Quality Policy

Section 1 - Purpose and Scope

(1) The purpose of this Policy is to affirm Southern Cross University's commitment to Quality Assurance and to define its Quality Assurance Framework.

Scope

(2) All of the University's organisational units, functions and collaborations.

Section 2 - Policy Statement

Part A - Policy Declaration

(3) The Higher Education context in Australia holds strong quality assurance expectations of self-accrediting Universities. Key reference points include:

a. the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA);
b. the Higher Education Standards Framework (HESF 2015);
c. the Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students (CRICOS); and
d. the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF).

(4) Southern Cross University has established a quality framework so as to realise its Mission, Goals and Strategic Priorities, and to meet its obligations as a self-accrediting University.

(5) Quality assurance in higher education involves the adoption of systematic management procedures to monitor performance and to ensure achievement and improvement of the quality of systems, processes and outputs.

(6) The aims of quality assurance are: to give internal and external stakeholders confidence in the management of operations, management, governance and outcomes; to ensure that the University meets both the expectations and performance measures in the higher education sector, and national and transnational quality assurance standards.

(7) Quality assurance at the University is developed and supported through policies, principles, attitudes, actions and procedures that assure quality through a continuous improvement philosophy.

Part B - Policy Description

Objectives

(8) The policy:

a. articulates the role of quality assurance at the University;
b. explains the University's quality framework and quality assurance methodology;
c. identifies reporting relationships across the university that support quality assurance and enhancement; and

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d. details how the methodology is operationalised (Matrix Table).

Part C - Content and Implementation

(9) Southern Cross University is a self-accrediting institution and is responsible for its own standards. The University's Quality Framework has five components - Planning, Implementation, Monitoring and Review, and Improve. These five components form the PIMRI cycle for implementation of quality assurance.

(10) The SCU Quality Framework incorporates, but is not limited to:

a. strategic planning;
b. operational planning aligned with budget;
c. review of organisational units, functions and educational collaborations for quality improvement (Organisational Reviews Policy and Planning, Quality and Review website);
d. accreditation and review of academic courses (Course and Unit Accreditation Policy);
e. monitoring of performance through review of evidence;
f. collection and review of feedback from staff, students and other stakeholders; and
g. use of external reference points to benchmark success and areas for improvement.

(11) Key interrelated milestones in the planning and budget processes across the calendar year are:

Phase 1: Organisational Unit Planning (April to May)

Phase 2: Refinement and Review by VC's Executive (June-July)

Phase 3: Finalisation (August-September)

Phase 4: Submission of Budget to Council (October)

(12) All University plans will align with the University's Strategic Plan.

(13) The University Council is regularly informed (at least annually) on progress against Strategic Plan targets and Key Performance Indicators (KPI's).

(14) All organisational units conduct an annual operational planning process that is informed by the University Quality Framework and is aligned with budget processes.

(15) All organisational unit plans contain key performance indicators, performance targets and quality improvement strategies.

(16) The Organisational Review Policy and Schedule are developed by the Planning and Quality Committee for approval by the Vice Chancellor.

(17) The Organisational Review Policy includes organisational unit, educational collaborations and functional/process reviews. The University's Review Schedule will be prepared taking into account the external environment, risk assessment, internal process and organisational changes.

(18) Organisational units may conduct other reviews as approved by the VC on the advice of the DVC-A as Chair of the Planning and Quality Committee.

(19) The University Council will establish a review process for itself and relevant governance committees.

(20) Academic Board will establish and conduct reviews relevant to its terms of reference and within the parameters

of its rules.

(21) All reviews will incorporate relevant comparative or process benchmarking.

(22) External assessment of professional courses is conducted through accreditation processes.

(23) All organisational units are expected to identify quality principles to assure quality and compliance where required.

(24) An evidenced-based approach will underpin the monitoring and review component of the PIMRI cycle. Institutional performance data will be identified, stored and reported to internal and external stakeholders. Feedback from students, staff and other stakeholders will be incorporated in monitoring and review processes.

(25) A schedule for reporting institutional data will be developed by the Planning and Quality Committee.

Quality Culture

(26) All members of the University community have a stake and role in quality assurance and improvement at the University.

(27) The creation and maintenance of a culture of quality is fundamental to the effectiveness of the University's quality system, and therefore there is ongoing whole-of-University education about quality assurance and improvement and the quality framework.

(28) Underlying the effectiveness of the quality framework is the need for University management to ensure that all members of the University community are part of the quality culture and are made aware of:

a. all elements of the quality framework;
b. those aspects of University operations, including structures, policies, principles, procedures, plans and practices that affect, guide or direct their activity as part of the quality culture; and
c. where the related accountabilities, delegations and responsibilities lie.

(29) All members of the University Executive are responsible for ensuring that a quality assurance culture is adopted, and that compliance with external responsibilities is an inherent part of quality assurance.

(30) It is expected that quality assurance procedures will be documented in quality assurance manuals across the University at critical control points to ensure business continuity and quality enhancement.

Section 3 - Planning and Quality Committee

(31) The Planning and Quality Committee monitors the application of the Quality Policy and associated processes.

(32) The Planning and Quality Committee reports to the Vice Chancellor on issues associated with quality assurance at Southern Cross University.

Membership

(33) The membership consists of:

a. Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic) (Chair)
b. Pro Vice Chancellor (Students)
c. Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research)

d. Vice President (Global)
e. Chair of Academic Board
f. Director, Planning, Quality and Review

Terms of Reference

(34) To monitor the application of the Quality Policy.

(35) To advise the Vice Chancellor of quality improvement strategies and issues.

(36) To monitor the alignment of the PIMRI Framework and advise the Vice Chancellor on the Review Framework and associated schedules.

(37) To advise the Vice Chancellor on performance indicators and measures of University progress.

(38) To co-ordinate reviews and reregistration, and monitor implementation of recommendations.

(39) To monitor the implementation of review processes.

(40) The SCU Quality Framework follows the PIMRI cycle of activities involving planning, implementing, monitoring and reviewing, and improvement activities.

(41) The Quality Assurance Responsibility Matrix identifies examples of the key responsibilities and quality control points for quality assurance at SCU.

Quality Assurance Responsibility Matrix - Key Examples

	Responsibility	Examples
Strategic Planning	Council	Strategic Plan
Planning	Vice Chancellor's Group	Functional Plans Service Level Plans Operating Plan
Academic Quality Assurance	Academic Board (and Council)	Academic Rules and Policies Committees of Examiners Course Accreditation and Review
	Planning and Quality Committee	Quality Policy & Framework Monitoring and Report Schedule Review Framework
	School/College	Course Advisory Committees Unit Reports Course Reports Quality in Learning and Teaching performance (QILT) Committees of Examiners' Reports Operational Planning
Non-Academic Quality Assurance	Planning and Quality Committee	Advice to Vice Chancellor Implementation, Monitoring and Review of Review Framework Benchmarking standards
	Finance Committee	Budget
	Audit and Risk Committee	Risk Register Audit Reports
	SCU Internal Auditor	Audit review schedule and reports
International Quality Assurance	VP (Global)	ESOS Compliance
	Office of PQR	ESOS Compliance CRICOS registration
	School/College	School Board (Committee of Academic Board) Management Committee Meetings Student Assessment
	Commercial Activities Committee	Commercial Activities Committee meetings

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Institutional Performance Reporting	Vice Chancellor	Profile Reports, General Report Card, KPIs
	Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic)	School Reviews (incorporating Course Reviews) Offshore & Collaborative Program Review QILT Professional Accreditation University's Course profile
Research	DVC (Research)	ERA Risk Management Strategy
External Review	DVC(A)	TEQSA 7-yearly Quality Review University Re-Registration
	Professional Bodies	Professional Accreditation & Review (e.g., Courses)

Status and Details

Status	Current
Effective Date	8th March 2018
Review Date	8th November 2020
Approval Authority	Vice Chancellor
Approval Date	8th March 2018
Expiry Date	To Be Advised
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