



# news

December 2015



*Te Pokapū Kōunga Mātauranga mō ngā Whare Wānanga o Aotearoa*

## New Executive Director for AQA

The Board of the Academic Quality Agency for New Zealand Universities (AQA) is pleased to announce the appointment of Professor Sheelagh Matear as its new Executive Director.

Professor Matear is currently a Professor and Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic Quality and Student Experience) at Lincoln University. She will commence her new role on 29 February 2016 following the retirement of Dr Jan Cameron after six years in the position of AQA Director.

Emeritus Professor Pat Walsh, Chair of the Board of AQA, said that Professor Matear brings a wealth of academic quality and management experience to the role and will continue on the good work undertaken by Dr Cameron and her predecessors.



*Professor Sheelagh Matear, Photo: Lincoln University.*

## Cycle 5 Academic Audits

The site visit for the academic audit of AUT University took place in November. It is anticipated that the report of this audit will be available from the AQA website in late March 2016. The AUT University audit panel was chaired by Emeritus Professor Dugald Scott. Professor Scott was joined by Professor Eric Pawson (University of Canterbury), Associate Professor Hon. Luamanuvao Winnie Laban (Victoria University of Wellington), Dr Fatuaiga Lorraine Petelo (Lincoln University) and Professor Elizabeth Deane (Australia).

The report of the academic audit of the University of Waikato was released on 4 December 2015. This report is available at [www.aqa.ac.nz/waikatocycle5](http://www.aqa.ac.nz/waikatocycle5). In 2016, AQA will be undertaking academic audits of the University of Otago (site visit May 2016) and Lincoln University (site visit August 2016). These will be the final audits in Cycle 5. [www.aqa.ac.nz/cycle5](http://www.aqa.ac.nz/cycle5)

### 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.

# Quality Enhancement

## AQA Support for Quality Conference 2015

Thank you to all who attended the AQA Support for Quality Conference on 1 October 2015 and/or the preceding half-day discussion forum on programme reviews coordinated jointly with Universities New Zealand.

Feedback from both days was positive and it was great to see familiar and new faces from all New Zealand universities present. Centred on a keynote presentation by Emeritus Professor Geoff Scott, the sessions allowed for a lot of discussion. Some feedback received:

- "Thanks so much for the conference, I both enjoyed it and found it informative. I find when conferences go well I come back all enthused about my work and excited about things I can be doing, so thanks for the reinvigoration!"
- "Geoff always good. Some great group conversations, especially on student input."
- "Linking to a pre-day/half-day session was great."

- "Resources available online prior to the event would be helpful. The ability to quickly link to online resources would be helpful."
- "More time for the programme review discussion the afternoon before. I could have done a whole day."
- "Universities could be asked to provide more examples prior to this Conference that could then be used as talking points during the Conference."
- "Geoff Scott's talk was timely for our university and his enthusiasm and energy is so positive."
- "Enjoyed lots of short session (liked that they were under/approximately 20 minutes)."

## Peer Review Benchmarking Final Report

During the AQA Conference, Dr Peter Coolbear (Director, Ako Aotearoa) and Dr Ineke Kranenburg (Academic Director, AUT University) provided an update on a peer review benchmarking project that was being piloted. This final report on this project (which is being coordinated by Dr Sara Booth, University of Tasmania) is expected to be released soon.

# AQA Board News

## John Jennings Obituary

It was with much sadness that AQA marked the recent passing of its former Director, Mr John Jennings. John was the second Director of AQA (then the New Zealand Universities Academic Audit Unit) from 2002 until his retirement in early 2010. A full obituary is available on the AQA website. [www.aqa.ac.nz/johnjennings](http://www.aqa.ac.nz/johnjennings)

## Changes on the AQA Board

John Sinclair, Deputy Chair of AQA, will conclude his second term on 31 December 2015. We thank John for his time and dedication to AQA over the past six years. Current

Board member, Ms Pania Gray, will succeed John as Deputy Chair. New lay member Dr Kaye McAulay will join the Board from January 2016 for a three year term. Ms Michelè Stanton has been reappointed for a second term.

## External Review Report

The report of the 2015 External Review of AQA is now available. The Review panel made 11 commendations and 13 recommendations. AQA's response to the recommendations will be published on our website in due course. [www.aqa.ac.nz/2015externalreview](http://www.aqa.ac.nz/2015externalreview)

## AQA Board's Role in Audit

The Board of AQA has, among its terms of reference, responsibility for appointing audit panels and for receiving and approving the release of audit reports. The Board must ensure that the process of audit is such to produce reports that reflect an independent judgement, are evidence-based and that are perceived as authoritative, rigorous, fair and perceptive. The Board also receives and reviews the formal follow-up report from each audited New Zealand university approximately 12 months after the public release of the audit report. [www.aqa.ac.nz/about-us/board](http://www.aqa.ac.nz/about-us/board)



### International Focus

One of the objectives of the AQA is to improve the quality of AQA activities, including audit practice, by interaction with other education and academic quality assurance agencies, both nationally and internationally. AQA is a member of the Asia-Pacific Quality Network (APQN) and the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE).

### 2016 APQN Conference and AGM and INQAAHE Forum

Registrations for the 2016 APQN Conference and AGM are now open. Hosted by Fiji Higher Education Commission (FHEC), the APQN Conference and AGM will be held in Natadola, Fiji on 26-27 May 2016 with a theme of "Sustainable Development of Quality Assurance in Higher Education". The APQN event will be preceded by the INQAAHE forum from 22-24 May at the same venue. According to Dr Jagannath Patil, President of APQN and INQAAHE, "the culmination of both events will add convenience to about 100 members from the Asia-Pacific region who are active in both networks." The APQN conference will be open to all registered delegates within and beyond the Asia-Pacific region. Registrations completed before 31 December 2015 will attract an early discount rate. The deadline for the submission of contributions is 10 February 2016.

<http://apqnfiji.fhec.org.fj/>

## Giving Effect to Audit

Martin Boswell, Senior Academic Quality Advisor at Victoria University of Wellington, has recently had an article published in the *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management* (2015, Vol. 37, No. 5, 572–585). "Giving effect to quality audit recommendations: a case study from an organisational culture perspective" explores how Victoria University responded to auditors' recommendations following its 1996, 2001, 2005 and 2009 academic audits. The article flows out of Martin's recently completed capstone project for his Master of Tertiary Education Management, conferred by the University of Melbourne. The article takes a detailed look at the University's progress in the adoption of audit recommendations over time and arrives at a number of implications for the University, for auditors and for AQA. Martin concludes that "there are numerous forces working on universities. Audit alone cannot change institutions, and not quickly" but nevertheless suggests that the model used in his research "may be applicable to other institutions wishing to review their own quality assurance progress over time". The full article is available here:

[www.tandfonline.com/toc/cjhe20/37/5](http://www.tandfonline.com/toc/cjhe20/37/5) or by contacting Martin directly ([martin.boswell@victoria.ac.nz](mailto:martin.boswell@victoria.ac.nz)). The Master of Tertiary Education Management is offered by the [L.H. Martin Institute](#), part of the University of Melbourne.

## New UK Higher Ed Green Paper

The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills in the UK has released a green paper for discussion entitled "Fulfilling Our Potential: Teaching Excellence, Social Mobility and Student Choice". The document includes a number of proposals which it says will "reshape the higher education landscape to have students at its heart. Its core aims are to raise teaching standards, provide greater focus on graduate employability, widen participation in higher education, and open up the sector to new high-quality entrants." Key points from the paper being considered by the UK government:

- There would become a single regulator of universities called the Office for Students (OfS).
- New providers would be given quicker access to student funding and there would be no cap on student numbers.
- Success at higher levels of the proposed Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) would allow universities to increase tuition fees in line with a series of fee caps. The power to set fee caps would lie with the secretary of state for Business, Innovation and Skills. <http://tinyurl.com/prku6qj>

## Have You Seen This?

- A reminder: Nominations for the **2016 Tertiary Teaching Excellence Awards** are due by 31 March 2016. <https://akoaotearoa.ac.nz/ako-aotearoa/ttea-nominations>
- "The Quality of Australia's Higher Education System: How it might be defined, improved and assured" was prepared for the Office of Learning and Teaching by Professor Belinda Probert. This paper "sets out to encourage an informed and critical debate concerning why educational quality needs to be demonstrated and what has been learned from the last two decades of policy and practice". [www.olt.gov.au/resource-quality-australias-higher-education-system](http://www.olt.gov.au/resource-quality-australias-higher-education-system)
- "Peer Review in 2015: A global view" is a summary of researchers, authors and editors' views on the role and process of peer review in the academic publication process. The report was prepared by Taylor & Francis Group, publishers of academic books and journals, and includes the views of over 7,000 authors, reviewers and editors from around the world. <http://authorservices.taylorandfrancis.com/peer-review-in-2015/>
- A new survey suggests that three-quarters of UK universities are breaking consumer law by failing to provide adequate information to prospective students, according to the consumer group "Which?". The survey followed the Competition and Market's Authority's issuing of new guidelines for universities earlier this year. [www.bbc.com/news/education-34604509](http://www.bbc.com/news/education-34604509)
- The Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications (HKCAAVQ) has a new Executive Director. Dorte Kristoffersen took up the role on 2 November 2015 having previously been Deputy Executive Director. <http://tinyurl.com/q8dze55>
- HKCAAVQ also recently celebrated its 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. To celebrate the occasion they have released a publication entitled "Future Directions of QA – Perspectives from 10 agencies" which includes observations of the current status and future direction of quality assurance from higher education agencies in nine countries including New Zealand. [www.hkcaavq.edu.hk/en/news/hkcaavq-25th-anniversary-issue](http://www.hkcaavq.edu.hk/en/news/hkcaavq-25th-anniversary-issue)
- A study of 60,000 Open University students in the UK has found that learning design is the most significant contributor to overall student satisfaction. This report is one of two recently released by the QAA on the topic of the role of student satisfaction data in quality assurance and enhancement. <http://tinyurl.com/nj8yu7y>
- A calendar of upcoming events can be found on the AQA website. [www.aqa.ac.nz/events](http://www.aqa.ac.nz/events)

### Signing off

Heather and Jan thank you for your support of AQA and wish you the very best for success in 2016.  
Happy Christmas!

### Contact Us

Level 9, 142 Lambton Quay  
PO Box 5787, Wellington 6145, New Zealand  
p +64 4 801 7924 | e [comms@aqa.ac.nz](mailto:comms@aqa.ac.nz) | w [www.aqa.ac.nz](http://www.aqa.ac.nz)

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