



news

September 2014



Te Pokapū Kōunga Mātauranga mō ngā Whare Wānanga o Aotearoa

2014 AQA Support for Quality Conference



Photo: Michèle Stanton (AQA Board member) and Dr Jan Cameron (AQA Director) cutting a cake to mark 20 years of AQA.

The group was also privileged to hear from Dr Sara Booth from the University of Tasmania, a recognised leader in benchmarking in Australia. Dr Booth presented a keynote on "Benchmarking for Quality" and led a workshop on peer review benchmarking. The group also took the opportunity to acknowledge 20 years since AQA (formerly the New Zealand Universities Academic Audit Unit) commenced operations. Conference presentations, links and more photos are now available from the AQA website:

www.aqa.ac.nz/supportforquality.

(See also pages 2 and 3 of this newsletter)

On Wednesday 10 September the Academic Quality Agency for New Zealand Universities hosted its second Support for Quality Conference. The conference, with a theme of "Challenges and Innovations in Internal Quality Assurance", was held in Wellington at the Royal Society of New Zealand. Approximately 50 attendees from across New Zealand and the Pacific met to share and discuss common challenges and recent innovations in areas such as self-assessment, student engagement, graduate outcomes, and programme approval and review.



Photo: Dr Sara Booth from the University of Tasmania presenting her keynote address on "Benchmarking for Quality". Photos by Jesse Loe.

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.

Cycle 5 Academic Audits

Two academic audits have been undertaken since the last AQA newsletter. It is anticipated that the report of the academic audit of the University of Auckland will be available from the AQA website in late-October 2014. The Auckland Audit Panel was chaired by Emeritus Professor Gareth Jones (University of Otago). Professor Jones was joined by Emeritus Professor Roger Field, Professor Cindy Kiro, Mr Graeme McNally, Professor Jeremy Bradshaw (Scotland) and Professor Hilary Winchester (Australia).

The report of the academic audit of Victoria University of Wellington will be available from the AQA website before the end of the year. The Victoria Audit Panel was chaired by Professor Robert Hannah (University of Waikato). Professor Hannah was joined by Associate Professor Lindsey Conner, Professor Marion Jones, Professor Hirini Matunga, and Emeritus Professor Mairéad Browne (Australia).

The audit of the University of Canterbury is underway and the site visit for this audit will commence on 24 November 2014. The University of Waikato and AUT University will both be audited in the second half of 2015. www.aqa.ac.nz/cycle5

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.

www.aqa.ac.nz/about-us/board

SFQ Keynote - Professor Eric Pawson

Attendees of the 10 September Support for Quality Conference will know that some aspects of the day were affected by fog at Christchurch Airport. Most critically, our second keynote speaker, Professor Eric Pawson, was unable to attend, and the group missed out on his presentation related to post-disaster pedagogies, active learning and graduate profiles. Eric has very kindly made available his slides for the day. These are now on the AQA website: www.aqa.ac.nz/supportforquality.



Academic Developers' Session / TERNZ

On the afternoon of Wednesday 26th November from 2-5pm the Centre for Research and Learning in Higher Education (CLear) at the University of Auckland will be hosting a session for all academic developers from tertiary institutions in New Zealand. It is hoped that the afternoon will generate discussion around Higher Education and SoTL (Scholarship of Teaching and Learning) interests with the aim of setting in motion some future research collaborations. If you are interested in attending this session, please email Barbara Kensington-Miller at the University of Auckland (b.kensington-miller@auckland.ac.nz).

The programme will finish at 5pm to allow those registered for the TERNZ conference to attend the social reception. The Tertiary Education Research in New Zealand (TERNZ) Conference will be held from 26 – 28 November at the University of Auckland. The theme is "Learning in higher education: our learning, our students' learning, our colleagues' learning". Proposals are welcomed from researchers interested in any aspect of the study of higher education. The closing date for proposals is 31 October. www.hersa.org.nz/ternz/2014/

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).

Some sources of international QA resources and news:

Australia

Office for Learning and Teaching
www.olt.gov.au

TEQSA www.teqsa.gov.au

Pacific

Secretariat of the Pacific Board for Educational Assessment
www.spbea.org.fj/

United Kingdom

The Higher Education Academy
www.heacademy.ac.uk
Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education www.qaa.ac.uk
Student Participation in Quality Scotland www.sparqs.ac.uk/

Canada

Association of Universities & Colleges of Canada
www.aucc.ca/canadian-universities/quality-assurance/
Ontario Universities Council on QA
<http://oucqa.ca/>

Multi-country Networks

APQN www.apqn.org
INQAAHE www.inqaahe.org
ENQA www.enqa.eu/

Pacific Colleagues meet in Wellington

A number of colleagues in quality assurance from around the Pacific met in Wellington on Tuesday 9 September to share experiences, practices and challenges, and to discuss opportunities for cooperation and collaboration. The idea of the informal forum arose from discussions at the most recent Asia-Pacific Quality Network (APQN) meeting and AQA was delighted to be able to host this event in the afternoon prior to the 2014 AQA Support for Quality Conference.

Attendees came from six countries: Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Tonga, Vanuatu, and New Zealand.

Following country updates and a presentation from Dr Sereana Kubuabola (University of the South Pacific) on institutional research, the discussion focused on the need for training in quality audit/ review across the region, potential for a common register of experts/



reviewers, how best to continue to share experiences and practices (e.g. via email, physical meetings and/or Skype), the question of mutual recognition, and how to increase the profile and recognition of the Pacific in APQN. Feedback indicates attendees found it to be a worthwhile meeting, and there are plans to keep the dialogue going. AQA thanks Lafi Sanerivi (SPBEA) for helping to coordinate the agenda.

Enhancement & Innovation in HE

The second international conference on **Enhancement and Innovation in Higher Education** will be held from 9 – 11 June 2015 in Glasgow, Scotland. This three-day event will explore a range of student transitions and other aspects of quality enhancement, including:

- Approaches to transitions
- Empowering students through transitions
- Transitions:
 - into higher education
 - relating to placements/work experience
 - into employment
 - to research and further study
 - relating to specific disciplines
- International aspects of transitions
- Quality enhancement: national approaches
- Enhancement descriptors/evidencing impact.

www.enhancementthemes.ac.uk/events/12th-enhancement-themes-conference

"Student Transitions" is the Scottish higher education Enhancement Theme from 2014 to 2017. Enhancement Themes are part of the Scottish Quality Enhancement Framework (QEF) which has been designed "to support higher education institutions in managing the quality of the student learning experience and to provide public confidence in the quality and standards of higher education". The QEF is coordinated by the Universities Quality Working Group which has members from the Scottish Funding Council, Universities Scotland, QAA Scotland, the Higher Education Academy, and the National Union of Students, Scotland. www.enhancementthemes.ac.uk

Have You Seen This?

- The Higher Education Academy (UK) has released **"Australian student engagement, belonging, retention and success: a synthesis of the literature"**. This synthesis is primarily focused on the Australian field though it draws on the international context where relevant and includes selected literature reviews concerned with student engagement from Australia and New Zealand. A sample of practical applications in the form of resources generated from Australian studies of engagement is included.
<https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/node/8683>
- ENQA (the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education) recently released an occasional paper, **"The Concept of Excellence in Higher Education"**. This paper was the result of a working party set up to consider "the meaning of excellence in education both at the level of programmes and institutions". Five specific questions were considered:
 - What is excellence?
 - How is it currently recognised?
 - What criteria can be used to assess the application of excellence?
 - Can excellence be achieved through quality assurance?
 - What current examples are there of excellence in practice?<http://tinyurl.com/lqwbxgg>
- NZQA has developed **Guidelines for assuring national consistency of graduate outcomes for qualifications listed on the New Zealand Qualifications Framework**. These Guidelines and accompanying Consistency Reviews apply to "NZ" qualifications (levels 1 – 6 with a title that begins with the words "New Zealand").
www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/consistency-of-graduate-outcomes/
- Ako Aotearoa's Professional Development Programme includes an upcoming full-day workshop entitled **"Designing curricula to enhance learning and teaching"**. Educators will consider a wide range of interrelated aspects of education, learning and teaching as part of this process, including: learning outcomes; learning and teaching activities; who will be involved; location and timing of activities; tools and resources, and assessment criteria and tasks. University of Canterbury, 6 November and University of Waikato, 7 November.
<https://ako.aotearoa.ac.nz/pd-programme/designing-curricula-enhance-learning-and-teaching>
- The **2015 STARS Conference** will be held in Melbourne from 1 – 4 July 2015. STARS (Students, Transitions, Achievement, Retention & Success) provides an opportunity to disseminate and discuss current research, good practice, emerging initiatives and ideas that are aimed at enhancing students' tertiary learning experiences.
<http://unistars.org/>
- The **2015 Higher Education Research and Development Society of Australasia (HERDSA) Conference** will be held in Melbourne from 6-9 July 2015. This theme of this year's conference is "Learning for life and work in a complex world". The sub-themes are: educating graduates to be responsive and adaptable professionals; exploiting emerging technologies to enable employability; assessing, evidencing and evaluating graduate capabilities; and navigating uncertainty and complexity. herdsa2015.org/
- A calendar of upcoming events can be found on the AQA website: www.aqa.ac.nz/events



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