

AQSG08/01(M)
LA TROBE UNIVERSITY
Academic Quality Steering Group

The first meeting for 2008 of the Academic Quality Steering Group Committee was held on **Monday 14 July** from **1.00 – 2.00 pm** in the Mandala Room, Level 3, David Myers Building West, Bundoora campus.

MINUTES

A PRELIMINARY BUSINESS

A1 Welcome from the Chair

Dr Julie Jackson welcomed members to the first meeting of AQSG.

A2 Apologies

In attendance were:

Dr Julie Jackson – PVC(QE) – **Chair**
Professor Thomas Angelo – PVC(CAP)
Professor Gerald Farrell – FHS
Professor Aaron Smith – FLM
Dr Jennifer Sheed – FE

Dr Kay Souter – FHUSS
Assoc Professor Katherine Legge – FSTE
Ms Helen King – Librarian
Mr John Molony – Chief Officer, Int'l
Mr Leon Lyell – Exec Officer, COI

Not present were:

Mr Peter Boyle – Student Representative Council
Ms Kara Sheehan – Guild President

B GENERAL BUSINESS

B1 Terms of Reference

The terms of reference were reviewed. It was agreed that the Chief Officer, International and the Executive Officer to the Chief Officer, International would replace the Director, International Programs Office. The reference to nominees of the DVC(A) and DVC(R) were also removed, as they are on a separate Audit Steering Group, and the Manager, Management Information Unit was removed as a member and included in the category of occasional attendees.

Dr Jackson invited members to contact her directly with any other inclusions for the membership.

The revised Terms of Reference are attached (attachment 1).

B2 Report of Chair

- Cycle 2 AUQA Audit and themes

Dr Jackson circulated a revised version of a presentation made to Academic Board (attachment 2). She reminded the meeting that the audit is a process through which areas for improvement at La Trobe University could be identified, and that this opportunity allows us to develop strategies and make change.

Dr Jackson offered to attend any Faculty meetings as necessary to explain the process for the audit and discuss the themes.

The Cycle 2 Portfolio is due at AUQA on 16 June 2009, and the audit visit will take place between 21 and 24 September 2009. Visits to overseas and regional operations may be included in the program, and if included would take place before the September audit visit.

Mr Mark Hay is La Trobe University's Audit Director, and suggested audit panel members will be presented to the University for comment.

- Portfolio Outline

Cycle 1 audits focussed on 'fitness for purpose' and were criterion referenced against the University's strategic plans. The 2009 audit will differ from the Cycle 1 audit, as rather than being a comprehensive audit, two themes have been chosen for the University. They are 'Research and Research Training' and 'Internationalisation', as described in the document AQSG 08/01/02. They were chosen after a risk assessment identified opportunities for improvement and strategic importance to the University in the themes.

Internationalisation is a common theme for all Cycle 2 audits. This topic does not refer solely to international student numbers, but is also about internationalisation of curriculum, among other things. The sub-themes identified in the document are included to allow the University to 'personalise' the portfolio.

The auditors will be looking for emphasis on 'standards' and external reference points ('fitness of purpose'), and Dr Jackson referred members to the National Protocols for Higher Education Approvals Processes (circulated as AQSG 08/01/07), against which AUQA will judge our compliance.

- Work Completed to date

AQSG 08/01/03

Dr Jackson briefly reviewed the paper AQSG 08/01/03, which identified actions taken to comply with Recommendations and Affirmations from the Cycle 1 audit. The main areas where the University does not comply with the National Protocols for Higher Education Approvals Processes are compliance with the Australian Qualifications Framework and in the arrangements for course closure ('teaching-out' of courses).

Other key areas for action stemming from the previous audit include the development of a Policy Framework and Library (approaching final approval at Council) and a suite of information and schedules related to regular Review Cycles for organisational Units (under development). These two activities are key building blocks for showing that the University has the systems in place for continuous improvement.

A Quality website has been established at <http://www.latrobe.edu.au/quality/> and members are encouraged to visit it regularly. The Policy Framework Papers, National Protocols for Higher Education Approvals Processes and the AUQA affirmations and recommendations from Cycle 1 are all available from the Quality site.

B3 Role of Members

The role of members of the Steering Group was discussed.

Faculty members of this Steering Group will serve as a two-way conduit for information related to quality management in the University and to assist Dr Jackson on preparations for the next audit. However, the Vice-Chancellor also wishes to build capacity with respect to knowledge of quality management and systems. He considers that quality management is the shared professional responsibility of all staff of the University to work on continuous improvement of what the University does, and to embed quality management into everyday practice.

This Steering Group will allow members to develop their joint knowledge and skills in this area, so that each member becomes a local area expert within faculties/divisions.

Members were asked to report to the faculty and divisional senior committees on the key points from this meeting, and advise them that Dr Jackson is available to come and talk about aspects of quality management or the forthcoming audit.

Dr Jackson circulated the Quality Enhancement Framework (attachment 3) to members for their information and input.

C ITEMS FOR INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION

The items listed below were circulated with the agenda and are available through the Quality website.

- Cycle 1 AUQA Audit Commendations, Affirmations, Recommendations
- Risk Framework
- Standards Framework
- Risk Analysis against the National Protocols for Higher Education Approval Processes
- 2005 AUQA Audit Report
- AUQA Audit Manuals

D OTHER BUSINESS

D1 There was no other business raised at the meeting.

The next meeting of the Academic Quality Steering Group has not yet been scheduled.

Randi Brooks
Secretary, Academic Quality Steering Group
01 August 2008

Academic Quality Steering Group

Composition, Membership and Terms of Reference

Composition and Membership	
::	PVC(QE)
::	Quality representatives appointed by the five Faculties (these should have oversight of quality management in their faculty and be members (or in attendance) of the respective Faculty Boards):
::	University Librarian or nominee
::	PVC(CAP)
::	Chief Officer, International
::	Executive Officer to the COI
::	1 student representative nominated by the Student Guild
::	1 student representative nominated by the Student Representative Council
::	Other occasional attendees for specific agenda items: Eg Manager RGSO for research discussions; Manager, Management Information Unit for discussions involving management data

Terms of Reference	
The members of the committee will facilitate the maintenance of a quality culture based on continuous improvement by:	
::	Providing advice to the PVC(QE) on issues relating to quality assurance across the University;
::	Participating in the development of strategies for assuring quality;
::	Assisting in the dissemination of quality assurance initiatives across the University;
::	Serving as a forum for exchange of good practice within the University.
::	Working with the PVC (QE) on the development of the University's performance portfolio for the 2009 audit;
::	Participate in the development and implementation of the University Action Plan in response to the 2009 audit

Membership at July 2008

Dr Julie Jackson – PVC(QE) – **Chair**
 Professor Thomas Angelo – PVC(CAP)
 Professor Gerald Farrell – Faculty of Health Sciences;
 Professor Aaron Smith – Faculty of Law and Management;
 Dr Jennifer Sheed – Faculty of Education;
 Dr Kay Souter – Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences;
 Assoc Professor Katherine Legge – Faculty of Science Technology and Engineering
 Mr Peter Boyle – Student Representative Council
 Ms Helen King – Librarian
 Mr John Molony – Chief Officer, International;
 Ms Kara Sheehan – Guild President

Cycle 2 AUQA Audit

Dr Julie Jackson

Pro Vice-Chancellor (Quality Enhancement)

Materials in this slide show are developed from AUQA resources

Planning for Cycle 2

There will be:

- A focus on two themes
- A risk assessment approach to the selection of themes
- Explicit attention to outcome standards, and
- AUQA will also audit institutions against a range of external reference points and specifically the new National Protocols for Higher Education Approval Processes

Audit Timelines

- Approx 15 months from Portfolio submission: **AUQA invites LTU** to suggest possible themes. (March 2008)
- Approx 12 months from PF: **Approval of two themes** by Chair of AUQA Board (June 2008) The approved themes are 'Internationalisation' and 'Research and Research Management'
- Portfolio submission June 16, 2009
- Audit visit September 21-24, 2009
- If there is an offshore visit it will take place about 4 weeks before the audit visit

Information for Themes

Relevant strategic objectives relative to the theme. Data presented should include:

- **Planned targets and outcomes**, with definitions
- **Related measure(s)** (qualitative or quantitative)
- **Performance outcomes** for past three years
- **Policy framework**, ie brief summary (or URLs) of policies, strategies and processes in place to support achievement of target outcome (including training and development)
- **Brief commentary** on whether target is on track to be achieved or not

Information for Themes (cont'd)

- Main **strategies and processes** in place, including processes to achieve alignment with relevant external reference points
- How the **effectiveness** of processes is monitored
- **Benchmarking** results and effect
- **Review and evaluation** mechanisms used, including **risk management**, and outcomes of these
- Evidence of how **academic standards** related to the theme are **set, monitored and evaluated**; or, for enabling areas, evidence of **effectiveness** in supporting academic outcomes and standards
- Priorities for **improvement**

MCEETYA on Attention to Standards

AUQA should be able to recommend to the University any areas that need substantial review or improvement ... to ensure that acceptable academic standards are being met

It could also recommend that the activity or course be suspended or discontinued ... in extreme circumstances.

Standards

A specification or other criterion designed to be used consistently as a rule, guideline or definition of a level of performance or achievement

Considerations

- How well does the University perform against its own standards set as part of its overall purpose? (Fitness for purpose). How do we determine standards?
- How well does it perform against external expectations (regardless of what the University aspires to achieve)? (Fitness of purpose)
 - i.e. thresholds considered through, for example, professional accreditation processes, BUT how do these compare with other relevant national/international institutions? (External reference points)

Areas for Audit Focus (Themes)

- How are standards in these areas determined? What input is there from internal/external stakeholders?
- How are they applied consistently across the University? What processes are in place to assure implementation?
- How are outcomes monitored?
- How are standards and outcomes compared nationally? Internationally?
- What is the result of comparisons? What standards are achieved?
- How is this information used to improve standards? What review processes are in place to ensure that standards are updated?

Institutions and audit panels will interpret the data in the light of:

- The University's strategic directions ('fitness for purpose')
- Relevant external reference points ('fitness of purpose'),
and
- Selected comparisons ('standards achieved')

External Reference Points include

- National Protocols for Higher Education Approval Processes
- AVCC Code of Practice for Provision of Education to International Students
- AVCC: Universities and their Students: Principles for Education by Australian Universities
- AVCC Policy Guidelines on Cross-sector Qualifications Linkages
- Australian Qualifications Framework

External Reference Points include

- ESOS Act and associated Code
- Quality Audit Factors for NSAs
- MCEETYA Good Practice Principles for Credit Transfer and Articulation from VET to Higher Education
- UNESCO/OECD Guidelines for Quality Provision in Cross-Border Higher Education

La Trobe University Quality Enhancement Framework

La Trobe University will promote critical inquiry, advance and share knowledge, and support the practical application of knowledge for the benefit of all.

La Trobe University's values guide our research, scholarship, teaching and organisational practices, and we commit to them:

Responsibility

- social justice, equal opportunity, cultural diversity and environmental sustainability;

Relevance

- education as a lifelong and interactive experience that produces responsible global citizens;

Critical enquiry

- freedom of expression, rigorous enquiry, and dialogue with the society at large;

Integrity

- adherence to the highest ethical standards and mutual respect;

Participation

- active involvement of staff and students in decision-making processes that are transparent and effective;

Excellence

- commitment to high quality, high impact teaching and research .

Principles

In line with the University values, the principles of the Quality Enhancement Framework are:

Responsibility Central leadership and encouragement, devolved responsibility - pursuing quality outcomes is the professional responsibility of all staff

Relevance Activity aligned to University purpose and values, recognising stakeholder needs

Critical Enquiry Use of internal measures and external standards to identify opportunities for continuing improvement in all activities

Integrity Honest and thorough interpretation of evidence in self evaluation

Participation Engage with staff, students and other community members in developing processes, identifying standards and enhancing outcomes

Excellence Commitment to high quality, high impact teaching and research linked to external standards and benchmarks

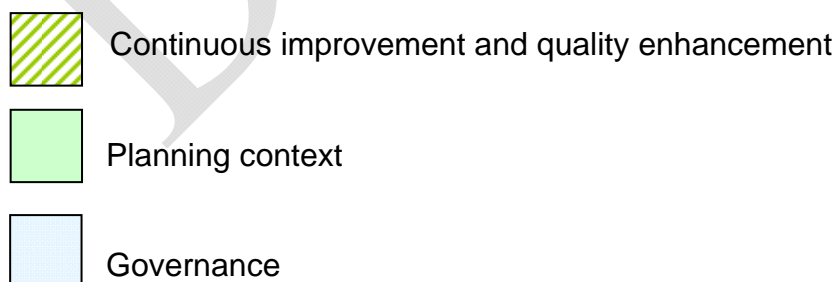
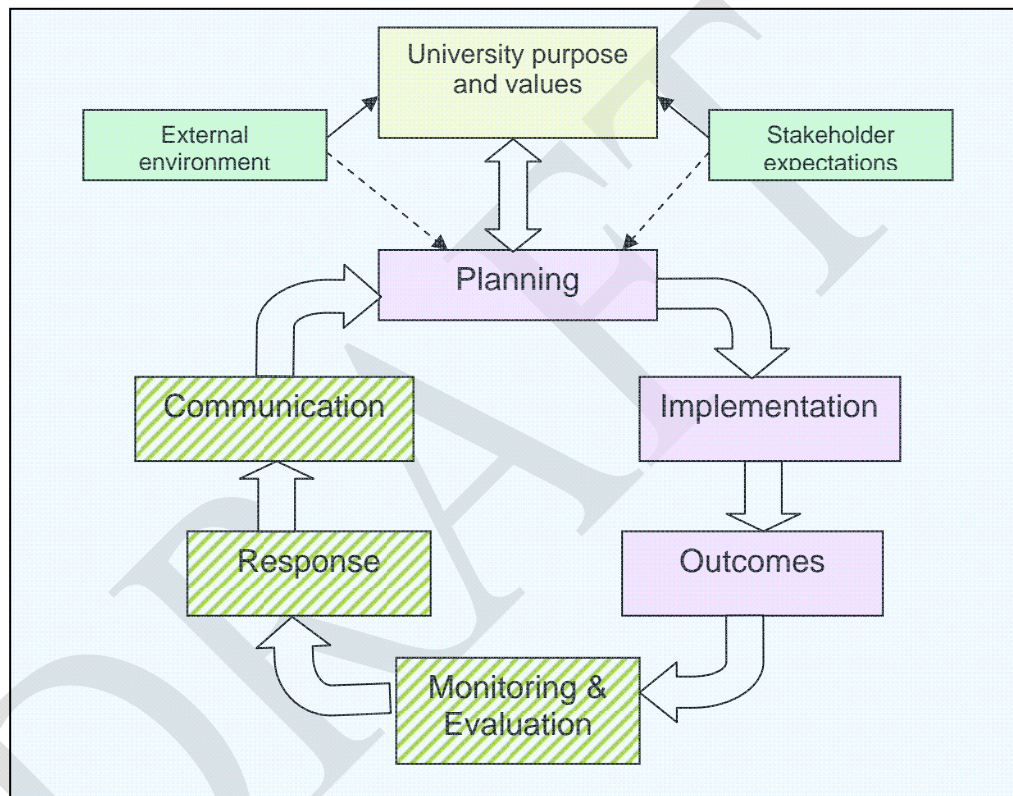
Scope

Research and research training, teaching, community engagement and enabling activities including governance, management/organisation, staff, resources, internationalisation, marketing and communication, infrastructure

Continuous Quality Improvement as Institutional Practice

In 2003, the La Trobe Council approved a quality management framework for the University intended to embed continuous quality improvement as institutional practice. The diagram below represents this framework, updated to the 2008 context. The renewed Quality Enhancement Framework is integrated in the planning and review processes of the University. Its key elements operate within the planning context, stated University purpose and values, and its governance structures.

PLANNING, REVIEW AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT



Planning

A suite of aligned strategic and operational plans setting University direction, objectives, strategies and targets and, deriving from the University Plan, organisational unit plans and functional plans including Teaching and Learning, Research and Research Training, Internationalisation, Equity and Diversity, Community and Regional Engagement

Implementation

The supporting policy framework, management and decision making structures including risk management considerations, to facilitate the application of human, financial and physical resources to achieve objectives

Results - Outcomes, Monitoring and Evaluation

Assessment, reflection and reporting on achievements against objectives and targets, supported by review and monitoring cycles and high quality management information, including stakeholder feedback

Improvement – Response and Communication

Responding to performance indicators and reviews to enhance quality; communication of results into future planning and to the University community

Processes/Elements of the QE Framework

Means for enhancing quality within institutional practice will include:

- Academic, administrative and committee structures with clear responsibilities and accountabilities
- Policies, procedures and processes supporting the fulfilment of the strategic plan
- A robust risk management framework integrated into University planning and review processes
- Well articulated governance role for Academic Board in academic quality assurance (policy approval, monitoring of academic reporting and reviews)
- Annual operational monitoring and five yearly strategic review of major organisational units
- Approval processes, monitoring and review of units and programs
- Assessment linked to learning outcomes
- Student feedback on units and teaching informing improvements
- Communication of responses to student feedback
- Student academic and personal support services
- Monitoring student grievances and using these to inform quality improvements
- Research training and support for research students
- Support for identified areas of research excellence
- Staff performance management and professional development
- Communication of responses to staff feedback
- Developing a strong service culture across all levels of the institution