

August 2006

AUQA News

A Quarterly Newsletter on the Activities of AUQA

Australian Universities Quality Agency

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## 1. Audit Update

### 2006 Audits

The Audit Report for the Department of Education Services Western Australia is now available. Other audits are proceeding on schedule. Details of 2006 audits and Audit Panels are available from: <http://www.auqa.edu.au/qualityaudit/auditschedule/index.shtml>.

### Progress Reports

Audit Progress Reports from Cycle 1 are being added progressively to the AUQA website. New progress reports added since the last newsletter are those for Edith Cowan University, James Cook University and the University of Sydney.

Progress Reports are accessible at [http://www.auqa.edu.au/qualityaudit/sai\\_reports/index.shtml](http://www.auqa.edu.au/qualityaudit/sai_reports/index.shtml).



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## 2. External Review of AUQA

The Review Report and AUQA's performance portfolio, together with a statement from the Board, were released on 9 June (<http://www.auqa.edu.au/aboutauqa/externalreview/index.shtml>).

The Review Report contains a range of commendations related to AUQA's performance. AUQA was in particular pleased to note that the review panel is extremely positive about AUQA's performance over the last five years, and vindicates MCEETYA's decision to establish AUQA. The Report concludes that AUQA has achieved the objectives set for it by MCEETYA (with the exception, at the time of the review, of the Objective 4 report, which has since been provided to MCEETYA).

The review panel finds that AUQA is "a sound, efficient organisation that has a robust and well documented quality system". AUQA's "fitness-for-purpose model and the peer review approach have been successfully implemented and have led to 'large scale buy-in' and engagement by the sector".

Other comments from the review reports are:

- "There was general acceptance across the higher education sector that AUQA's audits were fair and accurate."
- "AUQA has had positive impact in raising the awareness of quality matters, in developing a commitment to quality and quality enhancement across the sector, and also in showcasing good practice within the sector."
- "A number of interviewees indicated that AUQA has had a positive impact on their organisation."

The Review Report also contains affirmations and recommendations. The AUQA Board and staff have begun work on several of the affirmations and recommendations, and a full action plan will be developed for the Board to consider at its next meeting in September.

## 3. Board News

The Board of AUQA held its second meeting and the Annual Board Retreat on 5 and 6 June 2006. At the Retreat, which was structured around the external review of AUQA and Cycle 2 audits, the Board considered future directions and AUQA's achievements over the past five years. The Board accepted the broad thrust of the report's recommendations and endorsed the commendations in the external Review Report.

Board meeting dates for the remainder of 2006 are:

- 5 September
- 28 November

## 4. AUQA Audit Cycle 2 - Process for Advice to the Sector on AUQA's Cycle 2 Audits

AUQA's audit Cycle 2 was discussed at with AUQA Auditors at the Auditor Meeting on 5 July in Perth. Comments and suggestions from that meeting have been considered by AUQA staff prior to finalisation of advice to the AUQA Board.

*The following announcement was distributed by AUQA in June 2006.*

“As advised in May 2006, AUQA’s Cycle 2 audits will commence in October/November 2007. At its meeting of 5 and 6 June 2006, the AUQA Board considered the nature of Cycle 2, taking into account:

- Feedback from AUQA’s 2005 consultations with higher education sector, and
- Comments in the report of the external review of AUQA (<http://www.auqa.edu.au/aboutauqa/externalreview/index.shtml>), which also draw on stakeholder submissions.

The Board agreed that within the central spirit of quality audit, there should be some changes of emphasis for Cycle 2, to enable the process to stay fresh and useful and to encourage continuing improvement.

Aspects of Cycle 2 are likely to include primary attention to developments since Cycle 1; an emphasis on benchmarking, standards and outcomes; greater use of external reference points; focus on specific areas or themes selected by AUQA and/or the auditee; and continuing attention to transnational activities.

Within these guidelines, the AUQA Board intends to determine the form and topics for Cycle 2 audits at its next meeting in September. Following that, AUQA will hold workshops with representatives of self-accrediting institutions and accrediting agencies respectively, to refine the options for Cycle 2 audits. The Board will provide formal advice to the higher education sector on Cycle 2 audits in October 2006.”

## 5. Australian Higher Education Quality Award

The recipient of the inaugural Australian Higher Education Quality Award was announced at AUQF2006 on Friday 7 July. **Professor Paul Ramsden**, formerly Pro Vice-Chancellor (Teaching and Learning) at the University of Sydney, received the Award for his consistent efforts in promoting the quality of teaching and learning, exemplified by the development of the Course Experience Questionnaire and the Teaching Dividend. Professor Ramsden’s work has influenced quality assurance and enhancement practices not only in Australia, but around the world. His current position is Chief Executive of the Higher Education Academy in the United Kingdom.

The Australian Higher Education Quality Award was established by AUQA in 2005, in line with AUQA’s aim to promote quality assurance in Australian higher education, and is endorsed by the Australian Government Minister for Education, Science and Training, the Hon Julie Bishop MP.

## 6. News of AUQA Auditors

**Graeme Dennehy**, formerly Executive Director (Business and Administration) at the University of New England, has taken up an appointment as Chief Operating Officer at Deakin University.

**Professor Beryl Hesketh**, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Sciences and Technology) at the University of Sydney, will join the University of Western Sydney in 2008 as the new Executive Dean of the College of Health and Science.

## 7. Auditor Meetings and Workshops

### Annual Auditor Meeting 2006

The annual Auditor Meeting was held on 5 July in Perth and addressed the following topics:

- The results of the review of AUQA
- AUQA's action plan for recommendations in the review
- Updates on audits of non self-accrediting institutions and transnational quality
- Cycle 2 scenarios
- Issues of audit method
- The roles and responsibilities of audit panel chairs.

There was a lively discussion about the follow-up to the review of AUQA and scenarios for Cycle 2 audits. AUQA thanks auditors at the meeting for their invaluable comments on these matters.

### Auditor Training — 20 and 21 November 2006

The annual Auditor Training will be held on 20 and 21 November in 2006 in Melbourne. As usual, this training is for new AUQA auditors AUQA but is open as well to external fee-paying participants. The program for the training seminar will be available on the AUQA website.

## 8. AUQF2006 Quality Outcomes and Diversity - Report

AUQF2006 was held from **5 to 7 July 2006 in Perth** at the Parmelia Hilton and attracted 180 delegates including day registrations.

Keynote speakers were:

- Professor Elizabeth Harman, Vice-Chancellor and President, Victoria University
- Mr Bruce MacKenzie, Chief Executive Officer of Holmesglen Institute of TAFE
- Professor Richard Johnstone, Executive Director, The Carrick Institute of Learning and Teaching
- Dr Sheldon Shaeffer, Director of the UNESCO Office in Bangkok.

Other plenary sessions included:

- a panel discussion on 'Student Surveys and Student Engagement' with speakers from Australia, the UK and the US
- a panel on 'Institutional Diversity and Challenges for Quality Assurance', and
- a presentation on the proposal for a revised set of National Protocols for Education Approval Processes.

Parallel paper and workshop sessions covered a broad range of topics related to the conference theme as well as to quality assurance and enhancement of higher education more generally.

The Forum concluded with announcements of the Best Paper, Presentation, Workshop and Poster Awards. The recipients were:

- Best Paper: 'Excellent Measures Precede Measures of Excellence', **Dr Hamish Coates**, ACER

- Best Presentation: 'Redefining the Teaching Space as Public: An Essential Step in Implementing Lasting Change in Australian Universities', **Lisa Harris**, Centre for the Advancement of Teaching and Learning, the University of Western Australia.
- Best Workshop: 'Enhancing Quality in Graduate Research', **Cindy Tilbrook**, Executive Director, GCA and **Dr Hamish Coates**, ACER.
- Best Poster: 'Oman Program Accreditation versus Program Recognition: Facilitating Transnational Higher Education', **Oman Accreditation Board**.

## 9. AUQF2007 Announcement

In the final session of AUQF2006, AUQA Audit Director and AUQF Chair for 2007 Jeanette Baird announced that the 2007 Forum would take place in **Hobart** on **11–13 July 2006**.

The theme of AUQF2007 will be '**Evolution and Renewal in Quality Assurance**'. Broad sub-themes are:

- Integration of Quality Assurance Systems: Converging Pathways?
- Impact of Quality Audit
- Changing Approaches and Attitudes
- Benchmarking
- International Collaboration in Quality Assurance
- Qualitative Data and Quality Outcomes

As with previous fora, AUQF2007 will be organised by the AUQF Joint Steering Group, a pan-sectoral group whose sole purpose is to facilitate discussion about quality in higher education. The AUQF2007 Call for Contributions is expected to be released in November, with registrations opening in March 2007. For further information on AUQF2007 or to be added to the AUQF mailing list, please email AUQF Administrator Elizabeth Burke at [e.burke@auqa.edu.au](mailto:e.burke@auqa.edu.au).

The **Auditor Meeting** prior to AUQF will be held on **Wednesday 11 July 2007** in Hobart.

AUQA and the Australasian Association for Institutional Research (AAIR) held a series of discussions early in 2006 about holding collaborative or joint fora. As a result of these discussions, AAIR members are encouraged to attend AUQF2007 and some of the sub-themes reflect topics of particular interest to AAIR members. The **2006 AAIR Forum** will be held on 22–24 November at the Novotel Pacific Bay Resort, Coffs Harbour on the North Coast of NSW. The theme is Community, Customers, Clients, Colleagues and Competitors: Defining Relationships through Institutional Research. More information is available at [http://www.scu.edu.au/admin/acqua/index.php?page\\_id=28&menu=50\\_51](http://www.scu.edu.au/admin/acqua/index.php?page_id=28&menu=50_51).

## 10. AUQA Publications

The Publications section of the AUQA website has been updated and now includes both AUQA Occasional Publications (AOP) and other AUQA Publications.

Recent publications include:

- AOP Series – **Ranking of Higher Education Institutions** (Dr Antony Stella and Dr David Woodhouse)
- Other Publications – **AUQA Report on Objective 3** (A Report Submitted in Response to AUQA's Constitutional Objective 3, relating to the 'National Protocols for Higher Education Approval Processes', March 2005) and **AUQA Report on Objective 4** (Quality Assurance and Standards of Australian Higher Education Based on the Institutional Audit Reports of AUQA, June 2006).

These reports are available at: <http://www.auqa.edu.au/qualityenhancement/publications/index.shtml>. Other publications are in preparation, including the AUQF2006 Proceedings.

## 11. Good Practice Database

Twenty-five good practices have been added to the Database, from Charles Darwin University, Deakin University, Melbourne College of Divinity, Queensland University of Technology, the University of Melbourne and the University of Tasmania. These include a significant number of new entries on 'Community and Engagement' and 'Management, Planning and Review'.

Another group of good practices address Indigenous matters, such as Indigenous Support and Initiatives; Strategic Commitment to Indigenous Education and Development; and a Community-based Learning Model. There are now more than 140 good practices available online at [www.auqa.edu.au/gp](http://www.auqa.edu.au/gp) and the database has been accessed over 30,000 times.

## 12. INQAAHE

The 2006 INQAAHE workshop was held in The Hague in May. The main topics were standards for external quality assurance agencies, the impact of external quality assurance, and quality assurance of transnational education. Presentations from the workshop and reports on the three main workshop topics will be available at: <http://www.nvao-event.net/inqahe/proceedings.php>.

The next INQAAHE biennial conference will be held in Toronto on **2–5 April 2007**. The theme of the workshop is '**Quality Assurance: Coming of Age – Lessons learned from the Past and Strategies for the Future.**' More information on the program, the speakers and the topics is available at <http://www.peqab.edu.gov.on.ca/inqahe>.

### 13. Asia-Pacific Quality Network (APQN)

*Liesha Northover, APQN Administrator*

#### Forthcoming Conferences

APQN has two conferences on the agenda for the remainder of 2006.

The first Conference, hosted by the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) in Bangalore, India, will take place on 16–17 September. The theme of the conference is ‘Student Participation in Quality Enhancement’, and the official conference website can be viewed at <http://www.naacindia.org/naacapqn/Intorduction.htm>. Registrations for this event have closed and delegates from the following countries will be among those representing APQN: Pakistan, Thailand, Mongolia, Malaysia, Cambodia, Philippines, and Vietnam.

The second Conference, which will take place on 11–13 December in Lahore, Pakistan, is Pakistan’s First International Conference on Assessing Quality in Higher Education (ICAQHE). The theme of the conference is ‘Prosperity through Quality Education’.

Registration information for non-APQN supported places is available at <http://www.icaqhe2007.org.pk/registration.htm>. Registration for APQN supported places has not yet opened. The official conference website can be viewed at <http://www.icaqhe2007.org.pk/#>.

#### Newly Appointed APQN Board Member

On 1 May 2006 a new Board Member, Dagvadorj Chuluuntsetseg (Mongolia), was formally invited to fill a vacancy on the APQN Board. Chuluuna will serve on the APQN Board in this capacity until the AGM in Malaysia in February 2007.



#### Online Presentations

The interest in the presentations from the Shanghai Conference and AGM has been overwhelming. Presentations can be viewed at <http://www.apqn.org/events/past/details/32/presentations/>.

Due to the increased interest in this form of information, additional presentations have been uploaded for other APQN events at <http://www.apqn.org/events/past/> (see Hanoi, Phnom Penh, Ulaanbaatar and Manila).

#### UNESCO–APQN Toolkit

UNESCO and APQN are now preparing the second phase of the recently completed Toolkit, Regulating Quality Assurance in Cross-Border Education, which is viewable at: [http://www.apqn.org/virtual\\_library/reports/](http://www.apqn.org/virtual_library/reports/)

The main objective of stage II of the project is to compile a set of materials relevant to regulating cross-border higher education. Ms Wai Sum Wong, Executive Director of the Joint Quality Review Committee Limited in Hong Kong, has been commissioned by UNESCO-Bangkok and APQN to work on this. She will compile resources such as: accreditation policies; accreditation requirements/standards; guidelines for self-evaluation, and site visits; examples of evaluation reports; criteria relating to recognition of programmes; legislation pertaining to quality assurance and consumer protection; and other relevant documents. UNESCO-Bangkok will publish the compilation as a CD-ROM to be disseminated together with the UNESCO-APQN Toolkit to member countries in the Asia-Pacific region.

### **Changes to APQN Constitution**

The APQN Constitution has been amended after a Special Resolution in Shanghai. The Constitution was revised by the Board, sent to members for approval and voted on. The amendments were formally approved on 23 June 2006. The new Constitution (v 5.4) is available at:

[http://www.apqn.org/virtual\\_library/](http://www.apqn.org/virtual_library/).

### **Membership**

APQN now has: 16 full members; 6 intermediate members; 10 associate members; and 2 observers. Thirty-six additional applications are currently in progress.

### **Past Events: World Bank Seminar – Paris**

The World Bank Joint Client-Staff Learning Seminar: Quality Assurance in Tertiary Education was held on 18–20 June, 2006 and was conducted in partnership with UNESCO, the OECD and the Centre international d'études pédagogiques (CIEP) Sèvres, France. APQN sponsored the attendance of five delegates from five member organisations: Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Bangladesh, the Maldives and China. "Members in general appreciated the contribution of the regional network for capacity building in the Asia Pacific region," said Professor VS Prasad, Executive Director of NAAC, India, who attended the Seminar.

## **14. Visitors to AUQA and Other Meetings**

Visitors to AUQA during the period June to August included: Mauritz Dannielson from Luleaa University in Sweden; a delegation from the Omani Accreditation Board of the Ministry of Higher Education, Oman; Professor Andre Vyt from Artevelde Institute Belgium; Ms Lizzie Reinecke, QA & Risk Facilitator, and Mr Jan Roodt, QA & Academic Manager, from the QA and Academic Unit of Waikato Institute of Technology; and Sandi Stoddart, Executive Director, The Australian Universities Community Engagement Alliance (AUCEA). Audit Directors Robyn Adams and Jeanette Baird presented a one-day workshop for a delegation from the National Commission for Academic Accreditation and Assessment (NCAAA) of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.