



news

June 2015



Te Pokapū Kōunga Mātauranga mō ngā Whare Wānanga o Aotearoa

AQA Support for Quality 2015

The 2015 AQA Support for Quality Conference will be held on Thursday 1 October at the Royal Society of New Zealand, 11 Turnbull Street, Wellington. We're delighted to welcome back Emeritus Professor Geoff Scott as a keynote speaker. Geoff will be speaking about graduate outcomes and quality, in particular, "employability". As always there will be plenty of opportunities to talk to colleagues about successes and current challenges in quality assurance. This will include an initial discussion about the potential form and focus of future audits (e.g. Cycle 6). From 1.30pm – 4.30pm on the previous day (Wednesday 30 September) Wendy Robinson from Universities New Zealand will be facilitating a discussion for New Zealand university staff on the framework, management and outcomes of programme reviews. Please indicate on your conference registration if you also intend to join this forum (at no additional charge).

Conference registrations are now open at:

www.aqa.ac.nz/conference2015. The Conference fee is \$220 plus GST. We look forward to seeing you there!

AQA External Review

The staff and Board of AQA would like to thank its auditors, university staff and students, government officials and all other stakeholders who gave so generously of their time, experience and views to the AQA external review panel. The panel concluded their site visit on Friday 26 June and their full report will be released publicly later this year. The review panel comprised: Dr Roy Crawford, formerly Vice-Chancellor of the University of Waikato (Chair), Dr Bill Harvey (recently retired Director of the QAA Scotland) and Professor William Lee, Executive Director of the HKCAAVQ.

Cycle 5 Academic Audits

The academic audit of the University of Waikato is underway. The site visit for this audit will be held in the week starting Monday 17 August and it is anticipated that the audit report will be released in December 2015. The site visit for the audit of AUT University will be held in the week starting 16 November. The report from this audit is anticipated to be released in March 2016. Since the last AQA newsletter, the report of the 2014 academic audit of the University of Canterbury was released and is available from the AQA website: www.aqa.ac.nz/canterburycycle5. AQA also recently concluded an audit for the National University of Samoa, using the Cycle 5 Framework: www.aqa.ac.nz/nus2015.

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

Peer Benchmarking: An Update

Staff who attended the September 2015 AQA Support for Quality Conference will recall Dr Sara Booth (University of Tasmania) and Dr Peter Coolbear (Ako Aotearoa) talking about how the Australian peer review benchmarking project might be extended to include New Zealand universities. We're delighted to report that two New Zealand universities (AUT University and Lincoln University) have been exploring application of the peer review benchmarking methodology. Staff from AUT and Lincoln will meet in Wellington in July with colleagues from Birmingham City University; the Arts University, Bournemouth; Swinburne University of Technology; Victoria University; Melbourne; and the University of Tasmania in Australia. Dr Booth will lead the two day meeting which "will enable attendees to compare and discuss outcomes of their own critical self-reviews and share benchmarks of good practice".

<https://ako.aotearoa.ac.nz/ako-aotearoa/ako-aotearoa/news/proven-australian-benchmarking-methodology-extended-new-zealand-universities>

Heeding the Student Voice in Universities

On Friday 15 May, AQA joined NZUSA and Ako Aotearoa to host a one-day forum in Wellington entitled "Heeding the Student Voice at Universities". Staff and student representatives from NZ universities came together to discuss systems, challenges and successes with respect to heeding the student voice for quality enhancement. Dr Jan Cameron, Director of AQA, spoke about the role of students in academic audits, as well as some of the findings about student voice over past cycles of audit.

The group explored good practice exemplars prepared by some of the attendees and heard from Hannah Clarke, Development Advisor from sparqs (Student Partnerships in Quality Scotland) who spoke about the impact of sparqs' work in helping to build capacity amongst students' associations. sparqs has many web resources to assist institutions in this process: www.sparqs.ac.uk/

"Changing the Learning Landscape" – Final Report

"Changing the Learning Landscape" (CLL) is a partnership and cross-sector programme established in 2012 and funded by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE). CLL was set up to enable higher education institutions to bring about change in their strategic approaches to technology in learning and teaching. Its aims were to enhance students' learning and life prospects, institutional and systemic practice, and collaboration and partnership across and between universities and colleges through more effective use of digital technologies. The final evaluative report of the project has been released and includes the identification of principles in four key areas for institutions implementing TEL (technology-enhanced learning): taking a holistic approach; staff development; evidence-informed practice; and engaging students. The report confirms the importance of communities of practice and opportunities for sharing and inspiring. www.lfhe.ac.uk/en/programmes-events/your-university/cll/index.cfm

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 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

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).

Congratulations to Carolyn Campbell OBE

AQA extends its congratulations to Carolyn Campbell, formerly Head of International at QAA UK. Carolyn was awarded an OBE in the June 2015 Queen's Birthday Honours for services to higher education. www.qaa.ac.uk/newsroom/obe-for-former-head-of-international-at-qaa

(More) Changes for the OLT

The Australian government has announced that the Office of Learning and Teaching (the organisation that promotes and supports change in higher education institutions for the enhancement of learning and teaching in Australia) will be dis-established. From 1 July 2016 a new institute is to be established "to promote excellence in teaching and learning". Universities will be invited to bid to host the new institute.

www.olt.gov.au/may2015-new-institute-promote-excellence-teaching-and-learning

TNQAB Reviewer Training

In May 2015, Dr Jan Cameron, Director of AQA, travelled to Tonga to run a one-day reviewer training workshop for the Tonga National Qualifications and Accreditation Board (TNQAB). Dr Cameron worked with a group of TNQAB reviewers and staff. www.tnqab.to



Photo credit: TNQAB. May 2015.

What's happening in external QA internationally?

HEFCE consulting on new approach to quality assessment

Following the launch of consultation last year about the future of quality assurance in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, on 29 June HEFCE released a consultation document which sets out proposals for a new quality assessment system. The proposals suggest moving away from a six-yearly cycle of review towards a more risk-based, continuous improvement approach. Defining principles in the document suggest any new system would continue to rely on peer review, reinforce university autonomy and place strong emphasis on student engagement in the process. The proposals aim to "focus meaningful external scrutiny on those areas that matter to students and other stakeholders: academic output standards, improvement of student outcomes and the academic experience, and where there is evidence that things are going wrong in a particular provider."

www.hefce.ac.uk/news/newsarchive/2015/Name,104412,en.html

Educational Quality and Assessment Programme (EQAP)

The Secretariat of the Pacific Board for Educational Assessment has been renamed the Educational Quality and Assessment Programme (EQAP). Under the Director General's Office of the Secretariat of the Pacific Community, EQAP implements and manages regional projects in the field of assessment and education quality, including the Pacific Register of Qualifications and Standards.

www.spbea.org.fj/Home/About-EQAP.aspx

Have You Seen This?

- The Ministry of Education has recently released several new tertiary education reports, including:
 - **"What we get for what we spend"** analyses the "inputs, outputs and outcomes of the Government's tertiary education expenditure 2004-2013". The report highlights that the number of university students completing qualifications has increased over time, especially at level 4 and higher levels. The number of university students completing level 1-3 qualifications declined by 65% over the same period.
 - **"New Zealand's Annual Tertiary Education Enrolments"** is the first of six reports to be published this year, replacing Profile & Trends. Upcoming reports in this series are: New Zealand's Workplace-based Learners; Tertiary Education Outcomes and Qualification Completions; New Zealand's Tertiary Education Research; Tertiary Education Sector and Student Support; and the Tertiary Education System. www.educationcounts.govt.nz/publications
- A new report published by the Higher Education Funding Council for England found that students starting their first degrees through transnational pathways (those who start their degrees abroad on courses run or recognised by UK universities) have higher progression rates into postgraduate study than other international students. www.hefce.ac.uk/news/newsarchive/2015/Name,104332,en.html
- The University of Sydney has released a discussion paper that would see it reduce the number of undergraduate degrees it offers from 122 to approximately 20. The University plans to increase the standard length of its undergraduate courses from three to four years and cut many of its double degrees. <http://tinyurl.com/qfnere7>
- The Conversation is running a series called **"What are universities for?"** exploring the place of universities in Australia, why they exist, who they serve, and how this is changing over time. <https://theconversation.com/au/topics/what-are-universities-for>
- Universitas 21 has released its 2015 ranking of national higher education systems. The ranking, undertaken by the University of Melbourne Institute of Applied Economic and Social Research, ranked New Zealand 16th overall (9th adjusted for GDP), and 27th on resources. "Resources per student, which includes research expenditure, are highest in Singapore, Canada and the United States.... and three countries have fallen five places: New Zealand, Spain and the United Kingdom." www.universitas21.com/
- Tertiary Education Management Conference (TEMC) 2015 will be held from 30 August – 2 September in Wollongong, Australia. The theme of this year's conference is "Leading Locally Competing Globally". www.temc.org.au/
- The 26th Australasian Association for Institutional Research (AAIR) Forum will be held in Wellington from 9 -11 November 2015. The theme is "The Winds of Change". www.aairforum2015.com.au/
- Ako Aotearoa and Evaluation Consult are offering free two-hour seminars on "Evaluative Self-Assessment". The seminars will be held in Wellington on 25 August (for managers) and on 26 August (for Practitioners). <https://shop.ako.aotearoa.ac.nz/EC150825EM2>
- A calendar of upcoming events can be found on the AQA website. www.aqa.ac.nz/events



Contact Us