

Farewell from AQA Board Chair

Emeritus Professor Pat Walsh

On June 30 I will step down as Chair of the Academic Quality Agency after more than 6 years in the role. From this vantage point, I have been able to observe a mature quality assurance system which should give everyone confidence in the quality of the academic processes at all of New Zealand's universities. When I began as Chair in January 2015 the Cycle 5 audit process was well under way and was completed in 2016. The most important conclusion from Cycle 5 was that there were no systemic issues of concern at our universities. Now, 5 years later, we are well into preparations for Cycle 6 audits which will begin next year.



In that time there have been a number of noteworthy developments. AQA has itself been reviewed twice by external panels comprised of both New Zealand and international reviewers. Both reviews were emphatically positive in their assessment of AQA and its activities. This reflects well not only on AQA staff themselves, particularly the two Executive Directors Jan Cameron and Sheelagh Matear, but also on the commitment and professionalism of those who serve on audit panels and on the staff at universities, without whose assistance AQA could not conduct its activities.

There have been some significant developments in AQA's processes. Perhaps the most innovative has been the Enhancement Theme stage of Cycle 6, **Access, Outcomes and Opportunity for Māori students and for Pasifika students**, in which universities worked together to share good practice and learn from each other. Another innovation has been AQA's engagement with and commitment to Student Voice, driven by Sheelagh Matear's belief that students could and should make a significant contribution to quality assurance processes. This is now expressed in an MOU with NZUSA about how we jointly build student capacity for this purpose and in the now annual Student Voice Summit. These initiatives have now led to student participation in all audit panels. A similar commitment to ensuring Māori are heard in quality assurance has led to a decision that all audit panels will have Māori representation.

After 6 years, there are many people to thank. I would like to thank the Vice-Chancellors and Chris Whelan and Jackie Bailey at UNZ for their support for AQA. I have referred above to the auditors who serve on audit panels and the staff at universities who enable the audits to be conducted efficiently and effectively. I would like to thank my fellow Board members for their commitment to the principles which drive AQA, their diligent attention to their fiduciary responsibilities and their generosity of spirit, all of which ensure that Board discussion is informed and strategic and always collegial.

Continues on next page.

AQA | About

The Academic Quality Agency for New Zealand Universities (AQA) was established in 1993 to carry out audits of the processes in universities which underpin academic quality. The mission

of AQA is to contribute to high quality New Zealand university education by engaging as a leader and advocate in the development of universities based on high quality, internationally acceptable,

academic practices, and by providing quality assurance and quality enhancement services which assist universities in facilitating excellent student experience and learning outcomes.

Farewell from AQA Board Chair *(continued)*



The AQA Board in 2019

AQA is a small organisation which has always been exceptionally well served by its staff, and especially by its two Executive Directors, Jan Cameron and Sheelagh Matear. Their deep understanding of quality assurance and their commitment to excellence have positioned AQA well to meet the inevitable challenges that lie ahead. It has been a privilege and a pleasure to chair AQA, and I wish it and everyone associated with its mission all the very best for the future.

AQA Communications Survey - Feedback

AQA regularly seeks feedback on its communications with stakeholders and particularly its newsletter and website. A communications survey has been conducted since 2011. Thirty-seven people responded to the 2021 survey. This is a response rate of 13% which is not high but consistent with recent AQA communications surveys.

Overall (Table 1), respondents find AQA communications to be helpful in keeping them up to date and these figures have improved slightly from 2019.

Table 1 Overall helpfulness of AQA communications

	EXTREMELY HELPFUL	VERY HELPFUL	SOMEWHAT HELPFUL	NOT SO HELPFUL	NOT AT ALL HELPFUL
Information about AQA audits (e.g. timeline, framework and reports)	50.00% 16	28.13% 9	18.75% 6	3.13% 1	0.00% 0
Other AQA (non-audit) news and activities	28.13% 9	43.75% 14	21.88% 7	6.25% 2	0.00% 0
Other New Zealand quality assurance and enhancement news and trends	34.38% 11	46.88% 15	9.38% 3	9.38% 3	0.00% 0
International quality assurance and quality enhancement news and trends	40.63% 13	40.63% 13	12.50% 4	6.25% 2	0.00% 0
Information about professional development opportunities	28.13% 9	18.75% 6	34.38% 11	15.63% 5	3.13% 1

The main conclusion from this survey is that for the relatively small number of people that responded to the survey AQA communications are appropriate. Although the number of responses was small, respondents are likely to be people who are more engaged with quality assurance and academic audit and therefore these survey results provide useful guidance for AQA. There would be value however in AQA understanding more about the respondents to the survey, particularly whether they are Māori, Pacific, or students. These are groups that AQA is seeking to improve its engagement with and recruit Māori, Pacific people and students as members of audit panels.

The 2020 External Review of AQA recommended that “the AQA Board consider developing a communications and engagement strategy that supports and recognises the work undertaken by AQA as part of the quality assurance process” (R1). These survey results will help guide the response to this recommendation.

Thank-you to everyone who provided feedback. A more detailed report is available from AQA.

Student Voice

Contributed by Nkhaya Paulsen-More (Ngāti Maru ki Hauraki, Ngāruahine, Ngāti Pūkenga), Tumuaki Takirua (Co-President), Te Mana Ākonga | National Māori Tertiary Students' Association

This year has proved to be a busy one for Te Mana Ākonga. We kicked off in January with a Special General Meeting to elect our kaiāpai, launched straight into our first hui kaiārahi for the year in February, and began doing in-person campus tours in April to visit our roopū for the first time in over a year.

This year, Renata White (Ngāti Tama, Ngāti Kahungunu, Patuharakeke), our other Tumuaki Takirua, and I decided to focus on kotahitanga in student voice. We're developing a collection of stories about institutional racism and bias against taura Māori in the tertiary sector—and our taura have a lot to say. This is no surprise to anyone who's had an ear to the ground for a while. We heard stories of taura who weren't able to write their assignments in Te Reo Māori; we heard about taura who received unequal treatment from their lecturers. One of our members sparked a nationwide discussion about the pay disparity between Māori students' association Tumuaki and general students' association Presidents, highlighting the overwhelming amount of work our taura Māori are expected to do and how they're compensated for it, if at all. We're hoping to release our final report at the end of this year or the beginning of next year, once we finish up our last few campus tours.

We're also taking steps to ensure that kotahitanga isn't just enshrined in taura Māori spaces, but across the sector, for all students. For the first time in our 40-year history, Te Mana Ākonga is proud to co-host Te Hononga with NZUSA,

Taura Pasifika, and the National Disabled Students' Association. Te Hononga is a concept that describes the convergence of rivers into one, signifying a desire to begin unifying student voices from all avenues. Our combined goal is to host a multitude of students from general, Māori, Pasifika, and disabled students' associations to whakawhanaungatanga. Too often are our taura forced to fight amongst themselves to be heard, be acknowledged, and be funded. Our national students' associations believe that the best way to mitigate those circumstances is to come together to figure out how to make our individual voices stronger as a collective.

Our taura are still participating in their associations straight after the immediate effects of COVID-19 on tertiary education, but we feel that our taura are doing better than anyone would've expected. Some might assume that being in an association would be easier one year after our Level 4 lockdown. They'd be wrong. And yet we still persevere, they still give their all to tautoko their cohort of taura Māori, and they still remain dedicated to their studies. The resilience of our taura—no matter what type of association they choose to be a part of—demonstrates the tenacity with which students continue to engage in the tertiary sector. They're here to make a change for the better.



New Members of AQA Board

Nau mai, haere mai. AQA welcomes Professor John Morrow as the Chair of the AQA Board and Ellen Dixon as the student member of the Board. Both terms start on 1 July 2021 and are for three years. Board members may be reappointed for a second term.

Good Practice in Online Teaching and Learning

AQA has compiled a report on good practice in online teaching and learning in universities during the COVID-19 pandemic. The report is now available on the [AQA website](#).

Have You Seen This?

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused distress and disruption in many aspects of life including professional engagement at conferences. However, many organisations have adapted and others have developed options to maintain and often increase access to conferences and seminars. May and June 2021 has been an active period for online conferences and webinars. This 'Have you seen this' column highlights conferences and webinars that have recordings and/or resource compilations on a range of topics.

The **Cradle Seminar Series** from Deakin University has a summary of sessions and links to YouTube recordings of sessions. Topics include assessment for learning and programmatic assessment and remote proctored exams.

The **Needed Now in Teaching and Learning** conference has resources listed on the session pages. Sessions included Ending Pedastodgy, Industry-integrated education, Online learning and Student mental health and wellbeing. Recordings of sessions are available, but you will need to contact the organisers for access.

Phil Dawson and Ann Rogerson presented a joint ASCILITE and Turnitin session on **E-cheating and assessment security**. Registration is required to watch the recording.

Sessions from the Canadian Academic Integrity Symposium, including some **historical analyses of cheating** and contract cheating business models are available on the Thompson Rivers University **website**. The twitter hashtag **#CSAI21** is also worth a look.

The **2021 Student Voice Australia** conference has links to session recordings on their YouTube channel. It includes a presentation on the development of Whiria Ngā Rau from Aotearoa New Zealand and an excellent keynote presentation from Maisha Islam from the University of Winchester, England.

Meetings and Conference Calendar

5-9 July 2021

online

STARS – Students Transitions Achievement Retention and Success - **Conference**

10-13 October 2021

Online (from Brisbane)

Tertiary Education Management Conference

20 October 2021

Worldwide

Not a conference, but 20 October is the **International Day of Action against Contract Cheating**.

26-29 October 2021

Online (from Perth, WA)

Sustainable Education through SoTL: Practices and Cultures

29 November – 1 December 2021

Armidale, New South Wales and online

ASCILITE 2021 Conference – Back to the Future

24-27 November 2021

Singapore and online.

Asia Pacific Quality Network Conference, **Quality Assurance for Higher Education under the COVID-19 Pandemic and beyond in the Asia-Pacific Region**

The Asia Pacific Quality Network are currently anticipating that their conference will be a 2-part event with a webinar on 25 November and an in-person conference in Singapore. Note – dates on the APQN website differ from those advised in email communication.

24-26 November 2021.

Melbourne (online and in person)

TEQSA conference. Details not yet available.



AQA | Academic
Quality Agency
For New Zealand Universities

Sheelagh Matear
Executive Director



Contact Us

Level 9, 142 Lambton Quay
PO Box 5787, Wellington 6145, New Zealand
p +64 4 801 7924 | e comms@aqac.ac.nz | w www.aqa.ac.nz

We welcome feedback on this newsletter and the AQA website, along with news and suggestions for newsletter items.

AQA News is published quarterly (March, June, September and December). To join or be removed from the subscription list, please email comms@aqac.ac.nz or follow the links on our website www.aqa.ac.nz.