



Planning and Quality @ UOW

Issue 1 - 12 March 2007

<http://www.uow.edu.au/planquality/>

Welcome to the first edition of ImPAQt, the University's Planning and Quality Newsletter. In this edition, you can find out more about:

- University challenges and directions for 2007 and into the next triennium - 2008-10
- Quality improvement and the next AUQA audit
- Benchmarking – approach to assessing options

If you have any queries about issues covered in the Newsletter, please contact the Strategic Planning Unit, ext. 3866 or jennyh@uow.edu.au

January Planning Forum

The UOW Executive team, Deans and Directors came together for the University Planning Forum on 31 January to discuss the challenges and strategic priorities for UOW in the coming year.

Key challenges for 2007

The Forum agreed that UOW's main challenges for 2007 were:

- Capitalising on the opportunities created by the Graduate School of Medicine and the Innovation Campus
- Ensuring that we receive the maximum new Commonwealth Government Supported places
- Reinforcing strategies for attracting international students and ensuring the quality of their experience
- Positioning the University for a successful outcome under the Research Quality Framework
- Sustaining our research effort
- Improving strategies for developing and sustaining research partnerships
- Continuing to enhance the experience of UOW students

- Boosting our capacity to attract and retain high quality staff
- Improving the access by faculties to timely, useful and comprehensive data to support management and decision-making
- Further developing a strategic approach to community engagement

Follow-up action

The above challenges will be addressed throughout 2007 and beyond but five priority areas were flagged for specific action:

1. **Data** – determine faculty data needs and identify mechanisms for accessing data.
2. **Partnerships** – further develop strategies to develop and sustain industry and government partnerships.
3. **Staff** – identify why staff choose to work at UOW and review and improve retention strategies accordingly.
4. **Community engagement** – continue to develop a strategic approach to community engagement (e.g. through coordinated student placements, participatory research, “shop front” model for communicating with community and business groups, Community Engagement Minor).
5. **Student experience** – continue the work being done under an existing Strategic Project to identify distinctive/desirable features of the UOW Student Experience and ensure systematic monitoring and improvement.

Review of UOW Strategic Plan

The University Planning and Quality Committee (UPAQ), chaired by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor Academic & International, is currently conducting the triennial review of the University's Strategic Plan. The review was initiated in September 2006 with a view to attaining Council approval in October 2007. The Plan will set our strategic direction for the period 2008-2010.

To date, UPAQ has:

- Identified strategic priorities for 2008-10
- Agreed upon a new, streamlined planning format
- Made substantial progress in drafting the Vision, Mission and Goals
- Advised key committees and working groups of their roles in developing objectives, strategies and key performance indicators for relevant Goals

Next steps – key dates

26 April	UPAQ to move towards final recommendations for Vision and Mission and consider draft content for Goal areas developed by committees and other working groups
18 May	First draft of 2008-10 Plan finalised for comment by VC
15 June	Draft considered at UOW Annual Planning Retreat
26 June	Draft revised to incorporate feedback from Retreat
August	Presentation to Academic Senate and Council meetings for comment
12 October	Council approval

Academic Senate and Council briefings will take place throughout this period.

Quality after the AUQA audit

The University is continuing to address areas for improvement identified by the Australian University Quality Agency (AUQA) in its 2005 audit, in accordance with the UOW Quality Improvement Plan. Actions underway include:

- Development of model for integrating strategic risk management into faculty and unit planning processes
- Identification and assessment of institutional benchmarking opportunities
- Review of Graduate Attributes and development of simplified, integrated framework that can readily be applied by academic staff
- Implementation of new Intellectual Property Framework (approved by Council in June 2006)
- Improvement of quality controls for promotion of offshore programs through implementation of policy "Production of Marketing Material and Use of UOW Brand" (approved by Council 18 August 2006)
- Development and implementation of frameworks for offshore course approval and review
- Continued implementation of a range of strategies to address the low number of women at senior levels
- Improvement of biosafety management, including through the development of procedures and guidelines

Focus on standards and benchmarking for next AUQA audit

AUQA's second audit cycle will begin in 2008, with UOW likely to be audited again in 2011. During Audit Cycle 2 there will be a greater emphasis on standards and performance outcomes. In particular, UOW must report on external benchmarking activities and outcomes.

Two areas of activity will be chosen for detailed attention. These areas will be selected in consultation with the University, guided by considerations of academic risk. For each area, AUQA will be asking:

- How are standards determined?
- How are standards applied consistently across the University?
- How are outcomes monitored?
- How are standards and outcomes compared nationally and internationally?
- How is this information used to improve standards?
- What review processes are in place to ensure that standards are updated

Academic benchmarking the way forward

UOW is currently exploring ways of improving the process of academic benchmarking at an institutional level. Options being considered include establishing formal benchmarking relationships with one or more Australian or overseas Universities.

The following broad process is being followed to guide our assessment of benchmarking opportunities:

GUIDE TO ASSESSING BENCHMARKING ACTIVITIES

1. Identify priority areas for further benchmarking activity

Criteria include:

- The University's strategic goals and priorities
- Areas where performance needs to be improved (identified by the University itself or by AUQA)
- Levels of academic risk

2. Assess benchmarking options

For each priority area:

- Evaluate effectiveness of current benchmarking activities
- Identify possible benchmark indicators and assess availability of comparable data
- Assess resources required
- Assess potential benefits of alternative benchmarking options

3. Assess potential for mutually beneficial relationship with possible benchmarking partner/s

Relevant factors include:

- Need for balanced learning by all partners
- Similarity of profiles
- Common vision, goals and priorities
- Shared approach to nature and purpose of benchmarking