

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. The approval process for the establishment of an Academic Organisation Unit is as follows:
 - a. Establishment of a College or School – Senior Management Group (SMG) *recommends*, Vice-Chancellor *endorses* and University Council *approves* the establishment of the College or School (that is, as per Level 1 and 2 units as categorised in the ANU Academic Organisational Structure, with approvals in this regard to be exercised by the University Council pursuant to the Council [Charter](#)).
 - b. Establishment of a Department within a College or School - The College Dean recommends, the Vice-Chancellor approves and University Council notes the establishment of the Department (that is, any unit categorised as [Level 3 or below](#) in the ANU Academic Organisational Structure).
2. Recommendations consist of a rationale for the establishment, including, but not limited to:
 - a. Demonstration of the attainment of the relevant standard for a school or department outlined in the Academic Colleges, Schools and Departments policy;
 - b. An account of the staff that will constitute the school or department, highlighting any transfers from other ANU AOU's;
 - c. Evidence of consultation with any colleges, departments or schools affected or with cognate activities;
 - d. Adherences to the Naming Recognition policy and procedure; and
 - e. The intended communication plan should the establishment be approved.

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 Service Performance, and an AOU code assigned.

Renaming a School or Department

5. The approval process for renaming an Academic Organisation Unit is as follows:
 - a. Renaming a College or School – Senior Management Group (SMG) *recommends*, Vice-Chancellor *endorses* and University Council *approves* the renaming of the College or School (that is, as per Level 1 and 2 units as categorised in the ANU Academic Organisational Structure, with approvals in this regard to be exercised by the University Council pursuant to the Council Charter).
 - b. Renaming a Department within a College or School - The College Dean recommends, the Vice-Chancellor approves and University Council notes the renaming of the Department (that is, any unit categorised as Level 3 or below in the ANU Academic Organisational Structure).
6. Recommendation consists of a rationale for the name change, and includes evidence of:
 - a. consultation with the affected Academic Organisational Unit and any colleges, departments or schools with cognate activities;
 - b. Adherences to the Naming Recognition Policy and Procedure
 - c. The intended communication plan should the name change if approved, including, but not limited to, external stakeholders such as research partners and alumni.
7. Decisions to rename schools or departments will be communicated to Academic Board and Planning and Service Performance.

Disestablishment of Schools or Departments

8. The approval process for the disestablishment of an Academic Organisation Unit is as follows:
 - a. Disestablishment of a College or School – Senior Management Group (SMG) *recommends*, Vice-Chancellor *endorses* and University Council *approves* the disestablishment of the College or School (that is, as per Level 1 and 2 units as categorised in the ANU Academic Organisational Structure, with approvals in this regard to be exercised by the University Council pursuant to the Council Charter).

- b. Disestablishment of a Department within a College or School - The College Dean *recommends*, the Vice-Chancellor *approves* and University Council *notes* the disestablishment of the department (that is, any unit categorised as Level 3 or below in the ANU Academic Organisational Structure).
9. The recommendation for disestablishment must be accompanied by supporting evidence. If the “Procedure: Managing Change” has been followed then the Implementation Paper from that process should be submitted with the recommendation.
10. Supporting evidence should include, but not be limited to:
 - a. an overview of the consultation which has occurred including with the affected Academic Organisational Unit and any Colleges, Departments or Schools with cognate activities;
 - b. an account of winding down or transfer of operational activities including, but not limited to, finances, teaching activities, HDR supervision, research commitments, equipment and partnerships, alumni & advancement relationships;
 - c. communication plan regarding the proposed change;
 - d. impacts and arrangements for any Schools, Departments, Centres or Institutes belonging to the Academic Organisational Unit proposing to be disestablished; and
 - e. demonstration of the retainment of the relevant standards for a school or department outlined in the Academic Colleges, Schools and Departments policy.
11. Decisions to disestablish schools or departments will be communicated to Academic Board and Planning and Service Performance.

School and Department review cycle

12. Each of the University’s schools and departments will be reviewed at least once every five years, although the Vice Chancellor, Deputy Vice-Chancellor or Dean may determine a shorter review cycle.
13. Where relevant, school and department reviews will be scheduled to coincide with external accreditation or contract timelines.
14. Centres and Institutes can be reviewed separately or as part of the review of a school or department.
15. More than one school or department in a cognate area can be reviewed simultaneously.

16. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor endorses, and the Vice Chancellor approves the academic school and department review schedule.
17. The schools and departments review schedule will be reported to Academic Board and Planning and Service Performance.

Preparation for School review

18. 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
19. A call for submissions by the head of the school or department is published least two weeks before the scheduled review.

Review panels

20. 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;
21. Deans endorse and the Deputy Vice Chancellor approves the constitution of the review panel;
22. The review panel will be chaired by one of the independent, external reviewers;
23. Interviews with members of the school or department or those with appropriate expertise may be required;
24. The relevant Dean will meet with the review panel to provide comment on the self-review report of the school;
25. 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.

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

Response to the review report

27. 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;

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

29. 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

Appeals

30. 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.

31. Appeals are made to the Vice Chancellor within twenty working days of presentation of the panel report.

32. 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.

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