# Review of Academic and Administrative Service Units Procedure

# Section 1 - Purpose and Objectives

(1) This Procedure enacts the Supervisory Organisational Structure Policy.

# Section 2 - Definitions, Terms, Acronyms

| Term | Definition |
|---|---|
| Composition | The positions that together form a review committee. |
| Membership | The persons appointed to those positions that compose a review committee. |

# Section 3 - Procedure Scope/Coverage

(2) This Procedure applies to reviews of Academic and Administrative Service Units at The University of Queensland.

# Section 4 - Procedure Statement

(3) Reviews of academic and administrative service units are overseen by the Vice-Chancellor's Committee. Reviews involve self-analysis, benchmarking and an external assessment of the Unit's strategic and operational plans, with a view to attaining outstanding performance by international standards.

(4) The review considers the Unit's relationships with other organisational units. The review also considers resourcing, resource management and organisational structure and whether these allow the Unit to fulfil its goals and objectives and reach its potential.

(5) The review committee's task is to provide an objective view of the Unit's plans developed through the self-assessment process, and to comment on the appropriateness of those plans. Although the majority of reviews are expected to result in incremental changes, reviews provide an opportunity for Units to embrace significant change and development.

# Section 5 - Procedures

### Timetable for Reviews

(6) The Vice-Chancellor's Committee will prepare an annual timetable for reviews, normally no later than the end of first semester in the year preceding the scheduled review.

### Composition of Review Committee

(7) The composition of each review committee will be determined by the Vice-Chancellor's Committee on the recommendation of the relevant Senior Executive.

(8) Each review committee will include:

a. one external member with relevant expertise and knowledge;
b. a nominee of the relevant Senior Executive;
c. a representative from a cognate unit or service area, nominated by the Vice-Chancellor's Committee (VCC) in consultation with the relevant Senior Executive;
d. additional members as the Vice-Chancellor's Committee may determine to be appropriate; and
e. for academic units, where appropriate, the President of the Academic Board or nominee.

(9) The Vice-Chancellor's Committee will appoint a senior Secretary for each review; the Secretary will be independent of the unit under review.

## General Terms of Reference

(10) A review will be conducted against terms of reference specific to the unit under review but based on the general terms of reference, which are listed in section 9.

## Preparation for Review

(11) For each review, the Vice-Chancellor's Committee will consider the need to amend the general terms of reference and/or to include additional terms of reference specific to the unit under review.

(12) The unit under review will be provided with the approved terms of reference together with the guidelines for the review approximately 12 months in advance of the review.

(13) The unit will prepare a submission to the review committee addressing the approved terms of reference. Units are encouraged to begin the self-assessment exercise about 12 months before the scheduled date of the review.

(14) The unit submission should be available to the review committee approximately 1 month before the review date.

(15) Submissions to the review committee will be invited from interested parties.

## The Review and Review Report

(16) The review committee will consider all submissions received and consult with University staff and students and other parties as it sees fit.

(17) The committee is expected to conduct the review expeditiously so that a completed draft of its report is prepared prior to the departure of external members.

(18) Prior to finalisation of the review report, the recommendations will be discussed with the relevant Director and Senior Executive.

(19) Copies of the final review report will, in the first instance, be made available to:

a. members of the Vice-Chancellor's Committee;
b. the unit Director; and
c. members of the unit reviewed.

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## Report Consideration and Approval

(20) The unit Director is invited to prepare a response to the review report in the form of an implementation plan.

(21) The Vice-Chancellor's Committee will consider the review report and implementation plan within the broader context of the University. It will adjudicate on specific recommendations as required and ensure that any specified implementation timeframes are reasonable.

(22) Following approval by the Vice-Chancellor's Committee:

a. the review report and implementation plan will be forwarded to the University Senior Executive Team and Senate for noting, together with any comments from the Vice-Chancellor's Committee;
b. in the case of academic service units, the review report and implementation plan will also be forwarded to the Academic Board for noting; and
c. the review report will be distributed to those people who made written submissions and to other interested parties, together with any comments from the Vice-Chancellor's Committee (VCC).

(23) The review committee will be advised of approval of the review report.

## Review Implementation

(24) The relevant Senior Executive and unit Director are responsible for implementation of the approved recommendations on the basis of the submitted Implementation Plan.

(25) The Vice-Chancellor's Committee will monitor the implementation.

(26) The unit will be required to submit an implementation report (via the relevant Senior Executive) no later than 12 months after approval of the report and implementation plan.

## Review Process

(27) The purpose of academic and administrative service unit reviews is to:

Achieve improvement in the performance of the unit through a process of self-assessment, benchmarking, critical reflection, forward-planning and peer review. Reviews provide the catalyst for a continuous cycle of development and improvement with a view to adopting good practice by international standards.

### Terms of Reference

(28) The responsible Senior Executive member (using the general terms of reference), in consultation with the Director of the unit under review, will prepare draft review terms of reference for approval by the Vice-Chancellor's Committee.

(29) The Director is advised of the approved terms of reference for the review and will address the terms of reference when preparing the unit's submission to the review committee.

### Composition and Membership of Review Committee

(30) The Senior Executive member, in consultation with the Director, submits a proposed composition and membership for the review committee, based on the prescribed review committee composition outlined in clauses 7-9, to the Vice-Chancellor's Committee for approval.

**Timing and Duration of the Review**

(31) The annual schedule of reviews is determined by the Vice-Chancellor's Committee. The Senior Executive member, in consultation with the Director, will recommend a suitable time period for the conduct of the review for approval by the Vice-Chancellor's Committee. The timing of the review will also be contingent on the availability of review committee members. The review is normally held over three to four working days.

**Appointment of the Secretary**

(32) The Senior Executive member nominates a member of the University's senior administrative staff to act as Secretary to the review committee. The nominee will not be a member of staff of the unit under review or a member of the office of the Senior Executive member. The Senior Executive member will consult with the relevant Director and the Vice-Chancellor's Committee will approve the appointment of the Secretary.

**Preparations in the Unit under Review**

(33) Once the terms of reference, membership of the review committee and the date of the review have been approved, the Review Coordinator will provide the Director with:

a. the relevant University policy;
b. the terms of reference for the review;
c. procedures and guidelines for the review process; and
d. the current University of Queensland Strategic Plan.

(34) The Director should inform the unit's staff of the composition of the review committee and the date of the review. The Director, in consultation with staff of the unit and the Senior Executive member, prepares the unit's submission.

**Preparing for the Review**

(35) As an initial step in the review process, the Secretary and the Senior Executive member may convene and lead a workshop for the Director and the unit's staff to inform them of the review process and to discuss any issues. Staff should be advised that they might be interviewed by the review committee.

(36) During the planning stages for the review, the Secretary will:

a. liaise with the Senior Executive member and the Chair regarding the review timetable, including the arrangement of interviews with staff, students and external parties as appropriate;
b. ensure the availability of key senior staff for interview by the review committee;
c. convene a pre-review meeting of internal review committee members (see clauses 42-43 below).

**Support and Facilities for the Review**

(37) The Review Coordinator provides support to the review as set out below. The Secretary advises the Review Coordinator of any special requirements for the review at least three weeks in advance.

(38) The Review Coordinator:

a. publicises the review, requests submissions to the review, and acknowledges receipt of submissions;
b. arranges meeting venues and catering;
c. organises travel and accommodation for external review committee members;
d. arranges telephone conferencing equipment;
e. provides printing, photocopying and fax facilities;

f. provides internet access for external members; and
g. circulates submissions and other information to review committee members.

(39) Note: Review committee members should be requested to bring their own laptops for personal use during the review.

**Provision of Preliminary Information to the Review Committee**

(40) After the Secretary has finalised the dates for the review with members, the Review Coordinator provides the following information to all review committee members, at least three to four weeks prior to the review:

a. details of the review committee membership and Secretary, including: names, addresses, telephone and fax numbers, and email addresses; review terms of reference;
b. the unit's submission; submissions received from individuals within the University and external community;
c. documents outlining the University's management structure; the University's current Strategic Plan;
d. University policies, procedures and guidelines on review of organisational units; and
e. Information for External Review Committee Members.

(41) A copy of the unit's submission is provided to the members of the Vice-Chancellor's Committee and to the Senior Executive member.

**Meeting of Internal Review Committee Members**

(42) At least two weeks before the review, the Secretary arranges a meeting of the internal members of the review committee. The nominee of the Vice-Chancellor's Committee chairs the meeting.

(43) The purpose of the meeting is to:

a. ensure that the review committee has available to it all necessary information and to allow the unit adequate opportunity to provide any additional requested information;
b. review the roles of the internal members and ensure that each is aware of their responsibilities, as determined by the Chair;
c. determine the persons to be invited for interview, including all interested groups and ensuring a balance of perspectives;
d. finalise the draft review timetable, which has been prepared in advance by the Review Secretary (see clauses 44-51 below); and
e. make any other necessary arrangements.

**Development of the Review Timetable**

(44) The Secretary prepares an initial draft timetable for discussion at the meeting of internal members.

(45) In order to ensure adequate time for interviews and deliberation, the review would normally be scheduled across three to four days.

(46) The timetable includes the following:

a. an informal dinner on the evening prior to the commencement of the review to enable members to meet and to discuss the review in a preliminary way (The Director is not invited to this function but the Senior Executive member attends);
b. the first interviews are allocated for relevant members of the Vice-Chancellor's Committee to advise the review committee on the strategic issues and expectations critical to the unit under review;

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c. the Senior Executive member provides an overview on the procedures and protocols of the University, including its organisational structure and resource allocation processes, and other issues of relevance;
d. the Director should be interviewed on the first day, after the interviews with the Vice-Chancellor's Committee and the Senior Executive;
e. interviews with selected staff of the unit, staff of other university units, students as appropriate, and external stakeholders;
f. meetings on the final day with the Director and the Senior Executive member at which the review committee verbally reports its findings and discusses the feasibility of the draft findings; and
g. a separate presentation of the draft recommendations to the staff of the unit is also scheduled following the meeting with the Senior Executive member.

(47) Within the above constraints, it is recommended that the review committee follow a flexible program that allows time for scheduled and unscheduled interviews, discussion, review of progress, consideration of new issues and development of recommendations.

(48) While interviews are important, the number of people interviewed should be limited to avoid repetition. Morning teas and lunches provide opportunities for discussions to be held with key groups.

(49) After a draft timetable has been discussed at the meeting of internal members, the Secretary forwards it to external review members for comments and in particular, additions to the list of interviewees.

(50) Any significant alterations to the draft are referred to all members for final comment. When the timetable has been finalised, the Review Coordinator provides a copy to the review committee.

(51) A template for the review timetable is available in Review of Academic and Administrative Service Units Guideline. It is a general guide only and can be modified as required.

**Submissions to the Review**

(52) Invitations to interested persons to make written submissions to the review committee are prepared by the Review Coordinator. The deadline for these written submissions is four weeks prior to the commencement date of the review.

(53) Submissions received after the closing date are sent to members if time allows. Otherwise, they are provided to members on arrival.

(54) The Review Coordinator arranges the following:

a. request to the Director and Senior Executive member to provide a list of individuals in the external community to be invited to make a submission to the review;
b. invitations to make a submission (signed by the Vice-Chancellor) issued to individuals on the list provided by the Director and Senior Executive member;
c. invitations to make a submission (signed by the Vice-Chancellor) sent to members of the University community;
d. placement of a notice in UQ Update inviting submissions from interested persons;
e. notice sent to unit inviting submissions from all staff (and students if applicable); and
f. acknowledgement of receipt of submissions.

(55) The Director is not informed, prior to the review, of the names of those people who have made a submission or who will be interviewed. Until the review has been completed, submissions are distributed only to members of the Vice-Chancellor's Committee and the members of the review committee.

### Provision of Final Information to the Review Committee

(56) About one week prior to the Review, the Review Coordinator will provide review committee members with:

a. a copy of the final review timetable; and
b. advice of the arrangements for the pre-review dinner.

(57) The Review Coordinator will also ask members whether any further information is required for the review.

### The Review Process

(58) The review committee will consider the submission prepared by the unit, submissions made by individuals from other sections of the University and external bodies, as well as interviews with University staff and other stakeholders.

## Preparing and Finalising the Review Report

### The Review Report Format

(59) The review report consists of the following:

a. Title Page.
b. Table of Contents.
c. Terms of reference.
d. Membership of the review committee.
e. Summary of Commendations and Recommendations.
f. Report of the Review Committee.
g. Appendices.

(60) A template for the review report is available: Review of Academic and Administrative Service Units - Report Template.

(61) The report is normally organised around the terms of reference or the major themes on which the review committee wishes to make recommendations, with the most significant themes first.

(62) Appendices to the report should contain lists of all those interviewed by the review committee and all those who made written submissions to the review, except where they have requested anonymity.

(63) Those who have made written submissions or who were interviewed are not identified by name in the report.

### Commendations and Recommendations

(64) The report should address the terms of reference and list the review committee’s findings as commendations and recommendations. As a guide:

a. all recommendations, and particularly those proposing significant change, should be justified and substantiated by the evidence in submissions and from interviews, should be well-argued and within the stated terms of reference;
b. in formulating recommendations, the committee should be aware of the resource constraints facing the University, its collective goals and objectives as expressed in its Strategic Plan as well as University statutes, policies, and guidelines;
c. the report should be balanced and reflect the positive achievements and practices (commendations) of the unit as well as identifying areas that require improvement (recommendations); and

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d. review committees are encouraged to include time-frames for the implementation of recommendations.

**Presentation of Recommendations**

(65) The Chair will present the review committee's draft recommendations to the Senior Executive member, the Director of the unit, and the unit's staff.

(66) It is the Secretary's responsibility to inform the Chair of the purpose of the presentations and to assist with their preparation.

**Preparing the Draft Review Report**

(67) Where possible, review committee members are expected to have the significant sections of the report drafted prior to leaving the University at the end of the review period. The Secretary will finalise the draft for consideration and approval by the Chair of the review committee.

(68) Once the draft report has been finalised it is forwarded to the Senior Executive member. The Director and the Senior Executive member may provide comments on the draft which the Senior Executive member sends to the Chair for the review committee's consideration. Where necessary, the Senior Executive member may first seek comments from members of the Vice-Chancellor's Committee.

**Approving the Report**

(69) The report is considered confidential until approved by the Vice-Chancellor's Committee and noted by Senate.

(70) The Director and Senior Executive member responsible for the Unit are given a copy of the report and invited to prepare a formal response within one month attaching an implementation plan for consideration by the Vice-Chancellor's Committee. Once the Vice-Chancellor's Committee has approved the Review's Report and accompanying implementation plan, the report and the implementation plan, together with any comments from the Vice-Chancellor's Committee, are submitted to the next meeting of Senate and the University Senior Executive Team for noting. Where appropriate, a Report of a Review of academic units may be referred to the Academic Board for noting.

**Implementation and Communication**

(71) The Director is responsible for implementation of the review recommendations, in consultation with the Senior Executive member responsible for the unit. Within 12 months of noting by the Senate, progress toward implementation should be reported by the Director to the Senior Executive member for consideration by the Vice-Chancellor's Committee.

# Section 6 - Roles of Review Committee Members and Secretariat

## Role of the Chair

(72) As part of the review, the Chair is expected to:

a. liaise with the Secretary prior to the review to finalise the review timetable and determine the list of interviewees;
b. delegate report-writing tasks to each of the review committee members;
c. present the review committee's draft recommendations to the Director of the unit, the Senior Executive member and the unit's staff;
d. ensure the penultimate draft report is completed prior to departure from the University;

e. ensure completion of the final version of the review report within two weeks of the review; and
f. approve the review report before its submission to the Senior Executive member.

### Role of the Review Committee Members

(73) The role of members of the review committee is to:

a. participate in interviews and discussions;
b. contribute to the report-writing tasks; and
c. assist with the formulation of recommendations and commendations.

### Role of the Secretary to the Review Committee

(74) The Secretary is not a member of the committee and therefore does not participate in the committee's deliberations.

(75) The Secretary is expected to:

a. act as an administrative resource for the Chair and members of the review committee;
b. provide advice to the review committee on relevant University policies and procedures;
c. communicate as directed with the Director of the unit;
d. oversee the general organisation of the review;
e. liaise with interviewees, including representatives of professional and other external bodies;
f. collect, organise and analyse documentation for the Chair and members of the review committee;
g. assist the Chair to prepare for the presentation of the draft review recommendations to the Director, the Senior Executive member and staff of the unit;
h. facilitate, and where appropriate, implement follow-up action; and
i. finalise the draft review report in consultation with members and the Chair.

# Section 7 - Preparation of Unit’s Submission

(76) The unit's submission must be provided to the Review Coordinator no later than four weeks prior to the review.

(77) The unit under review is responsible for the cost of printing copies of its review submission.

(78) Units may wish to obtain copies of recent submissions made by other units to assist them with preparing their documentation. If so, they should contact the Review Coordinator.

(79) In the year prior to the review, the Head of Organisational Unit and the unit’s staff are invited to attend a briefing session on the review process conducted by the unit’s Director and the Secretary to the review committee.

(80) Units normally engage in a detailed strategic planning exercise several months prior to the preparation of the submission.

# Section 8 - Contents of the Submission

### General

(81) The submission allows the unit to reflect upon and analyse operations in order to optimise future performance. Consequently, the focus of the submission is to identify future directions and strategic intentions for the

unit.

(82) However, to set the context for the review, it is important briefly to address the unit's history and its present circumstances with a focus on factors that have contributed to the current operating environment and potential future outlook of the unit.

(83) Excluding the appendices, the submission should be no longer than 100 pages in length. The submission should include:

a. an overview/summary of the submission;
b. the history of the unit; the present circumstances of the unit;
c. the future plans of the unit for improvement and development; and
d. appendices (including the unit's strategic and/or operational plan, the unit's budget, and
e. additional benchmarking data).

**The History of the Unit**

(84) The section includes reference to:

a. the origins and histories of the groups/sections of the unit and the history of their organisational relationships (i.e. the precursors to the current unit);
b. amalgamations of groups/sections;
c. management structures and leadership positions established and the rationale for their creation;
d. major outcomes of the previous review;
e. any factors which might have had an impact since the previous review (e.g. reorganisations/restructures, changes in funding formula, changes in stakeholder/client perceptions); and
f. any other significant changes since the previous review.

**The Unit at Present**

(85) This section includes a comprehensive analysis of the unit’s current status and operations. An overview of the unit's goals and priorities should be provided with an analysis of the extent to which these goals and priorities are being achieved.

(86) There are two types of data required:

a. unit-specific data; and
b. benchmark data.

(87) Where possible, data should span at least three and up to five years to enable an assessment of trends.

(88) For Unit-Specific Data:

a. Submissions include an assessment of performance according to the areas covered by the terms of reference. The standard information that is expected, according to each area of the standard terms of reference, is outlined in Section 9.
b. The submission includes quantitative and qualitative data. Where quantitative data are available, comparable data for other relevant units within and external to the University should be supplied.
c. Performance should also be explicitly linked to the University’s strategic plans and operating priorities. Budget information provided is meant to inform discussion.

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(89) For Benchmark Data:

a. The unit is benchmarked with at least two comparative institutions nationally (Go8). The primary purpose of benchmarking is to assist in determining the direction of the unit and the quality of the unit's operations.
b. If it is decided that Go8 institutions do not provide an adequate basis for comparison, units provide reasons for such unsuitability, and select another appropriately regarded national institution.
c. [The unit identifies the benchmarking partners early in the preparation process and advises the senior Director.]

**The Unit in the Future**

(90) This section should be the focus of the submission.

a. It identifies factors that will influence the future directions of the unit and how the unit is currently contributing to that direction and/or realigning its activities in keeping with developments.
b. It describes plans and strategies for the future development and improvement of the unit over the next three to five years. It is expected that the unit will submit a concise operational plan in order clearly to display strategic objectives and goals, and to establish key targets.

(91) Therefore, this section articulates goals and courses of action that are tied to:

a. performance indicated by the data in the section 'The Unit at Present'. Strategies for maintaining excellence and improving identified deficiencies are to be included. An analysis of the data and an assessment of the unit's strengths as well as factors preventing progress is required;
b. areas of potential growth. The future plans of the unit include unit-specific strategic priorities. Some of these areas might arise from the benchmarking exercise or involve predictions of future directions in the unit's activities; and
c. contribution to the University's strategic and operational plans. Include how the unit contributes to operationalising these plans.

(92) In each case, consideration should be given to the unit's human, financial and physical resources to enhance performance, to meet the unit's objectives and to achieve its targets. Key performance indicators should be identified clearly, alongside strategic priorities that link appropriately to specified timelines, milestones and resource allocations.

# Section 9 - Description of General Terms of Reference and Performance Indicators

## Term of Reference 1 – Functions and Goals

(93) Assess whether the identified functions and goals of the unit are consistent with the University's objectives in learning, discovery and engagement.

**Details**

(94) The submission should describe:

a. current functions and goals of the unit and how they contribute to the University's strategic and operational plans with respect to learning, discovery and engagement;
b. challenges for the unit in performing its functions and achieving goals; and
c. changes in direction that are emerging with regard to the unit's functions.

## Term of Reference 2 – Effectiveness

(95) Assess the efficiency and effectiveness of the unit in meeting its identified functions and goals, in particular whether the profile and skill-base of the current staff can achieve those functions and goals into the future.

**Details**

(96) The submission should describe:

a. the unit's success in performing functions and achieving goals;
b. how the skill-base / qualifications of staff assist in achieving those goals;
c. identified deficiencies or gaps in skill-base / qualifications impacting on performance of unit; and
d. anticipated future developments requiring change in skill-base / qualifications.

## Term of Reference 3 – Service Expectations

(97) Identify the institution's service expectations for the unit and assess the validity of those expectations and, as appropriate, the unit's ability to meet them.

**Details**

(98) The submission should describe:

a. the unit's mission statement;
b. services provided by the unit and how they correspond with the University's expectations; and
c. factors impacting on service delivery.

## Term of Reference 4 – Service Culture

(99) Seek and evaluate client views of the unit's service culture and identify strengths and opportunities for improvement.

**Details**

(100) The submission should describe:

a. unit's self-assessment of service provision;
b. client feedback on the unit's service culture; and
c. those aspects of the unit's service culture requiring improvement and the unit's plans to enhance service performance.

## Term of Reference 5 – Scope of Activities

(101) Review the scope of current and planned work and mechanisms by which work is allocated to the unit.

**Details**

(102) The submission should describe:

a. activities currently undertaken by the unit;
b. mechanisms by which work is allocated to the unit;
c. planned future activities for the unit; and
d. assessment of the unit's capacity to successfully undertake planned activities.

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## Term of Reference 6 – Organisational Structure

(103) Review the organisational structure of the unit in the context of its current functions and anticipated developments.

**Details**

(104) The submission should describe:

a. organisational structure and how it assists the unit to fulfil its functions;
b. management structure and how it assists the unit to fulfil its functions; and
c. anticipated changes to the organisational and management structures, and the rationale for those changes.

## Term of Reference 7 – Resources

(105) Assess the level of resources needed for effective support of the unit.

**Details**

(106) The submission should describe:

a. budget for past three to five years;
b. projected budget for next three years;
c. staff profile: age structure, HEW levels, qualifications, skill-base;
d. staff development / training / career development;
e. staff recruitment and retention;
f. workload management;
g. major equipment items;
h. levels of IT infrastructure;
i. asset management plans; and
j. space (the area of the unit and the major categories of space utilisation, e.g. offices, equipment, meeting/training areas).

## Term of Reference 8 – Key Performance Indicators

(107) Identify key performance indicators for future evaluation.

**Details**

(108) The submission should describe:

a. unit’s current key performance indicators; and
b. additional key performance indicators to assess the unit’s performance in the future, based on anticipated developments in the unit’s activities.

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## Status and Details

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|---|---|
| **Status** | Historic |
| **Effective Date** | 20th October 2011 |
| **Review Date** | 1st September 2014 |
| **Approval Authority** | Director, Academic Services Division and Academic Registrar |
| **Approval Date** | 20th October 2011 |
| **Expiry Date** | 10th September 2024 |
| **Policy Owner** | Kathryn Blyth<br>Director, Academic Services Division and Academic Registrar |
| **Enquiries Contact** | Academic Services Division |

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