



December 2020

Te Pokapū Kounga Mātauranga mō ngā Whare Wānanga o Aotearoa

Quality Assurance: AQA External Review

The report of the 2020 External Review of AQA is now available on the AQA website [here](#). This 2020 review is the fifth external review since the agency was established in 1993. AQA's self-review report is also available on the AQA website [here](#).

The objective of the External Review was to assess how effectively AQA assists the New Zealand Vice-Chancellors' Committee to discharge its responsibilities for quality assurance matters in universities through:

- delivering on its purpose in line with its terms of reference,
- meeting or exceeding INQAAHE Guidelines of Good Practice,
- transacting core business processes efficiently and effectively.

The Panel has concluded that:

- AQA effectively assists the New Zealand Vice-Chancellors' Committee to discharge its responsibilities for quality assurance matters in universities.
- AQA meets, and in a number of cases exceeds, the INQAAHE Guidelines of Good Practice.

The International Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE) has also confirmed that AQA is fully compliant with the INQAAHE [Guidelines of Good Practice](#).

The External Review Panel made nine commendations, four affirmations and eleven recommendations. In addition to recommendations, the Panel also made seventeen suggestions. Work on responding to recommendations is underway.

AQA wishes to acknowledge the work of the Panel for their thorough and constructive review of AQA, recognising especially that this review occurred during the national lockdown period and the Panel met 'virtually'.

Haere rā

Professor Neil Quigley and Professor Jack Heinemann were farewelled at the last AQA Board meeting of 2020. Both have served for six years on the AQA Board and their guidance and advice has been appreciated.

AQA also says farewell to Tiana Mihaere who is returning to full-time study from the start of next year. AQA has benefited from her perspective and experience as a Taura Māori and we wish her well in her future study and career.

Auditor Recruitment and Training

AQA is continuing to seek applications, particularly from Māori and from Pasifika Peoples, to the Cycle 6 Register of Auditors and Reviewers.

Criteria for appointment can be found [here](#) or please contact Sheelagh.matear@aqac.ac.nz to discuss an application. AQA will continue to receive applications throughout Cycle 6.

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.

Global Benchmarking Review Project

Contributed by Cassandra Jutsum, Academic Projects and Quality Manager, University of Waikato

In early 2020, the University of Waikato signed a Memorandum of Understanding to participate in a Global Benchmarking Review. The benchmarking project was facilitated by the Australia based Online Peer Solutions (trading as the Peer Review Portal) and UK based OneHE and focused on three internationally significant themes:

- Academic Advising
- First Year Transition and Retention
- Student Wellbeing and Safety

There was a total of 17 participating higher education institutions from six countries, including Australia, Columbia, Ecuador, Mexico, England and New Zealand. The self-review phase of the project began early 2020, however, due to the impacts of Covid-19 the timeframes for the self-review were extended. This also presented a platform and an opportunity for the participating institutions to share details on how Covid-19 had impacted teaching, learning and student support in relations to each of the themes. Three peer review and calibration workshops were held via Zoom during the week of 16 November with a total of 120 participants. These workshops provided a space to share and discuss areas of good practice and challenges that were identified through the self-review process.

Dr Emily McIntosh, Director of Learning, Teaching and Student Experience at Middlesex University was involved in the benchmarking review as an external reviewer. Dr McIntosh provided a summary of sector opportunities, challenges and good practices for each theme and was happy to share her presentations with the group, the Peer Review Portal community and extended colleagues:

[Global Review Academic Advising](#)

[Global Review Transition and Retention](#)

[Global Review Student Wellbeing and Safety](#)

Following the workshops, Dr Sara Booth circulated a presentation on the [Key Themes on COVID-19 from Sector Review](#) which highlighted the significant shift towards a more student centred approach and new ways of working to support students. A final confidential report is in production and will include recommendations for improvement and good practice.

Waikato has seen real value in participating in the benchmarking review project, as it has provided us the opportunity to review our processes and gather evidence of the quality of our operations (especially for student outcomes). We have also learnt a great deal from other participating institutions which we will use to continue to refine and reshape our student support processes moving forward.

Enhancement Theme

The experience of New Zealand universities with an Enhancement Theme, focussing on “Evidence and evaluation for enhancement” was presented at QAA Scotland’s International Enhancement Conference. The video of the presentation and the paper are available on the Scottish Enhancement Themes [website](#) (session 1.3.1 on day 1).

Quality Forum

University Quality managers met via Zoom on 20 November 2020 for AQA’s annual Quality Forum. Wellbeing and engagement during the Covid-19 pandemic, remote reviews, impact of academic audit, maintaining assessment standards and academic integrity and Re-engaging with academic audit were discussed at the Forum. A report is available on the AQA website [here](#).

Student Voice

Contributed by Isabella Lenihan-Ikin, National President of NZUSA

A major project for students' associations (NZUSA, Te Mana Ākonga, Tauria Pasifika and the Disabled Students Association) in the second half of the year has been Whiria Ngā Tauria with the Ministry of Education. For several months, student representatives worked with the Ministry of Education to co-produce a model for how government agencies and tertiary institutions can work as effective and authentic partners in decision making.

The resource covers the student voices principles, outcomes, and practices, accompanied with real-world stories of student partnership in action. This resource hopes to assist tertiary providers in the transition from 'students as customers' to 'students as partners'. We hope that students' organisations, tertiary providers, government departments and other organisations wanting to work with students use this resource to develop their own, tailored student partnership practices and agreements at a local-level.



After a year of virtual meetings and workshops, it was great to finish the year with in-person events held by national students' associations across the country.

This included the Pasifika Students' Fono hosted by Tauria Pasifika at the Ministry of Education in Wellington. The fono provided an opportunity for Pacific student leaders across the country in tertiary education to come together to build capacity and confidence in student voice.

This was followed by the 5th annual Student Voice Summit co-hosted by NZUSA, TMĀ, Tauria Pasifika, NZ International Students' Association and AQA. The Ministry of Education sponsored the event this year and kindly hosted us at Mātauranga House. This event is an annual fixture in students' associations calendars and facilitates knowledge transfer between outgoing and incoming student representatives.

NZUSA Congress, followed a couple of days later at Massey University in Wellington, bringing together over eighty student leaders to reflect on the year that has been and plan for the year that lies ahead in 2021. This was also the purpose of the final Te Mana Ākonga Hui at Tangatarua Marae on the Toi Ohomai Rotorua campus the week later.



It has been a real privilege serving students' this year as the National President of the NZUSA. It was only by working as a team that we were able to achieve wins for students this year. I would like to acknowledge Mamaeroa Merito, Nohorua Parata, Ali Leota, Sabrain Alhady, Sam Smith and Matthew Schep for all their incredible work this year. I look forward to watching how the next generation of student representatives further development and grow student voice in Aotearoa.

Have You Seen This?

Everyone has spent a lot of time online this year. This 'Have you seen this?' column returns to classic format books to make some suggestions for summer reading. They may of course be read online.

Alexander, B., 2020. *Academic Next: The Futures of Higher Education* (Johns Hopkins University Press).

Bagshaw, A. and McVitty, D. (Eds.), 2019, *Influencing Higher Education policy: A Professional Guide to making an Impact* (Routledge).

Bearman, M., Dawson, P., Ajjawi, R., Tai, J., Boud, D. (Eds.), 2020, *Re-imagining University Assessment in a Digital World* (Springer).

Dawson, P., 2021, *Defending Assessment Security in a Digital World: Preventing E-Cheating and Supporting Academic Integrity in Higher Education* (Routledge).

Felten, P. and Lambert, L.M., 2020, *Relationship-Rich Education: How Human Connections Drive Success in College* (Johns Hopkins University Press).

Leiber, T. (Ed.), 2019, *Impact Evaluation of Quality Management in Higher Education* (Routledge).

Trigwell, K. and Prosser, M., 2020, *Exploring University Teaching and Learning: Experience and Context* (Palgrave Pivot).

Meetings and Conference Calendar

Some conferences postponed from 2020 are currently planning to be held in person in 2021, others are staying with an online format. The following may be of interest:

26-28 January 2021, online

24th Annual Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) Conference, [Quality in a time of change](#).

28 January 2021, online

HERDSA Webinar, [Panel discussion](#) – online learning, teaching and assessment during the COVID-19 outbreak and implications for Higher Education.

25-28 March 2021 in Singapore

APQN Conference, [Quality Assurance for Higher Education 4.0 in the Asia-Pacific Region](#).

7-10 June 2021 in Glasgow, Scotland

INQAAHE Conference, [Reimagining of Higher Education Quality in an Age of Uncertainty](#).

5-7 July 2021, online

STARS – Students Transitions Achievement Retention and Success - [Conference](#)



AQA | Academic
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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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