

# Procedure for Functional Reviews

## 1. Overview

The primary purpose of functional reviews is to assess the services we need to provide to ensure excellent administrative and business support. To this aim, we moved SMC reviews away from a service area-based approach, which looks at *where* things are done to look at what services need to be provided.

The functional review process will be dialogic and collaborative, driven by user needs and experiences, and examine cross-service functions to maintain the highest level of professional services to support the School's strategic aims.

The key objectives of the review process are:

- To respond to user feedback about School services from academic departments and the student community
- To assure the School Management Committee (SMC) that its professional services work effectively and in collaboration
- To confirm that professional services align with the School's strategic priorities
- To identify areas of cross-working and establish the primacy of 'one service' – provided within service areas and academic units – in support of School priorities

- To assist in evaluating strengths and weaknesses in the services offered across the School's community
- To address any risks emerged from the Operational Planning Process run by the Executive Office and Finance Division, which looks to establish appropriate performance measures and assessments
- To benchmark professional services against good practice in the sector more widely and identify areas for improvement
- Where necessary, to recommend how professional services can be supported through any change processes required by the outcome of the review

## 2. Process

- Functional reviews of professional services will be performed on a rolling basis driven by user feedback and modelling in the central Operational Plan.
- Following the annual operational planning process for service divisions, conducted between July to August each year, the Operational Plan will be scrutinized by the Chief Operating Officer and Chief Finance Officer, with a decision made on the areas required for functional review.
- Prospective functional reviews will be reported to SMC, which will make the final decision on the schedule for the coming academic year and establish the key headline terms for the scope of each review.
- Extraordinary functional reviews may also be convened, driven by such processes as: outcomes from Annual Monitoring, a rise in a level of risk monitored through the strategic risk register, audit findings, or SMC decisions.
- The movement to functional reviews does not exclude the possibility that a discrete service area will be reviewed under the process set out below.

## 3. Group Membership

- The composition of the review group will be at the discretion of the Chief Operating Officer, with guidance from SMC. The Functional Reviews will usually, but not exclusively, be chaired by the Chief Operating Officer. Membership of the review group may be drawn from the following groups:
  - Any member of the School community whose professional expertise would have a valid bearing on the scope of the review
  - Representatives from academic units
  - Representatives from operational partnerships identified by the Operational Plan
  - Systems experts
  - A review coordinator, drawn from a service division not covered by the review

## 4. Background Information

- a) In advance of the first meeting of the review group, information on the functional area will be collated by the review coordinator. The information will be drawn from the following sources, depending on relevance to the review in hand:
  - A target list of users to approach for feedback
  - Any external professional relevant for benchmarking purposes
  - User experience will be foregrounded through interviews (or surveys where appropriate)
  - Relevant Operational Planning documents, where available
  - Staff lists across key Operational Partners identified in the Operational Plan, with the aim of providing an overall breakdown of Staff FTE relating to the function
  - Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Data
  - Budgetary information
  - Risk Registers or reports
  - Recent Audit recommendations
  - Outcomes of any recent Business Continuity Exercises
  - Any relevant Space Planning documentation
  - A list of critical business systems involved with service delivery
  - Any other information considered relevant

## 5. Review Process

- a) An early meeting of the Review Group will be convened for the review group to review the background information and request clarification or corrections as required.
- b) The main aim of the review group's approach will also be established in this early meeting, alongside the scope outlined by SMC.
- c) The meeting will also establish how user feedback on the function should be collated.
- d) The process will prioritise face-to-face meetings with user groups with notes taken of each meeting
- e) Further meetings will be arranged as necessary depending on matters arising and the relative complexity of the issues involved.

## 6. Report

- a) Following the review group meetings, the chair and review coordinator will draft a report on findings of the review, which will be agreed with key members of the review group.
- b) The report will propose recommendations for improvement, highlight areas of good practice, and make recommendations for action.
- c) Responsibilities and, where possible, suggested timeframes for key actions will also be agreed.
- d) The report will be submitted to SMC, with a further report made to the Academic Planning and Resources Committee
- e) SMC will offer final directions on the actions necessary to address the matters arising and ascribe an expectation for delivery.

## Document Review schedule

Review interval	Next review due by	Next review start
3 years	May 2026	Jan 2026

## Version history

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## Communications and Training

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If Yes, please give details	