

TU Delft Research Assessments Protocol 2021-2027

Introduction

The Strategy Evaluation Protocol (SEP) 2021-2027 describes the methods used to assess the research conducted at Dutch universities every six years, as well as the aims of these assessments. In addition to the SEP, this 'TU Delft Research Assessments Protocol' describes how research assessments at TU Delft are designed. This document serves as a guideline for all actors involved.

Step-by-step plan

The enclosed table contains all 27 steps that are part of the research assessment procedure. The Executive Board supervises the execution of the assessments. Various tasks and roles are commissioned to other actors by the Executive Board. The planning of the research assessments can be found below. The step-by-step plan is in accordance with the SEP. Each step contains a reference to the concerning chapters of the SEP and any relevant appendices. At TU Delft:

- all research assessments are an integral part of the university's quality assurance cycle, i.e. are discussed biannually as part of the Planning & Evaluation cycle during the spring and fall meetings when applicable;
- all research assessments are stand-alone assessments, and the standard level of aggregation is that of the department;
- the aims and strategy of the department, that are fundamental to the assessment procedure, are related to the Faculty's multi-annual plan;
- the SWOT analysis of each department in the self-assessment is based on a qualitative comparison with another institute, including an international work visit;
- the Executive Board appoints and discharges the assessment committee;
- the Faculty meets with the Executive Board during a strategic planning meeting to discuss the departments' aims and strategy at the start of the procedure;
- the outcomes and follow-up of the assessments are annually incorporated in the executive work agreements between the Executive Board and the Faculties where relevant;
- The Executive Board discusses the outcomes of the assessments biannually with the Supervisory Board and annually with the Operational Committee;
- the Faculty receives a 50% reimbursement of the research assessment costs on condition of approval of the Plan of Approach by the Executive Board;
- a midterm review is conducted (three years after the previous/three years prior to the next assessment), to assess the state of affairs regarding the recommendations of the previous assessment as well as the strategy development for the following assessment.

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, faculty secretary and relevant heads of department;
- '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).

Planning 2021-2027

The planning indicates the years in which the site visits of the assessments (step 13) and the midterms (step 25) are to take place. The column 'when' in the step-by-step plan shows in which month(s) each step is to be conducted, related to the planning of the site visit. E.g. step 13 is to be conducted in month 25, and step 1 in month 1-2, which means that the process starts two years prior to the site visit. The exact moment depends on the planning of the assessment of that particular field. Note that step 19, 20 and 21 are (bi)annual steps.

Field	Planning SEP 2021-2027	
	Assessment	Midterm
Chemical Engineering (AS)	2021 (assessment 2015-2020)	2024 (midterm 2021-2023)
Geosciences (CEG)	2021 (assessment 2015-2020)	2024 (midterm 2021-2023)
Computer Science and Engineering (EEMCS)	2021 (assessment 2015-2020)	2024 (midterm 2021-2023)
Applied Mathematics (EEMCS)	2021 (assessment 2015-2020)	2024 (midterm 2021-2023)
Architecture and the Built Environment (ABE)	2022 (assessment 2016-2021)	2025 (midterm 2022-2024)
Technology, Policy and Management (TPM)	2022 (assessment 2016-2021)	2025 (midterm 2022-2024)
Applied Physics (AS)	2022 (assessment 2016-2021)	2025 (midterm 2022-2024)
Civil Engineering (CEG)	2023 (assessment 2017-2022)	2026 (midterm 2023-2025)
Electrical Engineering (EEMCS)	2023 (assessment 2017-2022)	2026 (midterm 2023-2025)
Industrial Design Engineering (IO)	2025 (assessment 2019-2024)	2022 (midterm 2019-2021)
Mechanical, Maritime and Materials Engineering (3mE)	2025 (assessment 2019-2024)	2022 (midterm 2019-2021)
Aerospace Engineering (AE)	2026 (assessment 2020-2025)	2023 (midterm 2020-2022)

Process					RACI model			
Step	What	SEP	When	How	EB	SD	FAC	AC
1.	Startup meeting	Ch. 2, 3	Month 1-2 [year 1]	<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 and relevant departments to discuss the procedure and format of the assessment and to formally start the process. 	A	R	I	-
2.	Hold strategic planning meeting	Ch. 2 & Ap. B	Month 2-4 [year 1]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SD and the Faculty schedule a strategic planning meeting. - During this meeting, the Faculty (dean and the relevant department heads) and the EB discuss the department's self-formulated aims and aspirations, how they relate to the Faculty's multi-annual plan, and their strategy to attain them. The outcomes of this meeting form the starting point for the Plan of Approach as well as the self-assessment. 	A/R	R	R	-
3.	Formulate Plan of Approach	Ch. 2, 3	Month 4-5 [year 1]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Faculty formulates a draft PoA together with the departments and sends it to SD for consultation. The PoA contains at least: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The names of the departments to be assessed (and, if relevant, the research schools coordinated by the Faculty that are part of the assessment); • The outline of the strategic process behind the assessment, including the relevant relationships with the Faculty's multi-annual plan, the executive work agreements between the EB and the Faculty etc.; • The planning of the process (according to the steps of this protocol); • The intended composition of the AC (amount of members, diversity, expertise, name(s) of independent secretary/ies); • The names of the involved Faculty members and their roles (coordination, self-assessment and the qualitative comparison with another institute); • The institution(s) selected for the international qualitative comparison, including motivation and proposed visit dates; • The budget (based on the TU Delft template). - SD and the Faculty meet to discuss the draft PoA. - The Faculty incorporates any feedback on the draft and sends the PoA to the EB for approval. 	I	C	A/R	-
4.	Accept Plan of Approach	Ch. 2, 3	Month 5-6 [year 1]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The EB takes a decision on the PoA and informs the Faculty in writing. Approval of the PoA is a prerequisite for the Faculty to receive a 50% reimbursement of the research assessment costs. 	A	R	I	-
5.	Compose assessment committee	Ch. 2, 3 & Ap. G, H	Month 6-12 [year 1]	<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 proposal should include at least one PhD candidate and one mid/early career researcher, and potentially one or more non-academic experts. - 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

Process					RACI model			
Step	What	SEP	When	How	EB	SD	FAC	AC
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The EB requests all AC members and the secretary to return a signed version of the Statement of impartiality and confidentiality to SD. - SD collects all Statements of impartiality and confidentiality, shares them with the secretary and discusses any AC members' potential (semblance of) conflicts of interest with the secretary, Faculty and/or EB. 				
6.	Formulate Terms of Reference	Ch. 2, 3 & Ap. C	Month 6-12 [year 1]	<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. If so desired, SD and the Faculty meet to discuss the draft ToR. 	A	R	C	-
7.	Accept Terms of Reference	Ch 2, 3 & Ap. C	Month 6-12 [year 1]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SD formulates the final version of the ToR. - The ToR is finalized and signed by the EB. 	A	R	C	-
8.	Appoint assessment committee	Ch. 2, 3 & Ap. G	Month 13-18 [year 2]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The EB sends all AC members, including the chair(wo)man, as well as the secretary, an appointment letter and the ToR. - The EB informs the Faculty about the sending of the appointment letters and sends the ToR to the Faculty. 	A	R	I	I
9.	Conduct qualitative comparison (incl. visit)	Ch. 4	Month 13-18 [year 2]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The departments visit the institution(s) and use the qualitative comparison as input for the self-assessment, specifically the departmental SWOT analysis. 	I	I	A/R	-
10.	Organize site visit	Ch. 2, 4 & Ap. F	Month 13-22 [year 2]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Together with the departments and the AC, the Faculty drafts the program of the site visit (including an interview with the Rector Magnificus). - The Faculty informs the EB and SD about the final program and organizes the logistical and other practical matters. 	I	C	A/R	C
11.	Draw up self-assessment and documentation	Ch. 2, 4 & Ap. D, E	Month 13-22 [year 2]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Faculty shares a template for the self-assessment for feedback with SD. If so desired, the Faculty and SD meet to discuss the template. - The Faculty coordinates the writing of the self-assessment report, which should be no longer than 20 pages per department (excluding attachments and case studies). The self-assessment elaborates on the strategic discussions the department had with the EB as part of the Planning & Evaluation cycle and during the strategic planning meeting. - The Faculty shares the draft self-assessment for feedback with SD and if desired a member of another faculty. - The Faculty incorporates any feedback on the draft and organizes a meeting to inform all participants about the procedure, and to reflect on the self-assessment report and the program of the site visit. - The Faculty finalizes the self-assessment report and sends the report to the EB. 	I	C	A/R	I
12.	Share self-assessment and documentation	Ch. 2, 3 & Ap. C	Month 22-23 [year 2]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The EB sends the report and other documentation (including at least the SEP and the ToR, with a fact sheet about the relevant scientific landscape in the Netherlands as appendix) to the AC. 	A	R	I	I
13.	Perform site visit	Ch. 2, 4, 5 & Ap. F	Month 25 [year 3]	<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 preliminary findings based on the written material. 	A	I	R	R

Process					RACI model			
Step	What	SEP	When	How	EB	SD	FAC	AC
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The AC conducts interviews with the Rector Magnificus and a broad range of employees, and holds a private interim meeting. - At the end of the site visit the AC holds a private final meeting. - Afterwards, the chairperson of the AC presents a brief, general summary of the AC's findings to the departments. The provisional findings are not published. 				
14.	Write assessment report	Ch. 2, 4, 5 & Ap. I	Month 26-29 [year 3]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The AC writes the draft assessment report and sends it to the Faculty. - The Faculty shares the document with the relevant departments and SD; all check 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 for approval. 	I	C	C	A/R
15.	Accept assessment report	Ch 2, 3, 5	Month 29-30 [year 3]	<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 and asks for a written response. 	A	R	I	I
16.	Write Faculty response	Ch. 2, 3, 4	Month 30-31 [year 3]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Faculty sends a written response to the assessment report to the EB, that includes follow-up actions regarding the AC recommendations to be taken by the Faculty and involved departments. 	I	I	A/R	-
17.	Accept Faculty response	Ch. 2, 3	Month 30-31 [year 3]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The EB responds to the Faculty response in writing, and asks the Faculty to propose how to incorporate the assessment outcomes where relevant in the executive work agreements between the Executive Board and the Faculties, to be discussed during the next fall meeting. 	A	R	C	-
18.	Publish SA summary, report and position document	Ch. 2, 3	Month 29-31 [year 3]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The EB writes a position document and sends it to the Faculty. - The EB publishes the summary of the self-assessment (including case studies), the assessment report and the EB's position document on the institution's website. 	A	R	C	I
19.	Discuss follow-up actions	Ch. 2, 3, 4	Biannually [year 1-6]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The EB, the Faculty and the departments involved discuss the assessment preparations, outcomes, and follow-up biannually as part of the Planning & Evaluation cycle, during the spring and fall meetings. - The EB and Faculty annually incorporate the outcomes and follow-up of the assessments where relevant in the executive work agreements, to be discussed during the fall meetings. 	A/R	R	R	-
20.	Discuss in annual report	Ch. 2, 3	Annually [year 1-6]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Based on the most recent discussion of the state of affairs as part of the Planning & Evaluation cycle, the EB reports on research assessments, conclusions, recommendations and follow-ups in the TU Delft Annual Report. 	A	R	C	-
21.	Share outcomes and follow-up actions	Ch. 2, 3, 4	Annually [year 1-6]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The EB biannually discusses an overview of research assessment outcomes with the Supervisory Board; - The EB annually discusses on overview of research assessment outcomes with the Deans during a meeting of the Operational Committee; - SD annually discusses an overview of the relevant research assessment outcomes per specific topic with the relevant support services. 	A/R	R	R/C	-
22.	Startup midterm	Ch. 1, 3	Month 49-50 [year 5]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - As part of the ongoing discussions about the assessment outcomes, the EB requests the Faculty to conduct a mid-term assessment. The aim is to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • assess the state of affairs regarding the recommendations of the previous AC; • assess the strategy development for the following assessment. 	A	R	R	-

Process					RACI model			
Step	What	SEP	When	How	EB	SD	FAC	AC
23.	Formulate midterm Plan of Approach	Ch. 1, 3	Month 50-58 [year 5]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Faculty formulates a PoA for the midterm, which should include at least: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The names of the departments to be assessed; • The planning of the process (according to the steps of this protocol); • The intended composition of the midterm committee, i.e. names of (non-Faculty) members and secretary, reflection on its diversity, expertise etc.; • The names of the involved Faculty members and their roles; - The Faculty sends the PoA for the midterm to the EB. 	I	C	A/R	-
24.	Accept midterm Plan of Approach	Ch. 1, 3	Month 52-60 [year 5]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The EB takes a decision on the midterm PoA and informs the Faculty in writing. 	A	R	I	-
25.	Perform midterm	Ch. 1, 3	Month 52-66 [year 6]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - After approval of the PoA by the EB the Faculty formulates the Terms of Reference, writes a self-assessment, appoints the midterm committee and organizes the midterm site visit. - The AC writes the midterm report and sends the draft report to the Faculty to check for factual inaccuracies. If such inaccuracies are detected, the AC sees that they are corrected. - The Faculty accepts the midterm report and thereby discharges the AC members of their duty. 	I	I	A/R	R
26.	Share midterm report and Faculty response	Ch. 1, 3	Month 66-70 [year 6]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Faculty sends the midterm report including a written response to the EB. 	I	I	A/R	-
27.	Accept midterm Faculty response	Ch. 1, 3	Month 68-72 [year 6]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The EB responds to the Faculty response in writing, and asks the Faculty to propose how to incorporate the midterm outcomes where relevant in the executive work agreements between the Executive Board and the Faculties. 	A	R	C	-