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ACADEMIC	1	
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Five Yearly Academic Course Review and Re-Accreditation Guidelines

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INTRODUCTION

These Guidelines were last approved by Academic Board 19 November 2014, Education Committee 29 October 2014. Minor revisions made on 1 February 2017.

1. Course Accreditation

La Trobe University is a self-accrediting institution established under the La Trobe University Act.

Academic Board and its sub-committees accredit courses through the New Course Approvals processes. Reaccreditation occurs through the Course Review process, usually every five years, unless professional re-accreditation is required more frequently. Re-accreditation focuses on the academic merit of the course and compliance with relevant national regulations and internal La Trobe policies.

Strategic Reviews

Annual strategic reviews of courses, related to the distinctiveness and competitiveness of the University's overall course profile and relevant College Plans, are conducted by the Course Portfolio and Scholarships Committee of PRC. These reviews are focused on the strategic fit and financial and market viability of courses, rather than academic quality. CPSC will liaise with the relevant College regarding the review process to be undertaken.

2. Purpose of Academic Course Reviews

An Academic Course Review is a broad, in-depth appraisal of a course to ensure its continuing academic quality and appropriate academic standards, compliance with national regulations and University policies and compatibility with the University's strategic directions as well as effective use of resources.

An Academic Course Review enables staff to evaluate and reassess a range of aspects of the course drawn from: overall curriculum design, including assessment; intended learning outcomes (ILOs); component subjects; teaching methods and technologies; student achievement of graduate capabilities and ILOs; and outcomes for graduates of the program. Based on the review, the College can respond in ways that enhance the quality and standards of the course.

3. Scheduling of Academic Course Reviews

Academic Course Reviews are conducted at *least* every five years, but it is recommended that reviews be scheduled in the same year as any professional accreditation reviews to reduce duplication of effort.

Courses that are subject to external or professional accreditation should have the reviews conducted in conjunction with one another whenever possible.

The timing of the academic course review as well as detail concerning precise content requirements can be negotiated. For example, to assist in reducing workload, a College may prefer to submit to the internal course review panel, the external professional accreditation submission together with an addendum containing any agreed additional La Trobe course review requirements.

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4. **Calendar of Academic Course Reviews**

Each College will develop a schedule of course reviews using information from the University's databases provided by Student Services and Administration and the Analysis and Reporting Unit (ARU) of the Planning and Governance Division. The College will provide this calendar to the Academic Course Reviews Coordinator, located in the Office of the Pro-Vice Chancellor (Educational Partnerships and Quality). Course reviews are to be included in College Operational Plans. Details of the planned calendar of academic Course Reviews will be published on the Academic Course Reviews Unite Site.

5. **Costs associated with Course Reviews**

The College concerned will assume the costs associated with the review including travel and accommodation for external representatives, catering and preparation of documents. There will be no charges for internally provided services.

6. **Single or Cluster/Grouping of Academic Course Reviews**

Colleges should consider whether it is most appropriate to review groupings of courses or majors in a single review. For example, a single Academic Course Review could focus on:

- courses within a similar discipline and/or courses in which there is a significant overlap of subjects
- a suite of nested programs such as a graduate certificate, graduate diploma and masters or diploma and bachelor degrees
- double-degree courses, in conjunction with the relevant single degree
- courses at different levels in a cognate discipline, such as bachelor, graduate diploma, master

Individual course review submissions must be provided by the College for each course within a cluster or grouping, except in the case of nested programs. In the case of nested programs, the submission ought to include course maps setting out individual course structures, as well as the associated course intended learning outcomes. The cluster or grouping will be considered by one Course Review Panel and the panel will complete one report containing their findings for all courses.

7. **Triggers for Out-of-Cycle Academic Course Review**

An Academic Course Review may be commenced at any time at the request of the College Pro Vice Chancellor or the Vice Chancellor on the advice of any of the Deputy Vice-Chancellors.

Triggers for an out-of-cycle review include:

- rapidly changing trends within a discipline such as changes in employment opportunities
- worsening trend in key indicators and related measures and targets as reported to CPSC
- consistent student feedback indicating that learning outcomes are not being met
- increasing concern in relation to course viability (eg decline in enrolments or loss of staff)
- requirements for application for accreditation of a professional degree
- a change in the external environment (eg competitor qualifications or enrolments; change in national policy)
- concern or evidence that the degree is not meeting University academic standards.

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8. Academic Course Review Processes

The steps of the Review are:

Activity	Responsibility
Review preparation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appoint College Course Review team, including Course Review Leader and Course Review Administrator • appointment of Review Panel Chair and panel members • appointment of Review Executive Officer • logistics arrangements – development of timelines and deadlines, travel arrangements, room bookings, catering 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • College PVC, Associate PVC (Coursework) or Nominee(s) • Chair of Coursework Committee (CC), Associate PVC (Coursework) or Nominee(s) • Chair of CC, Associate PVC (Coursework) or Nominee(s) • Review Executive Offer and Academic Course Reviews Coordinator (OPVC(EPQ))
Submission Preparation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Course data pack provided to Course Review Leader • Completion of Academic Course Review Submission (template available on Course Reviews Unite Site) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ARU • Course Review Leader with assistance from ARU in data analysis and interpretation
Review Panel Activities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consideration of Written Submission • Interview selected stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review Panel
Reporting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion of Academic Course Review – Course Review Panel Report (template available on Academic Course Reviews Unite Site) • College response to Report – development of Action Plan (template available on Academic Course Reviews Unite Site) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Panel Chair in consultation with Review Panel • Course Review Leader in consultation with College
Approval through relevant committees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • College Academic Committee, Coursework Committee and Academic Board

9. Course Review Team

Pro Vice-Chancellors of Colleges, in consultation with Associate PVC (Coursework) and/or Heads of Schools or Departments, may establish a Course Review team, including a Course Review Leader (usually one of the Course Co-ordinators), to prepare the review documentation required for each review of a course or group of courses. The Course Review Team will also be responsible for identifying people to be interviewed as requested by the Review Panel and assisting with the development of an interview schedule. This process should involve consultation with relevant stakeholders. In cases where a course is delivered in partnership by more than one college and/or school, or at multiple locations, staff from those areas must be provided an opportunity to provide feedback. The team will also include an administrative officer (usually the administrative officer of the course/s being reviewed) to assist the team with these tasks. The significant work involved will need to be considered in workload management. The Course Review

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Leader may seek assistance from ARU in interpreting data and from members of the Coursework Committee in preparing documentation.

10. Review Panel

The Academic Course Review will be conducted by a Review Panel comprising at least three, and up to five, members, including the Panel chair (i.e. the panel will be a Panel chair plus a minimum of two and a maximum of four other members). Panel members may be selected from the following categories:

- An external academic with relevant discipline expertise and appropriate experience
- An internal academic with relevant discipline expertise and appropriate experience, not directly involved with the courses being reviewed
- Up to two members of a related professional or industry group
- A La Trobe Learning and Teaching academic staff member

However, the composition of the Panel is negotiable with the Chair of the Coursework Committee to best suit the course being reviewed.

At least one member of the panel must be external to La Trobe University.

The Chair of the Coursework Committee will consult with the Associate PVC (Coursework) of the College to nominate the Panel Chair for each Academic Course Review. No Panel Chair will be involved with a Review Panel for a course from their own School. The Panel Chair will be trained in conducting Course Reviews and will be the process expert.

The Panel Members will be the discipline and course design experts, identified by the College for their knowledge or years of experience relevant to the course/s being reviewed.

Review Executive Officer support for the review will be appointed in consultation between the Chair of the Coursework Committee and the College Pro Vice-Chancellor (or nominee) (see 12 below for responsibilities).

11. Panel Chairs

Panel Chairs for Academic Course Reviews will be sourced from a pool of members of staff who have received training in the processes involved in reviews.

This group is comprised of academic members of the University's Coursework Committee, academic staff members of La Trobe Learning and Teaching and senior academic staff members nominated by each College. College nominations to the Panel Chairs group will be reviewed regularly. Workload allocations have been calculated for the role of Panel Chair in accordance with the Workload Management System.

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12. Administrative Support – Course Review Administrator

The Course Review Administrator will be nominated by the College to provide administrative support to the Course Review Team throughout the Review. Generally, they will be the administrative officer responsible for the course/s being reviewed.

The Course Review Administrator will be responsible for the following administrative tasks (some may be by delegation to other members of professional staff):

- assist the Course Review Team in preparation of the submission
- book rooms for Panel Interviews
- order catering for Panel Interviews
- assist the Course Review Team to identify interview participants
- book any travel and accommodation arrangements for Panel members where applicable

The College concerned will assume the costs associated with the review including catering, and travel and accommodation.

13. Administrative Support - Review Executive Officer

The Review Executive Officer will be nominated by the College to provide administrative support to the Panel throughout the Review. Generally, they will be an administrative officer from the same organisational unit as the Panel Chair. They will be trained in the Course Review Process by the Office of the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Educational Partnerships and Quality).

The Review Executive Officer will be responsible for the following administrative tasks:

- assist the Panel Chair in constructing the list of interview participants to be provided to the Course Review Administrator to populate
- collaborate with Course Review Administrator to invite people to interview and develop a schedule for course review interviews
- send interview invitations and collate responses
- develop the schedule of interviews
- provide secretariat support to the Review Panel
- assist the Panel Chair with drafting the review report, including provision of first draft, any amendments, and with drafting summary reports for committee consideration.

14. Coordination Support - Academic Course Reviews Coordinator (OPVC (EPQ))

An Academic Course Reviews Coordinator, located in the Office of the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Educational Partnerships and Quality) (OPVC(EPQ)) will be responsible for monitoring and maintaining the schedule of reviews ensuring College calendars of course reviews comply with policy expectations, coordinating Review Preparation and Data Presentation processes (as per table in Section 8 above) as well as facilitating post-review reporting processes to University committees and records management (refer to indicative review timeline in Appendix 3).

The Academic Course Reviews Coordinator (OPVC (EPQ)) will be responsible for sending formal invitations to review panel members and provide assistance to the Review Executive Officers during the academic course reviews when necessary.

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15. Data Collection

The Analysis and Reporting Unit of the Planning and Governance Division (ARU) will provide a comprehensive data set to inform the preparation of the submission as detailed in Appendix 1. The Academic Course Reviews Officer (OPVC (EPQ)) will advise ARU of courses to be reviewed in October of the previous year, as well as providing Course Review contact details. ARU and the College will liaise regarding delivery of the data. If the Course Review Leader requires other data not currently available from ARU, such as feedback from external stakeholders, this must be considered and collected well before commencement of the Academic Course Review Process. It is the Course Review Leaders' responsibility to identify whether any data other than the standard data pack will be required.

16. Written submission

The Course Review Leader will prepare a submission to the Review Panel on the Course Review Submission template available on the Academic Course Reviews Unite Site. Once completed, the Course Review Leader will submit an electronic copy of the completed written submission template and all attachments to the Academic Course Reviews Coordinator (OPVC (EPQ)) to distribute to the Course Review Panel.

When the Course Review Panel receives the electronic copy of the submission, the Academic Course Reviews Coordinator will send it to the Course Review Administrator to produce one hardcopy of the written submission and the data pack per panel member and one for the Executive Officer, for use during the review. All Panel Members ought to have their hardcopies of the submission prior to the Preliminary Panel Meeting, and in any event within 7 days of receipt the electronic version.

17. Review Panel Activities

Within two weeks of receiving the submission from the Course Review Leader, the Review Panel will meet to consider the submission and the relevant data set. At that meeting it will also consider if any other information is required, who should be interviewed as part of the review and questions for those being interviewed. Any external member(s) of the Review Panel may participate in this meeting by phone.

Within three weeks of that initial meeting, the Panel will convene to interview people considered relevant to its investigations. These stakeholders may include:

- The College Pro Vice-Chancellor
- The College Associate PVCs ((Coursework) and (Academic Partnerships))
- The College Academic Coordinators ((Coursework) and (Academic Partnerships))
- The Course Review Leader and any other Course Co-ordinators, including those from partner Schools and/or Colleges
- Current or recently enrolled students
- External stakeholders (accreditation/registration bodies, employers)
- Staff teaching in the course(s), including those from multiple locations where the course is offered
- The relevant Head of School
- Members of the Course Advisory Committee, if applicable
- Relevant LTU divisions: Marketing, LTI, future students/selection staff

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Once the panel has decided upon the stakeholders to be interviewed for the review, the Review Executive Officer will provide the list to the Course Review Administrator. The Course Review Administrator will populate the list of stakeholders with the names of the relevant people and return to the Executive Officer. The Review Executive Officer will send out interview invitations and collate responses to develop the interview schedule. As the Pro Vice-Chancellor, the Associate PVC (Coursework) and certain other members of the University will always be requested to meet the Panel, the Review Executive Officer should invite them even before the preliminary Panel meeting, to secure the space in their diaries.

The interviews may take the form of group or individual appointments (see Appendix 3 for an indicative interview schedule).

The final afternoon of the interview schedule will be set aside for the Panel to discuss their findings, provide advice to the Panel Chair on review outcomes and also identify any recommendations and commendations they would like to make. The Panel may recall the Course Review Leader and Head of School for a closing briefing to present the broad findings of the Panel. The Panel Chair and the Review Executive Officer will then work together in framing the report so that the Executive Officer may provide the first draft for review by the Panel Chair and then circulation to the Panel Members for their further input.

18. Reporting

The Academic Course Reviews Coordinator in the Office of Pro Vice-Chancellor (Educational Partnerships and Quality) is responsible for liaison with the College Academic Committee secretariat so that when the Course Review Panel Report and Action Plan have been considered by the College, a report will be made to the next scheduled Coursework Committee meeting as per item 22 below.

19. Reaccreditation Outcome

In addition to commendations or specific recommendations for course improvement, the final outcome of the Academic Course Review may be a recommendation to:

- Re-accredit the course(s);
- Re-accredit the course(s) with conditions;
- Against re-accreditation.

In accordance with policy, re-accreditation will generally be valid for a five-year period until the next review is due. The Review Panel may, at its discretion, recommend shorter accreditation periods with a supporting justification.

Where the panel recommends a shorter accreditation period subject to action plan outcomes, then the Panel Chair will review the documentation prepared by the Course Review Leader as required in item 23 below, and provide advice to the Coursework Committee on whether or not a five year re-accreditation is appropriate at that time.

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20. Review and finalisation of Report

The draft Course Review Report is provided to the Course Review Leader by the Review Executive Officer to give the College the opportunity to request amendments of any factual errors. Any amendments will be returned to the Review Executive Officer within one week. After inclusion of any relevant amendments the final Course Review Report is signed-off by the Panel Chair on behalf of the Review Panel and provided to the College Pro Vice-Chancellor and the Associate Pro Vice-Chancellor (Coursework).

21. Course Review Action Plan

An Action Plan should be created for courses recommended for re-accreditation or re-accreditation with conditions. Once the College has received the draft Course Review Report from the Review Panel, the Action Plan should be prepared by the Course Review Leader, in consultation with affected staff, using the Action Plan template available on the Academic Course Reviews Unite Site. The College should ensure that the Action Plan addresses any recommendations made by the Review Panel and any agreed upon identified areas of opportunities/improvements. The Action Plan will be presented, with the finalised Course Review Report, by the Associate Pro Vice-Chancellor (Coursework) to the College Academic Committee.

22. Reporting to University Committees

College Academic Committee

The outcomes of the review in the form of the Course Review Panel Report and the Action Plan are submitted by the Associate Pro Vice-Chancellor (Coursework) to the College Academic Committee for consideration.

University Coursework Committee

As soon as practicable following the College Academic Committee meeting, the College secretariat will pass on the Course Review Panel Report, Action Plan and the relevant extract of College Academic Committee minutes, to the Academic Course Reviews Coordinator in the Office of the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Educational Partnerships and Quality).

Then the Academic Course Reviews Coordinator will prepare a report using the Coursework Committee cover sheet, and submit this to the secretariat of the Coursework Committee for presentation to the next meeting.

The secretariat of the Coursework Committee will summarise the course reviews endorsed by the Coursework Committee in the Coursework Committee report to the Academic Board.

Academic Board

The minutes from the Academic Board will record the approval of the Academic Course Review outcome.

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23. Review Follow up

For courses recommended by the Review Panel for re-accreditation or re-accreditation with conditions, a progress report on the initial submitted Action Plan should be made to the College Academic Committee after 12 months followed by a brief advice report to the University Coursework Committee.

24. Appeals against Review Outcomes

The College may appeal to the Education Committee against review outcomes on the following grounds:

- there is evidence of inaccurate data
- there is evidence of a breach of procedural fairness
- there is substantial new evidence available relating to the course review that was not available to the Course Review Panel at the time of the review.

25. Report Storage and Distribution

Distribution

Academic Course Review Panel Reports and accompanying Action Plans are posted on the Academic Course Reviews Unite Site and will therefore be available to the La Trobe University community of staff.

The Academic Course Review Submission and accompanying annexures is not posted on the Unite site and therefore not generally available except by specific request.

The College will ensure that a summary of changes arising from Academic Course Reviews is published on appropriate College websites to inform students and staff, and to reinforce the importance of their feedback.

Archiving

The Academic Course Reviews Coordinator is responsible for ensuring that at the conclusion of each annual schedule of reviews, a full set of all relevant academic course review documentation is referred to the University's Records and Archive Services for storage.

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Appendix 1 Data Collection

The Analysis and Reporting Unit (ARU) of the Planning and Governance Division will provide a data pack to inform the preparation of the submission. It will include the following metrics over a four year time series and will show La Trobe performance against relevant IRU, State and National levels where available.

Indicator
STUDENT PROFILE
Aggregate EFTSL
Domestic EFTSL
International EFTSL (onshore)
Offshore EFTSL
Aggregate Load Plan target
Albury-Wodonga EFTSL
Bendigo EFTSL
Melbourne (Bundoora) EFTSL
Mildura EFTSL
Shepparton EFTSL
Other EFTSL
Median ATAR (all modes)
Proportion ATAR > 80
Proportion of total commencing who are school leavers
Proportion of total commencing who are TAFE
Proportion of total commencing who are mature-age
Proportion of total commencing who are low SES
Proportion of total commencing who are regional/remote
Proportion of total commencing who are Indigenous
Proportion of total commencing who are international
STUDENT DEMAND
Number of 1-4 preferences - school leavers
Number of 1-4 preferences - other
Number of 1st preferences - school leavers
Number of 1st preferences - other
STUDENT RETENTION
Aggregate retention rate of commencing into second year

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Retention rate of commencing into second year - domestic
Retention rate of commencing into second year - international
Retention rate of commencing into second year - offshore
Retention rate of commencing into second year - A/W
Retention rate of commencing into second year - Bendigo
Retention rate of commencing into second year - Bundoora
Retention rate of commencing into second year - Mildura
Retention rate of commencing into second year - Shepparton
Retention rate of commencing into second year - school leavers
Retention rate of commencing into second year - TAFE
Retention rate of commencing into second year - mature age
Retention rate of commencing into second year - low SES
Retention rate of commencing into second year - regional/remote
Retention rate of commencing into second year - Indigenous
STUDENT SATISFACTION
Aggregate AGS CEQ - Good Teaching Scale
Aggregate AGS CEQ - Generic Skills Scale
Aggregate AGS CEQ - Overall Satisfaction Index
Overall Satisfaction Index - A/W
Overall Satisfaction Index - Bendigo
Overall Satisfaction Index - Bundoora
Overall Satisfaction Index - Mildura
Overall Satisfaction Index - Shepparton
STUDENT OUTCOMES
Aggregate course completions (Number)
Course completions - domestic
Course completions -international onshore
Course completions - offshore
STUDENT OUTCOMES
Course completions - A/W
Course completions - Bendigo
Course completions - Bundoora
Course completions - Mildura
Course completions - Shepparton

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Aggregate AGS GDS - % students employed full-time
Aggregate AGS GDS - % students employed part-time
Aggregate AGS GDS - % students in further study
Aggregate AGS GDS - Median salary
BENCHMARKING
<i>Graphical supplements (may be done by the College if they have the benchmarking software)</i>
Aggregate EFTSL benchmarked against IRU or other institutions selected by the colleges
Aggregate retention rate benchmarked against IRU or other institutions selected by the College
Aggregate course completions benchmarked against IRU or other institutions selected by the College
Aggregate Good Teaching Scale benchmarked against national averages in relevant FoE, as applicable/available
Aggregate Generic Skills Scale benchmarked against national averages in relevant FoE, as applicable/available
Aggregate Overall Satisfaction Index benchmarked against national averages in relevant FoE, as applicable/available
Aggregate Good Teaching Scale against IRU or other institutions selected by the College
Aggregate Generic Skills Scale against IRU or other institutions selected by the College
Aggregate Overall Satisfaction Index against IRU or other institutions selected by the College

Data not provided by ARU

The Course Review Leader is responsible for sourcing (as necessary) or collating:

- feedback on the course from relevant external stakeholders (such as professional associations, employer groups, accrediting bodies). **Note that if this data is not already available and needs to be collected, it must be scheduled well before commencement of the Academic Course Review Process. ARU may be able to provide assistance in the creation of a survey of external stakeholders.**
- Any other data considered relevant by the Course Review Leader.

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Appendix 2 Academic Course Review Website

Templates

- Academic Course Review – Submission
- Academic Course Review – Panel Report
- Academic Course Review – Action Plan
- Academic Course Review – Completed Review – Implementation of Recommendations


Resources

- Course Lifecycle – Course Review Procedures
- Five Yearly Academic Course Review and Re-accreditation Guidelines
- Schedule of five year reviews
- Terms of Reference for Review Panel
- Roles and Responsibilities
- Induction Kit for Administering Course Reviews
- Interview Schedule Template
- Flow chart of process

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Appendix 3 Timeline

Activity	Responsibility	Timeframe
Review commissioned according to schedule provided by College (complying with policy expectations)	APVC (Coursework)	10 weeks before Submission Date
Data collection commences according to schedule	ARU and College (for external data)	10 weeks before Submission Date
Course Review Team and Leader selected	APVC (Coursework)	7 weeks before Submission Date
Data delivered to Course Review Leader	ARU	6 weeks before Submission Date
Commence submission	Course Review Leader	6 weeks before Submission Date
Review Panel appointed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Panel Chair • Panel members <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Discipline experts – Professional / industry representatives • Review Executive Officer 	Chair of Coursework Committee and APVC (Coursework) Chair PC and APVC (Coursework)	4 weeks before Submission Date
Deliver submission to Review Panel	Course Review Leader	Submission Date
Review Panel Initial Meeting	Review Panel	2 weeks after Submission Date
Review Panel Interviews / site visit	Review Panel plus interviewees	Within 3 weeks of Initial Meeting
Review Report delivered to the Course Review Leader	Review Panel	Within 2 weeks of Interviews
Response, including correction of any factual errors, returned to Review Panel	Course Review Leader	Within 1 week of delivery of report
Review Report amended as required	Panel Chair and Review Executive Officer	Within 1 week of responses
Preparation of Action Plan	Course Review Leader in consultation with stakeholders	Within 3 weeks of delivery of report
Panel Report and Action Plan submitted to College Academic Committee	College Academic Committee	Next meeting of College Academic Committee
Review Report Summary prepared and submitted to University Coursework Committee	Reviews Executive Officer	1 week after College Academic Committee

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Coursework Committee consideration of recommendation regarding reaccreditation	Coursework Committee	Next meeting of Coursework Committee
Review Report Summary prepared and submitted to Academic Board	Coursework Committee Secretariat	In report of Coursework Committee to Academic Board
Academic Board consideration	Academic Board	Next meeting of Academic Board
All documentation submitted to University Records and Archive Management	Administration Officer	1 week after Academic Board meeting
Review Report Summary and College Academic Committee Response published on Coursework Committee website	Coursework Committee Secretariat	Within 1 week of Academic Board meeting
Summary of changes arising from Review that relate to reaccreditation published to course information website(s)	College Academic Committee / Course Review Leader	Within 1 week of Academic Board meeting
Progress Report to the College Academic Committee and University Coursework Committee	Course Review Leader	12 months after final report presented to Academic Board