

AUSTRALIAN UNIVERSITIES QUALITY AGENCY

Report of an Audit of
The University of Adelaide

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1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 *Audit Findings*

The scope for the 2008 audit of the University of Adelaide (also referred to as 'the University') is the two themes of 'Internationalisation' and 'Curriculum and Assessment', together with follow-up of selected recommendations from the AUQA Cycle 1 audit. In addition, the Report includes comments on the University's compliance with the MCEETYA *National Protocols for Higher Education Approval Processes* and other external reference points and on academic standards.

AUQA's findings on the University's actions, processes and outcomes are contained in sections 2 to 4. Data that support the findings are provided in section 5. Information on the conduct of the audit is at Appendix A.

1.1.1 Key Points

The University of Adelaide is a member of the Group of Eight research-intensive universities in Australia with an important mission for the State of South Australia. The University has a stable and sound financial position, and is preparing to renew and develop key facilities at its North Terrace, Roseworthy and Waite campuses.

Internationalisation is a significant matter for the University, which aims to increase the proportion of international coursework students to 30% from the current 27%. An emphasis on growth in international student numbers over the past few years needs now to be balanced by greater attention to better social and cultural integration of international and domestic students, and stronger, embedded English language development.

The University has examples of outstanding, innovative curricula but is only now beginning to implement whole-of-University policies to make explicit its expectations and to ensure consistency in matters relating to curriculum and assessment. The development of new frameworks to rationalise existing approaches is a positive development. This Report affirms these developments, which are part of the University's larger strategy to bring greater coherence to its broad portfolio of academic programs.

1.1.2 Outcome Measures

On the readily-available graduate outcome indicators for Australian universities, which include responses to the Course Experience Questionnaire (CEQ), and data on full-time employment, and further study, the University of Adelaide is a moderate performer. While some Course Experience Questionnaire (CEQ) outcomes by discipline group are above the sector averages, many are below. These results do not reflect the University's current student evaluations, which are more positive, and AUQA urges the University to continue to explore with alumni and local stakeholders the likely reasons for these results. On the most recent available data, the proportion of University of Adelaide graduates in full-time employment after graduation is below the sector average but the proportion in full-time study after graduation is well above the average for the sector and for the Group of Eight.

The CEQ does not measure the academic standards achieved by graduates. The Audit Panel found no evidence to suggest that graduates from the University of Adelaide are less well-equipped academically than those from comparable Australian universities.

A series of actions is underway within the University to improve retention, particularly of first year students.

1.1.3 Matters from Cycle 1 Audit

From the matters examined by the Audit Panel, the University's performance on implementing recommendations from the 2003 AUQA audit is mixed. The University is commended for the ways in which it has strengthened, and continues to strengthen, the ability of Academic Board and its committees to assure the quality of learning and teaching at the University.

On human resources matters, AUQA finds that recommendations regarding career paths and leadership training for heads of school and internal communication are being addressed. Implementation of a University-wide performance review system is however not yet complete and AUQA recommends the University address this as a matter of priority. AUQA also recommends that the University give greater priority to the development and use of management information.

1.1.4 Theme 1: Internationalisation

The University has several committees with responsibility for aspects of international activities and AUQA affirms the University's recognition of the need to reconsider committee roles. The development of a comprehensive International Agreements Framework by the University is commended, as is the University's International Student Centre, which onshore international students rate highly. Suggested improvements to the International Agreements Framework include the development of a policy position on dual awards.

The University has recognised a need for better information on the academic performance of students entering through various pathways, not least to enable it to better identify the developmental and support needs of different cohorts. There is extensive ongoing debate within the University over the minimum International English Language Testing System (IELTS) level and equivalents required for admission of international students. In AUQA's view, the key issue is not so much one of test scores as of ensuring adequate, embedded support for the development of English language competence and academic language skills for all students. AUQA makes an affirmation in this regard, while commending the lead taken by the University's engineering programs.

One of the most urgent matters for the University to address is the social and cultural integration of international and domestic students. Although an initial report on this matter has been prepared, it will be important for the University to explore the issues more fully with students in order to develop a clear strategy.

Other aspects of internationalisation that should be addressed are the management of student exchanges and internationalisation of the curriculum, both of which can contribute to the realisation of a broader sense of internationalisation across the University. A higher profile for the University of Adelaide Ngee Ann – Singapore Campus could reinforce this wider view.

1.1.5 Theme 2: Curriculum and Assessment

The University is commended for several examples of good or leading practice in curriculum design, as are those academics who have championed innovative approaches to learning and teaching, including peer review of teaching in a few discipline areas. AUQA encourages the University to increase its efforts to systematise the use of evidence-based good practices in pedagogy. AUQA also encourages the University to use its examples of outstanding curriculum design as models for the renewal of curricula more widely. In this regard, AUQA suggests the University may find input from external stakeholders helpful in leading curriculum change.

At the time of the audit, the University was engaged in a major exercise of policy development and rationalisation, particularly in regard to policies for learning and teaching. New frameworks or policies for credit transfer, professional accreditation and assessment are three examples. The University has recognised the need to review actual assessment practices and the operation of boards of examiners.

AUQA affirms the University's actions which are consistent with approaches that have been implemented in many Australian universities. In 2007–08 the University standardised the credit points in most undergraduate courses, an example of a major curriculum change project that has been successfully completed. Again, this is a potential model for future University-wide initiatives. AUQA notes that in 2009–10 the University will target selected first year and final year courses for improvement under a 'learning and teaching' theme.

Given concerns expressed to the Audit Panel, coupled with the University's intention to increase its numbers of international Higher Degree by Research (HDR) students, AUQA recommends the University review its support and resourcing for HDR students. AUQA further recommends the University review the effectiveness and responsiveness of IT services to support staff and students.

1.2 **National Protocols and Other External Reference Points**

The National Protocols for Higher Education Approval Processes require all universities to meet a range of criteria, in particular nationally prescribed criteria A1 to A10 and D1 to D5.

On the evidence considered by the Panel, the University of Adelaide satisfies the criteria in the National Protocols. At AUQA's request, the University provided a self-assessment against the Protocols, although this submission was not a requirement in the early arrangements for 2008 audits.

In undertaking a self-review prior to the audit, the University tested compliance with external reference points listed in the *AUQA Audit Manual*, including:

- AVCC (now Universities Australia) 2005, *Universities and their Students: Principles for the Provision of Education by Australian Universities*
- AVCC (now Universities Australia) 2005, *Provision of Education to International Students: Code of Practice and Guidelines for Australian Universities*
- AVCC (now Universities Australia) 2001, *Policy Guidelines on Cross-sector Qualification Linkages*
- *Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000* (Cwlth) (ESOS Act) and the National Code.
- *Higher Education Support Act 2003* (Cwlth)
- Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF)

- MCEETYA's 2005 *Good Practice Principles for Credit Transfer and Articulation from VET to Higher Education*
- UNESCO/OECD's 2005 *Guidelines on Quality Provision in Cross-border Higher Education*.

The audit did not identify any matters of concern regarding the University's compliance with selected external reference points.

1.3 Strategic Context

The mission of the University of Adelaide, as stated on the website, is:

To be an Australian leader in research and teaching of excellence, unequalled in the positive impact our University has on the lives of our students, staff and alumni as well as the local, national and international community.

The University is the longest-established in the State of South Australia and has the highest levels of research output. It has the challenge of balancing its regional responsibilities to the State with its national and international roles as a Group of Eight research university.

Academic activities are grouped into five faculties: Engineering, Computer and Mathematical Sciences (ECMS); Health Sciences; Humanities and Social Sciences (HUMSS); Professions; and Sciences. In 2007, the University had 1,255 academic and 1,548 general staff.

Priorities for the University since 2002 have been restoring a secure and sound financial position, which has now been achieved (see table below), and increasing its student numbers to a planned maximum of around 20,000 equivalent full-time student load (EFTSL). International students are contributing to the achievement of both these priorities but the University also needs to manage the risks of rapid growth.

University of Adelaide 2002–2007	2002	2007 (provisional)
Revenue	\$338m	\$536m
Operating result	\$12m	\$33m
Total student EFTSL	12,950	16,015
Total postgraduate coursework EFTSL	1103	2227
Total postgraduate research EFTSL	1011	1289
International student EFTSL onshore	1706	3990
International student EFTSL offshore	261	369
Total University research income	\$78m	\$116m

Source: PF p6

Over the past couple of years, greater attention has been given to addressing:

- the balance between centralisation and decentralisation
- policy frameworks to ensure collective, common understandings
- quality teaching and learning.

In addition, the University has focused on improving its research performance, in line with increased research output and successes of the other Group of Eight universities nationally.

Recent activities have been directed at engaging more effectively and directly with the local community and industry. Given the importance of community engagement to the University and the State, monitoring the success of these initiatives will become essential.

The University has several campuses in and around Adelaide, the main campus being at North Terrace, and has recently granted campus status to its joint venture facility in Singapore. A major capital works program is planned for the Adelaide facilities over the next three years, aligned to the University's strategic objectives.

1.4 Commendations, Affirmations and Recommendations

This Report contains commendations, affirmations and recommendations. High priority recommendations and affirmations are marked 'urgent'. A commendation refers to the achievement of a stated goal, or to some plan or activity that has led to, or appears likely to lead to, the achievement of a stated goal, and which in AUQA's view is particularly significant. A recommendation refers to an area in need of attention, whether in respect of approach, deployment or results, which in AUQA's view is particularly significant. Where such matters have already been identified by the University, with evidence, they are termed 'affirmations'. It is acknowledged that recommendations in this Audit Report may have resource implications.

The themes for Cycle 2 audits are chosen by AUQA following discussion with the auditee for their risk potential and at least one theme is likely to reflect the institution's own assessment of its developmental and strategic needs. For this reason, Cycle 2 audit reports may contain more recommendations and affirmations than commendations. As for AUQA's Cycle 1 audits, this Report aims to assist the University to enhance the quality and standards of its operations.

Commendations

1. AUQA commends the University of Adelaide for strategically engaging the Academic Board and its committees in strengthening the coherence of efforts to improve the quality of learning and teaching across the University.....11
2. AUQA commends the University of Adelaide for its International Agreements Framework and for developing an accessible database of international agreements.....17
3. AUQA commends the schools of engineering at the University of Adelaide for taking a lead in the use of embedded English language support for students from language backgrounds other than English.....21
4. AUQA commends the University of Adelaide for the high levels of satisfaction expressed by international students with the services and support provided by the International Student Centre.....21
5. AUQA commends the University of Adelaide for the innovative, integrated curriculum in dentistry, its support for development of best practice curriculum in veterinary science, and for the development of new programs in engineering.....29
6. AUQA commends those academics at the University of Adelaide who have developed innovative approaches to learning and teaching, including peer review of teaching, and commends the University for ensuring the Centre for Learning and Professional Development is able to play an active role in improving pedagogy.....30

Affirmations

1. AUQA affirms the University of Adelaide’s development of a series of new policy and management frameworks, to ensure common approaches and understandings.12

2. AUQA affirms the standard benchmarking undertaken by the University of Adelaide but encourages the University to be more specific in defining priority topics for University-wide benchmarking of academic standards and outcomes.13

3. AUQA affirms the University of Adelaide’s reconsideration of the role of the Internationalisation Committee and suggests the University consider the need for further rationalisation of committee responsibilities in respect of international matters.16

4. AUQA affirms the University of Adelaide undertaking a detailed analysis of students’ academic performance by entry pathway to better understand and address the needs of different student cohorts.....19

5. [urgent] AUQA affirms a review by the University of Adelaide of the adequacy of its resourcing for academic language and learning support, noting that this resourcing should take into account the need for diagnostic assessment of students’ English language development needs on entry and greater use of discipline-specific approaches for English language development.20

6. AUQA affirms the decision of the Board of the University of Adelaide – Ngee Ann joint venture to appoint an Academic Director for the Singapore Campus, as this will assist to reinforce the profile of the University’s programs in Singapore and ensure the ongoing quality and relevance of programs.24

7. AUQA affirms the University of Adelaide’s progress towards comprehensive documentation of policies and procedures for curricula, assessment and learning, including the development of an Assessment for Coursework Programs Policy.....31

8. AUQA affirms the University of Adelaide’s development of an Articulation and Credit Transfer Framework and encourages the University to implement appropriate precedent databases.....31

9. AUQA affirms the actions being taken by the University of Adelaide to improve assessment procedures and practices across the University including initiatives being undertaken by the Assessment Monitoring Committee.37

Recommendations

1. AUQA recommends that the University of Adelaide make a concerted effort to implement staff performance management and developmental reviews consistently across all areas of the University, noting that this was a recommendation from the 2003 AUQA audit.10

2. AUQA recommends that the University of Adelaide give priority to the development and use of integrated data to better support management decision-making and monitoring of progress and outcomes.....14

- 3. [urgent] AUQA recommends that the University of Adelaide more actively promote the value of social and cultural inclusivity and implement activities and programs to ensure effective two-way interaction between domestic and international students.....22
- 4. AUQA recommends the University of Adelaide clarify its policy on dual degree programs and its use of the term 'dual degree'.....26
- 5. Given its plans to increase numbers of international higher degree by research (HDR) students, AUQA recommends the University of Adelaide review the implementation of its policies to support HDR students, paying particular attention to the provision of minimum resources and the ways in which students are able to confidentially express any concerns and have them addressed.....39
- 6. AUQA recommends the University of Adelaide review the effectiveness and responsiveness of IT services and support to better meet the needs of students and staff.39

2 MATTERS FROM AUDIT CYCLE 1

The following excerpt from the AUQA Audit Manual outlines the scope and focus of Cycle 2 audits in dealing with progress achieved since Cycle 1:

AUQA Audit Report

Recognising the importance of quality enhancement and improvement, the audits consider whether the recommendations and affirmations in the Cycle 1 AUQA audit report have been implemented. A sample of recommendations and affirmations is selected and checked.

Changes to Quality Systems and Processes

AUQA seeks evidence of the increasing effectiveness of the institution's quality assurance and improvement system/framework since Cycle 1. (AUQA Audit Manual v4.1, p35)

In its Performance Portfolio, the University provided an updated report on progress in implementing recommendations from the 2003 Cycle 1 audit. In addition to the recommendations specifically addressed below, the University identified six recommendations where further action is required for full implementation. Several of these recommendations are commented on below.

Several other matters relating to recommendations from the 2003 AUQA audit are discussed in sections 3 and 4.

2.1 **Recommendation 5: Follow-up**

Recommendation 5 of the 2003 AUQA Cycle 1 Audit Report stated that the University of Adelaide should make improvement *in recognising and rewarding the contributions of Heads of School so that they become attractive positions and that a suitable career structure for Heads of School be established*. This recommendation went on to add that *the training, development and support needs of Heads of Schools should be explicitly considered, including a review of how the Leadership Development Program meets their particular needs*.

The University's Responsibility Loading Policy (last modified in 2007), coupled with the broader Rewards and Recognition Framework Policy (2006) address the first part of this recommendation. In implementing this Policy, heads of school have been provided with the opportunity to bid for up to \$40,000 in research funding to compensate for personal research time.

From speaking with a sample of heads of school, the Audit Panel notes that they believe the position is providing adequate preparation for career progression within the University or at other universities. The leadership training provided for heads of school assists heads to view themselves as part of the leadership team, responsible for demonstrating leadership within their faculty.

AUQA finds that this recommendation is being addressed and encourages the University to continue to explore the most effective means of developing future academic leaders and providing career pathways for heads of school.

2.2 **Recommendation 12: Follow-up**

Recommendation 12 of the 2003 AUQA Cycle 1 Audit Report stated that, *in developing improved staff training and development systems, the University examine such systems within comparable Australian universities and that suitable means be established for assessing how effectively the University's systems operate, in terms of both staff participation and achieving stated development outcomes.*

The background to this recommendation was the recognition of a need for more systematic monitoring of staff professional development activities and their effectiveness, clearly linked to achieving the University's objectives.

The University advises that the Organisational and Staff Development Committee (OSDC) 'sets the direction of organisational and professional development for staff and considers whether the programs are fit for the intended purpose' (SM51). OSDC is an advisory committee to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Vice-President (Academic), who has overall responsibility for staff development at the University. The University further states 'Professional development opportunities are identified through Workforce Planning, the staff Planning and Development Review process and training needs assessments undertaken across the University' (<http://www.adelaide.edu.au/clpd/orgdev/staffdev/>). The University's Staff Climate Survey provides perhaps the most useful information: from the most recent Survey, the proportion of staff who report having developmental opportunities is 51% and the proportion who regard this training as relevant is 61%.

The University has undertaken comparative exercises with other universities to examine performance development systems as it seeks to redevelop its Planning, Development and Review process (section 2.3). It has been actively involved in the collaborative Go8 Future Research Leaders Program. Feedback on programs provided through the Organisational and Professional Development unit is gathered through a variety of means.

AUQA finds that the University has addressed this recommendation to a large extent, although the effectiveness of staff development programs has not yet been comprehensively reviewed. Given the new Performance Excellence Framework being considered by the University (section 2.3) it would be timely for OSDC to take stock.

2.3 **Recommendation 13: Follow-up**

Recommendation 13 of the 2003 AUQA Cycle 1 Audit Report stated that the University of Adelaide should *continue its progress towards an effective process of annual staff reviews which is linked to both performance and development outcomes. Once approved, this initiative should be implemented throughout the whole University, applying equally to academic and general staff and with primary responsibility for its implementation resting with the Head of School (or equivalent).*

The Audit Panel received a report on the proportion of staff by faculties and administrative branches that had completed a Performance Development Review (PDR). While there were high rates of implementation in several areas, the overall average was 60%. There was a very low level of implementation in the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in particular and a low rate in the Faculty of Sciences.

The University acknowledged in its Performance Portfolio that further planned actions are underway in respect of this recommendation. In 2007, the University committed to reviewing its

approach to performance management. The review has led to a new Performance Excellence Framework, essentially a consolidation and refinement of existing policies and procedures, which at the time of the Audit Visit was open for staff consultation. As part of the process, a new PDR system is being introduced from September 2008. One of the measures of the impact of the new Framework is to have structured PDR plans in place for 65% of staff. The Audit Panel notes that this appears a modest target and not one that suggests complete implementation.

AUQA finds that the University has not implemented the PDR system fully, although the new Performance Excellence Framework has the potential to provide best practice in integrating performance management and professional development and measuring success. The implementation of a new performance review system from September 2008 should provide an opportunity for greater effort to implement the PDR process consistently across the whole institution.

Recommendation 1

AUQA recommends that the University of Adelaide make a concerted effort to implement staff performance management and developmental reviews consistently across all areas of the University, noting that this was a recommendation from the 2003 AUQA audit.

2.4 Recommendation 14: Follow-up

Recommendation 14 of the 2003 AUQA Cycle 1 Audit Report stated *that work proceed without delay on the development of a University-wide communication strategy that provides staff with substantive opportunities to provide feedback; and that, if it is to have a continuing role, the operations of the Communications Committee, particularly its contribution to supporting achievement of the strategy, be confirmed and progressed without further delay.*

There are several elements to improving communications across the University. Since the 2003 AUQA audit, the University has completed the restructuring of its faculties and their schools. At a senior level, the Audit Panel notes that faculty executive deans have become more closely involved in strategic decision-making, for example through participation in the Internationalisation Strategy Committee (section 3.2). This is likely to bring executive deans and hence heads of school closer to the centre of the University's decision-making, which in turn can contribute to a stronger 'whole of University' approach. At the same time, the large numbers of committees across the University may generate some confusion over who makes decisions and which groups are responsible for implementation.

Staff awareness of new policies has been highlighted as an issue that the University will address through its new Policy Development Framework (section 2.5.2), including better provision of website information. The Audit Panel observes that it is not always easy to find relevant information on the University's website and that the search function for policies needs improvement.

On internal communication more broadly, the University established an Internal Communications Strategy Working Group in 2004, which subsequently became the Internal Communications Standing Committee. This latter Committee reported in 2006 on the implementation of the AUQA recommendation.

The University conducted *Your Voice* Staff Climate Surveys in 2004 and 2006. (The next survey will take place in 2009.) Communication continues to be a major issue, although the University

observes that the 2006 survey showed greater satisfaction with communication than in 2004 (PF p14). A Staff Survey Oversight Working Party (SSOWP) was established to address significant issues. A series of University-wide projects are to be trialled, although SSOWP has expressed frustration with the time taken to initiate these. Faculties and divisions have developed action plans in response to areas of concern raised in the 2006 survey.

The Audit Panel finds the University has made efforts to improve its internal communications and is continuing to do so, although it notes the SSOWP's call for more rapid progress.

2.5 Other Improvements to Internal Quality Assurance

2.5.1 Functioning of Academic Board

Recommendation 2 of the 2003 AUQA Cycle 1 Audit Report asked the University's Academic Board to *strengthen its ability to maintain an oversight of the academic activities of the University and, in particular, assure the quality of teaching and learning activities.*

This was a major recommendation and one that is crucial for both audit themes. The Audit Panel finds that the University has acted on this recommendation, making a careful distinction between the Academic Board's wider deliberative role and the quality assurance functions of its committees.

The Vice-Chancellor officially convenes Academic Board. The Board Chair, currently the Executive Dean of the Faculty of Sciences, is elected by Board members. Faculty boards report to Academic Board and are composed mostly of academics with executive responsibilities within the faculty.

Academic Board committees, reviewed in 2005, have been reconstituted to ensure their members possess appropriate expertise and are able to relate closely to faculty boards as well as to senior executives responsible for academic areas. As one example, the University's Learning and Teaching Committee (ULTC), which is chaired by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Vice-President (Academic), has faculty associate deans (learning and teaching) as key members. Faculty learning and teaching committees report to ULTC.

The Audit Panel reviewed documents from many of the Board's committees. Although some further consideration of the role of the Board's Internationalisation Committee is required (section 3.2), the Panel is satisfied that the Board's committees, and ULTC in particular, have a clear sense of direction and are playing an increasingly important role in academic quality assurance and enhancement.

Commendation 1

AUQA commends the University of Adelaide for strategically engaging the Academic Board and its committees in strengthening the coherence of efforts to improve the quality of learning and teaching across the University.

2.5.2 New Policy and Procedural Frameworks

At the time of audit, the University was engaged in a major exercise to strengthen its policies, processes and monitoring of activities across business and academic areas through development of a series of 'frameworks'. These frameworks are designed to allow the University to rationalise its existing policies. They have the further advantage of increasing the commonality of language

used by the University as it seeks a more effective balance between centralisation and decentralisation.

The Frameworks under development or in place are:

1. Legislative Compliance Framework
2. Contract Management Framework / International Agreements Framework (section 3.3)
3. Institutional Planning and Performance Framework (to better align planning, performance reporting and budgeting)
4. Policy Development Framework
5. Accreditation Framework (section 4.4.3)
6. Articulation and Credit Transfer Framework
7. Performance Excellence Framework (section 2.3) / Rewards and Recognition Framework (section 2.1)
8. Surveys Framework
9. Benchmarking Framework

An overarching quality assurance framework is also under development.

The frameworks, and their associated policies and procedures, will go a considerable way towards ensuring a common language and clearer understanding of respective responsibilities across the University. Noting that a number of these frameworks have been in development since 2006 or before, the Audit Panel is satisfied that these new policy frameworks are a genuine 'work in progress'.

Affirmation 1

AUQA affirms the University of Adelaide's development of a series of new policy and management frameworks, to ensure common approaches and understandings.

2.5.3 Risk Management

The University is currently improving its risk management capability and in 2008 is implementing a risk management software program to record, track and report on the University risk register.

The Audit Panel was informed that while a 2007–08 risk identification process had recognised strategic and academic risks, the University's Audit, Compliance and Risk Committee did not play a role in areas of academic risk, as this was a responsibility of the Academic Board. Documents viewed by the Panel do not suggest that Academic Board or its committees have yet taken any role in the consideration of academic risks.

The Panel notes that the University's Performance Portfolio used a risk management approach to identify quality improvements for each chapter.

AUQA urges the University to ensure that risks to academic standards and outcomes are identified, monitored and regularly reported to Council, as part of the implementation of its risk management program.

2.5.4 Benchmarking

Recommendation 9 of the 2003 AUQA Cycle 1 Audit Report stated that *priority be given to the development of a formal benchmarking framework, through which the University will be able to*

assess more accurately the achievement of its core objectives. The Audit Report noted that such a framework was under consideration at the time of the audit.

The University currently uses benchmarking data available to all Australian public universities through the Institutional Assessment Framework process (DEEWR, CEQ and GDS data), which benchmarks the University of Adelaide's performance against the Group of Eight cohort, South Australian universities and the sector. The University benchmarks the satisfaction of international students using the International Student Barometer™ (section 3.7).

An element of the new Benchmarking Framework, a Benchmarking Reports Repository, identifies a range of other benchmarking reports used by the University, including:

- Australian Universities International Directors Forum (AUIDF) reports
- Snapshot of Teaching and Learning Practice in Australian Universities: Australian Learning and Teaching Council (ALTC) project
- QUT Universities' HR Benchmarking Program
- CAUDIT University Wide IT Benchmarking Data
- ITIL Maturity levels (Information Technology Information Library)

The University uses a range of other universities as comparators for aspects of student services, marketing, records management, financial and IT services. In addition, it benchmarks its research performance and international research management against other institutions including overseas universities.

Notwithstanding the benchmarking activities in place and the progressive development of the Benchmarking Framework, full implementation of this recommendation is yet to occur. The University's Performance Portfolio states that in 2009 the University will improve benchmarking through:

- formal engagement with international and national benchmarking partners
- adopting a more systematic approach to benchmarking and reporting (through the Benchmarking Framework)
- embedding benchmarking standards as an assurance principle in review processes.

AUQA endorses the actions identified by the University, in particular the use of benchmarking information in program and unit reviews and the use of a repository. Noting that the current Benchmarking Framework focuses on 'how to' undertake benchmarking rather than what to benchmark, AUQA encourages the University to define some priority topics for University-wide benchmarking of academic standards and outcomes.

Affirmation 2

AUQA affirms the standard benchmarking undertaken by the University of Adelaide but encourages the University to be more specific in defining priority topics for University-wide benchmarking of academic standards and outcomes.

2.5.5 Management Reporting and Use of Data

The University is now making use of a data warehouse to generate performance reports. The warehouse currently is able to integrate DEEWR, CEQ and GDS, and internal student information, but has to separately include results from its Student Evaluation of Learning and

Teaching (SELT) survey. The development of cohort reports of student performance by entry pathway is one improvement that has been identified by the University (section 3.5.1).

It appears that until recently the University has not given widespread attention to accessing, using and interrogating data to identify the causes of problems or areas of good performance. There is not a wide community of users across the University to explore and identify corrections or improvements to the data being produced. Succinct management reports are not being generated from the data warehouse: the University Performance Report, other KPI reports and the trial faculty performance reports, while informative, present a large amount of data with comparatively little analysis. This situation may however be improving: the Report of the Retention Project (section 4.2.2) brought together and analysed a large amount of information to identify strategies for improvement.

The recent employment of a business analyst to clarify future directions is a first step in bringing the University's management information and data interrogation capabilities up to the level of good practice in the sector.

Recommendation 2

AUQA recommends that the University of Adelaide give priority to the development and use of integrated data to better support management decision-making and monitoring of progress and outcomes.

3 THEME: INTERNATIONALISATION

3.1 *Strategic Directions*

The main themes in the University's current Strategic and Operational Plans are Research, Education, and Services and Resources, with aspects of internationalisation considered under these three areas. In its Portfolio, the University states that it has 'a number of recurring internationalisation themes', which are:

1. 'as part of an overall growth strategy, identify and develop new international markets for student recruitment while encouraging a balanced spread across faculties and programs
2. increase international research linkages
3. expand the cultural diversity of the student experience'. (PF p31)

As a proportion of total coursework load, international student EFTSL has risen from 23% in 2005 to 27% in 2007. International student load is projected to grow from 3735 in 2007 to 5500 in 2012, representing 30% of coursework load by 2012 (Data Item 5.1). However, this successful growth strategy is generating some problems of its own and may have even been counterproductive in 'expanding the cultural diversity of the student experience' (section 3.8). The University has recognised these issues and has started to address them although the Audit Panel finds that more action is required.

The emphasis on increasing international student load may have overshadowed the development of a more holistic and integrated view of internationalisation across the University. The Audit Panel encourages the University to reflect on ways it might inculcate this broader perspective while continuing to address its important role within the State of South Australia.

3.2 *Management and Governance Responsibilities for International Activities*

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Vice-President (Academic) is responsible for the overall direction for internationalisation at the University, assisted by a Pro Vice-Chancellor (International), with strategies specific to research being led by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research). There are associate deans (international) in each of the five faculties and four of the five faculties have an internationalisation committee.

Several University committees have functions in relation to internationalisation. Strategic directions and initiatives, together with planning and target-setting, are undertaken by the Internationalisation Strategy Committee, which reports to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Vice-President (Academic) and whose membership includes the faculty executive deans.

The Internationalisation Committee is a committee of Academic Board established to provide advice to the Academic Board 'on matters relating to the development of internationalisation in the University'. The Committee's current Terms of Reference state that it:

1. Recommends to Academic Board on academic policies and guidelines relating to programs for international students and to the internationalisation of the University.
2. Recommends to Academic Board on quality assurance processes with respect to the University's academic programs for international students (including those offered off-shore).

3. Provides advice to the Pro Vice-Chancellor (International) on matters relating to the University's Internationalisation Plan [now subsumed into other University plans].

There is also an International Student Matters Committee, which the Portfolio states is an advisory committee to the Pro Vice-Chancellor (International), although the University's website states that it is a subcommittee of the Academic Board's Internationalisation Committee. The University's Performance Portfolio identifies as well an International Compliance Steering Committee, which last met in November 2007, while the website identifies an International Marketing Information Exchange Roundtable as a further body.

The presence of a number of deliberative bodies for aspects of internationalisation, and some confusion over which bodies are active and their scope of responsibilities, suggests a degree of fragmentation that may not assist a broad focus on internationalisation across the University. The role and effectiveness of the Internationalisation Committee emerged as an issue through the University's self-review and preliminary discussions have occurred on new terms of reference. As yet, it is not clear exactly what role (if any) the Committee is expected to play on matters such as quality assurance, internationalisation of the curriculum and cultural diversity on campus. The Audit Panel notes that there may be scope to rationalise other committee responsibilities for internationalisation.

Affirmation 3

AUQA affirms the University of Adelaide's reconsideration of the role of the Internationalisation Committee and suggests the University consider the need for further rationalisation of committee responsibilities in respect of international matters.

This reconsideration of responsibilities might usefully be extended to the positions of associate dean (international) in the faculties, as their current duties mainly concern marketing and student recruitment, rather than the facilitation of internationalisation. Associate deans (international) are aware that their roles could involve closer working relationships with faculty associate deans for learning and teaching and for research.

3.3 Policy Framework and Monitoring

One of the frameworks being developed by the University is an International Agreements Framework, which will be incorporated into the Contract Management Framework. The International Agreements Framework 'prescribes the processes for negotiating and contracting with international partners' and includes the following categories of agreement:

- Memoranda of understanding
- Student exchange
- Staff exchange
- Research collaboration
- Twinning
- Articulation
- Joint ventures
- Jointly conferred awards
- Licensing.

The University's website provides detailed information about the procedures for establishing new international agreements and a database of existing agreements. The format and contents

of all international agreements are approved by the University's Chief Prudential Officer (General Counsel), to ensure that risks are identified and mitigated.

Commendation 2

AUQA commends the University of Adelaide for its International Agreements Framework and for developing an accessible database of international agreements.

The Audit Panel encourages the University to further improve the accuracy, completeness and utility of the database for staff and students, and in particular to ensure the International Agreements Framework is understood and consistently used throughout the University.

The Audit Panel examined a sample of international agreements and found them to be generally robust. The Panel suggests that when the Pro Vice-Chancellor (International) reviews any agreement, including joint programs and exchange agreements, there should be a written analysis of the evidence considered and the outcomes achieved, together with recommendations for improvement.

The Audit Panel observes that offshore teaching agreements, such as those for teaching of the University's MBA with Lingnan University (section 3.9.2) do not appear to be covered by the current International Agreements Framework, although joint venture partnerships are. While the Panel understands the University is not considering any additional partnerships, agreements for offshore teaching should certainly be included in the Framework. Experience with a Master of Education Studies program in Singapore, now being taught out, will have alerted the University to the need for robust business models and well-developed exit strategies should offshore programs not prove financially viable.

Proposals to establish or renew international agreements are considered by the Internationalisation Strategy Committee, not Academic Board's Internationalisation Committee. While this may be appropriate for some international agreements, where there are issues around the comparability of academic standards, Academic Board should have a role in assessing proposals, although in some cases it may be important to ensure simultaneous consideration of academic and financial issues.

3.4 International Student Profile and Outcomes

The University's total international student load is slightly below the national average but its onshore load is above the national average, as around 90% of the University's international students study in Adelaide. Most international students are enrolled in the Faculty of the Professions, taking business and management programs, and the Faculty of Engineering, Computer and Mathematical Sciences (ECMS), as shown in Data Items 5.2 and 5.3. Around 50% of international students come from China, a higher proportion than nationally and for the Group of Eight cohort.

The University's wish to achieve a balanced spread of enrolments across programs is reflected in its 2008–2012 Strategic Plan. As yet it has not identified particular actions for achieving this outcome, apart from encouraging faculties other than the Professions and ECMS to increase their recruitment efforts. In 2005, the University considered a report on the feasibility of imposing caps on enrolment of students from particular countries into specific programs, noting that this could raise legal issues. Given the challenges currently faced by the University in facilitating and sustaining integration of international and domestic students (section 3.8), the Audit Panel considers the University might consider capping enrolments by discipline or faculty.

As part of its overall planned growth in international student numbers, the University aims to significantly increase its international higher degree by research (HDR) student numbers, from 217 to 470, through the provision of additional external and internally-funded scholarships. English language support for HDR students is discussed in section 3.6.2 while some other matters that the University needs to address are raised in section 4.7.

While international student response rates for the CEQ are low compared to domestic student response rates, these data provide some indications of overall international student satisfaction. For the 2007 CEQ, both undergraduate and postgraduate international students reported lower average rates of overall satisfaction than domestic students, although this trend was not consistent by faculty. Results from the 2008 International Student Barometer™ show that international students overall express comparative satisfaction with the expertise of their lecturers, program content, feedback and assessment, rated against other participating Australian universities. They indicate concerns over the lack of work experience opportunities in some programs, as well as concern over language support, an area they regard as of high importance (section 3.6) and multiculturalism (section 3.8). The University plans to undertake separate analyses of international responses to its SELT surveys.

The University's progress rate for international commencing bachelor students is above the national average but ranks 7th in the Group of Eight and has declined in the period 2003–06. Its attrition rate for the same group of students ranks 6th in the Group of Eight on the most recent data (Data Item 5.4 provides time series data for 2001–05). The University is now beginning to ask about the factors that might lie behind its relative progress and attrition rates and states that its planned development of cohort performance reports (section 3.5.1) will be used to develop responses (PF p47), in concert with other retention strategies.

3.5 International Student Admission, Entry Pathways and Recruitment

3.5.1 Admission and Entry

The University's Coursework Entry Committee (CEC) determines overseas qualifications equivalences for the purpose of meeting entry requirements. The Audit Panel sampled minutes from this Committee. These indicate that, among other activities, the CEC monitors the standard of articulating foundation studies programs offered by international partners.

Applications from international students for admission to undergraduate studies and some postgraduate coursework programs are considered by the International Office, under delegated authority from CEC. Applications for admission to other postgraduate coursework programs and applications for advanced standing are sent to faculties for consideration, while applications for HDR studies are managed by the Adelaide Graduate Centre.

The Audit Panel observes that the establishment of a University-wide precedent database would assist the University in knowing that decisions on admission are made consistently (section 4.4.2).

The University runs two foundation studies programs, through Bradford College and Eynesbury College, the former being located on the University's North Terrace Campus. The Audit Panel examined the report of a 2008 curriculum review of the Bradford Foundation Studies Program and found this to be an example of careful monitoring by the University, with a thoughtful set of recommendations for improvement.

As for other Australian universities, the University's students enter through a variety of pathways, with varying amounts of advanced standing and a range of English language equivalences. A need to better understand and monitor the academic performance of student cohorts, particularly international students, by entry pathway has been identified by the University as an area for improvement, reflecting a growing trend in many universities as well as a recommendation from the 2003 AUQA Cycle 1 Audit Report. At the time of the audit the University was able to provide ad hoc reports on students by entry pathway. As one element of a response to recommendation 2 (section 2.5.5), the University should consider the use of standard reports of student cohorts by entry pathway.

Affirmation 4

AUQA affirms the University of Adelaide undertaking a detailed analysis of students' academic performance by entry pathway to better understand and address the needs of different student cohorts.

3.5.2 Recruitment and Marketing

International students are attracted to the University of Adelaide by its reputation and membership of the Group of Eight, a lower cost of living in Adelaide coupled with an image as a safe environment, and, for some students, the ability to gain additional points in support of permanent residency.

The Audit Panel considers the University has appropriate processes in place for the recruitment and management of agents. It notes that the University provides a newsletter for agents and was told that agents visit the University each year.

Marketing of the University's programs to international students is managed by the University's International Office, while University marketing more generally is in a state of transition. While branding campaigns (eg the 'Life Impact' campaign) have been managed centrally, the Audit Panel was told that much existing marketing by the University is devolved to faculties. The University will shortly consider changes that may see greater coordination of marketing across the University, a move the Audit Panel believes may assist in attracting a wider diversity of students to the University.

One specific matter concerns the approval of information about the University and its programs provided in hard copy and on the websites of collaborating institutions offshore, such as the accuracy of program information including entry requirements. The Audit Panel was advised that 'marketing and promotional material for offshore partners' is approved by the central Marketing and Strategic Communication unit. It appears that program coordinators for offshore programs are authorised to approve specific information about program requirements. To minimise the risk of inaccurate information, the University should clarify responsibilities for approving – and for monitoring – the accuracy of all information produced by partners.

3.6 Academic Learning and Language Support for International (Onshore) Students

The University provides academic language and learning support through a variety of means, including the Language and Learning Service of the Centre for Learning and Professional Development, faculty-specific language support in the Faculty of the Professions, services based in the Library and embedded English language courses within programs.

3.6.1 Coursework Programs

There has been over several years considerable discussion within the University over the level of English language competence required for entry to the University of Adelaide. Most of the University's undergraduate and postgraduate programs, including research degrees, require an overall International English Language Testing System (IELTS) score of 6.0 (and 6.0 in all four bands) or equivalent. Much of this discussion has focused on whether to raise the required IELTS score at entry, rather than on the general issue of developing English competence.

The University is the only Group of Eight university that accepts an IELTS score of 6.0 for general entry. A number of other Australian universities also require a minimum IELTS score of 6.5 for general entry to coursework programs. (Across the sector and at the University, there are higher requirements for some specific programs.)

One concern, expressed by some stakeholders and students, is whether an IELTS of 6.0 could signify the University has lower entry standards than other Group of Eight universities. On this point, the Audit Panel received some indications that raising the required IELTS score may not make a major difference to the University's ability to meet international student enrolment targets. If the University decides to change the level of IELTS for admission, it will need to review and adjust its existing codified list of IELTS equivalences.

The University has undertaken some broad analyses that indicate there is only a small (and possibly insignificant) degree of difference in the average GPAs of students entering with an IELTS of 6.0 and 6.5 respectively. More detailed cohort analysis might provide additional information.

While the question of entry requirements continues to be discussed within the University, the most important issue in the view of the Audit Panel is the adequacy of the language support that is currently provided. The fundamental principle is if the University accepts the students, it takes responsibility for ensuring they can participate effectively and succeed in their studies, thus graduating with appropriate English language competence.

Internal University documents recognise that existing language and learning support is not fully adequate, although it is greatly valued when provided. The University's Operational Plan 2008–2010 and Performance Portfolio recognise a need to review levels on English language support.

The Audit Panel believes the University could learn from emerging practice in other universities, most of which face similar challenges in supporting students whose first language is not English. The University should review the adequacy of its resourcing for language support, to ensure there are systems to:

- diagnose the English language development needs of students at entry
- provide additional English language support embedded in discipline-based programs (as well as by other means) to ensure ongoing language development
- introduce students to discipline-specific academic practices and conventions at the outset.

Affirmation 5

[urgent] AUQA affirms a review by the University of Adelaide of the adequacy of its resourcing for academic language and learning support, noting that this resourcing should take into account the need for diagnostic assessment of students' English language development needs on entry and greater use of discipline-specific approaches for English language development.

In this regard, the Audit Panel notes the preliminary consideration that has been given to language support issues, and the question of plagiarism, by the Assessment Monitoring Committee (section 4.6.3).

It appears there is not a widespread recognition across the University of the value of discipline-specific language development, embedded in academic programs. In this regard, AUQA commends the University's engineering schools, and some schools in other faculties, for taking a lead in the use of compulsory and elective credit-bearing courses for students from language backgrounds other than English.

Commendation 3

AUQA commends the schools of engineering at the University of Adelaide for taking a lead in the use of embedded English language support for students from language backgrounds other than English.

3.6.2 Higher Degree by Research Programs

Discussions over the IELTS entry level for higher degrees by research are occurring in parallel with the discussions for coursework programs. Other Group of Eight universities, and some other Australian universities, require minimum IELTS scores of 6.5 or 7.0 for entry to HDR studies (although some individual band score requirements may be as low as 6.0).

The University has for many years offered its well-known Structured Program for HDR students, including the 12-week Integrated Bridging Program (IBP) that helps international research students gain access to the academic, linguistic and cultural conventions of their discipline. The strengths of the IBP are appreciated within the University and the need for more resourcing for the IBP to cater for a projected increase in research students has been recognised.

The University should consider the need for additional English language support for research students once they have completed the IBP, as part of a wider review of the implementation of support for HDR students (section 4.7) that should be undertaken in preparation for growth in international HDR enrolments.

3.7 Other Support Services for International (Onshore) Students

The University's International Office coordinates student recruitment and admission, while support for international students from their time of arrival in Australia is led by the International Student Centre (ISC) in conjunction with services that are provided for all students. Results from the 2008 International Student Barometer™ (ISB) show a high degree of international student satisfaction with the ISC in both absolute and comparative terms.

Commendation 4

AUQA commends the University of Adelaide for the high levels of satisfaction expressed by international students with the services and support provided by the International Student Centre.

Other features of the University's support services and the Adelaide environment that were regarded as highly satisfactory included the International Office, safety and the fact that the University is regarded as a 'good place to be'.

International students were most dissatisfied with: the ability to earn money and financial support; accommodation; and careers advice. Dissatisfaction with these areas is a common feature for many institutions participating in the ISB survey, although the University acknowledges a need for substantial improvement in its career services for international students.

The level of dissatisfaction with support and careers advice appears to be higher for postgraduate coursework students, and the Panel encourages the University to consider improvements to its assistance for postgraduate students in particular.

The University has recognised the importance of student learning hubs and sporting facilities, to provide better facilities for international students and to support integration of domestic and local students. The Audit Panel was told that at present many international students use the Library as their main meeting place. A new learning hub is currently being planned.

3.8 Cultural Integration and Inclusivity

Ensuring greater interaction between international and domestic students is acknowledged as a significant issue for the University of Adelaide. Results from the 2008 International Student Barometer™ confirm the level of international student dissatisfaction on matters such as making friends with domestic students. A fairly rapid increase in the numbers of international students and their concentration in a few main programs have magnified the difficulties of addressing this issue. So has the structure of some programs such as the MBA, where domestic students mostly study part-time in the evenings while international students study full-time.

The Audit Panel was told that domestic and international students for the most part inhabit 'different worlds' and do not readily mix. Moreover, the attitudes of each of these groups to the other may not be conducive to either the broadening of their own perspectives or a wholly rewarding student experience. The Panel believes this is a situation that the University should address urgently.

In 2007, a Mixing of International and Local Students Working Party was established. Academic Board has now endorsed a number of strategies to improve interaction, including mixing within courses, mentoring and buddy programs and interactions with the local off-campus community.

The Audit Panel observes that providing opportunities for mixing may not ensure meaningful interchange unless the actions to be taken are well-planned. The Portfolio states that the Pro Vice-Chancellor (International) and the Internationalisation Committee have responsibility for implementation of recommendations. They will need to develop some specific actions and regularly assess progress, possibly including systematic focus group discussions with relevant groups of students and staff.

AUQA finds there is a need for stronger and directed action to ensure that students understand the rationale for and benefits of extended two-way interaction, for clear strategies and for monitoring of progress.

Recommendation 3

[urgent] AUQA recommends that the University of Adelaide more actively promote the value of social and cultural inclusivity and implement activities and programs to ensure effective two-way interaction between domestic and international students.

The University has identified as an area of improvement a need to improve staff participation rates in cultural awareness training and the Audit Panel endorses this as part of a wider approach to internationalisation of the University.

3.9 Transnational Education

The University has one major offshore educational collaboration in Singapore and from 2009 plans to again offer its MBA in Hong Kong. Otherwise, it has no other offshore teaching. A twinning arrangement with INTI in Malaysia is being concluded.

The Audit Panel encourages the University to review the sustainability and financial viability of offshore teaching arrangements, including the willingness and availability of staff to travel consistently over a number of years for offshore teaching.

The University is moving towards fully-costed financial models for all its offshore teaching programs. The recent amalgamation of the former Adelaide Graduate School of Business and School of Commerce into a new Business School in the Faculty of the Professions offers an opportunity to reduce 'overload' offshore teaching and implement new funding models.

3.9.1 University of Adelaide Ngee Ann – Singapore Campus

The University's joint venture agreement with Ngee Ann Education Holdings Pte Ltd has been operating for 10 years. The University of Adelaide has brand name recognition in Singapore through several prominent alumni, while Ngee Ann Kongsi is a highly respected educational and philanthropic organisation.

In 2008, the University approved a change of name and campus status for the joint venture facility. The change to campus status has been welcomed by Ngee Ann, as signalling a recognition of the significance of the partnership, although this change is not widely known across the Adelaide campuses and even University of Adelaide students in Singapore may not be aware of it.

The University offers several business and computing programs to around 500 students at Ngee Ann premises in central Singapore. University of Adelaide academics teach all programs (in intensive mode), with supplementary tutoring provided as required by local academics. There are plans to increase the number of students to around 900 through the addition of new programs in other discipline areas and to develop research collaborations.

A delegation of the Audit Panel visited the Singapore Campus in August to speak with directors, staff and students. The Panel is satisfied that the joint venture is being well-managed. There is frequent and sound feedback to the University by its partner and the local administration was praised.

Student feedback through SELT and the ISB indicates a fairly high level of satisfaction, although students to whom the panel delegation spoke identified a number of areas for improvement in learning, teaching and the profile of programs in Singapore. The quality of teaching was felt to be variable, as was the amount and timeliness of feedback on assignments. Most students accept the constraints of intensive teaching but thought there could be options for adjusting the timing and that the range of electives offered should be broader. For the MBA program, greater use of local cases and local business input would be valued.

The University has a very strong partner and thus a unique opportunity to ensure it is known as a provider of quality education in Singapore. However, the University will need to make greater effort to ensure its programs provide consistently high quality student learning and are appropriately promoted and supported. The Board of the University of Adelaide – Ngee Ann joint venture recently agreed to appoint an Academic Director for the Singapore Campus, which will assist in reinforcing the profile of the University's programs in Singapore and ensure the ongoing quality and relevance of programs.

Affirmation 6

AUQA affirms the decision of the Board of the University of Adelaide – Ngee Ann joint venture to appoint an Academic Director for the Singapore Campus, as this will assist to reinforce the profile of the University's programs in Singapore and ensure the ongoing quality and relevance of programs.

3.9.2 Partnership with Lingnan University

In April 2008, the University announced a partnership with Lingnan University, a small liberal arts university in Hong Kong with a growing research reputation. The agreement provides for the University of Adelaide MBA program to be taught through one of Lingnan University's extension arms, the self-funding Lingnan Institute of Further Education (LIFE). The MBA program will be wholly taught by University of Adelaide staff.

When the program commences in 2009, it will provide the University of Adelaide with a presence in Hong Kong that it would not otherwise have had, following the conclusion of a partnership with another provider. Lingnan University will receive the reputational benefit of an association with an Australian Group of Eight university. A delegation of the Audit Panel visited Lingnan University to better understand the intended scope of and rationale for the agreement. The delegation heard various reasons why the University of Adelaide wished to continue to teach offshore in Hong Kong through this partnership, including: the desire of Hong Kong alumni for a continuing presence; the potential for attracting students from mainland China; the potential for a wider relationship with Lingnan University in future; and the strategic significance of Hong Kong for international programs involving students from a range of other countries.

The Audit Panel encourages the Internationalisation Strategy Committee to review future plans for the arrangement, including the validity of these arguments for its continuation, once it is clear whether 2009 enrolment targets have been met.

The Panel observes that even where the same program is being offered offshore as onshore there should be academic as well as strategic and financial consideration of any new offshore teaching partnership.

3.10 Student Exchange and International Award Programs

3.10.1 Student Exchange

The University of Adelaide has over 50 student exchange agreements for credit-bearing studies with institutions in North America, Europe, the Asia-Pacific region and Chile. It aims to broadly balance numbers of inbound (coming to Australia) and outbound students with its partner institutions. In 2007, the University hosted 159 inbound students while sending 151 students overseas.

The University states that 'student exchanges are the strongest mechanism for diversifying the international experience of domestic students, aside from the presence of international students on campus' (PF p35). No funding is provided to students by the University of Adelaide to support formal student exchanges, although the University has some travelling scholarships for postgraduate students to study overseas and is a successful participant in the Australian Government's Endeavour Student Exchange Program. International students have access to externally-sponsored scholarships and some internally-funded scholarships. The University states that it intends to review the level of University-sponsored scholarship programs (PF p60) while also rationalising the number of exchange agreements.

Students to whom the Audit Panel spoke (both inbound and outbound) were positive about their experiences and domestic students commented they had developed a great understanding of the situation of international students coming to study in Adelaide. Exchange students reported mixed experiences in terms of organisation of exchanges by the University. Some outbound students commented that they had to take a strong lead in ensuring that arrangements were in place, although staff in the International Office were trying to be as helpful as possible. Inbound students suggested that social functions could be improved by 'getting to know you' activities and greater follow-up after their initial orientation. Both inbound and outbound students had ideas for other ways of fine-tuning advice and arrangements.

The University conducts an annual survey of its returning exchange students although it was not clear to the Panel that there was any systematic consideration of aggregated reports by the Internationalisation Committee. The Audit Panel suggests the University consider ways to improve implementation and monitoring of student exchange programs.

Given the small proportion of Adelaide University students who will undertake an exchange, the Internationalisation Committee may find it helpful to consider additional means to diversity the cultural experience of domestic students.

3.10.2 Joint and Dual Programs of Study

The University offers several joint awards, including a joint Master of Laws with the University of Mannheim, several awards offered in partnership with Le Cordon Bleu International and the French/Australian Cotutelle Doctoral Research Program.

A Policy on Jointly Conferred Academic Awards, approved in 2008, provides for all new agreements to include provisions for stakeholder feedback and mechanisms for review. The Audit panel endorses the emphasis on quality assurance in the new Policy.

In April 2008, the University launched 'a dual Masters degree program' with the University of Indonesia. Students from the University of Indonesia complete 12 months of the two-year Masters at the University of Adelaide as well as 12 months in the Faculty of Economics at the University of Indonesia. The University of Adelaide's media release states: 'Students will be awarded the Master of Commerce (Applied Finance) degree from the University of Adelaide and the Master of Science in Management (Finance) degree from the University of Indonesia on completion of their studies'. The Audit Panel asked about the approval processes for this new program and was advised that it was approved as an international agreement but did not need to be considered by Academic Board, as it was regarded as an articulation agreement, ie one that gives advanced standing.

Dual degree programs are not unknown at other Australian universities and the offering of dual degrees is an emerging trend in international higher education. The University of Adelaide may

not have recognised the implications of marketing a program as a 'dual degree' while also treating the arrangement as simply one of reciprocal recognition of advanced standing. One general issue for dual awards is whether an external person, viewing a graduate's resume, would be likely to believe the person has completed two entirely separate masters' degrees rather than an integrated single program.

The Audit Panel considers the University should clarify its policy on dual degrees, including making clear the circumstances under which the term 'dual degree' is used by the University.

Recommendation 4

AUQA recommends the University of Adelaide clarify its policy on dual degree programs and its use of the term 'dual degree'.

3.11 *International Research Collaboration*

The University has a range of international research collaborations and notes an increase in the proportion of its research income from international sources between 2004 and 2006. The Performance Portfolio provided some measures of outputs from international research collaborations (Data Item 5.5). The Audit Panel regards this as an example of good practice and encourages the University to continue to monitor the output and impact of international research collaborations.

4 THEME: CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT

4.1 *Strategic Relevance of Quality Learning and Teaching*

The University states in its Portfolio that its objectives in the area of curriculum and assessment are:

- develop curricula that are relevant and responsive to students' aspirations, and the needs of employers and professional organisations, and which produce qualified graduates whose knowledge and attributes enable them to have a significant impact within the community
- evaluate, review and manage programs to ensure the highest standards of excellence and effective quality assurance.

The University's mission is to be a leader of excellence in teaching, as well as in research, and these objectives for curricula and assessment are reflected in its Strategic Plan. Certainly, senior executives have recognised a need to do much more to ensure 'coherent, relevant, and responsive' curricula (Strategic Plan 2008–2012 p24), as the audit findings below illustrate. However, the Audit Panel was not convinced that the significance of good curricula and assessment to achieving the University's strategic targets is fully understood at all levels within the University.

The Audit Panel considers that, as part of its communication of key messages (section 2.4), the University could emphasise the role of thoroughgoing curriculum renewal in ensuring that student learning is conducted more efficiently and productively. In some areas an emphasis on research is interpreted as being at the expense of learning and teaching. Curriculum renewal can assist academics in balancing their time between research and teaching. Further, the Panel encourages the University to ensure the initiatives underway in learning and teaching are not approached in a piecemeal fashion, so as to overwhelm academic staff, but rather are looked at together as programs are reviewed internally.

4.2 *Student Learning Outcomes*

4.2.1 Student Satisfaction and Employment Performance

A summary of the outcomes for bachelor degrees for full-time work and further full-time study is shown in Data Item 5.6. The Panel notes that local structural features including employment opportunities in South Australia and the research reputation of the University may explain in part the comparatively low proportion of graduates in full-time work and high proportion of graduates in full-time study.

Summary data from the Course Experience Questionnaire (CEQ) show the University's 2006 results for Good Teaching are comparable to the cohort and sector averages while its 2006 Generic Skills Scale (GSS) results are slightly below cohort and sector averages (Data Item 5.7). GSS results by field of education show the University to be significantly behind the sector in some fields, including Management and Commerce. For Overall Satisfaction, on 2006 data the University of Adelaide rates below the sector and the Group of Eight cohort and this rating runs across all fields of education (Data Item 5.8).

The University Council recently received a presentation on the University's CEQ performance, which does not correlate well with the University's internal course-level SELT data on student satisfaction. The introduction of program-level SELT surveys may provide better information but for now the University is not certain what factors may be contributing to the Overall Satisfaction results. A number of reasons have been advanced, including employment opportunities in South Australia and the timing of administration of the survey. The Audit Panel encourages the University to explore the issues in depth with recent graduates, and to continue to explore ways of increasing its response rates to the CEQ together with the quality of learning and teaching.

4.2.2 Student Retention

Improved retention rates are a substantial element in the University's plans for growth to 20,000 students. The University's attrition rates for commencing domestic students are greater than those of other Group of Eight universities although lower than sector averages (Data Item 5.9): by 2012 the University has an overall target of reducing student attrition rates to less than 12%.

Since 2005, the University of Adelaide has implemented a range of measures to reduce attrition, including several transition programs and a new Policy on Unsatisfactory Progress by Coursework Students that aims to assist students who are academically at risk.

The June 2008 Report of a Retention Project which commenced in 2007 concluded that failing a course in first year was likely to be a significant factor in attrition and that the University should continue to focus its attention on the first year student experience, the target of a learning and teaching 'theme' by the University in 2009–10 (section 4.5.8). The Report made a number of recommendations, including the need for more systematic University-wide approaches to monitoring and evaluating orientation and transition programs and to monitoring attrition.

AUQA acknowledges the efforts of the University to reduce student attrition for domestic commencing students in particular and encourages the University to better coordinate these efforts.

4.3 *Curriculum Innovation at the University of Adelaide*

4.3.1 New Curricula and New Programs

At the University of Adelaide, an academic program is defined as 'the series of courses in which a student enrolls and which, when completed, will lead to conferral of a designated academic award'.

The University has several examples of excellence in curriculum design. The School of Dentistry recently has undertaken a thorough review and redevelopment of its curriculum, assisted by an external specialist consultant, and informed by international trends. The process, which is documented and has engaged internal stakeholders, is regarded by the Audit Panel as an example of good practice that could be used for other disciplines.

A new Veterinary School accepted its first students in 2008 and the University has appointed a new head of school to develop an innovative and world-class curriculum, informed by the approaches of leading international schools of veterinary science. The Audit Panel received preliminary documentation showing a thorough and integrated approach to development of the program.

The University has developed a range of new engineering programs in response to identified need (including the mining boom in South Australia) and the recognition that students are seeking alternative ways of engaging with the discipline. These include programs in mining engineering, petroleum engineering, sports engineering and pharmaceutical engineering.

AUQA commends the University for the design of new curricula in selected disciplines.

Commendation 5

AUQA commends the University of Adelaide for the innovative, integrated curriculum in dentistry, its support for development of best practice curriculum in veterinary science, and for the development of new programs in engineering.

The University is not yet in a position to vouch for the quality and relevance of curricula in all programs. As an example, the Audit Panel heard a number of critical comments about the currency and quality of courses in the MBA program, which it notes is scheduled for a program review in 2009.

4.3.2 Innovation and the Scholarship of Learning and Teaching

The Audit Panel met a range of academics within the University who are using innovative approaches in their teaching and in their programs, ranging from associate deans (learning and teaching) through program and course coordinators to individual lecturers.

Eight University staff received ALTC/Carrick citations for 2008 (there were seven in 2006 and eight in 2007), indicating a considerable level of individual activity in improving learning and teaching.

Among other good practices, AUQA commends the University of Adelaide for the initiatives taken within some schools in the Faculties of ECMS and Health Sciences to implement peer review of teaching in several programs. (In addition, through the Director of the Centre for Learning and Professional Development, the University is involved in a collaborative ALTC project to implement pilot programs for external peer review of teaching.)

The Education Research Group of Adelaide (ERGA) developed from a group of University academics who met during the University's Graduate Certificate in Higher Education and identified a common interest in the scholarship of learning and teaching. Supported by some seed funding from the University, ERGA has now expanded to include academics from the two other South Australian universities, which have also provided start-up financial support. ERGA is now seeking a very modest amount of additional funding to maintain its activities.

The Centre for Learning and Professional Development (CLPD), which is within the Division of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Vice-President (Academic), is recognised by the University as an important participant in the development of new frameworks, policies and processes. The Centre's Director and staff are represented on key committees and called on to provide advice. The University provides sufficient funding to enable Centre staff to work with academics in faculties as well as to provide extensive internet resources and support for policy development. The Panel heard positive comments from associate deans (learning and teaching) about CLPD's support and resources. One example given was the research skills framework developed by

CLPD to make explicit and coherent the ways in which research skills can be attained in regular university coursework.

AUQA commends the University of Adelaide for the efforts of various academic and professional staff to improve learning and curricula, including the use of peer review of teaching.

Commendation 6

AUQA commends those academics at the University of Adelaide who have developed innovative approaches to learning and teaching, including peer review of teaching, and commends the University for ensuring the Centre for Learning and Professional Development is able to play an active role in improving pedagogy.

The use of improved, evidence-based approaches to curriculum and assessment by academics is patchy, however, and in need of more systematic implementation.

The Audit Panel notes that the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Learning and Quality) is involving the associate deans (learning and teaching) in developing a community of practice for learning and teaching across the University. This is one of several positive developments in assisting the University to move from its support of 'early adopters' through grants and awards to more systematic improvements across the University. As well as continuing to support the authority of the associate deans (learning and teaching), the University could consider ways in which to capitalise on the energy and enthusiasm of ERGA and other academics who practice and promote innovation in learning and teaching.

4.4 Policies and Frameworks

4.4.1 New Policies for Curriculum and Assessment

Over the past few years, and as part of its development of new frameworks, the University has been developing or revising a number of its policies for curriculum and assessment. Among the policies developed, under development or being reviewed are:

- Policy on Academic Program Structures
- Policy on Parallel Teaching in Postgraduate Coursework Programs
- Policy on Unsatisfactory Academic Progress by Coursework Students
- Policy on Jointly Conferred Academic Awards
- Policy on Assessment for Coursework Programs (section 4.6.1).

These new policies, and the rationalisation of existing policies through the Policy Development Framework, signal the University's recognition of the critical importance of central statements of principle.

Affirmation 7

AUQA affirms the University of Adelaide's progress towards comprehensive documentation of policies and procedures for curricula, assessment and learning, including the development of an Assessment for Coursework Programs Policy.

In 2006, the University adopted a student workload model and committed to standardise the unit values of undergraduate courses, so that the unit value for a given course will always be a multiple of three (except where discipline requirements preclude this). The outcome was a major curriculum restructure of the majority of the University's undergraduate courses throughout 2007, which in a number of schools and faculties led to more fundamental changes to curricula. The revised courses are being implemented in a staged fashion between 2008 and 2011.

Although fine-tuning of some courses may now be needed to ensure consistency in expectations and requirements from one course to another, the development of these changes in a relatively short period represents a considerable achievement for the University. Having proved its ability to implement this change will make it easier to similarly focus on achieving more consistent approaches to curriculum, assessment and hence the quality of learning and teaching.

4.4.2 Credit Transfer and Articulation

The University has formal articulation agreements with TAFE SA and the Australian Defence Force and participates in a Group of Eight credit transfer agreement. One of the new frameworks currently under development is an Articulation and Credit Transfer Framework, elements of which are a Credit Transfer Policy and a projected transfer policies and practices webpage.

AUQA supports the University's recognition of the need for a Credit Transfer Policy as an element in standard academic quality assurance, and suggests the University follow the example of some other institutions in systematising and streamlining its approach through the use of precedent databases. The credit transfer log in the Faculty of Sciences may serve as the basis for a University-wide approach.

Affirmation 8

AUQA affirms the University of Adelaide's development of an Articulation and Credit Transfer Framework and encourages the University to implement appropriate precedent databases.

4.4.3 Professional Accreditation

Many of the University's programs are externally accredited. The Audit Panel notes that recommendations from a 2007 accreditation process for the Bachelor of Engineering (Software Engineering) are being followed up by the University.

Another of the new frameworks in progress is an Accreditation Framework, which will ensure systematic management and central oversight of all professional accreditation processes within the University, including a process for reporting outcomes to senior management.

The University has already developed useful and accessible information on its website including lists of accredited programs, a schedule, a checklist, flowchart and list of resources. When fully implemented, the Accreditation Framework is likely to represent good practice in the sector.

4.5 Curriculum Development and Review

4.5.1 Academic Governance and Management of Curriculum and Assessment

The major responsibilities for academic governance of curriculum and assessment rest with the Academic Board (section 2.5.1). These are exercised primarily through the Program Approval Committee, the University Learning and Teaching Committee and its subcommittees, and faculty boards.

The Audit Panel notes the growing importance of faculty executive deans in leading innovative and successful programs of quality learning and teaching. Faculties and schools have primary responsibility for the design and delivery of curricula, which may be delegated to school program committees or to individual program coordinators (PF p68). Role statements for program and course coordinators are being developed or updated in several faculties, a development which will assist in performance management as well as in the implementation of new policies.

Despite the several committees involved in program review and approval of curriculum change (section 4.5.2), it is not entirely clear how authority for taking a lead in curriculum innovation is granted. While faculty boards are responsible for assuring the quality of teaching and learning, they are not initiating bodies. Apart from the development of selected new programs, the University's approach to curriculum innovation could appear reactive, given its reliance on five-yearly program reviews (section 4.5.6).

Although executive deans, heads of school, and program coordinators have important roles to play, it is not clear to the Audit Panel how the recognition of a need to improve curricula is communicated and prioritised, taking into account the resource implications of thoroughgoing curriculum reform and the fact that some programs involve several schools. The University needs to clarify its expectations for program innovation, drawing on experience from the School of Dentistry and other areas of the University where new or revised curricula have recently been developed.

4.5.2 Program and Course Approval

Proposals for new programs or for major revisions to existing programs proceed through faculty committees, including faculty learning and teaching committees, before being presented to the Program Approval Committee (PAC) of Academic Board, which in turn makes recommendations to the Vice-Chancellor. Changes to courses and new courses are approved at faculty level.

In 2007, the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Learning and Quality) commenced the development, through a working group, of an improved program approval process and documentation. The changes are designed to assist PAC members and others to ask the right questions and be provided with better information on strategic fit when considering new programs. For example, the new approval process will include consideration of internationalisation of the curriculum and research-enhanced teaching. (The latter of these matters has not yet been the subject of significant discussion within the University.)

The changes were also designed to ensure that senior managers have early advice about proposed new programs, as the plan for 2009 is for a Concept Proposal to be submitted first to a proposed Academic Programs Advisory Group.

The University's program approval processes appear generally sound, although care needs to be taken that these processes do not become so protracted as to jeopardise the introduction of new and revised programs that contribute to better learning and teaching.

4.5.3 Stakeholder Input to Curricula

The new programs mentioned in section 4.3.1 are being developed with input from industry and other stakeholders, including close liaison with professional accreditation bodies. An example of a new program developed at the request of the health sector in Adelaide is the clinical practice-led Bachelor of Nursing, whose students are enthusiastic and well-supported.

Some schools have industry advisory boards, whose regular meetings are minuted. However the small number of advisory board members and alumni to whom the Audit Panel spoke indicated that the University's performance on engaging with local industry and business stakeholders is patchy. Too often, advisory board meetings are dominated by report on initiatives being undertaken within a school, inhibiting a two-way process of engagement. Members of advisory boards appear often not to know if any action is taken in response to their suggestions and are not sure whether they have a role in curriculum development and improvement.

AUQA encourages the University to consider ways to better engage with alumni and industry and business experts in the renewal of curricula. In view of the comments in section 3.7 about improved employment and careers support for international students, the Audit Panel observes that stronger relationships with industry could assist as well in generating career and employment opportunities.

4.5.4 Graduate Attributes

The University states that it 'provides an environment where students are encouraged to take responsibility for developing the following attributes:

- Knowledge and understanding of the content and techniques of a chosen discipline at advanced levels that are internationally recognised.
- The ability to locate, analyse, evaluate and synthesise information from a wide variety of sources in a planned and timely manner.
- An ability to apply effective, creative and innovative solutions, both independently and cooperatively, to current and future problems.
- Skills of a high order in interpersonal understanding, teamwork and communication.
- A proficiency in the appropriate use of contemporary technologies.
- A commitment to continuous learning and the capacity to maintain intellectual curiosity throughout life.
- A commitment to the highest standards of professional endeavour and the ability to take a leadership role in the community.
- An awareness of ethical, social and cultural issues within a global context and their importance in the exercise of professional skills and responsibilities.'

This statement was ratified in 2004. CLPD has a range of examples on its website where graduate attributes have been contextualised and used in curricula and assessment across the University. In many course and program outlines, however, it is common for the graduate

attributes merely to be listed, without any indication to students on how learning outcomes and the overall program design contribute to their developing these attributes. Discipline-specific advice on preparing course outlines notes the requirement to include graduate attributes but does not indicate that the graduate attributes need to be considered in the context of the overall degree program.

The University has identified a need for a fresh approach, which the Audit Panel endorses, noting the several fields in which the University's CEQ results for general skills are well below cohort and sector averages. In its Portfolio, the University states that ULTC is carrying out a project 'to identify and adopt best practice strategies for embedding and mapping' the graduate attributes (PF p70). While the Audit Panel recognises this as another sign that the University is serious about implementing good practices in curriculum design, the University may achieve better outcomes if the embedding of graduate attributes is regarded, along with internationalisation and 'research-led teaching', as one of several ways of thinking about whether program curricula are fit for purpose.

4.5.5 Internationalisation of the Curriculum

The Strategic Plan commits the University to include an international dimension in curricula. In the Performance Portfolio, the University states that it 'does not systematically assess the extent of the internationalisation of the curricula' (PF p58), but notes that the Internationalisation Committee will address this issue. The CLPD website has for some time provided relevant resources for staff and the revised program approval process (section 4.5.2) requires information on internationalisation of the curriculum.

In June 2008, Academic Board approved a definition of 'internationalisation of the curriculum' and a summary of potential strategies, and resolved to invite faculties 'to consider the most appropriate strategies for implementing internationalisation of the curriculum in their programs'. There is no indication how the Board or its committees intend to monitor the progress made by faculties.

The Audit Panel suggests that internationalisation of the curriculum be viewed in the context of a holistic view of internationalisation across the University and preparation of students for living and working in a globalised world (section 3.1). Without this context, there is a risk that 'internationalisation of the curriculum' will be viewed, like 'graduate attributes', as merely another exercise in documentation, rather than a creative way of approaching curriculum renewal.

4.5.6 Program and Course Review

Apart from professional accreditation, the University's main means of reviewing curricula is through five-yearly program reviews, which were first implemented in 2004. Program reviews are normally undertaken by two internal University staff outside the relevant school, and at least one external academic with discipline-specific expertise. Recommendations from reviews are considered by Academic Board before being approved for implementation.

Terms of reference for program reviews are approved by the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Learning and Quality). While terms of reference may be individualised for a particular review, the standard terms of reference include consideration of program 'performance and outcomes, benchmarked against similar programs at other Go8 universities' and matters such as stakeholder feedback.

The Audit Panel sampled some recent program review reports and their follow-up, including the most recent review in the Faculty of the Professions (B Com/B Com Hons/BBIT) and in the Faculty of the Sciences (B Sc). Both review reports made recommendations about the need for better overall coordination and integration of courses that make up the programs, suggesting the coherence of curricula may be an area for specific consideration in future program reviews.

Examples of good practice in the conduct of program reviews at the University of Adelaide include: a well-defined process for conducting reviews; the availability of review reports on the University's intranet; a requirement for implementation plans (also available on the intranet); and monitoring of the implementation of recommendations.

Across the University there is frequent informal review of individual courses, facilitated by collective review in programs such as the Bachelor of Science where there is considerable team teaching. The Panel observes that course reviews are likely to be aided by peer review of teaching.

The University has recognised that existing course review practices are highly variable and in its Portfolio identified a need for a more formal approach to the management of course reviews. It plans to develop processes to specify requirements for input to such reviews, eg input from stakeholders and benchmarking information. The process for three-yearly course review in the Faculty of the Professions was given in the Portfolio as an example of good practice, informed by the use of internal University data.

The Audit Panel recognises that this guidance is likely to be useful. However, it suggests the University might give greater attention to the collective, collegial review of programs or program elements, such as the first year, as these better lend themselves to benchmarking and the embedding of a range of learning and teaching initiatives. The Audit Panel considers there is a risk that the time taken by academic staff in reviewing individual courses will not be well spent unless this is undertaken in the context of changes to programs as a whole.

4.5.7 Communication of Curricula to Students

Summary searchable information on programs and courses is available on the University's website. The Audit Panel reviewed a sample of course outlines and agrees with the University's assessment that there is much variability in the content and presentation of these. A project to develop a University-wide 'course profile' was agreed by ULTC in late 2007 and will include a benchmarking exercise with other institutions. The project appears to be at an early stage: although it is due for completion in 2008, this timeline may slip.

4.5.8 Electronic Technologies in Curricula and Assessment

In common with many other Australian universities, the University of Adelaide encourages academics to make use of electronic technologies to enhance learning and teaching, although uptake is uneven. The Director of CLPD is also the Director of Online Learning and the CLPD website provides extensive information and some examples.

The University has agreed to introduce a major learning and teaching 'theme' for 2009–10 of 'enhancing flexible approaches to learning and teaching' with a sub-theme of 'the incorporation of more effective feedback for students'. A number of large first year and final year courses are being targeted for specific enhancements, an approach that the Audit Panel endorses as conducive to curriculum renewal and better assessment, although there could be advantages in

seeking program-wide rather than course-specific improvements. This approach seeks to directly affect student retention and CEQ responses.

As well, the theme will be used by CLPD to support professional development and will be used in evaluating applications for University-level learning and teaching grants. Its aim is to promote the use of more effective, efficient and flexible approaches to learning, and through the sub-theme, more consistent and timely feedback.

E-assessment learning guidelines have been developed by a working party with the assistance of CLPD and at the time of the audit were being considered by the Technology in Education Committee of ULTC.

4.6 Assessment

4.6.1 Current Practices

The design of assessment tasks at the University is monitored through faculty-level course approval processes. A review of the nature and extent of feedback to be provided to students in each course would be useful topics for these committees to consider in 2009–10. The University has a set of uniform grade descriptors which have in some cases been contextualised by schools to reflect the requirements of the discipline. The Assessment Monitoring Committee has kept the grade descriptors under review, as evidenced by recent consideration of the ‘conceded pass’ grade.

Schools and discipline areas are responsible for oversight of the setting of assessment and moderation of assessment outcomes. Structures and names vary but there are academic programs or curriculum committees in most schools responsible for the former, with boards of examiners responsible for the latter.

Boards of examiners are active in many but not all schools and discipline areas. There is wide variability in practice although the sample minutes for one school viewed by the Panel indicate the specific Board of Examiners is operating effectively.

The University’s credit transfer arrangement with other Group of Eight universities ‘is based on explicit acceptance that the assessment regimes at all Go8 universities are comparable and transferable, an indicator of comparable standards across these institutions’ (PF p75).

Honours theses may include external examination while, in keeping with good practice across the sector, all PhD theses are externally examined. For other programs, the University comments that ‘external moderation of assessment tasks is not widespread, as it is resource and time intensive’ (PF p76).

Overall, the University does not have comprehensive information on the comparative academic standards being achieved by the University. While this may be the case for other Australian universities, AUQA suggests this be a priority for future benchmarking by the University of Adelaide (section 2.5.4).

4.6.2 Planned Improvements

One improvement in train at the time of the audit was the development of an Assessment for Coursework Programs Policy, the consultation period for which was open during the Audit Visit. The development of this Policy meets a need for more consistent assessment practices across the University than the non-mandatory 'Good Practice Guidelines on Assessment for Staff and Students' has achieved.

Among the required improvements to assessment practices identified by the University in its Portfolio are a need to implement a more formal governance requirement for examination/assessment boards to ensure the systematic monitoring and moderation of assessment. The new Assessment for Coursework Programs Policy addresses this requirement. An audit of assessment practices has also been proposed by the University.

The University's Assessment Monitoring Committee (AMC), a subcommittee of ULTC, is responsible for generally providing advice to Academic Board on matters relating to assessment. In previous years the AMC has scrutinised grade distributions for courses grouped by subject area. Subject areas with high rates of fail grades were identified and faculties were asked to provide comments to the AMC. For 2008, the AMC has agreed on processes for faculties to comment on courses that meet specified parameters, eg a fail rate of 20% or higher over the most recent three offerings of the course.

The AMC is continuing to work with the University's Strategy and Planning unit to develop an improved data warehouse workbook for future activities, highlighting the value to the University of accessible, readily manipulated information supported by flexible reporting tools (section 2.5.5).

Affirmation 9

AUQA affirms the actions being taken by the University of Adelaide to improve assessment procedures and practices across the University including initiatives being undertaken by the Assessment Monitoring Committee.

4.6.3 Academic Integrity and Plagiarism

The University has separate policies on Cheating in Examinations and Related Forms of Assessment and on Plagiarism, following a review of its previous Plagiarism Policy in 2006. The current Plagiarism Policy includes guidelines and provides for a Central Plagiarism and Cheating Register to be maintained within Student Services. The presence of a policy and advice to faculties and schools, however do not of themselves ensure thorough implementation or an ability to identify emerging problems and trends.

A licence for Turnitin™ software is in effect across the University. Usage statistics from 2003 to 2008 by school show very little or no use of the software by academics and students in a significant proportion of schools. This low level of use may be due to one of several reasons: the software may not be a suitable tool for some disciplines; the assessment methods being used may not lend themselves to plagiarising; or there may be a low level of awareness of the issues or of the software among academics and students in certain schools.

At its planning meeting in January 2008, the AMC identified two issues for follow-up in respect of international students: plagiarism/collusion, and English language support. A scoping study was prepared, followed by a further meeting of the authors to identify matters to be further followed up. A presentation to Academic Board is scheduled for October 2008. While the

discussion at the AMC to date has occurred in the context of language support, plagiarism is of course not only an issue for international students.

The scoping and follow-up work undertaken for the AMC reveals a lack of knowledge on the part of the Committee of whether there is central data available on cases of suspected plagiarism and the actions taken. The Audit Panel considers that the monitoring of plagiarism and cheating should be part of the activities of the AMC, with regular reports being provided to this Committee. AUQA endorses the actions that have been taken to date by the Committee to raise and follow-up the issues.

Given its learning and teaching theme for 2009–10, and to assist in educating students, the University might consider greater use of electronic technologies to increase student awareness and understanding, such as the Politics Citation and Plagiarism Quiz on the CLPD website, similar to quizzes in use in other institutions.

4.7 Support for Higher Degree by Research Students

As noted in section 3.4, the University plans to significantly increase the numbers of international HDR students over the next four years. For this reason, and because assessment is certainly relevant to HDR students, the Panel spoke with HDR students and some others about research training matters during the Audit Visit.

On assessment, and relevant to points made elsewhere about the importance of the accurate transmission of advice, the Panel was concerned to find that some PhD students were under the impression that if they did not complete their research within a defined time, they would be required to transfer their enrolment to a Masters by Research degree. While this is clearly a misunderstanding of the University's desire to improve its completion rates, such views suggest a lack of knowledge on the part of research students about HDR processes and whom to approach outside their school or discipline area for authoritative information.

Even acknowledging the Integrated Bridging Program (section 3.6.2) and induction programs at the Graduate Centre and in schools, some international HDR students identified a need for better orientation to Adelaide and the University. It may be useful for the International Students Centre and the Graduate Centre to consider the particular needs of international HDR students for general as well as specific orientation.

The University has a policy on the provision of minimum resources for HDR students and a checklist that heads of school are required to sign off. From discussions with students, it appears to the Audit Panel that this policy may not always be observed in regard to space, travel and conference attendance.

The University advises HDR students on procedures for complaints and grievances in its Research Student Handbook and in its annual progress review forms. However, the Audit Panel formed the view from its discussions with students that not all HDR students feel comfortable approaching relevant people or units with their concerns.

Prior to any significant expansion in HDR student numbers, AUQA suggests the University review the implementation of its policies to support for HDR students, to ensure it has effective processes and adequate resources for current and planned enrolments in all fields of study in which it takes HDR students.

Recommendation 5

Given its plans to increase numbers of international higher degree by research (HDR) students, AUQA recommends the University of Adelaide review the implementation of its policies to support HDR students, paying particular attention to the provision of minimum resources and the ways in which students are able to confidentially express any concerns and have them addressed.

4.8 IT Support for Student Learning

During the course of the audit, the Panel became aware of a range of concerns about information technology and services that adversely affect the quality of learning and teaching at the University.

The Panel heard from several different sources of frustrations and difficulties associated with information technology and services including: a lack of responsiveness to complaints; a low level of access to free internet downloads for students (internet quota); insufficient work stations in the Library and other laboratories for the growing number of students; an inability to cater for a diversity of platforms and needs; the level of service from Information Technology Services (ITS); and, for some research students on the Waite Campus, slow or no connections to the internet.

The Audit Panel understands the University is aware of a number of these matters and that it is also undertaking a strategic review of ITS. The issues identified by the Panel are less about the University's overall IT architecture than the quality and responsiveness of front-line support and service to users. The widespread nature of the concerns leads AUQA to recommend that the University urgently review its approach to the provision of IT services.

Recommendation 6

AUQA recommends the University of Adelaide review the effectiveness and responsiveness of IT services and support to better meet the needs of students and staff.

5 DATA

Item 5.1 University of Adelaide Total International Student Coursework Load

	2005	2006	2007	2012 target
Undergraduate	2027	2264	2489	3500
Coursework postgraduate	892	1081	1245	2000
Total International	2920	3345	3735	5500
<i>Percentage increase</i>	19%	15%	12%	47%*
<i>Percentage of total coursework</i>	23%	26%	27%	30%

*Cumulative growth rate 2007–2012

Source: PF p32

Item 5.2 University of Adelaide International Undergraduate Student Load by Faculty*

Faculty	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007(p)	2007(p) %
HUMSS	202	252	284	299	274	11
Sciences	154	183	238	288	313	12
Health Sciences	262	295	307	331	345	14
ECMS	524	610	625	640	606	24
Professions	466	608	781	982	1016	40
<i>University</i>	<i>1608</i>	<i>1947</i>	<i>2235</i>	<i>2540</i>	<i>2555</i>	<i>100</i>

* Includes non-award load

(p) Preliminary load data

Source: University of Adelaide Learning and Teaching Performance Report 2008 (SM1.08) p4

Item 5.3 University of Adelaide International Postgraduate Student Load by Faculty*

Faculty	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007(p)	2007(p) %
HUMSS	80	99	106	103	94	6
Sciences	93	107	112	123	143	9
Health Sciences	59	65	55	56	58	4
ECMS	69	168	260	298	355	22
Professions	424	526	666	803	938	59
<i>University</i>	<i>724</i>	<i>964</i>	<i>1199</i>	<i>1383</i>	<i>1587</i>	<i>100</i>

*Includes HDR load

(p) Preliminary load data

Source: University of Adelaide Learning and Teaching Performance Report 2008 (SM 1.08) p4

Item 5.4 Commencing Bachelor Overseas Students Attrition Rates of Go8 Universities and the Sector 2001–05

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
University of Adelaide	7.64	7.53	6.40	8.10	7.67
Australian National University	6.64	5.70	7.16	10.54	7.39
Monash University	8.80	8.81	8.62	9.69	9.11
University of Melbourne	28.60	29.62	28.63	27.09	5.30
University of New South Wales	5.19	5.43	6.2	5.92	5.98
University of Queensland	6.30	5.63	7.06	5.05	5.75
University of Sydney	7.91	7.40	7.49	6.75	7.03
University of Western Australia	5.36	8.70	8.98	5.75	7.67
<i>Sector</i>	<i>13.75</i>	<i>14.00</i>	<i>13.09</i>	<i>12.92</i>	<i>12.12</i>

Source: Data taken from the higher education statistics collections of the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) website.

http://www.dest.gov.au/sectors/higher_education/publications_resources/profiles

Item 5.5 University of Adelaide International Research Collaboration

	2004	2005	2006
Total DEEWR Category 3 research income	\$17.1m	\$13.0m	\$18.2m
International research income included in Category 3	\$3.9m	\$3.5m	\$5.1m
% of total Category 3 research income	23%	27%	28%
Research grants with international collaborators	95	183	191
Research grants awarded by international sponsors	11	20	20
Contribution of international collaborators to HERDC publications	22%	20%	16%

Source: PF p33 Table 2.2

Item 5.6 GDS Proportion of Bachelor Graduates in Full-time Work* and in Full Time Study 2003-06

Graduates (%)				
<i>Full-time work</i>	<i>2003</i>	<i>2004</i>	<i>2005</i>	<i>2006</i>
University of Adelaide	77.2	78.2	79.9	76.9
Group of Eight universities	82.3	82.3	82.9	83.8
Sector	77.5	77.2	78.3	81.0
Full-time study				
<i>Full-time study</i>	<i>2003</i>	<i>2004</i>	<i>2005</i>	<i>2006</i>
University of Adelaide	47.6	46.0	36.9	35.8
Group of Eight universities	34.5	36.3	27.1	24.8
Sector	23.1	24.2	18.6	16.7

*Of those available for full time work.

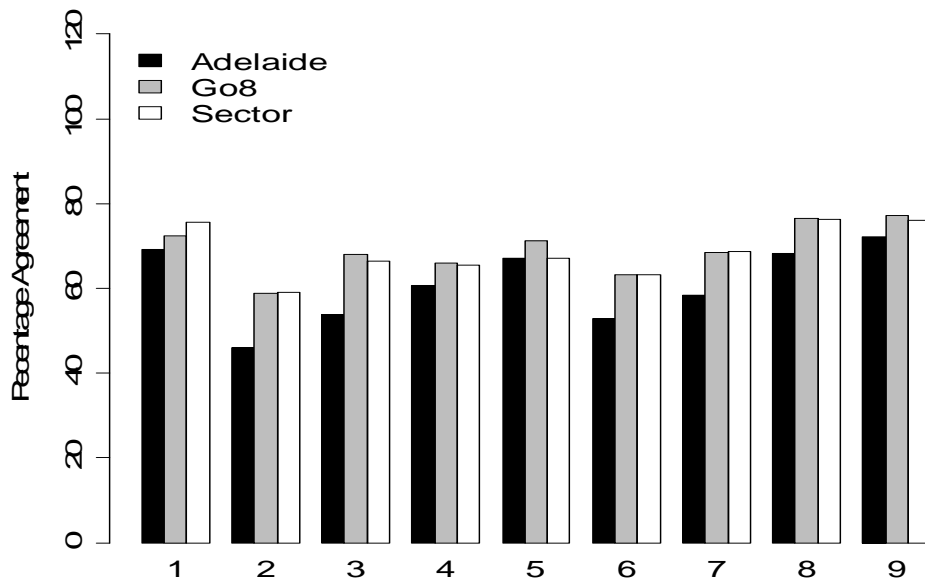
Source: DEEWR

Item 5.7 CEQ Good Teaching Scale, Generic Skills Scale and Overall Satisfaction: Percentage Agreement for Bachelor Degree Graduates 2003-06

Agreement (%)				
<i>Good Teaching Scale</i>	<i>2003</i>	<i>2004</i>	<i>2005</i>	<i>2006</i>
University of Adelaide	44.8	43.9	51.5	52.5
Group of Eight universities	46.9	48.0	50.1	52.4
Sector	46.8	47.2	49.7	51.2
Generic Skills Scale				
<i>Generic Skills Scale</i>	<i>2003</i>	<i>2004</i>	<i>2005</i>	<i>2006</i>
University of Adelaide	69.7	63.5	70.6	69.1
Group of Eight universities	72.6	72.6	72.3	73.7
Sector	70.8	70.3	71.2	71.1
Overall Satisfaction				
<i>Overall Satisfaction</i>	<i>2003</i>	<i>2004</i>	<i>2005</i>	<i>2006</i>
University of Adelaide	63.6	61.9	69.5	65.3
Group of Eight universities	69.9	71.1	70.4	71.9
Sector	68.2	67.9	69.4	69.6

Source: DEEWR

Item 5.8 University of Adelaide: 2006 CEQ Overall Satisfaction – % Agreement by Field of Education



Key:

- 1 Agriculture, Environment & Related
- 2 Architecture & Building
- 3 Creative Arts
- 4 Engineering & Related
- 5 Health
- 6 Information Technology
- 7 Management & Commerce
- 8 Natural & Physical Sciences
- 9 Society & Culture

Source: DEEWR

Item 5.9 Commencing Bachelor Domestic Students Attrition Rates for Go8 Universities and the Sector 2001–05

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
University of Adelaide	18.07	18.1	18.14	16.30	17.25
Australian National University	17.44	17.78	13.81	11.11	11.54
Monash University	15.36	15.97	14.14	13.58	13.25
University of Melbourne	9.94	10.27	9.13	8.92	8.64
University of New South Wales	11.71	12.4	11.06	11.81	11.89
University of Queensland	16.42	16.85	16.94	15.33	16.57
University of Sydney	13.43	14.06	13.1	11.65	11.24
University of Western Australia	14.41	12.36	12.58	12.16	12.66
<i>Sector</i>	<i>19.23</i>	<i>19.9</i>	<i>19.09</i>	<i>18.82</i>	<i>18.89</i>

Source: Data taken from the higher education statistics collections of the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) website.

http://www.dest.gov.au/sectors/higher_education/publications_resources/profiles

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: THE AUDIT PROCESS

In late 2007 the Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA) appointed an Audit Panel to undertake a quality audit of the University of Adelaide. Within the scope of the particular audit, AUQA's Cycle 2 audits emphasise institutional standards and performance outcomes, with attention to benchmarking activities and their effect on standards and outcomes.

In addition to the National Protocols for Higher Education Approval Processes, relevant external reference points for this audit include:

- Australian Qualifications Framework
- Disability Standards for Education
- ESOS Act and the requirements of the related National Code
- *Higher Education Support Act 2003* and related DEST/DEEWR guidelines (2005)
- *Good Practice Principles for Credit Transfer and Articulation from VET to Higher Education* (MCEETYA 2005)
- National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy
- *Provision of Education to International Students: Code of Practice and Guidelines for Australian Universities* (AVCC (now Universities Australia) 2005)
- Workplace health and safety legislation.

Quotations taken from the Portfolio are identified in the Report as (PF p) and from supporting material as (SM).

The mission, objectives, values and vision of AUQA are shown in Appendix B, membership of the Audit Panel is provided in Appendix C and Appendix D defines abbreviations and technical terms used in this Report.

Full details of the Cycle 2 audit process are available in the AUQA Audit Manual.

AUQA pre-selected the theme of 'Internationalisation' for the audit of the University of Adelaide, taking into account: the presence of offshore programs (a known high risk area of university operations), the proportion of international students studying University of Adelaide courses (27%), and recommendations from the Cycle 1 audit (recommendations 25 and 26).

The theme of 'Curriculum and Assessment', one of three proposed by the University, was selected by AUQA in view of the University's performance on measures of student satisfaction, such as the CEQ, the importance of curriculum innovation and renewal for the University in a State context and recommendations from the Cycle 1 audit (recommendations 2, 3, 15, 20, 21, 22, 23).

The Audit Panel selected several recommendations on communication and human resources for follow-up (recommendations 5, 12, 13 and 14), as attention to human resources management was a significant issue in the Cycle 1 audit. Some other findings in this Report contain references to Cycle 1 audit recommendations.

On 12 June 2008, the University of Adelaide presented its submission (Performance Portfolio) to AUQA, including 34 supporting materials. The Audit Panel met on 16 July 2008 to consider these materials.

The Audit Panel Chair and Audit Director undertook a Preparatory Visit to the University of Adelaide on 31 July. During that visit, the answers to questions and additional information requested by the Panel were discussed, as well as the Audit Visit program.

A visit to two educational partners of the University of Adelaide in the delivery of offshore programs was conducted from 13 to 16 August 2008. A written report of these activities was circulated to the full Audit Panel prior to the main Audit Visit. The main Audit Visit, at the University's North Terrace Campus, took place between 9 and 12 September 2008.

In all, the Audit Panel spoke with around 250 people in the course of the audit, including the Vice-Chancellor, the Chancellor, senior management, academic and general staff, external stakeholders, undergraduate and postgraduate students (including international students), and offshore partners. Open sessions were available for any member of the University community to meet the Audit Panel and two people took advantage of this opportunity.

AUQA expresses its appreciation to Professor Birgit Lohmann, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Learning and Quality) and her team for their excellent assistance and organisation throughout the audit process. AUQA also thanks the University of Adelaide for its ready production of additional information and for granting the Panel secure access to its intranet for the period of the audit.

This Report relates to the situation current at the time of the Audit Visit, which ended on 12 September 2008, and does not take account of any changes that may have occurred subsequently. The Report records the conclusions reached by the Audit Panel based on the documentation provided by the University of Adelaide as well as information gained through interviews, discussion and observation.

While every attempt has been made to reach a comprehensive understanding of the University's activities within the scope of the audit, the Report does not identify every aspect of quality assurance and its effectiveness or shortcomings. The Panel did not visit any of the University's other campuses in South Australia, although it spoke with students from the Waite Campus.

APPENDIX B: AUQA'S MISSION, OBJECTIVES, VISION AND VALUES

Mission

AUQA is the principal national quality assurance agency in higher education with the responsibility of providing public assurance of the quality of Australia's universities and other institutions of higher education, and assisting in enhancing the academic quality of these institutions.

Objectives

AUQA is established to be the principal national quality assurance agency in higher education, with responsibility for quality audits of higher education institutions and accreditation authorities, reporting on performance and outcomes, assisting in quality enhancement, advising on quality assurance; and liaising internationally with quality agencies in other jurisdictions, for the benefit of Australian higher education.

Specifically, the objectives of AUQA are as follows:

1. Arrange and manage a system of periodic audits of:
 - the quality of the academic activities, including attainment of standards of performance and outcomes of Australian universities and other higher education institutions;
 - the quality assurance arrangements intended to maintain and elevate that quality;
 - compliance with criteria set out in the National Protocols for Higher Education Approval Processes;and monitor, review, analyse and provide public reports on the quality of outcomes in Australian universities and higher education institutions.
2. Arrange and manage a system of periodic audits of the quality assurance processes, procedures, and outcomes of State, Territory and Commonwealth higher education accreditation authorities including their impact on the quality of higher education programs; and monitor, review, analyse and report on the outcomes of those audits.
3. Publicly report periodically on matters relating to quality assurance, including the relative standards and outcomes of the Australian higher education system and its institutions, its processes and its international standing, and the impact of the National Protocols for Higher Education Approval Processes on Australian Higher Education, using information available to AUQA from its audits and other activities carried out under these Objectives, and from other sources.
4. Develop partnerships with other quality agencies in relation to matters directly relating to quality assurance and audit, to facilitate efficient cross-border quality assurance processes and the international transfer of knowledge about those processes.

Vision

To consolidate AUQA's position, as the leading reference point for quality assurance in higher education in and for Australia. Specifically:

- AUQA's judgements will be widely recognised as objective, accurate and useful, based on its effective procedures, including auditor training and thorough investigation.
- AUQA's work will be recognised by institutions and accrediting agencies as adding value to their activities, through the emphasis on autonomy, diversity and self-review.
- Through AUQA's work, there will be an improvement in public knowledge of the relative academic standards of Australian higher education and an increase in public confidence in Australian higher education.
- Through AUQA's work with other quality assurance agencies, the international quality assurance requirements for Australian higher education institutions will be coherent and rigorous, avoiding duplication and inconsistency.
- AUQA's advice will be sought on quality assurance in higher education, through mechanisms including consulting, training and publications.
- AUQA will be recognised among its international peers as a leading quality assurance agency, collaborating with other agencies and providing leadership by example.

Values

AUQA will be:

- *Rigorous*: AUQA carries out all its audits as rigorously and thoroughly as possible.
- *Supportive*: AUQA recognises institutional autonomy in setting objectives and implementing processes to achieve them, and acts to facilitate and support this.
- *Flexible*: AUQA operates flexibly, in order to acknowledge and reinforce institutional diversity, and is responsive to institution and agency characteristics and needs.
- *Cooperative*: AUQA recognises that the achievement of quality in any organisation depends on a commitment to quality within the organisation itself, and so operates as unobtrusively as is consistent with effectiveness and rigour.
- *Collaborative*: as a quality assurance agency, AUQA works collaboratively with the accrediting agencies (in addition to its audit role with respect to these agencies).
- *Transparent*: AUQA's audit procedures, and its own quality assurance system, are open to public scrutiny.
- *Economical*: AUQA operates cost-effectively and keeps as low as possible the demands it places on institutions and agencies.
- *Open*: AUQA reports publicly and clearly on its findings in relation to institutions, agencies and the sector.

AUQA's Mission and Objectives were revised in March 2007, as recommended by MCEETYA. AUQA's Vision and Values have been modified accordingly.

APPENDIX C: THE AUDIT PANEL

Dr Jeanette Baird, Audit Director, Australian Universities Quality Agency

Professor David Goodman, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (International), University of Technology, Sydney

Professor Beryl Hesketh, Executive Dean, College of Health and Science, University of Western Sydney (Chair)

Mr Norbert Vogel, Director, The Australian Knowledge Management Group

Professor Robert Zemsky, Professor and Chair, The Learning Alliance, University of Pennsylvania, USA

Observer:

Ms Maria Elisa Zenteno Villa, Manager, Comisión Nacional de Acreditación, Chile

APPENDIX D: ABBREVIATIONS AND DEFINITIONS

The following abbreviations and definitions are used in this Report. As necessary, they are explained in context.

ALTC.....	Australian Learning and Teaching Council (formerly the Carrick Institute)
AMC.....	Assessment Monitoring Committee (of Academic Board's ULTC)
AUIDF.....	Australian Universities International Directors' Forum
AUQA.....	Australian Universities Quality Agency
AVCC.....	Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee (now Universities Australia)
BBIT.....	Bachelor of Business Information Technology
B Com.....	Bachelor of Commerce
B Com Hons.....	Bachelor of Commerce (Honours)
B Sc.....	Bachelor of Science
Carrick.....	Carrick Institute (now ALTC)
CAUDIT.....	Council of Australian University Directors of Information Technology
CEC.....	Coursework Entry Committee (of Academic Board's ULTC)
CEQ.....	Course Experience Questionnaire
CLPD.....	Centre for Learning and Professional Development
DEST.....	Australian Government Department of Education, Science and Training
DEEWR.....	Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, formerly DEST
EFTSL.....	equivalent full-time student load
ECMS.....	(Faculty of) Engineering, Computer and Mathematical Sciences
ERGA.....	Education Research Group of Adelaide
GDS.....	Graduate Destination Survey
Go8.....	Group of Eight
GPA.....	grade point average
GSS.....	Generic Skills Scale (of the CEQ)
HDR.....	higher degree by research
HERDC.....	Higher Education Research Data Collection
HR.....	human resources
HUMSS.....	(Faculty of) Humanities and Social Sciences
IELTS.....	International English Language Testing System
ISC.....	Internationalisation Strategy Committee
ITIL.....	Information Technology Information Library
ITS.....	Information Technology Services
MBA.....	Master of Business Administration
MCEETYA.....	Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs

National Protocols	National Protocols for higher Education Approval Processes
OSDC.....	Organisational and Staff Development Committee
PAC	Program Approval Committee (of Academic Board's ULTC)
PDR	Performance Development Review
PF p	Performance Portfolio page reference
Portfolio.....	Performance Portfolio
Protocols.....	National Protocols for higher Education Approval Processes
QUT.....	Queensland University of Technology
SELT	Student Evaluation of Learning and Teaching
SSOWP	Staff Survey Oversight Working Party
TAFE SA.....	Technical and Further Education South Australia
ULTC.....	University Learning and Teaching Committee (of Academic Board)

