UC Policy Library

Academic Reviews Policy and Guidelines

Last Modified   July 2020
Review Date   July 2022
Approval Authority Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic)
Contact Officer   Academic Quality Team Leader – Office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic)

Introduction

This policy outlines the approach to, and guidance around, undertaking academic reviews.

Definitions

Academic (or Programme) Review – a review of the overall academic quality of a qualification or programme, its purpose, structure, curriculum, teaching and learning, student outcomes, and, in particular for undergraduate degrees, the ability of graduates to meet the UC graduate attributes[1].

Programme – in the context of 'academic review', this includes a qualification, or a progressive series of courses in a defined subject or set of subjects. The key characteristic of a 'programme' is that it is comprised of a group of courses that are connected and exhibit a progressive sequence of study.

Qualification – a degree, certificate or diploma, approved by Universities NZ, Committee on University Academic Programmes (CUAP).

Policy Statement

Academic reviews are a key element in the University's Academic Quality Framework.

Objectives of an academic review include

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[1] For more information on the UC graduate attributes, see *Graduate Profile (University intranet)* (Staff only)

a. to assure the University of the quality of a qualification, by assessing whether the qualification meets expected standards

   i. at the University of Canterbury,

   ii. nationally, and

   iii. internationally (benchmarking objective); and

b. to determine ways in which the qualification might be improved (enhancement objective); and

c. to advance objectives that are specific to a qualification, for example to determine whether a qualification might be offered by alternative teaching modes, or whether a qualification is cost-efficient **and financially viable**.

As well as the institutional objectives of benchmarking and enhancement, an academic review should therefore also be responsive to opportunities and constraints which provide the context in which it is offered.

The initial focus of a review is usually on <u>outcomes</u>; i.e., *does the qualification meet expected and relevant standards?*

Additionally, a review might explore <u>systems</u> and <u>processes,</u> especially where it is considered there is a weakness or gap in an outcome. The review report should be able to identify the processes which need to be addressed in order to achieve the standard and any improvements recommended, and suggest steps for achieving these.

Categories of Academic Review

1. All qualifications of the University, except higher doctorates, shall be reviewed via an academic review commissioned by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) every five years. Review reports shall be made to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic). The review schedule will be published on the *[Academic Quality/Lead intranet (University Academic Quality/LEAD intranet website).](#)*

   Reviews will be followed by a one-year-on report that describes progress towards the implementation of the recommendations. The Academic Quality Team will have oversight of the schedule for one-year-on reports. If appropriate, an action plan will also be required, six months after the presentation of the Review Panel's report.

2. In addition to the scheduled reviews referred to above, ad-hoc reviews may also be commissioned. Ad-hoc reviews may be in response to a specific issue (e.g., admission criteria or when a qualification is being considered for discontinuation), or for strategic reasons. Such reviews may be commissioned by the

   - Vice-Chancellor,

   - Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic), or

- Pro-Vice-Chancellor of the relevant College.

3. A number of qualifications have regular reviews required by a professional body for the purposes of assuring that graduates of a qualification receive professional recognition; e.g., Engineering New Zealand review. Terms of reference for a professional accreditation review are normally set by the relevant professional body. Where possible, an academic review is undertaken in conjunction with an accreditation review.

4. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) and Assistant Vice-Chancellor (Māori, Pacific and Equity) shall be advised of all academic review proposals before they take place.

5. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) shall commission a review of the doctorates on a cycle of not less than every 10 years.

Guidelines: Review of Qualifications

1.   Responsibilities for the Management of the Review

1.1. Reviews will be coordinated by an Academic Manager[2] as directed by the relevant Dean and/or Pro-Vice-Chancellor.

1.2. The Academic Manager will be responsible for collating a Review Portfolio which contains relevant documentation (see *Appendix A* below). The Academic Manager is also responsible for ensuring that appropriate administration support is provided for the review in terms of arranging travel and accommodation for visiting panellists and ensuring that refreshments and meals are provided.

1.3. The Chair of the Review Panel will be responsible for facilitating the review by the panel and for preparing the Review Report (see *Appendix D* below). For professional accreditation reports, the University of Canterbury panel member will be responsible for preparing the appendix to cover internal matters (see *clause 8.4* below).

1.4. Costs of academic reviews will be borne by the College responsible for the qualification. An honorarium (determined by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor) will be paid to each panel member who is not a continuing academic staff member at the University. Reasonable travel and accommodation expenses will be reimbursed.

2.   Confidentiality

2.1. Panel members will treat all submissions as confidential. Submissions will be destroyed when the review report is finalised.

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[2] For Colleges where there is no Academic Manager, an equivalent senior administrator should take on the roles identified throughout the policy.

2.2. The Panel Chair should bring to the attention of the Assistant Vice-Chancellor (Academic) any matters of concern which arise in the Review and which fall outside the terms of reference.

3.   Review Process

3.1. *Terms of Reference*

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) confirms the Terms of Reference for the review, in consultation with the Pro-Vice-Chancellor and relevant Dean.

3.2.   The review process should follow these steps:

For scheduled Academic Reviews, the Panels are required to provide their assessment on the following points:

a. Overall, does this qualification meet standards acceptable to the panel for

   i. a University of Canterbury degree,

   ii. New Zealand degrees in this discipline/these disciplines, and

   iii. international degrees in this discipline/these disciplines.

b. Consideration of the issues listed in Section 6. In the case of an undergraduate qualification, it must include discussion on how the qualification meets the graduate attributes both in terms of programmes of study and where appropriate in individual courses.

c. Recommendations for improving this qualification:

   • to meet University of Canterbury, national and international standards;

   • to achieve the stated graduate profile; and

   • to meet professional or employer requirements.

d. Commendations.

3.3.   Specific aspects of the qualification requiring review may be added with the approval of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) and/or Assistant Vice-Chancellor (Māori, Pacific and Equity), in consultation with the College Pro-Vice-Chancellor and/or Vice-Chancellor. Additional questions must be stated clearly in a way which does not create ambiguity in relation to the generic terms of reference.

3.4.   Terms of reference for ad hoc reviews should be determined by the person commissioning the review in consultation with the College Pro-Vice-Chancellor and/or Vice-Chancellor. Additional questions must be stated clearly in a way which does not create ambiguity in relation to the generic terms of reference.

Panel membership

3.5.   The Panel members and a Panel Chair will be nominated by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor, in consultation with the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) and Assistant Vice-Chancellor (Māori Pacifika and Equity).

3.6.   Approval of panels, including the appointment of the Panel Chair, lies with the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic).

3.7.   The Review Panel will normally comprise

- Panel Chair (normally a University senior staff member),

- A University academic from a related discipline'

- one or two academics from the same discipline at another New Zealand tertiary institution (at least one must be from a university),

- one academic from an overseas university, and

- (if relevant) one or more members of the profession or an employer of graduates.

Consideration should be given to having a student or recent graduate on review panels. The gender balance of the panel membership should also be borne in mind and at least one panel member should be able to provide appropriate advice related to *Rautaki Whakawhanake Kaupapa Māori: Strategy for Māori Development University Plans website).*

A person who has recently been a moderator or external examiner for a qualification should not also be a Review Panellist.

3.8.   Panels will usually not exceed five people. Most of the panel's work will be electronic or paper-based. Site visits will normally be of two days' duration, preceded by an evening orientation and planning meeting. A further day may be required for analysis, formulation of recommendations and report drafting.

4.   Self-Review Report

4.1. The Pro-Vice-Chancellor, or a nominee as appropriately appointed, should author a self-review report (see also *Appendix B*)*.

4.2. The author of the self-review is free to develop the report in the manner s/he deems most appropriate (e.g., by use of working parties, sub-authors, discussion, etc.). The self-review document should be completed following the format outlined in *Appendix B – Self-Review Report.* It provides an overview of the qualification being reviewed, its strengths and challenges, identification of issues which the panel is asked to reflect on and a summary of key data generated by the Business Insight and Reporting team on request (see *Appendix C* for data set). The self-review should address the topics specified in the terms of reference for the review.

4.3. The Self-Review Report should not normally exceed 7,500 words excluding key appendices. The Self-Review Report will be informed by, but should not replicate the information collated in the Review Portfolio.

4.4. The panel should receive the Self-Review Report at least three weeks prior to the site visit. At this time it is also helpful to give the panel a summary (i.e., list of topics) of the supplementary material in the Review Portfolio which will be available at the site visit and a brief biographic note on each panel member.

5.   Portfolio and Supporting Documentation for the Panel

5.1. The Review Portfolio is prepared by the Academic Manager (see *Appendix A*).

5.2. In addition to the Self-Review Report, the Review Portfolio should be made available to the panel prior to their visit. The portfolio should include the information outlined in *Appendix A,* supporting documents, and all written submissions.

5.3. Submissions will be sought from

- staff teaching in the qualification (as appropriate/relevant),
- University colleagues in other disciplines who are familiar with the qualification,
- colleagues teaching the same or similar qualification in New Zealand and overseas (as appropriate/relevant),
- UCSA,
- any accreditation or registration body,
- Dean,
- other Deans,
- Assistant Vice-Chancellor (Māori, Pacific and Equity),
- external stakeholders, and
- employers of graduates.

Requests for submissions will include the terms of reference for the review. The Review Panel will also be provided with the relevant Department/School, College, University and Universities NZ CUAP regulations, polices and guidelines plus any relevant University planning documents. In most cases the electronic links should be sufficient.

6.   Issues to be considered by Review Panels

6.1. The following list outlines the areas which a panel might consider in reaching its conclusions. This list is not exhaustive:

- Admission criteria – are they appropriate or adhered to? (Include international admission criteria where relevant.)

- Student enrolment trends – are the student enrolment numbers consistent with Academic Board approved levels for minimal student numbers in undergraduate programmes? Are postgraduate student enrolment numbers viable and sustainable?

- Curriculum 'content':

  - Coherence across total qualification.

  - Appropriateness for each level.

  - Does the curriculum conform to national/international good practice?

  - Any unique aspects (good or poor).

  - Any omissions in the qualification.

  - Is the curriculum internationalised?

- Benchmarking information – how does the programme sit in the current context? This may include expectations from professional bodies, industry or employers for example**.**

- For undergraduate qualifications, how are the UC graduate attributes[3] being developed and delivered?

- Is there evidence of the curriculum being research-informed?

- Is there evidence that the curriculum contributes to the expectations as outlined in *Rautaki Whakawhanake Kaupapa Māori: Strategy for Māori Development (University Plans website)*?

  If not, why not?

- Has consideration been given to the *UC Pasifika Strategy (University Plans website)*?

  If not, why not?

- Is the qualification graduate profile appropriate? Does the assessment enable students to be assessed against the qualification graduate profile?

- Mode of delivery:

  - Is it appropriate?

  - Suitable balance of lectures, self-paced, flexible mode, tutorials, etc.

  - Is the staff - student ratio appropriate?

  - If online or blended, how are students supported in this environment?

- Assessment – modes of assessment and protocols for assessment:

  - Do these conform to University/national/international accepted practice?

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[3] *Graduate Profile (University intranet)* (Staff only)

- Issues: e.g., who does the assessment, and is internal/external moderation appropriate?

- Standards of achievement, relative to grades awarded – are these appropriate?

- Student workload expectations, modal workload relative to achievement – are these appropriate?

- Student support:

  - Practice regarding special consideration.

  - Availability of tutors.

  - Availability of required resources.

  - Pastoral care.

- Teaching criteria:

  - Qualifications of staff.

  - Participation in teaching workshops or conferences.

  - Professional activities outside the university relevant to the programme.

  - Student evaluations of courses.

- Portability:

  - Credit given by other universities – are courses portable at equal value?

  - Acceptance into postgraduate study elsewhere.

- Graduate destinations, employability of graduates, and stakeholder comment on graduates of qualifications. Acceptability of the qualification for employers, professional communities and other reference groups.

- Identify any special issues; e.g., small course numbers, limitation of entry, special admission requirements, relationship with other providers, requirements for accreditation.

- Are the facilities and learning spaces appropriate?

- Library holdings – are these adequate and appropriate? Any specific omissions?

- Is the programme financially viable into the future?

7. Review Panel and Site Visit

7.1. As soon as the Panel Chair is confirmed the College Pro-Vice-Chancellor in consultation with the Dean and Academic Manager should finalise a timeline.

7.2. The Panel is then expected to review the Self-Review Report and portfolio prior to the site visit. The panel may be briefed by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) and the relevant Pro-Vice-Chancellor.

7.3. Panel members are free to conduct their business as they choose. However the following activities are suggested:

- The Panel will usually assemble in the evening prior to a two-day period of deliberations. Dinner is usually arranged for this meeting. This is an opportunity for the Chair to brief the Panel and for the Panel to identify any specific areas they wish to focus on during their interviews or deliberations.

- Interviews with key people, identified by the Chair in consultation with the Dean and College Pro-Vice-Chancellor, should be undertaken (interviewees should be advised prior to the site visit). A timetable of interviews should be arranged by the Academic Manager.

- The Panel Chair may ask individual Panel members to take specific responsibility for preparing for and asking about specific areas, and for drafting that section of the report (subject to final editing by the Chair).

- There should be an opportunity for either the whole Panel, or the Chair, to meet briefly with the Pro-Vice-Chancellor and the Dean at the conclusion of the site visit to convey initial impressions, conclusions and concerns.

- The completed draft of the Report should be circulated, preferably electronically, to all Panel members for checking. If necessary, the College Office (via the Academic Manager) should assist with the preparation of the report.

8.   The Review Report

8.1. The Review Report is the responsibility of the Panel Chair (who may write it him/herself, or delegate the writing to one of the Panel members).

8.2. The Report should cover the suggested format for an Academic Review Report in *Appendix D* and cover the key issues identified in the Terms of Reference in a succinct fashion. In particular, recommendations should be supported by the evidence which led the panel to the recommendation. Key data should be included in an appendix (e.g., report generated by the Business Insight and Reporting team for the Self-Review Report).

8.3. The Report usually should be no more than 7,500 words excluding appendices. Examples of review reports are available from the Academic Quality Team.

8.4   For Teaching Council reports, and any other professional accreditation body reports, the University panel member should submit an addendum to the report to cover aspects not included in the professional body report but which are required by this policy. The following aspects are suggested:

-    For undergraduate qualifications, how are the UC graduate attributes being developed and delivered?

-    Is there evidence that the curriculum contributes to the expectations as outlined in *Rautaki Whakawhanake Kaupapa Māori: Strategy for Māori Development University Plans website)?*

If not, why not?

- Has consideration been given to the Pacific strategy?

This addendum should be submitted to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) and will be considered alongside the panel's review report.

8.5. The Report should be submitted by the Panel Chair to the Pro-Vice-Chancellor and College Executive within six weeks of the site visit for comments on matters of fact and checking the report aligns with the terms of reference approved for the review. The report may be circulated, in confidence, by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor to Heads of relevant Departments/Schools.

The Dean will create a chart (see *Appendix E*) to identify who (including which University committee where relevant) will be responsible for each recommendation and a timescale of when each recommendation is expected to be resolved. The chart will be sent to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) for consideration within four weeks of receipt of the report alongside the final review report.

9. Submission of the Final Report and One Year on Report

9.1. The final report should be submitted to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) and the Academic Quality Team within ten weeks of the site visit.

9.2. The report, (alongside the addendum for accreditation reports - where necessary - produced by the UC panel member as described above) is distributed by the Academic Quality team for comment on the recommendations to

- Academic Administration Committee (AAC),

- Learning and Teaching Committee (LTC),

- Postgraduate Committee (if appropriate), and relevant College committees.

The Panel Chair may be invited to present the report to the AAC and LTC.

The full report and comments from these committees is also considered by a subsequent Academic Board meeting.

9.3. The College Executive discusses the recommendations and feedback received and makes decisions on their implementation.

9.4. One year after the report is received, a follow-up report is submitted to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic), the AAC, the LTC and to the Academic Board for information.

9.5. Copies of scheduled academic review reports and one-year-on follow-up reports must be lodged with the Academic Quality Team as part of the University's academic quality assurance process.

Related Documents and Information

UC Website and Intranet

- Academic Programme Reviews (Academic Quality Team Website)
- Blue Book Programme Approval (University Blue Book intranet) (Staff Only)
- Graduate Profiles (University Academic Programme/LEAD intranet) (Staff only)
- Rautaki Whakawhanake Kaupapa Māori: Strategy for Māori Development (University Plans website)
- UC Pasifika Strategy 2019-2023 (University Plans website)
- University of Canterbury Calendar (University Publications website)

External

- Universities New Zealand – Committee on University Academic Programmes (CUAP) (Universities New Zealand website)

Appendices

- Appendix A: Review Portfolio – Information to be Provided by the Academic Manager/ Senior Administrator
- Appendix B: Self-Review Report
- Appendix C: Agreed Data Set for Self-Review Report
- Appendix D: Suggested Format for an Academic Review Report
- Appendix E: Suggested Format for Chart to be completed by the Dean identifying responsibility for recommendations

Document History and Version Control Table			
Version	**Action**	**Approval Authority**	**Action Date**
For document history and versioning prior to 2013 contact ucpolicy@canterbury.ac.nz			
1.00	Conversion of document into new format and document pushed out.	Policy Unit	Aug 2013
1.01	AVC(A) changed to DVC(A) in line with title change.	Policy Unit	Oct 2013
1.02	Document review date pushed out, and DVC(A) changed to DVC(A&I) in line with title change.	Policy Unit	Feb 2014
1.03	Hyperlinks updated.	Policy Unit	Jun 2014
1.04	Review date pushed out.	Policy Unit	Sep 2014
1.05	Contact Officer updated and DVC(A&I) changed to DVC(A) in line with title change.	Policy Unit	Apr 2015

2.00	Major scheduled review – comprehensive consultation and update.	DVC(A)	Jan 2016
2.01	'Faculty' references removed to reflect College-Faculty merger.	Policy Unit	Jun 2016
3.00	Schedule review by Contact Officer, minor changes to position titles and content to reflect current practice.	DVC(A)	July 2020

This policy remains in force until it is updated.

Appendix A – Review Portfolio

Information to be provided in advance to the panel by the Academic Manager/Senior Administrator:

Introduction/Curriculum

- Title of the qualification(s) to be reviewed.

- Course outlines for each course in the qualification, as appropriate/relevant – obtainable from programme administrator.

- CUAP definition of relevant qualification – obtainable from Academic Quality Team.

- Original CUAP proposal and a summary of any subsequent major changes (significant changes are those normally requiring CUAP approval, plus any new courses or subjects) – obtainable from the Academic Quality Team.

- Graduating year review – obtainable from the Academic Quality Team.

- Regulations for the current qualification as included in the current University Calendar, including admission requirements, structure, progression requirements, special requirements, etc., – obtainable from the Academic Quality team.

Purpose and Design

- Graduate Profile (for each qualification in the review) – obtainable from the Academic Quality Team.

- For undergraduate qualifications, the UC graduate attributes and supporting information – obtainable from the Academic Quality Team.

- Agreed data set for the Self-Review Report (if relevant).

- Professional accreditation review report (if relevant).

Teaching and Assessment

- Report on distribution of grades awarded per course in most recent year – obtainable from UCSMS.

- Course survey scores for most recent year surveyed by individual course – obtainable from the Learning Evaluation and Academic Development Team.

- List of teaching staff, their qualifications (available from HR). Provide a list indicating which courses staff teach into – available from the Department/School administrator.

- If the qualification or courses are externally moderated or examined, a copy of the most recent report.

- *[Rautaki Whakawhanake Kaupapa Māori: Strategy for Māori Development (University Plans website)](#)* and *[UC Pasifika Strategy (University Plans Website).](#)*

- Any information routinely collected about graduates, employers and graduate destinations. List any graduates who have recently won scholarships (obtainable from the Scholarships Office) or been accepted into postgraduate programmes elsewhere.

- Any relevant promotional material; e.g., departmental brochure or handbook **and** anonymous samples of assessed student work across a range of courses (permission must be obtained from students for their work to be seen) – this need not form part of the submission to be sent in advance to the panel but should be available for review at the time of their visit.

Learning Resources

- Statement from Library re library holdings.
- Statement from Facilities Management re space requirements/use.

Appendix B – Self-Review Report

The following material is required in the Self-Review Report:

Introduction

- Title of the programme(s) to be reviewed.

- An overview of the qualification(s) being reviewed, strengths and challenges of the qualification(s), identification of issues which the panel is asked to reflect on, and plans for future development.

Purpose and Design

- Include comment on how the staff and students believe the qualification's Graduate Profile has been achieved.

- For undergraduate qualifications, describe how the UC graduate attributes[4] have been achieved.

- Describe briefly how the qualification fits in with the Departmental/School/ College/University plan.

- Document involvement, if any, with key stakeholders (e.g., membership of, Advisory Boards).

Curriculum

- Describe briefly how the qualification recognises and promotes the teaching-research nexus and reinforces the interdependent nature of research and teaching.

- Describe briefly how the qualification incorporates Māori content or contributes to the expectations as outlined in *Rautaki Whakawhanake Kaupapa Māori: University Strategy for Māori Development (University Plans website).*

  If not, why not?

- Describe briefly how the qualification fulfils the University's obligations as they relate to the Pacific Plan.

Teaching and Assessment

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[4] Graduate Profile (University Intranet) (Staff only)

- Describe briefly and comment on any internal quality assurance procedures; e.g., is there an end of course reflection with a view to future improvements?

- Include a brief summary of any benchmarking activities undertaken; e.g., against comparable programmes.

Enhancements

- Recommendations for improving this qualification:

  - to meet University, national and international standards,

  - to achieve the stated graduate profile, and

  - to meet professional or employer requirements.

- For undergraduate qualifications, any recommendations to enhance the qualification's   approach to fulfilling the UC graduate attributes.

Appendix C – Agreed Data Set for Self-Review Report

Requests should be made to the following groups for data set information:

1. Business Insight and Reporting

- Numbers of students enrolled in named qualification(s) at both postgraduate and undergraduate level for previous five years, as appropriate.

- Demographic profile of students in qualification(s) for previous five years to include ethnicity, gender, age group, citizenship category, full-time or part-time status, domestic or international fee status, admission reason, major subject, endorsement, and secondary school region (where appropriate).

- Qualification completion numbers for previous five years (as appropriate).

- Completion times for the qualification.

- Subsequent qualification enrolments for following year for previous five years (as appropriate).

- Successful course completions – number of EFTS enrolled and number and percentage of EFTS passed for previous five years.

- Specific data requirements (e.g., the inclusion of double majors) can be requested.

2. Learning Evaluation and Academic Development (Institutional Research)

- Graduate Destination Survey results.

- Student experience results (e.g., UCount).

- Specific analysis of existing student learning experiences or teaching intervention studies.

Please note a minimum of two months' notice is required for these reports.

Appendix D – Suggested Format for an Academic Review Report

1. Cover Page

This should include the title of the qualification(s) being reviewed and the date of the report.

2. Table of Contents

3. Contents

If the generic terms of reference are used, the table of contents of a typical academic review report should look as follows:

- Executive summary including list of commendations and recommendations.

- Terms of Reference and Review Process.

- List of Panel members.

- Context.

- Curriculum.

- Teaching and assessment.

- Learning resources.

- Enhancements.

- Findings and recommendations.

4. Appendix

Key data from *Appendix C.*

Appendix E – Suggested Format for Chart to be completed by the Dean identifying responsibility for recommendations

Response to Academic Review of the_____

Date_____

List of recommendations	Person/committee responsible	Others involved	Comments	Action period
Rec 1:				
Rec 2:				