

TU Delft Research Assessments Protocol

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Introduction

The Standard Evaluation Protocol (SEP) 2015-2021 describes the methods used to assess the research conducted at Dutch universities every six years, as well as the aims of such assessments. In addition, this 'TU Delft Research Assessments Protocol' presents how research assessments at TU Delft are designed. This document serves as a guideline for all actors involved and is a codification of the procedures as they are employed since 2015.

Step-by-step plan

The enclosed table contains all 16 steps that are part of the research assessment procedure. The Executive Board is responsible for seeing that the assessments are carried out. Various tasks and roles are commissioned to other actors by the Executive Board. T₀ should be considered as the moment two years prior to the scheduled research assessment, i.e. the site visit (step 11). The planning of the research assessments can be found on the TU Delft website. The step-by-step plan is based on and in accordance with the SEP. Each step contains a reference to the concerning chapters of the SEP and any relevant appendices.

RACI model

In addition to a description of the various steps in the process, the overview also contains a so-called RACI model. This is a diagram form of the process and the responsibilities of the actors involved. The Executive Board is overall accountable for the research assessments; the model shows which actors are accountable for the various sub steps in the process.

In the table the following terminology is used:

- 'PoA' = Plan of Approach;
- 'ToR' = Terms of Reference;
- 'EB' = the portfolio holder research assessments of the Executive Board (i.e. the Rector Magnificus);
- 'SD' = the portfolio holder research assessments of the corporate office of Strategic Development;
- 'FAC' = the Faculty members involved, e.g. the dean and/or secretary;
- 'AC' = the members of the assessment committee;
- 'R' = responsible: the actor(s) that perform(s) the task;
- 'A' = accountable: the actor that is ultimately accountable for the task or decision being made;
- 'C' = consulted: the actor(s) that must be consulted prior to a decision being made and/or a task being completed (two-way communication);
- 'I' = informed: the actor(s) that must be informed when a decision is made or task is completed (one-way communication).

Assessment format

The Executive Board of the university is free to decide which internal unit(s) will be assessed. The Executive Board has decided that the standard level of aggregation at TU Delft is that of the department. The Executive Board is in favor of stand-alone assessments, as they provide many degrees of freedom with regards to the international benchmark. At the request of a Faculty, a national, discipline-specific assessment can be considered by the Executive Board. This protocol as well as the SEP guidelines apply equally for stand-alone and national assessments.

Process					RACI model			
Step	What	SEP	When	How	EB	SD	FAC	AC
1.	Start up process	Ch. 1-2, Ap. A	Month 1-2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SD contacts the Faculty concerned to announce the research assessment and to schedule a meeting. - SD meets with the Faculty to discuss the procedure and format of the assessment and to formally start the process. 	A	R	I	-
2.	Formulate Plan of Approach	Ch. 4	Month 3-6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Faculty formulates a draft of a PoA and sends it to SD for consultation. The PoA contains at least: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The name(s) of (a) potential independent secretary; • The names of the Faculty members that are involved; • The rough planning of the process (including the draw up of the self-assessment report); • The date(s) of the site visit; • The names of one or more (preferably international) benchmark institutions selected for a benchmark (including the visit dates); • The budget. - SD and the Faculty meet to discuss the draft PoA. - The Faculty sends the PoA to the EB for approval. 	I	C	A/R	-
3.	Accept Plan of Approach	Ch. 4	Month 3-6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Approval of the PoA is a prerequisite for the Faculty to receive a partial reimbursement of the research assessment costs. - The EB takes a decision on the PoA and informs the Faculty in writing. 	A	R	I	-
4.	Compose assessment committee	Ch. 4	Month 6-12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Faculty suggests one or more candidates with a strong academic track record for the position of chair(wo)man to the EB. - After approval of a candidate by the EB, the Faculty informally enquires after the availability of the intended AC chair(wo)man and keeps the EB informed. - Once the chair(wo)man has been selected, the Faculty proposes 8-10 candidate AC members to the EB, in consultation with the chair(wo)man. At least 30% of the candidates should be female. - The international AC should be capable of assessing all aspects of the SEP, and preferably be diverse in its composition. - In consultation with the Faculty and the chair(wo)man, the EB selects the members of the AC, and/or requests additional candidates if necessary. - The Faculty informally enquires after the availability of the intended AC members and keeps the EB informed. 	C	I	A/R	C/I
5.	Formulate Terms of Reference	Ch. 4, Ap. B	Month 6-12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SD sends a draft of the ToR to the Faculty. - The Faculty and/or the EB formulate, if desired, one or more additional questions for the AC. - SD and the Faculty meet to discuss the draft ToR. 	A	R	C	-
6.	Accept Terms of Reference	Ch. 4, Ap. B	Month 6-12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SD formulates the final version of the ToR. - The ToR is finalized and signed by the EB, and is sent to the Faculty. 	A	R	C	-
7.	Appoint assessment committee	Ch. 4, Ap. C	Month 13-18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The EB sends all AC members, including the chair(wo)man, an appointment letter and the ToR, and requests them to return a signed version of the Statement of impartiality and confidentiality to SD. - The EB sends the secretary an appointment letter and the ToR. 	A	R	I	I
8.	Benchmark	Ch. 5	Month 13-21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Faculty visits the benchmark institution(s). This benchmark can be done at the level of the Faculty or at the level of the research unit(s). 	I	I	A/R	-
9.	Organize site visit	Ch. 6	Month 13-22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Together with the research unit and the AC, the Faculty drafts the program of the site visit (including an interview with the Rector Magnificus). - The Faculty informs the EB about the final program and organizes the logistical and 	I	C	A/R	C

Process					RACI model			
Step	What	SEP	When	How	EB	SD	FAC	AC
				other practical matters.				
10.	Draw up self-assessment and documentation	Ch. 5, Ap. D	Month 13-22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Faculty coordinates the writing of the self-assessment report, which should be no longer than 15 pages per research unit. - The Faculty organizes a test site visit and uses it to reflect on the self-assessment report and program for the site visit. - The Faculty finalizes the self-assessment report and makes the report and other documentation (including the SEP and ToR) available digitally to the AC, preferably via a separate, secured website. 	I	C	A/R	I
11.	Perform site visit	Ch. 6	Month 25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The AC holds a private kick-off meeting, in which at least are discussed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ToR; • The Statements of impartiality and confidentiality; • The assessment procedure; • The writing procedure of the assessment report; • The AC's findings based on the written material. - The AC conducts interviews with a broad range of employees and holds a private interim meeting. - At the end of the site visit the AC holds a final meeting. - Afterwards, the chairperson of the AC presents a brief, general summary of the AC's findings to the research unit. 	A	I	R	R
12.	Write assessment report	Ch. 7, Ap. E	Month 26-29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The AC writes the draft assessment report and sends it to the directors/managers of the research unit. - The research unit checks the draft report for factual inaccuracies. - If such inaccuracies are detected, the AC sees that they are corrected. - The AC sends the assessment report to the EB. 	I	I	C	A/R
13.	Accept assessment report	Ch. 7, Ap. E	Month 26-32	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The EB accepts the assessment report and thereby discharges the AC members of their duty. - The EB sends the assessment report to the Faculty. 	A	R	I	I
14.	Publish report and position document	Ch. 7-8	Month 26-32	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The EB writes a position document and sends it to the Faculty. - The EB publishes the assessment report and the EB's position document on the institution's website. 	A	R	C	I
15.	Discuss in annual report	Ch. 7-8	Month >32	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The EB reports on research assessments, conclusions, recommendations and follow-ups in the TU Delft Annual Reports. 	A	R	C	I
16.	Monitor follow-up actions	Ch. 7-8	Month >32	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The EB monitors follow-up actions on assessment committee recommendations at regular intervals. - If desired, the EB requests the Faculty to conduct a (limited) mid-term assessment after three years. 	A/R	I	C	I