
Academic Reviews and Monitoring Policy

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to define the principles and intentions that underpin the academic reviews and monitoring processes at Te Herenga Waka–Victoria University of Wellington (‘the University’). This policy does not limit the ability of a Senior Leadership Team member to undertake a review of an academic unit for purposes not covered here.

2. Application of Policy

This policy applies to all credit bearing courses, qualifications, and programmes of the University, and to all staff members involved in their delivery. This includes programmes delivered wholly or partly overseas.

Policy Context

3. Principles

3.1 Reviews and monitoring activity will:

- (a) take into account the University’s strategic objectives
- (b) take into account the University’s commitments to Te Tiriti o Waitangi
- (c) incorporate a reflective self-review
- (d) use evidence from a range of sources, including the student voice
- (e) take into account recent or upcoming monitoring activities with overlapping relevance, including accreditation processes
- (f) take into account any changes or trends in the academic and professional sector(s)
- (g) identify both good practice and areas for improvement
- (h) be conducted in a way that is appropriate to the size of the programme.

4. Objectives

The objective of academic reviews and monitoring activities is to provide assurance of the quality of the University’s academic offerings, including programmes, qualifications, and courses. They provide a basis for on-going quality improvement to assist in achieving excellence in learning, teaching and research at the University.

5. Reviews

5.1 Academic Programme Review (APR)

All programmes in the University will be regularly reviewed through an APR process that examines the content and structure of the curriculum including the regulations, as well as the learning opportunities provided, and the connection with the research in the discipline.

All APRs will be guided by terms of reference, included as appendix 1. The terms of reference may be amended with agreement by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Academic and the relevant Dean. The procedures for APRs are included as appendix 2.

Note: Programme reviews are usually conducted of cognate disciplines/subject areas that contribute to one or more qualifications.

5.2 Graduating Year Review (GYR)

The Committee on University Academic Programmes (CUAP) require all new qualifications and majors to undergo a review to assure the Committee that “programmes are meeting their original objectives and an acceptable standard of delivery” (CUAP Handbook).

Note: GYRs are required when proposals introduce new qualifications and new parts of qualifications that make up at least 40% of it.

5.3 Special Purpose Reviews (SPR)

A special purpose review of an academic programme may be requested by a member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT). The SLT member is responsible for working with the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Academic to establish appropriate terms of reference and ensure resources are available for the review.

6. **Monitoring**

Progress Reports

Following an APR, the programme that was reviewed must develop a response that describes what actions are to be taken as a result. This report will be provided to the Academic Board and regularly updated.

Related Documents

[Education and Training Act 2020](#)

[CUAP Handbook 2021](#)

[Assessment Handbook](#)

[Student feedback on courses policy](#)

Document Management and Control

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Appendix 1: Terms of Reference for Academic Programme Reviews

The following questions and evaluation indicators provide the framework for what the Academic Programme Review process at the University seeks to understand, evaluate, and improve in each programme. Programmes and panels should use the terms of reference as the basis of their reflection.

Consideration of these questions and indicators should lead to the development a series of commendations of good practice and identify areas for improvement. Areas for improvement may be identified as suggestions, which are areas the programme could improve, or recommendations, which are areas that the programme must address.

The terms of reference are grouped into seven domains, under each domain are a set of evaluation indicators. These indicators are designed to help programmes and panels answer the key question in each domain (i.e., these are not measures).

Domain 1 – Design

How effective is the design of the programme?

Evaluation Indicators:

1. All courses contribute to students achieving the graduate outcomes.
2. The programme's offerings cover topics that are contemporary and provide knowledge and skills that are necessary and valued for professional and/or academic careers.
3. Teaching is informed by staff research, particularly at higher levels of study.
4. The programme has clear mapping of content and skills development pathways that is communicated and understood by students and staff.
5. The programme ensures that there are opportunities for all students, from a range of backgrounds and situations, to succeed in the programme (and thus, meets the goals of universal design).
6. The programme incorporates and nurtures interdisciplinary links where appropriate.
7. The programme's offerings take account of the current trends in the discipline, both academic and professional.
8. The programme places emphasis on the role and methods of research in creating knowledge.

Domain 2 – Delivery and Assessment

How well does the programme ensure that students are able to achieve the goals of the programme?

Evaluation Indicators:

1. There is an appropriate range of assessment tasks that effectively measure student's achievement of the learning outcomes in the programme.
2. Students receive timely formative and summative feedback throughout their courses.
3. The delivery of the programme provides students with opportunities to engage in activities that support their learning and development (e.g., tutorials, labs, use of digital technology, work integrated learning).
4. The learning objectives and learning opportunities in courses are clearly communicated to students.
5. Postgraduate supervision is of good quality and well balanced between support and fostering independence.
6. Postgraduate students are trained or supported to navigate the administrative aspects of the University.
7. Students are encouraged to progress to higher levels of study in the programme.
8. The degree to which staff are engaged with scholarship on learning and teaching practice in their discipline.
9. Adequate learning resources are provided for students (e.g., teaching facilities, the Library and IT resources).

Domain 3 – Evaluation and Quality

How well does the programme use information and feedback in order to improve?

Evaluation Indicators:

1. Assessments are moderated appropriately, including external moderation for postgraduate programmes (and take account of any professional body requirements).
2. The programme regularly reviews student data and uses it to identify and respond to trends in enrolment and retention.
3. The programme understands how well it is performing and has plans or strategies for further development.

Domain 4 – Programme’s Community

How well does the programme foster a sense of community for its students (undergraduate and postgraduate), and staff, that reaches across the programme?

Evaluation Indicators:

1. Undergraduate students are included in appropriate activities to enable them to work in a collaborative learning environment.
2. Postgraduate students have events to discuss their research and are invited to programme-level events such as seminars and visiting lecturers.
3. International students are supported to be an integral part of the student community.
4. Staff working in similar sub-disciplines have collegial relationships and collaborate on teaching and/or research.
5. The programme as a whole has appropriate opportunities for collaboration on learning & teaching and research within and external to the programme.

Domain 5 – Māori

How well does the programme demonstrate commitment to Te Tiriti o Waitangi by promoting a Māori focus in its design, delivery, assessment and evaluation?

Evaluation Indicators:

1. The programme promotes Māori content/perspectives, as appropriate to the discipline, in its offerings and assessment.
2. Staff in the programme:
 - a. provide a learning experience that is culturally safe for Māori students
 - b. engage in Māori-related teaching and research.
3. The programme monitors enrolment and retention of Māori students and takes immediate action to resolve issues.
4. The programme is involved in the development of reciprocal relationships, opportunities, and partnerships with Māori communities.

Domain 6 - Pasifika

How effectively does the programme provide opportunities for Pasifika students to engage in their learning and progress to further study?

Evaluation Indicators:

1. Staff in the programme are culturally able to provide a learning, teaching and research environment which is inclusive to Pasifika students.

2. The programme includes Pasifika content and/or perspectives in its offerings, assessment, and other applicable areas.
3. The programme monitors and utilises Pasifika student data on:
 - a. enrolment, to improve recruitment into the programme
 - b. retention and achievement, to ensure that students receive timely and effective support in their studies.
4. The programme collaborates with Pasifika students, staff, families, and communities to facilitate input to the discipline and provide reciprocal opportunities.

Domain 7 – Stakeholder Engagement

How effectively is the linked to and responsive to its relevant academic, social, and professional communities?

Evaluation Indicators:

1. Staff in the programme have links to staff at other universities who teach/research in the discipline and are engaged in a wider academic community (nationally and internationally).
2. The programme clearly identifies who its external stakeholders are.
3. The programme is engaged with its external stakeholders to enable discussion of potential changes and trends in the workforce and in the discipline(s).
4. The programme has evidence that it is acceptable to its external stakeholders.
5. The programme identifies career opportunities/pathways for graduates and informs students of these.

The Dean and Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Academic may agree to amend the term(s) of reference as required.

Appendix 2: Procedures for Academic Programme Reviews

1. Purpose

These procedures outline how the University conducts its monitoring and review of academic programmes.

2. Application of Procedures

These procedures apply to staff members, students and visiting panel members.

Academic Programme Review Processes

3. Planning Reviews

- 3.1 An annual schedule for Academic Programme Reviews (APRs) is established by the Manager, Quality and Policy of the Academic Office in discussion with Deans and notified to the Academic Board in the year prior. The schedule for reviews ensures that all programmes are part of an APR every seven years.
- 3.2 The Academic Office co-ordinates the timing of reviews and their organisation (e.g., room bookings, meetings, panel travel and accommodation) in consultation with Faculties/Schools/programmes.
- 3.3 A special purpose programme review request may be made by an SLT member to the Academic Office. The terms of reference for a special purpose review of a programme will be agreed between the Dean and the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic).

4. Developing the self-review

- 4.1 The Dean or Head of School will appoint a self-review team to lead the self-review process. This group must include the Programme Director (or equivalent) and at least one senior academic staff member who teaches on the programme.
- 4.2 The self-review team is responsible for engaging with all staff associated with the delivery and management of the programme(s), including those in other schools or faculties where appropriate.
- 4.3 Advice for the development of the self-review can be found in the guidelines. The Centre for Academic Development is available to help with this process.
- 4.4 The self-review document must be checked for accuracy, signed off by the Dean and be submitted to the Academic Office six weeks prior to the panel visit.
- 4.5 The self-review will be sent to the panel. Prior to the panel visit, a copy of the self-review will be sent to senior staff in the university who will meet with the panel e.g., Associate Dean(s), Toi huarewa, Assistant Vice-Chancellor (Pasifika).

5. Review panel composition

- 5.1 The membership of the review panel is approved by the Dean. The standard panel recommendation form is included in the guidelines.
- 5.2 The Academic Office nominates the convenor who:

- (a) Is a senior academic or recently retired academic from a different faculty; and
 - (b) Has relevant experience in university management; and
 - (c) Ideally has previously served as a member on at least one quality assurance review panel at a university.
- 5.3 The faculty and school are responsible for nominating external panel members, who should have as a minimum:
- (a) One academic staff member from an overseas university
 - (b) One academic staff member from another New Zealand university.
- 5.4 The composition of the panel should also have the skills and knowledge to give effect to the University's obligations to Te Tiriti o Waitangi and mātauranga Māori. Depending on the Māori skills and knowledge of the panel, the University may appoint an additional, internal panel member and/or co-convenor. The decision to appointment an additional panel member for this purpose should be made through an agreement – in line with the principle of Mahi Tahi – between the Office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Māori) and the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic).
- 5.5 In line with the University's aspirations for Pasifika education, the University may appoint an additional internal panel member with expertise in Pasifika education. The decision to appointment an additional panel member for this purpose should be made through an agreement between the Office of the Assistant Vice-Chancellor (Pasifika) and the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic).
- 5.6 In the case of reviews of either large or several cognate programmes, additional panel members may be needed to ensure that all disciplines are represented. This should be discussed with the Director of the Academic Office before establishing the panel.
- 5.7 Where programme(s) have key stakeholders from industry or a profession, it is strongly suggested that there is a panel member from that industry/profession.
- 5.8 The following should be considered when nominating external panel members:
- (a) Impartiality/objectivity
 - (b) Expertise in the relevant discipline(s)
 - (c) From a university with a strong reputation in the discipline
 - (d) Expertise in academic leadership
 - (e) The representation of Māori and Pasifika people
 - (f) The gender balance of the panel.
- 5.9 None of the panel members can have been involved in the management or teaching of the programme(s) under review within the previous 5 years.
- 5.10 All of the panel members will be asked to complete a conflict of interest form to ensure transparency in the panel appointment process.

6. Administrative support for the panel

The review panel will be supported by a staff member from the Academic Office.

7. Review Portfolio

- 7.1 The review portfolio is the complete set of documentation about the programme(s) provided to the review panel prior to the panel visit. This includes:

- (a) the reflective self-review conducted by the programme (refer to the guidelines)
- (b) the University's Strategic Plan
- (c) prior review documents
- (d) written submissions from members of the university community and any external stakeholders identified by the programme or Dean. Submissions will be invited by the Academic Office and remain confidential to the panel
- (e) student submissions, which are provided through consultation between the Academic Office and VUWSA. Students may also choose to make confidential written submissions as an individual or as a group
- (f) Benchmarking information. This can be provided as part of the self-review (7.1.(a)) or as a separate document. Further details around benchmarking can be found in the guidelines.

8. Panel visit

- 8.1 Reviews are normally conducted face-to-face at one of the University's campuses, but technology may be used to facilitate the engagement of one or more panel members, staff, students or other stakeholders.
- 8.2 The timetable for the panel visit is developed by the Academic Office in conjunction with the Convenor and the Dean or Head of School. Panel visits normally take place over three days.
- 8.3 The panel should meet with the following groups:
 - (a) The senior staff of the faculty e.g. Dean, Associate Deans
 - (b) Student and alumni representatives
 - (c) The academic staff involved in the programme
 - (d) Representative(s) of Toi huarewa, as decided by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Māori)
 - (e) Pasifika Representative(s), as decided by the Assistant Vice-Chancellor (Pasifika)
 - (f) Representatives of relevant central service units and administrative areas identified as necessary by the panel
 - (g) Interested senior staff in other faculties (e.g. for interdisciplinary opportunities)
 - (h) (where possible) Relevant external stakeholders.

Note: Individuals or groups may request to the Academic Office for an opportunity to make an oral submission to the review. This will be accommodated if it fits within the panel's timetable.

- 8.4 At the end of the panel visit, the panel must provide an oral presentation of their preliminary findings (commendations and recommendations) to the programme. The panel may decide to precede this with a de-brief for the Dean and/or Head of School.

9. Panel report

- 9.1 The review report must address each of the terms of reference in relation to the evidence presented in the review portfolio and the meetings with the panel.
- 9.2 The person providing administrative support to the panel is responsible for drafting the preliminary report within 2 weeks of the panel visit.
- 9.3 The Convenor is responsible, with the assistance of the Academic Office, for refining the report and ensuring that all panel members agree with the contents. The draft should normally be finalised within 6 weeks of the review visit.

- 9.4 The final draft is then released to the Dean and Head of School for a check of factual accuracy. If the recommendations relate to other parts of the university (e.g. FGR, CSU's), the Academic Office may also seek their input to ensure accuracy in the report.
- 9.5 If there are any parts of the report that require amendment due to inaccuracies or misunderstandings it may be necessary for a face-to-face meeting to be held between the Dean, Convener and the Academic Office support person to resolve.
- 9.6 If significant changes are requested these will be agreed by all panellists.

10. Faculty response to the report

- 10.1 The finalised review report is provided to the school and programme.
- 10.2 The Dean and Head of School are responsible for developing the faculty response to the review report. This must systematically address each of the panel's recommendations. See the guidelines for a template that may be used.
- 10.3 The faculty response should be completed within two months of receiving the advice of the Academic Committee (10.2 above). The Dean must approve the faculty response to the report before it is submitted to the Academic Office.
- 10.4 The report and faculty response will be submitted by the Academic Office to the Provost for endorsement to go to the Academic Board. The report and faculty Response will then be submitted to be received by the Academic Board.
- 10.5 The Dean or delegate is responsible for implementing the actions to be taken as a result of the review.
- 10.6 The Academic Board should receive regular updates on the progress made on implementation. This is normally done as part of an annual Deans report.

11. Alternative arrangements

- 11.1 Where a course or a faculty holds professional accreditation where many of the terms of reference for academic programme reviews have been covered, then the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Academic may agree to alternative arrangements for the review. These may include:
 - (a) A review scoped to include only the terms of reference that may not have been covered by the accreditation
 - (b) Acceptance that the accreditation replaces the university's requirements for on-going review
 - (c) A panel with a different composition than normal.
- 11.2 A request for alternative arrangements must be made in writing to the Director of the Academic Office, specifying the changes that are being requested and a clear strategic, pedagogical and operational rationale for the change.

12. Annual Review Seminar

- 12.1 Each year, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Academic will receive a summary report on the process and outcomes of reviews held in the previous year and what lessons can be learned by the University as a result.

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1. Purpose

These procedures outline how the University conducts its Graduating Year Reviews (GYRs).

2. Application of Procedures

These procedures apply to staff members and students.

Graduating Year Review Process

3. Overview of GYR Process

- 3.1 A GYR report will normally be required within three years after the graduation of the first cohort of students. The Committee on University Academic Programmes (CUAP) ultimately determines the yearly schedule (e.g., a qualification's first cohort graduating in 2001 would have a GYR due by 2004).
- 3.2 The Academic Office advises the relevant Deans, Heads of School, Associate Deans and Programme Directors which programmes are scheduled to submit a GYR. Where there is a strong reason, a request may be made through the Academic Office to CUAP for a change to the timing of a GYR.
- 3.3 The relevant faculty organises the GYR because it has administrative and academic oversight of its programmes.
- 3.4 The GYR is prepared on a template that is revised periodically by CUAP. The Academic Office provides a version of the template adapted for the University.
- 3.5 The Academic Office submits the GYR to CUAP for review and moderation.

4. Student involvement in the GYR

- 4.1 The Academic Office notifies the VUWSA Student Representation Coordinator of the programmes due for a Graduating Year review early each year, to enable early collection of student feedback. The programme should work with both VUWSA and the Academic Office to arrange for appropriate inclusion of student views into the GYR document. This usually involves one or more of the following:
 - (a) Student survey results provided to the Programme Director for inclusion in the self-reflection section, and/or to the evaluation group
 - (b) The VUWSA Student Representation Coordinator runs a student focus group and is included as a member of the evaluation group to represent the student views discussed
 - (c) A current student who has been in the qualification for at least two trimesters or a graduate of the programme, is included as a member of the evaluation group
 - (d) An alternative arrangement agreed to by VUWSA and the Academic Office.

5. Preparing the self-reflection section

- 5.1 The preparation of the GYR presents an opportunity for discussion and reflection on whether the newly introduced programme(s) have accomplished what they were intended to do. This includes whether the students are adequately developing the graduate attributes and whether changes were or may be needed. They encourage programmes to reflect on their

successes, identify areas for improvement, and highlight to an external audience their achievements in offering a successful qualification.

- 5.2 The Programme Director (or equivalent) working in consultation with programme staff completes the self-reflection section using the GYR template and collects any additional material that needs to be presented to the evaluation group.
- 5.3 When preparing the self-reflection section, care must be taken that all the instructions in the GYR template are addressed to ensure it meets the CUAP criteria for GYRs.
- 5.4 The Academic Office provides the data for the required tables in collaboration with the programme, which advises on the data parameters.
- 5.5 On completion of the self-reflection section, the programme submits it to the evaluation group.

6. Evaluation Group review

- 6.1 The evaluation group is established by the Dean in consultation with the Head of School and the Associate Dean(s). CUAP requires that the GYR process must include an evaluation group with at least one panel member from another disciplinary area.
- 6.2 The following membership is recommended for the evaluation group:
 - (a) The Associate Dean (or similar) of the relevant faculty, acting as Convener
 - (b) A senior academic from a different school (ideally from another faculty)
 - (c) A representative of student views, unless other arrangements for including student views in the evaluation group discussion are agreed by VUWSA (see section 4.1).
 - (d) Where applicable, a professional/industry representative
 - (e) Where applicable, an additional staff member from outside the discipline.
- 6.3 The evaluation group may require assistance from a faculty administrator such as the academic programmes manager/coordinator.
- 6.4 The evaluation group considers the self-review material presented by the programme using the evaluative questions (see guidelines). Where required, the evaluation group meets relevant academic staff, students, the Head of School and Programme Director(s) to gather further information or evidence.
- 6.5 The evaluation group adds its comments to section 3 of the GYR report in the form of boxed text under each section 3 heading. The Convener completes section 2 of the GYR template, which explains the composition and role of the evaluation group, including the titles and positions of its members.

7. Faculty review and approval

- 7.1 The GYR report, i.e., the version augmented by the evaluation group, is shared and discussed between the Head of School and Programme Director.
- 7.2 The report is then discussed at the relevant faculty committees and must be approved by the Faculty Board. Once approved the GYR is provided to the Academic Office, which arranges for it to be added to the agenda of the Academic Programmes Committee.

8. University review and approval

- 8.1 The Academic Programmes Committee discusses the GYR report at its July/August meeting. If required, the GYR report is sent back to the faculty for revision and is re-submitted at the September meeting.

- 8.2 The Academic Office arranges for the GYR to be presented at the September meeting of the Academic Board. After Academic Board approval, the Academic Office submits the GYR to CUAP.

9. External review and approval

- 9.1 CUAP arranges the review and moderation of all universities' GYRs through a peer scrutiny process. Universities are split into pairs and each pair is responsible for scrutinising the GYRs of another pair, which involves providing comments on each individual GYR and comments on the overall GYR process carried out at each university. The university oversees the GYRs of other universities, which are examined by the Academic Office.
- 9.2 CUAP discusses the GYRs and scrutineers' reports at its next meeting (most commonly in mid-November) where representatives may have to respond to comments about their university's GYRs or their GYR process.

10. Timeframe

GYRs must be submitted to CUAP by 1 October each year.

The exact timeframes for the year can be found on the intranet

<https://intranet.wgtn.ac.nz/learning-teaching/quality-assurance/graduating-year-reviews>.

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