



AUQA Audit Visit in May

The AUQA audit of UOW is fast approaching, with the Audit Panel due to visit the Wollongong campus between 16-19 May 2005.

The UOW Performance Portfolio was submitted to AUQA on 21 February, on schedule. The structure and purpose of the Performance Portfolio is discussed below, together with details of how it can be accessed.

During a preliminary visit on 4 April, the Audit Panel Chair and AUQA Director will let us know which groups or individuals the full panel will wish to interview during their visit in May. Participants will be selected by AUQA because of their particular responsibilities or because they represent categories of staff, students or community members.

The Pro Vice-Chancellor (Academic) (PVC-A) will speak to Deans, Directors and Heads to discuss the composition of the interview groups and individual participants will be contacted as soon as possible during the week commencing 4 April.

Those academic units involved in the Trial Audit will not necessarily be involved in the final audit in May.

Key Audit Dates 2005

21 February	Submission of Final Performance Portfolio to AUQA
21 March	First meeting of Audit Panel to discuss portfolio
4 April	Preliminary visit by Audit Panel Chair and AUQA Director to UOW
24-28 April	Probable offshore visits
16-19 May	AUQA panel visit to Wollongong

Quality Quiz

During the audit visit in May, AUQA will talk to numerous members of the University community about UOW's quality structures and processes. To check your understanding of some of the quality issues that may be explored by the AUQA panel, try answering these questions.

1. What are UOW's key strategic plans and what role do they play in achieving quality at UOW?
2. What role does the Academic Senate play in ensuring that UOW delivers quality outcomes in all areas of academic activity?
3. Why is internationalisation important to UOW?
4. How does UOW encourage the cultivation in students of the "Graduate Attributes"?
5. How does student feedback influence improvements at UOW?
6. What procedures are in place to ensure that student grievances are dealt with systematically and effectively?
7. How does UOW encourage quality HDR student supervision?

For the answers to these questions, see pp. 2-4 of this Newsletter.

About the Performance Portfolio

The Performance Portfolio is the key document describing our quality structures and processes. AUQA expects it to provide an honest appraisal of our strengths and areas for improvement and to be understood and endorsed by the University community.

The portfolio is organised into seven chapters to reflect UOW's quality priorities and practices:

1. Introduction – including UOW's Quality Model
2. The Institution – planning, governance and management
3. Learning and Teaching
4. Research and Research Training
5. Internationalisation
6. Community Engagement
7. Staff

Each chapter is structured to reflect the UOW quality cycle - Plan ... Act ... Review ... Improve. Strengths and areas for improvement are highlighted. A number of UOW documents accompany the portfolio, including strategic plans, key policies and procedures, reports and schedules.

A strict word limit imposed by AUQA means that not all examples of quality practices are included in the portfolio. During the audit visit, staff members will have the opportunity to provide further examples.

The portfolio was submitted to AUQA in hard copy form and on a CD-ROM. The package was produced with the assistance of Rob Hood (Graphic Design and Publications Coordinator, Faculty of Commerce), CEDIR staff and UOW Print and Distribution Services.

A hard copy of the portfolio and accompanying CD-ROM will be provided to each person participating in the AUQA interviews in May.

About the audit visit in May

On 16-19 May, a five-member AUQA panel will visit Wollongong to investigate the case we have made in the Performance Portfolio. The panel will talk to a wide range of University staff, students and members of the local community during either formal group interview sessions or less formal lunchtime sessions (for students and community members). We anticipate that around 25-30 sessions (45-60 minutes in length) will be conducted, involving a maximum of eight people per session.

During their preliminary visit to Wollongong on Monday 4 April, the panel chair and AUQA Director will let us know which groups or individuals they wish to interview.

Briefing sessions

In the lead-up to the Wollongong visit, the Quality Project Team will organise a number of events to prepare participants for the visit. These will include:

- A general Quality Forum open to all staff (12.30-1.30pm, Wed 13 April, Room 67.107)
- Information sessions for participants for each major quality area (14 & 18 April, times to be advised)
- Small group information sessions (week commencing 9 May)

Briefing and feedback sessions will also be conducted immediately before and after each AUQA interview session during the visit.

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, USA
- 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

For more information about the auditors, visit the Quality and Improvement website at: <http://www.uow.edu.au/about/quality/T>

Answers to Quality Quiz

1. What are UOW's key strategic plans and what role do they play in achieving quality at UOW?

Planning is the starting point of UOW's quality improvement cycle of Plan, Act, Review, Improve. UOW's Strategic Plan sets the institutional goals which are translated into specific objectives and strategies through linked plans in the following areas: Learning and Teaching; Research; Internationalisation; and Community Engagement. Faculty and

professional unit plans operate under these university-wide plans.

Both the University and unit plans inform our decision-making, priorities and budgets. UOW's overall performance in achieving its strategic objectives is assessed annually and reported to Academic Senate.

2. What role does the Academic Senate play in ensuring that UOW delivers quality outcomes in all areas of academic activity?

Academic Senate advises the University Council and the Vice-Chancellor on academic matters and issues affecting UOW. Senate is also the chief forum for discussing and disseminating information within UOW's academic community. For this reason it has chosen to retain a broad composition of 85 members.

Senate is involved in all aspects of academic governance - policy development, decision-making and the full cycle of quality assurance. Specific examples of the quality role of Senate include:

- Course approval
- Approval of university-wide academic policy in all areas (e.g. learning and teaching, research and internationalisation)
- Oversight of performance of key committees – University Education Committee, University Research Committee, University Internationalisation Committee – in implementing university-wide strategic plans
- Monitoring student feedback obtained through key surveys such the Course Experience Questionnaire

3. Why is internationalisation important to UOW?

UOW aims to integrate internationalisation into all its activities. Internationalisation is critical to our continued development as a quality University with an international reputation. In particular, internationalisation:

- stimulates research through collaboration and cross-fertilisation of ideas;
- helps drive the continuing improvement of teaching programs;
- provides an environment in which all students can attain the Graduate Attribute of 'appreciation and valuing of cultural and intellectual diversity and the ability to

function in a multicultural or global environment'; and

- helps to enrich the experience and knowledge of our international students and, through them, advance the development of their home communities.

4. How does UOW encourage the cultivation in students of the "Graduate Attributes"?

The UOW Graduate Attributes are the characteristics or qualities that the University expects of all its graduates; they are a key measure of the University's achievement of its core functions and therefore should be fostered while students are completing their studies.

A number of processes encourage the systematic incorporation of the Graduate Attributes within course structures. For example, student learning outcomes for each subject must identify which attributes are being addressed and, from 2005, subject reviews must consider whether the attributes have been appropriately integrated.

Professional units assist academic staff in the design of their courses and in developing teaching resources to support the development of Graduate Attributes.

In 2004 a website - Teaching Strategies for Graduate Attributes - was launched to make available teaching ideas and case studies from all faculties.

(www.uow.edu.au/about/teaching/attributes)

5. How does student feedback influence improvements at UOW?

Student feedback is critical to the review process and UOW regularly conducts a variety of student surveys. Examples of surveys completed by students during their studies include:

- Annual student satisfaction surveys
- Course evaluations
- Teaching surveys
- Subject surveys
- Surveys about a range of services and facilities

After they complete their studies, students are also asked to complete a Graduate Destination Survey and either a Course Experience Questionnaire or Postgraduate Research Experience Questionnaire.

how well we are achieving our strategic objectives. The feedback is analysed and reports distributed to faculties and units to inform their planning and review activities and to stimulate their improvement initiatives.

6. What procedures are in place to ensure that student grievances are dealt with systematically and effectively?

University procedures for dealing with student grievances are contained in the Student Academic Grievance Policy (Coursework and Honours Students) and the Student Academic Grievance Policy (HDR Students).

The policies are based on a staged process which encourages students to seek to resolve grievances informally through the person concerned before initiating a formal grievance process. The Dean of Students systematically tracks grievances and prepares a report for the PVC-A, who can initiate necessary improvements to policy and procedures.

7. How does UOW encourage quality HDR student supervision?

A number of mechanisms are in place to promote ongoing improvement of research supervision at UOW.

For example:

- the Research Student Office runs annual workshops on effective supervision and some faculties also run their own

The survey outcomes are used as indicators of professional development workshops for supervisors;

- quality research supervision is encouraged and rewarded through the Supervisor of the Year Award (one of the VC's annual awards);
- a sound policy framework governing supervision practices is in place – including the Code of Practice – Supervision, First Year Research Proposal Review, HDR course rules, HDR Grievance policy and Progress Review and Probation Guidelines (allowing Deans and Heads to identify supervision problems at an early stage);
- informal mentoring systems operate in faculties and research strengths;
- there is a widely accepted practice of pairing experienced and inexperienced supervisors, reinforced by recent policy changes which require co-supervision where a supervisor is inexperienced.

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).

