

## Quality Enhancement: Conference reports

There has been a lot of conference and meeting activity in the quality enhancement sphere recently. AQA's 2016 Support for Quality conference was held in Te Wharewaka o Pōneke on the Wellington waterfront on 13 October. The day was structured into five sessions: (1) reflecting on cycle 5; (2) considering external quality assurance arrangements in other jurisdictions; (3) exploring standards, benchmarking and calibration with keynote speaker Dr Sara Booth from the University of Tasmania; (4) sharing good practice and current issues and; (5) looking ahead to discuss options for cycle 6. The conference heard from eleven different speakers. Feedback from conference participants indicated that they appreciated the variety of topics and range of speakers, networking opportunities and discussion with colleagues.



The day prior to the Support for Quality conference, AQA participated in a jointly organized summit on the Student Voice and Quality in Universities with NZUSA and Ako Aotearoa. This summit brought student associations together with quality managers and quality agencies to discuss 'what better would look like' for the student voice in university quality. The guest speaker was Katrina Waite who is part of a large-scale Australian project on Student engagement in university decision-making and governance (see <https://www.uts.edu.au/partners-and-community/initiatives/student-voice-university-decision-making/overview> )



Photo Credits: Wendy Robinson



### 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 and Reviews

The Cycle 5 report for the academic audit of Lincoln University was released earlier this week. The Panel was chaired by Emeritus Professor Dugald Scott and the members were Professor Jeanette Baird (Divine Word University, Papua New Guinea), Fiona Coote (Massey University), Associate Professor Pat Cragg (University of Otago) and Professor Ajit Narayanan (AUT). The Panel made 8 commendations, 4 affirmations and 13 recommendations. The full report is available at <http://www.aqa.ac.nz/lincolncycle5>.

## AQA Board News

The AQA Board has met three times in 2016. One of the main tasks of the Board is to provide oversight and approval for the release of academic audit reports and the acceptance of follow-up reports. In 2016, the AQA Board approved the release of academic audit reports for AUT, the University of Otago and Lincoln University and accepted one-year follow-up reports from The University of Auckland, Victoria University of Wellington, the University of Canterbury and the National University of Samoa. The AQA Board also considered AQA's progress on response to recommendations from its 2015 External Review. Standing items for the AQA Board include monitoring progress against AQA's statement of performance expectations and budget. Further information on these can be found in AQA's Annual Report, available at <http://www.aqa.ac.nz/annualreport2016>

I would like to thank the AQA Board members for their contribution throughout 2016. 2017 meetings are scheduled for 21 March, 11 July and 7 November.

In addition to thanking Board members for their contribution, I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the panels who have undertaken the audits in cycle 5. Thirty-five auditors have formed panels for the audits of New Zealand universities and a further four auditors contributed to panels for audits and reviews of overseas institutions undertaken by AQA. Of the 35 auditors for New Zealand universities, 5 contributed to more than one audit and 57% of cycle 5 auditors were female. I wish to acknowledge the contribution all New Zealand universities make in supporting their staff to undertake academic audits.

The Board's priorities for 2017 are the development of Cycle 6 academic audit and renewal of the strategic plan for AQA.

*Emeritus Professor Pat Walsh, Chair of the AQA Board*

### Review of CUAP

AQA is undertaking a review of the Committee on University Academic Programmes (CUAP). The Chair of the Panel is Professor Ian Town and the members of the Panel are 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 will be supported by Dr Jan Cameron, former Director of AQA.

### 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)

### AQA External Review

The one-year follow-up report on recommendations from the 2015 External Review of AQA has been endorsed by the Vice-Chancellors. The report is available at

<http://www.aqa.ac.nz/2015externalreview>

## National University of Samoa Benchmarking Workshop *(contributed by Cassandra Jutsum, University of Waikato)*

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A three-day workshop on academic benchmarking and peer review of assessment was held on 30 November – 2 December 2016 and hosted by the National University of Samoa. There were a total of 63 participants from 6 universities, a University College, Ako Aotearoa, and the Samoan Qualifications Authority. Dr Sara Booth of the University of Tasmania and Helen Lomax of Ako Aotearoa facilitated the workshop and provided a series of professional learning sessions and cross-institutional discussions on institutional and programme level benchmarking and support for teaching quality. Dr Booth also presented on a project she has been spearheading with the Australian universities on developing an online peer review portal that can be used for review of courses, programmes and processes. The portal has been developed to support Australian universities to achieve the new higher education standards as defined by the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA).

The workshop was valuable in providing opportunities to network with other universities around the Pacific region and form closer collaborative relationship to enable quality initiatives such as benchmarking to be undertaken. During the course of the three days, participants built up a basic resource kit of definitions, tools and templates to equip them to undertake benchmarking and peer review of assessment.

As an overarching outcome of the workshop, an international benchmarking pilot project has been proposed for 2017. The project will focus on supporting teaching quality and programme quality in higher education across the Pacific and New Zealand and is split into four phases, which include:

PHASE 1: Pilot study: benchmarking processes and data at the institutional levels

PHASE 2: Pilot change programme: support for teaching quality and programme quality

PHASE 3: Pilot study: benchmarking of disciplinary programmes to support programme review and accreditation through the online peer review portal

PHASE 4: International peer review workshop



Photo credit: National University of Samoa



## Have You Seen This?

Simon Marginson's critique of the role of universities and the particular contribution of the University of California system is available as an open access book from Luminos, the University of California Press' open access publishing programme at <http://www.luminosoa.org/site/books/detail/17/the-dream-is-over/>

The Ministry of Education's 2015 Profile and Trends has been released as six reports on the Education Counts website at <https://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/publications/series/2531>

The TEC have released a report on relevance in tertiary engineering. The report builds on Geoff Scott's work on recent graduates and is available at <http://www.tec.govt.nz/assets/Reports/Making-Tertiary-Studies-In-Engineering-More-Relevant.pdf>

Presentations from the 2016 HECQ Forum are available from <http://www.hes.edu.au/services-initiatives/higher-education-compliance-and-quality-network-hecqn/hecq-forum-2016/> This includes the e=Quals project for assuring integrity of academic credentials. New Zealand universities have collaborated with Australian universities in this initiative. There is more information at <http://www.hes.edu.au/news/achieving-credential-integrity-and-security-for-anz-universities/>

### Meetings and Conference Calendar

**30 January – 1 February, 2017 in Washington DC**  
Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) Annual Conference 2017: Quality Assurance and Accreditation – Moving Into the Future  
<http://www.chea.org/Events/annual/winter-conference-2017.asp>

**27 February – 2 March, 2017 in Bahrain**  
International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE) biennial conference in Bahrain.  
<http://www.inqaah.org/blog/inqaah-conference-2017-quality-assurance-he-between-collaboration-competition-promises>

**8, 15, 22 and 29 March in Sydney, Melbourne, Perth and Brisbane**  
Higher Education Compliance and Quality Network - Peer Review of Assessment Workshops in 2017  
<http://www.hes.edu.au/news/peer-review-of-assessment-workshops-series/>

**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**  
3<sup>rd</sup> 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>

## Season's Greetings

Sheelagh and Zareena would like to wish you all a peaceful and relaxing period over the Christmas and New Year holidays and best wishes for 2017.

### Contact Us

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

We welcome feedback on this newsletter and the AQA website, along with news and suggestions for newsletter items.

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