

## AQA Board

### *Emeritus Professor John Morrow, Chair*

At the last AQA Board meeting on 20th July it was a great pleasure to meet my new colleagues and to welcome three other recent newcomers to the Board: Professor Cheryl de la Rey of the University of Canterbury who is the Vice-Chancellors' nominee, Dr John Egan of the University of Auckland who sits as the TEU's nominee and Ellen Dixon, the nominee from the New Zealand Union of Students' Associations. I look forward to working with Cheryl, John, Ellen and other Board colleagues over the coming years.

Current priorities include implementing the outcomes of the recent review of AQA and preparing for the launch of the audit phase of Cycle Six of the New Zealand Universities' audit process. The Vice-Chancellors have endorsed AQA's response to the review findings; thanks to Sheelagh and Pat Walsh for managing that on behalf of the Board. The implementation process will focus on streamlining some of AQA's business systems and utilizing expertise within Universities New Zealand to ensure the most efficient use of AQA's financial and personnel resources. It has also been decided to respond to the review panel's recommendations on staffing by seeking the appointment of an Associate Director who will have special responsible for guiding AQA's fulfilment of Treaty responsibilities. The search to fill this position is underway.

The recent national move to Covid Alert level 4 has underlined the importance of an exercise being undertaken by the Director to enable Cycle 6 site visits to go ahead regardless of national alert levels, or those applying in particular locations where panel visits are scheduled to take place. The Director has sought feedback with the Universities on options to meet these challenges and will consult with universities on a proposed model.

In closing I would like to record my thanks to Professor Walsh for the leadership he has provided as chair of the Board over the last 6 years. Having been on the other side of the AQA process until very recently, I am very aware of the benefits to the sector of an approach which has aligned the requirements of robust quality assurance with range of other demands the Universities have faced before and particularly during the pandemic.



The AQA Board in July 2021: Back row - Professor Cheryl de la Rey, Daniel Haines, Ellen Dixon, Dr Kaye McAulay, Dr John Egan. Front row - Emeritus Professor Sheelagh Matear (Executive Director), Emeritus Professor John Morrow (Chair), Professor Emerita Deborah Willis (Deputy Chair).

### 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.

# AQA Activities and Reports

## Agreements

Over the past couple of months, AQA has renewed two of its important relationships. A Partnership Agreement was signed with NZUSA on 12 August. The Partnership Agreement updates and reframes a 2017 Memorandum of Understanding between the two organisations. The move to a Partnership Agreement was led by NZUSA and reflects national and international developments in student engagement and contribution to academic quality.



AQA and the Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Awards (HKCAAVQ) have also renewed their Memorandum of Cooperation. Due to the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, hard copies of the Memorandum were exchanged by post and then jointly signed at an online meeting on 15 July 2021.



## Review of the Committee on University Academic Programmes (CUAP)

AQA is undertaking a Review of CUAP. The terms of reference of the review are:

1. Assess the effectiveness of CUAP's response to recommendations in its 2016/17 review.
2. Determine how effectively CUAP and its subcommittees meets its Terms of Reference as set out in 2.2 of the CUAP handbook and additional responsibilities as set out in 2.3. The review should assess effectiveness, strengths and progress, challenges and proposed enhancements.
3. Determine the current and future appropriateness of CUAP's composition and structure, standing procedures and key relationships.
4. Consider how CUAP and its ToR support broader goals and expectations of the NZVCC (including Te Tiriti o Waitangi responsiveness, academic freedom and universities' role as critic and conscience of society, and the interdependence of university research and teaching); and how CUAP ToR and processes consider all students and all delivery (in person, international, on-line, trans-national, etc).
5. Where the INQAAHE Guidelines of Good Practice (GGP) are relevant, these may be used as a supporting framework to critique and assess the extent to which CUAP processes and practices reflect international good practice.
6. Provide comment on CUAP's Terms of Reference and the composition and structure of the Committee, including comment on possible future priorities, structures or goals.
7. Recommend changes or improvements in CUAP's quality assurance activities, arrangements, practices and processes that will add value for New Zealand universities, students and other stakeholders.

AQA has invited stakeholders to make submissions as part of the review of CUAP. Submissions are due 15 October, 2021. Please contact [Sheelagh.Matear@aqac.ac.nz](mailto:Sheelagh.Matear@aqac.ac.nz) to make a submission or for further information.

## Students in Quality

The 2020 External Review of AQA made recommendations regarding how AQA could strengthen its work with students and ensuring student voices were supported in AQA's activities. While Sam Smith was at AQA he developed a working paper to AQA's response to these recommendations. That working paper is now available [here](#) on the AQA website and will be an enduring legacy of his time with AQA. Although the working paper is tailored to student partnership in the context of academic quality, many of the reflective questions and advice could be used to develop and strengthen student partnership practices throughout the tertiary education sector in Aotearoa New Zealand.

## Academic Audit and the ongoing impacts of COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to affect many aspects of activity including quality assurance. AQA has developed a [working paper](#) on the options for undertaking Cycle Academic Audits if restrictions continue to be in place. Consultation with universities on a proposed model will commence soon.

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## Coming Soon - Māori Themes from Cycle 5 Academic Audit Reports

An analysis of themes for Māori from within the Academic Quality Agency for New Zealand Universities Cycle 5 Academic Audit Reports will be released shortly. The report was commissioned by AQA and prepared by Hana Meinders-Sykes and Tiana Mihaere. AQA greatly appreciates their advice and guidance.

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## Student Voice

*Contributed by Jaistone Finau, National President – Tauria Pasifika*

Kia Orana, Malo ni, Fakalofa lahi atu and Warm Pacific greetings.

Tauria Pasifika has had an interesting time this year following on from the first impact of COVID-19 in 2020 we are still feeling COVIDs impact in 2021. This has meant we have had to adapt our approach to become more dynamic for our students. One of the things we learnt from our engagements with the Pacific student community is that the circumstances and experiences change all the time especially during this COVID period.

Our year so far has involved a lot of work with our other National Student Associations as well as with different peak bodies and government to progress some of the big changes in the tertiary sector. Other than the work that all our different groups have been working together there have been some initiatives that Tauria Pasifika has been working on throughout the year which are now coming to fruition. One of our plans that we are working on is our Annual National Fono. Due to COVID we are working through the hard task of planning a conference at different alert levels and working through those challenges. We hope that whatever the outcome in alert levels is by that time that we can provide a Fono that empowers and strengthens student voices.

Over the course of last year, I realised during my work with the Ministry of Education and our work on Whiria Nga Rau that there was no one source of information when it came to understanding the needs and issues of Pacific students. Due to this realisation, I began conversations with the team at MOE and we have been quietly progressing a Pasifika Student Survey. This survey will hopefully be one piece of many pieces of data that will help to inform the work that not only Tauria Pasifika does but also the entire tertiary sector. Working with the Ministry of Education and the Tertiary Education Commission has been a huge privilege especially because this survey will start to dig down and answer some of those questions that are not addressed sufficiently. The hope is that this survey continues annually to build the wealth of knowledge about our Pacific Students so that in all that we do we make sure our students are put first.

## Have You Seen This?

This 'Have you seen this' column provides links to papers, conference proceedings and books that examine student experience and retention, including experiences of online teaching and learning during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Mahsood Shah, Sally Kift and Liz Thomas are the editors of a new book "Student Retention and Success in Higher Education: Institutional Change for the 21st Century" published by Palgrave Macmillan. Put this one on your library's book purchasing list.

<https://www.palgrave.com/gp/book/9783030800444>

The Student Success journal has published a special issue of papers from the STARS (Student Transitions Achievement Retention Success) conference held online in July this year. See

<https://studentsuccessjournal.org/issue/view/106>

The conference proceedings are available at

<https://unistars.org/papers/STARS2021.pdf>

In Aotearoa New Zealand, academics from five universities have released an overview of their research into 'University student online learning experiences in COVID times'. See

[https://studentonlinelearningexperiences.files.wordpress.com/2021/08/sole-project-report\\_student-experiences-of-online-learning-in-covid-times.pdf](https://studentonlinelearningexperiences.files.wordpress.com/2021/08/sole-project-report_student-experiences-of-online-learning-in-covid-times.pdf)

Staying in Aotearoa New Zealand, Ako Aotearoa, Te Wānanga o Raukawa, Te Wānanga o Aotearoa and Te Whare Wānanga o Awanuiārangi have released a substantial report and framework for student success based on research of students in the three wānanga. See

<https://www.wananga.ac.nz/experience/news/kaikaik-aroro-research-project>

In the UK, the Higher Education Policy Institute (HEPI) have released a collection of thirteen essays on listening to the student voice. See

<https://www.hepi.ac.uk/2021/08/05/new-hepi-report-considers-when-and-how-universities-and-policy-makers-should-listen-to-students/>

## Meetings and Conference Calendar

**10-13 October 2021**

*Online (from Brisbane)*

**Tertiary Education Management Conference**

**19 October 2021**

*Online (from Torrens University, Australia)*

**Australian Academic Integrity Forum**

**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**

**18 – 19 November 2021**

*Online (Central European Time)*

Building trust and enhancement: from information to evidence, **European Quality Assurance Forum**

**29 November – 1 December 2021**

*Armidale, New South Wales and online*

**ASCILITE 2021 Conference** – Back to the Future

**25 November 2021**

*Singapore and online.*

Asia Pacific Quality Network Webinar **COVID-19 – Response Mechanism and Impact on Quality Assurance for Higher Education in the Asia-Pacific Region**

**25 November 2021.**

*Online (from Melbourne)*

TEQSA conference - **Hard Lessons, Valuable Learnings, Heightened Expectations**



**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](mailto:comms@aqac.ac.nz) | w [www.aqac.ac.nz](http://www.aqac.ac.nz)

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

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