THE UNIVERSITY OF
NOTRE DAME
AUSTRALIA

PROCEDURE:

HIGHER EDUCATION PROGRAM MONITORING, REVIEW AND RE-ACCREDITATION

Purpose:	Sets out the University's processes for monitoring, reviewing and re-accrediting programs.
Location of Procedure	The procedure is maintained on the National Drive.
Responsible Executive:	Pro Vice Chancellor, Academic
Responsible Office:	Academic Registrar
Contact Officer:	Academic Registrar
Effective Date:	16 March 2015
Review Date	16 March 2018
Modification History:	Created: 24 November 2014; Replaces Policy: Program Reviews (June 2009)
Related Policy:	Policy: Higher Education Approval, Amendment, Monitoring, Review, Re-Accreditation and Discontinuation of Programs
Authority:	Endorsed by Academic Council 24/11/2014. Approved by Vice Chancellor 11/02/2015.

Purpose

1.1   This Procedure outlines the approval processes and documentation required for the monitoring, review and re-accreditation of coursework awards.

Related Policy and Regulations

2.1.1   This Procedure should be read in conjunction with the following Policies:
   (i)   Higher Education Program Approval, Amendment, Review, Re-Accreditation and Discontinuation
   (ii)   Double and Combined Degrees
   (iii)   Nested Awards
   (iv)   The Award of a Degree with Honours

Definitions

3.1   For the purposes of this Procedure, the definitions outlined in the *Policy: Program Approval, Amendment, Review, Re-Accreditation and Discontinuation* apply.

3.2   In addition, the following definitions apply to this Procedure:
   3.2.1   *Higher Education Standards Framework* means the Higher Education Standards Framework published by ComLaw.gov.au.
   3.2.2   *National Standards for Foundation Programs* means the National Standards for Foundation Programs published by the Commonwealth Department of Education and Training as amended from time to time.

Program Monitoring and Reporting

4.1   All programs are monitored on an annual basis using performance data to enable schools and the University to be responsive to issues affecting academic quality, student experiences, and ongoing program relevance and viability.

4.2   Schools are provided with program performance information to inform an annual program report that provides a concise assessment of outcomes for each program. In the case of programs with major research components, information is provided to the Research Directors.

4.3   Wherever possible, program trends are compared with nationally available data.

4.4   Program reports are used to identify strengths, potential risks and action required for improvement and to inform planning and budgeting decisions for program development and review activities for the following year. Program reports are also used to inform the scope for formal program reviews and for preparation for any professional accreditation activities.

4.5   The Office of Quality Management and Academic Development (QMAD) advises Deans and Associated Deans (Teaching and Learning) (or equivalent) of the timeline and requirements for annual program monitoring and reporting, including grouping of programs.

4.6   Programs sharing characteristics such as the same or equivalent discipline or overlap, or that are part of nested award arrangements, double degrees, or combined degrees are monitored together. Grouping of programs for the purpose of annual monitoring is determined at the time of new program approval.

4.7   Where a program or group of programs is offered on more than one Campus, a single program report is prepared through collaboration by all administering schools.

4.8   Completed program reports are reviewed by the School Learning and Teaching Committee (or equivalent). For programs with a major research component, completed program reports are reviewed by the Research Directors. When satisfied that each report adequately assesses trends, issues, strengths of the program and actions to be taken to make any improvements necessary, the Dean, on recommendation from the Committee, endorses the report and forwards it to the Course and Program Accreditation Committee (UCAC) for consideration. For programs with a major research component, the report is forwarded to UCAC by the Research Directors.

4.9   Following consideration by UCAC, QMAD provides a high level summary of the outcomes of annual program monitoring to the PVC, Academic (or delegate) and advises on:

    4.9.1   any programs that may be performing unsatisfactorily or 'at risk', based on criteria approved by the PVC Academic (or delegate) and noted on the program report template

    4.9.2   actions proposed by Schools to improve programs that may be performing unsatisfactorily or 'at risk'

    4.9.3   strongly performing programs

    4.9.4   progress with implementing identified learning and teaching priorities

    4.9.5   any good practices and/or unsatisfactory program performance issues that may warrant consideration across more than one school.

4.10   The PVC Academic (or delegate) provides feedback to schools on their program reports and make joint recommendations to the Academic Council and Vice Chancellor as appropriate.

4.11   The high level summary of outcomes, updated as necessary, and a brief response by the PVC Academic (or delegate) is noted by Academic Council.

4.12   Completed annual reports are retained by schools as a record of program quality assurance and are used to inform and support

    4.12.1 development of proposals to amend programs

    4.12.2 sharing of good practices

    4.12.3 school planning and reporting

    4.12.4 preparation for five yearly program reviews

    4.12.5 any professional accreditation activities.

Program Reviews

5.1   Program reviews incorporate self-assessment and external input and provide a robust and systematic approach to the assurance of academic standards, quality and the ongoing relevance of programs. Review outcomes inform decisions for program re-accreditation and planning for ongoing development and improvement.

5.2   **Scheduling Program Reviews**

    5.2.1 Programs are reviewed on a five-yearly cycle according to a schedule based on the accreditation period for each program. The schedule is updated and approved by the Vice Chancellor on recommendation of the Academic Council each year.

    5.2.2 Academic Council may recommend to the Vice Chancellor that a program not be subject to review due to robust professional accreditation processes being in place for the program, or where it is considered that the program is very low risk, based on outcomes of annual program monitoring.

5.3   **Terms of Reference and Scope**

    5.3.1 The Terms of Reference for program reviews align with the Program Accreditation Standards in the *Higher Education Standards Framework* and focus on any areas of identified risk. Terms of Reference cover: program level outcomes; student experience; positioning and standing of the program; pathways; relevance and quality of curriculum; quality of teaching and learning and assessment; identified strengths and areas for improvement; and future directions for the program.

5.3.2   The Terms of Reference, scope, timing and process for the review take into account any professional accreditation requirements and outcomes.

5.3.3   Non-award programs are also subject to review each five years using the *National Standards for Foundation Programs* as a basis.

5.3.4   The scope of program reviews covers all delivery locations so that equivalence of learning outcomes and student experiences can be considered.

5.3.5   Programs sharing characteristics such as the same or equivalent discipline or overlap, or that are part of nested award arrangements, double degrees, or combined degrees are reviewed concurrently where possible.

5.3.6   The proposed Terms of Reference, scope and process for each program review are developed by the relevant Deans. For program reviews involving programs with a major research component, the proposed Terms of Reference, scope and process for each program review are developed by the Research Directors.

5.3.7   The PVC, Academic (or delegate) endorses the Terms of Reference, scope, timing and proposed review process and review panel membership. Endorsement is contingent on ensuring that identified areas of risk have been included; the rationale for any variations proposed to the Terms of Reference is sound; the proposed panel membership is appropriate; and the process and timing is suitable.

5.3.8   Following endorsement of the Terms of Reference by the PVC, Academic (or delegate), the Terms of Reference, timing, scope and process for the review are approved by Academic Council on recommendation of UCAC at least six months prior to the scheduled commencement of the review process.

5.4   Self-review

5.4.1   A self-review of the program/s is completed using the self-review template in the *Guidelines for Program Review* at **Attachment 1,** and based on input from the School Advisory Committee for coursework programs, or relevant external input for programs with a major research component. The self-review report includes an assessment of previous annual program reports, any professional accreditation outcomes, and assessment of performance against national and, where possible, international comparative data.

5.4.2   The completed self-review document is endorsed by the School Teaching and Learning Committee (or equivalent). For programs with a major research component, the completed self-review document is endorsed by the Research Degrees and Scholarships Committee.

5.4.3 The completed self-review document, together with program documentation including course outlines, curriculum materials, annual program reports and other necessary contextual information about the program, such as professional accreditation activities is provided to the panel members, to the PVC, Academic (or delegate). The self-review document and any other relevant supplementary materials is also provided to stakeholders meeting the panel.

5.5 Review process

5.5.1 For programs deemed low risk, or those subject to robust professional accreditation processes, Academic Council may approve a review process involving validation of the self-review document by only one or two external reviewers with necessary discipline expertise, without the need to interview a wide range of staff and students associated with the program. For other programs, a panel of up to four people and a site visit involving interviews with staff and students over one to two days may be deemed necessary. In these cases, the panel is chaired by a senior academic with appropriate discipline expertise and external to the University.

5.5.2 Review report findings are presented by the Panel Chair/reviewer to the relevant Deans, College Chair and PVC, Academic (or delegate) at the conclusion of the site visit. For programs with a major research component, review report findings are presented to the Research Directors and the PVC, Research.

5.6 Review Report

5.6.1 At the conclusion of the review process, a report is prepared by the Panel chair or external reviewer which comprises commentary and findings for each section of the self-review document, a summary of any other findings, observations about issues for improvement, and a list of recommendations for the program prioritised as high, medium and low. A recommendation as to whether or not the program should be re-accredited by the University for a further five years is included.

5.6.2 For coursework programs, the final review report is considered by the relevant Deans and a formal response developed, including proposed actions to address each recommendation prioritised as high or medium. The final review report and the formal response is provided to the PVC, Academic (or delegate) within three months of receipt of the final review report.

5.6.3 For programs with a major research component, the final review report is considered by the Research Directors and a formal response developed, including proposed actions to address each recommendation prioritised as high or medium. The final review report and the formal response is provided

to the PVC, Academic (or delegate) within three months of receipt of the final review report.

5.6.3 Following endorsement by the PVC, Academic (or delegate), the self-review document, review report and formal response are sent to UCAC for consideration, together with a request for re-accreditation of the program, using Form C4: Program Re-Accreditation.

5.6.4 Any recommendations contained in the review report that relate to issues outside the operations of the School, College or Research Office are considered by the PVC, Academic (or delegate) and forwarded to the Vice Chancellor, through Executive Council, for action as deemed appropriate.

5.7 Monitoring

5.7.1 The relevant Deans provide an update on progress in addressing each review recommendation through the annual program report. In the case of reviews of programs with a major research component, this update is provided by the Research Directors.

5.7.2 When all recommendations from the review report are considered to have been addressed, a summary outlining main outcomes is provided to the PVC, Academic (or delegate).

5.7.3 When the PVC, Academic (or delegate) is satisfied that all recommendations have been appropriately addressed, the summary of outcomes and advice that the review process has concluded is provided to Academic Council for noting.

5.8 Evaluation

5.8.1 Feedback on the review process is sought from the panel chair and panel members using a formal evaluation tool administered by QMAD.

5.8.2 Formal feedback on the process is also sought from the relevant Deans, or from the Research Directors in cases where the process concerned programs with a major research component.

5.8.3 Feedback on the process is collated, summarised and presented to Academic Council annually by QMAD. Recommendations for improvements to the program review process and changes to procedures and guidelines are made as necessary.

Program Re-accreditation

6.1 All programs are subject to re-accreditation on a five yearly cycle.

6.2   The required documents for Program Re-accreditation comprises:

(v)   Form C4: Program Re-Accreditation

(vi)   professional accreditation or external review reports and School, College or Research Office responses

(vii)   Annual program reports for the previous five years (or as many years as are available) showing trend data and benchmarking

6.3   Program Re-accreditation documents are submitted to UCAC. For programs with a major research component, these documents are considered by the Research Degrees and Scholarships Committee prior to submission to UCAC.

6.4   UCAC makes a recommendation about re-accreditation to Academic Council, based on consideration of whether the program will continue to meet requirements of the Program Accreditation Standards within the *Higher Education Standards Framework* and any professional accreditation or professional recognition requirements.

6.5   Academic Council considers the recommendation of UCAC and may either:
6.5.1   approve re-accreditation of the program

6.5.2   approve re-accreditation of the program subject to certain conditions being met; or

6.5.3   determine that the program should not be re-accredited. In such cases, a recommendation is made to the Vice Chancellor and the process for program discontinuation should be followed.

6.6   Academic Council reports its decisions to the Vice Chancellor through the Senior Deputy Vice Chancellor in accordance with University Statute 35.9.

Related Guidelines, Forms and Templates

Guidelines: Higher Education Program Monitoring and Reporting
Guidelines: Program Reviews
Form C4: Program Re-Accreditation