



# University of Otago

---

2020 Handbook for Review Convenors

Updated December 2019

# Contents

<b>Introduction</b> .....	1
<b>Prime Function</b> .....	2
<b>Key Responsibilities</b> .....	2
<b>Functional Relationships</b> .....	5
<b>Appendix A</b> Sample Time-Line/Critical Path .....	6
<b>Appendix B</b> Sample Panel Visit Programme .....	8
<b>Appendix C</b> Fact Check Policy.....	11
<b>Appendix D</b> Policy on the Provision of Status Reports to Convenors.....	12

## Introduction

---

The University of Otago has instituted a rolling programme of formal reviews of its departments, programmes, administrative processes, residential colleges, student services and operations, to effect improvement in teaching, research, and out-reach activities. A Review is conducted by a Panel consisting of members both internal and external to the University. Traditionally, units within the University have volunteered the time of staff members to service reviews. Those who have filled the Convenor role regarded the responsibility as an opportunity to widen their knowledge and understanding of the University, and to further their professional development. Although the role is a demanding one, most have found the experience to be thoroughly rewarding.

We recognise and appreciate that each Convenor brings a unique perspective to the Review process and each works in different ways. Therefore, this Handbook is intended as a general guide only. There are some variances in the duties of Convenors, depending on the type of review, but the principles are the same.

The Quality Advancement Website <http://www.otago.ac.nz/quality/reviews/> provides additional Review information, including current Review Guidelines, review proposal forms and standard Terms of Reference. The webpage also provides a schedule of forthcoming reviews, past reviews and a list of past convenors.

## 1. Prime Function

---

The Convenor:

- Is the main point of contact between members of the Panel and the Pro-Vice-Chancellor /Head of the Division;
- Ensures that the members of the Panel understand the Review process and uphold the expectations around confidentiality i.e. all written and oral submissions to the Panel must remain confidential to the Panel.
- May request the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) to appoint, to the Panel, an additional member should it become clear that this step is necessary to ensure a thorough review.
- Maximises the expertise of individual Panel Members and ensures that each Panel Member is clear about what is expected of them e.g. contributes to writing the Report.
- Coordinates the drafting of the Review Report and ensures the final Report is endorsed by the Panel before submitted as complete.

## 2. Key Responsibilities

---

The Convenor has the responsibility to:

### 2.1 Preliminary Duties

- Meet with the relevant Pro-Vice-Chancellor/Director/Head of Division, to discuss issues and expectations, in the early stages of the review process.
- Meet informally with all staff of the area under review, before the Panel Visit, to discuss the review process, encourage participation and to address any concern
- Introduce yourself to the Panel.
- Consult with the Panel to:
  - Identify key issues arising from the Self Review;
  - Identify stakeholders/submitters with whom the Panel should meet;
  - Determine lines of questioning during the Panel Visit;
  - Clarify the role and contribution of individual Panel Members e.g. assign responsibility for a particular heading from the Terms of Reference.
- You may prefer the Secretary to schedule a planning meeting with Dunedin-based Panel Members to discuss the above; alternatively you might opt for an email discussion.

- Consult with the Secretary to:
  - Coordinate requests for information, additional to the Self Review;
  - Coordinate meeting times with the Head and Staff of the unit prior to the Review;
  - Prepare review notices;
  - Advise of expectations for the Secretary during the Panel Visit e.g. note-taking;
  - Formally invite staff and students to meet with the Panel, via the Secretary; and
  - Advise the Panel Members on protocols relating to confidentiality, commercial sensitivity and other privacy matters in relation to the Review.

## **2.2 The Panel Visit**

- Ensure that:
  - No Panel Member dominates questioning.
  - Confidentiality is maintained.
  - The programme of meetings keeps to time.
  - There is verbal feedback on final day of the Review.
  - All the major recommendations are agreed upon before the end of the Panel Visit.

## **2.3 The Review Report**

Aim for completion within 6 – 8 weeks of the Panel visit.

- Ensure that all the Terms of Reference have been covered, although some issues will require more investigation than others.
- Coordinate and/or write the first draft of the Report, in consultation with the Secretary and Panel Members.
- Identify commendations, as well as recommendations
- Include justification/reasoning within the Report text for each commendation and recommendation.
- Identify areas of good practice that may benefit the wider University.
- Use of individual's names are strongly discouraged in the Report; preference should be given to job titles/positions.
- Ensure the confidentiality of submitters is maintained within the Report.
- The names of submitters should not be listed, or be able to be identified, within the Report.
- The Panel Visit Programme is confidential and should not be listed as an Appendix to the Report.
- Ensure the final Report is a coherent document, regardless of who wrote the individual sections.

- When the Report is completed by the Panel, send it and the Fact Check Policy, to the Head of the Unit to complete a check for factual accuracy (Appendix C).
- Review the completed Report with the Panel, post fact check.
- Ensure the final Report is endorsed by the Panel as a group, before submitting it to the Reviews Manager, for the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic).
- The Reviews Manager will then arrange for the Convenor to meet with the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) and the relevant Pro-Vice-Chancellor/Head of Division to discuss the Panel findings and the Report at the Report Approval Meeting.
- Make any last changes required, for the Report to be authorised for wider release.

**Note:** Panels are sometimes challenged by matters of a confidential and personal nature which are beyond the scope of the Terms of Reference and the Panel's brief. The Panel may therefore choose to:

- Submit a confidential letter to the DVC (Academic) so that such issues can be dealt with under a separate process.
- Offer advice (formally or informally) to the relevant person, on a process for resolution.

**Note:** Not all Reports are received favourably. Should any subsequent issues arise following either the preliminary presentation or the release of the Report, that are uncomfortable for the Convenor, the Convenor should contact the Quality Advancement Unit for advice and support.

### 3. Functional Relationships

---

The Convenor should have a good working relationship with:

- The QAU Reviews Manager
- The Review Secretary
- Panel Members
- The Academic of the Department/Programme/College/Unit under review
- The General Staff of the Department/Programme/College/Unit under review
- External stakeholders if appropriate.

## APPENDIX A: Sample Timeline/Critical Path

The following is a timeline that was developed for a Department Review and offers a method of organising time and tasks in preparation for a Review. The Timeline is valuable in showing the overlap of tasks. Convenors may use these guidelines in accordance with the individual demands/nature of their Review.

<p><b>1. Preliminary Paperwork</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Official letter of appointment as Convenor to the Review Panel received from the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic). The following documents were enclosed: list of names and contact details for members of the Review Panel, Terms of Reference of the Review, a copy of the Review Guidelines.</li> <li>• Review Secretary will contact you to arrange a meeting.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>2. Meet with the Secretary</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meet with the Secretary to discuss logistical matters such as venue; process and schedule; expectations of the Secretary before, during and after the Review.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Within 2 weeks of receipt of the official invitation or at least 3 months prior to Review</li> </ul>
<p><b>3. Introduce yourself to the Panel Members</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Send an introductory letter/email to Panel Members initiating contact. Perhaps discuss the following matters...             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ask Panel Members to: 1. indicate which of the major headings from the ToR for which they might take particular responsibility and</li> <li>2. Consider lines of questioning.</li> <li>- Advise the responsibilities of the Convenor and Secretary</li> <li>- Schedule a planning meeting for Dunedin-based Panel Members, if required.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Note – the Secretary will also send their own introductory email to Panel members.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• After meeting with Secretary</li> <li>• Note: it may be helpful to talk to the student/graduate rep to ensure that they understand their role.</li> </ul>
<p><b>4. Meet with PVC/Dean/Director/Department Staff</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meet with the PVC/Dean/Director prior to the review to identify and discuss issues at an early stage.</li> <li>• Convenor and Secretary meet with the Head of the Unit under review to discuss general matters relating to the review process. The Secretary will request a list of stakeholder names and contact details.</li> <li>• Meet informally with all staff e.g. at a regular staff meeting for example, as an introduction to the review process, encourage their participation and answer any questions they may have.</li> <li>• Follow-up where the Self Review is at and when it will be ready for the Review Secretary to dispatch (if not already received).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 6 weeks before the Review</li> </ul>



<p><b>5. Review Preparations</b></p> <p>In consultation with the Secretary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss the stakeholders list provided. Are all the people suggested by the Unit Head invited to make a submission? Oral or Written? Are there any obvious gaps?</li> <li>• Identify key people for the Panel to meet so the Secretary can book them ASAP.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 6 weeks before and complete no later than 4 weeks before the review.</li> <li>• Submissions deadline is 2 – 3 weeks before the review.</li> </ul>
<p><b>6. Distribution of the Self Review</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Secretary will distribute the Self Review, supporting documents and other information to Panel Members.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4 – 6 weeks prior to the Review</li> </ul>
<p><b>7. Planning meeting (if required)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• with video link to externals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• After receipt of Self Review</li> </ul>
<p><b>8. Panel Visit Programme</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss draft Panel Visit Programme with the Secretary; who might be invited, any particular order, individual or group meetings? Student groups? Secretary to circulate programme to panel for their input</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3 weeks before the Review and after the Self Review has been received.</li> </ul>
<p><b>9. Written submissions circulated by Secretary</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 weeks prior to the Review</li> </ul>
<p><b>10. Finalise Panel visit programme</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Secretary circulates programme to Panel</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One week prior to the Review</li> </ul>
<p><b>11. REVIEW WEEK</b></p>	
<p><b>12. Post Review</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In consultation with the Secretary: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Confirm the report writing process and timeframe</li> <li>- Oversee the writing of the Report</li> <li>- Ensure Panel Members approval prior to submitting the Report to QAU, for the DVC (Academic).</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Within 6 – 8 weeks of the Panel visit, submit the Final report.</li> </ul>
<p><b>14. First status report</b></p> <p>Convenor receives a copy of the First Status Report</p>	6 months post-review

## APPENDIX B: Sample Visit Programme

The Secretary will prepare a Visit Programme for a Department/Programme, which may look something like the following model, and includes people with different responsibilities, committees and group meetings.

- HOD/Programme Director/Coordinator: has one hour and this should be the first meeting in the programme.
- PVC: has 30 mins. Sometimes better to see later in the programme – Day 2.
- Other individual meetings: as a general rule have 20 mins; but there is a 10 min buffer time.
- Group meetings: have 30 mins if more than three people.
- The Secretary will try to reserve time for the Panel to have discussions throughout the day and some breaks for the Panel.



### Sample Review Programme of Meetings

**CONFIDENTIAL**

<b>Tuesday 14 August</b>	
8:30 – 9:00am	Panel convene
9:00 – 10:00am	Associate Professor Vanda Symon, Head of Department
10:00 – 10:15	Run-over time if needed/Panel break
10:15 – 10:45am	Professor Jane Austen, PVC Division of Books
10:45 – 11:00am	Morning tea
11:00 – 11:20 Submission no.4	Dr J.R. Tolkien, Lecturer ( <i>requested to meet with the Panel</i> )
11:30 – 11:50	Dr Ian Rankin, Postgraduate coordinator
12:00 – 12:20	Management Committee: Professor J.K. Rowling; Associate Professor Janet Frame; Dr Margaret Mahy
12:20 – 12:45	Buffer time, prepare for student meeting
12:45 – 1:30	Lunch - with class reps (see attached list for names)
1:30 – 1:50	Professor Joy Cowley, HoD Children's Fiction

2:00 – 2:30 (note longer meeting time for group)	Research Group: Dr Maurice Gee (NZ fiction); Virginia Wolf (Feminist literature); Dr Seuss (Philosophical literature)
2:40 – 3:10 Group Submission. 3	Technical Staff: Harry Potter, Hermione Granger and Ron Weasley,
3:15 – 3:30	Afternoon tea
3:30 – 3:50	Available meeting time
4:00 – 4:15	Panel debrief
4:30	Tour of Department
Own arrangements for dinner	

<b>Wednesday 15 August</b>	
8:30 – 9:00am	Panel convene
9:00 – 9:20	Barry MacKay, Property Services Director <i>(this one is for real!)</i>
9:30 – 9:50	Professor Dumbledore, Research Professor
10:00 – 10:20	Assoc. Prof. Bill Shakespeare , Coordinator Theatre Studies 101
10:30 – 10:45	Morning tea
10:45 11:05 Submission 10	Dr. Bill Manhire, Dr.Fay Weldon, Margaret Attwood (Centre for Fictional Development)
11:15 – 11:45 General Staff	Ms Becky Thatcher, Senior Manager Client Services, Mr Huck Finn, Lead Admin, Mr Tom Sawyer, Administrator, Client Services
11:45 – 12:00	Run-over time/panel discussion time
12:00 – 12:20	Professor Iain M. Banks, Director, Science Fiction Programme
12:20 – 12:45	Buffer time/panel time
12:45 – 1:30	Lunch with graduate students (see list attached)
1:30 – 2:00	Panel time – discussion, check emails etc.
2:00 – 2:20	Associate Professor C.K. Stead (joint appointment with Dept of Interesting Biographies)
2:30 – 2:50	Professor Emily Perkins (new appointment, June 2012) <i>Requested to meet with Panel</i>
3:00 – 3:20	Dr. Kate De Goldi, Research only appointment
3:30 – 3:45	Afternoon tea
3:45 – 4:05 Submission 8	Associate Professor Gareth Morgan,
4:15 – 5:05	Available meeting time

Panel debrief	
Own arrangements for dinner	

<b>Thursday 16 August</b>	
8:30 – 9:00am	Panel convene and prepare preliminary findings No meetings scheduled for today apart from presentations. Vanda Symon available for call back this morning
10:30	Morning tea
12:30	Lunch
3:00	Finalise presentation and agree next steps i.e draft text due date
3:15	Walk to Dept seminar room
3:30 – 4:00pm	Presentation of findings to Vanda Symon
4:00 – 4:30pm	Present findings to staff – in seminar room

**Panel Departures:**

- Erika Leonard to leave at 5:00pm for check in at 5:50pm.
- George Eliot to leave at 4:30pm for check in at 5:30pm

**Notes:**

- List those who were asked to meet the Panel but were unavailable or declined.
- List names of students for group meetings
- Any other things you think the Panel need to be reminded of!

## APPENDIX C:

---

### FACTUAL CHECK OF REVIEW REPORTS POLICY

*Revised 4 February 2011*



Prior to finalisation of a Review Report by the Panel, the Convenor will send a copy of the Report to the Head of the Unit to check for factual inaccuracies. The Head will have two weeks from receipt of the Report to reply with any factual corrections. If no corrections are received within the two weeks, it will be assumed that the Report is factually accurate and the Report will go forward “as is” to the Report Approval Meeting.

#### **Notes:**

The Review Report reflects the views of the Review Panel only.

No response by the Head does not constitute “approval of” or “agreement with” the Report in any way other than to accept its factual accuracy.

The Status Reports provide the Unit with an opportunity to respond to the Review Report and its recommendations as well as to provide information about any implementation steps taken and/or planned.

**Confidentiality Reminder:** Until formally released by the DVC (Academic), this Report remains confidential to the Review Panel and the Head of Unit only. Although limited consultation to verify factual accuracies may be required, the Report has not yet been finalised and is not to be shared or circulated with others.

## APPENDIX D:

---

### **POLICY ON PROVISION OF STATUS REPORTS TO REVIEW CONVENORS** *Updated January 2016*



In the interest of providing Review Convenors with follow up information on the Review they convened, the Quality Advancement Unit will provide Convenors with a copy of the Unit's first Status Report. The Status Report will be confidential to the Convenor and must be destroyed once read.

#### **Notes:**

The Status Report is provided to Convenors as a courtesy and is for the Convenor's information only. The Convenor has no role in the Status Report process or any other aspect of the Review follow up.

Convenors will be provided with the first (6 month) Status Report prepared by the Unit only; any additional reports and/or comments submitted by the PVC, Dean and/or Director will not be included. Second Status Reports will be provided on request.

The Status Report is strictly confidential to the Convenor personally and must be destroyed appropriately by the Convenor once read. Convenor's who wish to provide fellow Panellists with follow up information may *advise* them of the contents of the Report but may not copy or circulate the Status Report itself.

The substance of this Policy will be communicated to Convenors in a covering memo along with a copy of the Post Review information flyer to ensure understanding and transparency of this procedure.

## **Quality Advancement Unit contacts:**

<http://www.otago.ac.nz/quality/reviews/>

### **Reviews Manager:**

Megan Wilson [m.wilson@otago.ac.nz](mailto:m.wilson@otago.ac.nz) ext.6528

### **Reviews Administrators:**

Annabel Rutherford [annabel.rutherford@otago.ac.nz](mailto:annabel.rutherford@otago.ac.nz) ext.8432

Dr Pete Dulgar [pete.dulgar@otago.ac.nz](mailto:pete.dulgar@otago.ac.nz) ext. 8861