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# Quality Initiatives Project

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Development and pilot testing of an  
evidence-driven audit cycle model

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Department of Health and Environment,  
La Trobe University, Bendigo

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## **List of Abbreviations**

<b>AIEH</b>	Australian Institute of Environmental Health
<b>AUQA</b>	Australian Universities Quality Assurance
<b>BPH</b>	Bachelor of Public Health
<b>CAC</b>	Course Advisory Committee
<b>CC</b>	Course Coordinator
<b>ENTER</b>	Equivalent National Tertiary Entrance Rank
<b>HOS</b>	Head of School
<b>PEDS</b>	Performance Enhancement Development Scheme
<b>QA</b>	Quality Assurance
<b>QAS</b>	Quality Assurance of Subjects
<b>SET</b>	Student Evaluation of Teaching
<b>VTAC</b>	Victorian Tertiary Admissions Centre

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# Executive Summary

This project was funded by a Quality Initiatives Grant (Office of the Pro Vice-Chancellor Quality and Community). It was designed to develop and pilot test the use of an evidence-driven audit cycle of the Quality Assurance (QA) processes of an undergraduate degree program offered at La Trobe University at the Bendigo campus.

Universities are responsible for delivering programs of sound quality to students and are required to report the results of their QA processes. The purpose of this project was the development of a continuous, evidence-driven audit cycle that could reduce the peaks in QA activity to a more even and continuous process, but at the same time ensure all reporting requirements were achieved.

Development of the model was based on published research evidence, and was guided by an existing validated quality cycle model. Pilot testing of the model involved the integration of internal quality audit processes for the Bachelor of Public Health (Environmental Health) Course (BPH(EH)), with the external re-accreditation requirements of the Australian Institute of Environmental Health (AIEH). Following this pilot test, changes have been integrated into the model, which reflects a composite and ideal sequence for all QA data gathering procedures.

The main outcome of this project is an evaluated, conceptual model that streamlines quality processes – a model that can be adapted to a range of undergraduate courses across the University, regardless of discipline base. In addition, a reflective checklist and recommended quality cycle has been developed to ensure the ongoing QA cycle process is continued in a timely manner regardless of staff changes or structural reorganization within the wider University. From the evidence assembled we are able to conclude that the process planned by the Department will now enable us to collect all the data necessary to meet the requirements of the various reporting and accrediting bodies in an efficient and timely manner. We recommend that other University academic Departments consider utilising this model to develop their own quality data collection cycle.

## Introduction

This project was funded by a Quality Initiatives Grant (Office of the Pro Vice-Chancellor Quality and Community). It was designed to develop and pilot test the use of an evidence-driven audit cycle in the QA processes of the Bachelor of Public Health (Environmental Health - BPH(EH)) offered at La Trobe University at the Bendigo campus. The project has involved the integration of University quality audit processes with the external re-accreditation process of the Course with the Australian Institute of Environmental Health (AIEH). AIEH re-accreditation was undertaken in October 2005. The result is an evaluated model that can be adopted by a range of different Courses to streamline QA processes.

In this report, a program of study such as the Bachelor of Public Health is referred to as a *course* that is made of major *streams* (such as Environmental Health or Health Promotion) and comprising a program of separate *units* previously known as subjects.

## Background

Quality assurance (QA) has been defined as a “*formal and systematic exercise in identifying problems in delivery, designing activities to overcome the problems and carrying out follow-up monitoring to ensure that no new problems have been introduced and that corrective steps have been effective*” (Lapsley, 2000). Universities are responsible for delivering programs of sound quality to students and are required to report the results of their QA processes through the Australian Universities Quality Assurance (AUQA) audit process. Likewise, students have reasonable expectations of having programs of sound and reliable quality that meet their expectations. La Trobe University is committed to ensuring that there are appropriate processes in place to maintain and enhance the quality of its research, teaching and learning and management (La Trobe University, 2003).

Both institutional accreditation (for example hospital) and course accreditation (for example in teaching and nursing) are recognised and accepted components of QA (Lapsley, 2000). In addition to University QA processes, some courses which lead directly to professional practice undergo accreditation with outside bodies, this is often necessary to gain professional recognition by a professional body representative of their discipline. These two processes can be seen as mutually beneficial to the University and to students. The University, industry and the wider community benefits from offering well designed and

structured courses, which directly meet the needs of new practitioners in the field. Well designed courses reduce the likelihood of student discontent or litigation. Students benefit because, upon graduation, they make a smooth and successful transition into professional practice, possessing the essential prerequisites in their field. The recent focus on evidence based curriculum development ensures that research evidence informs course development and forms an important part of quality processes (Greenhalgh *et. al*, 2003).

Academic and Course Administration staff need to be constantly aware of the parallel processes of University QA and external accreditation, to ensure that they have documented evidence of their ability to meet the requirements of each agency, and that any alterations made to a course do not reduce their ability to meet quality and accreditation requirements.

Both QA and course accreditation processes can be quite onerous to undertake, from an academic and course administration point of view, especially in terms of the preparation of documentation and the logistics of consulting with community and external experts in the field.

The introduction of a continuous evidence-driven audit cycle was considered to have the potential to reduce the peaks in QA activity to a more even and continuous process. It was also seen to be of benefit in clearly documenting the requirements and stages of Quality Improvement that need to be undertaken, even if there are personnel changes in course administrators and Course Coordinators, or Department and Faculty restructures.

This project was designed to develop and pilot test such a model. The model was developed and based on published research evidence and pilot tested using the Environmental Health Stream of the Bachelor of Public Health as the case study course. The resulting model has the potential to be applicable to other courses across the University, especially those which require accreditation and registration with an external authority. It could also allow individual Departments to integrate Course Review, QA and External Accreditation into a continuous audit cycle.

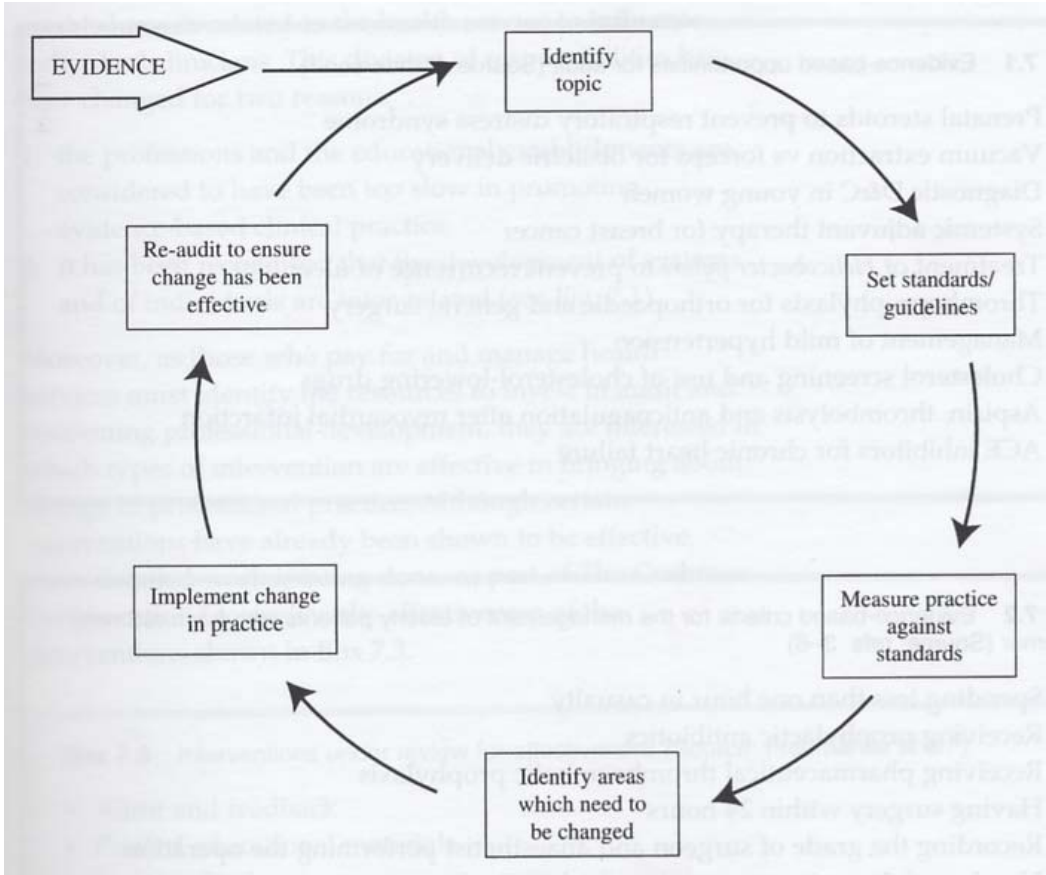
# Objectives of the Project

The specific objectives of this project were to:

1. Identify the full range of relevant QA reporting requirements of the Bachelor of Public Health, including those both internal and external to the University.
2. Map the requirements of varying review processes to identify common data needs.
3. Measure existing data gathering processes against the needs identified in phase 2.
4. Identify changes required to current data collection procedures.
5. Initiate revised data collection strategies.
6. Re-audit to see if the change has been successful.
7. Develop a reflective checklist to assist future users to identify their ongoing needs.

The objectives were designed to correspond with the well respected and validated quality cycle proposed by Muir Gray (2001) .

**Figure 1:** Evidenced based medicine quality cycle (Gray, 2001)



The following sections of this document report on each phase of the project as they correspond with the objectives listed above.

## Section 1

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### **Phase 1: QA Reporting requirements of the BPH**

This phase identified the parallel quality improvement processes and reporting requirements related to Course Reviews (both internal and external), Quality Assurance of individual units and reaccreditation by the AIEH. In this phase documentation from the University and external organisations was scrutinised to determine the actual data required to satisfy each source. There are a number of different QA activities undertaken by the Department of Health and Environment and a range of QA reporting requirements. In order to meet these requirements the Department of Health and Environment has an ongoing cycle of QA data collection procedures.

The cycle of QA data collection procedures previously implemented by the Department is a five yearly cycle that enables continuous quality improvements to be made to the course. Outlined below are the data collection activities undertaken by the Department in each year of the cycle.

Year 1: Focus group discussions are conducted with current students and recent graduates

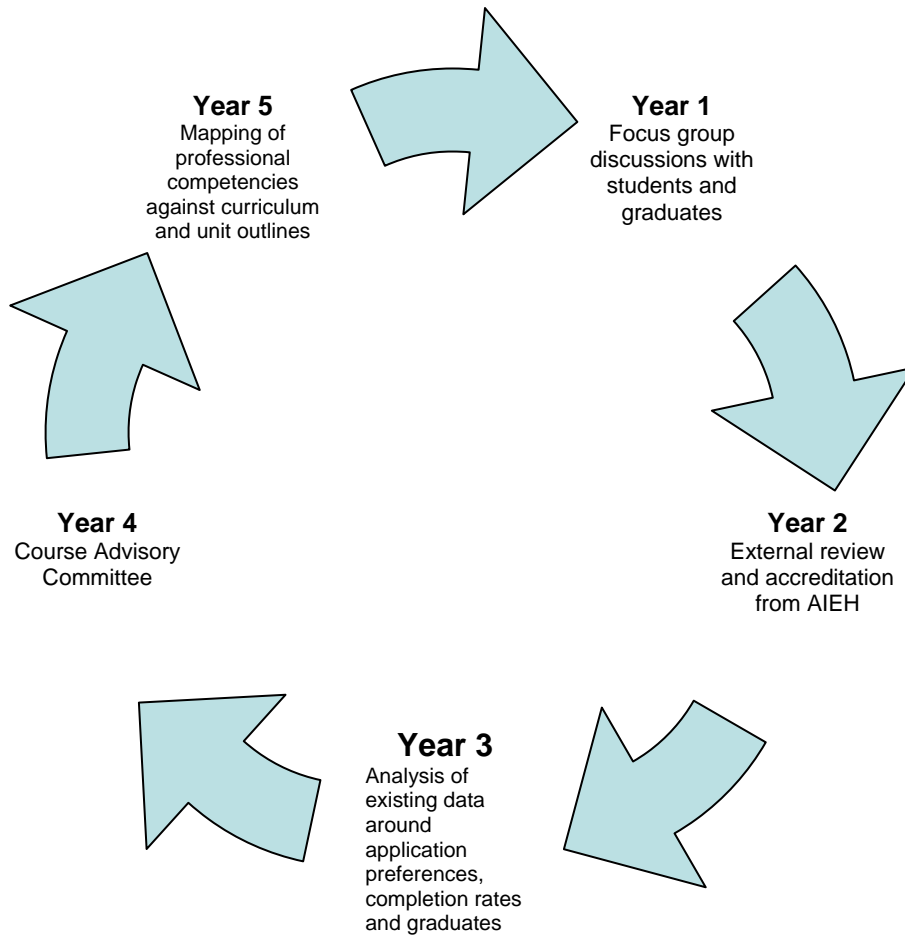
Year 2: External review and accreditation from the AIEH is undertaken.

Year 3: Analysis of existing data around application preference, completion rates and graduate employment and an exit survey of graduates are completed.

Year 4: Course Advisory Committee

Year 5: Mapping of professional competencies against curriculum and unit outlines is undertaken.

**Figure 2:** Department of Health and Environment QA Data Collection Cycle



In addition to the activities undertaken in this five year data collection cycle the Department of Health and Environment is also involved in University quality activities. The following sub-sections A - G outline the range of activities undertaken as part of University and external requirements.

#### **A. Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA) Audit**

QA in Australian universities is undertaken by a number of internal and external mechanisms which assess teaching and learning, research, and governance and administration (Department of Education, Science and Training, 2005). These are regularly audited by the Australian Universities Quality Agency which “*is an independent, not-for-profit national agency established to monitor, audit and report on quality assurance in Australian higher education*” (DEST, 2005). AUQA audits take place every 5 years to determine the extent to which universities achieve their aims and objectives and maintain appropriate standards of higher education. Feedback from this audit is made available to all staff via the University website and reports of the audit have been made available to all Heads of Department. This

feedback loop ensures that all staff are able to incorporate suggested changes in policy and practice. Data requirements for AUQA are available in the Faculty/School Quality Management Checklist.

### **B. University Accreditation Process for New Courses**

Before a new course can be offered to students it must undergo a comprehensive process of internal University accreditation processes. This involves the documentation of issues such as demand for the course, underlying principles, and workforce demand for graduates. New course proposals are developed by Schools and reviewed by Faculties. Accreditation of a new course must take into account the principles of inclusive curriculum. In 2000 the Academic Development Unit (ADU) and Equity and Access Units (EAU) initiated the *Inclusive Curriculum Project*, designed to assist University staff to understand the concept of inclusive curriculum, with the longer-term goal that the notion of inclusive curriculum would be incorporated into all new units at La Trobe as part of the accreditation process. In July 2003 the La Trobe University Academic Board approved a proposal by the ADU and EAU that Faculties revise their teaching and learning plans to incorporate an amendment in the New Unit and Course Proposal Forms to include a section on Inclusive Curriculum Considerations. The BPH (Environmental Health) underwent the internal course accreditation process in 2000.

### **C. Course Reviews**

La Trobe University requires a comprehensive Course Review be undertaken at intervals of not less than 3 years and no more than every 7 years (La Trobe University, 2003). Currently the Department of Health and Environment undertakes a review every 5 years. These reviews are compulsory and, according to University policy, they need to access a range of opinion and provide substantiating data. Accordingly, these reviews draw on data from graduates, graduate employers, Victorian Tertiary Admissions Centre (VTAC) popularity polls, Equivalent National Tertiary Entrance Rank (ENTER) scores, graduation rates, and student focus groups. Issues that might be addressed are provided in Table 1.

**Table 1:** Possible issues to be addressed during internal course reviews

- (a) Are the original aims, objectives and vocational outcomes being met?
- (b) Does the curriculum still meet the aims of the course?
- (c) What is the importance of the course in achievement of the Faculty plan?
- (d) Are any resource issues relevant (budget, staff, library, information technology, space)? Is the staff profile or staff workload unusual?
- (e) Is the demand for the course adequate? Provide enrolment (EFTSU and bodies) in the course in the previous three years. Are any special adjustments necessary to offer the course with large/small numbers? Is there competition from other institutions?
- (f) Are there any economies in offering the course and any related courses?
- (g) What are entrance requirements for the course? What is the academic quality of entrants?
- (h) Are there particular features of the profile of students?
- (i) What is done to improve the first-year experience and minimise the withdrawal rate?
- (j) Is the course offered in more than one place? Are there any cross-campus issues?
- (k) What are strengths and weaknesses of the course? What is being done to address any weaknesses?
- (l) Is the student/graduate acceptance of the course good?
- (m) Do graduates readily obtain employment?
- (n) Have any new directions been taken since accreditation? What future directions are envisaged?
- (o) Is the nomenclature for the course still appropriate?
- (p) Are the quality assurance procedures for units in the course sound?
- (q) Is the teaching being informed by research in accordance with the mission statement of the University? Does the course prepare students to move into research?
- (r) Is the Course Advisory Committee (if there is one) functioning effectively?
- (s) Are there any other considerations?

(Academic Committee, La Trobe University, 1999)

Course review recommendations go not only to the Head of School, Department Head and Course Coordinator but also to the Academic Program Committee for follow up and action.

In addition to the formal Course Review, the Department of Health and Environment has

undertaken a curriculum-competency mapping initiative. In 2004 the Department reviewed the Australian Health Promotion Workforce competencies (Shilton *et. al*, 2002) and mapped these against individual unit outlines in the Bachelor of Public Health. The standards were benchmarked against the nationally agreed competency standards as outlined in the Review of Competencies for Australian Health Promotion (Shilton *et. al*, 2002). Competency standards can be said to “describe what people do in their work and what they need to be able to do. It is a system for being more precise in describing and ascertaining the particular knowledge and skills, which are applied in different jobs” (Public Health Association of Australia, June 1994). Health Promotion competencies are relevant to needs assessment, planning, implementation, communication, knowledge, organisation and management, evaluation and research and the use of technology (for example, computer based statistical programs), and are a very effective way of reviewing teaching outcomes against a nationally accepted evaluation framework. (See Appendix 1 for a sample of a unit map including workforce competencies). This competency mapping process allowed the identification of gaps in the professional competencies which were not covered in the BPH and revisions were made to individual units and the course structure to address these gaps.

As part of the ongoing accreditation requirements of the Environmental Health stream offered within the Bachelor of Public Health, the Australian Institute of Environmental Health (AIEH) accreditation policy provides a framework for review every 5 years. According to the Course Accreditation Policy (Australian Institute of Environmental Health, 2004) the reporting requirements for the accreditation process involves the items outlined in Table 2.

**Table 2:** Reporting requirements of the AIEH for course undergoing accreditation

- |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Initial discussions with the Dean, Head of School, EH Convener, local State Health professional board representative (if applicable) and other staff</li> <li>b) Review of University/provider documentation including EH Literacy, EH Skills and Curriculum against AIEH Accreditation Requirements</li> <li>c) Inspection of Facilities e.g. labs, computing, library resources in environmental health, on-line web based materials, books of readings</li> <li>d) Interviews with up to six current environmental health students as a small focus group</li> <li>e) Interviews with and/or written feedback from Alumni or Employer Groups as a small focus group of up to six people</li> <li>f) Review of a sample of Course/Subject/Unit student teaching evaluations</li> </ul> |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

#### **D. Course Advisory Committee**

The role of the Course Advisory Committee (CAC) is to *“consider and advise the La Trobe University, Bendigo on matters associated with the development and conduct of programs and activities within the area of its expertise”* (La Trobe University, 2001). Theoretically, the CAC should be comprised of experts external to the University and should meet annually. The reality is that it has been very difficult to achieve a quorum, so in recent times CAC members have been contacted and asked for feedback about the course. One Departmental initiative designed to overcome the difficulties involved with convening a course advisory committee has been to conduct interviews with a range of professionals in the field. Interviews were completed in 2003, and have provided valuable data to draw upon for quality assurance purposes.

#### **E. Unit Evaluation (Quality Assurance of Subjects - QAS)**

The QA of undergraduate Units is conducted biennially at a minimum, but in most cases, annually. The scheme ensures that the quality of all units is regularly, independently and systematically reviewed by those teaching them. The focus of the QA process is on continual improvement of all units, rather than just the identification of poorly performing units. One required source of data for these reviews is student evaluations of the units either by quantitative or qualitative surveys, or by student-led focus groups. A centralised and annually updated QAS system keeps track of which units are due for evaluation each semester each year, and it is the responsibility of individual unit coordinators to conduct this process in conjunction with the Academic Development Unit (ADU).

The timelines for review are arranged in such a way that some units are evaluated in odd numbered years and the remainder in even numbered years. First year subjects are evaluated every year. The QAS forms are administered by the administration staff and then sent directly to ADU for analysis. The results of the QAS are then compiled by ADU and sent back to unit coordinator who circulates them throughout the teaching team and writes a report summarizing the results and making recommendations for any changes to the unit. The individual unit summaries are then sent to the Course Coordinator (CC) who summarises all of the results of the evaluation and submits this report to the Head of School (HOS) who then reports to the Dean of the Faculty that the units have been satisfactorily

evaluated. The data collected in the QAS process is confidential and the results are not made available to the academic staff until after the students' results for the semester have been compiled.

#### **F. Unit Outline and Exam Moderation**

According to University policy, each student is to be supplied with a unit outline detailing the unit aims, content and assessment requirements. The Department utilises a standard template for unit outlines that also includes details such as aims and objectives matched to professional competencies. The Department of Health and Environment voted to continue with a process of compulsory unit moderation following integration into the School of Public Health (this process was a policy of the former School of Health and Environment). The process of unit moderation involves an independent member of the academic staff who is *not* teaching in the proposed unit to review the outline and sign a form to document that the assessment matches that which is stated in the handbook and on the unit database, that the standard statement for plagiarism is included, and to provide a final check for typographical errors prior to printing.

Each exam and class test is also moderated by an independent member of the academic staff.

In this instance the academic staff member signs to endorse that

- a) the exam lies within the bounds of the syllabus
- b) the topics/questions are framed at an appropriate level
- c) sufficient information is given to enable all questions to be completed
- d) the required amount of work may be completed by the average student in the time specified.

#### **G. Student Evaluations of Teaching**

In order to improve the educational experiences of students at La Trobe University, staff from the ADU work co-operatively with members of the University community to conduct Student Evaluations of Teaching (SET). The SET questionnaires have been used at La Trobe University since 1995. All University teaching staff, particularly new staff, need flexible, efficient and effective means of obtaining student feedback on their teaching (teaching being defined in terms of the context in which student learning takes place). The SET instrument has been designed by the ADU to help staff evaluate those aspects of teaching and units which will, if enhanced, result in improvement of the quality of student learning in higher

education.

The SET instrument consists of a bank of approximately fifteen questions from which lecturers can choose to develop a customised questionnaire. The questions are grouped into four general and several specific sections. The first section of the question bank focuses on how students perceive the goals, workload, assessment and advice in the subject. The second section focuses on ways in which the students studied the material in the unit, and is designed to identify whether students attempted to understand or just memorised the material. The third and fourth sections focus on how the students perceive the teaching in lectures and tutorials in the unit. The analysis of the questionnaire items provides indicators of the ways in which students perceived these factors.

In the final general section, students are asked what they think the unit is about, the best thing about the subject, and how the unit can be improved. Reading through these comments can provide valuable insights into why students answered the preceding questions the way they did. These open ended questions are often the most valuable in helping to identify ways of improving the teaching and the unit. The subsequent sections in the item bank deal with specific teaching situations.

The SET questionnaires are administered by a colleague who does not teach in the unit. The students collect the completed questionnaires, put them into a sealed envelope and send them directly to the ADU. The questionnaires are analysed by the ADU and a computer-generated report is produced. This report summarises the students' responses to each question in terms of percentages, means, standard deviations and a bar graph. The reports are held by the ADU until the results for the unit have been tabled. When the results are tabled the reports are forwarded to the teaching staff who requested them. Teaching staff are then expected to take some time to consciously interpret and contextualise the results and then reflect upon what they can do to further improve their teaching of that unit. Staff use the results of these evaluations to reflect on teaching and they form an integral part of developing a teaching portfolio which can be used for promotion or tenure applications. Conducting evaluations of teaching is voluntary; however it is an essential requirement for academic advancement. Academic staff are also required to participate in the Performance Enhancement Development Scheme (PEDS) which is a process of formalised mentoring and professional supervision with a senior academic. A process of formal reflection on teaching

and the use of SET is commonly part of the PEDS process.

The information from Phase 1 is summarised in Table 3.

**Table 3:** QA processes and requirements related to the BPH

TYPE OF EVALUATION	FREQUENCY	BY WHOM
AUQA audit	Every 5 years	Australian Universities Quality Agency and Pro-Vice Chancellor (Quality and Community)
Course Advisory Committee (CAC)	Every 5 years	CAC comprises key stakeholders from outside the University such as employers of graduates and representatives from DHS.
Course review (internal)	Annually	Review committee including Department staff, students and external representatives
Course review (external) – Environmental Health	Every 5 years	Australian Institute of Environmental Health
Unit QA	Annually for first year Units Biennially for other Units	Department responsibility, results reported to Faculty
Unit outline and exam moderation	Every time unit is taught	Department responsibility

## Section 2

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### Phase 2: Set standards and guidelines

For each of the quality activities listed in section 1 there are a variety of data gathering systems and sources of information. The aim of this phase of the project was to map the various review processes and identify common data needs, along with the optimal timing for information gathering.

**Table 4:** Mapping of data needs from varying review processes

Type of Evaluation	Data required that must be supplied by the Department of Health and Environment	Optimal Timing in a data collection cycle
AUQA	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Graduate attributes specified ❶</li> <li>2. Program in place for review of units and courses</li> <li>3. Clear objectives, clear statement regarding assessment requirements, and due dates, and statement regarding plagiarism available to relevant students, for all units taught in the School/Department.</li> <li>4. Provide statistics on attendance of staff at courses related to teaching and learning,</li> <li>5. School/Department response to Graduate satisfaction as measured by the Course Experience Questionnaire</li> <li>6. Clear process regarding the collection and consideration of SET and QAS data and reporting outcomes to School/Department members, participating students, the Dean, the AQAC and the website ❷</li> <li>7. Clear statement of the resources available for each Honours and postgraduate coursework student within the School/Department</li> <li>8. Process in place to monitor and moderate the standard of the Honours year with respect to other Honours courses both within Australia and overseas.</li> </ol>	1-8. Prior to 5 yearly accreditation visit – last visit was 2004, next visit 2009
Course Advisory Committee	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Surveys and focus group interviews with final year students ❸</li> <li>2. Interviews by telephone and focus group with recent graduates</li> <li>3. Telephone interviews with professionals in the field ❹</li> <li>4. Assessment of how course meets the Health Promotion workforce competencies ❶</li> </ol>	<p>1-4 Prior to 5 yearly course review, last review conducted 2003, next review due 2008.</p> <p>5-7 Annually collated, graphed in year of review</p>

	<p>5. VTAC popularity polls</p> <p>6. ENTER scores</p> <p>7. Graduation rates</p>	
<b>AIEH Review</b>	<p>1. Discussions with the Dean, Head of School, EH Convener, local State Health professional board representative (if applicable) and other staff</p> <p>2. Review of University/provider documentation including EH Literacy, EH Skills and Curriculum against AIEH accreditation Requirements ❶</p> <p>3. Inspection of Facilities e.g. labs, computing, library resources in environmental health, on-line web based materials, books of readings</p> <p>4. - Interviews with up to six current environmental health students as a small focus group, - Interviews with and/or written feedback from Alumni or Employer Groups as a small focus group of up to six people, - Review of a sample of Course/Subject/Unit student teaching evaluations (SETs)</p> <p>- Assessment of how the course meets the student's environmental health workforce competencies</p> <p>- Interviews with up to six current environmental health students as a small focus group</p> <p>5. Interviews with and/or written feedback from Alumni or Employer Groups as a small focus group of up to six people ❷</p> <p>6. Review of a sample of Course/Subject /Unit student teaching evaluations (SETs) ❸</p> <p>7. Assessment of how the course meets the student's environmental health workforce competencies ❹</p>	<p>1, 3, 6 During the accreditation visit</p> <p>2, 4, 5, 6, 7 Prior to year of 5 yearly accreditation visit. Last visit 2000, reaccreditation visits 2005 and 2010</p>
<b>Internal Course Review Committee</b>	<p>1. Interviews with and/or written feedback from Alumni or Employer Groups as a small focus group of up to six people ❷</p> <p>2. Assessment of how course meets the Health Promotion and Environmental Health workforce competencies ❶</p>	<p>1 and 2 Prior to 5 yearly course review</p>

Notes:

❶ ❷ ❸ and ❹ indicate common areas of data collection between the QA processes

As documented in Table 4 above there are four main areas of overlap in terms of quality data requirements. These relate to SET/QA processes and documentation, interviews with current students, interviews with alumni and current employers, and documentation of how the course meets professional competencies/graduate attributes.

## Section 3

### Phase 3: Measuring practice against standards

Table 5 describes actual practice in terms of quality data collection procedures within the Department of Health and Environment against the required QA standards/procedures for each type of review or audit (as identified in phase 2 of the project).

**Table 5:** Data collection within the Department of Health and Environment

Type of Evaluation	Data required that must be supplied by the Department of Health and Environment	Optimal Timing in a data collection cycle	Current Practice
AUQA	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Graduate attributes specified ❶</li> <li>2. Program in place for review of units and courses</li> <li>3. Clear objectives, clear statement regarding assessment requirements, and due dates, and statement regarding plagiarism available to relevant students, for all units taught in the School/Department</li> <li>4. Provide statistics on attendance of staff at courses related to teaching and learning</li> <li>5. School/Department response to Graduate satisfaction as measured by the Course Experience Questionnaire</li> <li>6. Clear process regarding the collection and consideration of SET and QAS data and reporting outcomes to School/Department members, participating students, the Dean, the AQAC and the website ❷</li> <li>7. Clear statement of the resources available for each Honours and postgraduate coursework student within the School/Department</li> <li>8. Process in place to monitor and moderate the standard of the Honours year with respect to other Honours courses both within</li> </ol>	1-8. Prior to 5 yearly accreditation visit – last visit was 2004, next visit 2009	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Competency/ attribute mapping conducted every 5 years for Health Promotion stream</li> <li>2. Clear process for course review</li> <li>3. Standard practice for unit moderation and standard unit outline format</li> <li>4. Not currently compiled **</li> <li>5. No current process for response to the Course Experience Questionnaire **</li> <li>6. Standard practice and clear policy regarding QA and SET includes feedback to all stakeholders except participating students **</li> <li>7. Honours booklet updated annually includes statement of resources</li> <li>8. No current process to monitor and moderate Honours program nationally and internationally</li> </ol>

	Australia and overseas.		**
<b>Internal University Course Review</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Surveys and focus group interviews with final year students ③</li> <li>2. Interviews by telephone and focus group with recent graduates</li> <li>3. Telephone interviews with professionals in the field ④</li> <li>4. Assessment of how course meets the Health Promotion workforce competencies ①</li> <li>5. VTAC popularity polls</li> <li>6. ENTER scores</li> <li>7. Graduation rates</li> </ol>	<p>1-4 Prior to 5 yearly course review, last review conducted 2003, next review due 2008.</p> <p>5-7 Annually collated, graphed in year of review</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Interviews with current students conducted every 5 years</li> <li>2. Interviews with graduates conducted every 5 years</li> <li>3. Interviews with employer groups conducted in 2003, no ongoing process for this data **</li> <li>4. Competency/ attribute mapping conducted every 5 years for Health Promotion stream</li> <li>5 and 6. Data available after selections each year, data compiled every 5 years</li> <li>7. Data available after December CEMS each year, data compiled every 5 years</li> </ol>
<b>AIEH Review</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Discussions with the Dean, Head of School, EH Convener, local State Health professional board representative (if applicable) and other staff</li> <li>2. Review of University/provider documentation including EH Literacy, EH Skills and Curriculum against AIEH accreditation Requirements ①</li> <li>3. Inspection of Facilities e.g. labs, computing, library resources in environmental health, on-line web based materials, books of readings</li> <li>4. Interviews with up to six current environmental health students as a small focus group ③</li> <li>5. Interviews with and/or written feedback from alumni or employer groups as a small focus group of up to six people ④</li> <li>6. Review of a sample of Course/Subject /Unit student teaching evaluations (SETs) ②</li> <li>7. Assessment of how the course meets the student's environmental</li> </ol>	<p>1,3, 6 During the accreditation visit</p> <p>2, 4, 5, 6, 7 Prior to year of 5 yearly accreditation visit.</p> <p>Last visit 2000, reaccreditation visits 2005 and 2010</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 and 3. Organized at time of accreditation visit</li> <li>2 and 7. Competency/ attribute mapping conducted every 5 years for Health Promotion stream. Not done for EH attributes **</li> <li>4. Interviews with students conducted every 5 years</li> <li>5. Interviews with graduates conducted every 5 years and interviews with employer groups conducted in 2003, no ongoing process for this data **</li> <li>6. Standard practice and clear policy regarding QA and SET</li> </ol>

	health workforce competencies ❶		
CAC	1. Interviews with and/or written feedback from alumni or employer groups as a small focus group of up to six people ❷ 2. Assessment of how course meets the Health Promotion and environmental health workforce competencies ❶	1 and 2 Prior to 5 yearly course review, last CAC conducted 2003, next CAC due 2008.	1. Interviews with graduates conducted every 5 years and interviews with employer groups conducted in 2003, no ongoing process for this data ** 2. Competency/attribute mapping conducted every 5 years for Health Promotion stream. Not done for EH attributes **

Notes:

❶ ❷ ❸ and ❹ indicate common areas of data collection between the QA processes.

\*\* identified gap in data collection procedures

In addition to this mapping of current data collection, the Department also mapped current practice in terms of explicitly stated quality activities from various groups (Appendix 2).

## Section 4

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### **Phase 4: Identification of areas that need to be changed**

This phase analysed, in terms of process change as well as content of the course, those areas that needed to be changed to streamline the QA process, avoid duplication, and to make the data gathering more evenly spread over the cycle. In the development of this model, this phase was informed by internal and external data collection. As a result, a number of gaps in processes or accrued information were identified. They are as follows:

1. There is currently no process for documenting staff attendance at ADU Teaching and Learning seminars.
2. Currently there is no process in place to formulate a response to the Course Experience Questionnaire (AUQA requirement under Graduates). NB. the Course Experience Questionnaire is the last section of the Graduate Destination Survey. The Head of the School of Public Health and the course co-ordinator have not been supplied with this information, so this issue needs to be addressed at a structural level.
3. There is currently no process to provide feedback to participants (students) following QA or SET.
4. Moderating across disciplines and faculties is fraught with difficulties, not to mention the difficulties of moderation across Australian and overseas courses. Moderation of Honours grades has been identified as a gap in QA activity within the Department and action needs to be taken to raise this point with the appropriate committee and request advice as to how to proceed.
5. Regular and systematic collection of information from Employer Groups is a gap in QA processes for the BPH (see external course review requirement under Graduates). This needs to be added to the Department's cycle of QA data collection.
6. Although Health Promotion competencies were mapped against course content for the Bachelor of Public Health in 2004 (Appendix 1), it is evident that the AIEH Literacies (competencies) also needed to be mapped against the Environmental Health stream content to measure practice against standards.

**Other relevant issues identified:**

1. There are some procedural barriers to ensuring good quality. For example, the new student information system (NEWSIS) where unit moderation is now optional. This can have an adverse effect on quality.
2. The process of having all staff (including administrative staff) involved in the mapping process for this project was invaluable. It has facilitated information sharing, and raised awareness of the need to enable ongoing access to and documentation of the wealth of corporate knowledge into the one place.
3. The use of jargon becomes an issue and there needs to be increased awareness of the difference in terminology between different sectors. For example, external agencies talk of student evaluation of teaching and mean unit QA, and La Trobe University refers to SETS or student evaluations of teaching as only one part of QA. The questions being used in these evaluations are being reviewed through faculty processes in order to provide stronger guidance for lecturers should a negative response be received.

## Section 5

### Phase 5: Implementation of changes in practice

Phase 5 involved the implementation of the areas identified in the previous phase. For our pilot test of this model we incorporated this phase into the AIEH re-accreditation of the Bachelor of Public Health (EH) in 2005. It involved, for example, revision of individual unit objectives, revisions of course content and structure, revision of student assessment profiles, and mapping of Environmental Health attributes against unit outlines (see Appendix 1 for a sample unit map).

Table 6 provides a description of the gaps identified in data collection procedures and processes along with the action planned to rectify.

**Table 6:** Action taken in response to identified gaps in QA data collection procedures

Gap identified in current practice	Action taken
There is currently no process for documenting staff attendance at Teaching and Learning seminars	New process instigated where academic staff send details of attendance at teaching and learning course to course AO for filing
Moderating across disciplines and faculties is fraught with difficulties, not to mention the difficulties of moderation across Australian and overseas courses. This process has been identified as a gap in QA activity within the Department and action needs to be taken to raise this point with the appropriate committee and request advice as to how to proceed.	Memo to Teaching and Learning committee from HOD and CC
Currently there is no process in place to formulate a response to the Course Experience Questionnaire (AUQA requirement under Graduates). NB. the Course Experience Questionnaire is the last section of the Graduate Destination Survey. The Head of the School of Public Health and the course co-ordinator have not been supplied with this information, so this issue needs to be addressed at a structural level.	Memo to HOS and Dean from HOD and CC
There is currently no process to provide feedback to participants following QA or SET.	Provide QA summaries and actions on web page

Regular and systematic collection of information from Employer Groups is a gap in QA processes for the BPH (see External course review requirement under Graduates).	Collection of data from employers (either by interviews or written questionnaire) will be added in to the Departments 5 year QA data collection cycle
The use of jargon becomes an issue and there needs to be increased awareness of the difference in terminology between different sectors. For example, external agencies talk of student evaluation of teaching and mean QA, and La Trobe University refers to SETS or student evaluations of teaching as only one part of QA.	QA summary for AIEH panel included a glossary of terms. A definition of terms will be included on the Department web page
Although Health Promotion competencies were mapped against course content for the Bachelor of Public Health in 2004 (Appendix 1), it is evident that the AIEH Literacies (competencies) also needed to be mapped against the Environmental Health course content to measure practice against standards.	AIEH literacy's were mapped against unit outlines

This process identified the 'ideal' sequence for data collection and therefore also resulted in a revision in the order of activities in the Department's QA data collection cycle.

## Section 6

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### Phase 6: Re-audit to ensure change has been effective

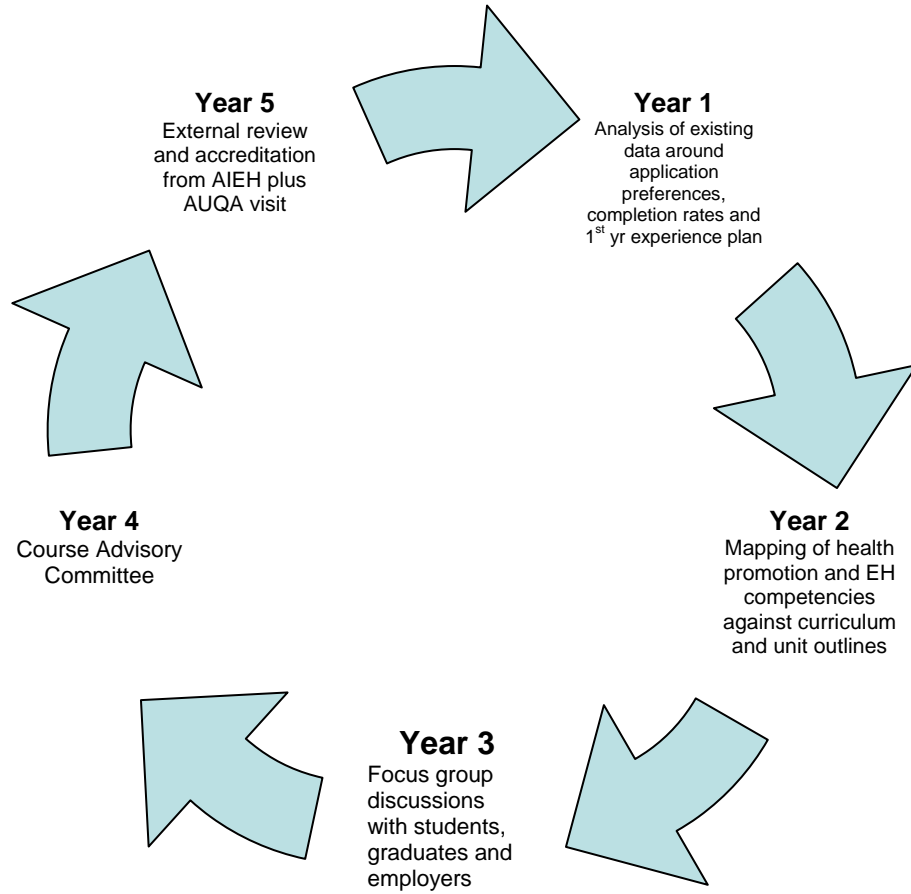
This phase systematically reviewed the required changes to assess the quality and scope of implemented changes. All of the suggested changes had been incorporated/actioned from Phase 5. Changes to data collection or QA processes are outlined in Table 7. Recommended changes to be made to the course are documented in Appendix 3. For example, if changes were required to unit objectives to better match with required competencies or workforce expectations, this would be audited to ensure that the changes were implemented in the unit outlines, on the subject database, in the handbook, and in the actual content of the teaching program.

Table 7. Actions required as a result of accreditation

Action required	Current status
New process instigated where academic staff send details of attendance at teaching and learning course to course AO for filing	Process initiated and documented in Department meeting minutes
Memo to Teaching and Learning committee from HOD and CC regarding Honours moderation	The memo has been sent. At the time of this report, the Department was still waiting for a response from Teaching and Learning Committee
Memo to HOS and Dean from HOD and CC regarding response to the graduate destination survey	The memo has been sent. At the time of this report, the Department was still waiting for a response
Provide QA summaries and actions on web page	Still to be actioned
Collection of data from employers (either by interviews or written questionnaire) will be added in to the Departments 5 year QA data collection cycle	QA data collection cycle revised (see below)
QA summary for AIEH panel included a glossary of terms A definition of terms will be included on the Department web page	Completed at time of AIEH audit  Still to be actioned
AIEH literacy's were mapped against unit outlines	Completed at time of AIEH audit

The revised QA data collection cycle is provided in Figure 3.

**Figure 3:** Bachelor of Public Health Revised Data Collection Cycle



## Section 7

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### **Phase 7: Identify new aspects for audit if necessary**

To ensure the ongoing QA cycle process is continued regardless of staff changes or structural reorganization within the wider University, a reflective checklist and recommended quality cycle was developed (see Figure 3 for the revised data collection cycle). If this QA data collection cycle is carried out the data available for all quality activities will be available in a timely manner.

Reflective checklist for data gathering for a course /Department quality cycle

#### **AUQA**

Course Coordinators need to supply requested information to assist the University to comply with AUQA requirements. It may be easiest when planning a Quality Cycle to work backwards from this date.

- Are you clear about the data requirements for the next AUQA Audit?
- When is the next AUQA Audit?
- When is the data required?
- What data are required?
- Are staff aware of the Strategic Plan for their Faculty and for the University?
- Do course documents and unit aims reflect the objectives of the Strategic Plans?
- Are the mechanisms in place to gather the data requested by the Faculty?

#### **COURSE COMMITTEE**

This internal review of a course, conducted by staff within the Department provides an opportunity for review of the direction, content and sequencing on materials in the course.

- Are the data files up-to-date for the forthcoming AUQA Audit?
- Have the necessary changes to the course, identified in previous reviews, (re-accreditation or CAC) been made and implemented?
- Have the changes been documented in appropriate places, such as Course Document master copy, Unit data-base, Handbook and Unit Outlines?

## RE-ACCREDITATION

- Are you required to have your course re-accredited with a professional registering authority? Are you clear about the data requirements for their terms of reference?
- The timing and cycle of this process may vary but can usually fit into a 5-year quality cycle.
- It will be beneficial to complete the processes for an external reaccreditation in the year before the AUQA Audit because the data will serve multiple purposes.
- What data has already been collected for other quality processes and can assembled for this purpose?
- What additional data is required?
- Are you clear about the data requirements for a Course Advisory Committee (CAC)?
- It will be beneficial to complete the processes for a CAC in the year before the external re-accreditation in required because the data will serve both purposes.
- What data has already been collected for other quality processes and can assembled for CAC?
- What additional data is required for CAC?
- Can proposed data-gathering procedures (such as meetings with experts from the field) inform quality revisions in course focus, structure and content?
- Can these consultation mechanisms be broadened to meet the requirements of the re-accreditation authority at the same time?
- Is there a file maintained by the Department of potential participants such as experts and graduands who may be canvassed?
- Can qualitative data gathering procedures such as focus group interviews and telephone interviews be used to overcome the problems associated with CAC meetings, such as expense and lack of a quorum?
- Are you clear about the data requirements for consultations with current students, former students and experts in the field?
- What forms of data gathering will provide useable data to inform the quality of changes to the course?

- What participant groups need to be canvassed?
- Are there common themes or questions which can be asked of all participant groups, to allow data triangulation?
- Do the proposed data gathering mechanisms allow for anonymity and healthy power relationships?
- It is possible to engage consultant(s) removed from a direct role in the course to gather the data and provide a report?
- Are you clear about the data requirements for curriculum-competency mapping in your discipline?
- Are there discipline-specific competencies relevant to the course?
- Are workforce competencies already used to inform the content of the course?
- Are the competencies regularly reviewed by the professional workforce to ensure their ongoing relevance to new graduates?
- Are the aims and objectives in each unit of study, clearly stated and reflective of separate competencies?
- Are these competencies clearly stated in course documentation?
- Is there a mechanism by which unit activities can be updated to address competency updates?
- Are you clear about the data requirements for Department-based reporting?
- These files should be updated as least annually and stored centrally
- Are the graduate attributes specified?
- Are the graduate attributes reflected in course information material?
- Is there a QA of units (QAS) plan for the course/ Department?
- Are QAS data routinely collected and collated each semester by unit coordinators?
- Is there a routine report, itemising responses to QAS findings?
- Are the reports provided in a timely manner to HOS?
- Is there a central file for the data in the Department, rather than in the office of the Course Coordinator?

- Are these reports made available to students? (e.g. From the course Web page)
- Is there a spreadsheet, updated annually with the following data:
  - ENTER scores for enrolled students?
  - 'Popularity Polls' for the course?
  - Completion rates

## Section 8

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### **Project Outcome**

The main outcome of this project has been an evaluated conceptual model that streamlines quality processes – a model that can be adapted to a range of undergraduate courses across the University, regardless of discipline base.

This project has clearly linked with the University Strategic Plan and its commitment to “*continuous improvement in management processes and outcomes*” (LaTrobe University, 2003). The project has also linked with the model for Unit Level Planning and Review which identifies that the external environment and stakeholder expectations must be integrated in to the quality cycle. The model has delivered an improvement in management processes and has recognised the importance of the external environment, and all stakeholders internal and external to the University.

The need for QA evidence is well accepted and is a requirement for all University courses. This project has provided a conceptual model that allows individual Departments to integrate Course Review, QA and External Accreditation in to a continuous audit cycle. The introduction of such a continuous evidence-driven audit cycle has the potential to reduce the peaks in activity to a more even and continuous process, and has provided a systematic and comprehensive approach that is sustainable regardless of staff changes or organisational restructures.

From the evidence assembled we are able to conclude that the process planned by the Department will now enable us to collect all the data necessary to meet the requirements of the various reporting and accrediting bodies.

For different Departments which have not taken such an initiative, implementing a cyclical process such as this may seem to be onerous and time-consuming. However, there are clear advantages outlined in the following points, and in addition, a data collection cycle can be implemented incrementally.

## So, is it worth it?

Data collection was more complete than other University processes.

1. There is a clear and definite purpose for each type of data collection. When data are not collected and disappear into a 'black hole' of administration, or the purpose is not clear to the academic staff, then their commitment to that process wanes. Having a purpose for each form of data reinforces the continuing cycle of feedback, reflection and change.
2. If we had conducted our CAC and Course Review Committees according to University guidelines (rather than by the specific arrangement agreed to with the Faculty Teaching and Learning Committee in 2002), we would not have had adequate data to comprehensively review our course in that manner we have undertaken, and we would have had to convene separate and expensive meetings subsequently for the other review processes, such as external re-accreditation.
3. The costs, both financial and in terms of staff time, associated with QA and Course Review processes are now more evenly spread across the five-year cycle, and the cycle ensures greater efficiency in data gathering because it can be used for multiple purposes.
4. Academic staff of the Department are all contributing to course reflections and revision. The tasks can be shared and the interest sustained, rather than this being seen as the sole responsibility of the Course Coordinator.
5. Some academic staff are now contributing to the QA literature (Dickson-Swift and Kippen, 2005), and curriculum development literature (Talbot, James and Graham, under review).
6. This documentation, outlining the mapping of activities against reporting requirements is a useful orientation for staff new to the University sector (and for new Course Coordinators) for whom the processes and requirements can be very confusing, and seem overwhelming.

We recommend other Departments consider the application of a continuous cycle to their quality activities such as the one presented here.

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## Useful links to La Trobe Policies

<http://www.latrobe.edu.au/policies/>

<http://www.latrobe.edu.au/acadserv/policies/reassesswork.pdf>

[La Trobe Strategic Plan](#)

[plagiarism policy](#)

[Unit Level Planning](#)

[Faculty Academic Policies and Procedures Manual.](#)

[inclusive curriculum,](#)

[Australian Universities Quality Agency](#)

[QAS step-by-step](#)

[PEDS](#)

[SET](#)

## APPENDIX 1 : Sample unit showing health promotion competencies and environmental health literacies

Subject	Aim of Subject	Objectives	Type of Assessment	Health Promotion Competencies	Environmental Health Generic Attributes and Specific Abilities
<b>Environmental Health</b> <b>HLT21EH</b>	<b>AIMS:</b> <p>The aim of this subject is to provide the opportunity for students to develop a greater understanding of the interrelationship between the physical environment and human health in preparation for public health practice.</p>	<b>OBJECTIVES:</b> <p>Upon successful completion of the subject, students will be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Discuss the interdependence of humans and their physical environment.</li> <li>2. Discuss the relationship between some of the content themes and health.</li> <li>3. Develop an understanding and outline some of the theoretical and action frameworks that public health practitioners can use to promote, protect and restore the health of the planet and consequently human health.</li> <li>4. Discuss the interrelationship between environmental health and social justice.</li> <li>5. Critically appraise the environmental health literature.</li> <li>6. Develop skills in communicating environmental health issues to a wide range of audiences through report writing.</li> </ol>	<b>ASSESSMENT:</b> <p>Assessment 1 – 2,000 - 2,500 word assignment (50%)                      Assessment 2 – One 2-hour examination (50%)</p> <p><b>Assessment 1</b>                      Literature review focusing on a theme of significant environmental importance such as climate change, ozone depletion, soil quality, water quality and scarcity, air quality, population increases and consumption patterns or biodiversity.</p> <p><b>Part A</b>                      Thinking globally provide an overview of the global environmental health issues relating to the theme you have identified. Discuss the actual or potential long and short-term impacts for the world.</p> <p><b>Part B</b>                      Thinking globally identify actual or potential health risks to members of a local community that have developed because of the factors associated with global conditions of change discussed in Part A. These will be local public health issues which also have relevance for people everywhere.</p> <p><b>Assessment 2</b>                      One 2-hour examination (50%)                      Comprising: short answer questions (15%)                      Multiple choice (15%)                      discussion - short essay (15%)</p>	N2 P1 K1 K6 I10	<p><b><u>Apply relevant knowledge, principles and concepts to workplace needs</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• apply basic public health science principles and concepts to issues of concern</li> <li>• understand the discipline of environmental health, its theoretical underpinnings and spheres of operation</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Communicate effectively</u></b>                      *persuasively argue for the value and importance of environmental and public health</p> <p><b><u>Access, evaluate and synthesise information</u></b>                      *identify and access information sources and compile relevant and appropriate information when needed                      * evaluate the effectiveness, performance or results of procedures, interventions and programs</p> <hr/> <p><b><u>Demonstrate international and cultural awareness and understanding</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• think globally</li> </ul>

## APPENDIX 2 – University QA Standards and Actual Practice in Department of Health and Environment

A = AUQA requirements, C = COURSE REVIEW requirements, and E = EXTERNAL REVIEW requirements.

### STUDENTS

QA requirement/Standard Practice in relation to this guideline	Actual
A - Clear statement regarding the way in which students in the School/Department are informed of the "importance of academic honesty and avoidance of plagiarism"	The statement regarding plagiarism is stated on every unit outline, in every student diary (available free to all students), is available on the web via the 'students' link or at the plagiarism policy website. The issue is discussed during 'O' week introductions and library orientation sessions, and there is a set Communications Skills task about plagiarism. In addition, it is a requirement of the 1 <sup>st</sup> Year Experience committee that academic staff talk to this issue when discussing unit outlines. There is a formal process in place on the web that sets out how staff deal with plagiarism, and there is a plagiarism report kept by the Department Administration Officer. This report keeps a record of the instances of plagiarism by students, and copies of letters of warning etc.
A - Clear statement of the resources available for each Honours and postgraduate coursework student within the School/Department	This statement is made in the Honours Students Handout 'Rules for Administration', and also in the Rules for coursework masters (black and white). The Research Methods information session is directly related to the resources available within the Health Sciences building.
A - Process in place to monitor and moderate the standard of the Honours year with respect to other honours courses both within Australia and overseas.	Unit outlines are moderated by an independent academic who is not teaching in the area. The outline is then signed off by the course co-ordinator. In addition, the Department has a policy of separating supervisors from the examination of student's work. The Honours marks history is kept on NEWSIS. Moderating across disciplines and faculties is fraught with difficulties let alone across Australian and overseas courses. Such a process has been identified as a gap in QA activity within the Department and action will be taken to raise this point with the appropriate committee and request advice as to how to proceed.
E - Review of a sample of Course/Subject/Unit student teaching evaluations	SETS can be a) staff member requested b) at the discretion of the PEDS supervisor c) related to expectations of promotion. Although a SET cannot be made compulsory (under the Enterprise Bargaining Agreement), it is highly recommended within the Department that sessional lecturers/tutors undergo an annual SET.
E - Interviews with up to six current environmental health students as a small focus group	It is expected that these interviews are convened by School of Public Health staff at the time of the review, and facilitated by the Australian Institute of Environmental Health panel members.
C - Are there particular features of the profile of students?	Lower ENTER scores are a feature; therefore students in the course tend to be personnel resource-intensive. Over 80% of students also tend to come from rural areas.  This initiative has highlighted the fact that staff members maintain active email lists with graduate students. The emails are a rich source of data on graduate employment opportunities, experiences, reflections etc., and it has been determined that copies of emails from graduate students will be held by the School Administrative Officer in future.
C - What are the entrance requirements for the course? What is the academic quality of entrants?	ENTER of 60.25. La Trobe has a policy not to accept anyone with an ENTER under 55.
C - Is the student/graduate acceptance of the course good?	A survey associated with the course review (every) 5 years provides the relevant data.

### GRADUATES

C - Do graduates readily obtain employment?	There are 2 surveys currently used to ascertain graduate employment rates. 1. The Graduate Destination Survey is conducted by the Management Information Unit (MIU). 2. A survey of graduates which is associated with the course review. In 2004, collection of this data involved telephone interviews
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	with recent graduates. Also, academic staff maintain active email lists with graduate students. The emails are a rich source of data on graduate employment opportunities, experiences, reflections on the course etc., It has been decided that copies of these emails from graduate students will be held by the School Administration Officer.
<b>A - Graduate attributes specified</b>	Competencies (vocational outcomes) are specified on course banners, posters and promotional material. Since there is no formal registration process for BPH graduates, the School of Public Health also uses a list of competencies (as outlined by the Australian Health Promotion Association) to ensure that graduates have adequate knowledge in all of the specified areas. The relevant competencies are listed in unit outlines.
<b>A - School/Department response to Graduate satisfaction as measured by the Course Experience Questionnaire</b>	Results of the Course Experience Questionnaire (within the Graduate Destination Survey) are made available to academic staff via the Management Information Unit. The School of Public Health is awaiting the current report and any gaps in the course will be identified. Currently there is no process in place to formulate a response to the Course Experience Questionnaire. This means that there is a gap in QA strategies. In the future, staff will use the MIU report to identify any gaps in the course.
<b>E - Interviews with and/or written feedback from Alumni or Employer Groups as a small focus group of up to six people</b>	Regular and systematic collection of information from Employer Groups is a gap in QA processes for the BPH. It is a sustainable and natural process that can readily be undertaken by the Department in the future, by recording the content of interviews/discussions with employer groups who undertake Field Experience placements. These discussions currently take place for public relations reasons, but the results of the interview are not formally recorded.

#### STAFF

<b>C - Are any resource issues relevant (budget, staff, library, information technology, space)? Is the staff profile or staff workload unusual?</b>	Information on these issues is collected regularly and in a transparent manner via staff meetings, minutes and action sheets and also staffing forms. In addition, the Strategic Plan makes mention of transparent processes. There is the capacity to map workloads There is clear evidence that the staff workload is higher than Bundoora, and that the staff/student ratio is very high. The Department has the capacity to map workloads.
<b>C - Is the teaching being informed by research in accordance with the mission statement of the University? Does the course prepare students to move into research?</b>	Staff are very research active and the seminar series is part of the research reporting process within the School. However, there appears to be a gap in ensuring that the staff mention the latest research during lectures. Staff have a high publication profile in peer reviewed journals and books. Further evidence that staff are informed by research is evidenced in the teaching awards within the Department, and the fact that unit outlines are updated and moderated regularly. The course prepares students to move into research by a sequential process through the course and Honours Year.
<b>A - Learning and Teaching plan implemented and outcomes reported annually</b>	The Faculty of H/S Teaching and Learning Plan is published on web, and informs the teaching and learning component of the Dept's strategic plan. Staff actively participate in the 1 <sup>st</sup> yr experience program and the Department has a representative on this committee to enhance the 1 <sup>st</sup> yr experience for Public Health students. In the Teaching and Learning plan submitted by the course co-ordinator in 2004, staff were encouraged to attend courses offered by the Academic Development Unit.
<b>A - School/Faculty level initiatives to encourage innovation in teaching</b>	Three current staff members have won innovation in teaching awards for an on-line innovation scheme. In addition, sessional lecturers are encouraged to attend the 3 day teaching and learning block conducted by ADU. The School of Public Health is supportive of innovative modes of teaching eg the Rural Health Unit.
<b>A - Staff encouraged to attend courses related to teaching and learning, provided by the Academic Development Unit or other providers (provide statistics on attendance):</b>	This information is documented in individual teaching portfolios rather than a central place, however all current academic staff have completed a teaching and learning workshop and sessional staff are actively encouraged to do so. 50% of staff have completed a Graduate certificate in teaching within which the Faculty meets the cost of one unit in a Graduate Certificate.
<b>A - School/Faculty level initiatives to encourage excellence in teaching</b>	5 staff members have received Excellence in teaching awards and staff members are encouraged to maintain a teaching portfolio for the PEDS Scheme.

## COURSE STRUCTURE - INTERNAL

A - Program in place for review of subjects and courses	Yes - course review and ongoing QA.
A - Clear objectives, available to relevant students, for all units taught in the School/Department.	Yes - unit outlines and online from 2005.
A - Clear statement, available to relevant students, about the assessment tied to the objectives for all subjects in the School/Department.	Yes - unit outlines and online from 2005.
A - Clear statement, available to relevant students, about submission dates within all units (and penalties for late submission) in the School/Department.	Yes - there is a standardised statement in unit outlines, and online information will be available from 2005
A - Consistency ensured for courses offered on multiple campuses (regional or international)	This is not applicable at this point but may soon be an issue as a result of alignment.
A - System for moderation of grades, or moderation guidelines for units taught via a number of modes or in different locations	This is not applicable at this point but may be an issue as a result of alignment if Bundoora have a different policy regarding moderation.
C - Is the Course Advisory Committee (if there is one) functioning effectively? Are the original aims, objectives and vocational outcomes being met?	Theoretically the course advisory committee meets every 12 months and is comprised of outside consultants. The reality is that it is difficult to achieve a quorum, so in recent times course advisory committee members have been contacted and asked for feedback about the course. One Departmental initiative designed to overcome the difficulties involved with convening a course advisory committee has been to conduct interviews with professionals in the field. Interviews were completed as part of the course review in 2004, and have provided valuable data to draw upon for QA purposes.
C - Does the curriculum still meet the aims of the course?	This matter is assessed as part of the 5 year cycle of QA. The Department has identified the need for a separate current course document and all correspondence to be collated and kept with the Departmental Administration Officer, and for any incremental changes in the course to be <u>related back to the course document</u> .
C - What is the importance of the course in the achievement of the Faculty plan?	The Department plan is based on the Faculty Plan and will be reviewed when the new faculty plan is decided.
C - Is the demand for the course adequate? Provide enrolment (EFTSL and bodies) in the course in the previous three years. Are any special adjustments necessary to offer the course with large/small numbers? Is there competition from other institutions?	Enrolment information for the past 3 years is available from the Dept Administration officer. Currently the Department does not reach its funded EFTSL.  The Health Promotion course at Deakin could be viewed as competition; however the respective catchments are very different.
C - Are there any economies in offering the course and any related courses?	Collaborative teaching with Outdoor Education, Education and Psychology.
C - What is done to improve the first-year experience and minimize the withdrawal rate?	The 1 <sup>st</sup> year experience program is in place. Directions for support and help are publicised to students. Some units have been designed in such a way as to offer maximum assistance eg essay writing. Staff are accessible and available for pastoral care issues with students. Academic skills information is available to students and promoted by staff.
C - Is the course offered in more than one place? Are there any cross-campus issues?	To be announced
C - What are strengths and weaknesses of the course? What is being done to address any weaknesses?	Marketing This QA project
C - Have any new directions been taken since accreditation? What future directions are envisaged?	It was discussed at planning day to include health streams into a number of courses

<b>C - Are the quality assurance procedures for units in the course sound?</b>	Yes - addressed already
<b>E - Review of University/provider documentation including EH Literacy, EH Skills and Curriculum against AIEH Accreditation Requirements</b>	It is important to note that originally the environmental health stream was mapped against the principles and strategies of the National Environmental Health Strategy. The unit outline shows EH competencies, but they need to be more effectively mapped against course content.
<b>E - Inspection of Facilities e.g. labs, computing, library resources in environmental health, on-line web based materials, books of readings</b>	

#### EXTERNAL ONLY

<b>E - Initial discussions with the Dean, Head of School, EH Convener, local State Health professional board representative (if applicable) and other staff</b>	Carried out at time of review.
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#### AUQA ONLY

<b>A - Action plans prepared in response to reviews are sent to AQAC</b>	Non-Departmental responsibility
<b>A - Clear process regarding the collection and consideration of SET and QAS data and reporting outcomes to: School/Department members, participating students, the Dean, the AQAC and the website.</b>	Non-Departmental responsibility

### **APPENDIX 3 - Changes made to the course following the audit**

The externally identified changes have been derived from the October 2005 AIEH accreditation process. The AIEH identified the following areas for change;

- There is a need to strengthen theoretical application because the transition between University and work is traumatic for many of the Environmental Health Graduates, especially those in a rural situation where graduates are likely to be working with minimal supervision.
- It was recommended that the University closely monitors and records each student's field experience to ensure that this comprises an appropriate orientation to professional practice. Field experience placements also need to have a minimum of six weeks work place experience.
- Graduates appear to be ill-prepared for the legislative aspects of their role as Environmental Health Officers, in that they have difficulty in applying the legislation in practice. The workplace needs graduates to be able to take action immediately on exiting University so that where legislation has been contravened, they are capable of conducting an interview, preparing a brief, and giving evidence in court.
- It was recommended that a number of emerging areas could be integrated into the La Trobe Environmental Health course - Emergency Management, Safety Hazard and Risk Analysis and Onsite Sewage Management.
- Professional competencies in time management, best-practice etc need to be strengthened.
- Given Bendigo's rural location it was also recommended (although not made mandatory for accreditation), that Water Conservation as an emerging crisis could be included in the course.