



University of Wollongong Quality Matters

Issue 2 – November 2004

<http://www.uow.edu.au/about/quality/>

Trial Audit

A Trial Audit was conducted on 25 and 26 October 2004 as a critical part of an extensive review of the effectiveness of UOW's quality systems in key areas of operation.

The Quality Project Team would like to thank all those people who contributed to the process. Your support was critical and much appreciated. The Trial Auditors were impressed with the collegial spirit demonstrated by participants throughout the sessions and commented favourably on their understanding of and commitment to key University objectives.

The Process

The Trial Audit followed the processes of an official AUQA Audit as closely as possible, within a compressed timeframe. A Trial Performance Portfolio was developed and submitted to three Trial Auditors, each of whom is an experienced AUQA Auditor.

The Trial Audit Panel comprised:

- **Hilary Winchester** (Panel Chair), Pro Vice-Chancellor and Vice President, University of South Australia

- **Susan Holland**, Professor, Institute for the Service Professions, Edith Cowan University
- **Paul Burnett**, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research and Graduate Training), Charles Sturt University

Twenty group interview sessions were conducted over the two days of the trial, covering our quality processes in the following key areas:

- strategic planning
- governance and management
- research and research training
- learning and teaching
- internationalisation
- student support and equity
- community engagement
- staff management

The Participants

Participants in the interview sessions included undergraduate and postgraduate students, community representatives and a wide range of general and academic staff members selected by the Trial Audit Panel. Those involved included:

- the University's Senior Executive Group;
- the Chancellor and three external Council members;
- most Deans and Directors and a number of other key managers;

- Chairs and other members of key University committees; and
- a range of academic and general staff, with varying levels of experience, selected largely from the academic units set out in the table below.

Academic Unit	Focus of Session(s)
Social Sciences, Media and Communication	Teaching; student support; research training
Biomedical Sciences	Research; student support
Mechanical, Materials and Mechatronic Engineering	Research; student support
Earth and Environmental Sciences	Research training
Graduate School of Business and Professional Development	Internationalisation - teaching
Information Technology and Computer Science	Internationalisation - teaching

Feedback from Trial Auditors

During the final session of the Trial Audit, the Trial Audit Panel provided verbal feedback to UOW's Senior Executives on the University's strengths and areas for quality improvement. Advice was also given on how we might highlight our strengths even more effectively in our final Performance Portfolio to be submitted to AUQA next year.

It should be noted, however, that the official AUQA Panel that will be auditing the University in May 2005 will be differently constituted and may focus on different issues.

Strengths

Particular areas of strength identified by the Trial Audit Panel included the following:

Strategic Projects

- UOW's strategic projects provide us with the ability to take advantage of opportunities to advance the University's objectives, e.g. Innovation Campus, Graduate Medical School, student equity strategies (especially through local schools), risk management strategies, management of HDR students. See the Strategic Planning website for a full list: <http://www.uow.edu.au/about/stratplan/projects.html>

Research

- The recent consolidation of research strengths is appropriate and well managed.
- Recent initiatives to improve the quality of research training are positive. HDR students provided positive feedback about induction and supervision.

Learning and teaching

- There was strong evidence of our student-centred approach to learning and teaching. Positive feedback was received from coursework students on the quality of their learning experience.

- There is a clear framework for developing the UOW Graduate Attributes.

Internationalisation

- There is good support for international students, e.g. orientation, accommodation, learning development.
- University staff demonstrated an understanding of and commitment to internationalisation.
- There was evidence that offshore teaching curricula are appropriately contextualised.

Staff management

- Staff performance is managed well throughout the University. Our career development policy is effective and well connected to a suite of related programs.

Community engagement

- Regional engagement is ongoing and appropriate. Alternative pathways for regional students are a particular strength.

Areas for improvement

The Trial Audit Panel provided constructive feedback regarding a number of areas where further improvements might be made, including:

- clarification of procedures for approving offshore promotional materials;
- further development of our induction process for staff teaching offshore;
- further development of our strategic direction for e-teaching; and

- better articulation of how we benchmark at an institutional level.

These are challenges that the University has already begun to address and we will continue to improve our performance in these areas.

Where to from here...

The Quality Project Team is now working on improving the Performance Portfolio in light of feedback received through the Trial Audit process. The revised portfolio will be submitted to the official AUQA Audit Panel in 2005.

AUQA Audit Panel

The AUQA Audit Panel members will be:

- **Professor Stephen Parker** (Panel Chairperson), Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Monash University
- **Dr Marilee Bresciani**, Assistant Vice-President, University of Texas A&M, United States of America
- **Martin Carroll**, Audit Director, AUQA
- **Ian Hawke**, Director, Office of Higher Education, Department of Education, Queensland Government
- **Professor Kerry Pratt**, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research), Swinburne University

You can find further information about these auditors, including brief curriculum vitae and photographs, at the AUQA website (<http://www.auqa.edu.au/qualityaudit/auditors/>).

Key Dates

Key dates for our AUQA Audit preparations are as follows:

2004	
Nov-Dec	Revision of Performance Portfolio and Supporting materials
20 Dec	Executive approval of revised portfolio
2005	
Jan-Feb	Production and printing of revised portfolio
21 Feb	Receipt by AUQA of final portfolio and supporting materials
4 April	Preparatory visit by AUQA Panel Chair to UOW – Audit Interview Schedule finalised; probable request for additional materials
24-28 April	<u>Probable offshore audit visits</u> It is anticipated that Prof Stephen Parker (Panel Chair) and Martin Carroll (AUQA Director) will visit offshore teaching sites
11 April-15 May	Briefings of staff, students and community representatives participating in interview sessions
16-19 May*	<u>AUQA Audit visit to Wollongong Campus</u> May also include visit to an off-campus operation

*** It is important that all Deans, Faculty Executives and Managers remain available, if at all possible, on 16-19 May 2005 when the AUQA Audit Panel will be visiting Wollongong Campus.**

Questions or comments

Comments or questions regarding any aspect of the AUQA Audit process are welcome. Please do not hesitate to contact Heather Sainsbury (Ext 3573) or Neil Webster (Ext 4605).

Please contact Prof Rob Castle (Pro Vice-Chancellor (Academic)) as soon as possible if you anticipate any problems with this. We will be able to confirm who the Panel will be interviewing after the preparatory visit by the AUQA Panel Chair on 4 April. The people chosen will not necessarily be the same as those selected to participate in the Trial Audit.



You are invited to visit the new Quality and Improvement website at <http://www.uow.edu.au/about/quality/>