



THE UNIVERSITY
of ADELAIDE

Guidelines for the Self-Evaluation Report (SER) for Academic Unit Reviews

July 2022



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1. Introduction

The academic unit review process is aimed at addressing future prospects and enhancement opportunities through formative self-evaluation and participatory stakeholder engagement from internal and external stakeholders.

The review process involves a self-evaluation process which culminates in a self-evaluation report (SER), developed by the academic unit/Faculty, which is submitted to the Review Panel for consideration. This document deals specifically with the development of the self-evaluation report (SER) for unit reviews.

An essential part of the SER is an explanation of proposed educational, research and operational strategic aims of the academic unit and identification of actions to enable those strategic goals to be met. Part of the Review Panel's role is to provide support in formulating strategic initiatives to address any identified issues. It is important that the SER clearly identifies where the School is seeking the Review Panel's support.

2. Process

The Guidelines provide support and ideas as to how the faculty/school may choose to draft its SER. A set of key themes derived from the generic Terms of Reference (TOR) (Appendix II) have been developed to assist the faculty/school staff in addressing the main requirements.

2.1. Internal team

The Internal Team is chaired by the Head of School (HOS) with School/Unit/Faculty representation as determined by the Executive Dean in consultation with the HOS. The internal team will coordinate the SER in discussion with colleagues in the School.

A staff member from Education Quality (EQ) will provide support and guidance to the Internal Team on the development of the SER including the draft template provided at Appendix II, but it is the responsibility of the faculty/school to prepare the SER for submission to EQ to be provided to the Review Panel, prior to the review.

3. Themes to be introduced in SER

3.1. Theme 1 – Research and research-training

3.1.1. Research

Schools are asked to reflect upon how they contribute to the University's research ranking and how they measure themselves against equivalent organisations at other institutions.

Matters to be addressed might include:

- Where does the School see its research profile in 5-7 years' time (i.e. when the subsequent unit review is scheduled to take place)? How will the School achieve this? The reasons for choosing a particular research profile might be included.

- Is the School's research ranking appropriate or could it be improved? How can an improvement be achieved?
- What strategies are in place to maintain or improve a ranking?
- What opportunities are there to participate in emerging fields of enquiry? How can the School take advantage of them?
- Are there fields of research that might become a focus for the School or be strengthened? How might these be added to the School's research profile?
- Are there any inhibitors affecting the School's research profile (e.g. facilities, equipment, loss of staff, staffing profile)? How might the inhibitors be ameliorated?
- What opportunities exist for collaborative research both internally and externally?
- What relationships are being built with the external community to enable partnerships or shared funding arrangements or support?

The School's report on their research activities should be contextualised by data on:

- performance in Experience in research for Australia (ERA) and ERA for Engagement and Impact outcomes
- research income;
- publication numbers and quality;
- research collaborations and partnerships (including externally funded partnerships);
- the support for and progress of early career researchers (ECR).

3.1.2. Research-training

The University has a longstanding record for the number of students that proceed automatically to higher degree enrolments directly from their undergraduate studies.

Schools are asked to reflect upon their current HDR enrolments including:

- completion rates;
- attrition rates and how these might be addressed;
- how HDR students participate in the Career and Research Skills Training (CaRST) and what effect it has had;
- any inhibitors affecting the School's HDR profile (e.g. facilities, equipment, staffing profile);
- whether there is any further opportunity for growth, including research projects which might involve support through student scholarships; and then to indicate what strategies might be employed to strengthen completions and to reduce attrition.

3.2. Theme 2 – Curriculum

The School is asked to reflect broadly on its learning and teaching performance and to identify priorities and opportunities in curriculum development across the programs it provides or in which it participates. The discussions might be informed by previous or imminent program reviews or accreditations.

Questions to be answered might include:

- Are there particular pedagogical approaches that are being taken by the School to apply to a range of courses and programs?
- How might teaching performance and/or learning experiences of students be enhanced by teaching innovations?
- How is innovative teaching awarded?
- How are innovative learning and teaching practices disseminated within the School and more broadly outside of the School?
- Are there collaborative teaching arrangements that are working well or opportunities that might be built upon?
- What induction arrangements are provided to new staff (both new to institution and early career staff)?

- Are there opportunities for growth in current programs or for new programs?
- How do students respond to the Schools offerings? The School could draw on QILT and SELT surveys to respond to this question.
- How effective is the School in attracting particular cohorts of students? Is there any additional assistance that might be required?
- Do staff play a role in fostering relationships and providing subject-matter expertise to the secondary school sector and to agencies such as SACE?
- For those schools where there is a direct relationship with professional accreditation how does the School interact with the profession?
- In those Schools where there is not a direct professional accreditation requirement to practice, have professional associations been established and what role might they play in curriculum development and in community engagement?
- How are alumni relations fostered and how effective are they? Are there opportunities to strengthen them?

3.3. Theme 3 – School Management

The School is asked to reflect on the context in which it operates and undertake the equivalent of a SWOT analysis so that they might then advise on its management processes and structures, including governance, and how these contribute to the:

- effective running of the School (e.g. management role statements, School Board minutes, School Advisory Board minutes);
- recognition and reward of academic and professional staff expertise and achievements;
- rating of the School's ranking against various key measures and benchmarking both nationally and internationally (e.g. ERA, various international surveys such as the identification of high performing disciplines in the Academic Ranking of World Universities (ARWU);
- setting of the School's direction via its own strategic objectives (e.g. School Planning Days, School Strategic Plans);
- allocation of resources for core business including learning and teaching and research;
- development and implementation of key strategic objectives set at the University, Faculty or School level (e.g. University Strategic and Implementation plans);
- fostering of cross-/inter-disciplinary projects in both teaching and research;
- development of a student as partner approach to its relationships with students;
- building of positive and active relations with external stakeholders including but not limited to the professions, employers, alumni and the secondary school sector;
- instigation and maintenance of research partnerships including internal and external researchers (e.g. Cooperative research centres (CRCs), joint research grants, industry partnerships).

Opportunities for growth (e.g. enrolments, research funding) and new relationships (e.g. CRCs) should be explored, including those for engaging with donors and sponsors. A priority list might be drafted so that the Review Panel can provide advice on how to proceed or where resources might be directed.

Examples of good practice and how these are disseminated across the School might also be cited.

3.4. Theme 4 – Resources and Support

Notwithstanding that the provision of additional resources is at the discretion of the University, consider whether there are human, physical and financial resources that might be re-organised or increased to deliver cost effective programs, research and academic Units. This might include benchmarking with equivalent institutions or making a case for growth or building upon existing strengths or emerging disciplines.

A case might also be made for the funding of new initiatives and projects especially for learning and teaching or research or the commercialisation of activities.

Are there questions such as:

- Does the current structure suit the needs of the discipline or does it inhibit the delivery of programs or collaborative research?
- Are resources being used effectively?
- Can the existing resources be employed differently to improve outcomes?

3.5. Theme 5 - Inclusion and Diversity

The University is committed to ensuring and promoting a safe, respectful and inclusive environment for every member of our community. Evidence suggests that innovation, productivity and ultimately economic performance generally follow those organisations that have a staff that represents the diversity in the community. The School is asked to reflect on its diversity profile and inclusive practices.

Questions to be answered might include:

- What is the diversity profile of staff in the School?
- Does the School's strategic plan feature diversity/inclusion components, including specific goals and objectives?
- What strategies are in place to maintain and enhance diversity in staff and student profiles in the School?
- Does the School have any action plans relating to diversity and inclusion, and are these actions established and monitored by school governance/management processes?

4. Completion of the SER

The questions raised in the themes listed, are intended to be conversation starters and provide a basis upon which the operations of programs may be enhanced for the future. It is recognised that the current environment is dynamic and that the University has to position itself to respond to emerging trends and opportunities for growth and development in the learning, teaching and also research fronts.

It is intended that the reflection process will result in a Report that is informed by the recent past but is clearly one which is forward-looking. It should propose strategic objectives (with related actions) for the future, clearly delineating where the expert advice of the Review Panel would be welcomed.

The Review Panel is expected to take an evidence-based approach, and it is anticipated that some of the evidence will be provided in the SER, with the inclusion of performance data as listed in section 2.3 above or as tailored to the Program as required by either P&A or by Program staff. Information on the range of consultations and the methods employed as well as the outcomes should also be included (e.g. focus groups, surveys and Program Management Committee meetings).

A draft template is provided at Appendix III for the SER. Please note that the template is provided for guidance only and it may be adapted as required. Again, the template will be updated as an iterative process, through feedback from users, as the new review processes are implemented. The template as provided takes a themes-based approach, but areas may, if preferred, draft their report in the sequence of the TOR.

5. Resources

5.1. Policies

A range of policies inform program and governance issues, these include:

Name	If Acronym is employed	Link
Assessment for coursework programs policy		https://www.adelaide.edu.au/policies/700/
Coursework academic programs policy	CAPP	https://www.adelaide.edu.au/policies/669/
Student experience of learning & teaching policy	SELT policy	https://www.adelaide.edu.au/policies/101/

5.2. University Frameworks

- Digital capabilities framework (<https://www.adelaide.edu.au/learning-enhancement-innovation/projects-and-initiatives/digital-capabilities>)
- Dornwell Framework (<https://www.adelaide.edu.au/hr/organisational-development/diversity-and-inclusion/gender-equity/dornwell-framework>)
- Graduate Employability Framework (<https://www.adelaide.edu.au/learning/strategic-projects/student-employability>)
- Student Partnerships Values (<https://www.adelaide.edu.au/learning/strategic-projects/student-partnerships>)
- Student Retention and Success (<https://www.adelaide.edu.au/learning/strategic-projects/student-retention-and-success>)
- Assessment and Feedback Strategy (<https://www.adelaide.edu.au/learning/strategic-projects/assessment-and-feedback-strategy-project>)
- There is also a project devoted to the peer review of teaching which includes the Peer Assisted Reflection & Development Program (PARD-P) which might impact on programs/curriculum and staffing resources and enhancements. Details on the PARD-P are available at: <https://www.adelaide.edu.au/learning/teaching/peer-review/reflection-development/>

5.3. Data

Planning & Analytics (<https://www.adelaide.edu.au/planning/>) provide the following reports available to staff with a University log-in:

Name	If Acronym is employed	Link
Faculty Performance Reports		https://www.adelaide.edu.au/planning/staff-only/plans-reports/current-plans-reports.html
Quality Indicators for Learning and Teaching surveys	QILT surveys	https://www.adelaide.edu.au/planning/ags/
Student experience of learning & teaching surveys	SELT surveys	https://www.adelaide.edu.au/planning/selt/

Rankings

<https://www.adelaide.edu.au/planning/rankings/>

Research (ERA) data may be obtained as follows:

Name	If Acronym is employed	Link
Experience in research for Australia	ERA	https://www.adelaide.edu.au/research/docs/era-full-results-2015.pdf https://www.adelaide.edu.au/research-services/systems-reporting/era/

5.4. External Resources

Name	If Acronym is employed	Link
Australian qualifications framework	AQF	https://www.aqf.edu.au/
Higher Education Standards Framework (2021)	HESF	https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/F2015L01639
Quality Indicators for Learning and Teaching	QILT	https://www.qilt.edu.au/
Tertiary Education Quality Standards agency	TEQSA	https://www.teqsa.gov.au/

6. Acronyms cited in these guidelines

Acronym	Meaning	Acronym	Meaning
AQF	Australian Qualifications Framework	P&A	Planning & Analytics
CAPP	Coursework Academic Programs Policy	PARD-P	Peer assisted reflection & development program
DDLTL	Deputy Dean (Learning & Teaching)	PG	Postgraduate
EQ	Education Quality	PVC(SL)	Pro Vice-Chancellor (Student Learning)
HDR	Higher degree by research [student]	QILT	Quality indicators for learning and teaching
HESF	Higher Education Standards Framework	SELT	Student experience of learning & teaching
HOS	Head of School	SER	Self-evaluation report
LEI	Learning Enhancement and Innovation	TEQSA	Tertiary Education Quality Standards agency
LMS	Learning management system	TOR	Terms of reference

Appendix I – The framework for the development of the self-evaluation process

Recommendations 9, 10 and 11 established the broad framework for the development of the self-evaluation process, as follows:

REVIEW STAGE 1 - SELF-EVALUATION

Recommendation 9

That a self-evaluation process be launched no less than six months prior to the Review Panel's visit, and that this be supported through partnership with central University services including [EQ] and based on Guidelines to be developed by [EQ] in consultation with stakeholders. A self-evaluation report will be prepared by the team and submitted to the Review Panel.*

* Please note that as the Review Panel has to be provided with the SER a month before the visit a seven month timeline is preferred operationally.

Recommendation 10

That consultation with student, employer and alumni stakeholder groups is undertaken as a requirement of the self-evaluation process. This engagement should include, as a minimum:

- *students from all year levels including international and domestic students, and engagement with relevant student associations and clubs;*
- *relevant employer groups, professional organisations and research partners;*
- *alumni and community members.*

Recommendation 11

*That a Briefing Paper is prepared for the Panel by [EQ] in consultation with the following staff:
Academic Program reviews: PVC(SL), Executive Dean, Head of School, Program Coordinator
Academic Unit reviews: PVC(SL), Executive Dean, Head of School*

*The Briefing Paper, **together with the self-evaluation report**, will be provided to the Review Panel at least one month prior to the Panel's visit, with the expectation that the Panel will have formed a broad understanding of the context and themes of the review prior to its meetings with the areas under review.¹*

The Guidelines reference the imperatives required in Recommendation 10 but also recognise examples of internal and external best practice. It is also recognised that the management of programs differs across the University with some being the preserve of faculties and others overseen by schools or departments or disciplines. In these Guidelines 'faculty' and 'school' are used inter-changeably and also encompass the departments and disciplines where appropriate. While programs are generally referred to in the singular it is recognised that multiple programs may be under review especially with Double and concurrent degrees, nested awards, and the inclusion of Honours programs.

¹ Final Report of the Review the Purposes, Principles and Processes that support the Review of Academic Programs and Academic Units, pages 12-13.

Appendix II – The generic TOR for a unit review

The generic Terms of Reference (TOR) for academic unit reviews has been approved and can be found below.

It should be noted that the TOR as provided may be modified as required to fit the circumstances that prevail or to focus on the issues that require consideration.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

REVIEW OF THE SCHOOL OF (INSERT DETAILS OF THE SCHOOL)

IN THE FACULTY OF (INSERT DETAILS OF THE FACULTY)

The School Review is conducted within the University's seven-year Academic Unit Review cycle. The Review will take into account the views of all relevant internal stakeholder groups, including students, staff and other relevant academic areas of the University, and of all relevant external stakeholder groups including employers, alumni and representatives of relevant professions.

Both the Faculty Self-Evaluation process and report, and the Review Panel assessment, should address the Aims of School Reviews which are as follows:

- To evaluate the quality and effectiveness of academic strategy, operations and outcomes, including in research, learning and teaching, entrepreneurship and innovation, and external engagement and impact;
- To assess the school's standing, nationally and internationally, in relation to appropriate benchmarking;
- To evaluate the school's ability to sustain and enhance educational and research operations in the context of the University's strategic goals, its resources, and internal and external opportunities;
- To evaluate the quality of school governance, management and enhancement processes, including approaches to working with students as partners and to external engagement;
- To assess the school's progress since the previous review, with reference to the outcomes of the implementation plan in response to the recommendations of that review;
- To identify and give recognition to best practice and successful outcomes;
- To identify strategic and operational opportunities, and priorities for enhancement, including for research performance and academic portfolio refresh and development;
- To assist in identifying areas where resources and support might be needed to optimise future performance.

The Review Panel is asked to assess the School's self-evaluation and its enhancement proposals for the School under review, and make evidence-based recommendations. The following areas of consideration are in scope of the Review Panel's assessment of the quality of the School's academic enterprise and of the enhancement proposals:

1. Research and innovation performance, impact, priorities and opportunities, benchmarked nationally and globally, in relation to:

- research income, commercialisation measures, publication numbers and quality, overall and per FTE, including contribution to ERA and ERA for Engagement and Impact outcomes;
 - research collaboration and partnerships, within the school and across the University, as well as with external stakeholders, particularly externally-funded partnerships, in terms of quality and outcomes;
 - research training and support for HDR students, with consideration of current HDR enrolments and completions, and future opportunities for increasing the latter and reducing attrition; and
 - support provided for Early Career Researchers, including individual development pathways.
2. Across all programs, and with reference to relevant Program Reviews, learning and teaching performance, priorities and opportunities in relation to:
- curriculum development;
 - innovation in delivery including digital and flexible approaches;
 - pedagogy, academic staff induction and development, reward and recognition;
 - teaching collaborations and partnerships;
 - demand and growth opportunities (based on available evidence) for programs and courses offered by the School;
 - student retention;
 - student experience/satisfaction;
 - graduate employment and employer satisfaction;
 - professional and community engagement and impact of the School;
 - alumni engagement.
3. The governance and management of the School as a model for supporting the University's strategic direction and delivering its objectives:
- the School's staffing structure, gender diversity and culture more generally;
 - approaches to working with students and staff as partners, and with alumni and industry;
 - staff engagement within the School including professional staff induction and development;
 - planning, quality assurance and enhancement systems and processes.
4. The use of human, physical and financial resources in addressing plans for development and initiatives, and cost effectiveness in delivering outcomes. Decisions on the provision of additional resources remain at the University's discretion.
5. The School's academic profile and standing, benchmarked against similar schools in other Australian universities, relevant international institutions, and global and national university rankings in research and education in relevant fields.

Appendix III – SER template

The template found on subsequent pages is provided as an example – it is not mandatory, but may inform the development of the SER.

Self-evaluation Report to Review Panel

Review of the (name of review)

Sign off:

School (Insert Name of School)

Faculty (Insert Name of Faculty)

Please note:

This document is intended as a general guide when completing the Self-evaluation Report. All sections may not be applicable, and likewise there may be special considerations that should be addressed that are not included. Please add or delete topic areas as necessary to conform to the needs of your SER.

I/we commend the following Self-evaluation Report to the Review Panel for consideration:

Head of School: Date

Executive Dean: Date

1. Introduction/overview/executive summary

Please summarise your findings and the proposals arising from the reflection process.

2. Self-evaluation process

Provide background on how the SER was developed, describing the process undertaken including the range of conversations and consultations.

You might also want to provide a summary of the current state of play.

3. Theme 1: Research and research-training

See section 3.1 above (Guidelines).

See TOR items 1, 5 (Appendix II).

Include evidence as relevant, see section 5 above (Guidelines).

4. Theme 2: Curriculum

See section 3.2 above (Guidelines).

See TOR items 2, 5 (Appendix II).

Include evidence as relevant, see section 5 above (Guidelines).

5. Theme 3: School management

See section 3.3 above (Guidelines).

See TOR items 3-4 (Appendix II).

Include evidence as relevant, see section 5 above (Guidelines).

6. Theme 4: Resources and support

See section 3.4 above (Guidelines).

See TOR item 4 (Appendix II).

Include evidence as relevant, see section 5 above (Guidelines).

7. Theme 5: Inclusion and Diversity

See section 3.5 above (Guidelines).

See TOR item 4 (Appendix II).

Include evidence as relevant, see section 5 above (Guidelines).

8. Outcomes/Looking forward

See section 4 above (Guidelines).

If not specified in each of the sections 3-7 (Self-evaluation Report) provide the outcomes of the deliberations as well as a realistic appraisal of how the strategies/proposals/enhancements will impact on the Unit under review in the current University climate.

Specify where you would welcome the advice of the expert Review Panel and the kind of advice you require.

9. Appendices (if required)

Provide appendices if required of evidence to the Review Panel to support the outcomes (if not already included in sections 3-8 of the Self-evaluation Report).