

AQA Marks 25 Years

AQA marked 25 years since being established in 1993 as the New Zealand Universities Academic Audit Unit at a small function in Wellington on 13th November 2018. Former Chairs Professors Emeriti Les Holborow and David Mackay and past members of the AQA Board were able to attend, along with former Director Dr Jan Cameron, the current AQA Board and staff, former and current auditors and members of universities and other parts of the tertiary education sector with an interest in academic quality. Others unable to attend sent notes which were displayed at the function.

In his speech the current Chair of the AQA Board, Emeritus Professor Pat Walsh, noted both the amount of consistency and continual change and evolution which characterised AQA's first 25 years. The current Executive Director Sheelagh Matear outlined how the current cycle built on that history and continued AQA's commitment to add value for New Zealand universities and their students.

There is more information on AQA's 25th anniversary, including a 25th Anniversary Booklet with contributions from former and current Chairs of the Board and Directors and pictures from the event, on the AQA website at: <https://www.aqa.ac.nz/aqa-25>.



Above: AQA celebrates its 25th Anniversary
(photographs by Wendy Robinson)

AQA Annual Report 2017-2018

AQA's Audited Financial Statements and Statement of Service Performance for the year end 30 June 2018 are now available: <https://www.aqa.ac.nz/annualreports>

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



The last quarter of 2018 saw a lot of quality enhancement activity with a Quality Forum meeting on 3rd October, followed by a Student Voice Summit on 4th October and the first Enhancement Theme Symposium at the end of October.

The Quality Forum examined current and emerging topics in quality assurance through a series of sessions led by quality managers.

The topics were academic integrity, assessment, graduate profiles and graduate outcomes, contract and sessional teaching and facilitating and supporting organisational change. A summary of the day is available at: https://www.aqa.ac.nz/sites/all/files/AQA_Quality_Forum_2018_Summary_Report.pdf

The objectives of the Student Voice Summit were professional development and knowledge transfer for incoming student administrations by:

- learning from outgoing administrations, sharing good practices, ideas and updates on current issues,
- gaining an overview of academic quality processes and academic decision making in the university sector, and
- making connections among incoming administrations and between incoming administrations and quality



Top: Students and quality professionals attend the third annual Student Voice Summit at Massey University's Wellington campus.

Above: Members of university senior leadership teams, academics, professional staff and students attend the first Enhancement Theme Symposium.

The first Enhancement Theme Symposium for New Zealand Universities was held in Wellington on 31 October 2018. It brought together members of university senior leadership teams, academics, professional staff who support Māori students and development, professional staff who support Pasifika students and development, quality managers and students to share and critique initiatives.

The objectives for the day were to share approaches and initiatives underway with respect to the enhancement theme, and to critique those approaches and explore what would be the implications of them operating at scale (either whole of university or nationally).

The day was structured according to the three areas of emphasis (topics) identified across the universities' enhancement theme plans:

- Access,
- Student success, and
- Organisational change;

plus, a final session that considered a provisional synopsis of the day.

continued on page 3

Mid-Cycle Reports

The AQA Board has reviewed and accepted mid-cycle reports from Massey University, The University of Auckland and Victoria University of Wellington.

Each of the three topics was introduced with a plenary presentation or panel and followed by a workshop. Workshops were facilitated and each included a rapporteur who produced a summary of the workshop's discussion of key questions:

- What key initiatives are underway?
- What is needed to improve?
- What are the barriers to greater collaboration on this topic?
- What implications might initiatives have at greater scale, would they make a system-level improvement?
- If funding wasn't a constraint, what would you do?
- What is highest priority action to achieve significant progress?

Season's Greetings

Season's Greetings to our newsletter readers and best wishes for a safe holiday season!

Our office will close on Friday 21st December and will reopen on Monday 7th January 2019.

A provisional synopsis of the workshop sessions was presented by the Chair of the Enhancement Theme Steering Group. A final panel session and series of workshops were then asked to respond to this Provisional Synopsis in terms of:

- From your perspective, what are the strengths in this summary?
- Where are the gaps?
- What would the priorities be?

A report from the Symposium will be available soon.

Student Voice

Contributed by Jonathan Gee (NZUSA President)

As I come to the end of my time as NZUSA President, and finish my three years on the AQA Board, it has been extremely heartening to see the significant progress we have made in enhancing student voice. Achievements include:

- Signing a Memorandum of Understanding between AQA and NZUSA
- Three annual Student Voice at Universities summits to support the professional development of incoming student representatives,
- Establishing the National Pasifika Liaison Officer role at NZUSA, supporting the work on the Cycle 6 Enhancement Theme, and
- Enabling student auditors to sit on academic audit panels for Cycle 6.



The outcomes of these achievements have been felt across the country. Education student representatives are now more connected, more empowered and more equipped to carry out their responsibilities compared to when I first started as an Academic Vice President in 2015.

A highlight for student voice this year was having Te Mana Ākonga, the National Māori Student Association, co-host our Student Voice at Universities Summit, allowing for a stronger partnership between our organisations.

I would like to thank the numerous university staff and students I have engaged with over the last four years as a student representative. From the wonderful people at my home university who helped me to learn the ropes as I began my journey, to the fantastic Sheelagh Matear for championing our student voice kaupapa, thank you for helping to create a culture of student partnership across New Zealand's universities.

It's been a wonderful four years. I look forward to seeing even more progress as we move from 'student voice' to 'student partnership' over the next four years, and beyond.

Have You Seen This?

An introductory video for the New Zealand universities' Enhancement Theme is available at:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=28VvyBaBWwI&feature=youtu.be>

Te Kāhui Amokura have released a series of case studies of good practice programmes for taura Māori across the New Zealand university sector. See:
<https://www.universitiesnz.ac.nz/sites/default/files/uni-nz/documents/TKA%20Case%20Studies%20-%20Good%20practice%20%282018%29.pdf>

In Australia, the national Centre for Student Equity in Higher Education have published a Briefing Note on Equity Student participation in Australian Higher Education: 2012 – 2017 available at
<https://www.ncsehe.edu.au/briefing-note-equity-student-participation-in-australian-higher-education-2012-to-2017>

Presentations from the 3rd Annual TEQSA conference and Higher Education Quality Forum held at the end of November 2018 are available in the HES Document Repository at: <https://www.hes.edu.au/document-repository>

The Australian higher education system is also engaging in review activity. A review of the Australian Higher Education category Standards is underway (<https://www.education.gov.au/review-higher-education-provider-category-standards>) as is a review of the Australian Qualifications Framework (<https://www.education.gov.au/australian-qualifications-framework-review-0>).

TEQSA have published a snapshot of key financial metrics in Australian higher education, available at: <https://www.teqsa.gov.au/latest-news/articles/latest-financial-snapshot-and-analysis-sector-released>

In news from the United States, education blogger Robert Kelchen has developed a top ten list of higher education developments:
<https://robertkelchen.com/2018/12/17/the-2018-higher-education-top-ten-list/>

Meetings and Conference Calendar

13-14 February 2019 in Coolangatta, Gold Coast
 Enhancing and Sharing Employability Practice Conference
<https://www.hes.edu.au/program-enhancing-and-sharing-employability-practice-conference>

27 February to 1 March 2019 in Canberra
 Universities Australia Higher Education Conference – Degrees of Change
<https://www.eiseverywhere.com/ehome/375507/800354/>

25-28 March in Colombo, Sri Lanka
 15th INQAAHE Biennial Conference 2019
<http://www.inqaahe2019srilanka.lk/>

29-31 March 2019 in Colombo, Sri Lanka
 Asia Pacific Quality Network (APQN) Conference
<https://www.apqn.org/>

28 March 2019 in Edinburgh
 Sparqs 2019 Conference: Student Engagement for All: <https://www.sparqs.ac.uk/news-detail.php?page=769>

7-8 May 2019 in Liverpool
 UK Quality Summit – Successful Partnerships
<https://events.qaa.ac.uk/qaaevents/frontend/reg/thome.csp?pageID=11111&eventID=32&traceReDir=2>

3-5 June 2019 in Melbourne
 Learning Leaders in Higher Education and Higher Education Quality Network Conference
<https://www.hes.edu.au/events/learning-leaders-higher-education-and-higher-education-quality-network-conference>
 Submissions due 28 February

7-10 July 2019 in Melbourne
 STARS – Students Transitions Achievement Retention Success – conference
<http://unistars.org/>



AQA | Academic Quality Agency
 For New Zealand Universities

Sheelagh Matear
 Executive Director



Contact Us

Level 9, 142 Lambton Quay
 PO Box 5787, Wellington 6145, New Zealand
 p +64 4 801 7924 | e comms@aqa.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@aqa.ac.nz or follow the links on our website www.aqa.ac.nz.