

Cycle 6 Academic Audit Update

This column provides an update on progress for a number of components of Cycle 6 Academic Audit. Cycle 6 is being undertaken over two main phases – the enhancement phase and the audit phase. Although enhancement theme activities have been more visible over the last 18 months, preparation for the audit phase has also been taking place over this period.

2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Enhancement theme		Self-review	Thematic emphasis				Review of cycle
Mid-cycle report			Audit framework (guideline statements)				
				Includes report on Cycle 5			

Cycle 6 Academic Audit Phases

Preparation for the audit phase includes:

- **Publication** of the first edition of the Guide to Cycle 6 Academic Audit and a short Guide to the Academic Audit Framework. These were released on the AQA website and distributed to universities in May 2019. They are also available from AQA. A Supplement for Auditors will be released shortly. These Guides and the Supplement are first editions. They will be updated once recommendations for guideline statements derived from the enhancement theme have been finalised. Feedback on the first editions is welcomed and can be incorporated into later editions.
- **Planning** for university self-reviews. A pilot self-review workshop was held at the end of this month (June 2019). Feedback from this pilot will inform the development of a self-review workshop series and supporting materials.
- **Recruitment** of audit panel members for Cycle 6. The Cycle 5 Register of Auditors and Reviewers is now closed and AQA is inviting applications to join the Cycle 6 Register. AQA wrote to the members of the Cycle 5 Register in April 2019 and to universities in May 2019 inviting applications and nominations. The criteria for appointment for appointment and application process are on the AQA website at <https://www.aqa.ac.nz/about-us/auditors>. Although Cycle 6 Academic Audits do not commence until 2021, early application to join the Cycle 6 Register is greatly appreciated. AQA has a target of having 20 academic auditors recruited and trained by June 2020.

The schedule for academic audits of universities is on the AQA website at <https://www.aqa.ac.nz/cycle6>

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.

Quality Enhancement: AQA Communications Survey



AQA's biennial survey of its communications was distributed with the March 2019 newsletter and closed on 31 May. Thirty-nine responses were received. 82% of respondents were from New Zealand; 30% worked or studied at a university and 20% were independent consultant; 33% were academic staff members and 36% professional staff; 31% were existing academic auditors and one student responded. While the number of responses is not high, it is an increase on previous surveys and reflects the range of stakeholders AQA engages with.

70% of respondents found the AQA newsletter useful and interesting and the remainder found it either useful (13%) or interesting (18%). Respondents thought the current frequency of the newsletter was about right (85%) and respondents (82%) indicated they would prefer to keep the current format. Email was the preferred format for distribution of the newsletter.

Most respondents had looked at content on the AQA website in the last 6 months. The academic audit section was, not surprisingly, the most visited. Overall, respondents felt that AQA communications were helpful in terms of keeping them up to date on audits, other AQA activities and New Zealand quality news and professional development opportunities.

Respondents suggested that AQA communications could include more comment on international quality developments and updates on effective quality practices. International developments are currently linked to in the "have you seen this" column, but we will explore a more narrative format. We will also invite contributions from universities and auditors on effective quality practices. Almost half (46%) of respondents indicated they would be interested in receiving other communications, with the most frequently mentioned being occasional emails on topical or relevant issues.

Thank-you to those who provided feedback on AQA's communications by completing the survey.

A sparqs experience

*Contributed by Heather Merrick, Senior Academic Quality Advisor, The University of Auckland**

I recently attended the Student Partnerships in Quality Scotland (sparqs) 'Student Engagement for All' conference in Edinburgh as part of a grant-funded trip to look at how student voice and 'students as partners' initiatives have progressed in Scotland and England. The conference gave me insight into how student engagement succeeds as a central part of the Scottish Quality Enhancement Framework and the sector's Engagement Theme projects. The well-attended conference canvassed issues across student voice and representation such as student wellbeing and mental health, inclusivity in student representation, the use of data to improve the student experience, and co-creation in the curriculum.

** The views expressed in this article are those of the author and not necessarily The University of Auckland.*



McEwan Hall, University of Edinburgh

Visits to a number of other universities in Scotland and England, including the University of Edinburgh, the University of Dundee, Heriot-Watt, Exeter and University College London, illustrated the degree to which the principle of students as partners has become embedded in the learning and teaching and quality enhancement

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activities of these universities, including quality reviews. The students as partners approach is also exemplified in a number of staff-student project-based partnership schemes operating in UK universities.

In Scotland, and increasingly in England, working with students within a partnership framework is - as one staff member put it - not always easy but 'just what we do'. Context is important though - the UK sectors enjoy compulsory student union membership and has full-time sabbatical officers in student unions, often supported by staff employed by universities to facilitate student voice activities. Sparqs trains student representatives across the country and provides resources for institutions.



A session from the sparqs conference

The university sector in New Zealand has a different set of conditions within which to work to further enhance student voice. However, the embeddedness of student engagement in academic governance and decision-making began in Scotland with an enhancement-led quality assurance framework (not dissimilar to New Zealand's), and has progressed in part through the efforts of individual institutions to work within a partnership framework. This is food for thought for universities as we move towards Cycle 6 Academic Audit and its increased emphasis on student voice as an integral part of academic quality assurance and enhancement.

Student Voice

Contributed by Mamaeroa Merito, Tumuaki, Te Mana Ākonga

Te Mana Ākonga is the National Māori Tertiary Students' Association. Arising out of the Māori protest movements of the 1970s and emerging from the national Māori student collective Ngā Toki o Aotearoa, we became an Incorporated Society in 1995 and took the name Te Mana Ākonga. For the next 9 years TMA represented the interests of Māori Student Roopū at Universities. In 2004, the korowai of TMA also came to embrace Māori students studying at Polytechnics and Colleges of Education and their interests.

As a voice for tauira Māori that is independent of both institutions in which we study and of government, we are able to advocate strongly for Māori and student issues and exert pressure to make real the guarantees made by the crown to hapū.

This year Te Mana Ākonga has focused on key kaupapa that we think are important to our Tauira. We recognise the impact that mental health and wellbeing has on our Tauira, therefore we established Te Oranga Tauira o Te Mana Ākonga. This roopu is a sub-committee of our national executive that is focused on understanding and advocating for positive change that can be utilised by both students and learning institutions.

Te Pararē our first National Māori Student Publication has also been established. We will launch our first issues this year. It is a medium in which Tauira Māori can analyse and speak on issues that affect us and our whānau.

Moving forward we utilise the rich history that Te Mana Ākonga has to guide us In the decisions that we make, creating an environment that can best tautoko and awhi our Tauira Māori in Tertiary education.

"Ko te manu e kai ana i te miro, nōna te ngahere. Engari, ko te manu e kai ana i te mātauranga, nōna te ao".

The bird who partakes of the miro berry, owns the forest, whereas the bird who partakes of education owns the world.

Have You Seen This?

The Teaching and Learning Repository, hosted by Universities Australia, is a collection of learning and teaching materials and resources from projects funded by the Australian Government between 1994 and 2018. <https://ltr.edu.au/>

The Australian Learning and Teaching Fellows website <https://altf.org/> includes a Student Success Blog with comment from ALTF fellows and Legacy report at <https://altf.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/ALTF-Report-2019.pdf>

The Australian National Centre for Student Equity in Higher Education have released a series of reports – see <https://www.ncsehe.edu.au/> – including a Long-Term Strategic Vision for Student Equity in Higher Education “The Best Chance for All”, available at <https://www.ncsehe.edu.au/publications/the-best-chance-for-all/>

Still in Australia, the Australian Department of Education released an exposure draft of legislation to address combat cheating. Some of the comment on this has been concerned with whether it could criminalise parents or friends and the effectiveness of such legislation. An ABC radio interview with Anthony McClaran and Phill Dawson from Deakin University discussing these issues can be found at <https://radio.abc.net.au/programitem/pgJGOeda8V>

Elsewhere in the world, the Augar Review in the UK continues to attract a great deal of attention and discussion. Wonkhe has a collection of Augar articles at <https://wonkhe.com/tag/post18review/>

In the USA, CHEA has released a report on “Accreditation and Student Learning Outcomes; Perspectives from Accrediting Organizations”, available at <https://www.chea.org/accreditation-and-student-learning-outcomes-perspectives-accrediting-organizations>

Meetings and Conference Calendar

7-10 July 2019 in Melbourne
STARS – Students Transitions Achievement Retention Success – conference
<http://unistars.org/>

28-30 August 2019 in Wellington
Heads of Student Administration (HoSA) Conference: Capitalising on Connections
<https://confer.eventsair.com/hosa-2019/>

October 2019 - tbc
AQA Quality Forum

11-13 November 2019 in Hobart, Tasmania
Australasian Association for Institutional Research (AAIR) Forum: Institutional Research – the Devil is in the Detail
<https://airforum.com.au/>

14 November 2019 in Wellington
Student Voice Summit
Please watch the AQA website for details

21-23 November 2019 in Berlin
European Quality Assurance Forum
<https://eua.eu/events/33-2019-european-quality-assurance-forum.html>
Submissions close 22 July 2019

24 – 27 November 2019 in Wollongong
Equity Practitioners in Higher Education in Australasia (EPHEA) and the National Association of Enabling Educators in Australia (NAEEA) 2019 EPHEA/NAEEA Biennial Conference “Enabling Excellence through Equity”
<http://enablingequity.com/>

27-29 November 2019 in Melbourne
4th Annual TEQSA Conference: Partnerships driving quality
<https://www.teqsaconference.org.au/>

8 – 11 December 2019 in Dunedin
2019 Australian and New Zealand Student Services Association (ANZSSA) Conference
<https://www.anzssa.com/annual-conference/2019-anzssa-conference/>



AQA | Academic
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For New Zealand Universities

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

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