – including all tiers of government;

- teachers in the secondary sector - preparing students for University entry.

Process

Consultation with stakeholders can take many forms and it is up to the Internal Team coordinating the SER to determine how these will occur. It is important to encourage stakeholders to take a lead in reflecting and commenting on the program and participating in the formulation of the SER by addressing the questions and matters raised by the self-evaluation process. There is an extensive range of issues that can be canvassed and may include emerging opportunities, including program viability, program structure, retention, industry ties, graduate outcomes and employment, new teaching practices, etc.

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Consultation methods

With face-to-face consultations there is a variety of methods by which feedback on programs might be obtained and it is suggested that workshops and focus groups might be a useful starting point, although there might also be more formal committees that have a role in eliciting responses including:

- Program Management committees (see: https://www.adelaide.edu.au/policies/669/?dsn=policy.document;field=data;id=7865;m=view)

- Faculty Learning and Teaching committees

- Program accreditation panel visits (see: https://www.adelaide.edu.au/learning/program-approval/accreditation/)

- Faculty/School/Discipline Advisory boards (see: https://www.adelaide.edu.au/policies/645/))

- Program SELT annual student forum (effective from semester 2 2018) (see: https://www.adelaide.edu.au/policies/101/?dsn=policy.document;field=data;id=161;m=view))

In addition, there is a range of Discipline- or School-specific student associations and clubs that are ideally placed to be involved in the self-evaluation process, especially as an initiator of a student as partners or a student-led response.

As a supplement to face-to-face consultations, surveys might also be employed, including the use of one-off formative online surveys (see: https://www.adelaide.edu.au/learning/reviews/surveys/) and there is also a rich source of program/discipline-related data available through the national QILT surveys (see: https://www.adelaide.edu.au/planning/ags/) – especially the Student Experience survey (SES) and Graduate Outcomes surveys (GOS and GOS-L) for the student perspective and the newly introduced Employer Satisfaction survey (ESS) for the employers.

Media and Communications and External Relations respectively are also able to assist in the use of targeted focus groups or in contacting Alumni.

In the case of feedback from the secondary sector, in addition to recruitment staff, there may also be Discipline-specific Teacher associations at the national and local level that might be approached (e.g. SAETA, SASTA).

While internal stakeholders might have a more direct relationship with the program, there are several items proposed in the SER template which require formal advice from external stakeholders, namely:

Theme 4 – Sustainability

- Is the program sufficiently differentiated from other internal and external programs to position itself in the market? (e.g. benchmarking similar programs internally and in South Australia, nationally and internationally). How is it differentiated? Is differentiation significant and do students and external stakeholders understand the differences?

Theme 6 - Program governance and management

- The ways in which the Program Management Committee communicates with its stakeholders (e.g. staff, students, employers, accreditation bodies). [CAPP Schedule D]

Related resources

Stakeholder Engagement – Identifying stakeholders   **Guidance Note 2**

Self Evaluation Reports – Guidelines for the Self-Evaluation Reports (SER) for Academic Program Reviews