



Celebrating the Pacific, Shaping its Future

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Call for Expression of Interest to Carry Out an Independent External Review

Application Deadline – 8th April, 2018

Background:

The University of the South Pacific commenced the implementation of the Research Skill Development (RSD) framework¹ in 2012 upon the recommendation of the [Strategic Total Academic Review \(STAR\) Working Group 5](#) to achieve the systematic development of research skills and literacy of the university students.

The University is now in the seventh year of the RSD project and changing its focus to programme level RSD coherence. Given the approaching change in project management, it is an opportune time to review project management as well as performance.

The external review will be carried out to:

- a) Provide recommendations and way forward for informing future RSD implementation strategy
- b) Analyse and report on the aspects of RSD implementation that:
 - i) work well and should continue;
 - ii) did not work well but should be strengthened;
 - iii) did not work well and should be discontinued.
- c) Identify lessons learnt in project implementation
- d) Identify the specific challenges that need to be addressed in the near future.

Review Objectives:

The objective of this review is to evaluate the planned implementation of the RSD Framework activities and outputs against actuals to date, and as far as possible establish the initial project impact, sustainability and execution performance. More specifically:

- a) Are the institutional coordination mechanisms and arrangements adequate, effective and timely to coordinate project activities?
- b) Has the establishment of baseline information been appropriate and sufficient?

¹ Willison, J., and O'Regan, K. (2006). The Research Skill Development Framework. Accessed from <http://www.adelaide.edu.au/clpd/rsd/framework>



- c) Is the project approach to RSD implementation effective?
- d) Are the stakeholders adequately involved in the development and implementation of the project activities?
- e) Will the project facilitate long-term sustainability after the completion of project activities?

Review Activities:

The review will assess the following (among other things):

- Delivered outputs: assessments of the projects success in the development of research skills and literacy of the university students/graduates to date, both in quantity and quality as well as usefulness and timeliness. This may involve student interviews and course assessment reviews.
- Project outcomes and impact: evaluation of the projects success so far in achieving its outcomes
- Sustainability: analysis of the risks that are likely to affect the persistence of project outcomes in the short, medium and long term.
- Execution performance: determination of effectiveness and efficiency of project management and supervision of project activities, including the placement of the project in the University's organizational structure.

The evaluation should also give consideration to the processes that have affected the attainment of project results to date, such as:

- Was the project properly prepared? Were the objectives and components clear and feasible?
- Has the project involved the relevant stakeholders through consultation or information-sharing during its preparation and implementation?
- What were the reasons of delays in the implementation of the project and its components (if applicable)? What are the consequences? Have efforts been made to overcome these constraints?

Furthermore, the evaluation should highlight lessons learnt where possible, both positive as well as negative, from the standpoint of the design and implementation of the project. The evaluator will identify lessons learnt from the project, from the following perspectives:

- Mechanisms to establish coordination at the school, faculty and university level, promoting ample stakeholder participation.
- The engagement of academic staff and students, and how to change their attitudes and behaviors towards explicit research skills training
- Assessment of baseline information and strategies developed to analyse and disseminate information for improved decision making



Approach:

Selection of the reviewer/team will be undertaken by the Research Office, which will include a representative from the Office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor Learning & Teaching and Student Services. The review report should be written in clear and concise English and be submitted via email to the University contact person. The report should include an executive summary, recommendations for the way forward, and a list of consultations/interviews conducted, documents/literature reviewed, surveys conducted, etc. (as annexes). The report is expected to follow the structure of the Review Activities as listed above.

The reviewer/team will be expected to use a mixed-methods approach, integrating quantitative and qualitative information, including interviews with academic and administrative staff as well as students and graduates. Subsequent to selection, the reviewer/team will propose a more detailed methodology for approval by the Research Office, prior to commencing the detailed work. The Research Office will provide access to all documents, data, testimonials and other information sources relevant and available in-house.

Proposed Timeline

The final report of the review should be completed by 1st August 2018. A proposed time line to meet the deadline will be negotiated with the reviewers.

Application/Expression of interest

Interested applicants should submit their expression of interest by email no later than 8th April, 2018 to RSD Coordinator, Shaiza Janif at janif_s@usp.ac.fj with a copy to Director Research at jito.vanualailai@usp.ac.fj

Expression of interest should contain a brief statement of interest, experience with previous similar reviews and curriculum vitae of principal reviewers.

