

To Heads of NSAI HEPs

I am writing to advise you about a number of matters.

1. I attach the current outline audit schedules for 2010 and 2011. (Note that the planned schedules will continue as AUQA moves into TEQSA.)
2. AUQA is working closely with DEEWR to ensure full and timely communication between AUQA, DEEWR and respective NSAs. In this context, NSAs should note that DEEWR is currently responsible for monitoring action plans and audit progress reports, and consults with AUQA as it does so.
3. AUQA currently schedules each NSAI for audit in the final year of its approval by DEEWR as a HEP. If an NSAI wishes to have a later audit for some reason, DEEWR's approval must be sought. (The request should be copied to AUQA.) If an NSAI wishes to have an earlier audit for some reason, such as alignment with its state or territory re-registration, the NSAI must approach AUQA and the state or territory authority.
4. AUQA is in discussion with COPHE and ACPET as another route for advice to and from the NSAI sector. It is anticipated that these relationships will strengthen as we all learn more about the challenges NSAs are dealing with over the next few years as all NSAs move through their first cycle of quality audit.
5. At the start of each of AUQA's first and second audit cycles for universities, we employed an external consultant to review the first year of audit reports and advise AUQA on a range of matters, to assist in improving AUQA's audit system. We shall shortly be doing this with the first NSAI audit reports. This advice will be used by AUQA to continue to develop and inform the quality of higher education in NSAI HE Providers. By the end of 2009 AUQA will have conducted 18 audits of NSAs, so it is timely that we begin to review audit reports and identify what themes are emerging. This review might lead to suggestions for revisions to the audit approach.
6. As soon as possible, we shall let you have some advice on academic governance, emanating from the 'Round Table' discussion we convened a couple of months ago with providers, regulators and AUQA auditors. A working party is currently developing some guidelines which we hope to distribute to the sector by the end of the year.
7. We are planning future events for NSAs, including a workshop in March on 'preparing for audit', and an NSAI state of play forum later in 2010, to explore issues of relevance to NSAs. One thought is for this forum to precede the 2010 Australian Quality Forum, and AUQA will be interested to hear from NSAs on what form this forum should take.
8. As many NSAs are not accustomed to carrying out and reporting on self-review, I offer the following cautionary comments. While it is entirely appropriate, and indeed very helpful, to share experiences with each other, we have been surprised to receive many performance portfolios that are very similar to each other. What should be shared is the knowledge of how to carry out an authentic, and hence meaningful and useful, self-review, not the text of the report of that review.
9. In writing a performance portfolio, remember to be analytical, not just descriptive; to provide evidence; and to write economically.

10. It is appropriate and helpful to use consultants (and many universities use AUQA auditors to advise them in the lead-up to an audit). However, some consultants are not as knowledgeable as they purport to be. More seriously, some offer too great an involvement in the institution's activities. If a consultant is needed to develop the self-review, how much does the institution learn about itself? If a consultant is needed to develop the accreditation document, how able is the institution to implement the course if it is accredited?
11. As AUQA now has responsibility for all NSAI audits we have advertised for another audit director who, with Karen Treloar, will have prime responsibility for NSAI audits. It is anticipated that this position will be filled as soon as possible, to commence audits of NSAI in 2010.

Audit Schedule 2010

Auditee	Audit Dates
Tabor Victoria	PF 29 Jan; AV 18–19 March
NIDA	PF 5 Feb; PV/AV 22/23 Mar
CIC	AV Apr
Perth Institute of Business and Technology Pty Ltd	AV Apr
South Australian Institute of Business & Technology Pty Ltd	AV May
Eynesbury Institute of Business and Technology (Adelaide)	AV May
Marcus Oldham College	PF 1 March AV 27 May
Southern School of Natural Therapies	PF 14 May; AV 28–29 June
Carnegie Mellon	AV July
East Coast Gestalt	AV July
Harvest Bible College	PF 8 Aug ; AV 18–19 Oct
Tabor Adelaide	PF 1 Sept, AV 14–15 October
Holmes Colleges	PF 6 Sept; AV 14–? Nov
SIBT	AV Dec
QIBT	AV Dec
MIBT	AV Jan 2011
Australian Lutheran College	TBC
Endeavour College	TBC
Oceania Polytechnic	TBC

Key:

- PF – Portfolio due
 PM/T – Portfolio meeting/teleconference
 PV – Preparatory visit
 AV – Audit visit

Audit Schedule 2011

Auditee	Audit Dates
Australian College of Physical Education	February
Wollongong College / ITC	April
Adelaide College of Divinity	April
International College Management Sydney	May
Jansen Newman	July
Perth Bible College	July
International College Hotel Management	August
Holmesglen Institute of TAFE	August
SAE Investments	September
Australian College of Theology	November
Dixon Elliott / Macleay	November
Campion College	TBC
JMC Academy	TBC
Tabor Tasmania	TBC
Australian Guild of Music Education	TBC

Yours sincerely



Dr David Woodhouse
Executive Director