

THEMES

For the purposes of audit cycle 2, a theme is defined as: ‘a distinct unifying concept that is significant for an institution’s strategic plan or academic profile’. A theme can be either:

- an area of academic outcomes within the core activities of teaching and learning, research and scholarship, including a broad discipline area, or
- an ‘enabling’ area closely related to the achievement of academic outcomes.

A theme covers a range of sub-themes. These sub-themes must be interrelated or closely related enough to allow the auditee to provide a meaningful self-evaluation of the theme as a whole. The self-evaluation must provide more than just a description of a particular approach and its deployment – it must include an evaluative component, including evidence of outcomes and effectiveness.

Examples of themes and sub-themes are below. A sub-theme may form part of more than one theme.

Based on the institution’s self-review process against its own objectives in these areas and the relevant external reference points, provide information on the institution’s activities relevant to the identified themes. Information should include:

The following matters will need to be addressed for each theme that is an area of academic outcomes, including a discipline area, and as appropriate for enabling areas:

- Relevant strategic objectives relative to the theme. Data presented should include:
 - Planned targets and outcomes, with precise definitions
 - Related measure(s) (qualitative or quantitative)
 - Performance outcomes for past three years
 - Policy framework, ie brief summary (or URLs) of policies, strategies and processes in place to support achievement of target outcome (including training and development)
 - Brief commentary on whether target is on track to be achieved or not
- Main strategies and processes in place, including processes to achieve alignment with relevant external reference points
- How the effectiveness of processes is monitored
- Benchmarking results and effect
- Review and evaluation mechanisms used, including risk management; outcomes of these.
- As appropriate, evidence of how academic standards related to the theme are set, monitored and evaluated; or, for enabling areas, evidence of effectiveness in supporting academic outcomes and standards
- Priorities for improvement

The scope of the selected theme in the auditee’s Portfolio will be agreed between AUQA and the auditee at the outset of the audit. For further information about themes, see the SAI Portfolio Outline

Example Themes and Sub-Themes

AREAS OF ACADEMIC OUTCOMES

Internationalisation

International partnerships for teaching and research; international student experience (onshore); internationalisation of curriculum; transnational education and evidence of equivalence; student exchanges; staff exchanges and partnerships

Academic QA: Curriculum and Assessment

Course profile and planning; curriculum development, design and review; graduate attributes; workplace learning; academic integrity; course approval/accreditation process; assessment design and practice, including moderation; course and discipline renewal, professional accreditation

Academic QA: Admissions and Progress

Admissions criteria; selection and admission process; articulation and credit transfer; learning and personal support for students; equity groups; retention and success/progress for different cohorts

Quality of Teaching

Scholarship of teaching and pedagogy; evaluation of teaching and impact on learning; enhancement of skills; professional development; recruitment of staff; performance management

Learning Outcomes

Curriculum development, design and review; graduate attributes; workplace learning; academic integrity; assessment design and practice; recognition of qualifications; further study

Flexible or Blended Learning

Scholarship of teaching and pedagogy; curriculum development, design and review for flexible learning; assessment design and practice; equivalence in learning outcomes; learning support; staff professional development, IT and infrastructure

Research

Approach to management; teaching and research nexus; concentration of effort; collaboration and partnerships; retention and development of researchers; scholarship; academic integrity; especially ethics of research; consultancy; commercialisation; use of infrastructure

Research Training

Approach to management; admission criteria; supervision and student evaluation of supervision; support for research students and supervisors, including collaboration and partnerships; research degree 'curriculum', skills development and graduate attributes; retention and progress; career planning

Engagement

Approach to and scholarship of engagement; relationship to teaching and research; roles and responsibilities; stakeholder involvement; relationship management;

Example Discipline Areas

- Agriculture / Environmental Sciences
- Arts / Social Sciences
- Education
- Business, management and Commerce
- Law
- IT
- Engineering Sciences
- Health Sciences
- Physical Sciences
- Biological Sciences
- Design/Creative Arts

ENABLING AREAS

Academic Governance

Structures and roles, quality management system; curriculum development and review, learning and teaching development and pedagogical issues, academic culture and integrity

Student Experience

Understanding the student population and student life cycle; academic aspects e.g. learning support; personal and social support; equity groups; grievances and problems; amenities and facilities; multi-campus and offshore operations; alumni

Human Resources: Workforce Planning and Renewal

Planning and skill requirements; recruitment, reward and retention; equity groups; managing change and transition; casual staff; academic workloads; organisational climate and communication

Human Resources: Career Development and Performance Management

Planning and skill requirements, career development support for teaching and research; general staff career development, casual staff career development; performance management; organisational climate and communication