Procedure: Academic School or Department accreditation

Purpose
To outline the procedures which support the creation, regular and triggered review, and disestablishment of schools and departments at ANU.

Procedure

Establishing a School or Department

1. College executives recommend, the relevant dean and the deputy vice-chancellor endorse, the Vice Chancellor approves and University Council notes the establishment of a school or department.

2. Recommendations consist of:
   a. An evidence–based document demonstrating attainment of the standards for a school or department outlined in the Academic Colleges, Schools and Departments policy; and
   b. An account of the staff that will constitute the school or department, highlighting any transfers from other ANU AOU; and
   c. Evidence of consultation with any colleges, departments or schools with cognate activities.

3. Additional information may be required before a decision can be made. The relevant college will be notified if additional information is sought.

4. Decisions to establish schools or departments will be communicated to Academic Board and Planning and Performance Management, and an AOU code assigned.

School and Department review cycle

5. Each of the University’s schools and departments will be reviewed every five years, although the Vice Chancellor, Deputy Vice-Chancellor or Dean may trigger a shorter review cycle on the basis of evidence relating to the emergence of new research or education directions, viability, failure to meet University or external
standards or policies, research, education or service outcomes or student experience.

6. Where relevant, school and department reviews will be scheduled to coincide with external accreditation or contract timelines.

7. Centres and Institutes can be reviewed separately or as part of the review of a school or department.

8. More than one school or department in a cognate area can be reviewed simultaneously.

9. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor endorses, and the Vice Chancellor approves the academic school and department review schedule.

10. The schools and departments review schedule will be reported to Academic Board and Planning and Performance Management.

Preparation for School review

11. Staff in the school or department prepare an evidence-based self-report against the University’s Academic Colleges, Schools and Departments policy standards at least a month before the scheduled review; and

12. A call for submissions by the head of the school or department is published at least two weeks before the scheduled review.

Review panels

13. School or department reviews will be undertaken by a panel of no fewer than four members, and must include at least three independent, external reviewers who are appropriately qualified and experienced;

14. Deans endorse and the Deputy Vice Chancellor approves the constitution of the review panel;

15. The review panel will be chaired by one of the independent, external reviewers;

16. Interviews with members of the school or department or those with appropriate expertise may be required;

17. The relevant Dean will meet with the review panel to provide comment on the self-review report of the school;

18. The review panel may require further information, including, but not limited to: demand, conversion and market strength; student experience, outcomes and satisfaction; student load and program and course suite profile; achievement of equity goals for staff and students; staff teaching load; research outputs and
standing; staff turnover and comparison of revenues and expenses. The review panel will provide a written response to the school or department self-report that includes a summary recommendation to:

- Renew recognition of the school or department with no conditions; or
- Renew recognition of the school or department with specified conditions, including suggested actions and timeframes; or
- Disestablish the school.

19. Any potential conflicts of interest will be declared by the panel in their published report.

Response to the review report

20. Staff in the school or department will provide specific responses, including actions, timeframes and persons responsible, against the panel’s recommendations and any specified conditions within six weeks of receiving the report;

21. The Dean and the Deputy Vice-Chancellor approve a school or department response to the review panel’s report;

22. A progress report against recommendations will be provided by the school or department to the Dean within twelve months of the review. A progress reporting timeframe may be required by the Dean on the basis of evidence relating to viability, quality assurance, research outcomes or student outcomes or experience.

Disestablishment of Schools or Departments

23. College executives recommend, the relevant dean and the deputy vice-chancellor endorse, the Vice Chancellor approves and University Council notes the disestablishment of a school or department.

24. Schools or departments are considered for disestablishment only after a review, and the review report includes an account of winding down or transfer of operational activities such as teaching responsibilities.

25. Decisions to disestablish schools or departments will be communicated to Academic Board and Planning and Performance Management.

Appeals

26. The Head of a school or department may lodge an appeal against the outcome of an academic review on the basis of a procedural irregularity only.
27. Appeals are made to the Vice Chancellor within twenty working days of presentation of the panel report.

28. The Vice Chancellor will seek advice as to whether there has or has not been a procedural irregularity and may confirm the panel’s decision, uphold the appeal or refer the appeal to a newly constituted review panel.