

# Quality Management Framework



## 1 Purpose

The University of Southern Queensland assures quality through the alignment and integration of its strategic and operational planning with its evaluation, accreditation and review processes.

The Quality Management Framework provides structural management and support for quality issues and USQ organisational management systems and is designed to assist USQ in its organisational drive towards sustainability.

## 2 Scope

All USQ employees and sections

## 3 Policy Statement

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## 4 Approach to Quality

For USQ, quality is achieved when

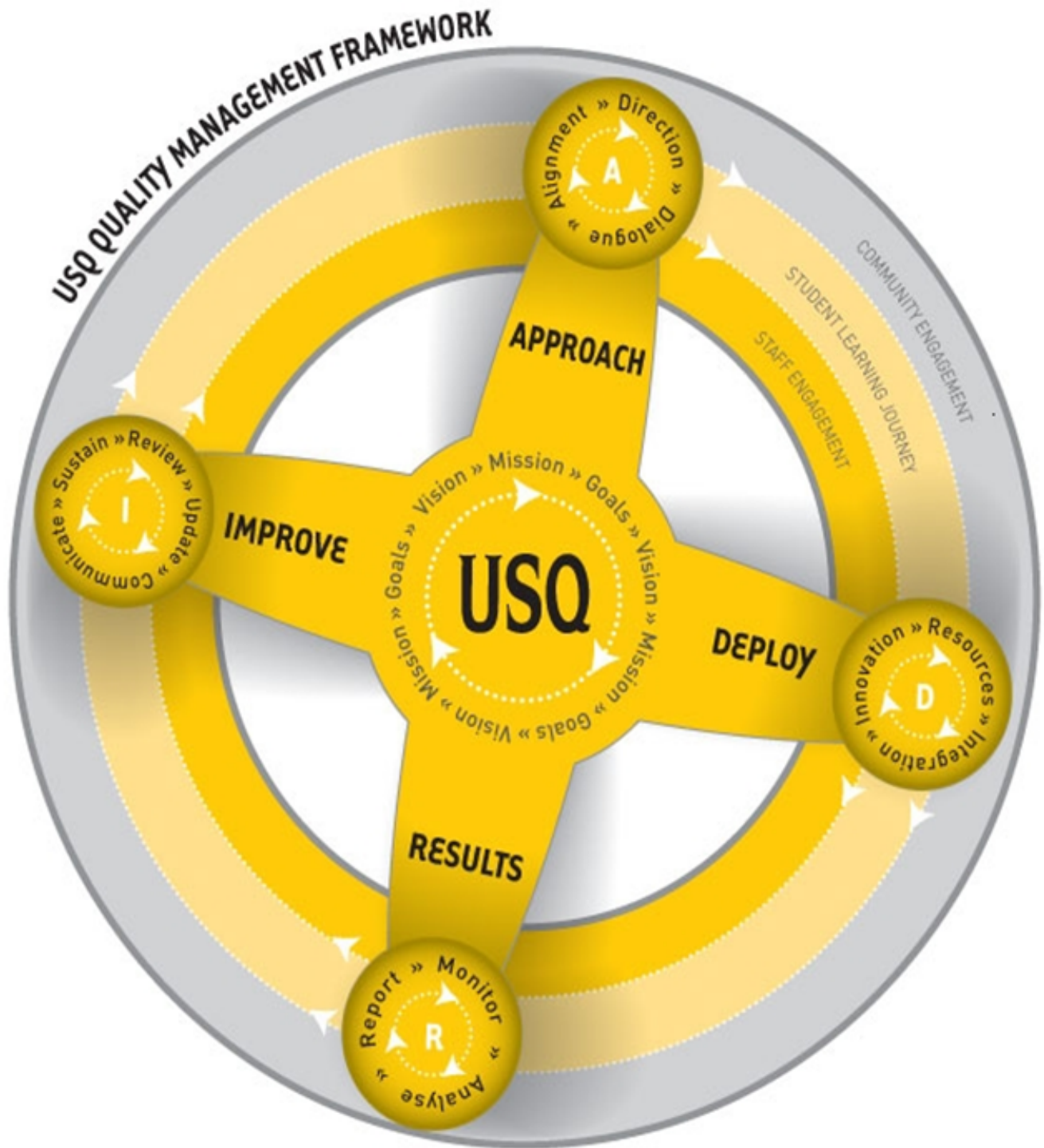
- values, plans, policies and actions are aligned
- staff, customers, stakeholders and community are engaged
- application of resources is aligned with organisational values, plans and policies
- plans, actions and achievements are reviewed and learning's applied
- results are achieved in line with institutional plans and the expectations of staff, customers, stakeholders and community expectations, and
- a high level of commitment to university values, plans, policies and actions is evident.

Quality is considered to be the result of contributions from diverse groups, individuals, parts and functions of the University. The evolution of organisational thinking and application of 'quality' has seen the convergence of 'total quality management', 'quality client service' and 'corporate governance' into what contemporary organisations, such as USQ, incorporate in approaches to quality.

At USQ a **planning cycle** and a **quality management framework** have been established as the basis for this policy. This policy is designed to enable all people, sections, teams and functions at USQ to contribute to the quality of what USQ is and what USQ does.

## 5 Planning Cycle

The planning cycle illustrated below has been adapted by USQ from a number of similar models. The planning cycle is a way of promoting the recognition that quality is not a fixed or static procedure, output or standard but that it arises from an ongoing commitment to the values of USQ and the various phases of work embodied in the cycle.



The Approach, Deploy, Results and Improvement (ADRI) model is the approach adopted for quality processes at USQ.

- Approach 'What do we do?' - derived from the organisational guiding statements - its overall objectives through to specific goals and how these may be achieved, i.e. through written policies;
- Deploy 'How do we do it?' - considers whether, and how effectively, the approach is being put into effect, i.e. its operationalisation through business process;

- Results 'What are our outcomes?' - how well is the organisation achieving the desired results, how is the deployment achieving the planned approach?
- Improve 'How can we improve our Approach and Deployment to gain better Results?' - is the organisation actively and continuously engaged with understanding its performance in each of the A-D-R dimensions? Is the organisation using this understanding to bring about change in its Approach and Deployment to achieve improvements?

The quality management framework at USQ operates within the overall way USQ goes about doing its business. This comprises the formal structure of the University [into organisational sections] and the categorisation of its primary functions [into goals]. One way of describing how this matrix works would be to represent the formal structure as providing the vertical pathway for action and the primary functions as providing the horizontal pathway for action. This description is illustrated by the following table.

<b>Key Organisational Goals</b>	<b>Faculty / Division</b>	<b>Faculty/ Division</b>	<b>Faculty/ Division</b>
<b>Learning and Teaching</b>			
<b>Students</b>			
<b>Academic Programs</b>			
<b>Research and Research Training</b>			
<b>Staff</b>			
<b>Educational Partnerships</b>			
<b>Social Justice, Equity and Inclusion</b>			
<b>Engagement and Development</b>			
<b>Enterprise</b>			

The USQ approach to quality aims to use and improve both the horizontal and vertical pathways for improved performance. Each organisational section is managed by a section head. The section head is responsible for putting in place an appropriate organisational structure and suitable management arrangements to support the section's performance. Co-ordination of key organisational goals rests with the respective Executive Portfolio Stewards whose roles oversee

the governance of the goals to ensure that appropriate policies, procedures and protocols are put in place to support enterprise wide performance and compliance.

The USQ quality management framework operates to support and coordinate each of these pathways through specific, critical aspects of the organisation which is considered to underpin understanding and achievement of quality in all parts of the university.

The components of this framework are-

- Planning and performance monitoring (covering sections and processes and incorporating academic planning and academic quality)
- Process improvement steps
- Organisational section, process and academic reviews
- Policy and governance
- Performance Reporting
- Knowledge management
- Risk
- Project management
- Compliance
- Benchmarking

This policy envisages that all organisational sections at USQ will implement the planning cycle and the quality management framework. The next section provides a description of what is covered by each element of this framework.

## **6 Deployment and Implementation of Quality**

This policy will be deployed and implemented in each organisational section of USQ. This will be by way of each organisational section implementing each one of the key components of the quality framework in the manner most suited to the operations, resources and management of the section. What is required in each section for each component of the quality framework is set out below.

Each year, the Planning Quality & Review Committee, through its Chair, the Director (Planning and Performance Support Services) will publish a quality plan which sets out the timing and resourcing of key actions intended to be undertaken in that year so as to support the

implementation of this policy. Organisational sections contribute to development of the quality plan through submitting progress information to the Planning Quality & Review Committee with respect to each of the following areas.

## **6.1 Planning and Performance Monitoring**

USQ has a strategic plan with a five year scope, updated annually, and an annual operational plan. The strategic plan covers all organisational sections and all key processes. The goals of USQ's strategic plan are aligned with the core functions of USQ as outlined above. Each organisational section will have a published section plan and an operational plan (See Section 9.1, USQ Planning Policy). Performance monitoring will occur each semester. Faculty academic planning and review is integrated with goal and section plans through the alignment of faculty plans with Organisational Goal Plans, but particularly, the plans for Academic Programs, Learning & Teaching and Research & Research Training goals.

## **6.2 Process Improvement Steps**

Each section will implement the process improvement steps in relation to the Key Organisational Goals of USQ. These goals together with key processes are set out in the quality management framework.

The process improvement steps comprise-

1. Compliance to and implementation of the policy, procedures and protocols relating to each of the above goals.
2. Achievement of the performance targets related to a goal and agreed as part of section planning.
3. Successful completion of projects agreed to be undertaken in relation to that process.

The performance of the section against these three improvement steps for each process will be reviewed by the section head and the USQ Portfolio Steward responsible for each goal, at the end of each annual planning cycle. The results of this review will be included in the section's next update of the section plan. The nature of the review and the assessment method will be as agreed so that it achieves balance between enterprise and section needs and resources.

## **6.3 Reviews: sections, processes and academic**

Each key section and each goal (or part thereof) will be reviewed in each planning cycle. The procedures for, and the timetable of reviews are endorsed by the Planning, Quality and Review Committee and approved by the Vice-Chancellor. The organisational sections will comprise sections under the following categories:

- Faculty
- Academic Support
- Administrative Support

The Quality Management Framework [as modified from time to time] may comprise a complete goal, process or activity including:

- Policies
- Procedures
- Protocols

The review schedule will be prepared taking into account the Annual Corporate Risk Assessment undertaken by USQ.

The policy in relation to academic review is set out in the University Calendar (Reference Section 4) Academic Program). It is a critical component of USQ's approach to quality.

By having review mechanisms in place in relation to sections, goals and academic programs, USQ is seeking to apply the essential ingredients of its approach to quality to every aspect of the organisation.

## **6.4 Policy and Governance**

Governance for organisational sections and processes at USQ is reflected through the university's organisational structure and its policy framework. Section Heads are responsible for organisational sections. Each organisational goal is the responsibility of a senior manager called an Executive Portfolio Steward. The Quality Management Framework summarises the responsibilities associated with each of the goals and its relevant principal activities and business processes at USQ.

The alignment of policy and governance is a critical issue for achieving quality at USQ. The Quality Management Framework sets out the key governance mechanisms associated with the goals areas in Section 4 above. This policy requires that the USQ Steward for a particular process will make a report to the relevant governance body no less than once each year in relation to the operation of the goal in the past year and for the next year. The report and its timing will be as agreed between the Chair of the relevant body and the USQ manager responsible for the process.

The Executive Portfolio Steward for each Goal will, twice yearly, provide a report for submission to the USQ Council on the performance of USQ against its targets and benchmarks for each

respective goal.

## 6.5 Performance Reporting

The USQ reporting framework includes the Annual Report to Council, the Biannual Strategic Alignment Report against cross-institutional goal Key Performance Indicators, the annual Institutional Assessment Report to DEEWR, and annual Faculty Academic Quality Reports that include outcomes of course and program reviews. These scopes are executive reporting and scanning applications associated with compliance as well as with national reporting requirements, and include:

- university wide environmental scanning resources;
- specific purpose analysis functions;
- planning and review facilities;
- reporting to the Council, academic governance and management;
- student demand forecasting, which informs and moderates student program load planning, by faculties and USQ marketing;
- budgetary resource allocation;
- course and program accreditation and reaccreditation;
- course and program review and
- academic program portfolio management.

The system is based on high level national data bases associated with tertiary sector students and staff, as well as financial and research data provided by ABS and DEEWR. It also incorporates data from USQ core transaction systems, which is collected and maintained by the Office of Corporate Management Services.

## 6.6 Knowledge Management

Knowledge Management covers the manner in which the University seeks to capture, maintain and make available, the business information which will support organisational decision making. Each organisational section and process requires access to reliable, relevant and useable information. This requirement applies in each phase of the planning cycle and USQ is endeavouring to ensure that each section and process is able to access and use key enterprise information for planning, implementation, monitoring and reflection.

USQIndex is the framework for the knowledge management system for all sections, goals and



campuses at USQ and the Planning, Quality and Review Committee will oversee its progressive development. As a core USQ system, the Sharepoint User Reference Group ensures participation and guidance from a cross section of the University. This policy also anticipates that each section head and process steward will support the operation of USQIndex through making available relevant enterprise information to populate the USQIndex. The enterprise information will then be available to service each section and process through each phase of the planning cycle.

This policy envisages that the information in USQIndex will support the key decision making processes required in each organisational section and process. To do this it is expected that the information will be maintained in categories under each of the goal headings noted earlier in this policy. Within these categories, organisational section-level information will also be maintained wherever feasible and warranted.

## **6.7 Risk**

USQ's approach to risk management is set out in the University Calendar (see USQ Academic Calendar, Section 1.7). This policy requires each organisational section to undertake an annual risk assessment. USQ's planning policy requires the items of risk so identified to be listed in the section's plan. The alignment of risk and planning activities is considered to be a critical aspect of quality at USQ. Quality is not an arbitrary or fixed indicator and must be moderated in the context of the risks confronting the organisation and the resources available to respond to those risks. This policy is seeking to ensure that USQ's approach to quality is directly informed by the risks confronting the organisation.

## **6.8 Compliance**

Through policy for compliance management set out in the University Policy Framework, the University's has established a Policy and Procedure Framework for the effective and efficient management of compliance risks. Inherently the framework will provide a level of quality and provide the opportunity for sector-wide benchmarks using regulatory obligations. With a focus on continuous improvement this policy requires each organisational section to undertake a regular assessment of conformance of management systems and practices with external, internal and self-adopted obligations and standards, and report to the Planning, Quality and Review Committee.

## **6.9 Project Management**

Project Management is employed for all key projects using the defined USQ methodology.

The USQ templates for USQ Goal Plans require Executive Portfolio Stewards to employ project management concepts, including a business plan, for those corporate strategies identified as projects to achieve organisational goal objectives. Section Managers are similarly required to adopt these principles for strategies delineated in USQ Section Plans for those Objectives identified in the USQ Strategic Planning Process as high priority for the organisation.

## 6.10 Benchmarking

Benchmarking at USQ is considered to be a strategic improvement tool and way of thinking about organisational improvement through organisational learning, sharing, engagement and collaboration. The process is framed as an on-going learning course of action for self-measurement and improvement to foster excellence. The aim of benchmarking is about learning and action - learning and discovering the specific practices responsible for high performance, understanding how these practices work, adapting and applying good practice to the organisation, engaging and discussing with valued partners, and implementing improvements.

USQ defines benchmarking in its framework for learning and continuous improvement as:

“A strategic and systematic learning approach of continuous comparative and evaluation processes against organisations, both national and international, to gain information which will help USQ to take action to improve its performance and excel”.

A formal benchmarking activity at USQ is one where it can:

- inform the University of its comparative activities and performance;
- identify areas of good practice across the organisation; and
- identify areas for improvement and implement changes.

The rationale for organisational benchmarking includes:

- continuous improvement;
- reinvigoration of current practices;
- acceleration of change and restructure by using tested and proven practices, creating a proactive plan when gaps are revealed and extending the organisation to higher levels through the setting of performance measures;
- going beyond lagging indicators to using leading and learning indicators;
- leading to lateral or innovative ideas;
- pursuit of high quality practices resulting from a better understanding of processes and systems;
- making implementation more likely because of the involvement of the benchmarking owners (i.e. process owners);
- contributing to the alignment of performance with cross organisational strategies;

- facilitation of learning; and
- facilitating reflection upon and evaluation of progress.

## **7 Authority**

### **Strategic Management**

The Portfolio Steward, for the USQ Key Organisational Goal of Enterprise, the Chief Operating Officer has overall executive responsibility for this Policy.

### **Management Responsibility**

The Principal Process Steward, Planning & Quality, Director (Planning and Performance Support Services) has overall management responsibility for this Policy

### **Implementation and Monitoring**

The Chair, Planning Quality and Review Committee has responsibility for implementing and monitoring this Policy. Reporting on Benchmarking will form part of the Annual Planning and Review processes of the University.

### **Review**

This Policy will be reviewed in the cyclical USQ Planning Schedule. The Benchmarking Process will be subject to Process Reviews as listed in 9.3 Process Reviews of the University Calendar.

## **8 Improvement and Review of Quality**

Implementation of this policy will be coordinated at the enterprise level by the Planning Quality and Review Committee (PQRC), through a quality plan which will be updated each year. The plan will review feedback and input from each organisational section each year as part of its approach and incorporate improvements. The PQRC will coordinate both the planning and quality policies and activities each year. The planning policy requires a planning survey at the end of each annual planning cycle. This survey will also review quality related issues, including the activities in the annual quality plan, and this is one way in which USQ will seek to build quality into (not on) to USQ activities.

Evidence and feedback on the application of this policy in each organisational section [as well as all other USQ policies] will arise through implementation of the specific requirements of each component of the quality framework.

## **9 References**

Nil.

## 10 Schedules

This policy must be read in conjunction with its subordinate schedules as provided in the table below.

## 11 Policy Information

<b>Accountable Officer</b>	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Enterprise Services)
<b>Responsible Officer</b>	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Enterprise Services)
<b>Policy Type</b>	Executive Policy
<b>Policy Suite</b>	
<b>Subordinate Schedules</b>	
<b>Approved Date</b>	1/9/2014
<b>Effective Date</b>	1/9/2014
<b>Review Date</b>	
<b>Relevant Legislation</b>	USQ Act 1998  Higher Education Support Act 2003 (Cwlth) and associated schedules and regulations
<b>Related Policies</b>	<a href="#">Institutional Planning Policy and Procedure</a>  <a href="#">Process Review Policy and Procedure</a>  <a href="#">Policy and Procedure Framework</a>  <a href="#">Organisational Section Reviews Policy and Procedure</a>
<b>Related Procedures</b>	
<b>Related forms, publications and websites</b>	
<b>Definitions</b>	<b>Terms defined in the Definitions Dictionary</b>  <b>Definitions that relate to this policy only</b>

<b>Keywords</b>	Quality Management
<b>Record No</b>	13/421PL