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Academic Reviews Policy

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Mana Whakaae Approval Authority	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic)
Āpiha Whakapā Contact Officer	Dean (Academic Governance)

Kupu Whakataki | Introduction

This policy outlines the requirements for undertaking reviews of academic qualifications and programmes.

Tautuhinga | Definitions

Academic Review – a review of the overall academic quality of a qualification or programme or academic unit, 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 through the Committee on University Academic Programmes (CUAP).

Kaupapa Here | Policy Statement

Academic Reviews are a key element in the University’s Academic Quality Framework. Academic reviews are carried out to ensure that our qualifications meet the expectations of the type of qualification awarded within requirements set by the University and that it meets national and international standards. Academic Reviews therefore provide the institution the opportunity to benchmark its academic offerings and look at areas for enhancement and continuous improvement which could include suggested changes in the curriculum or delivery methods.

¹ For more information on the UC graduate attributes, see [Graduate Profile website](#).

The initial focus of a review is on outcomes, i.e., does the qualification meet expected and relevant standards? Review panels should consider whether the programme has sufficient staffing, physical resources, and enrolments to achieve the desired academic outcomes.

Additionally, a review might explore systems and processes, 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.

Academic reviews should be cognisant of the opportunities and the constraints within which the programme or unit under review is operating when making its recommendations.

Review panels should not make recommendations outside the terms of reference of the review. Issues identified outside the terms of reference can be raised informally with the Faculty and/or University Management but should not form part of the review report.

Types of Academic Review

Graduating Year Review (GYR)

CUAP requires a follow-up programme review of all successful proposals involving the introduction of new qualifications, and major subjects and endorsements comprising 40% or more of a qualification. A GYR review report has a very structured format and is limited to four pages (excluding appendices). Where qualifications are introduced as a group one GYR may cover all clusters of qualifications that were approved at the same time and one extra page per qualification is allowed.

Completed GYRs should be sent to the Executive Dean or delegate, be considered by Faculty Board, and sent to AAC before being considered by Academic Board. From Academic Board they will be sent through to CUAP.

Programme Reviews

All qualifications of the University, except 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 Team's Blue Book Intranet site.

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) shall commission a review of the doctorates every 10 years.

Completed Programme Reviews should be sent by the panel chair to the Executive Dean or delegate, and considered by Faculty Board and the Faculty Leadership Team where a response to each recommendation is recorded on the appropriate table. The panel report and responses are then considered by AAC and LTC before being reported to Academic Board. Programme reviews form part of the portfolio of evidence for UC AQA Audit.

A "One-year-on Report" will be required 12 months from the report being considered by AAC with an update on the progress being made on the recommendations made by the panel. This update should be considered by Faculty Board before being sent to AAC and reported to Academic Board.

Ad Hoc Reviews

Ad Hoc Reviews may be in response to a specific issue and often will focus on a particular academic unit (e.g. reviewing the unit's structure, management, resources, policies, teaching, research), or examining the ongoing viability of a given programme, or for other strategic reasons. Such reviews may be commissioned by the

- Vice-Chancellor,

- Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic), or
- Executive Dean of the relevant Faculty.

The process for these reviews can be customised to the scope of the review.

The reporting of the outcomes from an Ad Hoc Review is at the discretion of the person who commissioned the review.

Accreditation Reviews

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, a scheduled academic review is undertaken in conjunction with an accreditation review.

Responsibilities for the Management of the Review

Faculty

The costs of academic reviews will be borne by the Faculty responsible for the qualification and/or area. Costs include:

- An honorarium (determined by the Executive Dean) paid to panel members who are not a continuing academic staff member at the University.
- Reasonable travel and accommodation expenses will be arranged or reimbursed.
- Refreshments and meals for the panel.

Executive Dean

Executive Deans may delegate responsibility for the direct management of the review to another faculty member, such as the Associate Dean (Academic).

For Programme Reviews and Ad Hoc Reviews, the Executive Dean or delegate will draft the terms of reference for the review and provide a list of potential panel members. The terms of reference need to be approved by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic). For Accreditation Reviews, if procedures for drafting the terms of reference and/or determining panel membership have not been established by the relevant professional body, the Executive Dean or delegate will draft the terms of reference and provide a list of potential panel members.

For Graduating Year Reviews, the Executive Dean or delegate will approve the panel membership. Terms of Reference for GYRs are fixed and are outlined in the GYR handbook.

The Executive Dean or delegate will be responsible for responding to each of the recommendations of the review once the review is completed.

Academic Services Manager

Reviews will be coordinated by an Academic Services Manager as directed by the relevant Executive Dean and/or Associate Dean (Academic).

The Academic Services Manager will be responsible for:

- coordinating the review schedule and ensuring the appropriate academic staff and students have been invited to relevant sessions.
- collating a Review Portfolio which contains relevant documentation.

- ensuring that appropriate administrative support is provided for the review panel.
- ensuring appropriate travel and accommodation is provided for visiting panellist.
- ensuring appropriate refreshments and meals are provided for the panel.

Chair of the Review Panel

The Chair of the Review Panel (or 'Panel Chair') will be responsible for facilitating the review by the panel and for preparing the Review Report.

For professional accreditation reports, the University of Canterbury panel member will be responsible for preparing the appendix to cover internal matters.

The Panel Chair should bring to the attention of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) any matters of concern which arise in the review but fall outside the terms of reference. Such matters should not be included in the final review report, which should be restricted to only items under the terms of reference.

Panel Members

Panel members will treat all submissions as confidential. Submissions will be destroyed when the review report is finalised. This will be the responsibility of any person receiving such information on the review.

Deputy Vice-Chancellor Academic

The DVCA approves the terms of reference for the review including the membership of panels for Ad Hoc Reviews and Programme Reviews.

Academic Quality Team

The Academic Quality Team will notify relevant parties when a review is due to take place. Completed panel reports and action lists should be submitted to the Academic Quality Team for inclusion on the AAC/LTC and Academic Board agenda. The Academic Quality Team will also archive the reports on the appropriate Intranet sites for future reference.

Procedures

The procedures and processes for each type of review are outlined in the associated review handbook.

Reporting and Archiving Requirements

The reporting requirements for each type of review is outlined in the associated handbook. In summary:

- Graduating Year Reviews are considered by AAC and Academic Board before being sent to CUAP.
- Programme Reviews are considered by AAC and LTC before being sent to Academic Board for approval.
- Ad hoc Reviews are considered by appropriate committees as determined by the initiator of the review.

Graduating Year Reviews and Programme Reviews will be archived on appropriate intranet sites by the Academic Quality Team. It is the responsibility of the initiator of an Ad Hoc Review to ensure the Ad Hoc Review Reports are appropriately stored on UC's IT infrastructure for future reference.

Related Documents and Information

Review Handbooks

- Graduating Year Reviews Handbook
- Programme Reviews Handbook (includes Accreditation Reviews)
- Ad Hoc Review Reviews Handbook

UC Website and Intranet

- [Academic Programme Reviews \(Intranet – Staff only\)](#)
- [Graduating Year Reviews \(Intranet - Staff only\)](#)
- [Blue Book Programme Approval \(Intranet - Staff Only\)](#)
- [Graduate Profiles \(Intranet - Staff only\)](#)
- [Rautaki Whakawhanake Kaupapa Māori: Strategy for Māori Development \(University Plans website\)](#)
- [UC Pasifika Strategy \(University Plans website\)](#)
- [University of Canterbury Calendar \(University Publications website\)](#)

External

- [Universities New Zealand – Committee on University Academic Programmes \(CUAP\) \(Universities New Zealand website\)](#)

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
4.00	Scheduled Review Major restructure of the document. Introduction of associated Review Handbooks	DVC(A)	April 2024

This policy remains in force until it is updated.