

La Trobe University

Report against AUQA Affirmations and Recommendations: Revised 15 May 2009

Affirmations

Areas where AUQA affirmed the need identified by La Trobe University for improvements to its practices are as follows:

Number	Affirmation	Progress as at 15 May 2009	Responsibility	Existing Risk
1.	AUQA affirms that La Trobe University needs to concentrate on developing an inclusive organisational culture across all its campuses, and especially between the Bundoora and Bendigo campuses, in order to successfully pursue its strategic goals.	The University has integrated the former Bendigo-based academic elements into five University-wide Faculties since the last AUQA audit. a Pro Vice-Chancellor (Regional) was appointed in 2008.	Senior Executive Group Pro Vice-Chancellor (Regional)	Low stakeholder (disaffected staff) and reputational risks – Minor consequence x Possible likelihood
2.	AUQA affirms La Trobe University's efforts to develop an integrated system of planning and reviews that permeates all significant budget centres of the institution, and to provide improved support for managers with planning responsibilities.	The University restructured its planning processes in 2008 by forming the Finance and Resource Division with responsibility for resource planning and budget, and the Governance, Planning and Policy Unit with responsibility for cyclical planning and review and the alignment of the Operational Plan to the University's Strategic Plan.	Senior Executive Group Executive Director, Office of the Vice-Chancellor	Significant financial, business performance (particularly efficiency and effectiveness), stakeholder and reputational risks Moderate consequence x Possible likelihood
3.	AUQA affirms that La Trobe University needs to develop a more systematic approach to identifying and assessing strategic and operational risks and incorporating the findings into the planned management of the University.	A Risk Management Unit has been established with the responsibility for implementing an enterprise-wide approach to risk management consistent with the current Australian standard. The activities of the RMU are overseen by the Corporate Governance and Audit Committee.	Senior Executive Group Executive Director, Office of the Vice-Chancellor	Significant Business Performance and Capability risk Moderate consequence x possible likelihood

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4.	AUQA affirms that La Trobe University needs to improve the management information available to managers at various levels to assist with the execution of their planning, decision-making and performance monitoring responsibilities.	Two major initiatives are currently under implementation – linking of load planning process into budget development and development of a reporting framework across statutory, governance and management levels to ensure a consistent view of performance.	Executive Director, Finance and Resource Planning	Significant Business Performance and Capability risk Moderate consequence x possible likelihood
5.	AUQA affirms that La Trobe University needs to ensure that uptake of its Graduate Attributes scheme is systematic throughout the University.	The Curriculum Review and Renewal project identified Graduate Capabilities as a key part of all La Trobe University courses. The Implementation Plan for the report from this review is in progress.	Deputy Vice-Chancellor	Medium reputational and stakeholder risks if fail to implement after announcing Minor consequence x Possible likelihood
6.	AUQA affirms that La Trobe University needs to ensure that the Quality Assurance of Subjects system is implemented consistently throughout the University, including for its online and offshore courses.	New Student Feedback on Subjects instruments supported by policies and procedures have been developed and will be implemented in Semester 1 2009.	Deputy Vice-Chancellor Pro Vice-Chancellor (Curriculum and Academic Planning)	Low stakeholder and reputational risks if fail to implement adequately Minor consequence x unlikely likelihood

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7.	AUQA affirms that La Trobe University needs to provide systematic support for professional development in learning and teaching for sessional and full-time academic staff.	Professional development for casual tutors and lecturers became a condition of employment/re-employment beginning in 2009. The Curriculum, Teaching and Learning Centre (CTLTC) offers three-hour workshops in the fundamentals of small-group teaching for tutors and demonstrators and in the fundamentals of teaching to casual lecturers. Attendance has been high and feedback positive.	Pro Vice-Chancellor (Curriculum and Academic Planning)	High stakeholder and reputational risks from failure to provide Major consequence x possible likelihood
8.	AUQA affirms La Trobe University's plans to promote greater use of its Student Evaluation of Teaching survey, but particularly so that more staff will seek and act upon student feedback on their teaching through a system that may provide for benchmarking and professional support.	New Student Feedback on Teaching instruments supported by policies and procedures have been developed and will be implemented in Semester 1 2009. The policy specifies that results may be used in performance management and promotions processes.	Deputy Vice-Chancellor Pro Vice-Chancellor (Curriculum and Academic Planning)	Low stakeholder and reputational risks if fail to implement adequately Minor consequence x unlikely likelihood

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9.	AUQA affirms that La Trobe University needs to develop a clear position on what it means to be a regional university and incorporate this position into its strategic and operational planning processes.	<p>LTU has re-organised the structure of its regional operations to achieve greater integration, management and development of its regional campuses. The PVC(R) is supported by Directors of each regional campus. A Committee has been established and meets monthly to inform the PVC, report on campus issues, and contribute to University planning and management.</p> <p>After consultation with Regional Advisory Boards at each campus, and approval from Council, the final draft of the Regional Strategy will be launched in May 2009. Objectives outlined in the RS have already been incorporated into LTU's operational plans.</p>	<p>Senior Executive Group</p> <p>Pro Vice-Chancellor (Regional)</p>	Medium business performance and capability, stakeholder and reputational risks if position not fully realised minor consequence x possible likelihood
10.	AUQA affirms La Trobe University's decision to centralise coordination of offshore international student enrolment for now, in order to ensure that standards are implemented consistently.	La Trobe International currently manages the admissions function for all of the University's offshore international students to ensure that the process is handled consistently.	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (International and Future Students)	Low risk as processes are well established minimal consequence x rare likelihood
11.	AUQA affirms that La Trobe University needs to increase its attention to Indigenous students as an issue of relevance to the whole University community.	La Trobe University has made significant gains in indigenous education since 2004, establishing an Office of the Director, Indigenous Education and both the number of indigenous students and their academic performance have improved. Scholarships and bursaries are also made available to indigenous students.	Pro Vice-Chancellor (Equity and Student Services).	Low risk as processes are well established minimal consequence x rare likelihood

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Recommendations

Areas where AUQA recommended improvements to the practices of La Trobe University are as follows:

Number	Recommendation:	Progress as at 15 May 2009	Responsibility	Existing Risk
1.	AUQA recommends that La Trobe University establish formal mechanisms for regularly reviewing the performance of the Vice-Chancellor and the Council.	In 2008 performance management procedures for the Vice-Chancellor and senior appointments were drawn from individual contracts into the policy framework and made available for information on the policy website. An annual external review of Council performance has been agreed upon by Council and is now included in the annual Council Calendar. A review was conducted in late 2008.	Chancellor. Corporate Governance Committee of Council.	Low/medium stakeholder and reputational risks minor/moderate consequence x unlikely likelihood
2.	AUQA recommends that La Trobe University develop a comprehensive framework for the development, approval, dissemination, monitoring and review of policies that takes into account appropriate delegations to faculties and campuses.	The University's Policy Framework was approved by Council in August 2008 and the process of moving all University policies and procedures to the new format is under way. The Policy website includes all reviewed and revised policies and some which are under review.	Executive Director, Office of the Vice-Chancellor	Low business performance and capability risk minor consequence x unlikely likelihood
3.	AUQA recommends that La Trobe University review the level of delegation to the coordinators of different 'subject instances', with a view to establishing systems that will ensure greater consistency across subject instances.	Different Instances of a Subject Policy and Different Instances of a Subject Procedures were approved in November 2008 and are being implemented through the Faculties in Semester 1 2009.	Deputy Vice-Chancellor Curriculum Teaching and Learning Committee.	Medium reputational and stakeholder risks if fail to implement appropriately Minor consequence x Possible likelihood

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4.	AUQA recommends that La Trobe University review its credit point policy with a view to establishing a standard annual full-time credit point load applicable to all programs, including combined degree programs.	Single degrees have remained standardised at 120 credit points per year. Double degree students are permitted but not required to overload. Analysis of their academic performance compared to single degree enrolled students indicates that the voluntary higher workload does not affect their performance in a negative manner.	Deputy Vice-Chancellor	Low risk minimal consequence x rare likelihood
5.	AUQA recommends that La Trobe University adopt an alternative acronym to DBA for the Diploma in Business Administration in order to avoid confusion with the Doctor of Business Administration.	The Foundation Studies and Diploma program has adopted 'Dip. Bus. Admin' as the common formal abbreviation. A new Diploma of Business will soon replace the old Dip Bus Adm.	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (International and Future Students)	Low risk minimal consequence x rare likelihood
6.	AUQA recommends that La Trobe University enhance its assessment policy in light of best practice within the Australian higher education sector.	A revised Assessment Policy was approved by Academic Board in September 2007. The documents were moved to the new policy framework in October 2008. The concepts of 'criterion referenced' and 'summative and formative' assessment are variably understood in the University and the former Academic Development Unit ran training to develop understanding.	Pro Vice-Chancellor (Curriculum and Academic Planning)	High stakeholder and reputational risks from failure to provide Major consequence x Likely likelihood

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7.	AUQA recommends that La Trobe University ensure that all major research activities, centres and initiatives are brought within a single, comprehensive research strategy.	<p>The University's strategic research framework is expanded and detailed in the Strategic Plan 2008-2012. The Research Plan 2009-2012 is in turn the framework for the Faculty, Centre and Institute operational plans, and for the yearly Research Operational Plan.</p> <p>Together these documents form the high level five-year strategy, the detailed plans behind it and actions to be taken on a yearly basis. The Research Plan is based on identification of University strengths with investment increasingly focused in strengths.</p>	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research).	High stakeholder and reputational risks from failure of strategy Major consequence x possible likelihood
8.	AUQA recommends that La Trobe University develop a comprehensive framework for explicitly linking research with teaching and curricula, and establish means for monitoring the effectiveness of this framework.	<p>La Trobe has a particular approach to the relationship between teaching and research which puts learning at the heart of both. Learning is central to all university work, for both students and staff. This approach is underpinned by the requirement that academic staff be engaged in research or scholarship, including the scholarship of teaching, and that students develop the graduate capability of 'inquiry/research' relevant to their course of study. This is reflected in the WP, the Research Plan and the new promotions policy and procedures.</p>	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) and Deputy Vice-Chancellor	Medium reputational and stakeholder risks if fail to implement appropriately Minor consequence x Possible likelihood

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9.	AUQA recommends that La Trobe University establish monitoring systems to ensure that its policies and processes for postgraduate supervisors and supervision are implemented consistently.	<p>LTU now has a number of formal policies and procedures to ensure consistency in the management of students across the faculties and schools. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examination of Theses Policy and Procedures • Research Student Selection Criteria Policy and Procedures • Supervision of Research Students Policy and Procedures <p>The University also has guidelines for monitoring and supporting the progress of research scholarship holders, which are being extended to all research students. An advisory panel will provide support, advice and guidance, assist in choosing additional training and career development options, and address any difficulties in the relationship of supervisor and student.</p>	<p>Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research)</p> <p>Pro Vice-Chancellor (Graduate Research).</p>	<p>Medium reputational and stakeholder risks if fail to implement appropriately</p> <p>Minor consequence x Possible likelihood</p>
10.	AUQA recommends that La Trobe University review the adequacy of its resourcing of higher degree research students.	<p>Under the Support for Research Postgraduates Policy, LTU guarantees all research students access to the equipment required for their research, and to workspace, mail, telephone, central library and computer facilities. Access to printing and photocopying is subject to school procedures. All research students have access to training courses, counselling, English-language instruction and other services.</p> <p>From 2009, all students with clearly first-class degrees receive a LTU research support scholarship of up to \$20427/annum (for 3.5 years).</p>	<p>Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research)</p> <p>Pro Vice-Chancellor (Graduate Research).</p>	<p>Medium reputational and stakeholder risks if fail to implement appropriately</p> <p>Minor consequence x Possible likelihood</p>

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11.	AUQA recommends that La Trobe University connect its Research and Development Parks more closely to the research capabilities of the University in order to maximise commercialisation opportunities and the potential of this resource to contribute to the overall research effort of the University.	As a prerogative of its management function the University reserves the right to determine the purposes for which the R&D Park has been developed.	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research).	High stakeholder and reputational risks Major consequence x Possible likelihood
12.	AUQA recommends that La Trobe University establishes a mechanism for ensuring that moderation is appropriately and consistently implemented for all applicable offshore courses, and that results for comparable onshore and offshore courses are considered as one means for determining equivalence.	Different Instances of a Subject Policy and Different Instances of a Subject Procedures were approved in November 2008 and are being implemented in Semester 1 2009. The policy specifically covers moderation and comparability of assessment. Faculties are in the process of implementation.	Deputy Vice-Chancellor Curriculum Teaching and Learning Committee.	Medium reputational and stakeholder risks if fail to implement appropriately Minor consequence x Possible likelihood

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13.	AUQA recommends that La Trobe University fully integrate Library and Information Technology Services considerations into the overall management of offshore activities in order to ensure that offshore students receive an equivalent level of service in support of their education.	A new Course Lifecycles Policy has been approved with procedures covering approvals, reviews, revisions, suspension and closure of courses. These procedures are implemented through the Programs subcommittee of the Curriculum, Teaching and Learning Committee (CTLCom). New offshore programs must also be approved through the course approvals procedures, which include specific provision for Library and ITS considerations within course development and approval.	Deputy Vice-Chancellor	Low risk minimal consequence x rare likelihood
14.	AUQA recommends that La Trobe University reconsider the application of its English language entrance standards in light of the overall demands of the teaching, reading materials and assessment methods.	After consideration, LTU has maintained its English language entrance requirements at the DIAC minimum of visa requirements of 6.0 IELTS (UG) and 6.5 IELTS (PG). The entry requirement for the Foundation Studies Program is standardised at an IELTS score of 5.5 onshore and offshore in line with the recent national review of Foundation Studies programs. A new 'English Language Entry Requirements Policy' formalises the University position, but allows faculties to vary these minimum entry requirements upwards.	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (International and Future Students) Deputy Vice-Chancellor	Medium reputational and stakeholder risks if fail to implement appropriately Minor consequence x Possible likelihood

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15.	AUQA recommends that La Trobe University develop and implement a university-wide strategic approach to the design, implementation, growth and evaluation of online learning management systems and video-conferencing.	<p>Three new documents set out a university-wide strategic approach to flexible teaching and learning. They set out protocols, guidelines, principles and practical advice for planning and designing flexible teaching and learning at the university and establish essential groundwork to support policy development.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Guidelines for flexible learning using the La Trobe University Learning Management System (LMS)</i>, which sets out good practice principles for the design of a learning-centred approach, design of inclusive curriculum and the use of blended approaches suited to university learning. • <i>Multi-campus Teaching by Videoconferencing.</i> • <i>Protocol for establishing a new centrally supported learning technology.</i> 	Deputy Vice-Chancellor	<p>Medium reputational and stakeholder risks if fail to implement appropriately Minor consequence x Possible likelihood</p>