



Academic Quality Framework

Quality Review of Professional Services

**Approved by Academic Council
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1. Context

- 1.1 It is University policy to carry out an internal cycle of reviews of its Professional Services (hereafter termed *Quality Review of Professional Services*) on an ongoing basis for purposes of quality assurance and quality enhancement as provided for by the TU Dublin Quality Framework, and as per relevant statutory obligations. Best practice guidelines require ongoing monitoring and periodic review, including review of the effectiveness of quality assurance procedures, to ensure that they achieve their objectives and respond to the needs of students and society at large. The intention of such reviews is to lead to continuous improvement of designated functions. Hence, any action(s) planned, or undertaken, arising out of the reviews, are communicated to all stakeholders.
- 1.2 These procedures as outlined here should be read in conjunction with the [Principles Underpinning TU Dublin Academic Quality Framework](#). All Professional Services should consult the Academic Affairs website for records of the Annual Quality Reports (AQRs) to QQI, outcomes of internal quality surveys, and the suite of current national and international best practice guidelines applicable to their respective areas.
- 1.3 The rationale for the *Quality Review of Professional Services* embodies the requirements in regulatory guidelines, legislation, and observation of international best practice.
- 1.4 The premise of the Quality Review is to be able to answer three fundamental questions, namely:
 - 1.4.1 How is the service under review furthering the achievement of the University's strategic objectives?
 - 1.4.2 How effective is the service under review being provided to stakeholders?
 - 1.4.3 Are there viable opportunities for enhancement of the service under review?

2. Purpose

- 2.1 The purpose of this document is to outline the policies and procedures relating to the *Quality Review of Professional Services* in TU Dublin, specifically aimed at continuous quality enhancement. Effectiveness of the University's approach to student engagement and provision of comprehensive supports of student

learning, includes both the general and academic services, i.e., the professional services that contribute to the overall student experience.

2.2 The purposes of the *Quality Review of Professional Services* are to:

2.2.1 Evaluate, through a structured collation of evidence and critical reflections that the Professional Services and/or their inherent units can provide, and plan, for its supports to academic programmes, research, student experience, and strategic development in a manner compatible with the overall University mission, Strategic Plan and Educational Model.

2.2.2 Evaluate the extent to which activities of the Professional Service are aligned with the University's strategic objectives, including those relating to the enhancement of learning and teaching, and related environments dedicated to the student experience.

2.2.3 Evaluate the efficacy of the function in meeting the needs of identifiable stakeholders, including staff and students, and the level of engagement with such stakeholders.

2.2.4 Evaluate the implementation of processes for continuous monitoring and enhancement of quality standards to support teaching, learning, assessment, research, and the overall student experience, ensuring that any emerging issues are identified and appropriately addressed.

2.2.5 Benefit from objective critique from expert Review Panel members external to the Professional Service under review, affording it the opportunity to identify examples of good practices for adoption, commendation, and dissemination.

2.2.6 Ensure that the Professional Service's development plans are aligned with the vision and strategic objectives of the University.

3. Scope

Procedures covered in this document relate to *Quality Review of Professional Services* in TU Dublin to ascertain:

3.1 Observance, effectiveness, and rigour of internal quality assurance protocols within the Professional Service under review.

3.2 Contribution of the Professional Service under review to the strategic aims and initiatives of the academic Faculties, including how these are objectively addressed in the broad contexts of the University's goals in its Vision, Strategic Plan and Education Model.

The Professional Services covered by this protocol for *Quality Review of Professional Services*, includes whole or specific components of the functional areas of the University such as:

- Recruitment, Admissions and Participation.
- Student Services and Wellbeing.
- Academic Affairs.
- Library Services.
- Estates and Facilities Management.
- Technology Services .
- Human Resources.
- Governance and Compliance.
- Finance.
- Strategy and Planning Unit.
- Functions under VP Partnerships.
- Functions under VP Sustainability.
- Functions under VP Change Management
- Any other Functions not listed above but determined to be relevant. .

Note: Where Academic Affairs is the Professional Service under review, the role of the Academic Affairs' representative in the coordination of the review and as a Review Panel member will be undertaken by a representative from another Professional Service or by an external Quality specialist.

Academic Affairs aims to implement a lean and considerate administrative process to ensure that the University's internal processes do not issue multiple requests for the same information, thereby burdening its systems. Therefore, the scope of this *Quality Review of Professional Services* is cognisant that the performance review of some of the Functions and/or their inherent Units may be substantially covered under the standard services audit protocols administered under Governance and Compliance function area. Consequently, Academic Affairs, in consultation with Governance and Compliance, will compile a listing of the specific Function(s)/Unit(s) under this category to exempt them from this Quality Review process.

4. Procedures for the Quality Review of Professional Services

- 4.1 A schedule of Professional Services Quality Reviews will be agreed as part of an overall schedule of reviews overseen by the University Academic Quality Assurance and Enhancement committee. These reviews will inform preparations for the Institutional Review.
- 4.2 Procedures will include:
- 4.2.1 Nomination of the Review Panel, as per specifications in Section 5 below.
- 4.2.2 Preparation and submission of Review Documentation, specifically the Professional Services Self Evaluation Report (SER), as per specification in Section 6 below. The SER will be compiled by a *Review Coordination Steering Committee* chaired by the Head of the Function under Review.
- 4.2.3. Scheduling and conducting of site visit(s) for discussion with relevant stakeholders, culminating in the Review Report, as per Section 7 below. Critically, the Review Report will assess the Professional Service under review's:
- Current and future capability to provide services that effectively contribute towards quality enhancement of the student learning experience.
 - Current and future capability in the management of its development vision(s) per the strategic plan of the Professional Service, and their alignment with the overall Service's role in the University's Strategic Plan.
- 4.2.4. The process will conclude with the development of a Post-Review Service Quality Enhancement Plan and implementation strategy (Section 8 below), including progress reporting.

5. Review Panel

5.1 Panel Composition and Member Nomination

- 5.1.1 The composition of the *Quality Review of Professional Services Panel* will typically include a Chair (external to the University), two internal members, one student member, two external members, and a representative from Academic Affairs.

- 5.1.2 The Chair shall be the Head of a similar Professional Services function in a comparable University and have experience in participating in Quality Reviews. The Chair is nominated by the Professional Service under review and approved by Academic Affairs. Of the two internal members, one shall be a Professional Services manager, and one shall be a Head of School nominated by Academic Affairs.
- 5.1.3 Two external members shall be nominated by the Head of Function and approved by Academic Affairs. External member selection criteria shall be based on experience of working in a University of a similar profile to TU Dublin, preferably with multi-campus/multi-location and multi-mode programme delivery. This should include knowledge of related student research activity, coupled with a large international student body, some of whom may be registered and/or may be undertaking their programmes fully remotely.
- 5.1.4 The representative appointed by Academic Affairs will facilitate the Quality Review process.

5.2 Panel Objectives and Functions

- 5.2.1 The Review Panel will specifically evaluate the extent to which the evidence submitted by the Professional Service under review in the Self Evaluation Report (SER), and corroborations gained through collegial discussions with stakeholders, meet the review purposes detailed in Section 2.2 above.
- 5.2.2 The Review Panel will be tasked with:
- Considering the SER, including any supporting information from discussions with appropriate stakeholders and onsite evidence as presented during the site visit(s).
 - Participating in planned site visit(s) to the Professional Service under review, or remote interaction with the Service to scrutinise the evidence. Remote interactions will be facilitated in situations where the same objectives can be achieved as with physical site visit(s), or where prevailing operational guidelines may not allow for physical site visit(s).
 - Reviewing other activities that contribute to the Professional Service's meeting of strategic intents, and enhancement of the student learning experience in the overall University context.

- Preparing an interim report specifying its findings and recommendations, with the communication of the indicative findings to the Professional Service at the Exit Meeting.
 - Finalising the Professional Service Review Report, which will provide the basis for the subsequent Quality Enhancement Action Plan arising from the Review.
- 5.2.3 The Review will include consideration of the outcome of comprehensive stakeholder feedback. For example, where students and/or staff interact directly with the Function, then the review will include consideration of structured staff and/or student feedback on the Professional Service under review. This feedback will be collated in advance and presented to the panel to afford the reviewers the opportunity to corroborate the evidence at the scheduled stakeholder engagement sessions. The stakeholder feedback process shall ensure that representative inputs from the different categories of TU Dublin students are captured. This should include feedback from students undertaking TU Dublin full-time, part-time, apprenticeship, fully online/remote (incl. international scholars) basis.

6. Review Documentation

6.1 Outline of Material Relevant to the Submission

- 6.1.1 The focus of the Quality Review is towards quality enhancement through reflection, analysis and improvement plans. It will therefore be conducted based on informed collegial discussions, rather than audit for possible errors and omissions.
- 6.1.2 The Professional Service will submit a Self Evaluation Report (SER) capturing comprehensive background information relevant to that Service that will inform discussions, while also eliciting the requisite critique by the Review Panel. The SER, along with relevant supporting documentation, shall be submitted to Academic Affairs in electronic format, at least 5 weeks prior to the agreed date for the Quality Review.
- 6.1.3 The Review Panel will be afforded the opportunity to submit queries regarding issues that require clarification, as well as to request additional information as deemed necessary, prior to the scheduled site visit(s).

6.2 Establishment of Professional Services Review Coordination Steering Group

- 6.2.1 Each Professional Service under review will establish a Review Coordination Steering Group to lead the preparation of the SER.
- 6.2.2 Each Professional Service under review will nominate a liaison person, who will take responsibility for co-ordinating the activities of the steering group, preparation of the self-evaluation report, and liaising with Academic Affairs to make logistical arrangements for the Quality Review meetings.

6.3 Structure and Contents of the Professional Services Self-Evaluation Report

- 6.3.1 With a formative objective at its core, the SER will provide evidence-based on reflection through the Quality Review of Professional Services process.
- 6.3.2 Overall, the SER narrative will articulate the Service's approach to quality assurance and quality enhancement in its operations; specifically, a critical self-reflection on the effectiveness of its delivery of services and/or facilities. The Professional Service being reviewed shall relate their activities and describe their role in leading/supporting the University's functions, and how they assure/enhance the quality of their role under the following headings:
- Governance and Management of Quality.
 - Documented Approach to Quality Assurance.
 - Programme(s) Provisions (e.g., development/approval; learner admission, progression, and recognition; programme monitoring and review).
 - Staff Recruitment, Management and Development.
 - Teaching and Learning (e.g., promotion of learning, collaborative/communities of practice, appropriate learning environments etc.).
 - Assessment of Learners.
 - Provision of supports for Learners.
 - Information Systems and Data Management.

- Public Information and Communication (e.g., learner information, quality reports, etc.).
- Other Parties involved in Education and Training (e.g., external partners and providers, expert panellists/examiners/authenticators).
- Self-Evaluation, Monitoring and Review.
- Support for Research.

6.3.3 It is recommended that the SER document should be no longer than 20 pages, with additional appendices where necessary. In most part, the typical SER structure and indicative contents are provided in the indicative SER Template.

6.4 Consideration of Professional Service Self-Evaluation Report by Academic Affairs

6.4.1 The SER will be considered by a representative of Academic Affairs, prior to forwarding to the Review Panel within a week of submission.

6.4.2 The Academic Affairs representative will review the submission and if in compliance with the requirements in the SER Template, confirm progression with the Review Panel.

7. Protocol for Professional Service Review Site Visits

7.1 Pre-Visit Planning

The protocols for the Quality Review will be discussed in the pre-visit planning between the Head of Function and the representative of Academic Affairs. Academic Affairs will provide the broad structure for the event, which will also include any specific lines of enquiry intended to guide the Chair and the review team. A representative of Academic Affairs will confirm the date of the Quality Review Panel meetings and will formally invite the Quality Review Panel members once their nominations have been approved.

7.2 Review Panel Visit(s) and Schedule

A planning meeting will be agreed with Academic Affairs, to initiate and enable discussion of the objectives and key aspects of the review. It is estimated that the Professional Services Reviews will be covered in a two-day site visit(s). It may be desirable to undertake the review over two sequential days, but where this is not

feasible, then the review may be scheduled over any two days within the same week. A typical schedule and key review elements are outlined in Table 1 below. An indicative schedule specific to the Review of Library Services is also provided in the Appendix.

Table 1. Indicative Schedule and Elements of Review of Professional Services

Review Session	Activity
Part I: Day 0	Planning/Pre-planning Meeting between Academic Affairs, Panel Chair, and the Head of Professional Services Function under review.
Part II: Day 1	Services Overview (Covering Strategic Objectives, and Short and Long-term priority support areas) Service Delivery & Processes (including data/information management) Background Support Processes & Services (including data/information management)
Part III: Day 2	Inspection/Discussion of Supporting Facilities and Infrastructure Shared Services, Links to Other Support Services & Services-in-Partnership Challenges and Opportunity for Further Development & Enhancement

7.3 Exit Meeting

7.3.1 The Exit Meeting affords the Review Panel the opportunity to communicate their provisional findings to the Professional Service under review. The Panel Chair (or the nominated external member of the Review Panel) will present their findings in the form of an overview of salient observations, commendations, and recommendations for improvement.

7.3.2 Typically, the Exit Meeting will not accommodate any discussions of findings, except for any points of clarification that may arise from the outcome summary. This is due to the provisional nature of the findings as communicated during this meeting, with these findings being subject to change considering further evidence (as may have been requested by the Review Panel), and post-visit discussions and reflections by Review Panel members. The indicative period for the issuing of the panel report to the Professional Service/Unit under review will be communicated at this meeting.

7.3.3 In keeping with best practice, after the site visit(s), any contact between the staff of the Professional Service/Unit under review and the Review Panel on any matters relating to the Self Evaluation Report (SER), the concluded site visit(s), or the Professional Service Review Report will be conducted through Academic Affairs.

7.4 Professional Service Review Report

7.4.1 The Professional Service Review Report is expected to provide formative feedback to the Service under review in keeping with the quality enhancement aims of the review process and associated outcomes. Whereas the Professional Service Review Report will be expected to draw substantially from the Self Evaluation Report (SER) in both structure and part-contents, the commendations and recommendations will arise purely from a critical review of the SER. This information will have been corroborated with evidence obtained both orally in the scheduled review forums, and in direct observations during the panel visit.

7.4.2 It will be expected that, by the end of the site visit(s), the Academic Affairs representative on the Review Panel will have composed a summary of indicative observations and recommendations, upon which the critical and well supported views and opinions to validate the Review Panel's observations, commendations and recommendations will follow.

7.4.3 The Review Panel and Academic Affairs will agree a timeline for finalisation of the report, report sign-off, and return of the report to Academic Affairs. Typically, this will be within 6 weeks after the end of site visit(s) (after accounting for any time-period that may be required to consider additional evidence that would have been requested at the visit).

7.4.4 The panel report will be sent to the Head of Function for checking of any factual errors, and if required, a brief response to recommendations and/or feedback to the panel on the review process. The rejoinder will be limited to the report contents only, as this is not an opportunity to initiate any further dialogue on the Professional Service Review.

7.4.5 Any minor editorial corrections will be completed in consultation with the Chair of the Review Panel. At this stage, any editorial aspect demanding more significant alteration to parts or sections of the draft report, and which arise from more considered reflection on the initial draft, will be

considered exceptional. These may necessitate a coordinated resolution between Academic Affairs, and the Review Panel Chair, with possible consultation with specific panel members.

- 7.4.6 All subsequent communication between Academic Affairs and the Professional Service will be conducted through the Head of Function or nominee.
- 7.4.7 To enable consistency in reporting, Academic Affairs will retain editorial responsibility for the final Professional Service Review Report, which, when completed, will be forwarded to the Head of Function, University Registrar and the Academic Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee.
- 7.4.8 Completed Professional Service Review Reports, incorporating the associated action plans, will be published on the TU Dublin Academic Affairs website.

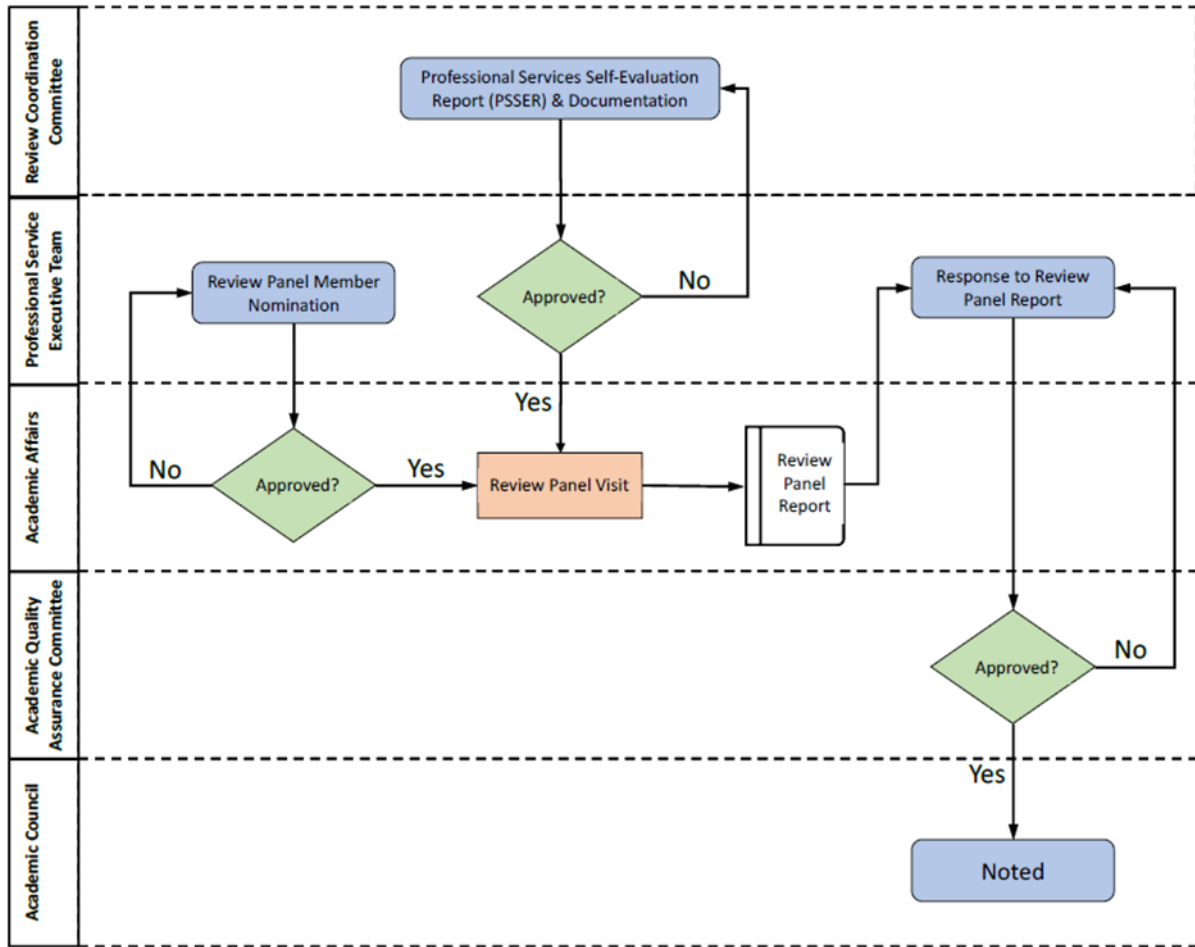
8. Post-Review Service Quality Enhancement Plan

- 8.1 The Professional Service is expected to update the action plan presented within the Professional Services Self-Evaluation Report (PSSER), to include additional actions to address the recommendations of the Professional Service Review Panel. This forms the basis of the Service Quality Enhancement Plan.
- 8.2 Upon approval and publication of the Review Report, the Professional Service under review will be expected to develop and submit to Academic Affairs the Service Quality Enhancement Plan within 12 weeks. This plan should indicate clear responsibilities and timelines for implementation of the actions outlined in the plan.
- 8.3 Prior to forwarding of the Service Quality Enhancement Plan to Academic Affairs, it shall be considered by the Executive Team of the Function/Service under review. The Function/Service's Executive Team will take ownership of any recommended actions added to the Service's Quality Enhancement Plan,
- 8.4 When satisfied with the Service Quality Enhancement Plan, the Function's/Service's Executive Team submits the document to Academic Affairs.
- 8.5 Academic Affairs will send a copy of the report to the Review Panel members, who may submit additional comments regarding the Professional Service's responses. The Professional Service Review Report, the Service's response, including the Service Quality Enhancement Plan, and any additional comments

from the Review Panel members will be tabled at the Academic Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee for review and approval. The Head of the Service under review, will be expected to attend the Academic Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee meeting at which the documents are being considered, to outline the Professional Service's response and enhancement plan.

- 8.6 If the Academic Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee determine that actions captured in the Service Quality Enhancement Plan are required at University level, it will add those actions to the University Quality Enhancement Plan (see: [Annual Academic Quality Enhancement Process](#)).
- 8.7 The final Professional Service Review Report will be lodged in the Academic Affairs repository and will be used to inform the University's Annual Quality Report and/or follow-on Institutional Review.
- 8.8 The Professional Service shall submit a Progress Report to the Academic Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee annually after submission of the initial Service Quality Enhancement Plan, until all recommendations captured in this plan have been closed out.

9. Professional Services Review Process Flow Chart



10. Professional Services Review Schedule

To enable fore-planning, Academic Affairs will maintain the Professional Services Review Schedule on its website.

Appendix

Illustrative Schedule of Meetings for the Review Panel.

Library Services: Please note that all itineraries will be subject to agreement during the pre-visit planning.

QUALITY REVIEW OF PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

Library Services Quality Review 2024

Day 1 – Monday January 24, 2022

Venue: Building xyz Boardroom, TU Dublin, xyz Campus

- | | |
|----------|--|
| 9.00 am | Private meeting of Panel to discuss agenda for day. |
| 9.30 am | Commencement of Review Process: Review Panel Chair introduces members of panel to Academic Affairs Team, Head of Library Services and Library Services Senior Management Team. |
| 10.15 am | Formal presentation by Library Services describing main activities of Library Services and introducing the key points from the SER. |
| 11.15 am | Tea/Coffee Break. |
| 11.30 am | Panel meets with Library Services Senior Management Team to discuss the broad contents of the SER exercise and the practical implications arising. |
| 1.00 pm | Working lunch & private meeting of panel to review progress and agree issues for further discussion or evaluation. |
| 2.30 pm | Panel visits specific library/libraries that are part of agreed itinerary. |
| 4.00 pm | Panel meets with members of the Library Committee. |
| 5.00 pm | Tea/coffee: Panel meets with representative staff users of Library Services. |

- 5.45 pm Panel meets with representative student users of Library Services.
- 6.30 pm Private meeting of Panel to review progress.
- 7.00 pm Dinner (including Academic Affairs, Library Services Senior Managers and Panel).

Day 2 – Tuesday January 25, 2022

Venue: Building xyz Boardroom, TU Dublin, xyz Campus

- 9.30 am Tea/coffee. Private meeting of Panel to plan for the day.
- 10.15 am Panel meets with representative group of Library Services staff.
- 11.15 am Tea/coffee break.
- 11.30 am Panel meets with yyy and zzz staff.
- 12.00 noon Private meeting of panel to discuss outline and plan schedule for the draft report.
- 1.00 pm Lunch for Panel.
- 2.00 pm Panel meets with Head of Academic Affairs and Head of Library Services to discuss issues of resources, staff development and any outstanding issues.
- 4.00 pm Exit Meeting— the panel meets with Library Services to outline the Provisional Findings.