

Review of Operational Units and Service Functions Procedure

Section 1 - Preamble

(1) Charles Darwin University ('CDU', 'the University') is committed to the systematic evaluation and review of operational units and service functions as part of its commitment to quality enhancement and improvement. Reviews will consider past and present performance of the operational unit and/or service function as it relates to the University Strategic Plan, sub-plans, operational plans, and any previous reviews.

Section 2 - Purpose

(2) This procedure outlines the process to evaluate and review the quality and effectiveness of an operational unit and/or service function at the University.

Section 3 - Scope

(3) This procedure applies to University staff, students and external stakeholders involved in the review of an operational unit and/or service function.

Section 4 - Procedure

(4) The University is committed to the continuous improvement of its operational functions and endeavours to ensure that business activities and the delivery of services are fit for purpose, efficient and support strategic objectives.

(5) To allow for the ongoing improvement and enhancement of an operational unit and/or service function, the University may undertake a review to gain an in-depth understanding of:

- a. the purpose and outcomes for each operational unit and/or service function;
- b. the effectiveness of the operational unit and/or service function in achieving its purpose and outcomes, along with overall quality;
- c. the vision for the operational unit and/or service function and improvement actions taken as a result of institutional data; and
- d. future programmatic improvements of the operational unit and/or service function as relevant.

Initiation of a review

(6) The review of an operational unit and/or service function may be initiated from time to time as determined by the Vice-Chancellor. Reviews will be undertaken by an independent and external reviewer to ensure an impartial and non-biased assessment.

(7) The Vice-Chancellor, in consultation with the relevant Senior Executive Team member and Director of the

operational unit and/or service function will establish and disseminate a schedule for the review.

Review process

(8) A review of an operational unit and/or service function will incorporate the following key elements:

- a. terms of reference;
- b. review portfolio;
- c. independent review;
- d. written submissions (where relevant);
- e. review panel visit (where relevant);
- f. review report; and
- g. implementation plan.

Terms of reference

(9) Terms of reference will be established to provide guidance for the operational unit and/or service function review portfolio, and the appraisal of the operational units and/or service functions performance and plans in relation to appropriate and attainable future objectives and provide recommendations for improvement.

(10) The terms of reference will generally include the following areas (as further described in Section 5 – Review Report/Review Portfolio):

- a. Strategy, performance and planning;
- b. Leadership and structure;
- c. Resources (i.e., human, and physical);
- d. Finances; and
- e. First Nations Leadership.

(11) The terms of reference may be adapted or modified by the Vice-Chancellor in consultation with the relevant Senior Executive Team member, to direct the attention of the reviewer to matters of importance to the operational unit and/or service delivery areas performance or its future.

Review portfolio

(12) A review portfolio will be prepared for consideration of the Vice-Chancellor and the relevant Senior Executive Team member of the operational unit and/or service function under review, with assistance from the Director Planning and Performance and other relevant areas of the University.

- a. The review portfolio should be a maximum of 30 pages (plus any supporting documentation including data in appendices).

(13) As a tool for continuous quality improvement, the review portfolio should give consideration to:

- a. national and international contexts and trends;
- b. recognised best practice and other relevant benchmarking; and
- c. the operation and impact of relationships between the operational unit and/or service function, and other areas within the University.

(14) The review portfolio will be made available to relevant University staff and key stakeholders at least four weeks before the review commences.

(15) The review portfolio will address the terms of reference and provide a self-assessment of performance including relevant data, and identify areas of excellence, potential, initiatives in progress and opportunities for improvement.

Independent review

(16) An independent reviewer, or a panel of reviewers, with expertise and experience from relevant fields will be engaged by the Vice-Chancellor or relevant Senior Executive Team member of the operational unit and/or service function to review and make commendations or recommendations regarding the operational unit and/or service function under review.

- a. A panel of reviewers consisting of two or more reviewers may be engaged where it is determined as necessary to cover all functional aspects of the operational unit and/or service function. In this instance the Vice-Chancellor, in consultation with the relevant Senior Executive Team member, will appoint a Chair of the review panel.
- b. Additional members may also form part of the review panel as determined by the Vice-Chancellor.

(17) The review will occur with reference to the review portfolio, written submissions (where relevant), interviews with stakeholders, and benchmarking and practice at other Australian universities.

(18) Reviewers and review panel members are required to declare any potential conflicts of interest with any item on the review agenda.

- a. Any potential conflicts of interest are to be declared in the review report.

(19) The reviewer and/or review panel shall:

- a. provide independent advice and recommendations on the performance, future directions, resourcing, capability, capacity, and impact of the operational unit and/or service function under review;
- b. be briefed on the operational unit and/or service function review by the relevant Senior Executive Team member, and identify and agree on any modifications to the standard terms of reference;
- c. receive and consider the review portfolio prepared by the relevant Senior Executive Team member and Director of the operational unit and/or service function;
- d. liaise with the review secretary on issuing a call for written submissions (where it is determined appropriate), and develop a review schedule and list of interested parties and stakeholders to be involved in the onsite visit;
- e. consider written submissions (where relevant) from interested parties and stakeholders, and make initial judgements on the confidentiality of submissions;
- f. conduct onsite reviews/interviews with:
 - i. staff members selected by the relevant Senior Executive Team member and/or the Director of the operational unit and/or service area;
 - ii. relevant members of Senior Executive Team and the Vice-Chancellor's Advisory Committee as relevant; and
 - iii. other people at the discretion of the reviewer and/or review panel, including internal and external stakeholders, and interested parties who have provided written submissions (where relevant).
- g. at the conclusion of the scheduled interviews;
 - i. prepare a verbal brief for the Vice-Chancellor, relevant Senior Executive Team member and Director of the operational unit and/or service function on high level findings, commendations, and recommendations; and
 - ii. advise the relevant Senior Executive Team member and/or Director to speak to staff who may be significantly impacted by the review.
 - iii. prepare a draft written report and recommendations for the Vice-Chancellor in accordance with the terms

of reference provided for the operational unit and/or service function review within two weeks of completing the onsite visit.

Written submissions

(20) Where it is determined that written submissions are required as part of the review, relevant staff, students, and key stakeholders will be invited to provide a written submission and will receive a copy of the review portfolio.

- a. The written submissions must be submitted to the independent reviewer/review panel at least four weeks prior to the review commencing.
- b. Unless otherwise stated, written submissions will be treated as confidential.

(21) Where a review panel is engaged, the review secretary will provide a copy of the written submissions to the panel at least one week before the panel is scheduled to meet.

Review panel visit

(22) A review schedule will be prepared in consultation with the panel chair and relevant senior staff members as required.

(23) The panel meetings and verbal brief to Vice-Chancellor, relevant Senior Executive Team member, and Director of the operational unit and/or service function may be conducted in person, by telephone, video conference, or other electronic means.

Review report

(24) At a minimum, the review report will include the following sections:

- a. executive summary;
- b. membership;
- c. body of the report - organised according to the sections of the review portfolio:
 - i. Strategy, performance and planning;
 - ii. Leadership and structure;
 - iii. Resources (i.e., human, and physical);
 - iv. Finances; and
 - v. First Nations Leadership.
- d. Appendices.

(25) The review report will reference the evidence and conclusions contained in the review portfolio and may benchmark or comment on how these compare to practice at other Australian universities, as well as perceptions and information supplied in written submissions (where relevant) and interviews.

Implementation plan

(26) The draft review report will be provided to the relevant Senior Executive Team member, Director of the operational unit and/or service function, and other stakeholders as relevant, to review any errors of fact or misrepresentation, and any inclusions considered to potentially pose a serious risk to the University if made public, prior to approval.

(27) The relevant Senior Executive Team member, Director of the operational unit and/or service function, and other relevant stakeholders will provide a response to the review report, including the implementation plan, within six weeks of its approval.

(28) The Vice-Chancellor will consider the responses and approve an implementation plan that includes short-term (up to six months) and medium to long-term actions (up to 18 months).

Reporting

(29) The review report and approved implementation plan will be tabled at the Vice-Chancellor's Advisory Committee, and other University committees as determined by the Vice-Chancellor.

(30) The relevant Senior Executive Team member of the operational unit and/or service function will report annually to the Vice-Chancellor's Advisory Committee on the status of the review and progress against the implementation plans.

Section 5 - Review Report/Review Portfolio

Terms of reference

(31) The standard Terms of Reference as outlined below may be adapted or modified by consultation with the Vice-Chancellor, and/or the relevant Senior Executive Team member to direct the attention of the review panel to matters of importance to the operational units and/or service functions performance, capability, effectiveness or its future development.

Executive summary

Membership (Review Report only)

Strategy, performance and planning

(32) Capacity to identify and contribute to the University's future needs and strategic ambitions as they relate to the operational unit and/or service function;

(33) Alignment of the operational unit and/or service function's strategic and operational plans with the University's Strategic Plan and contributions to planning across CDU operational and service functions where relevant;

(34) The operational unit and/or service function's track record of meeting operational targets and key performance indicators;

(35) Performance of the operational unit and/or service function in University and unit-specific surveys;

(36) Identification of best practice and national and international contexts and trends in relevant disciplines / professions, and engagement, and their translation into appropriate and attainable future objectives; and

(37) Planning processes and outcomes including workforce planning, positioning of academic activity.

Leadership and structure

(38) The operational unit and/or service function's leadership and structure arrangements, including leadership and committee roles, staff participation on committees, internal quality assurance, risk management, and compliance measures;

(39) Key relationships and dependencies, extent of cross-disciplinary and cross-operational unit and/or service function collaboration as relevant; and

(40) Feedback from students, staff, and other stakeholders; the management of complaints or grievances from students and staff; and the efficacy of student and employee support mechanisms.

Resources

(41) Suitability of the operational unit and/or service function's workforce profile (level, qualifications/accreditation, staff workload and work functions) and for staff student ratios;

(42) Workforce matters including employee recruitment planning and retention, culture, and an overview of the operational unit and/or service function's performance review and development and mentoring processes; and

(43) Suitability and utilisation of the operational unit and/or service function's physical resources (e.g., space, IT, other infrastructure).

Finances

(44) Revenue and cost management, including planning and budget management across Vocational Education and Training (VET) and Higher Education (HE) funding arrangements and targets.

First Nations Leadership

(45) Contribution to First Nations engagement in First Nations student recruitment, retention and success; and

(46) Efforts to recruit, employ and recognise First Nations staff and collaborators/stakeholders, provide career pathways for First Nations staff, and create a suitable and supportive work and learning environment.

Section 6 - Non-Compliance

(47) Non-compliance with Governance Documents is considered a breach of the [Code of Conduct – Staff](#) or the [Code of Conduct – Students](#), as applicable, and is treated seriously by the University. Reports of concerns about non-compliance will be managed in accordance with the applicable disciplinary procedures.

(48) All staff members have an individual responsibility to raise any suspicion, allegation or report of fraud or corruption in accordance with the [Fraud and Corruption Control Policy](#) and [Whistleblower Reporting \(Improper Conduct\) Procedure](#).

Status and Details

Status	Not Yet Approved
Effective Date	To Be Advised
Review Date	To Be Advised
Approval Authority	
Approval Date	To Be Advised
Expiry Date	Not Applicable
Responsible Executive	Hilary Winchester Vice-President Governance and University Secretary +61 8 8946 7790
Implementation Officer	Hilary Winchester Vice-President Governance and University Secretary +61 8 8946 7790
Author	Jess Bradley 0889467383
Enquiries Contact	Hilary Winchester Vice-President Governance and University Secretary +61 8 8946 7790 <hr/> Governance