



news

June 2014

AQA | Academic
Quality Agency
For New Zealand Universities



Te Pokapū Kōunga Mātauranga mō ngā Whare Wānanga o Aotearoa

Cycle 5 Academic Audits

The audit of the University of Auckland has commenced with the site visit to be held in the week beginning 7 July. The audit of Victoria University of Wellington is also underway with the site visit to be held in the week beginning 18 August. The final audit for 2014 is that of the University of Canterbury. The site visit for this audit will be held in Christchurch in the week beginning 25 November. Audit reports for the University of Auckland and Victoria University of Wellington are both expected to be released before the end of 2014. www.aqa.ac.nz/cycle5

Support for Quality Conference

The 2014 AQA Support for Quality Conference will be held in Wellington on Wednesday 10 September at the Royal Society of New Zealand, 11 Turnbull Street, Thorndon, Wellington. The Conference will run from 9.30am – 5.00pm. The theme for the day is "Challenges and Innovations in Internal Quality Assurance" and the registration fee is \$200 per person inc. GST. We are delighted to announce our two keynote speakers: **Dr Sara Booth** (University of Tasmania) is a recognised expert in the area of benchmarking for quality and institutional decision-making. Following her presentation Sara will lead a workshop which will explore examples of benchmarking practice which are linked to selected Cycle 5 audit guideline statements. **Professor Eric Pawson** (University of Canterbury) is an AQA Auditor, a member of the Ako Academy and was the winner of the 2013 University of Canterbury Teaching Medal. Eric's presentation about "post-disaster pedagogies" will lead into discussion about active learning strategies and the quality assurance of graduate profiles. Further details and an on-line registration form can be found on the AQA website: www.aqa.ac.nz/2014conferenceregistration

Communications Survey

As part of its own commitment to quality enhancement, AQA undertakes a regular review of its various communication activities, including this newsletter. Readers of the AQA newsletter are kindly asked to provide feedback via the following short (nine question) online survey:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/G7BHKNZ>

Responses by 30 June 2014 would be appreciated.

This newsletter is AQA's regular channel for communication with the sector and other interested parties. It is intended to supplement but not to replace our website, publications, meetings, emails, and direct contact with universities and AQA auditors. Feedback about AQA communications and activities can be sent to comms@aqac.ac.nz or director@aqac.ac.nz at any time.

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

Good Practice in Action

AQA's website includes links to resources related to each of the Academic Activity Themes of Cycle 5, plus the topic of 'self-review'. Included in these resources are short summaries of commended practices from Cycle 5 audits of NZ universities. Entitled "Good Practice in Action", these summaries include extracts from audit reports, links to relevant webpages and publicly available documents from university websites. "Good Practice in Action" summaries from the 2013 audit of Massey University have been added recently; other summaries will be included from time to time.

www.aqa.ac.nz/enhancing-quality/thematic-resources
www.aqa.ac.nz/goodpracticeinaction

Recent Ministry of Education Reports

The Ministry of Education recently released several reports likely to be of interest to universities, including:

- "Three Reports: On outcomes and post-study earnings for women, Māori and Pasifika graduates"
- "Technological Developments and Tertiary Education Delivery Models: The arrival of MOOCs"
- "2013 Tertiary Education Enrolments"

www.educationcounts.govt.nz/publications

UK Student Academic Experience Survey

The Higher Education Policy Institute (HEPI) in the UK has released a new report looking at **student experience and satisfaction across the UK higher education sector**. This is the latest in a series of HEPI surveys, the initial rationale of which was "to explore whether learners' expectations, perceptions and experiences changed as a result of paying more for university education". The report includes a particular focus on class size, contact time and total workload. The study's results support other UK research suggesting that the sector needs to "...explain the relationship between fees and the quality and value of degrees". The report also found that there are "...challenges for institutions in engaging students in active learning and while new technologies provide opportunities in this regard ... simply putting lecture notes online can also encourage non-attendance. It is vital to ensure students benefit from participating in class and that they understand the value of doing so for their learning experience".

www.hepi.ac.uk/2014/05/21/hepi-hea-2014-student-academic-experience-survey/

AQA Board News

External Review of AQA

AQA undergoes independent external review on a cyclical basis. AQA was last audited in 2009 and will again be reviewed by a panel of New Zealand and overseas auditors in the first half of 2015. This review has been timed to coincide with the halfway point in Cycle 5 audits. Panel composition and the terms of reference for the review will be determined by the Vice-Chancellors and the review will be commissioned by Universities New Zealand – Te Pōkai Tara.

It is expected that a report of the external review will be released late-2015.

International Links

In addition to our active involvement in APQN and INQAAHE, AQA has been developing benchmarking relationships and sharing aspects of practice with QAA (Scotland) and the Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications (HKCAAVQ). AQA has a small number of memoranda with agencies where it believes there will be mutual benefit from co-operation.

The 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 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.



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).

APQN News

The Asia-Pacific Quality Network is currently exploring the idea of promoting an "APQN Quality Label" within the Asia-Pacific region. Other areas of focus for the Network in its next stage of development include an Asia Pacific Quality Register (APQR), an Asia Pacific Quality Information Portal and various agreements and collaboration with European QA counterparts.

www.apqn.org

INQAAHE News

The International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education held its Annual Forum in Tallinn, Estonia from 26 – 28 May 2014. Key topics for the Forum were: the relationship between professional accreditation and general programme accreditation; the input of stakeholders to programme development; and quality assurance of new forms of teaching and learning (including MOOCs). Copies of Forum presentations are available from the following website:

<http://archimedes.ee/inqaahe/program/presentations/>

Spotlight on Student Participation

AQA recently met with Chief Executive, Eve Lewis, and Senior Development Officer, Stephanie Millar, from sparqs (**Student Participation in Quality Scotland**). Eve and Stephanie were visiting New Zealand at the invitation of the New Zealand Union of Students' Associations as contributors to a summit held with Ako Aotearoa to advance student voice in the ITP sector. Sparqs is funded by the Scottish Funding Council, and hosted and managed by the National Union of Students (Scotland). Sparq's vision is: "Students making a positive and rewarding difference to their own and others' educational experience, helping shape the nature of learning and contributing to the overall success of Scotland's universities and colleges". They work within a nationally-agreed Student Engagement Framework for Scotland and are directed by a steering committee with sector-wide membership. The sparqs website includes a variety of information and tools to encourage and support student participation including: resources in the areas of: developing representation; supporting reviews; staff development; and co-creation of the curriculum. www.sparqs.ac.uk/

What's Happening Around the Pacific

The Secretariat of the Pacific Board for Education Assessment (SPBAE) has a membership of nine countries (Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu, Samoa, Solomons, Vanuatu), plus Australia and New Zealand as the major donors. One of SPBAE's projects is the development of the **Pacific Register of Qualifications and Standards (PRQS)** - a regional database of all quality assured qualifications and standards offered in each Pacific Island country. The inaugural meeting of the Advisory Board for the PRQS, held in March in Fiji, endorsed the Pacific Qualifications Framework as a meta-framework for the Pacific region and the Pacific Quality Assurance Framework as minimum quality standards for accrediting agencies, institutions and programmes. The SPBAE's original mission was to support educational assessment in its member countries. This mandate has since been expanded to focus on the support of education systems across the Pacific. New areas of focus include: teaching, learning and curriculum; policy, benchmarking and strategic direction; research; assessment services; and accreditation and standards.

www.spbea.org.fj/getattachment/News-And-Gallery/News/PRQS-newsletter-2013/PATE13-April-2014.pdf.aspx

Australia

The Australian Government has announced the establishment of a new **Advisory Council for the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Authority (TEQSA)**. The Council will "advise the Minister and TEQSA on minimising regulatory intervention relating to Australian higher education, consistent with ensuring accountability for quality". www.teqsa.gov.au/news-publications/news/teqsa-advisory-council-announced Also in Australia, the Higher Education Standards Panel has released proposed revisions to the Higher Education Standards Framework including clarifying the relationship between the Standards and the Australian Qualifications Framework. www.hestandards.gov.au/ Both initiatives are said to be part of a broader government agenda intended to reduce the regulatory burden for providers.

Have You Seen This?

- TEC is consulting on its **"Information for Learners"** work programme. The aim of this work is to improve the content and delivery of information to New Zealand learners about what and where to study. Feedback is sought by 22 July.
www.tec.govt.nz/Tertiary-Sector/Reviews-and-consultation/Information-for-Learners/
- New Zealand's nationally developed **e-learning Guidelines** have recently been updated and expanded. This latest revision was an Ako Aotearoa-funded project led by the New Zealand Tertiary College. The Guidelines have been developed "to assist the tertiary sector in its engagement with eLearning. The guidelines offer prompts for reflection from five perspectives - the learner, teacher, manager, organisational leader and quality assurance body". <http://elg.ac.nz/>
- NZQA recently commissioned a review of **the usability of the New Zealand Qualifications Framework** (NZQF) from learners' perspectives. The review "confirmed NZQA's role as a provider of reliable, clear and credible information on qualifications", but found that learners don't know to consult NZQA's website to find information on qualifications and know little about how the qualification system works.
www.nzqa.govt.nz/about-us/news/is-the-new-zealand-qualifications-framework-user-friendly/
- Results are now available from an EU-funded project studying policies and procedures for **detecting and preventing student plagiarism** in HE institutions across 27 European countries. "Impact of Policies for Plagiarism in Higher Education Across Europe" also includes details about the development of tools to detect and prevent plagiarism. <http://ippheae.eu/>
- The QAA (UK) opinion series *Talking about Quality* covers a variety of issues in higher education. Current think pieces address the **pedagogical and quality assurance opportunities and challenges of designing MOOCs** ("Massive misalignment: the challenges of designing and accrediting MOOCs") and **engagement with employers** ("Only connect - employer engagement, graduate employability and university-business links").
www.qaa.ac.uk/ImprovingHigherEducation/debate
- The OECD's journal of *Higher Education Management and Policy* recently included a report of a study reviewing the **experiences of universities operating one or more international branch campuses**. The study focused on concerns and strategies in three main areas: faculty, curriculum and finances. (Volume 24, Issue 3. Subscription may be required).
www.oecd-ilibrary.org/education/higher-education-management-and-policy_17269822
- The **Future Learning Environments Conference** will be held from 29-30 July in Auckland.
www.conferenz.co.nz/conferences/future-learning-environments
- The HERDSA New Zealand TERNZ (Tertiary Education Research in New Zealand) **Conference 2014** will be held at the University of Auckland from 26-28 November. This conference on teaching and learning research in higher and tertiary education is open to academics from all disciplines. The theme of the TERNZ conference is "Learning in higher education: our learning, our students' learning, our colleagues' learning."
www.herdsa.org.nz/ternz/2014/
- A calendar of upcoming events can be found on the AQA website: www.aqa.ac.nz/events



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.