Sojourn Travel

# Quality Policy

**SECTION 1 - DEFINITIONS**

(1) For the purpose of this policy:

1. Benchmarking - means comparing processes and/or outcomes so as to provide a point of reference for good quality practices or outcomes. It can be done internally or externally. It may combine quantitative measures and qualitative descriptions of practice.
2. Critical control points - Means the points or steps in a process at which controls are in place to ensure that quality is being applied at all stages of a process.
3. Outputs - The organisation aims to enhance the cultural, social, economic and knowledge development of its footprint region through key activities of teaching, learning and research. Outputs will be measured and assessed using performance indicators and targets and will be benchmarked using internal and external data sources.
4. Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) - Means the data, outcomes, measures or devices to be used for demonstrating the degree or extent of success in achievement of the organisation's purpose or meeting a goal or objective or in implementing an action or strategy to achieve the organisation's goal or objective. For quality assurance and improvement purposes, preference is given to the selection and use of key performance indicators that facilitate benchmarking.
5. Performance Indicators (PIs)/Progress metrics - Means secondary measures that underpin KPIs or demonstrate the extent of achievement of a target that is not the organisation's goal or target.
6. Performance targets - Will be associated with performance indicators and identify specific outcomes or levels of performance that are expected or sought within a particular timeframe in order to assure or improve the organisation's performance.
7. Quality assurance - Means the adoption of systematic management procedures and processes to monitor performance and to ensure achievement and improvement of the quality of outputs and thereby the organisation assures itself, and demonstrates to the wider community, that it is achieving its purposes and goals and meeting the standards it sets for itself or those that are externally mandated.
8. Quality assurance manual - Means the collection of organisation policies and procedures that provides guidance to organisational units and educational collaborations to ensure that quality is applied at all stages of their processes.
9. Quality principles - Means the guidelines or procedures that are developed in the organisational units to assure quality and compliance. These principles mirror organisation policy at the organisational unit level.
10. Risk register - The organisation maintains a comprehensive register of strategic risks that may affect the organisation together with actions or controls that are in place to minimise these risks. The Audit and Risk Management Committee ensures governance of the issue and reports regularly to Council.

**SECTION 2 - POLICY STATEMENT**

**Part A - Policy Declaration**

(2) The Higher Education context in Australia holds strong quality assurance expectations of all institutions particularly self-accrediting Universities. Southern Cross organisation (Sojourn Travel) regards quality assurance and improvement as vital throughout the organisation in order to realise its Mission and Strategic Priorities and meet its obligations as a self-accrediting institution.

(3) Quality assurance in higher education involves the adoption of systematic management procedures to monitor performance and to ensure achievement and improvement of the quality of outputs. The aim of quality assurance is to give stakeholders confidence in the management of operations and the outcomes achieved.

(4) Quality assurance at Sojourn Travel is developed and supported through policies, principles, attitudes, actions and procedures that assure that quality is not only maintained but also enhanced.

**Part B - Policy Description**

**Objectives**

(5) The policy:

1. outlines inter-relationship between Sojourn Travel QA and the external operating environment;
2. identifies the Planning, Implementation, Monitoring, Review and Improve (PIMRI) framework that encompasses all organisation activities;
3. identifies reporting relationships across the organisation that support quality assurance and enhancement; and
4. outlines processes that support quality assurance and improvement in the organisation.

**Scope**

(6) All organisational units.

**Part C - Content and Implementation**

(7) Sojourn Travel is a self-accrediting institution and is responsible for its own standards.

(8) Quality assurance at Sojourn Travel seeks to ensure that Sojourn Travel meets the quality assurance measures in the higher education sector and aligns with national and transnational quality assurance standards.

(9) The Sojourn Travel Quality Framework has four components (Plan, Implement, Monitor and Review, and Improve) which together form the PIMRI cycle for implementation of quality assurance. The Sojourn Travel Quality Framework includes:

1. strategic planning;
2. operational planning aligned with budget;
3. review of organisational units, functions and educational collaborations for quality improvement;
4. accreditation and review of academic courses;
5. monitoring of performance through review of evidence;
6. collection and review of feedback from staff, interns and other stakeholders; and
7. use of external reference points to benchmark success and areas for improvement.

(10) All organisation plans will align with the organisation's Strategic Plan. The organisation Council is regularly informed (at least annually) on progress against Strategic Plan targets.

(11) All organisational units conduct a planning process that is informed by the organisation quality framework (see below for outline) and aligned with budget processes. All organisational unit plans contain key performance indicators, performance targets and quality improvement strategies.

(12) The organisational Review Policy and Schedule are developed by the Planning and Quality Committee for approval by the Vice Chancellor. The organisational Review Policy includes organisational unit, educational collaborations and functional/process reviews. The organisation's Review Schedule will be prepared taking into account relevant changes in the external environment, risk assessment, internal process and organisational changes.

(13) organisational units may conduct other reviews as approved by the VC on the advice of the SDVC as Chair, Planning and Quality Committee.

(14) The organisation Council will establish a review process for itself and relevant governance committees.

(15) Academic Board will establish and conduct reviews relevant to its terms of reference and within the parameters of its rules. External assessment of professional courses is conducted through accreditation processes.

(16) All organisational units are expected to identify quality principles to assure quality and compliance where required.

(17) An evidenced-based approach will underpin the monitoring and review component of the PIMRI cycle. Institutional performance data will be identified, stored and reported to internal and external stakeholders. Feedback from interns, staff and other stakeholders will be incorporated in monitoring and review processes. A reporting schedule for reporting institutional data will be developed by the Planning and Quality Committee.

(18) All reviews will contain relevant comparative or process benchmarking information in line with the Sojourn Travel Benchmarking Framework.

**Quality Culture**

(19) All members of the organisation community have a stake and role in quality assurance and improvement at the organisation. The creation and maintenance of a culture of quality is fundamental to the effectiveness of the organisation's quality system therefore there is ongoing whole-of-organisation education about quality assurance and improvement and the quality framework.

(20) Underlying the effectiveness of the quality framework is the need for organisation management to ensure that all members of the organisation community are part of the quality culture and are made aware of:

1. all elements of the quality framework;
2. those aspects of organisation operations including structures, policies, principles, procedures, plans and practices that affect, guide or direct their activity as part of the quality culture; and
3. where the related accountabilities and responsibilities lie.

(21) All members of the organisation Executive are responsible for ensuring that a quality assurance culture is adopted and that compliance with external responsibilities is an inherent part of quality assurance.

(22) It is expected that Quality Assurance procedures will be documented in quality assurance manuals across the organisation at critical control points to ensure business continuity and quality enhancement.

**SECTION 3 - PROCEDURES**

(23) The Planning and Quality Committee is established to monitor the application of the Quality Policy and associated processes and to report to the VC on issues associated with quality assurance at Sojourn Travel.

**Membership**

(24) The membership will consist of:

1. Chairman of the Board
2. Director, Travel Services
3. Executive Director, Corporate Services
4. Director, Planning Quality and Review

**Terms of Reference**

(25) To monitor the application of the Quality policy and framework.

(26) To advise the Vice Chancellor of quality improvement strategies.

(27) To advise the Vice Chancellor on the Review Framework and associated schedules.

(28) To monitor the alignment of planning, review and improvement.

(29) To monitor the implementation of review processes.

(30) To advise the Director on performance indicators and measures of organisation progress.

(31) To co-ordinate  reviews and monitor implementation of recommendations.

(32) The Sojourn Travel Quality Framework follows the PIMRI cycle of activities involving planning, implementing, monitoring and reviewing, and improvement activities. The Quality Assurance Responsibility Matrix identifies the key responsibilities and quality control points for quality assurance at Sojourn Travel.