



news

December 2017



Te Pokapū Kōunga Mātauranga mō ngā Whare Wānanga o Aotearoa

Quality Enhancement

AQA's 2017 Support for Quality Conference was held in Wellington on 28 September, and was attended by Quality Managers and professionals from New Zealand universities, and colleagues from Australia and the Pacific. The theme of this year's conference was 'Enhancement', and we were fortunate to be able to have Professor Roni Bamber, Chair of the Student Transitions Enhancement Theme Steering Group in Scotland, as our Keynote speaker. AQA wishes to thank both Universities New Zealand and Ako Aotearoa for their support for our keynote speaker. University speakers presented how they were progressing enhancement initiatives from their Cycle 5 Self-Reviews and Dr. Pat Sandbrook, Chair of the Committee on Student Administration and Academic Services (CSAAS), presented a CSAAS enhancement initiative on course advising. The day concluded with an excellent Student Panel providing their perspectives on quality enhancement. Presentations from the conference can be found [here](#). Participant feedback on the conference was positive; however, as the enhancement theme component of Cycle 6 gains momentum over the next two years, we will need to consider the format and focus for Support for Quality.



Sheelagh Matear with keynote speaker, Professor Roni Bamber.



From left: Professor Roni Bamber, Dr. Pat Sandbrook, Megan Wilson, Lizzie Kelly, Sheelagh Matear, Paula Morrison, Cassandra Jutsum, Sue Walbran, Andrew Bainbridge-Smith, Heather Merrick and Fiona Coote – presenters at the conference.

AQA | About

The Academic Quality Agency for New Zealand Universities (AQA) was established in 1993 to carry out audits of the processes in universities which underpin academic quality. The mission

of AQA is to contribute to high quality New Zealand university education by engaging as a leader and advocate in the development of universities based on high quality, internationally acceptable,

academic practices, and by providing quality assurance and quality enhancement services which assist universities in facilitating excellent student experience and learning outcomes.

AQA Board News

2017 has been a busy and exciting year for the AQA Board as it has overseen the development of Cycle 6 Academic Audit. I would like to take this opportunity to thank members of universities and others who have contributed to the design of Cycle 6 and its ongoing operationalisation. It is very encouraging to see the engagement of universities and student representatives in the Enhancement Theme Steering Group. The enhancement theme topic of "Access, opportunities and outcomes for Māori learners and Pasifika learners" is important to each university and of national significance. It is also important for students and the contribution of Te Mana Ākonga and NZUSA to the Steering Group will be very valuable.

Also in terms of student contribution to academic quality, the AQA Board endorsed the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding with the New Zealand Union of Students' Associations. This MoU seeks to build a sustainable framework for student contribution, including capability building to develop a pool of potential student auditors.

One of the main tasks of the Board is to provide oversight and approval for the release of academic audit reports and other reviews and the acceptance of one-year follow-up reports. With Cycle 5 Academic Audit drawing to a conclusion, this activity has been slightly less in 2017. However, the Board approved the release of the Review of the Committee Academic Programmes (CUAP) and accepted one-year follow-up reports from the University of Waikato and Auckland University of Technology.

The AQA Board also monitors progress against AQA's Statement of Performance Expectations and budget. For the 2016-17 financial year, AQA achieved targets in all measures related to its four goals of quality assurance, quality enhancement – universities, quality enhancement – AQA and quality support. Further information on these can be found in AQA's Annual Report, available [here](#).

Board membership has remained stable throughout 2017 and I am pleased to have been re-appointed for a further term as Chair of the Board. Professor Neil Quigley and Professor Jack Heinemann have also been reappointed for further terms on the Board and the re-election of Jonathan Gee as president of NZUSA means that he will also continue on the Board. I would like to take this opportunity to thank members of the Board for their contribution throughout 2017 and look forward to further progress in 2018.



The AQA Board:

Back row - Jonathan Gee, Dr Kaye McAulay, Professor Neil Quigley, Professor Jack Heinemann, Michèle Stanton.

Front row - Sheelagh Matear, Emeritus Professor Pat Walsh, Pania Gray.

Academic Audit Update

Cycle 5 is fast approaching its conclusion and the one-year follow-up visits for the University of Otago and Lincoln University occurred in November and December, respectively. Their reports are expected to be considered by the AQA Board in March 2018.

Cycle 6 information is now available on the AQA website. The Enhancement Theme Steering Group met in November and considered 'indicative plans' from each of the universities. Full plans will be considered at the March meeting of the Steering Group. The Quality Managers followed up their August workshop with a Zoom meeting to consider a second draft of the academic audit framework for Cycle 6. A workshop focusing on 'evidence' is being planned for early in 2018.

Communications Survey

Thank-you to everyone who responded to AQA's communications survey. We acknowledge that there were some problems with how questions where respondents should have been able to select multiple responses had been set up and this may have limited the feedback respondents were able to provide on those questions. Responses indicate that you find this Newsletter to be useful or interesting, and often both. You also indicated that the quarterly frequency was about right. Respondents also made helpful suggestions for things we could include in the newsletter and other improvements.

Student Voice

Contributed by Jonathan Gee, NZUSA National President

Our annual Student Voice in Universities Summit, co-hosted by AQA and the New Zealand Union of Students' Associations (NZUSA), took place in late September. The purpose of the Summit is three-fold, to upskill student representatives with the features of good practice student voice, facilitate knowledge transfer between outgoing and incoming student representatives, and to develop a pool of senior representatives who will eventually serve as auditors in Cycle 6.

The Summit received some very positive feedback from participants, who appreciated the opportunity to hear about other universities' experiences with student voice. The Summit was also fortunate enough to hear about the Scottish experience of student voice through Professor Roni Bamber, where student auditors are well-embedded in their academic audit process. We also had the opportunity to hear from Associate Professor David Crabbe (Dean of Education, Victoria University of Wellington), Heather Merrick (Academic Quality Manager, University of Auckland) and Megan Wilson (Reviews Manager, University of Otago).



A handful of participants also contributed to a Student Panel at the Support for Quality conference the day after the Summit, reflecting on their experiences and providing useful insights into how to better engage students to improve academic quality.

Overall, it has been a successful first year of formal partnership between AQA and NZUSA. Our partnership has become the aspiration of our counterparts across the Tasman, who have followed suit in also signing a Memorandum of Understanding. We look forward to continuing an even more fruitful partnership between the two organisations in 2018.

Have You Seen This?

The Pacific Peer Review Quality Project held a peer network meeting and showcase of their work in Auckland at the start of November. See <https://akoatearora.ac.nz/ako-aotearoa/higher-education-pacific-peer-review-quality-project>

Presentations from the TEQSA Conference and Higher Education Quality Forum held in Melbourne from 29 November to 1 December 2017 are available at <http://www.hes.edu.au/events/teqsa-conference-and-heq-forum/> See also **#Teqsa2017** to catch up on the conversations around the conference.

Resources from the UK's Quality Assurance Agency's 'Quality Matters' Conference are available at: <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/newsroom/events/event-resources/quality-matters-2017>.

The video "What has student engagement done for me" is worth a watch, see: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NYHVOMDTn5o&t=5s> and you might want to explore other videos on the QAA YouTube channel **QAAtube**.

A synthesis document from the second National Equity Fellows Forum, held alongside the Equity Practitioners in Higher Education Conference in November 2017, is available at <https://www.ncsehe.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Forum-communique.pdf>

A number of other organisations provide conference and professional development programmes that are relevant to academic quality. Ako Aotearoa, Higher Ed Services Australia, ATEM and the LH Martin Institute have released their meeting and event schedules for 2018. See:

- <https://shop.akoatearora.ac.nz/events>
- <http://www.hes.edu.au/events/teqsa-conference-and-heq-forum/>
- <https://www.atem.org.au/events>
- <http://www.lhmartininstitute.edu.au/events>
-

Meetings and Conference Calendar

28 February – 2 March 2018 in Canberra
Universities Australia Conference: Future Fundamentals
<https://www.eiseverywhere.com/ehome/287157/624286/>

22 – 25 March 2018 in Nagpur, India
Asia Pacific Quality Network (APQN) Annual Conference: Capacity Building for Next-generation Quality Assurance in Higher Education
<https://www.apqn.org/call-for-apqn-conference-papers-2018>
Paper submission deadline 31 January 2018

2 – 4 May 2018 in Mauritius
The 11th biennial INQAAHE Forum
<http://www.inqaahe.org/blog/inqaahe-11th>

7 June 2018 in Glasgow
15th Enhancement Conference: Evaluation, Evidence and Enhancement: Inspiring Staff and Students
<http://www.enhancementthemes.ac.uk/conference>
Paper submission deadline 12 January 2018

2 – 5 July 2018 in Adelaide
HERDSA: Valuing Higher Education
<http://herdsa2018.aomevents.com.au/call-for-contribution/>
Paper submission deadline 5 February 2018

8 – 11 July 2018 in Auckland
STARS (Students Transitions Achievement Retention Success) Conference
<https://www.ncsehe.edu.au/event/2018-stars-conference/>
Submissions close 2 February 2018



AQA | Academic
Quality Agency
For New Zealand Universities

Sheelagh Matear
Executive Director



Contact Us

Level 9, 142 Lambton Quay
PO Box 5787, Wellington 6145, New Zealand
p +64 4 801 7924 | **e** comms@aqac.ac.nz | **w** www.aqa.ac.nz

We welcome feedback on this newsletter and the AQA website, along with news and suggestions for newsletter items.

AQA News is published quarterly (March, June, September and December). To join or be removed from the subscription list, please email comms@aqac.ac.nz or follow the links on our website www.aqa.ac.nz.