

# Administrative Division Review Policy

## Section 1 - Background and Purpose

(1) To provide a basis for formal quality and strategic review of the University's Administrative Divisions. The review will provide an evidence-based assessment of the performance of a Division and its contributions to the strategic objectives of the University. Reviews also consider the effectiveness of the internal management and operations of the Division.

### Preamble

(2) The review will provide a basis for quality assurance of a Division in relation to its activities, organisation and management and the resourcing of these to ensure alignment with the University's [Strategic Plan](#).

(3) A calendar of planned reviews will be published, and may be varied at the discretion of the Vice-Chancellor. An out of cycle review may be commissioned at the Vice-Chancellor's discretion.

### General

(4) Provision for formal reviews of Administrative Divisions is an important element of the University's planning and quality assurance framework. [Generic Terms of Reference](#) are provided, which are customised, as required, by the Vice-Chancellor.

(5) For each review, the Vice-Chancellor will nominate a Senior Executive Group (SEG) member to act as the Review Sponsor of the review. The Review Sponsor will not have line management responsibility for the division being reviewed. This person will work with staff from the Planning and Institutional Performance Unit (PIPU) in the effective implementation of this Policy. The role of the Review Sponsor is outlined in clause 23 below.

## Section 2 - Scope

(6) All Administrative Divisions are covered by this Policy.

## Section 3 - Policy Statement

(7) A Review of a Division will:

- a. critically evaluate the current performance of the Division, including an assessment of performance over time and relative to appropriate benchmarks from the higher education sector or other sectors;
- b. assess the extent to which Division's activities support the objectives of the respective Portfolio's Business Plan and the University's [Strategic Plan](#) and related plans;
- c. consider the efficiency and effectiveness of allocated resource utilisation;
- d. identify actions to improve performance; and

- e. provide advice on the future direction of the Division, including staffing profile and noting developments within the University, the higher education sector, relevant wider industries/professions and the community.

## **Section 4 - Procedures**

### **Part A - Timing of Reviews**

(8) Reviews of Divisions will normally be conducted on a seven year cyclic basis. A calendar of planned reviews will be published, and may be varied at the discretion of the Vice-Chancellor.

(9) Timing of reviews will take account, to the extent possible, of planned in-depth UniForum Project Study Topics, and other external reviews.

(10) An out of cycle review may be commissioned at the Vice-Chancellor's discretion.

### **Part B - Commissioning the Review**

(11) A review is formally commissioned by the Vice-Chancellor.

(12) The Review Sponsor, supported by PIPU, will make recommendations to the Vice-Chancellor with respect to review timing, Terms of Reference and panel membership.

(13) The Vice-Chancellor will inform the Senior Executive Group, the Academic Board (via Academic Quality Committee) and the University Council of any changes to the approved schedule following the review of the schedule each year in March.

(14) The Vice-Chancellor will issue formal invitations to Panel members, and approve any customisation of the Generic Terms of Reference. Should the Panel be decided through a Tender, the Vice-Chancellor/Review Sponsor will approve the appointment of the successful tenderer.

### **Part C - Review Costs**

(15) Costs associated with the review, including the travel, accommodation (if applicable) and any other associated costs of the Review Panel, will be borne by the Division under review.

### **Part D - Composition of the Review Panel**

(16) Each Review Panel will include suitably qualified and experienced people who can comment authoritatively on the professional services under review. Panel members may be drawn from another non Victorian university, from sectors other than higher education and from business/industry taking account of commercial in confidence considerations. Depending on the nature of the review, a tender process may be undertaken to identify appropriate reviewers.

(17) A senior La Trobe representative nominated by the Review Sponsor will also form part of the Review Panel.

(18) Reviewers will be requested to sign a confidentiality agreement. Each review will be supported by an Executive Officer nominated by the Executive Director, Planning and Governance.

### **Part E - Formal Appointment of the Review Panel**

(19) The Review Sponsor will provide recommendations to the Vice-Chancellor regarding an appropriate Chair and membership for each Panel.

(20) The relevant SEG portfolio holder and the Head of the Division under review will be invited to comment to the Review Sponsor, in confidence, on a proposed short-list of potential panel members to identify any potential conflicts of interest. The Senior La Trobe representative will also be asked about any potential conflict of interest with the proposed list of external panel members.

(21) The proposed Panel members will be invited to comment, in confidence, on potential conflict of interest between themselves and other proposed panel members.

(22) The Planning and Institutional Performance Unit will provide support for this process.

## **Part F - Role of the Review Sponsor**

(23) The Review Sponsor plays a key role in overseeing the review process, including:

- a. advising the Vice-Chancellor on the scheduling and commissioning of reviews and the appointment of review panels;
- b. approving the self-review document prior to its submission to the review panel;
- c. approving the panel's site visit schedule; meeting with the review panel;
- d. ensuring the review panels are appropriately briefed on the nature and intended outcomes of the review processes and on the La Trobe operating context;
- e. receiving the draft written panel report and working with the review panel, Head of the Division, relevant Senior Executive Group member and other staff as necessary in finalising the report; and
- f. overseeing the progress of action planning and implementation.

## **Part G - Role of the Senior Executive Group Member with Portfolio Responsibility for the Division Under Review**

(24) The Senior Executive Group member will:

- a. be invited to provide comment to the Review Sponsor on possible panel members.
- b. approve the Self-review document prepared by the Division prior to its submission to the review Sponsor; and
- c. meet with the review panel each day of the site visit.

(25) The SEG member plays a key role in supporting the Divisional Head in the implementation of the agreed Action Plan.

## **Part H - Role of the Head of the Division**

(26) The Head of the Division has overall responsibility for the preparation of the self-review document. The Division will receive support from PIPU in the provision of data to underpin the Division's analysis, and general advice on the requirements.

(27) The self-review document will be submitted to the Panel via the Executive Officer at least six weeks before the panel's site visit.

(28) The Executive Officer will ensure the Terms of Reference for the review is made available to La Trobe staff via the University intranet.

(29) The Head of the Division will meet with the review panel each day of the site visit.

(30) The Head of the Division will nominate an administrative officer who will be allocated to work with the panel

Executive Officer to support the logistics for the review.

## **Part I - Role of the Review Panel**

(31) The Review Panel will:

- a. consider the self-review portfolio prepared by the Division;
- b. participate in a teleconference prior to the site-visit;
- c. liaise and or meet with the Review Sponsor throughout the review process to discuss/seek any required additional guidance;
- d. consider any additional information it may wish to request of the Division;
- e. issue a general invitation to the University community to make written submissions to the panel;
- f. where appropriate, invite submissions from particular members of the University community and from external groups and individuals;
- g. actively participate in a site visit (typically three to four days) to conduct interviews with key stakeholders including University management and Division staff and review relevant documentation;
- h. draft recommendations, affirmations and commendations on the final day of the visit;
- i. meet with the Review Sponsor and the Vice-Chancellor and potentially other SEG members, at the conclusion of the visit to discuss preliminary findings and recommendations; and
- j. with the assistance of the Executive Officer, prepare and submit a final written report to the Review Sponsor and then the Vice-Chancellor within six weeks of the site visit. The review report will be prepared in accordance with the specifications in the Reviews Handbook.

## **Part J - Role of the Senior La Trobe Representative**

(32) The Senior La Trobe representative will be nominated by the Review Sponsor.

(33) The Senior La Trobe representative provides a La Trobe perspective to the Panel and facilitates their understanding of the relevant operating environment and current issues.

## **Part K - Role of the Executive Officer**

(34) Planning and Governance will appoint an appropriately qualified person to act as Executive Officer to the review panel. This person may be a PIPU staff member, or drawn from another area within La Trobe. The Executive Officer to the panel will provide professional advice and administrative support to the panel.

(35) The Executive Officer will:

- a. throughout the review, provide professional advice to the panel to ensure the University's expectations of the process are fulfilled;
- b. support the panel in the development of an appropriate site visit schedule and liaise with the Division in practical arrangements for interviews;
- c. work with the Administrative Officer identified by the Division being reviewed to ensure that calendar invitations are made in accordance with the agreed site visit schedule, and that other necessary logistical arrangements (such as catering, inter campus travel (if any)) are made;
- d. ensure La Trobe staff are advised of the option of providing a written submission to the reviewers, and assembling and providing this material to the panel prior to the site visit;
- e. coordinate the provision of information and answers to questions that the panel may have prior to and during the site visit;

- f. participate in the site visit, taking notes of interviews and supporting the panel's work; and
- g. draft the review report, taking account of panel member's feedback, other than in the case of a tender.

(36) The role of the Executive Officer is fully specified in the Reviews Handbook.

## **Part L - Role of the Divisional Administration Officer**

(37) The nominated Divisional Administration Officer will work with the panel Executive Officer to make detailed arrangements for the smooth-running of the panel site visit, including calendar invitations, panel member travel and accommodation bookings (if applicable), room bookings, catering and other administrative duties as required.

## **Part M - Role of the Planning and Institutional Performance Unit**

(38) PIPU has operational responsibility for the reviews process and effective implementation of this Policy.

(39) The Division will receive support from PIPU in the provision of data to underpin the self-review portfolio, including comparative data where available.

(40) PIPU can also assist by providing general advice on the requirements of the self-review document, including suggestions on what data and information may serve as appropriate evidence for the self-review.

(41) PIPU oversees the work of the panel Executive Officer, and provides support to the Review Sponsor in all aspects of the review process.

## **Part N - Self-Review Process and Self-Review Document**

(42) The self-review process provides an opportunity for critical self-assessment by the Division, and should identify areas of achievement and success, as well as opportunities for improvement. Self-assessment focuses on both current and future performance, and includes a critical examination of how the Division can contribute most effectively to the Portfolio's and University's strategic objectives. The Division being reviewed will prepare a self-review document to summarise its performance in relation to the review's Terms of Reference, drawing on appropriate comparative data.

(43) The self-review is not a marketing document and should provide a frank, evidence-based analysis of strengths and opportunities for improvement.

(44) The self-review document will:

- a. address the Terms of Reference;
- b. compare the Division's performance in key areas (with evidence), in line with the Terms of Reference, against relevant comparators in the higher education sector and other sectors, as appropriate; and
- c. focus on future performance through an analysis of the Division's areas of strength and those requiring development.

(45) The self-review document will be no longer than 20-40 A4 pages, excluding appendices, and must address the Terms of Reference for the review.

(46) The self-review document allows the Division to reflect upon and analyse operations in order to optimise future performance. Consequently, the focus of the submission is to identify future directions and strategic intentions for the Division. However, to set the context for the review, it is important to briefly address the Division's history and its present circumstances with a focus on factors that have contributed to the current operating environment and potential future outlook of the Division.

(47) The self-review document should include:

- a. an Executive Summary of the submission;
- b. the history of the Division;
- c. the present circumstances of the Division;
- d. self-evaluation (with supporting evidence) of the current activities and outcomes of the Division and its future plans for improvement and development against each term of reference; and
- e. appendices (including the Division's Business Plan, budget, and supporting evidence).

## **A: The History of the Division**

(48) The section includes reference to:

- a. the origins and histories of the groups/sections of the Division and the history of its organisational relationships (i.e. the precursors to the current Division);
- b. amalgamations of groups/sections;
- c. management structures and leadership positions established and the rationale for their creation;
- d. major outcomes of the previous review (where applicable) and summary of any factors which might have had an impact since the previous review (e.g. reorganisations/structural change, changes in funding formula, changes in stakeholder/user perceptions); and
- e. any other significant changes since the previous review.

## **B: The Division at Present**

(49) This section includes a comprehensive analysis of the Division's current service offerings, operations and performance levels. An overview of the Division's goals and priorities should be provided with an analysis of the extent to which these goals and priorities are being achieved. The self-review should identify the key services provided by the Division and for each key service, assess:

- a. the key stakeholders for the service;
- b. main activities undertaken;
- c. key performance measures; efficiency and effectiveness in allocated resource utilisation; and
- d. effectiveness of internal, advisory and supervisory organisational structures.

(50) There are two types of data required:

- a. Division-specific data or documentation; and
- b. external comparative/benchmark data from higher education and elsewhere. Time series data for the past five years should be provided as the default.

### **Division-Specific Data and Documentation**

(51) Submissions include an assessment of performance according to the areas covered by the generic Terms of Reference. The self-review should include quantitative and qualitative data for the past 3 years (where possible). Where quantitative data are available, comparable data for other relevant units within and external to the University should be supplied.

(52) Data requirements include:

- a. current Business Plan, current year budget and profit-loss statement;
- b. summary of budget and actual financial performance;

- c. organisational chart showing position HEO levels and FTE;
- d. staff demographic data showing age, gender and length of service;
- e. staff qualifications and skill-base;
- f. staff professional development/training/career development plans;
- g. staff succession plan (where available);
- h. most recent Business Plan and Performance Review report;
- i. most recent Staff Climate Survey data;
- j. asset register including major equipment and IT infrastructure;
- k. space report showing floor area, space utilisation and space quality;
- l. relevant data from the UniForum Project.

### **External Comparative Data**

(53) The Division should present relevant comparative data, including at least two IRU member universities. Other relevant university or non-higher education sector external comparators may be used. Relevant data from the UniForum Project must be used.

### **C: The Division in the Future**

(54) This section should be the focus of the submission.

- a. Identify factors that will influence the future directions of the Division and how the Division is currently contributing to that direction and/or realigning its activities in keeping with developments.
- b. Describe plans and strategies for the future development and improvement of the Division over the next five years. It is expected that the Division will submit its current Business Plan.
- c. Areas of potential growth. The future plans of the Division include Division-specific strategic priorities. Some of these areas might arise from the benchmarking exercise or involve predictions of future directions in the Division's activities.

## **Part O - Additional Documents**

(55) Refer to the:

- a. [Administrative Division Review: Generic Terms of Reference](#)
- b. Reviews Handbook

## **Part P - Publication of Written Submissions to the Review**

(56) All written submissions to the review Panel are confidential and will be made available to the Review Panel only at least one week before the site visit.

## **Part Q - Arrangements for Site Visit**

(57) The panel's site visit schedule is prepared by PIPU, with input from the Division under review and the Review Panel members. The Review Sponsor approves the final site visit schedule.

(58) The site visit appointments, room bookings, catering and other logistics will be coordinated by the panel Executive Officer and supported by the allocated Divisional Administration Officer.

## **Part R - Report of the Panel**

(59) The review report will be prepared in accordance with the Review Handbook.

(60) Within eight weeks of the site visit a draft report will be submitted to the Review Sponsor. He/she will invite the Divisional Head to check the report for matters of fact and emphasis. The review Sponsor may circulate the draft to other staff at his/her discretion, for factual checking. The report will then be returned to the Panel for consideration of comments and final sign-off by the Panel Chair.

(61) The Panel will submit the final report to the Review Sponsor who will receive the report and make recommendations to the Vice-Chancellor.

(62) The Vice-Chancellor will provide the Head of Division and the relevant SEG member with a copy of the Panel's report and invite the preparation of an Action Plan, using the approved pro-forma. The draft Action Plan will first be submitted by the Head of the Division to the SEG member and the review Sponsor for consideration. The final version of the Action Plan will be submitted by the Review Sponsor to the Vice-Chancellor for approval.

## **Part S - Scope of the Review Report**

(63) The Review Report is intended to be primarily focussed on the activities of the Division. During the process the Panel may identify issues outside the Division that impact on its capacity to fulfil its mission. These issues should be identified in a discrete section of the report, but without specific recommendations related to wider organisational matters, other than the suggestion that these matters might be reviewed in the wider organisational context. At the time of preparing the Action Plan the Review Sponsor will seek input from the University officer with accountability for that area to determine the action that needs to be taken and these details will be included in the Action Plan.

## **Part T - Distribution of the Panel Report**

(64) The head of the Division of the area under review will make the report available to members of the Division and is expected to consult with Division staff as appropriate in the development of an Action Plan.

## **Part U - Division Response to the Report - Action Plan**

(65) The Action Plan will respond directly to the recommendations made by the Panel, and will be prepared in accordance with the format provided by PIPU.

(66) Where these relate to matters outside the Division, the Review Sponsor will seek input from the University officer with accountability for that area and include the University actions in the draft Action Plan submitted by the Head of Division.

(67) The Action Plan will be submitted to the Review Sponsor within one month of the invitation to the Head of Division. The Review Sponsor will provide initial feedback on the draft Action Plan and will submit the final Action Plan to the Vice-Chancellor for formal approval.

## **Part V - Reporting on Review Outcomes**

(68) The Action Plan and the Panel's Review Report will be presented to Senior Executive Group for management approval.

(69) The Vice-Chancellor will provide the Action Plan and the Panel's Review Report to Council for governance approval.



(70) The Action Plan and the Panel's Review Report will also be provided to Academic Board (via the Academic Quality Committee).

## **Part W - Implementation of Action Plans**

(71) The relevant SEG member and the Head of the Division under review have a responsibility to monitor the implementation of the Action Plan.

(72) Items in the Action Plan will be incorporated into the Division Business Plan. Reporting on the Action Plan will be integrated into the Division's annual reporting against Business Plan objectives.

## **Part X - Progress Reports**

(73) The Division will provide the Vice-Chancellor, through the Review Sponsor with a consolidated report of progress against each relevant review recommendation at 12 months and 18 months and each following 12 months until such time as the Division is due for another cyclical review.

(74) The 12 and 18 monthly Progress Reports will be provided to Senior Executive Group for approval; and the Vice-Chancellor will provide a summary report provided to Council and Academic Board (via the Academic Quality Committee) for noting. This process will be facilitated by PIPU.

## **Part Y - Records Management**

(75) All confidential submissions, drafts of the review report, and notes taken during the review, will be returned by panel members to the secretariat upon completion of the review for confidential disposal.

(76) Records and Archives Services will retain a copy of the core self-review document and the final Panel report.

## **Section 5 - Definitions**

(77) For the purpose of this Policy and Procedure:

- a. Action Plan: Usually in tabular form, details planned responses to recommendations, responsible persons and timelines for action.

## **Section 6 - Stakeholders**

Responsibility for implementation – Vice-Chancellor; Vice-President (Strategy and Development); Executive Director, Planning and Governance.

Responsibility for monitoring implementation and compliance – Vice-President (Administration); Academic Board; University Council and the Senior Executive Group.

## Status and Details

<b>Status</b>	Current
<b>Effective Date</b>	1st August 2017
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<b>Unit Head</b>	Natalie MacDonald Vice-President (Strategy and Development) +61 3 9479 1862
<b>Author</b>	Katerina Speer Director, Planning and Institutional Performance Unit
<b>Enquiries Contact</b>	Planning and Institutional Performance Unit