

news

March 2017



Te Pokapū Kōunga Mātauranga mō ngā Whare Wānanga o Aotearoa

Academic Audit

With the publication of the report of the Cycle 5 Academic Audit of Lincoln University at the end 2016, the emphasis of Cycle 5 has shifted to follow-up visits and reports, analysis, and dissemination of common themes in audit reports.

The one-year follow-up report from the University of Waikato was accepted by the AQA Board at its meeting of 21 March. Two-year, informal, follow-up visits have been completed for The University of Auckland and University of Canterbury.

Work is underway to develop analyses and enhancement resources from Cycle 5. A preliminary analysis indicates that overall the Cycle 5 framework has worked well, with only two guideline statements not eliciting a commendation, affirmation or recommendation. Commendations were made with respect to 28 guideline statements, 27 for affirmations and 29 for recommendations. While great caution does need to be exercised with respect to any numerical analysis of academic audit reports – not all guideline statements are of the same ‘size’ or importance – these numbers refer to the performance of the framework, rather than the performance of universities. Further analysis will consider themes across the eight Cycle 5 academic audit reports. Participation and contribution by others interested in such analyses would be welcomed.



Review of CUAP

The Panel for the review of CUAP met in Wellington in March. The Panel is Professor Ian Town (Chair), Dr Brian Timney, Executive Director of the Quality Council for the Ontario Universities Council on Quality Assurance and Associate Professor Nuala Gregory, Deputy Dean Creative Arts and Industries at The University of Auckland. The panel is supported by Dr Jan Cameron. The report is expected to be available in May.

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.

From the Executive Director

The Productivity Commission report into New models of tertiary education has been released. While there are a number (49) of recommendations, some of the implications for quality assurance for New Zealand universities could be a move to common, minimum standard-based, national system. In a paper presented at the INQAAHE conference in Bahrain, the AQA Executive Director argued that such systems have greater potential applicability in large systems. Small systems, such as the Scottish higher education system, have retained, and further developed, enhancement-led models of quality assurance. The minimum standards model suggested by the Productivity Commission, which would exempt organisations that meet the standards from other external quality assurance requirements, goes much further than other jurisdictions that have adopted such frameworks. In other minimum standards based jurisdictions, re-registration of providers occurs as part of a quality framework that incorporates annual monitoring. Few of these systems place emphasis on quality enhancement, which has been a feature of AQA's model of quality assurance.



The AQA Executive Director attended the INQAAHE conference in Bahrain at the end of February. Key points of interest from the INQAAHE conference include:

- The continuing growth in external quality assurance agencies and growth in national qualification frameworks. NZQA is substantially involved in work to align (or reference) national and regional qualifications frameworks.
- Challenges associated with using proxy indicators of educational performance and quality, rather than developing more valid measures, including those that capture 'academic gain'.
- Whether the existing models of and methods for quality assurance are adequate for the future environments and challenges.

The next INQAAHE event will be the forum in Mauritius in 2018.

Otherwise, the AQA Executive Director has been working with the universities on the model for a sixth cycle of academic audit. More on this soon!

Assessment Matters

AQA has been keeping abreast of the current media attention to assessment practices. Assessment is addressed in Cycle 5 Academic Audit in Guideline Statement 3.6 "Universities should use documented procedures for monitoring and moderating assessment processes and standards". Universities New Zealand has provided a statement which is available at <http://www.universitiesnz.ac.nz/UNZ-OverviewofAssessmentPracticesandAddressingComplaints>

Quality Enhancement and Communications

The AQA website has undergone an upgrade onto a new platform. This is intended to make it more responsive to viewing on a wider range of devices, as well as a small refresh of the look and feel of the site. Over the coming months, we will be updating content, particularly in the Enhancing Quality pages. We're keen to hear any thoughts or suggestions you may have. We'll also be seeking feedback on how and what AQA communicates and how we can support your needs.

The Pacific benchmarking initiative is getting underway. This initiative is being led by Tea Tepora Wright from the National University of Samoa with Dr Sara Booth from the University of Tasmania and involves six universities across the Pacific, including the University of Waikato. Other interested universities are encouraged to contact either Tea Tepora Wright at the National University of Samoa, project lead, or Cassandra Jutsum, University of Waikato. The project will use the Australian Peer Review Portal launched at the end of 2016. This portal is likely to be an important tool for Australian universities as they undertake re-registration using the new Higher Education Standards Framework (HESF) that came into effect at the start of this year.

Student Voice

This edition of the AQA newsletter features a column on the Student Voice, contributed by Jonathan Gee, President of the New Zealand Union of Student Associations and member of the AQA Board. It is intended that this will be a regular feature of AQA newsletters and is part of how AQA will engage with students in audit processes; as well responding to Recommendation 7 in the 2015 External Review of AQA.



Contributed by Jonathan Gee, National President, New Zealand Union of Students' Associations

Discussions between AQA and the New Zealand Union of Students' Associations (NZUSA) have been progressing well around enhancing student voice and the engagement of students with the audit process. These discussions have taken the form of a Memorandum of Understanding between the two organisations, which is currently in its drafting stage.

Students are increasingly being regarded as co-producers in tertiary education and in their own learning experience. A university which values students as active partners in the classroom and at the decision-making table can often gain valuable insights for how to improve the student experience.

Through this proposed MoU, we hope to increase student engagement in the audit process, professionally develop senior student representatives, and have students or recent graduates included on audit panels in the upcoming Cycle 6.

Students are engaged closely in the core operations of a university, and their representatives often have an insight into the highest levels of university governance and management. We hope that formalising the relationship between AQA and NZUSA will be a further step towards valuing students as partners to improve the outcomes and successes of New Zealand universities.

Have You Seen This?

Presentations from the INQAAHE conference in Bahrain are available at

<http://www.qqa.gov.bh/En/Mediacenter/INQAAHE2017Conference/Pages/Presentations.aspx>

The University of Melbourne has released a series of papers, traversing topical issues in Visions for Australian Tertiary Education, available at

http://melbourne-cshe.unimelb.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0006/2263137/MCSHE-Visions-for-Aust-Ter-Ed-web2.pdf

Also from the University of Melbourne, and others, comes a project report on learning analytics

<http://melbourne-cshe.unimelb.edu.au/research/edutech/completing-the-loop>

Somewhat in the same vein, the Higher Education Policy Institute in the UK has released a report on the future of technology enhanced education, see

http://www.hepi.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/Hepi_Rebooting-learning-for-the-digital-age-Report-93-02_02_17Web.pdf

And following on from this, Jisc in the UK are working with over 50 universities and colleges to develop a national learning analytics service. See

<http://wonkhe.com/blogs/technology-enhanced-learning-is-finally-taking-off/> and <https://www.jisc.ac.uk/rd/projects/effective-learning-analytics>

Meetings and Conference Calendar

9-10 May, Nottingham, UK
QAA Annual Conference 2017: Dimensions of Quality

<http://www.qaa.ac.uk/newsroom/events/qaa-annual-conference-2017#.WE9jkOZ96Uk>

6-8 June, 2017 in Glasgow, Scotland
3rd International Enhancement in Higher Education Conference: Inspiring excellence – transforming the student experience
<https://www.eventsforce.net/qaa/frontend/reg/thome.csp?pageID=45982&eventID=152&traceRedir=2&eventID=152>

27-30 June, 2017 in Sydney, Australia
HERDSA Conference: Curriculum Transformation

<http://www.herdsa2017.org/>

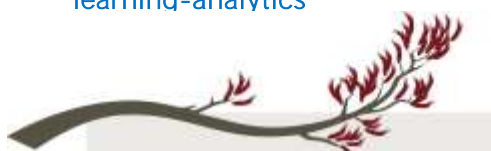
13-14 September, 2017 in Glasgow
Breaking the mould: creating an evidence-based enhancement culture
<http://www.rgu.ac.uk/news-and-events/conferences/heir-conference-2017>

18-19 September 2017, in Melbourne
Inaugural Assessment and Review Summit
<http://hes.edu.au/events/assessment-and-review-summit/>

28 September, 2017 in Wellington

[Support for Quality](#)

29 November – 1 December, 2017 in Melbourne
TEQSA Conference and Higher Education and Quality Forum
<http://hes.edu.au/events/teqsa-conference-and-hecq-forum-2/>



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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@qa.ac.nz or follow the links on our website www.qa.ac.nz.