

External Referencing: Peer Review of Assessment - Procedures

Definitions

Please refer to the University's Glossary of Terms for policies and procedures. Terms and definitions identified below are specific to these procedures and are critical to its effectiveness:

External Peer Review of Assessment An activity conducted with one or more higher education providers participating in reviews of assessment practices, in selected courses, by academics delivering similar programs. The activity can be singular or reciprocal.

1. Purpose of procedures

1.1 This procedure provides a method for external referencing of assessment standards, through an External Peer Review of Assessment (EPRA) process, conducted with another institution.

1.2 By conducting External Peer Review of Assessment as described in the procedures, USC obtains evidence that assessment methods and student grading are appropriate, aligned to the course and program learning outcomes, and are broadly comparable with those of similar courses and programs offered by other institutions.

1.3 The USC preferred method of external peer review of assessment is via the Peer Review Portal and this is reflected in the procedures. The Peer Review Portal is an online tool allowing higher education providers to upload assessment and course material, and other relevant information for review by academic staff at other higher education providers.

2. Initiating an External Peer Review of Assessment Project

2.1 As stated in the External Referencing Policy, all programs on a five-year external program review schedule must undertake at least three EPRA of courses per review cycle; all programs on a seven-year external program review schedule must undertake at least five EPRA of courses per review cycle.

2.2 The Program Coordinator in consultation with Course Coordinators identifies courses for which EPRA will be undertaken and institutions with comparable courses.

2.3 The Program Coordinator will make the final decision on courses and scheduling for EPRA.

2.4 The final courses and schedule must be approved by the Head of School (HoS).

2.5 Where possible, the Program Coordinator and Course Coordinator will nominate one or two reviewers from a similar course or program at another institution to undertake the review.

2.6 The Course Coordinator will contact the proposed reviewer/s to ascertain their availability and to discuss whether the review is to be reciprocal.

2.7 C-SALT staff will be able to assist where no specific reviewer/s are identified.

2.8 The Course Coordinator and any other academic staff to be involved in the review process must register themselves on the Peer Review Portal before commencement of the project.

3. Identifying and Loading Project Materials

3.1 The Course Coordinator is responsible for identifying and collating all project materials. This includes:

- the course outline

APPROVAL AUTHORITY

Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic)

RESPONSIBLE EXECUTIVE MEMBER

Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic)

DESIGNATED OFFICER

Pro Vice-Chancellor (Learning and Teaching Futures)

FIRST APPROVED

25 June 2019

LAST AMENDED

28 August 2024

REVIEW DATE

18 June 2024

STATUS

Active

- the program outline, where applicable
- a brief course context
- course learning outcomes
- program learning outcomes, where applicable
- course rubric
- course grading guidelines
- assessment task/s
- de-identified examples of student work (3-5 samples)
- a questionnaire for reviewer/s

3.2 C-SALT staff will be able to provide guidance on the material required, if necessary.

3.3 The Course Coordinator, or a nominated School staff member will load the review material into the Peer Review Portal.

3.3 Each School is responsible for payment for each review.

3.4 These actions signal the commencement of the review process, which should take no longer than six weeks.

4. Assessment report

4.1 Actions following receipt of assessment report

(a) The Course Coordinator will receive a copy of the report via the portal.

(b) The Course Coordinator will share the report with the course delivery team and identify improvement or enhancement actions for consideration alongside other performance, monitoring and feedback information.

(c) The Course Coordinator will provide the report and a brief (1-2 pages) response to the report, to the Program Coordinator and Head of School.

(d) When the response has been approved by the Program Coordinator and Head of School, a copy of the report and response are to be forwarded to C-SALT.

(e) The final report and response must be maintained on the official program file by the School as evidence of interim monitoring of assessment standards.

(f) The report and any changes made to course assessment resulting from the report are to be included in the comprehensive external program review portfolio when the program is reviewed as part of the regular cycle of reviews.

5. Assessing achievement standards in a reciprocal process

5.1 Assess achievement standards

(a) Review of student achievement standards are to be conducted using an appropriate Peer Review of Assessment review methodology.

(b) The Course Coordinator can choose to establish a small group to conduct an assessment or can do this individually.

(c) The Course Coordinator judges the appropriateness of assessment practices and the intended outcomes as evidenced by the grade attained and provides feedback and any recommendations for improvements via the portal documentation.

6. Roles and Responsibilities

6.1 Schools

The School is responsible for:

- Ensuring that all courses engage in external Peer Review of Assessment.
- Ensuring that at least three courses of study for a program in a five year review cycle, and five courses in a seven year review cycle, provide evidence of external Peer Review of Assessment.
- Making payments for the process.

6.2 Program Coordinator

The Program Coordinator is responsible for:

- Ensuring that courses which assure the program learning outcomes within their program (or major), engage in external Peer Review of Assessment.

- In collaboration with discipline teams, communicating with institutions to identify relevant courses and discipline staff with which to partner.
- Reading the final assessment reports and, in collaboration with the Course Coordinator, responding to the feedback and identifying and implementing modifications and changes as appropriate.

6.3 Course Coordinator

The Course Coordinator is responsible for:

- Undertaking review preparation and conducting the review process as outlined in sections 3 and 4 of this procedure.
- With the Program Coordinator and the teaching team (where applicable), responding to review feedback and identifying and implementing assessment modifications and changes as appropriate.
- Ensuring all records are captured on the relevant program file in an approved records management system, in accordance with section 8 of this procedure and the University's Information Management Framework – Governing Policy.

6.4 Centre for the Support and Advancement of Teaching and Learning (C-SALT)

C-SALT is responsible for:

- Monitoring, review and improvement of the External Referencing: Peer Review of Assessment - Procedures.
- Notifying Heads of School when Higher Education Providers approach USC to engage in external peer review of assessment projects or place notices on the portal seeking partners or reviewers.
- Providing advice and guidance on EPRA processes including:
 - establishing and maintaining a register of EPRA activity
 - accessing the National Peer Review Portal
 - establishing a review timeline and setting up meetings
 - identifying appropriate documentation
- Reporting on use and effectiveness of EPRA with reference to:
 - program quality themes identified and
 - recommended improvements to the external Peer Review of Assessment process

7. Reporting

C-SALT will provide an annual report to the Academic Board on themes identified in EPRA of courses.

8. Records management

8.1 Schools are responsible for creating detailed records of all EPRA of courses undertaken including responses to the review report.

8.2 Schools are responsible for ensuring all records are captured on the relevant program file in an approved records management system, in accordance with the University's Information Management Framework – Governing Policy.

END

RELATED DOCUMENTS

- Assessment: Courses and Coursework Programs - Academic Policy
- Data Governance - Operational Policy
- External Referencing - Academic Policy
- External Referencing: Program Benchmarking - Procedures

LINKED DOCUMENTS

- External Referencing - Academic Policy

RELATED LEGISLATION / STANDARDS

- Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021 (Cth)