

Supporting Student Partnerships in Academic Quality

Contributed by Sam Smith, Student Voice Advisor

The term 'student partnership' is not new to the tertiary education sector, but universities in Aotearoa New Zealand are generally in the early stages of embracing this concept. In essence, student partnership is about student representatives and universities working together, from problem identification to solution implementation, to enhance the experiences of students and staff.

The 2020 external review of AQA recommended that, to improve consistency, AQA work with students' associations to develop good practice guidelines for including students in academic quality processes. The review also recommended that AQA provide training to

its Board, and audit panels, for working with and supporting their student members. In response to these recommendations, AQA has been developing a working paper, *Students in Quality*, to support the creation of good practice guidelines for student partnership in academic quality.

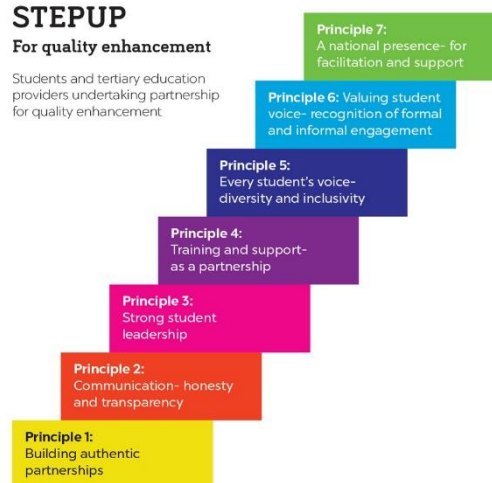
Students in Quality examines student partnership in Scotland, Wales, Ireland, Europe and Australia (see figure) and the frameworks that underpin it. Most of these regions have undergone significant cultural shifts towards treating students as partners in education, rather than consumers of it, often due to the cross-sector approach to strengthening student partnerships.

In Aotearoa New Zealand, recent developments in student partnership began in late 2020, when national student leaders came together, with the Ministry of Education, to produce *Whiria ngā rau: progressing from student voice to partnerships*. This resource offers concepts, ideas and actions for effective student partnerships in tertiary education and will be publicly released following consultation with the sector. Using these international frameworks and *Whiria ngā rau*, *Students in Quality* hopes to support AQA's response to their external review by facilitating the development of good practice guidelines, and it will also become a resource for others seeking to strengthen their partnerships with students.

STEPUP

For quality enhancement

Students and tertiary education providers undertaking partnership for quality enhancement



Source: Student Voice Australia

<http://studentvoiceaustralia.com/principles>

AQA Board

The AQA Board has welcomed Professor Cheryl de la Rey (as the Vice-Chancellor member of the Board) and Dr John Egan (as the Board member nominated by the TEU) to their first meeting of the Board.

The March 2021 meeting of the Board was also the last meeting for Emeritus Professor Pat Walsh, and the Board recorded its thanks to Pat for his leadership of AQA over the past six years.

It is hoped that the July meeting of the Board can be in person to welcome Professor John Morrow as the new Chair of the Board, alongside the new student member of the Board who will replace James Heath as the NZUSA nominated member.

Student Voice

Contributed by Andrew Lessells, National President, NZUSA

Tēnā koutou. It is an immense honour to be able to write this column in the first 2021 AQA Newsletter as the newly elected National President of the New Zealand Union of Students' Associations. Student politics has been a passion of mine for quite a few years, and I was the President of the EIT Students' Association in Hawke's Bay from March 2019 to December 2020. Alongside this I was NZUSA's Project Lead in the Reform of Vocational Education and sat on the EIT Council. Empowering student voices has been my passion and has led me to the privilege of being in the role I am in today at NZUSA.

Liam Davies, who was the 2020 Vice President (Engagement) of the Massey at Wellington Students' Association (MAWSA), joins me in National Office as our National Vice President. Alongside Liam, we have created three new roles in our National Office—Welfare, Education and Rainbow Officers. Kate Aschoff, Ellen Dixon and Faelan Sorensen fill these roles and bring a diversity of experience that will inform everything that NZUSA does this year.

The year has certainly started with a bang for students. Our ākonga in Tāmaki Makaurau have had to endure two COVID lockdowns and had their orientation weeks thrown into chaos. Institutions are having to shift back to online delivery and examination as they did in 2020. COVID-19 had and continues to have a massive impact on academic quality and there are huge lessons to learn from in this space. Many of these learnings come from students, and it is vital that we partner with them meaningfully to enact these learnings.

We have ambitious plans for 2021: firstly, launching Whiria Ngā Rau, a document co-designed with the Ministry of Education to enable a transition from student voice to student partnership. Secondly, enhancing student voice in academic quality, which could significantly benefit outcomes as students are of course the experts at being students. Alongside this we are (as always) fighting for students to be able to live and survive. Thirdly, our Universal Education Income campaign is continuing to grow, and we would love to partner with tertiary providers to ensure that students have their basic necessities — money, food, technology, housing — adequately met to allow them to thrive in their studies. Without these, academic success simply isn't possible, and that is not good enough.

CUSPaC Chair

The New Zealand Vice-Chancellors' Committee is seeking an independent chair of the new Committee for University Student Pastoral Care (CUSPaC).

Contact jane.edwards@universitiesnz.ac.nz before **19 April 2021** for more information.

Covid-19 Good Practice Assessment

AQA has compiled a synopsis of universities' good practice in responding to the Covid-19 pandemic. The synopsis is drawn from a report from each university against a framework agreed with the universities in May 2020. The synopsis will be discussed in universities before being finalised.

Have You Seen This?

This 'Have you seen this?' column looks at a number of retrospectives from external quality assurance agencies as they mark significant anniversaries since formation plus some recent reports from quality assurance agencies.

ENQA has marked 20 years since its establishment with a series of reflections on the past, present and future of ENQA and of quality assurance. See <https://www.enqa.eu/publications/advancing-quality-in-european-higher-education-celebrating-20-years-of-enqa/>

INQAAHE is marking 30 years since its establishment with a series of events and publications, plus the opening of a permanent secretariat in Barcelona and a new logo and website. See <https://www.inqaahe.org/30th-anniversary>

The Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications has also celebrated its 30th anniversary with a programme of activities. See <https://www.hkcaavq.edu.hk/en/30th-anniversary/30th-Anniversary>

TEQSA has published an analysis of 118 student experience surveys as "Foundations for good practice: The student experience of online learning in Australian higher education during the COVID-19 pandemic". See <https://www.teqsa.gov.au/sites/default/files/student-experience-of-online-learning-in-australian-he-during-covid-19.pdf?v=1606953179>

The QAA in the UK has released a summary of key points from a recent 'Quality Insights' online conference – Engaging students and connecting curricula in a digital future. See <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/membership/quality-insights/quality-insights-conference>

In a similar vein, The Council for Higher Education (CHEA) has released a short paper on "COVID and change-adjustments: Can Higher Education handle deep change?" See https://docs.google.com/gview?embedded=true&url=https://www.chea.org/sites/default/files/pdf/CHEA_Inside_Accreditation_February_2021_FINAL2.pdf

Meetings and Conference Calendar

Conferences and meetings in the first half of 2021 are still mainly online conferences. However, several in-person events (some of which have been postponed from 2020) are also being signalled. We are also seeing some mixed model or blended conferences with in-person and online components. The in-person components include local hubs.

14-15 April 2021

in Wellington plus local hubs and online
FLANZ 2021 Conference for Flexible Learning.

31 May – 2 June 2021

online and in local hubs
Student Service Centres **Conference**

7-10 June 2021

online
INQAAHE Conference, **Reimagining Higher Education Quality in an Age of Uncertainty**

5-9 July 2021

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

7-10 July 2021

Brisbane
HERDSA conference

17-20 November 2021

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

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@aqaa.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@aqaa.ac.nz or follow the links on our website www.aqa.ac.nz.