

Strategic planning and review

Key operating principles

The planning, quality management and review processes are intended to be:

- focused – that is, limited to a number of key directions and improvements in order to make implementation feasible
- integrated and synchronised – across core and enabling activities to ensure university directions are reflected in relevant operational action plans developed specifically for UWS at the college, school, unit and individual level
- consistent and equivalent in that which is delivered – e.g. consistent in terms of the services students receive across different campuses and equivalent in delivery and assessment
- evidence-based and monitored regularly – informed by data on agreed key performance and management indicators, along with internal and external monitoring and strategic intelligence, utilising a comprehensive performance tracking and reporting system
- consultative – informed by input from UWS stakeholders, specifically in areas of expertise
- action-oriented – using a rolling set of action-plans, which apply established project management processes
- consistently supported – by ensuring that the UWS budget directly supports key directions and quality improvements; and by ensuring that staff development programs explicitly address the individual and group capacity to manage implementation
- accountable – by identifying who is responsible for the development and implementation of both strategic and operational plans and subsequently reviewing performance against agreed targets as part of individual annual performance reviews and cyclical unit reviews

Strategic planning

The planning and reporting phases consist of four interrelated components: the planning process; action plans; the reporting system; and the budget process.

College and school plans are formulated, implemented and reviewed on a rolling, three-year basis. The plans identify a small number of locally relevant strategic directions consistent with the overall UWS strategy, along with key improvement priorities generated from analysis of current performance.

Enabling plans are produced and delivered on a three-year rolling basis for the Library, international activities, IT infrastructure and services, capital works and facilities, campus development, equity and EEO, student administration and human resources. The plans are developed with a particular focus on the consistent and effective implementation of goals for core areas of learning, research and engagement. They include strategies for operational improvement identified through user feedback and other mechanisms.

The UWS resourcing and budget processes combine targeted support for key directions and for existing operations through the University's ongoing funding model, and a targeted staff development strategy. The UWS Budget Plan currently focuses on supplementing existing sources of income.

Individual plans for academic staff are negotiated and reviewed at the school level using the workload policy. A parallel system operates for administrative and support units. UWS senior staff and Executive annual plans are negotiated and reviewed with the relevant supervisor. The Vice-Chancellor negotiates and reviews her annual plan with the Chancellor.

Reporting on plans, where possible, uses qualitative and quantitative time series and benchmarked data. Measures are identified in the overall key strategic plans, improvement plans and operational plans and are increasingly linked to the individual performance plans of senior staff.

The annual Senior Management Conference (SMC) plays an important role in prioritising goals for the coming year, and in translating policy directions into concrete plans. Each SMC is designed to focus on a theme or a specific action plan. In 2005 the focus was on quality improvement with working groups developing the foundations of the current Learning and Teaching Action Plan. Planning days are held throughout the University at all levels and the Vice-Chancellor holds campus forums to discuss the 'state of the University' and to invite feedback on plans, priorities, challenges and aspirations from staff.

Review

The University strives to achieve a rolling, embedded approach to planning, monitoring, reporting and review. It also has a system of five-yearly cyclical reviews for schools and administrative units, and uses periodic thematic reviews of key areas of risk or relevance (e.g. the 2004 Review of UWS Offshore Programs and the 2005 Review of University Engagement). Structural reviews are undertaken (e.g. the Colleges and Schools realignment of 2004–2005 and the Divisional Review of 2005) within the overall institutional reform process.

Review processes include:

- local self-review of performance reports provided by the Office of Planning and Quality (OPQ) and other sources on the implementation of each rolling plan and review recommendations. This is undertaken to identify what is working well and what requires further enhancement
- confirmation by supervisors and the Planning and Quality Committee that the self-review is valid and that action plans to address agreed improvements are relevant and achievable
- checking the agreed actions have been delivered
- discussion of performance against key plans and improvement priorities in the annual individual performance reviews of staff, especially those accountable for each plan

UWS reporting and review processes are supported by the OPQ which, in conjunction with other relevant units, provides data to responsible staff at a time and in a format agreed by them and the University's Planning and Quality Committee. Areas of good practice are targeted for broader dissemination throughout the University.

Self-review involves input from key staff, committees and advisory groups for each area. It is undertaken under the coordination of the relevant Executive member using agreed guidelines and a specified timeframe. Self-review reports are considered by relevant local planning and quality groups, the Academic Senate and its committees (where appropriate) and finally by the UWS Planning and Quality Committee which makes recommendations to the Vice-Chancellor who, in turn, reports to the Board of Trustees.

The performance reports, self-assessments, advice of Senate and recommendations of the Planning and Quality Committee and the Vice-Chancellor's response are used as components of the annual performance review of the Executive member with accountability for each plan.

Accountability for development, implementation and review

Overall coordination of the UWS planning, reporting and review process is the responsibility of the UWS Planning and Quality Committee assisted by the OPQ.