

## Support Section Review Policy

<b>Policy Number:</b>	<b>1.6.2.56</b>
<b>Responsible Officer:</b>	<b>Director Planning &amp; Quality</b>
<b>Policy Contact:</b>	<b>Director Planning &amp; Quality</b>
<b>Approving Authority:</b>	<b>Executive Committee</b>
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### 1. Purpose

This policy provides the guiding principles of support section reviews at the University. It covers academic and non-academic support sections of the University.

### 2. Objectives

The policy provides the guiding principles for review of support sections to:

- a) Clarify the process for review of support sections;
- b) Clarify the responsibilities of stakeholders in the review process;

### 3. Definitions

A support section review is a comprehensive and periodic review aimed to enhance the quality of operations of a support section. These reviews will normally occur on a seven-year cycle and will be conducted by a panel of reviewers. A special purpose support section review outside the review cycle may be conducted to address particular circumstances, strategic and resources issues. The support section review process will also entail an internal self-review of the support section.

### 4. Policy Principles

- a. All support sections of the University shall be subject to planned seven-year periodic cycle external reviews.
- b. The review shall provide a strategic assessment of the support section and identify future directions and opportunities that are consistent with the University's strategic goals and resource availability.
- c. All support section reviews shall be carried out according to the Terms of Reference approved by the line Senior Management Team (SMT) maintaining the oversight of the support section.
- d. A decision to conduct special purpose support section review may be made by the Vice-Chancellor & President (VC&P). The Terms of Reference shall reflect the particular circumstances that prompt the review and can address strategic and/or resource issues.
- e. Support section review processes shall be overseen by the Director Planning & Quality and shall encompass:

- (i) The preparation of support section review schedule for the seven year cycle in consultation with support section heads;
  - (ii) A comprehensive self-evaluation and preparation of a self-review report by the support section;
  - (iii) A site visit by the appointed panel of reviewers in accordance with the site visit programme;
  - (iv) Under circumstances where it may not be feasible to hold a site visit, review meetings shall be undertaken via virtual modes;
  - (v) Receipt of review report from the chair of the review panel;
  - (vi) Formulation and deployment of action plans that are consistent with the recommendations of the approved support section review report; and
  - (vii) Monitoring of the achievements and outcomes of the academic support section action plans by the Teaching Quality Committee and the non-academic support section action plan by the line SMT.
- f. The reviews shall be conducted during normal semesters where students are available on the campus to participate in the review process.
- g. Support section reviews shall be coordinated by the Planning & Quality (P&Q) Office of the University.

## 5. Terms of Reference

The Terms of Reference (ToR) for the support section being reviewed shall be developed by the Planning & Quality Office in consultation with the Head of Section and line SMT. The ToR shall be approved by the line SMT. Please refer to *Appendix 1 – Guidelines for Review Panel*.

## 6. Responsibilities

Overall responsibility for the review processes shall rest with the VC&P. External reviews shall be overseen by the Director Planning & Quality and managed by the P&Q Office. Specific responsibilities are as follows:

### a. Vice-Chancellor and President

- (i) Provide approval of a review panel and a designated review panel chair and;
- (ii) Provide formal acceptance on review report upon receipt from the chair of the review panel.

### b. Director Planning & Quality and the Planning & Quality Office

- (i) Provide a formal recommendation to the VC&P regarding the prospective members of the review panel and chair of the review panel. The recommendation shall include bio-data of the prospective members of the review panel and the Terms of Reference for the review.
- (ii) Upon approval from the VC&P, ensure formal appointment of the review panel through issue of appointment letters with Terms of Reference to the chair and panel members.
- (iii) Prepare review site visit programme in consultation with both the chair of the review panel and the Head of Section.
- (iv) Provide guidance to the area in its preparation of the self-review report.
- (v) Ensure that the self-review report is forwarded to the members of the review panel.

- (vi) Provide further information as may be required by the panel of reviewers.
- (vii) Ensure that travel, per diems and accommodation for review panel members are arranged in accordance with the University processes.
- (viii) Coordinate review panel site visit or virtual review meetings in accordance with thereview programme.
- (ix) Convey the comments provided by Head of Section on the draft review report to the panelof reviewers.
- (x) Disseminate final review report to the Head of Section.
- (xi) Provide guidance to the support section for the development of an action plan to addressrecommendations and affirmations;
- (xii) Solicit Senate approved action plans from the Council and Senate Secretariat.
- (xiii) Maintain repository of all key review documents (appointment letters, Terms ofReference, self-review reports, review reports, action plans, update reports).

**c. Heads of Sections**

- (i) Identify and propose the review panel in accordance with *Support Section Review Procedures (Section a & Section b)*;
- (ii) Ensure that their sections are reviewed once in the seven year review cycle;
- (iii) Prepare self-review report and forward to the P&Q Office at least four weeks prior to thereview site visit;
- (iv) Support P&Q Office in preparation of the review site visit programme;
- (v) Critique on any factual errors, but not matters concerning with the panel's opinions, judgment or conclusions except where these are clearly formed on the basisof factual error upon receipt of draft report;
- (vi) Present final review report to the SMT;
- (vii) Develop action plan to specifically address the recommendations and affirmations made by the review panel following internal approval processes;
- (viii) Present action plan for approval by SMT (applicable to non-academic sections) or present action plan for endorsement by TQC and approval by the Senate (applicable to academicsupport sections) as identified in *Support Section Review Procedures (Section e and Section f)*;
- (ix) Submit six monthly progress reports to the SMT or to the TQC and Senate as appropriate;
- (x) Submit the action plans and progress updates to the P&Q Office;
- (xi) Maintain support section review records.

**7. Related Documents**

- a. Appendix 1 - Guidelines for Review Panel
- b. Appendix 2 – Guidelines for Developing Self Review Report
- c. [Support Section Review Procedures](#)

# **Policy and Procedures**

## **Appendix 1 Guidelines for Review Panel**

1. The review panel shall provide input into the formulation of a review site visit or virtual programme in consultation with P&Q Office and subsequently provide confirmation on the final programme to enable it to meet the Terms of Reference for the review.
2. The review panel will provide an overall assessment of the support section under review based on Terms of Reference and self-review document through:
  - a) structured meetings with managerial, academic and professional support staff;
  - b) students and relevant stakeholders;
  - c) analysis of quantitative and qualitative data supplied to or acquired by the panel;
  - d) review of any additional documentation requested.

**Note: Terms of reference and self-review report developed by the support section shall be forwarded to the review panel in advance by the P&Q Office.**

3. The length of the review visit(s) will be determined by the review panel in consultation with the P&Q Office and will take into account the geographical distribution of the support section's activities across the USP campuses in the member countries.
4. The chair of the review panel shall coordinate the preparation of the report based on the findings of the review and its conclusions.
5. The chair of review panel shall send a draft review report to the P&Q Office within 28 days of the site visit that is evidence-based and structured around the terms of reference provided and that identifies:
  - a) Recommendations (indicating aspects that the panel considers requires attention);
  - b) Commendations (highlighting areas the panel considers constitute good practice and commendable approaches / outcomes);
  - c) Affirmations (drawing attention to an area that the panel considers requires attention but which has been recognized by the support section that is being reviewed).
6. An assessment of priority will be attached to the Recommendations and Affirmations in the following terms: 'critical'; 'essential'; 'advisable'; and 'desirable', to which may also be attached the review panel's assessment of urgency.
7. The review report will also comment on the utility of the self-review document and the extent to which the review panel found it open, transparent, reflective and evaluative.
8. The review panel will comment on the standard of the support section benchmarked against international comparisons and will specifically indicate whether USP is meeting high quality standards.
9. The University's response to the draft review report shall be communicated to the chair of review panel through the P&Q Office after internal verification on whether the draft report contained any errors of fact, or whether any statements of the draft report required clarification, or any additional matters should be addressed to make clarifications.

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10. The final review report shall be forwarded to the Director Planning & Quality by the chair of the review panel.
11. The Director Planning & Quality shall forward the final review report to the VC&P for acceptance.
12. The structure of the review report shall include the following sections:
  - a) Table of Contents
  - b) List of Abbreviations
  - c) Executive summary, including a list of the commendations, affirmations and recommendations
  - d) Introduction, including review panel membership
  - e) Broad Overview
  - f) Findings of the review panel, including commendations, affirmations and recommendations
  - g) Concluding comments
  - h) Appendices, including review documentation and programme of review activities
13. The panel shall prepare report on the following assumptions:
  - a) Most recommendations for change will have to be achieved by redeployment of the support section's existing resources.
  - b) Recommendations for change will have to be implemented by the support section rather than the University. Where the panel believes the University rather than the support section needs to take action, the panel may write a specific recommendation to the University for consideration.

### **14. Review Funding**

- An honorarium to the chair of panel of reviewers – FJ\$3000.00.
- An honorarium to review panel member - FJ\$2000.00.
- Expenditure related to onsite visits and facilitation of the review will be met by the University as per policy.
- The reviewers are responsible for their own insurance for the purpose of travel for the external review onsite visits.

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## **Appendix 2 Guidelines for Developing Self-Review Report**

1. The self-review process is evidence-based and provides an opportunity for the support section to evaluate its performance and identify opportunities for further improvement as part of its ongoing commitment to quality. A self-review report as an integral component of the self-review process.
2. The self-review report should be a concise, evidence-based document and developed by the support section being reviewed. It should address the support section's outcomes against its strategies and goals and in the light of the University's current Strategic Plan. Support sections should also provide data to demonstrate progress against support section and University goals (where appropriate). Good practice should be identified and, in addition, weaknesses should be addressed. Actions undertaken, or planned, to remedy weaknesses should be described.
3. The self-review report structure (below) is designed to support the broad direction of support section self-review. Support sections can use this as a guide to developing their self-review report.

### **a) Current Status of the Support Section**

This section can succinctly describe the following information:

- i. Mission and Values
- ii. Strategic aims of support section and alignment with the University strategic aims
- iii. Planning process
- iv. Organisational Structure (reporting up to SMT Representative)
- v. Current budget
- vi. Staffing profile, recruitment, training and development .Examples of evidences can include  
but is not limited to:
  - i. Vision and Mission statements
  - ii. Support section operational or work plans
  - iii. Projects and initiatives pursued
  - iv. Organisation Structure (diagram)
  - v. Three year income (if applicable) and cost trends
  - vi. List of professional staff and classification/role
  - vii. Staff development plans and records of trainings

### **b) Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) Analysis**

Do a SWOT Analysis for the support section.

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### **c) Report on Last Review Recommendations**

This section can describe changes that occurred in light of previous review. Evidence can include last review reports, action plans and completion checklist.

### **d) Leadership and Management**

This section shall describe the following information:

- i. Role and responsibilities
- ii. Planning and Reporting
- iii. Internal Communication (including with the regional campuses as applicable)
- iv. External Communication (with external stakeholders)

Examples of evidences can include job descriptions and, internal and external business reports.

### **e) Functional Areas and Business Processes**

This section shall describe the following information:

- i. Functional areas of the support section and their core business processes
- ii. Quality assurance and improvements

Examples of evidences can include but is not limited to:

- i. Link to policies and procedures
- ii. User satisfaction surveys or results of any focus group

### **f) Resource Provision**

This section shall evaluate existing resources and impact on the support section:

- i. Financial
- ii. Information Technology
- iii. Human Resources
- iv. Infrastructure

Evidences can include performance, budget and associated reports.

### **g) Support towards University Strategic Goals**

This section shall describe projects and initiatives pursued by the support section to achieve University strategic goals. Evidences can include KPIs and performance targets of the support section.

### **h) Future Direction**

This section can describe issues and trends and provide suggestions for future. Evidences can include 3 – 5 year strategic plans, performance reports and trends.

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## **FORMAT of the Self-Review Report**

- Title page
- Table of Contents
- Introduction
- Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) Analysis
- Progress on Action Plan of Previous Review
- Vision, Mission and Values
- Current Status
- Leadership and Management
- Functional Areas and Business Processes
- Resource Provision
- Support towards University Strategic Goals
- Future Directions
- Appendices (evidence documents could be part of the appendices)