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# School reviews

## Guidelines for Panel Members

Planning and Service Performance

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**Introduction**

These guidelines are provided to assist panel members in the preparation for, and conduct of, a review.

**Principles of a School Review**

* A critical evaluation of the current performance of the School, including an assessment of performance over time in all areas of activity (research and innovation, research training, teaching and learning, outreach and engagement, leadership, governance, resources and administration).
* An assessment of the extent to which the School’s activities support the strategic priorities of the College Plan, and the ANU Strategic Plan and related Executive Plans.
* Consideration the efficiency and effectiveness of allocated resource utilisation.
* Identification of actions to improve performance.
* Advice and recommendations on the future strategic direction of the School.

**Role of the Review Panel**

The review panel is appointed to provide an objective view of the School’s plans developed through the Self-Evaluation Report, and to comment on the appropriateness of these plans. Although the majority of reviews are expected to result in incremental changes, reviews provide an opportunity for Schools to embrace significant change and development.

One member of the panel will be invited to be Chair. The Chair is responsible for leading the review panel and the line of questioning, and coordinating the drafting of the review report.

**Terms of Reference for Review**

The terms of reference provide the framework in which the School, through its Self-Evaluation Report, and the review panel, through its enquiries, analyse the School’s current performance and plans in relation to appropriate and attainable future objectives.

The review panel receives a copy of the Terms of Reference with their official letter of appointment to the review panel from the Deputy Vice-Chancellors Office.

**Confidentiality Agreement and Conflict of Interest Forms**

Panel members are required to sign a Confidentiality Agreement and Conflict of Interest forms. These must be completed and returned to [review@anu.edu.au](mailto:review@anu.edu.au)

**Material for Members of the Review Panel**

The School will provide information for the review panel that is relevant and accessible without overburdening panel members. Review content includes:

* Terms of Reference for the review;
* Membership of the review panel and contact details;
* Self-Evaluation Report (including appendices);
* ANU Strategic Plan;
* College Plan;
* Written Submissions by ANU staff and students and external stakeholders;
* Site Visit Schedule
* Guidelines for panel review members

Information is provided one month before the review dates. Panel members are reminded that this information is provided solely for their use for the purpose of the review, and must not be shared as per the confidentiality form. Once the review is complete panel members are asking to destroy the documentation.

**Written Submissions to the Review**

The ANU community and external stakeholders are invited to submit a written submission to the review panel one month before the site visit. Submissions are circulated to the panel one week before the site visit. Submissions are provided to the review panel on a confidential basis.

**Conduct of the Review**

The review panel purpose is to provide an objective view of the School’s perceptions and plans developed through the Self-Evaluation Report, and either confirm or recommend changes to those plans. The review panel meets with key colleagues and stakeholders to gain an in-depth perspective of how and where the School’s perceptions and plans may be falling short in meeting performance targets, as well as providing commendations in areas where the School’s exceeds expectations.

**Site Visit**

Panel members receive a copy of the site visit schedule one month prior to the date of the site visit. There is an opportunity for the panel Chair to suggest modifications to the schedule in consultation with the School Director or Head of School.

On the first day of the site visit, the Vice-Chancellor, Duty Vice-Chancellor, and College Dean welcomes panel members and provides an overview of the strategic context and specific issues relevant to the School that should be investigated by the panel.

On the final day of the site visit, the Vice-Chancellor, Deputy Vice-Chancellor and College Dean has a further session with the panel members to discuss high level preliminary findings.

The site visit schedule provides enough time for the panel to have independent discussions and sufficient time at the end of each day for the panel to reflect on discussions.

The Associate Director, Planning and Reviews provides a secretarial services to the review panel and take comprehensive minutes from sessions with University’s staff, students and stakeholders. These minutes are shared with the panel members to aid drafting the review report.

**Stakeholder dinners**

The School organises an informal welcome dinner where panel members have an opportunity to meet each other and discuss the review the night preceding the first day of site visit.

There is a formal stakeholder dinner on the first evening of the site visit. This may include the School’s Executive, College Dean, representatives from industry, government, professional bodies, and employer groups, as well as alumni.

**Engaging students in the review**

Engaging students across all careers (undergraduate, postgraduate coursework and research students) is a key component of the review. Students can participate in a number of ways, either through a written submission or by attending a session during the site visit.

Students are provided with an information sheet explaining the review process and the benefits of participating in the review. In addition, students are provided with a standard set of questions which the panel may use as part of their line of questioning. These questions are provided to students in advance of the review in order to give them time to prepare for the interviews.

Standard questions for undergraduate, honours and postgraduate coursework students:

* Why did you choose to study here?
* What is the most engaging part of your program?
* What kind of course advice did you receive when you started the program or as a returning student?
* What do you think of your lectures and seminars?
* Do you like the curriculum?
* Do you have opportunities for work experience, work placements etc. as part of your program?
* What support mechanisms are available for language and academic skills?
* What mechanisms are in place for providing assessment feedback?
* Is the marking criteria clear?
* If there are any difficulties, how does the School support you?
* Do you have the necessary resources to undertake your Honours research project?

Standard questions for higher degree research students:

* How did you end up being a HDR student?
* Why ANU? Is the School meeting your expectations?
* Is any research training provided?
* What resources do you receive? Enough to attend conferences?
* Are their opportunities for you to teach?
* Who do you go to for advice?
* What mechanisms are there for feedback on your thesis?
* If there are any difficulties how does the School support you?
* How rigorous is the assessment of your PhD coursework courses?
* What support or advice is provided for career opportunities post PhD whether academia or within industry?

**Preparing the Review Report**

The review report is drafted by panel members. The Chair will discuss the division of responsibility for drafting individual sections of the report with panel members.

The panel is provided with a review report template that aligns with the Terms of Reference.

Commendations are made in those areas where the school has achieved outstanding outcomes, or made significant progress towards doing so.

In formulating its recommendations, the panel members is asked to take into account the resources available to the School and its goals and objectives, as expressed in the Self-Evaluation Report, and as advised by the School Director and other senior colleagues/ stakeholders and students who met with the panel during the course of the site visit.

Every effort should be made to ensure that statements in the panel report are factually correct and in the first instance a copy of the draft report is sent to the School Director. Once the School Director has checked the factual accuracy of the report, the report is sent to the College Dean for endorsement and the Deputy Vice-Chancellor for approval.

**School Response to the Review Report**

The School prepares a response to the Review Report and drafts an implementation plan setting out how the School will address the panel’s recommendation over the period of 12-months. This response and implementation plan is endorsed by the College Dean and approved by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor.

**12-Month Progress Report**

The School provides a progress report 12-months after the implementation was approved. This is reviewed and approved by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor.

**Panel Expenses**

The School will cover panel member’s expenses including travel, accommodation, and meals. Members are asked to submit receipts for any other sundry costs.