




Strategic Risk Register Process

Version Control

Document Name	Strategic Risk Register Process	
Version Reference & Approval Dates	V2.0 Approved by Executive on November 16th 2021 V2.1 Approved by Risk Committee on December 7th 2021	
Document Owner	Risk & Compliance Officer	

Contents

Page

Introduction	2
Scope	2
Participants	2
University Risk Appetite	3
Process Flowchart	4
Step 1 – Selection of Units & Preparation of Registers	4
Step 2 – Preparation of Functional Area Risk Registers	5
Step 3 – Preparation of the draft Strategic Risk Register	5
Step 4 – Review of the draft SRR	6
Step 5 – Adoption of the SRR by the Governing Authority	6
Process Management Points	6
Conclusion	7
Appendix 1: Overview of process tasks by party	8
Appendix 2: Impact Assessment Criteria at a Unit level	9
Appendix 3: Impact Assessment Criteria at a University level	10
Appendix 4: University Risk Appetite Statement	11
Appendix 5: Overview of Risk Management in DCU	12

Introduction

The University's original risk management process began in 2012 and since then it has undergone a number of refinements. The primary documentary output of the process is an annual Strategic Risk Register (SRR) that lists the most significant risks that have the potential to affect the University. The steps taken to create an SRR are set out in this guide.

Version # 2.0 of the process was approved by the DCU Executive on November 22nd 2021. Subsequently, Version # 2.1 of the process was approved by the Governing Authority Risk Committee on December 7th 2021.

Scope

As stated in the DCU [Risk Management Policy](#) the risk process applies to all units of the University, both academic and support, including its research centres and its wholly owned campus companies.

Participants

Throughout this guide, references are made to a number of participants. A short description of each participant's part in the overall risk process is set out below.

Governing Authority – The Governing Authority is responsible for exercising oversight of the University's system of risk management. It ultimately reviews and, if appropriate adopts, the SRR.

Governing Authority Risk Committee (GARC) – The GARC is a sub-committee of the Governing Authority and on behalf of the Authority, it exercises oversight of the University's risk management process in line with its Terms of Reference.

Executive – The University Executive is the senior decision making body within the University. Its primary role is to advise the President on issues of major strategic and operational importance, including the management of risk. The Executive is also responsible for coordinating the development and maintenance of the University's risk management process.

Senior Management Group (SMG) – When acting as a group they are referred to as the SMG but some risk process tasks require them to act as individual SMG Line Managers. All units within the scope of the Risk Management Policy report to a member of the SMG for risk management purposes.



Head of Unit - The individual who has responsibility for the local management of a Unit. Heads of Unit prepare and provide Unit Risk Registers for review by their respective SMG Line Manager.

Chief Operations Officer (COO) - The COO has overall responsibility for risk management at an Executive level.

Risk & Compliance Officer (RCO) – The RCO facilitates the risk process and reports to the COO.

Risk Function – The Risk Function facilitates the overall risk process and it is composed of the COO, Deputy COO and the RCO.

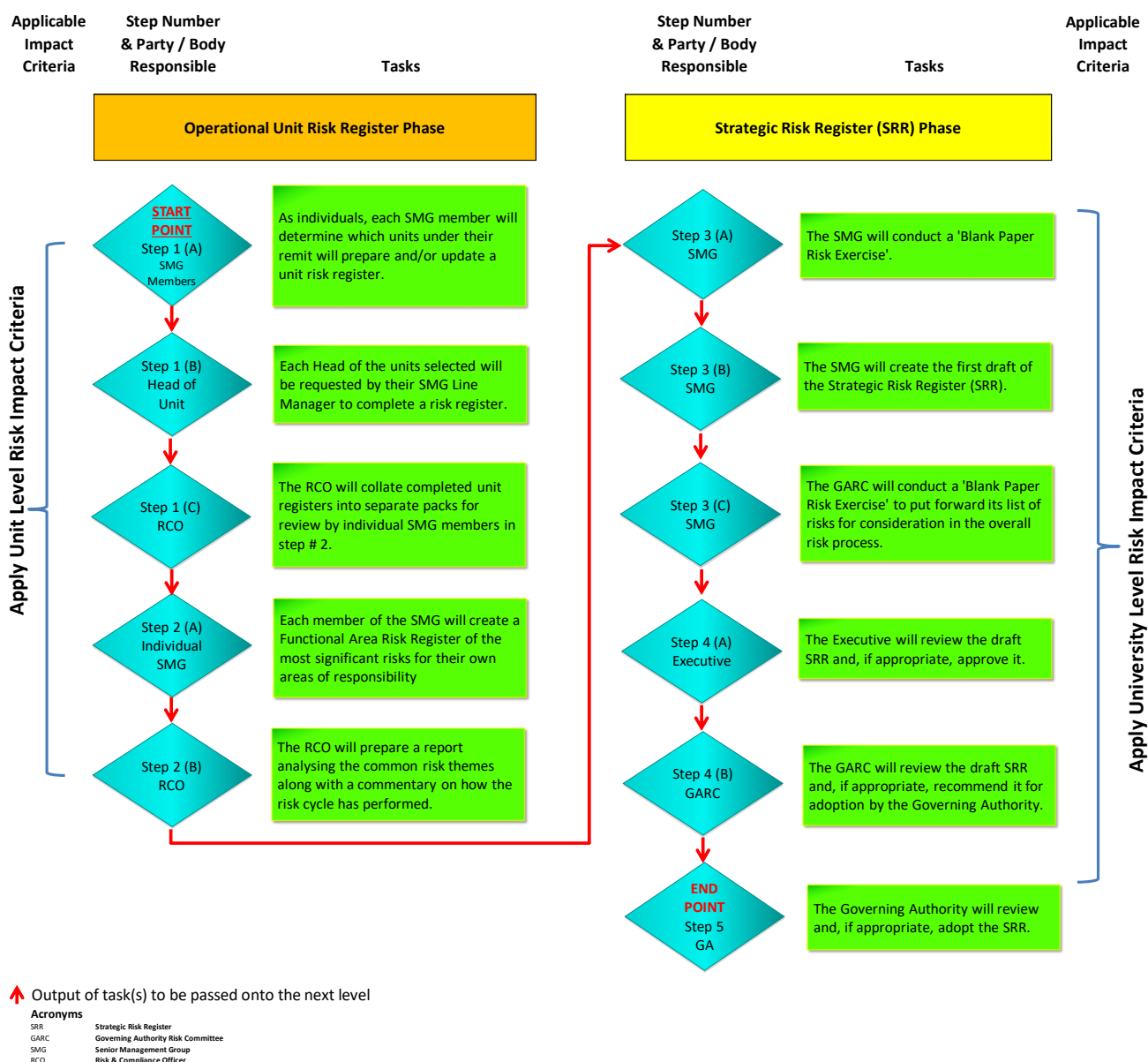
University Risk Appetite Statement

Risk Appetite refers to the amount of risk that an organization is prepared to accept, tolerate or be exposed to at any given point in time. In the context of the University its [Risk Appetite Statement](#) seeks to summarize its tolerance for risk across a range of activities.

The Statement is an integral element of the University's risk management framework and it sets a risk appetite that ranges over three risk categories (i.e. Low, Medium and High). An overview of the University's appetite for risk across these categories can be seen in [Appendix # 4](#).

The Risk Appetite Statement will be referred to by Heads of Unit, Members of SMG and the GARC in the drawing up their own allocated risk registers as set out in this process.

Process Flowchart



Step 1 – Selection of Units & Preparation of Registers

Part A) Individual members of the SMG will determine which Units under their remit will be included in the annual risk cycle.

In doing so, they may consider the RCO's opinion on whether a Unit Risk Register is required for that year's cycle. That opinion will be based upon the Unit's historic risk profile, the date of when it last provided a risk register and if there are any new emerging risks identified.

In determining which Units should update / prepare a Unit Risk Register, the SMG Line Manager should consider the following:

- the strategic importance of the Unit;

- the potential risks which could arise from within the Unit or from its activities;
- whether the Unit can be divided into smaller sub-units which should prepare their own risk register;
- the degree of the Unit's contribution to the overall objectives and functioning of the University;
- the complexity of the Unit's activities; &
- whether the Unit has prepared a Unit Risk Register in the past.

Part B) Each Head of the Units selected will be requested by their SMG Line Manager to provide an updated Unit Register using the Unit level impact assessment criteria at [Appendix # 2](#). Finished registers will be submitted to the RCO.

Part C) The RCO will collate the completed Unit Registers into separate packs for review at step # 2 by the individual members of the SMG to which the Units report for risk management purposes.

Step 2 – Preparation of Functional Area Risk Registers

Part A) Each member of the SMG will create a Functional Area Risk Register (FARR) of the most significant risks for their own areas drawing upon the packs of Unit Registers provided by the RCO in step # 1(C).

Part B) The completed FARRs will be returned to the RCO who will then prepare a report analysing the common risk themes and other relevant risk related matters highlighted in Unit and Functional Area registers along with a commentary on how the risk cycle has performed. The report will be provided to the Risk Function first and, at step # 3, to the SMG.

Step 3 – Preparation of the draft Strategic Risk Register

Part A) The SMG will conduct a 'Blank Paper' Risk exercise drawing upon:

- a review of the collated FARRs; &
- the RCO's report.

The SMG may include or exclude risks that they deem appropriate at this point in the process. In doing so, they should consider:

- the most appropriate organisational level at which the risk is best managed;
- risks highlighted by horizon scanning, sectoral reports, the risk registers of other universities, national risk assessments and any other relevant source;
- risks arising from, or as a threat to, the execution of the University's Strategy; &
- the University's Risk Appetite Statement.

Part B) The SMG will create the first draft of the Strategic Risk Register and, by using the University level impact assessment criteria at [Appendix # 3](#), assess each risk's impact.

Part C) The GARC will conduct a 'Blank Paper' Risk Exercise to put forward its own list of risks for consideration in the overall process.

Step 4 – Review of the draft SRR

Part A) The Executive will review the draft SRR after having undertaken their own review and taken on board input from the GARC's blank paper exercise. If approved by the Executive, it will then be provided to the GARC.

Part B) The GARC will review the draft SRR and, if appropriate, recommend it for adoption by the Governing Authority.

Step 5 – Adoption of the SRR by the Governing Authority

The Governing Authority will review and, if appropriate, adopt the Strategic Risk Register.

Process Management Points

1) Non-Returned Risk Registers

Where a Unit or Functional Area Risk Register is not completed within a reasonable timeframe the process will nevertheless proceed to the next stage in order to maintain momentum. A list of these Units will be included in the RCO's report at Step 2 (B) for noting by the Risk Function and GARC.

2) Cycle Start Date

The start date for each risk cycle will be set by the Risk Function and will be determined by working back from the anticipated end date for the cycle.

3) Selection of Units based upon their Risk Profile

At Step 1 (A) the Risk Officer will assess the risk profile for each Unit and make a recommendation to the SMG Line Manager as to whether Units should prepare a register in current year's cycle. The Risk Officer's opinion on whether a unit register is required for that cycle which will be based upon the Unit's historic risk profile, the date of when it last provided a risk register and if there are emerging risks.

In the case of some Units, the Risk Officer will recommend that a register be provided every year because of the Unit's profile. Units that are deemed to be low risk should not be nominated to prepare an annual register as once every three years will suffice.

4) Explanation for Units not selected

Where a Unit is not nominated by the SMG Line Manager to whom it reports they should justify that decision.

5) Quality of engagement

Where the Risk Officer believes a Unit register has not been completed to an acceptable level this will be highlighted in the annual report on the cycle provided to the Risk Function at Step # 2, Part (B). Any non-engagement with the risk process will also be highlighted.

Conclusion

For additional clarity, the primary roles of all parties in preparing an SRR are summarized in the table in [Appendix # 1](#). An overview of the University's Risk Management Governance Structure is shown in [Appendix # 5](#). Queries regarding the application of the process should be directed to the Risk & Compliance Officer.

End.

Appendix 1: Overview of process tasks by party

Process Task	Step #	Head of Unit	RCO	SMG	SMG Line Mgr	Executive	GARC	Gov. Authority
Initial selection of Units	Step 1 (A)				✓			
Provision of Unit registers	Step 1 (B)	✓						
Collation of registers into review packs	Step 1 (C)		✓					
Preparation of Functional Area Risk Registers	Step 2 (A)				✓			
Report on themes & process	Step 2 (B)		✓					
GARC blank paper exercise	Step 2 (C)						✓	
SMG blank paper exercise	Step 3 (A)			✓				
Preparation of the draft SRR	Step 3 (B)			✓				
Review & approval of the draft SRR	Step 4 (A) & (B)					✓	✓	
Final adoption of the SRR	Step 5							✓

✓ Denotes a role for the party indicated

Appendix 2: Impact Assessment Criteria at a Unit level

Impact Category	1 Minor	2 Limited	3 Serious	4 Very Serious	5 Catastrophic
Constituent Strategy 1) Research & Innovation 2) Teaching & Learning 3) International 4) Student Experience 5) Engagement	Negligible delay in achieving a strategic objective or initiative of the unit	Some delay with implementing a strategic objective or initiative at unit level	Significant delay with implementing a strategic objective or initiative at unit level	Failure to deliver on one or more of the unit's strategic objectives or initiatives	Failure to deliver one or more of the unit's mission critical activities and / or strategic objectives
Operational 1) Physical Infrastructure 2) Unit Effectiveness 3) Health & Safety***	Students/staff aware of problem but impact on them is limited	Short term disruption to a critical unit activity	Short term significant disruption to critical unit activities	On-going & significant disruption to critical unit activities	Complete shutdown of critical unit activities for an extended period
Financial	Up to 3% of the unit's annual budget	4% to 10% of unit's annual budget	11% to 15% of unit's annual budget	16% to 20% of unit's annual budget	Greater than 20% of unit's annual budget
Reputational	Unit's reputation not affected	Some negative comments in local press / media about the unit	Critical article in local media or criticism from within DCU senior management regarding the unit.	Continuing & significant negative publicity in local or national media regarding the unit. DCU managerial concern.	Unit loses confidence of the public and / or DCU management.

*** Due regard is to be given to the Unit's Occupational Health & Safety Hazard and Risk Assessment

Appendix 3: Impact Assessment Criteria at a University level

Impact Category	1 Minor	2 Limited	3 Serious	4 Very Serious	5 Catastrophic
Constituent Strategy 1) Research & Innovation 2) Teaching & Learning 3) International 4) Student Experience 5) Engagement	Some delay in achieving a constituent strategy of the University	Some delay with achieving more than 1 of the constituent strategies or significant delay with a single constituent strategy	Significant delay with achieving more than 1 constituent strategy	Failure to deliver on one or more of the following constituent strategies: - International - Student Experience - Engagement	Failure to deliver one or more of the following mission critical strategies: - Teaching & Learning - Research & Innovation
Operational 1) Physical Infrastructure 2) Unit Effectiveness 3) Health & Safety***	Students/staff aware of problem but impact on them is limited	Short term disruption to a critical University activity	Short term & significant disruption to critical University activities	On-going & significant disruption to critical University activities	Complete shutdown of University activities for an extended period
Financial	Up to €2m	€2m - €7m	€7m - €10m	€10m - €15m	Over €15m
Reputational	Adverse but isolated media coverage regarding the University	Adverse & widely reported media coverage regarding the University	Widely reported (but unproven) allegations of serious misconduct	Widely reported & proven mismanagement with Government review	Widely reported & proven mismanagement with Government sanction against the University &/or loss of public confidence

*** Due regard is to be given to the Unit's Occupational Health & Safety Hazard and Risk Assessment

Appendix 4: University Risk Appetite Statement

Risk Appetite Range 1-9		Low Appetite 1 2 3		Medium Appetite 4 5 6		High Appetite 7 8 9	
Approach to Risk		Accepts as little risk as possible and takes a cautious approach towards taking risk		A moderate and informed approach to risk taking		A more aggressive approach to risk taking for increased benefit and to achieve the goals set out in the DCU Strategic Plan 2017-2022 - Talent, Discovery and Transformation	
1	Strategic	Key Activities					
1.1	Research & Innovation	* Unethical Conduct		* Academic Programme Development Research & Training		* International Research Collaborations and Partnerships * Attracting High Performing Research Staff & Students	
1.2	Teaching & Learning	* Academic Standards & Integrity * Quality of Teaching & Learning Design				* Linkages with Industry/Partners * Transnational Education & Partnerships * Teaching Learning & Innovation * On Line Learning Environment	
1.3	Internationalization	* Alignment to University values		* Trans-National Education Development		* Academic Linkages & Strategic Partnerships * Organisational Change to Optimise Performance	
1.4	Student Experience	* Overall holistic approach to Student Experience		* Academic Programme Enhancement & Engagement		* Coherent & Integrated Multi Campus Experience * Student Transition Support Services	
1.5	Engagement	* DCU Brand & Reputation in Local Communities and Regional		* Engagement with Alumni		* Enterprise Engagement Strategy with our 4 primary communities - Local / Regional / National / Global	
2	Operational						
2.1	Physical Infrastructure & Operational	* Fit for Purpose Physical Infrastructure * Cyber Risks * Staff Resourcing & Competence Levels		* Enabling Technologies and Connectivity * Strategic Infrastructure Investment * Multi Campus Environment * Multi Campus Infrastructure		* Technological Innovation	
2.2	Health and Safety	* Staff & Student Health & Safety Compliance * Environmental Safety		* Sustainable Operations			
3	Financial	* Compliance with Policies, Standards, Legislation & Relevant Government Directives * Stewardship & Reporting		* Financial Sustainability		* Strategic Investment Opportunities * Philanthropic Engagement * Non-Exchequer Income Generation Plan	
4	Reputational	* Reputation, DCU Brand, Ethical Standing, Professional Standards and other Legislative Compliance * Alignment with DCU Values and the DCU Community					

Risk Appetite Table Layout - Charles Sturt University

Appendix 5: Overview of Risk Management in DCU

