

AUSTRALIAN UNIVERSITIES QUALITY AGENCY

Report of an Audit of
Northern Melbourne Institute of TAFE
(Higher Education)

July 2009

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OVERVIEW OF THE AUDIT

Background

In 2003 the Australian Government introduced the *Higher Education Support Act 2003* (HESA) to allow students in non self-accrediting higher education institutions to receive financial assistance for their students' tuition fees through the FEE-HELP program.

Non self-accrediting institutions (NSAIs) approved under HESA for this purpose have become known as higher education providers (HEPs). (Although other institutions also provide higher education, the term 'HEP' is commonly used to denote only non self-accrediting higher education providers, and it is used in this sense in this Report.) HESA requires that HEPs in receipt of FEE-HELP funds must meet a range of quality and accountability requirements, including regular audit by a quality auditing body named in the Higher Education Provider Guidelines.

This Report of the audit by the Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA) of the Northern Melbourne Institute of TAFE (NMIT) (the 'Institute') provides an overview, and then briefly details the Audit Panel's main findings, and its commendations, affirmations and recommendations. The NMIT strategic plan 'The Northern Journey' including its vision and strategic objectives, is given in Appendix A; the mission, objectives, vision and values of AUQA in Appendix B; membership of the Audit Panel in Appendix C; and abbreviations and technical terms used in this Report in Appendix D.

The Audit Process

AUQA bases its audits of non self-accrediting HEPs on each organisation's own objectives, together with the MCEETYA *National Protocols for Higher Education Approval Processes* (National Protocols, available at: <http://www.mceetya.edu.au/mceetya/>), the DEEWR *Audit Handbook for non self-accrediting Higher Education Providers* and other relevant legal requirements or codes to which the organisation is committed. The programs or courses of NSAIs are accredited by government accreditation authorities, so quality audits of HEPs do not include a detailed examination of the academic quality assurance processes for programs of study.

HEP audits under the HESA consider institutional actions and performance in relation to, firstly, the institution's objectives; and, secondly, a group of criteria collectively known as 'Quality Audit Factors' (QAFs). The four QAFs are set out in the handbook referred to above (and in the AUQA Audit Manual). Their primary purpose is to provide the HEPs with a framework for the review of certain aspects of institutional performance. In the report of its self review (the 'Performance Portfolio' or 'Portfolio'), NMIT reported against each of the QAFs. The chapters in this Report use the four main topic headings provided by the QAFs. Within each chapter, all the criteria for that QAF are addressed, but usually in a holistic way rather than criterion by criterion.

On 27 February 2009, the Institute presented its submission to AUQA, comprising a 66-page self-assessment report against the individual QAF criteria, together with supplementary materials. The Audit Panel met by teleconference on 11 March 2009 to consider these documents.

NMIT has its headquarters at its Preston campus in Melbourne, one of a number of campuses in Victoria. On the morning of 20 April 2009, the Audit Panel visited the Fairfield, Epping, and Northern Lodge campuses of the Institute to view facilities and for informal contact with staff. The formal Audit Visit interviews took place on the afternoon of 20 April and on 21 April 2009 at the Preston campus.

The Audit Panel spoke with more than 65 people during these audit visits, including external members of the NMIT Board, the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), managers, academic staff, students, industry representatives and external stakeholders. A session was available for any member of the Institute community to meet the Audit Panel but no one took advantage of this opportunity.

This Report relates to the situation current at the time of the Audit Visit, which ended on 21 April and does not take account of any changes that may have occurred subsequently. It records the conclusions reached by the Audit Panel based on the documentation provided by the Institute as well as information gained through interviews, discussion and observation. While every attempt has been made to reach a comprehensive understanding of the Institute's activities encompassed by the audit, the Report does not identify every aspect of quality assurance and its effectiveness or shortcomings.

The Report contains a summary of audit findings together with lists of commendations, affirmations and recommendations. 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 Institute, with evidence, they are termed 'affirmations'. AUQA indicates that some recommendations and affirmations have a high priority. It is acknowledged that recommendations in this Audit Report may have resource implications.

Quotations taken from the NMIT Portfolio are identified as, eg 'PF p6'.

CONCLUSIONS

This section summarises the main findings and lists the commendations, affirmations and recommendations. Other favourable comments and suggestions are mentioned throughout the text of the Report.

Introduction to Findings

Since commencing its first degree program in 2004, higher education enrolments at NMIT have grown to a headcount of 242 students in 2009. The Board and staff at NMIT are proud of the new seamless model of tertiary education which they are developing from certificate through to bachelor degree. NMIT has put a lot of work into establishing itself as a HEP, and is now moving from the early setup stage to the next phase of the development of its higher education operations when structures and processes become more formalised.

NMIT defines itself as having a 'vocational approach' to higher education and has a range of high quality practical facilities and infrastructure which contribute to this vocational approach to student learning. The Institute has further challenges ahead in the development of its seamless model of education. It appears at times that NMIT is attempting to 'fit' higher education into a vocational education and training (VET) mould, assuming that higher education tasks and policies can legitimately be reinterpreted into a TAFE framework, rather than looking at policies and processes from both higher education and VET perspectives and developing a process which can better serve both sectors. NMIT now needs to consider adopting an approach to higher education strategic planning which is supported by a key performance indicator (KPI) framework. In considering such a framework, further work is needed in building the higher education student statistical collection. Also this data collection needs to be used by the Institute's committees to monitor the higher education student cohort.

Given NMIT's commitment to higher education, the NMIT Board needs to take a more proactive role in creating the higher education profile. The roles of the Higher Education Academic Committee (HEAC) and the Academic Head of Higher Education also need to be clarified and enhanced. HEAC as the academic board of the Institute needs to be taking a stronger role in the governance of higher education.

Other challenges for the Institute to address include the implementation of plagiarism and higher education academic promotions policies. The beginnings of a quality management system (QMS) for higher education are evident, but more work is needed to move beyond a compliance view of quality to understanding and implementing a continuous improvement approach. As part of this approach, the Audit Panel recommends development of a QMS that includes external moderation. Also, staff need leadership and support in how to operate within a higher education environment.

Overall, NMIT satisfies the requirements of the QAFs.

Commendations

- 1. AUQA commends Northern Melbourne Institute of TAFE on exploring a model of higher education within a vocational education framework, which includes a clear vocational and professional focus.8
- 2. AUQA commends Northern Melbourne Institute of TAFE on the high quality of practical facilities available to higher education students.12
- 3. AUQA commends Northern Melbourne Institute of TAFE for its strong involvement with industry in the development and ongoing monitoring of courses.17
- 4. AUQA commends the Northern Melbourne Institute of TAFE’s Visiting Scholar Program, and encourages the further development of this program.18

Affirmations

- 1. AUQA affirms Northern Melbourne Institute of TAFE’s identified need to involve additional senior external academics on the Higher Education Academic Committee.10
- 2. AUQA affirms Northern Melbourne Institute of TAFE’S intention to develop and strengthen awareness of the NMIT higher education brand.13
- 3. (urgent) AUQA affirms that the Northern Melbourne Institute of TAFE, through the Higher Education Academic Committee, should continue the development of a set of graduate attributes for its higher education offerings and use these attributes to further define the higher education profile.14
- 4. (urgent) AUQA affirms Northern Melbourne Institute of TAFE’s intention to implement a plagiarism policy.14
- 5. AUQA affirms Northern Melbourne Institute of TAFE’s recently commenced course consolidation project to examine and consolidate higher education courses.17
- 6. AUQA affirms Northern Melbourne Institute of TAFE’s intention to develop an NMIT higher education alumni group.21

Recommendations

- 1. (urgent) AUQA recommends that Northern Melbourne Institute of TAFE Board, be more fully engaged with the developing higher education strategy of the Institute, and that it oversee the development of a strategic plan for higher education which comprises short- and long-term targets and is regularly monitored and reviewed as the Institute’s higher education portfolio develops.9
- 2. (urgent) AUQA recommends that the Northern Melbourne Institute of TAFE Board oversee the development of a key performance indicator framework to monitor the strategic plan; and that it regularly receive reports on a small set of significant key performance indicators to enable it to assess the progress of the higher education portfolio.10

3. (urgent) AUQA recommends that Northern Melbourne Institute of TAFE reviews and improves the quality of minute taking of all higher education meeting and committee documentation.....11
4. (urgent) AUQA recommends that Northern Melbourne Institute of TAFE improve higher education student data collections, and that this data is monitored by the Higher Education Academic Committee and regularly reported to the NMIT Board.12
5. (urgent) AUQA recommends that Northern Melbourne Institute of TAFE develop an approach to the external moderation of assessment in all higher education courses and review its approach to internal moderation, to ensure the processes are thorough and enhance the quality of teaching.14
6. AUQA recommends that the Northern Melbourne Institute of TAFE substantially strengthens its ongoing support to assist staff in both understanding and operating in the higher education environment.15
7. (urgent) AUQA recommends that Northern Melbourne Institute of TAFE review the roles of the Higher Education Academic Committee, Course Committees, and of the Academic Head of Higher Education, to ensure that the Higher Education Academic Committee, as the senior academic forum of the Institute, has accountability for the academic governance of higher education, including the development of the higher education profile and all academic policy.....16
8. (urgent) AUQA recommends that Northern Melbourne Institute of TAFE develop and implement a higher education academic promotions policy.18
9. AUQA recommends that Northern Melbourne Institute of TAFE, under the auspices of the Higher Education Academic Committee, further define and develop a quality management system for higher education, including a formal approach to benchmarking.....21

1 INSTITUTIONAL AND EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES AND INSTITUTIONAL GOVERNANCE

From its beginnings in 1910 NMIT has grown 'with seven campuses with four training institutes stretching from the inner metropolitan suburbs to Ararat in western Victoria' (PF p7). It sets out its vision, mission and values in *The Northern Journey*, the NMIT Strategic Plan. The Institute's strategic objectives are elaborated in the NMIT Strategic Plan and may be found in Appendix A of this Report.

1.1 Institutional and Educational Objectives

'NMIT was the first TAFE institute in Victoria to gain accreditation for specialist bachelor degrees for higher education studies in 2004, and enrolled higher education students in nine disciplines in 2009' (PF p7). Since the first degree program began in 2004, higher education has grown to a headcount of 242 students in 2009; the average EFTSL is 0.43. The Board and staff at NMIT are proud of the new model of education which they are developing from certificate through to bachelor degree. NMIT has chosen to explore a new context for the delivery of higher education 'aimed to integrate these new higher education courses into its existing educational development, delivery and management structure' (PF p5).

Table 1: NMIT Higher Education Student Profile 2009

| Program by Faculty | Year Commenced | EFTSL | Headcount* |
|--|----------------|---------------|------------|
| Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences | | | |
| Bachelor of Illustration | 2008 | 15.63 | 32 |
| Bachelor of Australian Popular Music | 2007 | 41.25 | 92 |
| Faculty of Business | | | |
| Associate Degree in Accounting | 2008 | 8.37 | 20 |
| Associate Degree in International Business | 2008 | 2.33 | 5 |
| Associate Degree in International Business Management | 2008 | 2.97 | 8 |
| Faculty of Earth Sciences | | | |
| Bachelor of Viticulture and Winemaking | 2006 | 7.50 | 23 |
| Bachelor of Equine Studies | 2006 | 10.79 | 25 |
| Bachelor of Applied Aquaculture | 2006 | 7.38 | 19 |
| Faculty of Further Education | | | |
| Bachelor of Writing and Publishing | 2009 | 4.75 | 10 |
| Faculty of Hospitality, Tourism and Personal Services | | | |
| Bachelor of Hospitality Management | 2009 | 3.91 | 8 |
| Total | | 104.88 | 242 |

*Note: current NMIT student profile 1 headcount averages to 0.43 EFTSL

Source: NMIT student data collections

There are many challenges in developing a model of higher education within a VET framework, some of which are explored further in this report. The Institute has deliberately not chosen a dual sector model, and the activities of the two sectors are being run as seamlessly as is practical. The Institute is conscious that it is in the early days of this new approach and that it will need to develop a sustainable model for seamless delivery between the two sectors.

To provide a perspective on the Institute's operations, higher education at NMIT in 2009 comprises 1% of total student load and 6.4% of total budget. The low number of higher education enrolments means that the Institute's higher education portfolio is being subsidised by the Institute's commercial activities. The Institute has a substantial, first rate educational infrastructure which it is using in order to enhance its higher education profile. It has excellent

facilities in a number of vocational and technical areas, including equine studies, popular music and viticulture.

The Audit Panel commends the Institute for pioneering this seamless approach to higher education. Further, the NMIT involvement in the AUQA audit process is timely as it has given the Institute the opportunity to take stock of its achievements to date in establishing itself as a credible HEP, and to consider the next stage in the development of the NMIT higher education portfolio.

Commendation 1

AUQA commends Northern Melbourne Institute of TAFE on exploring a model of higher education within a vocational education framework, which includes a clear vocational and professional focus.

One of the main challenges that will face the Institute in developing and managing higher education is to move from the compliance-driven approach to quality assurance (derived from operating in a VET context over many years) to a continuous improvement approach to the quality management of higher education. The Audit Panel was of the opinion that VET is both a strength and a weakness to the Institute in this respect. The VET profile of the Institute has enabled the Institute to develop a range of first class facilities and infrastructure, but many of the approaches undertaken in VET need to be re-conceptualised in developing a seamless approach to education which incorporates higher education. In VET, the Australian Quality Training Framework move to a continuous quality improvement approach should also further encourage the development of the same approach across the Institute.

1.1.1 Strategy and Strategic Plan

NMIT has recently completed a strategic planning process resulting in the development of the new institutional strategic plan *The Northern Journey*, which includes higher education in the Institute's vision. The strategic planning process involved consultations with staff and stakeholders and was a management-led process with final endorsement by the NMIT Board.

The NMIT strategic plan, written in the present tense, is largely aspirational and is a statement of strategic objectives. The Institute is currently in the process of developing implementation plans to underpin the strategic plan. NMIT has no detailed strategic plan for higher education and has no institutional KPI framework. The Institute is also preparing to operate in a fully contestable VET market.

The Institute needs to strengthen its capabilities in the area of strategic planning, monitoring and reporting on a number of levels. Staff show great enthusiasm and support for the development of higher education within a VET environment, but are not clear about the long-term strategy for it. This causes unease at some staff levels about future job security. For example, whilst the senior management was able to discuss the strategy and commitment to higher education in the long term and was able to discuss issues of building critical mass of student numbers, and the challenges in developing a seamless system, many staff working in the higher education area were unable to articulate or understand the vision or strategy for higher education. Further, the Institute is not measuring performance of higher education beyond enrolment and this is of concern to the Audit Panel.

The Institute, in pursuing a seamless approach to education, appears reluctant to develop a stand-alone higher education plan, but the development of such a plan and associated strategic

discussions would greatly assist the Institute in the development and understanding of its higher education portfolio. The higher education strategy and plan could then be integrated into the overall NMIT strategic plan. It is also important for the Institution to be able to continue to develop and revise its strategy for higher education as it evolves, for all staff to be aware of the strategies for higher education, and for progress to be regularly measured and monitored.

The Institute does not have a KPI framework for the monitoring of the NMIT strategic plan, and no KPIs are reported to the NMIT Board, CEO or senior executive. However, the Audit Panel was provided with the NMIT Strategic Plan and supporting implementation plans, which contained proposed measures described as KPIs. The Audit Panel found that these measures are not performance indicators, but are Institute review and improvement projects and activities. NMIT should develop a KPI framework to underpin its strategic plan, and ensure that a suite of higher education KPIs is reported regularly to the NMIT Board and HEAC.

1.1.2 Breaking New Ground

The Institute is breaking new ground in exploring and offering higher education and VET awards in a single and seamless model of delivery. Breaking new ground brings with it increased interest by the higher education sector. From some interviews the Audit Panel felt that NMIT is attempting to 'fit' higher education into a VET mould, and that there is an assumption that all higher education tasks and policies can legitimately be reinterpreted. A challenge for NMIT is to look at policies and processes from both a higher education and a VET perspective and then develop a process that can better serve both sectors. In cases where integration does not work and processes need to be identifiably separate, NMIT must appreciate this legitimate separation between higher education and VET activities.

1.2 *Institutional Governance*

NMIT has a Board which governs the Institute. The NMIT Board is responsible to the Victorian Minister for Skills and Workforce Participation and has a membership of fifteen, eight of whom are Ministerial appointees. The Board is presently playing a reactive rather than a proactive role in the development of higher education at NMIT. Members of the Board advised that they fully support the initiatives of the CEO and senior management in the development of the higher education portfolio.

From examining the minutes of meetings of the Board, the Audit Panel is not convinced that the Board is devoting sufficient time to significant, regular discussions of higher education. Whilst the Audit Panel acknowledges that higher education is a small component of the total Institute's profile and activity, it was described by Board members as very much the future of the Institute. If the Institute is aspiring to assuming a greater role in higher education Board members need to be more involved in the governance and monitoring of NMIT higher education strategy.

Recommendation 1

(urgent) AUQA recommends that Northern Melbourne Institute of TAFE Board, be more fully engaged with the developing higher education strategy of the Institute, and that it oversee the development of a strategic plan for higher education which comprises short- and long-term targets and is regularly monitored and reviewed as the Institute's higher education portfolio develops.

Board members told the Audit Panel that the Board has never had any self-reviews, annual retreats or formal planning days. Members of the Board acknowledged that they are in the early

days of higher education provision and are aware of the need to seek increased guidance in the governance of higher education, but the Board was unable to provide evidence as to what it is doing to obtain this expertise. Although higher education is a small part of the NMIT profile, it is important that NMIT establish good practices in its higher education activities, and in corporate and academic governance. The Audit Panel suggests the NMIT Board have an annual self-review of its objectives and its performance and also consider at least an annual retreat or strategic planning forum, including discussions on higher education strategy.

Members of the Board also need to ensure that they are receiving reports on KPIs and the appropriate data to make decisions and to monitor performance. Higher education is currently a small component of the Institute's budget, but it is a developing part of the Institute's business, so financial and other data need to be presented to the Board and reported on regularly.

Recommendation 2

(urgent) AUQA recommends that the Northern Melbourne Institute of TAFE Board oversee the development of a key performance indicator framework to monitor the strategic plan; and that it regularly receive reports on a small set of significant key performance indicators to enable it to assess the progress of the higher education portfolio.

1.2.1 Higher Education Academic Committee (HEAC)

The Higher Education Academic Committee (HEAC) is a committee of the NMIT Board responsible for higher education. HEAC is in essence the NMIT higher education academic board. HEAC has been operating in its present format for approximately 18 months and is chaired by a member of the NMIT Board. HEAC appears well attended by external academics, and NMIT acknowledges that it could be strengthened by the involvement of additional senior academics. HEAC members advised that NMIT involvement in higher education is evolving, and is reflecting and meeting regional needs. The committee, like the NMIT Board, also recognises the need for the further definition and development of the NMIT higher education brand in the sector.

Affirmation 1

AUQA affirms Northern Melbourne Institute of TAFE's identified need to involve additional senior external academics on the Higher Education Academic Committee.

The Audit Panel noted from the minutes of HEAC that some of the meetings are extremely short (as little as 30 minutes on one occasion). This is of concern as it is not clear where the strategic discussions regarding higher education are being undertaken within NMIT. The roles of HEAC and the Academic Head of Higher Education are not sharply defined and this affects decision making and policy development in the area of higher education. The Audit Panel was advised that the committee had not undertaken any self-assessment, had not developed a higher education strategic plan nor action work plan, and had no KPI or other framework that it monitors in overseeing the development of higher education, relying on ad hoc reports from faculties. This ad hoc approach means the committee had not considered major strategic issues such as the present student profile or the costs of delivery, and how long a course is given in a start up phase before it is not considered viable to run.

Although the above issues may not all be the responsibility of HEAC, the lack of identifiable accountability for many higher education issues was a concern to the Audit Panel. Members of HEAC are also expressed the view that they are not responsible for resourcing issues of higher

education, but only for the outputs of these resourcing decisions. As the resourcing and development of the higher education profile are closely linked this needs to be more strongly reflected in the HEAC terms of reference.

There are inconsistencies in how academic higher education policies are consulted upon, developed, approved and reviewed. The current ad hoc approach to policy development and approvals does not support the development of a culture of continuous improvement and it is important that NMIT develop a higher education academic policy framework to support its future aspirations in regard to higher education. As the senior higher education academic forum it is important that HEAC approve all higher education academic policy.

1.2.2 Record of Decisions Made in Higher Education Committees

NMIT provided copies of minutes of meetings from all higher education related committees. The Audit Panel noted that there was little if any record of the discussion on how decisions were reached. This led to the possible conclusion that items for approval were 'rubber-stamped'. It was noted in many cases that major documents are tabled at meetings, which does not allow for digestion, or thorough discussion of the subject matter. This is an area where NMIT needs to improve quickly. The Institute has an internal quality assurance process, which amongst other activities, checks that minutes have been completed and signed off. But the Institute needs to consider the quality of both the discussion within its higher education committees, and of minutes that adequately record the discussion, remembering that the minutes are a legal account of a committee's proceedings.

Recommendation 3

(urgent) AUQA recommends that Northern Melbourne Institute of TAFE reviews and improves the quality of minute taking of all higher education meeting and committee documentation.

2 ACHIEVING EFFECTIVENESS IN TEACHING, LEARNING AND OTHER CORE FUNCTIONS

The development of the NMIT higher education profile and the balance of niche and mainstream programs has evolved in response to Victorian Government policy which has designated that higher education programs delivered by TAFE must be ‘...in vocational areas’ (PF p5). At the time of the audit the Institute had 10 programs in three faculties comprising seven bachelor programs and three associate degrees.

2.1 *Teaching and Learning*

2.1.1 Higher Education Teaching Facilities

The challenge for NMIT is to continue to achieve a balance between the delivery of niche and mainstream higher education programs, which complement the VET profile. The Institution’s strategy is to build higher education programs in areas where there is already a strong foundation of VET delivery, and first rate facilities to support these endeavours.

On the first day of the Audit Visit the Audit Panel toured higher education facilities at the Fairfield, Northern Lodge and Epping campuses of the Institute and noted the facilities and infrastructure provided to both VET and higher education students at NMIT, and in particular the practical quality of these facilities which enable students to undertake studies in industry standard facilities.

Commendation 2

AUQA commends Northern Melbourne Institute of TAFE on the high quality of practical facilities available to higher education students.

2.1.2 Higher Education Student Data Collection and Monitoring

The Audit Panel requested data on enrolments and other relevant data categories from the Institution, but this data was not able to be provided in an easily accessible format. Staff in interviews agreed that the quality of student data needs to be improved. It is essential at this early stage in the development of NMIT’s higher education activities that the Institute collect and align its higher education data with the higher education sector in general. This is necessary in order to benchmark NMIT’s performance in areas such as articulation, attrition, progress, and completions for various cohorts. Further, staff advised that student data is not regularly reported either to the NMIT Board, senior management, faculties or HEAC (this was supported by the examination of minutes of meetings). The collecting, reporting and monitoring of student data needs to be improved and regularly communicated; in particular, retention, progress and attrition data needs to be monitored by the Board, HEAC and senior management.

Recommendation 4

(urgent) AUQA recommends that Northern Melbourne Institute of TAFE improve higher education student data collections, and that this data is monitored by the Higher Education Academic Committee and regularly reported to the NMIT Board.

The Audit Panel also noted that the Institute had not considered providing for the online enrolment of higher education students and this is something that could be further considered as the NMIT higher education profile evolves.

2.1.3 Articulation

The Institute is mindful of the need to improve articulation internally from its own VET courses and of the attractiveness of providing associate degrees which articulate into its own bachelor programs. Articulation pathways need to be strengthened by the Institute. The Audit Panel also encourages NMIT to develop further international student articulation from NMIT VET offshore programs, into onshore associate degree and bachelor programs.

2.1.4 Balancing Delivery

In developing its higher education profile, NMIT must strike a balance between niche and mainstream programs, which are also compatible with the VET profile of the Institute. The Institute must also endeavour to strike an appropriate balance between the practical and theoretical in course content. Feedback from Course Committees, industry connections, and student feedback has enabled newly introduced courses to be further refined quickly. Staff and students spoke of the tensions in balancing theory and practice as new courses evolve.

2.1.5 NMIT Higher Education Brand

The NMIT higher education brand is developing and staff pride themselves on courses which are vocationally driven and where students are taught in state of the art facilities. Whilst this provides strengths in keeping an edge in the market, it also brings with it challenges in sustaining these standards into the future particularly as the student cohort grows. Industry relationships are also instrumental in influencing courses at NMIT, with the small numbers of staff and student cohorts enabling strong relationships to be developed and industry's voice to be heard. NMIT must be careful to preserve these conditions and relationships with industry as it expands and builds its higher education 'vocational' reputation.

Many of those interviewed had trouble in describing the higher education brand beyond it being defined as a vocational approach, and comments were made in a number of interviews that the NMIT higher education brand needs to be further strengthened and defined.

Affirmation 2

AUQA affirms Northern Melbourne Institute of TAFE'S intention to develop and strengthen awareness of the NMIT higher education brand.

2.1.6 Feedback Surveys

NMIT is exploring how students are to be surveyed in the future. The Institute has adopted a version of the Course Experience Questionnaire which it is using to survey students at the end of each subject and this information is also considered by Course Committees. Further, NMIT has advised that it will use the Graduate Destination Survey (GDS) to survey students once there is a substantial group of graduates. Participation in the GDS will also provide benchmarking data and feedback from alumni. At present this information is collated at an individual level as there are only a small number of graduates.

2.1.7 Moderation

The Audit Panel found no evidence of any external moderation of assessment being conducted for any higher education courses, other than through assessment in applied areas, such as popular music. As there is limited external assessment occurring, the Institute cannot effectively monitor the appropriateness of the assessment methods and results of its higher education courses. The Institute has developed some internal assessment models but there is no evidence that these processes are improving the quality of teaching. Further, the Audit Panel saw internal subject moderation documents that had not been completed, yet were signed off as having been moderated, so it was difficult to know what moderation had actually occurred.

Recommendation 5

(urgent) AUQA recommends that Northern Melbourne Institute of TAFE develop an approach to the external moderation of assessment in all higher education courses and review its approach to internal moderation, to ensure the processes are thorough and enhance the quality of teaching.

2.1.8 Graduate Attributes

The Audit Panel was advised that consultations are occurring regarding the development of NMIT graduate attributes and that discussions have occurred at HEAC, but a number of staff are less sure of the relevance of graduate attributes to their teaching and what would be done with the NMIT graduate attributes once developed. The Audit Panel is of the view that once defined, the NMIT higher education graduate attributes could contribute to the NMIT higher education brand and to a seamless approach to tertiary education.

Affirmation 3

(urgent) AUQA affirms that the Northern Melbourne Institute of TAFE, through the Higher Education Academic Committee, should continue the development of a set of graduate attributes for its higher education offerings and use these attributes to further define the higher education profile.

2.1.9 Implementation of Plagiarism Policy

Both in the NMIT performance portfolio and in interviews, plagiarism was discussed and the Audit Panel was advised that a plagiarism policy is being developed, but no-one could explain why a policy had not been developed and implemented. This is a key policy in the area of academic integrity which is needed urgently.

Affirmation 4

(urgent) AUQA affirms Northern Melbourne Institute of TAFE's intention to implement a plagiarism policy.

2.2 *Scholarship and Creativity*

There is a varied understanding amongst staff of how they are to operate in a higher education environment. Teaching staff coming from higher education are comfortable in operating in this context. Other staff, most importantly those operating in management positions that have come from traditional VET backgrounds, need to be provided with support to understand better the higher education operating environment. More work needs to be undertaken by the Institute to develop higher education cultures, including a culture of scholarship. This should contribute to

NMIT's overall aspiration of seamless delivery of education. NMIT has conducted some higher education learning forums for staff to discuss topics of interest in higher education, but a more substantial and ongoing effort is needed.

Recommendation 6

AUQA recommends that the Northern Melbourne Institute of TAFE substantially strengthens its ongoing support to assist staff in both understanding and operating in the higher education environment.

3 ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURES, DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES AND RESOURCES TO SUPPORT TEACHING AND LEARNING AND OTHER CORE ACTIVITIES

Under Victorian government approval in 2004 NMIT 'was the first TAFE institute in Victoria to gain accreditation for specialist degrees for higher education studies' (PF p7). According to government directives at the time, NMIT was approved to deliver higher education programs in 'vocational' niches, and NMIT '...aimed to integrate these new higher education courses into its existing educational development, delivery and management structure' (PF p5).

3.1 *Organisational Structures and Decision Making*

The academic governance and decision making processes of the Institute were not clear to the Audit Panel. There is an ambiguity regarding the roles and responsibilities of committees and how committees report to each other under the NMIT's governance structures. This ambiguity is further compounded by the role of the Academic Head of Higher Education. For example the Academic Head is responsible for developing some higher education policies, whilst other matters are referred to HEAC. Further, some areas of accountability and activities that should be discussed and monitored at HEAC, such as the NMIT higher education strategy, are not listed as agenda items for HEAC, nor its predecessor, nor the Higher Education Academic Implementation Advisory Committee (HEAIAC).

In line with the current small higher education student enrolment and the small higher education staff profile, many of the academic aspects of higher education are the responsibility of the Academic Head of Higher Education rather than being systemised and developed under the auspices of HEAC. In considering the overlapping and unclear roles of committees and higher education senior management roles, NMIT needs to review its higher education committee roles and structures and senior management capacity. It should ensure that accountability for higher education is firmly positioned with HEAC as the senior higher education academic forum (academic board) of the Institute, and that discussions, decisions and accountabilities are captured in the minutes.

Recommendation 7

(urgent) AUQA recommends that Northern Melbourne Institute of TAFE review the roles of the Higher Education Academic Committee, Course Committees, and of the Academic Head of Higher Education, to ensure that the Higher Education Academic Committee, as the senior academic forum of the Institute, has accountability for the academic governance of higher education, including the development of the higher education profile and all academic policy.

3.1.1 Course Committee

Some Course Committees are working extremely well with strong industry representation and external higher education representation. NMIT has acknowledged there are challenges in attracting external higher education representation to committees in some disciplines but overall the quality of industry and external interactions with industry is strong. The Audit Panel was impressed by the high level of involvement by some industry representatives in the development of higher education courses.

Commendation 3

AUQA commends Northern Melbourne Institute of TAFE for its strong involvement with industry in the development and ongoing monitoring of courses.

3.1.2 Course Consolidation

The original Victorian Government directive led to NMIT developing a range of programs in a disparate array of niche industries. In establishing these courses and building skills in particular disciplines, little attention has been given to ways in which disciplines could work together. As NMIT higher education enrolment grows towards a critical mass of students, it will be important for faculties to work together to achieve economies of scale in higher education. The Institute has begun to consider a consolidation of courses and has recently commenced a course consolidation project to address this issue. It will also be important for NMIT to focus on the cultural issues in working to develop a seamless approach to tertiary education. The oversight of this project will be a key responsibility of HEAC.

Affirmation 5

AUQA affirms Northern Melbourne Institute of TAFE's recently commenced course consolidation project to examine and consolidate higher education courses.

3.2 Academic and Administrative Staff

NMIT higher education staff are enthusiastic, professional and committed to developing the higher education experience for their students. Due to the small number of enrolments, staff and students enjoy a strong relationship and many of the academic policies in the Institute are still working on an informal level and have yet to be formally implemented and the outcomes documented. For example, in the case of the Staff and Student Grievance Policy, the VET-adapted formal policy and process is still to be tested. Students and industry representatives spoke of the flexibility, commitment and willingness of staff to work together in the teething stages of the introduction of new courses to ensure that there is a suitable mix of theory and practice in courses as they are developed and offered.

Induction at the Institute was described as good with many staff attending induction sessions, and undertaking individualised induction programs. The Institute needs to ensure that its induction documentation, whilst reflecting the seamless aspirations of the Institute, includes information on higher education. The induction information provided to the Audit Panel did not contain any information on the Institute's higher education activity, nor on specific requirements for higher education staff.

3.2.1 Academic Promotion

There was no evidence of policy in the area of academic promotion. In order to continue to attract higher education staff to the Institute, it is important that NMIT develop its academic promotions policy as a public statement of expectations on staff in the Institution, and include the weightings given to different factors of strategic importance to the Institute, such as the development of skills in teaching and learning. The Institution's academic promotion policy should also enable staff to establish a point of comparison in considering their future career choices.

Recommendation 8

(urgent) AUQA recommends that Northern Melbourne Institute of TAFE develop and implement a higher education academic promotions policy.

3.2.2 Professional Development

Professional development is available to all higher education staff and many staff have taken up opportunities as they arise. There is a need to systemise professional development approval to ensure information on the type of development staff are undertaking is systematically collated. It is also important that staff development is linked to staff performance plans.

The Institute has established a Visiting Scholar Program, which brings a visiting expert to work with staff in a particular discipline for a few weeks. This new program appears to be working well and has been well received by staff, industry representatives and the visiting scholar. The Audit Panel encourages the Institute to continue to develop this program and to consider a longer visiting period for scholars to attend the Institute. This program could also include short-term visits by academics from Australian universities.

Commendation 4

AUQA commends the Northern Melbourne Institute of TAFE's Visiting Scholar Program, and encourages the further development of this program.

Some NMIT higher education staff have also been involved in international study tours and are building a range of international relationships with peers in their various disciplines. It will be important that these programs continue to enhance the quality of teaching and are reviewed regularly by the Institute.

The Institute has developed an Academic Mentor Scheme which is in the process of being implemented. One of the key challenges in the development of a seamless workforce, besides the issue of staff operating under separate awards, will be how in the longer term, staff with a VET background manage higher education staff. This is currently handled through the Academic Head of Higher Education's involvement in conducting performance and professional development reviews with staff. As the higher education workforce grows, this will not be possible and processes will need to be implemented to systemise this activity within faculties and work areas.

3.3 Support for Student Learning

NMIT has developed good course outlines and has committed staff who are happy to make themselves available to assist students. Students also appear to be well supported in terms of study skills and assistance. Students are generally impressed by staff knowledge of the industry within the disciplines they are teaching. The Audit Panel was also advised that students can also attend Skills Week, and obtain more practical VET skills such as forklift licences, but staff are unsure if this week is compulsory, or how many of the predominantly part-time higher education student cohort attend any of the activities.

Student course materials are generally of a high standard as are student support facilities. The Institute offers a range of support services to students. These have been adapted from VET models and presently appear to be working well.

3.4 Information Resources

The NMIT information and technology infrastructure supports the needs of the higher education student cohort, and higher education student and staff demand is managed within the overall NMIT infrastructure budget.

3.4.1 NMIT Library

The Library's strategic statement does not mention higher education and this should be rectified. The Librarian advised that the Library does not have a separate budget for higher education so was not able to advise how much money is being apportioned to material to meet higher education accreditation requirements. NMIT higher education students are nevertheless positive about the services provided by the Library and in particular student access to the range of online services. The Library does not undertake benchmarking with any higher education or other VET providers.

4 MAINTAINING A COMMITMENT TO QUALITY IMPROVEMENT

4.1 A Quality Management System (QMS) for Higher Education

The NMIT approach to quality is 'The NMIT *Service quality loop*, which mirrors the ADRI (Approach, Deployment, Results, Improvement) model' (PF p49). Whilst this model has been operational across the VET delivery of the organisation, there is little recognition of this model amongst higher education staff and concepts of quality and quality management are not well understood by staff throughout NMIT higher education.

At NMIT there is a compliance focus on quality which is probably derived from a VET and industry standards-based focus on compliance and quality assurance. This is one of the key areas of difference between the VET and higher education sectors and which the Institute needs to further develop. As a TAFE institute establishing itself as a HEP, the challenge is to embed a continuous improvement approach to quality and this is something with which the Institute is clearly grappling. For example, there is lack of reporting on KPIs on higher education at all levels of the Institute. This could be for a number of reasons, in particular the small higher education student cohort, and hence the familiarity with individual students, but with no regular review and improvement activity being undertaken it was difficult for the Audit Panel to establish how NMIT is evaluating its overall NMIT higher education profile and what it needs to do to build and achieve a critical student mass.

NMIT provided limited evidence of the beginnings of a QMS for higher education. It will be important over the next few years that this emerging QMS and associated processes are further nurtured under the governance of HEAC. The roles of this committee and of the Quality Assurance Committee need to be reconsidered, with HEAC taking overall responsibility for the academic quality of higher education. The Institute has the beginnings of student survey and feedback tools that will further support the development of quality courses and contribute to the development of a QMS.

4.2 Benchmarking

The Audit Panel was advised in interviews that 'informal benchmarking' occurs at all levels, but it could find no evidence of formal approaches to benchmarking, or that staff really understand what benchmarking is or the benefits of benchmarking. In key areas, such as the Library, no benchmarking is occurring at either a VET or higher education level. It is important, as the Institute develops its higher education profile, that it benchmarks its activities. A number of benchmarking activities should be occurring regularly, for example, comparing the Institute's data collections against those of similar providers. The Institute should build more external relationships with HEPs, universities, and international providers to further develop benchmarking activities, as an approach to continuous improvement. Benchmarking activities could usefully contribute to the recently established course consolidation project.

4.3 Stakeholder Feedback

As the first cohort of students graduated in 2008, the student cohort is too small to implement the national GDS, or other tools. The NMIT portfolio advises that an NMIT higher education alumni group is to be developed; the alumni should assist the Institute in building further stakeholder relationships with alumni and industry.

Affirmation 6

AUQA affirms Northern Melbourne Institute of TAFE's intention to develop an NMIT higher education alumni group.

4.4 Planning and Managing Quality

The present strategic planning in the area of higher education appears to be an add-on to faculty annual self-assessments. There is no overall strategy for higher education and no explicit link to resources and budget. Without KPIs there is at present no way of measuring the success or otherwise of the NMIT higher education effort. Staff are not aware of how quality is managed in higher education beyond some staff talking about internal peer review exercises. The Audit Panel acknowledges that the Institute has put a lot of work into establishing itself as a HEP, and that it is also moving from early stage set up to the next phase of development when structures and processes need to become more formal. The Institute needs to resolve how it will plan and manage quality with NMIT higher education, and develop a continuous improvement approach to the management of quality, which supports the strategic objectives of NMIT higher education.

Recommendation 9

AUQA recommends that Northern Melbourne Institute of TAFE, under the auspices of the Higher Education Academic Committee, further define and develop a quality management system for higher education, including a formal approach to benchmarking.

4.4.1 Higher Education Leadership

Higher education leadership structures and accountabilities are underdeveloped in NMIT. HEAC as the senior academic higher education forum of the Institute must be responsible for the academic governance of NMIT higher education. The Academic Head of Higher Education is a part-time position, and that role, in both the reporting and accountability structures, is ambiguous. It is on one hand an advisory position, and on the other responsible for a range of higher education activities, and in many cases lacking in accountabilities. It is important given the Institute's commitment to higher education, that this position become a full-time role and that there be greater clarity of responsibility. At this stage of its development, the Institute could benefit from having on hand a greater range of external senior mentors, such as senior academics, to assist in discussions in clarifying the future NMIT higher education profile. Staff at all levels, in particular heads of faculties who are responsible for the day-to-day management of both VET and higher education, should be given ongoing support and professional development in understanding the higher education operating environment.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: NORTHERN MELBOURNE INSTITUTE OF TAFE STRATEGIC PLAN

THE NORTHERN JOURNEY

Values and Objectives

The NMIT Strategic Plan is organised around the themes of Learning, Engagement and Capacity and these, with the identified key result areas, will provide the basis for planning and operations in the coming years.

Together, these themes from the Northern Journey, which can be understood from a number of perspectives: as an educational model, a business model, or an ideal for the NMIT student experience.

An Educational Model

The fundamentals of the Northern Journey are quality teaching, social and intellectual engagement and learner centred approaches.

Local, regional and international engagement forges partnerships which integrate education programs with professional and industry practice.

NMIT builds community and industry capacity through provision of skilled, solution orientated graduates.

A Business Model

NMIT aims for sustainable development of programs and services in line with diverse government, community and industry expectations.

NMIT is part of the community infrastructure and accepts our responsibility to contribute actively to community wellbeing and prosperity.

NMIT fulfils its ongoing commitments to customers and stakeholders in a competitive global market.

The Student Experience

NMIT students bring diverse cultures, experiences, strengths and interests and contribute to the growth of NMIT through providing valued feedback regarding programs and services.

NMIT students are respected and understood, and are provided with information, learning experiences, academic supports and development opportunities to expand their capacity for work and lifelong learning.

For NMIT students, the Northern Journey represents pathways towards their personal vocational goals.

LEARNING

The NMIT learning experience integrates practical skills, global perspectives, teamwork, flexibility and a solution oriented attitude into courses and qualifications drawing from all levels, from vocational certificates and diplomas to higher education degrees.

NMIT students progress along personalised pathways towards vocational goals – developing the lifelong vocational and learning capabilities needed for mastery and leadership in their chosen occupation.

1. Teaching and Teachers

NMIT supports, develops and advocates excellence and innovation in teaching, and takes pride in the skills, industry knowledge, creativity, professionalism and scholarship of NMIT teachers.

2. Access and Flexibility

NMIT expands individual opportunities and reduces barriers to education and employment through creative and flexible study options for people with diverse needs, strengths, interests and vocational goals.

3. Pathways

NMIT students acquire the skills to enter and progress in the workforce by accessing a broad range of qualifications which offer cost effective opportunities for non-conventional entry, defined milestones, recognition of prior learning and creative approaches to course design and delivery.

4. The Student Experience

NMIT supports students to reach their vocational goals by maximising information exchange between students and NMIT and by providing personal, social and work relevant learning experiences.

ENGAGEMENT

Engaging with the community, governments, industry, professions and other education providers – internationally, regionally and locally – expands NMIT's knowledge and capacity and enhances vocational and academic opportunity for NMIT students.

By connecting global knowledge and experience with community and industry needs, NMIT promotes the competitiveness of industry and the prosperity and wellbeing of the community.

5. Global Knowledge

NMIT develops global perspectives on industry and education, and enhances vocational and academic opportunities for students through information and knowledge exchange with international partner institutions, governments and enterprises.

6. Directions in Industry and Professions

NMIT promotes the competitiveness of industry through innovative partnerships, brokering solutions and negotiating new directions in vocational and higher education with industry, professions and government.

7. Developing Business and Communities

NMIT is a responsible corporate citizen contributing to business success and community development by offering customised consultancy and business training solutions, and engaging in community development projects, research partnerships and relevant networks and forums.

8. Alumni

NMIT understands the needs of current students and stays connected with graduates – maintaining a dialogue which strengthens and continually expands networks in industry, community and education.

CAPACITY

NMIT's capacity is continuously evolving with the introduction of new facilities, technologies, skills and business systems in accordance with industry training expectations and community needs.

NMIT maintains and strengthens its presence in northern Melbourne and beyond through outstanding customer service and a culture of continuous improvement and evidence-based management.

Sustaining and developing NMIT's capacity – our people, our infrastructure, our systems – enables NMIT to deliver on our commitments to learning and engagement, and to building capacity in individuals, in industry and in communities.

9. People

NMIT becomes the employer of choice in post-compulsory education by attracting, developing and retaining knowledgeable, practical and solution orientated people in satisfying jobs. NMIT celebrates the achievements of, and remains connected with, its high performing, globally oriented NMIT staff who are leaders in their profession.

10. Brand

NMIT delivers on its promise of sustained quality and excellence, and is known locally, regionally and around the world for strategies of learning and engagement, and for graduates who are practical, solution oriented and ready to contribute to community wellbeing and industry competitiveness.

11. Infrastructure

NMIT's facilities, equipment and infrastructure are maintained and developed in accordance with industry training requirements, contemporary teaching practices and community expectations for safe, accessible and environmentally sustainable places for work and study.

12. Governance and Accountability

NMIT maintains and develops academic and business practices and management systems to ensure the effective, sustainable and ethical conduct of the core activities of learning and engagement.

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

In its external relations, 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.

APPENDIX C: THE AUDIT PANEL

Professor Gus Guthrie AM, Gus Guthrie Consulting P/L (former VC of UTS)

Ms Karen Treloar, Audit Director, Australian Universities Quality Agency

APPENDIX D: ABBREVIATIONS AND DEFINITIONS

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

| | |
|----------------|--|
| ADRI | Approach-Deployment-Results-Improvement |
| AUQA | Australian Universities Quality Agency |
| CEO | Chief Executive Officer |
| DEEWR..... | Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, formerly DEST |
| EFTSL..... | equivalent full-time student load |
| FEE-HELP..... | FEE-HELP is a loan given to eligible fee-paying students to help pay part or all of their tuition fees. |
| GDS | Graduate Destination Survey (http://www.graduatecareers.com.au/content/view/full/868) |
| HEAC | Higher Education Academic Committee |
| HEAIAC | Higher Education Academic Implementation Advisory Committee |
| HEP(s)..... | higher education provider(s) |
| HESA | <i>Higher Education Support Act 2003</i> |
| KPI(s)..... | key performance indicators |
| MCEETYA | Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs |
| NMIT | Northern Melbourne Institute of TAFE |
| NSAI(s) | non self-accrediting institution(s) |
| PF p | Performance Portfolio page reference |
| Portfolio..... | Performance Portfolio: Self-Review Report |
| QAF(s) | Quality Audit Factor(s) |
| QMS | Quality Management System |
| TAFE | Technical and Further Education |
| VET | vocational education and training |

