

AUSTRALIAN UNIVERSITIES QUALITY AGENCY

Report of an Audit of
University of Wollongong

July 2011

AUQA Audit Report Number 116

ISBN 978 978-1-921561-63-4

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The Australian Universities Quality Agency receives funding from the Australian Government, and state and territory governments of Australia.

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1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 *Audit Findings*

The scope for the 2011 audit of the University of Wollongong (UOW or the University) is the two themes of 'Enabling undergraduate learning at UOW' and 'International activities', together with the follow-up of selected recommendations from the 2006 Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA) Audit Report. In addition, this Report includes comments on the University's compliance with the MCEETYA *National Protocols for Higher Education Approval Processes* (National Protocols) and with other external reference points, and comments on academic standards.

AUQA's findings are contained in sections 2 to 4 of this Report. A selection of data that supports the findings is provided in section 5. Information on the conduct of the audit is contained in Appendix A.

1.1.1 Main Points

On the evidence considered by the Audit Panel, the University of Wollongong complies with the National Protocols.

The University has addressed or is continuing to address affirmations and recommendations from the 2006 Cycle 1 AUQA Audit Report and is implementing other improvements to management information. Its quality assurance framework and strategic planning are well integrated. UOW has well-developed risk management processes, but needs to expand its oversight of potential academic risks for the University of Wollongong in Dubai (UOWD).

AUQA commends UOW for many of its arrangements for ensuring undergraduate learning and for the strong student outcomes and satisfaction achieved by the University. Among other matters, UOW is commended for implementing the recommendations of a comprehensive academic transition support benchmarking project undertaken with the University of Tasmania, for embedding academic quality assurance through its Code of Practice – Teaching and Assessment (COPTA), and for its network of dedicated student support staff. Areas for particular attention include systematic processes for obtaining and using student feedback, academic staff performance reviews and eLearning.

On internationalisation, AUQA finds the University has larger challenges, as well as some more straightforward opportunities for improvement. A major recommendation is the need for the University to develop an integrated vision for internationalisation of UOW at a time of rapid developments in global higher education. International students onshore are generally satisfied with their experience at UOW but the University can do more to support these students to achieve excellent outcomes, while also more actively pursuing global perspectives in curricula and through student mobility. AUQA considers that, despite improvements, the University's processes for quality assurance of some aspects of offshore operations are not yet mature and so should be reviewed. Although UOWD has been operating successfully, the relationship between UOW and UOWD requires more constant and thorough reinforcement, through collegial academic bonds and through better governance oversight.

1.1.2 Matters from Cycle 1 Audit

The Audit Panel reviewed four of the affirmations and recommendations from the 2006 Cycle 1 AUQA Audit Report and investigated a selection of these. This Report includes affirmations and recommendations that relate to topics that were also raised in the 2006 Cycle 1 audit.

AUQA finds that UOW has addressed adequately two of the affirmations and recommendations. An affirmation and a recommendation in respect of graduate attributes are receiving renewed attention (section 2.1) and in this regard the University is encouraged to give specific attention to ensuring that students undertaking higher degrees by research, as well as undergraduate students, have opportunities to reflect on how well they are acquiring UOW graduate qualities.

The University is commended for the integration of its quality assurance framework and its planning processes, and also for the strong quality assurance procedures of its administrative divisions. On data, AUQA notes the planned improvements being made to reporting of student performance by entry cohort.

1.1.3 Theme 1: Enabling Undergraduate Learning at UOW

The University has an established record of strong performance in retaining domestic undergraduate students and assisting them to succeed in their studies. AUQA commends UOW for this, for its sustained high levels of graduate satisfaction and for providing an excellent student experience at its onshore teaching locations. A successful academic transition benchmarking project with the University of Tasmania is commended, and actions being taken by UOW to better coordinate its first year experience programs are affirmed. Among many examples of student support, the PASS program, in which UOW is an acknowledged leader, is commended.

On learning and teaching, the University is commended for effective implementation through the faculty education committees of its Code of Practice – Teaching and Assessment and for its thorough quality assurance processes for subjects. AUQA commends UOW for its attention to improving the assessment of student work and also for its attention to supporting sessional staff. The University has many dedicated personnel who provide effective and valued support for student learning.

Several areas for improvement have been identified and are being addressed by the University. These include a focus on recruitment of Indigenous students, further development of work-integrated learning, and additional actions to support sessional staff.

AUQA recommends that the University conduct more systematic and regular student evaluations of subjects and teaching, as well as more systematic reviews of academic staff performance. AUQA finds that the role of course coordinators needs to be clarified and recommends that a clear strategic direction for eLearning be identified.

Overall, AUQA finds that the University of Wollongong is doing very well at enabling undergraduate learning, especially for its domestic students.

1.1.4 Theme 2: International Activities

While the University's international students generally are positive about their experience and UOW is a strong performer on international research collaboration, AUQA finds that a more holistic and integrated vision for internationalisation would assist the University. This vision needs to be understood and shared by students and staff.

As in the first theme, UOW has identified some areas for improvement that are affirmed by AUQA, including a more proactive approach to student mobility and a review of how well global perspectives are integrated into curricula. International students onshore overall do not perform as well as domestic students and AUQA encourages the University to take this issue very seriously, affirming the development of an English language strategy that should include a review of English language entry requirements. AUQA recommends that the University review the appropriateness of arrangements for onshore recruitment of international students through UniAdvice, which is part of the University's controlled entity ITC Ltd.

Since the 2006 AUQA Audit Report, the University has implemented new arrangements aimed at strengthening quality assurance for its offshore teaching. While noting this positive intent, AUQA finds there continue to be some gaps and concerns over specific arrangements, such as the approval of promotional material, and more general oversight of the student experience for offshore students. Accordingly, AUQA recommends that UOW implement changes to ensure it is operating in line with recognised good practice.

The University's most substantial offshore activity is UOWD, which has been operating successfully since 1993. UOWD is a trading name of ITC Ltd, a controlled entity of UOW. At UOWD there is a clear sense of strategic direction and some sensible structural changes have been made recently. However, there are some concerns and tensions as well, notably over the quality of teaching and the nature of the relationship between UOW and UOWD. AUQA affirms the development of stronger collegial links between UOW and UOWD and recommends that the University of Wollongong exercise greater oversight in the identification and mitigation of potential reputational risks associated with UOWD, including the implementation of a comprehensive risk framework and register for ITC Ltd.

1.1.5 National Protocols for Higher Education Approval Processes

The National Protocols require all universities to meet a range of criteria, in particular nationally prescribed criteria A1 to A10 and D1 to D5. The University provided a self-assessment against the National Protocols prior to the audit.

On the evidence considered by the Audit Panel, UOW complies with the National Protocols. The University is aware of matters it will need to address to meet the revised Australian Qualifications Framework, including the reshaping of its existing one-year masters degrees.

1.1.6 Other External Reference Points

The University has also made use of a number of other external reference points to ensure the compliance and quality of its provision, including:

- Australian Qualifications Framework
- AVCC (now Universities Australia) 2005, *Provision of Education to International Students: Code of Practice and Guidelines for Australian Universities*
- DEEWR 2009, *Good Practice Principles for English Language Proficiency for International Students in Australian Universities*
- DEST 2007, National Code of Practice for Registration Authorities and Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students (the National Code 2007)
- *Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000* (Cwlth) (ESOS Act) and associated and subordinate legislation and regulations, including the National Code 2007
- *Higher Education Support Act 2003* (Cwlth) and associated schedules and regulations.

The audit did not identify any matters of concern regarding the University's compliance with these external reference points, although the University is advised to keep under review the

adequacy of support services for international students at the Sydney Business School premises in Sydney and other locations outside Wollongong.

1.2 Institutional Context

1.2.1 Institutional Profile

The University of Wollongong was established as a university in its own right in 1975, after a period since 1961 as a University College, and before that, a division of the University of New South Wales.

UOW ranks strongly in national measures of research performance and has been recognised for consistent performance in good teaching.

The University's teaching and learning is conducted in multiple locations: at its main campus in Wollongong; at the new Innovation Campus in north Wollongong; at the Sydney Business School Campus at Circular Quay in Sydney; at its Shoalhaven Campus and at several education centres along the south coast of New South Wales and in Southern Sydney; at offshore partnerships; and at the University of Wollongong Dubai (UOWD). A profile of the University's students by location is given below.

UOW enrolments (headcount) at 31 October 2010	
Undergraduate	17,561
Postgraduate (coursework)	7,131
Postgraduate (research)	1,441
Non-award (eg study abroad)	740
TOTAL	26,873
Including:	
International onshore	6,222
International offshore	4,321
Enrolment profile of campuses and sites	
Wollongong Campus	20,120
Shoalhaven Campus	578
Batemans Bay Education Centre	149
Bega Education Centre	152
Moss Vale Education Centre	102
Southern Sydney Education Centre	268
Innovation Campus	338
Sydney (Sydney Business School)	711
UOW Dubai	2,943
Other offshore teaching locations	1,378
Staff	
Academic (FTE)	1,125
General (FTE)	1,090
TOTAL	2,215

Source: University of Wollongong Performance Portfolio p10, Table 1.1.

Among the University's controlled entities is ITC Ltd, which operates UOWD and manages the University's main pathway provider, Wollongong College Australia (WCA).

The University's Innovation Campus is being developed in conjunction with the major building group Boulderstone as a distinctive multi-building environment combining facilities for research and postgraduate studies with commercial offices, residential, retail and services facilities. Other significant infrastructure developments at the University include the SMART Infrastructure Facility and the Illawarra Health & Medical Research Institute.

1.3 Commendations, Affirmations and Recommendations

This Report contains commendations, affirmations and recommendations. A commendation refers to the achievement of a stated goal, or to some plan or activity that has led to, or appears likely to lead to, the achievement of a stated goal, and which in AUQA's view is particularly significant. A recommendation refers to an area in need of attention, whether in respect of approach, deployment or results, which in AUQA's view is particularly significant. Where such matters have already been identified by the University, with evidence, they are termed 'affirmations'. It is acknowledged that recommendations in this Report may have resource implications.

The themes for Cycle 2 audits are chosen for their risk potential and are likely also to reflect the institution's own assessment of its developmental and strategic needs. As for Cycle 1 audits, AUQA aims to assist the University to enhance the quality and standards of its operations.

Commendations

1. AUQA commends the University of Wollongong for the integration of its quality assurance framework and planning processes and for the commitment of its administrative divisions to systematic quality assurance. 13
2. AUQA commends the University of Wollongong for its sustained high levels of domestic undergraduate student retention and success, particularly for students from equity groups. 16
3. AUQA commends the University of Wollongong for its sustained high levels of graduate satisfaction, including graduate satisfaction with generic skills, and quality of teaching and overall satisfaction. 16
4. AUQA commends the University of Wollongong for providing an excellent onshore student experience. 18
5. AUQA commends the University of Wollongong for undertaking and following up a comprehensive benchmarking exercise with the University of Tasmania to improve its academic transition support. 19
6. AUQA commends the University of Wollongong for the dedicated and effective support for prospective and new students provided by the head of its Shoalhaven Campus. 20
7. AUQA commends the University of Wollongong for its Peer Assisted Study Sessions program and its intended further development of the program. 21
8. AUQA commends the University of Wollongong for the effective implementation through faculty education committees of its Code of Practice – Teaching and Assessment. 23

9.	AUQA commends the University of Wollongong for its quality assurance processes for subjects, which include comprehensive internal reviews that give close attention to content and assessment.	25
10.	AUQA commends the University of Wollongong for its attention to sustaining and improving the quality of assessment of student work, including the Assessment Benchmarking project undertaken with the University of Tasmania and Deakin University.	26
11.	AUQA commends the University of Wollongong for continuing to assure and improve the quality of its support for sessional academic staff.	27
12.	AUQA commends the University of Wollongong for the quality and dedication of staff who provide student learning and welfare support, including the student support advisors, disability support services, learning support services and the University Library.	29
13.	AUQA commends the University of Wollongong for the development and implementation of the Certificate of Global Workplace Practice, which is valued particularly by international students.	30
14.	AUQA commends the University of Wollongong for its processes for ensuring academic integrity.	31
15.	AUQA commends the University of Wollongong for its significant number of international collaborative research projects and for its targeted support for recruitment of international higher degree by research students.	35

Affirmations

1.	AUQA affirms the University of Wollongong taking action to further embed its graduate qualities in learning and teaching across the University and encourages the University to ensure that students, including higher degree by research students, have opportunities to reflect on the ways they are acquiring graduate qualities.	10
2.	AUQA affirms the inclusion by the University of Wollongong of reporting on student performance by entry cohort and pathways in its data on comparative student outcomes.	14
3.	AUQA affirms the actions being implemented by the University of Wollongong to ensure better coordination of first year experience programs and support across the University.	19
4.	AUQA affirms the establishment by the University of Wollongong of an Onshore Sites Coordinating Committee to ensure effective management of student engagement and learning across all teaching sites in Australia.	20
5.	AUQA affirms a renewed focus on recruitment of Indigenous students by the University of Wollongong.	22
6.	AUQA affirms the development by the University of Wollongong of a work-integrated learning framework and encourages the University to expand opportunities for work placements and internships across its teaching locations.	26

7.	AUQA affirms the University of Wollongong’s commitment to act on the findings of its internal review of Sessional Teaching Practices at UOW, acknowledging the initiatives that the University has already taken.....	27
8.	AUQA affirms the University of Wollongong’s plans to develop a more comprehensive English language strategy for all students, which should include a review of the level and implementation of its English language entry requirements.....	30
9.	AUQA affirms the University of Wollongong’s intent to review how well global perspectives are incorporated into learning outcomes, using a new definition of internationalisation in learning and teaching.....	36
10.	AUQA affirms the development and implementation by the University of Wollongong of new approaches to outbound and inbound student mobility that go beyond traditional exchange programs and use the opportunities presented by its offshore campus and partnerships.	36
11.	AUQA affirms the introduction at the University of Wollongong in Dubai of additional English language subjects into the general education year of courses.	44
12.	AUQA affirms the development of greater and closer collegial academic relationships between the University of Wollongong and the University of Wollongong in Dubai.....	45

Recommendations

1.	AUQA recommends that the University of Wollongong ensure more frequent and regular systematic evaluation of all subjects and teaching.....	18
2.	AUQA recommends that the University of Wollongong clarify the role and responsibilities of course coordinators across the University, to support further improvements in curricula and student learning.	24
3.	AUQA recommends that the University of Wollongong ensure the systematic completion of performance reviews for all academic staff, noting the valuable formative role of such reviews.	28
4.	AUQA recommends that the University of Wollongong clarify its strategic direction for eLearning across the University and develop a plan for implementation and monitoring of its strategy.....	31
5.	AUQA recommends that the University of Wollongong give further consideration to developing an integrated vision for internationalisation that is understood and shared by staff and students.....	33
6.	AUQA recommends that the University of Wollongong review the appropriateness of its arrangements for onshore recruitment of international students, and some offshore admissions functions, through UniAdvice, to ensure that these functions are undertaken in ways that minimise risk.....	37
7.	AUQA recommends that the University of Wollongong benchmark and review its arrangements for oversight and management of all aspects of offshore teaching	

partnerships and implement changes to ensure that it is operating in accordance with recognised good practice. 39

8. AUQA recommends that the University of Wollongong exercise greater oversight in the identification and mitigation of potential reputational risks associated with the University of Wollongong in Dubai. 44

2 MATTERS FROM CYCLE 1 AUDIT

Recognising the importance of quality enhancement and improvement, the audit considers whether the recommendations and affirmations in the 2006 Cycle 1 AUQA Audit Report have been implemented. A sample of recommendations and affirmations is selected and checked. As well, AUQA seeks evidence of the increasing effectiveness of the institution's quality assurance and improvement system/framework.

In its Performance Portfolio, the University provided an updated summary of progress in implementing the 13 recommendations from its 2006 AUQA Audit Report. A summary of progress against the five affirmations was subsequently provided as well. Matters relevant to several of these affirmations and recommendations are addressed in sections 3 and 4 of this Report.

The Audit Panel selected some other affirmations and recommendations for follow-up, as described below. A risk assessment undertaken by AUQA in the light of the progress report on Cycle 1 affirmations and recommendations indicated that several recommendations should be reviewed in the Cycle 2 audit. After considering the Performance Portfolio and the supporting documents, and progress against the affirmations and recommendations, the Panel selected affirmations 3 and 4 and recommendations 7 and 8 for specific follow-up.

2.1 Affirmation 3 and Recommendation 7: Graduate Qualities

Affirmation 3 from the 2006 AUQA Audit Report is: *That AUQA affirms the University of Wollongong's recognition of the need to further develop systems to ensure that its graduate attributes are embedded in its curriculum, teaching and assessment practices, and of the need to ensure that this recognition is shared by all staff.*

Recommendation 7 from the 2006 AUQA Audit Report is: *That the University of Wollongong further develop and communicate systems to ensure that its Research Graduate Attributes are embedded in its curriculum, supervision and assessment practices.*

This affirmation and this recommendation were selected for separate follow-up, as they are relevant to the two thematic areas for the audit and central to the achievement of the first goal of the University's Strategic Plan. UOW advises that it reviewed its graduate attributes in 2006–2007 and after extensive consultation developed a single set of graduate qualities that apply for all students, including students undertaking higher degrees by research (HDR). A new Graduate Qualities Policy was approved in 2007.

Recognising that faculties needed to 'own' the graduate qualities, UOW provided Faculty Implementation Guidelines and funded projects at faculty level to embed the graduate qualities, including development of faculty-specific qualities drawn from the five University-wide graduate qualities. A graduate qualities website was developed although it appeared out of date at the time of the audit.

The University's self-review for the AUQA audit identified good practices by the Graduate School of Medicine and Engineering in embedding graduate qualities and curriculum mapping, processes that are assisted by professional accreditation requirements in these fields. There is also evidence of very good practice in the Faculty of Commerce. However, some other faculties had not advanced in the development of contextualised graduate qualities; furthermore, their

inclusion in subject outlines often consists of a list of the qualities rather than a demonstration of how they will be developed.

The Audit Panel found evidence that some undergraduate and postgraduate coursework students are aware of the graduate qualities, which indicates significant progress has been made in some disciplines. As noted in section 3.1.2, bachelor degree students rate highly their acquisition of generic skills through their studies. Nonetheless, the University needs to do more to ensure that students have opportunities to reflect on the ways in which they are acquiring the generic qualities they are expected to graduate with. The University was an early leader in the development of e-portfolios, but has not systematically required students to develop such portfolios, although they are used in a number of fields of study.

For research students, the University revised its Code of Practice – Supervision for research supervisors to include mention of the graduate qualities, and aims to communicate these qualities to HDR students through the HDR handbook, orientation programs and the research website. While results from the Postgraduate Research Experience Questionnaire indicate that HDR students are satisfied with their level of skills development, the Audit Panel found that the international HDR students they interviewed did not have any awareness of the UOW graduate qualities.

The self-review identified a need for the University to refresh and revitalise the embedding of its graduate qualities. Action to address this is included in the scope of a curriculum mapping project, which is evaluating the use of a curriculum mapping tool developed by Curtin University for implementation at UOW.

Affirmation 1

AUQA affirms the University of Wollongong taking action to further embed its graduate qualities in learning and teaching across the University and encourages the University to ensure that students, including higher degree by research students, have opportunities to reflect on the ways they are acquiring graduate qualities.

2.2 Affirmation 4: The Link between Research and Teaching

The 2006 AUQA Audit Report affirmed *the need identified by the University of Wollongong to develop a systematic approach to effecting the link between research and teaching in order to promote learning as, inter alia, a process of inquiry.*

In 2008, the University completed a strategic project, Nexus, to define and capitalise on the relationship between learning and research. This led to the development of an articulated approach involving extensive consultation, an Honours website and case studies of good practice. The next stage was to embed the concept of the nexus in policy and course planning and review, through the Course Review Guidelines. Questions on Nexus have been included in the University's comprehensive Student Experience Questionnaire (SEQ).

The main activity in respect of this affirmation appears to have occurred between 2008 and 2009. However, the 2011–2013 Strategic Plan identifies a 'demonstrable Learning-Research nexus with a strong alignment of teaching programs with areas of research strength' as one way to ensure that students acquire the University's graduate qualities.

AUQA finds the University of Wollongong strongly addressed this affirmation between 2007 and 2009. UOW is encouraged to maintain an identifiable focus on systematising the link between research, teaching and student learning.

2.3 Recommendation 8: Intellectual Property Rights of Students

The 2006 AUQA Audit Report contained a recommendation that *the University of Wollongong communicate and practise clear and consistent policy on the intellectual property rights of its students.*

The University advised that in 2006 it approved a new Intellectual Property framework that addressed student assignment of intellectual property and in 2007 approved a policy on assignment of intellectual property by fellows, visiting students and volunteers. Supervisor training and research student orientation includes information on student ownership of intellectual property. A reimbursement fund has been established to support students to seek independent legal advice prior to signing intellectual property assignment deeds and a position of Intellectual Property Officer has been established. The University aims to ensure that students working on projects with commercial potential sign assignment deeds prior to commencing the project and asks them to keep records.

HDR students to whom the Audit Panel spoke were aware of intellectual property issues and those working on externally funded projects had signed assignment deeds. AUQA finds that the University has thoroughly addressed this recommendation.

2.4 Internal Quality Assurance and Improvements since the 2006 Cycle 1 AUQA Audit Report

2.4.1 Governance

The University Council is actively involved in strategic planning, and initiated the development of planning against a time horizon longer than the three years of the Strategic Plan. Council members are well informed about plans and developments across the University and receive twice-yearly reports from Academic Senate. As indicated in AUQA's findings in respect of internationalisation (section 4), Council is advised to keep under active review the effectiveness of the University's plans to realise its vision of being 'a global education provider of the highest standards' and an 'international university of choice' (2011–2013 Strategic Plan) in a rapidly changing global higher education environment.

Risk management is well developed at the University and several improvements to risk monitoring have been implemented since 2006. UOW's approach is based on the Australian Risk Management Standard ISO 31000, and includes a Risk Management Policy for all areas of the University's operations and a Strategic Risks Register. Risk management has been integrated progressively into annual planning and review processes and is included in faculty and unit planning templates, with guidance provided to staff. Since 2008, the University has conducted an annual Academic Risk Assessment.

These developments exemplify good practice in risk management. However, as noted in section 4.8, the University Council needs to give greater attention to evaluating and monitoring reputational risks associated with the operation and future development of the University of Wollongong in Dubai (UOWD).

The operation of the Academic Senate is discussed in section 3.3.1.

2.4.2 Strategic Planning

The University's 2011–2013 Strategic Plan, developed in 2010 after a review of the planning framework in late 2009, identifies the following five strategic goals:

- Graduates equipped to learn, engage and lead in society and the global workplace
- Recognition for research of high quality and impact
- Partnerships that develop communities and an enterprising, engaged University
- An international University of choice
- Versatile, collaborative and creative staff.

The University has evidence from its periodic workforce surveys that staff strongly believe in the values and purposes of the University and that the objectives of the University are being reached.

Recommendation 5 in the 2006 AUQA Audit Report was that UOW consider establishing more specific qualitative and quantitative targets in its planning process in order to help determine and measure the pace and extent of progress against its strategic goals. The 2011–13 Strategic Plan includes qualitative and quantitative performance indicators, measures and targets. Faculties are reporting against performance indicators derived from the 2008–2010 Strategic Plan. Although precise indicators and targets were not specified in this plan, the University has produced annual reports under its Performance Monitoring Framework (PMF) since 2008. The PMF comprises a set of annual indicators and measures or targets linked to the Strategic Plan and provides a quick check of overall performance. An annual report on performance against strategic goals is presented to the Academic Senate and University Council. AUQA finds that the University has adequately addressed this recommendation.

The new Strategic Plan (2011–2013) is underpinned by a series of Management Plans, including a Student Learning and Teaching Plan, a Research Management Plan and an International Management Plan (section 4.1), and enabling plans for faculties and operational units. Additionally, the University identifies for each planning period a small number of strategic priorities, or areas of particular focus, which are supported through projects and resources to ensure progress can be made.

Each faculty has a detailed operational plan and the deans report on these plans annually to senior management. Although there appear to be no sanctions (budgetary or other) for poor performance or failure to report against strategies in faculty plans, there is active monitoring at senior levels and deans are required to discuss their reports in depth at quarterly planning and budget meetings.

Further, the University ensures that academic committees, including faculty education committees, play a significant role in pursuing strategic objectives and in monitoring progress.

There is clear evidence of effective cascading and alignment of goals between the University's previous strategic plan and faculty plans, although the extent to which these goals are reflected within the schools' planning is variable.

2.4.3 Quality Framework

In 2010, the UOW Quality Framework was updated and now articulates how UOW's quality management system works and how the various elements of the Quality Framework align with the University's strategic planning and review processes. The Framework uses a Plan-Act-Review-Improve model.

Planning starts and ends with the University Strategic Plan and related management and operational plans. The framework explains that 'Act' means the ways through which strategies are implemented through policies, procedures, projects and resource allocation at University, faculty and unit levels, while elements of 'Review' include: planning and budget reviews; reviews of policy; annual faculty and unit reviews against plans; academic unit reviews; course reviews, including professional accreditation; risk management; and benchmarking. To track improvements identified from significant reviews and projects, the University maintains a Quality Improvement Plan which, inter alia, monitors risks identified through the Academic Risk Assessment.

AUQA finds that the University now has a quality framework that is well integrated with its strategic planning process. As UOW acknowledges, a priority for 2011 is to ensure that the quality framework, and how it connects to operational activities, is well known by the University community. In the 2010 UOW 'Your Voice' workforce study, 58 per cent of respondents agreed that they understood the University's quality improvement cycle (Plan-Act-Review-Improve).

The University supports an Administration Quality Assurance Unit for its administrative divisions, and three administrative areas, including the Library, maintain ISO9001 quality certification. These areas undergo regular external review and their attention to monitoring the quality of their processes has assisted in streamlining and making other improvements to these processes.

Commendation 1

AUQA commends the University of Wollongong for the integration of its quality assurance framework and planning processes and for the commitment of its administrative divisions to systematic quality assurance.

2.4.4 Data Analysis and Reports

The University has made significant improvements to its ability to use data on student performance and outcomes to inform improvements. A new Performance Indicator Reporting System (PIRs) enables real-time reporting and viewing of student data at different levels of aggregation. The further development of PIRs, data warehouse and dashboard systems will provide good support for planning and quality enhancement.

Recommendation 6 in the 2006 AUQA Audit Report was that UOW routinely conduct comparative analyses of student learning outcomes across its various modes and locations of teaching as one way of monitoring equivalence. In response, the University now ensures that greater attention is paid to comparative student outcomes (CSO). Twice-yearly CSO data reports are provided to faculties and other key personnel under a 2007 CSO Monitoring Procedure, with an annual report provided to the Quality Assurance Subcommittee. In 2010, the Procedure was revised to emphasis stronger monitoring by faculties and to improve the reporting trail from faculties to University committees. Results are discussed by Faculty Assessment Committees and actions may be referred to Faculty Education Committees. A record of actions taken is made on a CSO Review Template.

The University has not yet issued reports on comparative student outcomes by entry pathway or entry cohort, but it has been developing this capability and plans to include this information in reports in 2011. These enhancements are important to assist the University to track the performance of its main pathway provider, Wollongong College Australia (WCA) (section

3.2.5), and other pathway providers, and to target interventions for any groups that appear to face particular difficulties in doing well in their studies.

Affirmation 2

AUQA affirms the inclusion by the University of Wollongong of reporting on student performance by entry cohort and pathways in its data on comparative student outcomes.

2.5 Benchmarking and Academic Standards

The University introduced a Benchmarking Policy in 2010 and has a benchmarking website and register of activities. UOW actively compares its performance against other institutions using available data, such as its Institution Performance Portfolio, AUSSE and the International Student Barometer™ (ISB) survey, plus more specific data for individual organisational activities. Faculties are required to report on benchmarking activities through the annual review process.

In 2009, UOW signed a benchmarking Memorandum of Understanding with the University of Tasmania, and extended this to a third partner, Deakin University, in early 2010. The University advises that the three universities have agreed to pursue a range of benchmarking activities to 2014.

Two major whole-of-institution benchmarking exercises have already been undertaken (sections 3.2.1 and 3.3.4) and others are planned. Another, international, benchmarking project—on the measurement of teaching performance in academic promotion—is being undertaken with the University of Leicester, University of Newcastle upon Tyne and the University of Tasmania. As well, UOW is participating with five other Australian universities in the Teaching Standards Framework Project (funded by the ALTC), which aims to provide ways to assess the quality of learning and teaching practice across institutions. AUQA finds that benchmarking is taken seriously by the University of Wollongong.

The University is developing an Academic Standards Framework based on the AUQA Framework for Standards, Evidence and Outcomes. The Audit Panel finds that that the proposed framework is at an early stage and is not well known among academic committee members, but encourages its further development. The project will support a requirement in the UOW Curriculum Review Guidelines that courses are assessed against a number of quality indicators, including 'Curriculum consistent with sector and relevant professional standards' (PF p18).

3 THEME: ENABLING UNDERGRADUATE LEARNING AT UOW

This audit's first theme, proposed by the University, is 'Enabling undergraduate learning at UOW'. It was selected by AUQA after a consideration of academic risks related to the theme, the noting of the recommendations from the 2006 AUQA Audit Report, and the significance of the theme to the University's strategic priorities.

The scope of this theme includes:

- Learning outcomes, eg graduate and student outcomes, graduate qualities, career development, and student experience
- Introduction to university learning, eg academic transition support, pathway programs, and communication of expectations
- Engagement with learning, eg curriculum design, teaching, assessment and standards, student involvement, staff capacity and development, and learning support services.

3.1 *Student and Graduate Outcomes and Satisfaction*

3.1.1 Student and Graduate Outcomes

UOW is a strong performer among Australian universities in respect of the retention and success of commencing domestic bachelor students, an achievement that is notable given that its tertiary median entrance scores are lower than those of the Group of Eight institutions and some other comparable universities.

The University's retention rates for commencing bachelor students, both domestic and international, are above those for sector, state and benchmark comparators (data item 5.1). The University's success rates for commencing bachelor students have been similar to sector averages. According to the latest available data, the UOW success rate for commencing domestic undergraduate students has been consistently above sector averages, while that for commencing international students has been similar to or lower than sector and comparator averages (data item 5.2).

For all undergraduate students, UOW performs well on measures of retention and success for domestic students. The latest available data shows the University's retention rates for domestic students are well above those for sector, state and benchmark comparators (data items 5.3 and 5.4). The success rate for international undergraduate students has been, and continues to be, below the average for comparator groups, a matter which is discussed in section 4.6.2.

The University has moderately high proportions of regional students and students from areas of low socio-economic status. On measures of access and participation, it is comparable to state and sector averages for these groups, but has the highest proportion of any Australian university of domestic students who identify as having a disability (data items 5.5 and 5.6).

The success rate for UOW students from low socio-economic status backgrounds is noticeably higher than the rates for the state, benchmark comparator group and sector. The retention rates for UOW students from low socio-economic status backgrounds, both overall and for students aged under 25, are higher than for any of these comparators. Similarly, the University's success and retention rates for regional students and for remote students are well above the average rates of comparator groups, as are the rates for students who identify as having a disability (data items 5.7 and 5.8).

The University's access and participation rates for students who identify as Indigenous are similar to those for comparator groups, but its retention and success rates are well above (data item 5.9).

In summary, UOW has a very good record in retaining students from equity groups and ensuring they succeed in their studies.

Commendation 2

AUQA commends the University of Wollongong for its sustained high levels of domestic undergraduate student retention and success, particularly for students from equity groups.

From Graduate Destination Survey data, the University's rate of graduates in full-time employment is slightly higher than sector averages and higher than the averages for the state and for its benchmark comparator group. The UOW rate of employment is better for students who mainly studied full-time than for those who mainly studied part-time. The rate of graduates in full-time study is slightly higher for UOW than for other comparator groups.

3.1.2 Graduate Satisfaction

On Course Experience Questionnaire (CEQ) data to 2009, the University is a very strong performer, although its response rates have been comparatively low. On measures of good teaching, UOW was rated higher than benchmark, state and sector comparators, while its performance on the generic skills and overall satisfaction scales was considerably higher than the performance of all the comparator groups on the same scales. Higher than average ratings for overall satisfaction are evident over nearly all fields of education (data item 5.10). The University has sustained its good performance on these measures over a number of years (data item 5.11).

Commendation 3

AUQA commends the University of Wollongong for its sustained high levels of graduate satisfaction, including graduate satisfaction with generic skills, and quality of teaching and overall satisfaction.

On specific CEQ items concerning student assessment and feedback on their work, recent UOW graduates give higher scores than the sector average, although the University recognises that more can be done (section 3.3.4). The University's progress in embedding its graduate qualities into curricula is addressed in section 2.1.

The University requires an analysis of student and graduate feedback to be undertaken by faculties and units in their annual review of performance and similar analyses in five-yearly course reviews.

3.1.3 Student Experience

The University has participated in the Australasian Survey of Student Engagement since 2008 and its overall performance for the main scales has improved nearly uniformly over time (2008–2010). On most items and for all students, UOW is rated slightly more highly than the average for all Australasian participants. The University has noticeably higher overall satisfaction for all students and for first year students.

The University has participated in the ISB survey since 2009. Results for 2010 show that on most overall measures, students were slightly more satisfied with their experience at UOW than the Australian average and were more satisfied with their overall support experience (data item 5.12). Respondents were highly satisfied with the quality of teaching and assessment, and very satisfied with the Library. Areas for improvement under teaching and learning were work experience and employability, and language support. On the measures for living arrangements and support, respondents reported that they felt safe and were satisfied with transport and accommodation, but were less satisfied with accommodation access and costs, living costs and internet access. Making friends with Australians is another area where international students were less satisfied. Students were highly satisfied with UniAdvice (sections 1.1.4 and 4.6.1) and with Student Central (section 3.5.1). There was some decline in satisfaction on many of the measures for living arrangements and support between 2009 and 2010.

The University conducts a comprehensive annual student survey, the Student Experience Questionnaire (SEQ), for its onshore sites, which allows the University to monitor the comparative satisfaction of first year students as well as all students, and to track student responses in respect of graduate qualities. Among other measures, the survey obtains views from first year students on the quality of teaching and courses, support services, and information received on courses (data item 5.13). The survey indicates that overall satisfaction is high and is detailed enough to allow the University to identify systemic issues and target them for improvement. There are plans to extend the SEQ to offshore teaching locations.

The University provides other opportunities for students to give feedback, such as a Student Representative Forum and 'feedback@UOW'. The University makes efforts to show students how it has responded to their feedback via a 'UOW responds' website, but the Audit Panel observes that this may require more regular updating if it is to provide an effective vehicle. In addition, the University Education Committee has established a working group on how to improve student input through representation on committees.

The environment on the University's main campus in North Wollongong supports a positive learning experience. There are excellent social and sporting facilities and various well-designed new learning spaces. The Audit Panel received predominantly positive feedback about the range of social activities available for students on the main campus, but notes that the adequacy of facilities for students at other teaching locations should be kept under active review (sections 4.6.2 and 4.7) and improved where possible.

The University is encouraged to acknowledge the important support role provided by some student societies, particularly for international students. The University proposes to increase funding to student societies and has recently upgraded their facilities. AUQA observes that funding for societies needs to take account of the size of their membership. The University might consider ways in which student societies can better assist the University to promote cultural inclusion and a diversity of experiences for all students.

The University has placed considerable emphasis on improving internal communications, including communications with students, and has several working groups actively identifying opportunities for improvement. On the main campus there is evidence of considerable care having been taken by the University to consider students' information needs and to enhance channels of communication, including the use of digital signage and UOWMail. Given the difficulties for staff and students of parking, the University's actions, such as commercial signage and incentives for car pooling, are praiseworthy.

The University's marketing draws on its strong results from the CEQ, using its sustained five star ratings in the Good Universities Guide as a key promotional point. Another major point of emphasis is the University's 'top 2%' performance, as assessed by various international rankings of universities. The Audit Panel finds that the 'top 2%' concept is well embedded in students' perceptions. A strong majority of students to whom the Audit Panel spoke confirmed that UOW was meeting their expectations and that they would recommend the University to others.

Commendation 4

AUQA commends the University of Wollongong for providing an excellent onshore student experience.

3.1.4 Student Feedback on Subjects and Teaching

The University has data on its current onshore Student Evaluation of Subjects (SES) survey from 2005. (Student evaluations at offshore locations are discussed in section 4.7.)

From 2005 to 2007, all subjects were surveyed each session using online delivery. As the result of a major review, which included reference to best practice, the University moved to paper-based delivery of the SES in 2008 and raised response rates from around 14% to over 50%. Subjects are currently reviewed on a five-year cycle requiring one-fifth of subjects to be surveyed each year and with provision for more frequent reviews to be held as determined by Faculty Education Committees. While many academics now seem uncertain about the required frequency of subject evaluations, the University advises that they are notified when their subjects are to be surveyed.

Teacher evaluations are not mandatory for all staff, although they are required for academics on probation and for promotion purposes, and some staff request them routinely. The results of teacher evaluations are confidential to the staff member and not available to supervisors unless provided by the academic. AUQA considers that the current frequency of evaluation of evaluation of courses and teaching is insufficient to provide ongoing quality enhancement.

The quality of teaching at UOW is felt by students at onshore locations to be high, although not uniformly so. A challenge for UOW is to ensure that its reputation for good teaching is upheld through consistently good student experiences of teaching. There is a perception by some students that they have insufficient opportunity to provide feedback about teaching and subjects, and the weaker teachers were perceived to be those least likely to conduct the evaluations. While the SEQ provides some information, it does not address the quality of individual subjects or how well they are taught.

There is ample evidence that many academics at UOW are keen to improve the quality of their teaching, but these staff are likely to be already using Teacher Evaluations. AUQA considers that the University should implement more frequent systematic evaluation of all subjects, and that student evaluation of teaching quality should be mandatory. To assist staff to improve their teaching and for effective, informed career development discussions, the results of student evaluations should be made available routinely to the staff member's supervisor.

Recommendation 1

AUQA recommends that the University of Wollongong ensure more frequent and regular systematic evaluation of all subjects and teaching.

The University needs to ensure that students are better informed about changes made in response to their feedback, although some academics are demonstrating good practice by including in subject outlines a comment on changes made in response to student feedback from previous teaching sessions, in accordance with University policy.

3.2 Introduction to Student Learning

3.2.1 Academic Transition Benchmarking

In 2008, the University commenced a substantial benchmarking project with the University of Tasmania on academic transition support for first year undergraduate students, under a Memorandum of Understanding signed by the vice-chancellors of both universities.

The project was carefully planned and included a launch and briefing session for project leaders, self-assessment workshops, and a peer assessment workshop with both institutions to compare and follow up on collaborative projects and identify priority areas for improvement. UOW reports that all faculties, relevant support units and regional sites participated in the project, which included consideration of both processes and outcomes.

The final project report for UOW, in October 2009, contained a summary of comparative findings, lists of good practices from each university, recommendations and an action plan. Among the areas which UOW staff identified for action were: first year student policy; coordination across programs; transition pedagogy; provision of first year transition support within faculties; identification and role of first year coordinators; processes to identify and support at-risk students; improved support for pathway students, international students and equity groups; professional development and induction, especially for casual staff; comparison of library programs; and comparison of English language courses and Foundation Studies programs. As discussed below, the University is actively pursuing improvements.

AUQA finds this project to be an exemplar of good practice in productive benchmarking for improvement. UOW is to be congratulated for undertaking and actively using the project to further improve the first year experience of its students.

Commendation 5

AUQA commends the University of Wollongong for undertaking and following up a comprehensive benchmarking exercise with the University of Tasmania to improve its academic transition support.

A major finding of the project was that UOW needed stronger coordination of activities. Accordingly, a First Year Experience (FYE) working party, under the University Education Committee, was established to oversee the implementation of an action plan. Given the many activities undertaken by the University at an institutional level and various actions occurring within the faculties, AUQA finds that UOW is responding appropriately to the report.

Affirmation 3

AUQA affirms the actions being implemented by the University of Wollongong to ensure better coordination of first year experience programs and support across the University.

One of the projects being pursued by the FYE working party is the development of a 'transition pedagogy' to show how beneficial transitional experiences can be incorporated into first year curriculum design. While this project is still at an early stage, AUQA encourages the University

to continue to take a leading role in developing this innovative approach to curriculum design and to ensure that the concepts are widely understood by those involved in designing and teaching first year curricula.

3.2.2 Management of a Multi-site University in Australia

Recommendation 5 in the 2006 AUQA Audit Report was that UOW develop an approach to its various campus operations, whereby the purpose and interrelationships of each campus are part of a comprehensive University plan. The University now has strategic development plans for the Shoalhaven Campus and for education centres, and there is recognition of UOW as an integrated multi-site network in the 2011–2013 Strategic Plan.

AUQA finds that the University is giving appropriate attention to transition and other support at the Shoalhaven Campus and the education centres, and is closely monitoring attrition rates at these sites, which from time to time are higher than those at its main campus. (The predominantly postgraduate Innovation Campus and wholly postgraduate Sydney Business School Campus in Sydney are discussed in section 4.)

Students to whom the Audit Panel spoke, and other feedback, emphasised the significant role played by the head of the Shoalhaven Campus in ensuring a positive and highly supportive environment for students and in reaching out to encourage prospective students to explore their potential. Many subjects at Shoalhaven Campus (and at the education centres) are taught in part through video lectures, which means that students at these campuses can be very reliant on local support to help them remain engaged with their studies.

Commendation 6

AUQA commends the University of Wollongong for the dedicated and effective support for prospective and new students provided by the head of its Shoalhaven Campus.

The University has recognised that student support and engagement at its other locations should not rely largely on a few dedicated individuals, and that there needs to be more systematic coordination in future, both for academic matters and for the student experience generally. An Onshore Sites Coordinating Committee was established in 2010 to make plans for the future growth of the University as a multi-site institution in Australia.

Affirmation 4

AUQA affirms the establishment by the University of Wollongong of an Onshore Sites Coordinating Committee to ensure effective management of student engagement and learning across all teaching sites in Australia.

3.2.3 Academic Transition Support

The University has a wide range of programs to support students in their transition to university life and throughout their first year of study. Orientation events and information for incoming students are extensive and an expanded orientation program for mature age students has been implemented for 2011.

StartSmart, which is a remodelled and improved version of an earlier UOW compulsory information literacies program, aims to equip students with foundation information skills and advice on how to avoid plagiarism. The program seems to be very well received by first year students and by staff, and is routinely revised in accordance with feedback.

Other programs for students early in their studies include 'immersion days' for students at Shoalhaven Campus and education centres, and day-long writing and research intensives, both part of a larger Successful Transitions project implemented in 2010. Project resources are made available in a core subject in the Bachelor of Commerce program. Another initiative is the First Year on Campus Learning Carnivale, offered through an eLearning site with follow-up support.

The University has also implemented a Staying Connected project, first piloted in 2009 and extended more widely in 2010. This project aims to develop an institutionally comprehensive retention strategy and also to support students in their first year. As many students as possible are contacted by phone, in first and second semesters, by other students who receive training, and are referred to services or additional support if they need assistance.

These initiatives, especially Staying Connected, were particularly valued by students at the Shoalhaven Campus and the Woolyungah Indigenous Centre.

One of the student support programs for which UOW is best known is its long-established Peer Assisted Study Sessions (PASS) program. The University has provided leadership to the Australian higher education sector in this area and PASS is now a routine part of the first year experience at UOW, much valued by the students. In 2010, UOW's PASS Program was awarded the 'Most Outstanding PASS Program' in the world at the International PASS Conference. The University has data showing that between 2003-2009, all students who attended PASS more than 5 times on average achieved a final mark 7.6 points higher and had a significantly lower likelihood of failing than a student who did not attend. AUQA endorses the University's plan to extend PASS to second and third years and notes that some students would like it extended to additional first year subjects.

Commendation 7

AUQA commends the University of Wollongong for its Peer Assisted Study Sessions program and its intended further development of the program.

3.2.4 Support for Indigenous Student Recruitment and Success

A sense of community and support services for Indigenous students are provided by the Woolyungah Indigenous Centre, which is a safe and valued home base for Indigenous students. The Centre, on the main campus, offers 24/7 access to a student computer laboratory, kitchen and lounge. It runs an Indigenous Orientation Program.

The Audit Panel notes the positive, family atmosphere at the Centre. The Indigenous Tutorial Assistance Scheme appears to be operating well at UOW, and Centre staff noted recent improvements in student pass rates. A recent review of Indigenous services proposes a restructure to relocate the Centre's academic activities to mainstream academic areas, to allow the Centre to focus on recruitment of Indigenous students and their ongoing support at UOW. There appeared to be strong respect for and appreciation of the work of the Acting Director during this transitional period. Among the University's activities to improve recruitment of Indigenous students are plans for greater involvement of more Indigenous elders and additional staffing for the IPP Uni Connections program, which conducts outreach programs with disadvantaged high schools in the Illawarra and Shoalhaven regions. AUQA finds there is an appropriately renewed focus on the student experience of Indigenous students and on recruitment of Indigenous students to university study. The restructure and review of arrangements affecting Woolyungah Indigenous Centre are being handled with care.

Affirmation 5

AUQA affirms a renewed focus on recruitment of Indigenous students by the University of Wollongong.

3.2.5 Pathways and Credit

Wollongong College Australia (WCA) is the University's pathway college and is an entity of ITC Ltd, which in turn is a wholly owned controlled entity of UOW. In addition to its foundation studies and university access programs, WCA is a higher education provider in its own right, offering two diplomas that articulate into studies at UOW.

WCA was undergoing its own AUQA audit at the time of this audit of UOW, and the findings of both audits are expected to inform both institutions. The UOW Audit Panel received evidence of some concern among UOW academics over the performance, and especially the English language proficiency, of international students articulating from WCA. Some data on the comparative performance of students entering from WCA and direct entry students has been extracted by the University and such comparisons will be facilitated by the introduction of routine reporting on student performance by cohort and entry pathway (section 2.4.4).

The University has taken action to strengthen its oversight of WCA and to ensure close collegial relationships through attendance by WCA staff at relevant UOW academic committees and the establishment of a joint UOW/WCA Board of Studies to monitor the diploma courses. AUQA encourages UOW to continue to ensure that students entering from WCA are well prepared to participate effectively in their studies at the University.

Improved processes for students transferring from WCA to UOW are also being pursued, as in the past this process has not been at all seamless for many students. UOW currently recognises WCA diplomas formally through its new Quality Assurance of Overseas Credit Transfer Procedure, even though the diplomas are offered onshore. Under a new procedure planned to ensure better management of applications from overseas students for credit, UOW's Faculty International Support Unit (FISU) has a quality assurance responsibility for coordinating, recording and notifying faculties of reviews of the institutional credit assessment of curriculum.

AUQA endorses these improvements and urges the University to ensure that its planned cycle of reviews of the granting of credit for particular pathway courses is implemented.

For domestic students, faculties have individual databases for credit approval. The University plans to review processes for credit transfer approval for domestic students over the next two years and then to provide a fully inclusive credit precedent database.

3.3 Academic Commitment to Student Learning

3.3.1 Academic Governance

Academic Senate is the peak academic governance body, advising Council on the quality of academic activities and programs. Under the Academic Senate sit three committees responsible for the main University activities, including the University Education Committee (UEC), which advises the Academic Senate on policy, planning and quality assurance in relation to teaching and learning. A Quality Assurance Subcommittee (QAS) of UEC is responsible for specific projects and monitoring the implementation of aspects of policy.

Senate has implemented various mechanisms to further improve its effectiveness, including open forums and 'members' business' sessions, and regularly reviews its own performance. It has taken a strong role in the academic benchmarking projects being undertaken with other universities.

The UEC plays a major role in ensuring the quality of academic practice and exercises oversight of the implementation of University policies through senior academic members who chair the faculty education committees, which in turn have substantial responsibilities for academic quality assurance. UEC and its subcommittees have also established numerous working parties to address specific topics.

UOW's networked approach to academic governance works well because of academic commitment to the processes. The Audit Panel notes the deep commitment of many staff to enhancing the quality of student learning, reflected in a willingness to serve on and participate in the University's committees and working parties. AUQA finds that Senate and the UEC are operating very effectively.

The main policy for academic quality assurance is the University's long-standing Code of Practice – Teaching and Assessment (COPTA), which is regularly updated. The Code sets out academic responsibilities for faculties and individual roles, and adherence is monitored by the faculty education committees, which are operating robustly. AUQA finds the faculty education committees to be a significant element of the UOW quality assurance system for learning and teaching and they have a strong influence in ensuring the consistency and quality of subjects (section 3.3.3).

AUQA finds that COPTA is helpful and is being thoroughly implemented, as are other codes of practice.

Commendation 8

AUQA commends the University of Wollongong for the effective implementation through faculty education committees of its Code of Practice – Teaching and Assessment.

Faculties have established faculty advisory committees with external membership to advise on courses and planning and, as required, to assist in course review (section 3.3.3). From speaking with members of these committees and other evidence, AUQA finds these committees to be actively engaged and performing a valuable role in bringing new perspectives and information into the University.

3.3.2 Academic Roles

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (DVC) (Academic) has executive responsibility for the quality of teaching and learning at UOW and chairs the UEC. Projects to improve learning and teaching are either initiated by the DVC (Academic) or supported by him when proposals come from working parties or other academic groups. The Audit Panel congratulates the University for ensuring a climate in which initiatives to advance good practice are welcomed and often adopted.

Responsibilities for academic quality assurance are set out in COPTA for various positions, notably for teaching staff, subject coordinators and heads of school. Among academic teaching staff, there appears to be strong interest in developing innovative teaching practices, including

the use of eLearning approaches. The commitment of many staff to peer review of teaching is another significant feature of UOW's academic quality assurance.

The role of subject coordinator is clearly spelt out in COPTA and subject coordinators at UOW take their roles seriously, particularly in regard to the quality assurance of subjects (section 3.3.3), and show an informed appreciation of requirements. Subject coordinators frequently assume responsibilities for coordinating a teaching team and AUQA believes it would be helpful for subject coordinators to be aware routinely of student evaluations of teaching and of the subject (section 3.1.4), to assist in improving the design and delivery of their subjects.

Heads of school also have a specified role in COPTA and many of them take a strong role in the quality assurance of subjects, ensuring consistency in approach. Among other groups at UOW, heads of school are making good use of the CSO reports to review student outcomes for subjects taught from their schools.

COPTA does not address in detail the role of course coordinator as the University places more emphasis on the role of subject coordinators in academic quality assurance. Course coordinators at UOW describe their roles variably, the majority emphasising student advising. There was a general lack of clarity about the role of course coordinators in contributing to course leadership, such as oversight of the curriculum as a whole, internationalisation and the embedding of graduate qualities. There was variation in the relationship between course coordinators and subject coordinators, and often an unclear relationship between the respective roles of course coordinator and head of school.

The Audit Panel notes that new positions titled 'academic program director' have been established in some teaching locations, including the Sydney Business School and the University of Wollongong in Dubai. While these roles are still being developed and often involve consideration of how a course might best be targeted to prospective students, they point to a need for quality assurance, coherence and renewal to be considered at course, rather than at subject, level more continuously than through a course review process. Accordingly, AUQA considers there is a need to review, clarify and ensure broad commonality in the role of course coordinators (and academic program directors) across the University.

Recommendation 2

AUQA recommends that the University of Wollongong clarify the role and responsibilities of course coordinators across the University, to support further improvements in curricula and student learning.

3.3.3 Curriculum Design and Review

Curriculum design is governed by procedures set out in COPTA, in subject and course approval guidelines, and also in the University's revised Academic Integrity and Plagiarism Policy. Processes are overseen by faculty education committees. Subject outline templates ensure consistency in structure and that required information is included, while the academic level and content of subjects is given genuine scrutiny within faculties.

AUQA finds that great attention is given, through several academic levels, to assuring the quality of student learning in the curriculum. From subject coordinators through to heads of school and then in faculty education committees, subject outlines, including learning objectives and the structure and nature of assessment, are reviewed in detail. The Audit Panel received examples of the various stages of subject outline review in different faculties, noting for example that in the Faculty of Law a subcommittee of the faculty education committee

reviews all subject outlines, makes suggestions for improvement where needed including to assessment tasks, and negotiates these with the subject coordinator.

From time to time, the University has used its other committee mechanisms to audit subject outlines, as in a recent audit by UEC's Quality Assurance Subcommittee of the inclusion of relevant graduate qualities and feedback statements. As noted in section 2.1, some subject outlines do little more than list the graduate qualities, but UOW has recognised this and is taking further action.

AUQA finds the University has a systematic and fine grained approach to ensuring quality in the design of subjects.

Commendation 9

AUQA commends the University of Wollongong for its quality assurance processes for subjects, which include comprehensive internal reviews that give close attention to content and assessment.

Many of the University's courses are subject to external professional accreditation and are reviewed at the time of reaccreditation. The University has had review processes for all courses for many years, but revised its approach in 2007–2008 to ensure appropriate balance of rigour and flexibility.

The level of external involvement in course reviews can vary, the external involvement often being provided by an External Course Advisory Committee (ECAC), whose members may include members of faculty advisory committees. If course changes are clear or routine, the role of the ECAC will be to endorse the change. However, if a major change is contemplated or considered likely, the ECAC will play a larger role and may include academics from other universities.

Reviews of individual subjects have tended to be undertaken together with course reviews. Reviews of academic schools are undertaken as deemed necessary by the University.

The University has nearly completed a full cycle of course reviews using the revised process and feels the process is working well. Information provided to the Audit Panel indicates a sound process.

3.3.4 Assessment

COPTA includes detailed assessment rules and practices and, as noted above, the design of assessment tasks is moderated by faculty quality assurance processes. Each faculty has a faculty assessment committee, which is responsible for monitoring grades and ensuring consistency in assessment practices across sites and cohorts. Assessment committees are asked to discuss CSO reports and to make recommendations to the relevant faculty education committee.

COPTA encourages the use of grading rubrics and many subjects use marking guides. Under the Code, subject coordinators are responsible for marking practices such as holding teaching team meetings to clarify approaches to marking, cross-marking within the team and check-marking by the coordinator.

In late 2010, UOW completed a second major benchmarking project, on assessment, with the University of Tasmania and Deakin University. The report showed that UOW is performing very

well in regard to instituting practices that are perceived to be fair and in reviewing and improving policies and practices.

From the project, the University has identified some areas for improvement and now has best practice examples to use as a guide. One area where the University aims to improve is a greater use of constructive feedback to students, which the Audit Panel notes is an issue for many Australian universities. While implementation of improvements arising from the project is still at an early stage, the Audit Panel finds there is already some influence on subject outlines and assessment committee processes.

Commendation 10

AUQA commends the University of Wollongong for its attention to sustaining and improving the quality of assessment of student work, including the Assessment Benchmarking project undertaken with the University of Tasmania and Deakin University.

3.3.5 Work-integrated Learning

The University's history and ethos are supportive of work-integrated learning and many of UOW's professional programs require practical or placement experience. In 2010, UOW reviewed practice and developed a University-wide Code of Practice – Student Professional Experience. The Code addresses four major areas: responsibilities of students; faculty responsibilities; assessment; and expectations of host organisations.

Adherence to the Code is monitored by the faculty education committees and AUQA finds that the University is demonstrating good practice in the quality assurance of work-integrated learning and professional placements.

The University has recognised the articulation and communication of a work-integrated/experiential learning framework as a priority for improvement, to be addressed both within curricula and co-curricular experiences. AUQA notes that there is an intent for the Innovation Campus to provide opportunities for student workplace learning with commercial firms on site, and encourages UOW to continue to expand similar opportunities for students at all its teaching locations.

Affirmation 6

AUQA affirms the development by the University of Wollongong of a work-integrated learning framework and encourages the University to expand opportunities for work placements and internships across its teaching locations.

3.4 Academic Staff Development

3.4.1 Academic Staff Professional Development

The University's approach to academic staff development is contained in its Organisational and Professional Development Policy and also in its Learning and Teaching Course Policy. The University Learning and Teaching (ULT) course is compulsory for most new academic staff and is supplemented by other programs offered by the Academic Development Unit. A range of other initiatives and awards, including positions for Faculty Scholars, assists in supporting teaching and scholarship.

Heads of school at UOW have opportunities to participate in leadership and mentorship programs offered by the University or the faculty, and many have done so. Their roles and responsibilities are clear and they are appropriately inducted. The Audit Panel formed the view, however, that the University could take further action to support heads of school in gaining experience of, and meeting, the many challenges they face. The position is a key one for any university, as heads of school must provide both academic and administrative leadership in implementing university-wide and faculty policies and strategies.

Accordingly, AUQA endorses the University's plans to offer a revised version of its UOW Heads Leadership program for heads of school and associate deans in 2011, noting that elements of the program need to be designed specifically for heads of school.

3.4.2 Support for Sessional Staff

Under the leadership of the DVC (Academic), the University has made significant efforts to support its sessional academic staff, who constituted around 22 per cent of FTE academic staff in 2009. UOW is recognised in the Australian higher education sector for its acknowledgement of the need to support sessional teaching staff and has developed a Code of Practice – Casual Academic Teaching. Additional advice is available in the University's Good Practice Guidelines – Leading Teaching Teams, developed after a review in 2009. The ULT is available to sessional staff at the Wollongong Campus through flexible delivery.

The University continues to monitor and review its practices for sessional staff. It has evidence that nearly all sessional staff receive an induction within their faculty and that most attend University-level induction, for which they are paid. Most are aware of the University's graduate qualities and how to facilitate students' acquisition through their teaching. Another report has examined professional development opportunities for sessional staff at education centres, acknowledging that these staff are highly motivated to improve their teaching and involvement with UOW.

In 2010, the Quality Assurance Subcommittee (QAS), through a casual teaching working group of the UEC, commissioned a broad assessment of practice across the University in regard to sessional teaching and its support. The report, *Casual Practices: Sessional Teaching at UOW*, includes a quality improvement program which makes recommendations on further auditing of faculty practices and improved communication.

Commendation 11

AUQA commends the University of Wollongong for continuing to assure and improve the quality of its support for sessional academic staff.

Recognising the leadership shown by the University in acknowledging and supporting the work of sessional academics, AUQA encourages UOW to implement fully the recommendations in the QAS report.

Affirmation 7

AUQA affirms the University of Wollongong's commitment to act on the findings of its internal review of Sessional Teaching Practices at UOW, acknowledging the initiatives that the University has already taken.

3.4.3 Academic Staff Performance Management

Workforce planning at UOW forms part of faculty planning processes. Academic staff performance management at UOW takes the form of a Career Development Dialogue between the academic and the head of school. Staff who have been with the University for more than five years and are not seeking promotion or study leave are required to undertake a performance enhancement and career development process only every second year. Evidence provided by UOW indicates that not all academic staff are undertaking this process regularly.

At the time of the audit, records of completion of performance reviews were held only at faculty level. However, the University is introducing an online system for performance development, which will ensure that full reporting will be available centrally as well as at school and faculty level.

AUQA considers that the University needs to ensure systematic completion of academic staff performance reviews for all academic staff, with which the online system will help.

Recommendation 3

AUQA recommends that the University of Wollongong ensure the systematic completion of performance reviews for all academic staff, noting the valuable formative role of such reviews.

The University shows good practice in its established processes to use a mix of evidence of teaching effectiveness for promotion purposes. Additionally, UOW has provided evidence that it takes seriously requirements in the National Protocols for teaching staff to be appropriately qualified for the level they teach.

3.5 Supporting Students to Engage with Learning

3.5.1 Student Learning and Welfare Support

The University has an extensive suite of policies addressing student welfare and learning support and students find the range of services adequate and appropriate. A feature of the UOW approach is the use of student support advisors, who in effect act as troubleshooters and guides for students with problems or uncertainties. The Audit Panel believes the student support advisers are highly dedicated to helping students on both straightforward and much more challenging matters. As noted above, the University has a comparatively high proportion of students who identify as having a disability. UOW's disability support services were praised by students who had had direct or indirect contact with them.

The University Library, which has been expanded and redesigned since the 2006 AUQA audit, is well regarded by students and committed to a performance culture. It performs very well in comparative surveys and in 2010 it was the first organisation in Australia to receive a silver level of accreditation under the new standards of Investors in People.

The Learning Development Unit (LDU) provides online resources, workshops and individual consultations for students to assist them with their academic work. The LDU also takes an active role in embedding English language skills into coursework (section 3.5.2). Students were very positive about the English conversation groups and the strong support provided by the LDU.

The Audit Panel formed a view that the network of dedicated people who provide learning and other support is a strong factor in enabling undergraduate learning at UOW.

Commendation 12

AUQA commends the University of Wollongong for the quality and dedication of staff who provide student learning and welfare support, including the student support advisors, disability support services, learning support services and the University Library.

The Dean of Students is the students' ombudsman. As a single point for review of more serious academic grievances or misconduct matters, the Dean is well placed to identify trends in these areas. The Audit Panel notes that the Dean has been proactive in suggesting policy changes to address systemic issues, another way in which support for student learning is reinforced at UOW.

Student Central is the University's source of advice for students on academic administration and related support matters, including enrolment, fees, visas, accommodation and applying for academic consideration. Services are available online and face to face. The Audit Panel heard some mixed views from students about the availability and speed of service and support, but many students were very happy with the services and praised the assistance provided by students working at Student Central.

3.5.2 English Language Development and Support

The University appropriately recognises the development of English language proficiency as an issue for all students, not only one for students whose first language is not English, as is the case for many international students.

In addition to the workshops, consultations and conversation initiatives mentioned in section 3.5.1, the LDU has emphasised a curriculum-integrated model of language development. LDU staff provide support in core subjects and subjects that include large numbers of international students, through embedded workshops and tutorials or parallel tutorials.

Recognising the need for greater attention to language development, the University established, in 2010, a strategic project on English language proficiency. A proposed English Language Strategy, emphasising achievement by students of at least IELTS 7.0 by the time they graduate, early diagnostic assessment and improvements to current practices, is in the final stages of development.

The Audit Panel observes there is a considerable need for a better and shared understanding among academic staff of the rationale underpinning such a strategy, as staff views about the relationship between good assessment practice and English language proficiency are highly variable.

The University's English language requirements for entry into general undergraduate degrees specify an IELTS score of 6.0 or equivalent, but only a score of 5.0 in the listening and speaking bands. For many postgraduate courses, including research degrees in engineering, informatics, science and some creative arts disciplines, the IELTS entry requirement is 6.0. These requirements seem to the Audit Panel to be rather low compared with those at other Australian universities.

AUQA considers that the University should review aspects of its English language entry criteria, including equivalences and the processes for approving equivalences through Academic

Senate. These processes are obscure at present and not always observed. English language criteria should be reviewed: against actual student performance by entry pathway, including grade distributions; by benchmarking with other universities; and through careful consideration of the amount of basic remedial assistance UOW wants to provide, as against further development of all students' English language proficiency. AUQA observes that professionally qualified staff in the LDU are well placed to advise the University on appropriate requirements.

Affirmation 8

AUQA affirms the University of Wollongong's plans to develop a more comprehensive English language strategy for all students, which should include a review of the level and implementation of its English language entry requirements.

3.5.3 Career Development and Workplace Preparation

Careers Central at UOW provides resources and workshops for career preparation for students and also for students seeking work experience or, simply, a job to support themselves as they study. The service actively encourages students at any stage of their course to commence career planning and reflection on their future career paths. Among the programs initiated over the past few years are the Univate Illawarra program, which involves groups of students working over breaks to develop a solution to a business problem within the University's region, and Jobs on Campus, which facilitates on-campus casual work for students. The University has identified as an improvement the need for more face-to-face interaction with career services by students at its education centres.

Since 2007, UOW has offered a Certificate in Global Workplace Practice, comprising a module on workplace language and a work placement. The Certificate program was originally developed as a co-curricular program over two sessions, but in 2010 was embedded in engineering postgraduate programs and is operating in engineering and commerce in 2011. International students spoke highly of this program.

Commendation 13

AUQA commends the University of Wollongong for the development and implementation of the Certificate of Global Workplace Practice, which is valued particularly by international students.

3.5.4 Academic Integrity and Plagiarism

The University has taken a number of actions to improve its approach to academic integrity, building on good practice identified in the 2006 AUQA Audit Report. Developments since then included active participation by UOW in the Asia Pacific Forum for Educational Integrity.

UOW has had a stable academic misconduct management system since 2008, when new processes were introduced. Faculties keep a local register of academic misconduct cases, while a central register records inherently more serious cases and those that escalate beyond the level of the Primary Investigation Officer (PIO). Specific training on investigating misconduct was introduced for PIOs and subject coordinators in 2009.

A new Academic Integrity and Plagiarism Policy, approved in 2010, expands the University's emphasis on the educative and ethical aspects of academic integrity. A range of amendments and improvements to other policies, such as Student Conduct Rules, has been made to support

implementation of the Policy. The Academic Integrity website has been updated and students report that the StartSmart program (section 3.2.3) gives helpful guidance. AUQA finds that first year students have a high level of awareness of academic integrity and there is significant embedded content in first year curricula to prevent plagiarism.

Commendation 14

AUQA commends the University of Wollongong for its processes for ensuring academic integrity.

3.5.5 eLearning

While many academics at UOW are using eLearning in innovative and beneficial ways in their teaching, and while some lectures are offered in a variety of formats (including video lectures for Shoalhaven Campus and the education centres), the University has not made clear its assumptions about how best to use technology to support student learning.

Between 2004 and 2008, the University engaged in an extended process of planning and consultation about its direction and support for eLearning, a process which led to the development of an eLearning business plan, the implementation of a new learning management system and a 2008–2010 UOW Strategic Plan for eLearning & Teaching. There is no evidence of the University having taken action to monitor the implementation of this Plan.

At the time of the audit, the University was planning to review this Strategic Plan. Delays in conducting the review were attributed to a prolonged process of deciding on a new eLearning Platform, although it appears the need to finalise a new Student Learning and Teaching Management Plan has also played a role. However, a view commonly expressed to the Audit Panel was that the technology would drive the strategy. While this is not the University's intention, staff of the University need to be more aware that the choice of technology does not precede learning, teaching and student experience considerations in the processes of eLearning strategy development.

While the University has identified the broad role of eLearning in enabling undergraduate learning in its 2011-13 Strategic Plan, it needs to give higher priority to clarifying and implementing, through an updated eLearning Plan, its strategic approach to this mode of teaching and learning.

Recommendation 4

AUQA recommends that the University of Wollongong clarify its strategic direction for eLearning across the University and develop a plan for implementation and monitoring of its strategy.

4 THEME: INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITIES

The second theme for this audit was chosen in recognition of the significance of internationalisation for the University's aim to be 'recognised as a global education provider of the highest standards' by 2020, and its goal of being 'an international university of choice', combined with its provision of education to a substantial number of international students both onshore and offshore.

The scope of this theme includes:

- Internationalisation strategy and management
- International research and research training activities
- Internationalisation of the curriculum
- Student exchange and study abroad
- Onshore international students
- International student performance
- Transnational education, including collaborative partnerships
- University of Wollongong in Dubai.

4.1 Strategic Directions

The University's international strategic priorities for 2011–2013 are:

- Establish UOW as a leading global education provider
- Develop graduates as creative, global citizens in outlook, experience and capacity
- Strengthen distinctive concentrations of excellence, aligned with emerging and existing national and international priorities
- Lead the sector for international student experience and graduate outcomes
- Initiate and sustain global and national networks of influence within a strong quality framework.

These priorities are stated to be put into operation, monitored and improved through the strategies and specific targets of the International Plan. The University has had a 2010–2012 International Management Plan and at the time of the audit had just completed an International Management Plan 2011–2013. The current Plan includes the University's new definition of internationalisation as:

... an understanding of the interconnectedness of global, regional and national issues, leading to a greater interaction between different cultures and languages. UOW views internationalisation as an opportunity to foster productive partnerships and collaborations. Diversity is celebrated and a 'sense of the global' permeates teaching, learning, scholarship and research. Internationalisation is a valued concept which underpins the university's vision to become a global educator.

AUQA finds the University has a considerable distance to travel before this vision of 'a sense of the global' becomes reality. As UOW is aware, there is not a common understanding of internationalisation across the University, and the new Plan is too recent to have gained widespread acknowledgement. The Audit Panel noted a strong tendency for staff at all levels to perceive the concept of internationalisation as being synonymous with increasing international student enrolments.

While the new International Management Plan has some positional and trend analysis, AUQA considers that the University needs to do more strategic and forward thinking about the exact nature of its vision for internationalisation and how this can be realised. Previous international management plans at University and faculty level are largely operational and appear to have been developed incrementally from the range of current activities. The aggregation of activities, however, does not identify any broader rationale or urgency for greater international engagement. The University community is not clear about the assumptions that have been made about the future of global higher education and UOW's position in it, apart from the aspirational statements in the Strategic Plan.

If UOW is to go beyond its current suite of activities, a more sharply defined and shared understanding of internationalisation at UOW will be required. AUQA urges the University to give further consideration to the development of an integrated vision of internationalisation and to the ways in which this vision can be made meaningful to staff and students.

Recommendation 5

AUQA recommends that the University of Wollongong give further consideration to developing an integrated vision for internationalisation that is understood and shared by staff and students.

4.2 Management and Committee Responsibilities for Internationalisation

The University has gradually increased the institutional visibility of internationalisation since the 2006 AUQA Audit Report. A position of Pro Vice-Chancellor (International) was created in 2008 and made a DVC position in 2010. The DVC (International) has overall responsibility for the international portfolio including leadership, planning and operation of international activities, while the DVC (Academic) and DVC (Research) have some specific responsibilities for particular aspects of internationalisation. The DVC (Academic) also has overall responsibility for academic quality oversight.

The committee structure includes a University International Committee (UIC), which provides advice to the Academic Senate, under which sit the International Alliances Committee (IAC) and the International Student Engagement Committee (ISEC). A separate subcommittee under the UEC, the Internationalisation in Learning & Teaching Subcommittee (ILTS), is responsible for international perspectives in content and curriculum.

In 2010, the University created a new International Services and Development Division, comprising the existing Transnational Education and Alliances Unit and a new Faculty International Support Unit (FISU), to better coordinate international activities. AUQA finds this development to be a step in the right direction, as is the University's intent for greater oversight by committees. However, the increasing scale of the University's international activities, both on and offshore, requires UOW to give serious attention to strategy development and quality assurance at senior management level as well as at operational levels and through committees.

On offshore teaching partnerships and UOWD (sections 4.7 and 4.8), the Audit Panel finds that increasing attention is being paid to quality assurance and compliance processes, but these processes are not yet fully integrated into a holistic and strategic overview of the potential advantages and reputational risks of such offshore operations. UOW is increasing the formalisation of its quality assurance processes and acknowledges that further work is required to fully implement these processes. However it is yet to give enough attention to the actions and interactions that will sustain the quality of its international reputation. Broader

questions still to be considered concern the strategic role of the University's offshore operations and the type of overall student experience the University aims to provide in its offshore operations.

The IAC and ISEC subcommittees of UIC have been operating under their current terms of reference since 2007. Both have the potential to work as effectively as many of the other committees at UOW but these committees, and especially their new members, need to be quite clear about the roles they are expected to play, especially in regard to the University's improved quality assurance processes. There are sound reasons also for having a separate reporting line for ILTS but the current mechanisms for sharing of views among these committees (e.g. by common membership and exchange of minutes) need to be more systematic to promote a more integrated approach to internationalisation.

AUQA finds a need for the University's senior management to more actively adopt an integrated approach to internationalisation. At the same time, the separate and complementary roles of the DVC (Academic) and DVC (International) should be clarified in respect of quality assurance for internationalisation and the student experience in all locations.

4.3 Strategic Alliances and Internationalisation of Research

The International Alliances Policy governs processes for international linkages at University and faculty level. Around 30 of the University's more than 260 international agreements have been identified as 'strategic international partnerships' and are managed through a Strategic International Partners Register, which is subject to biennial review by IAC. The International Alliances Procedure sets out a list of criteria to be used in selecting institutions as strategic international partners, including: the standing of the institution; the breadth of collaborations; and the potential to seek and obtain external funding.

The Audit Panel observes that IAC members are aware of these criteria in selecting strategic partners, but considers that these criteria alone are too broad to guide strategic decisions.

One of the tests for a revised UOW vision of internationalisation will be whether it highlights key strategic choices for the University, or offers better criteria by which to make decisions about future significant alliances. AUQA urges UOW to articulate its vision in ways that better support decision making for prospective alliances.

Internationalisation of research is well developed at UOW, particularly in respect of the larger research institutes and centres. On numbers of active international collaborative research projects with research institutions and with industry, the University is among the best performers of all Australian universities. The UIC International Links Grants Scheme provides \$125,000 annually to support the development of international teaching and research collaborations. A priority for improvement identified by the University is to further develop systems to capture data on the internationalisation of its research, including staff mobility.

The number of international HDR students at UOW has increased rapidly, with more than half of these students in the Faculties of Engineering and Informatics. All HDR students are eligible to enrol in the free Graduate Certificate in Research Commercialisation and Graduate Certificate in Business. The University has recognised a need to meet the needs of a large population of international HDR students. It is providing additional office space for research students and, more significantly, from 2011 is introducing a new four-year PhD that will include taught subjects as well as three years of research, an initiative which offers students

both greater breadth and more flexibility in their program. Over the next few years, UOW plans to extend its shared cost scholarship programs with other countries and increase scholarship funding for international HDR students as well as deepening two-way exchanges and linkages. AUQA finds the University has a well-developed strategic approach to internationalisation through HDR studies.

Commendation 15

AUQA commends the University of Wollongong for its significant number of international collaborative research projects and for its targeted support for recruitment of international higher degree by research students.

4.4 Internationalisation of the Curriculum

The University's SEQ outcomes show that both international and domestic students onshore believe they are developing a good understanding of international/global issues in their area of study, but the figure is much higher for international than for domestic students and has fallen since 2007 for domestic students.

UOW has some examples of innovative practice in internationalisation of the curriculum, such as the International Bachelor of Science, offered in conjunction with the University of Colorado, Boulder, in the USA and Dublin City University in Ireland. Students must take at least one semester of international study and take some subjects jointly via videoconference. While this course is exciting, only a small number of elite students can be enrolled in it.

Among the ways in which UOW aims to ensure an international perspective in curricula are the embedding of graduate qualities (section 2.1) and 'international minors' in languages, international business and international studies. ILTS is working to finalise the iConnect program, which will replace the current International Studies Minor, and to further increase participation in language study.

The plan to advance internationalisation of the curriculum through the embedding of graduate qualities does not appear to be widely known to academics at UOW, and the Audit Panel expresses concern if reliance on the development of minors or for-credit student mobility opportunities means that many students are not exposed to an internationalised curriculum.

AUQA finds that a broader concept of global perspectives and engagement is only weakly embedded in curricula at UOW, although this varies by course. Discussions with staff on the internationalisation of the curriculum often defaulted to reference to the need to ensure that examples were relevant to students from different cultures rather than drawing on genuinely international perspectives.

Further internationalisation of the curriculum will rely on staff understanding the vision and rationale for internationalisation at UOW, and the reasons why 'a sense of the global' needs to permeate learning and teaching. AUQA urges UOW to pursue stronger alignment between its definition of internationalisation and its actions to internationalise the curriculum.

As a response to the University's self-review, ILTS has adopted a new working definition of internationalisation in learning and teaching, whereby the curriculum:

- is informed and enriched by regional, national and international knowledge
- encourages independent learners by engaging with diverse international approaches to learning, researching and problem solving
- harnesses intercultural diversity in communication

- facilitates globally responsible, professional and ethical practices.

AUQA endorses the intent of this definition and plans by the University to review how well global perspectives are incorporated into learning objectives and develop minimum standards over the next couple of years.

Affirmation 9

AUQA affirms the University of Wollongong's intent to review how well global perspectives are incorporated into learning outcomes, using a new definition of internationalisation in learning and teaching.

4.5 Student Mobility

One area where a more integrated vision for internationalisation at UOW would assist is in the further development of study abroad and exchange. This is an area where the University, as an early leader, has a well-established program, but one that may need leadership to mobilise faculty efforts and integrate these with the existing offerings.

The University's student mobility programs are managed by the Study Abroad & Exchange Office, which continues to work on improving the administration of these programs through strengthened reporting and review of experiences, and better integration of data. UOW has increased its funding for student exchange opportunities over the past several years to increase outbound mobility and has an undergraduate outbound student mobility rate that, on benchmarking data provided for the Australian Universities International Directors' Forum, is higher than the sector average. There is still, however, uneven and in some cases insufficient take-up of current exchange opportunities, suggesting a need for stronger and more prominent action by faculties and schools. AUQA notes that a new program incorporating recognition of study abroad, study tours and other global experiences is being trialled in the Faculty of Commerce and encourages UOW to pursue this initiative.

AUQA finds that the University has done little as yet to harness the opportunities presented by its offshore teaching partnerships and UOWD to expand inbound and outbound mobility, despite being aware of the interest of its own students offshore in such opportunities. The University's own self-review identified this as an area for improvement but no firm plans have yet been made.

Affirmation 10

AUQA affirms the development and implementation by the University of Wollongong of new approaches to outbound and inbound student mobility that go beyond traditional exchange programs and use the opportunities presented by its offshore campus and partnerships.

4.6 International Students Onshore

4.6.1 Recruitment and Promotion

International student recruitment for UOW and for WCA is managed by UniAdvice, which is part of ITC Ltd, a controlled entity of the University. While UniAdvice is part of the separate subsidiary group, the University states there is a direct relationship to the DVC (International). The practices of UniAdvice are governed by an International Marketing Plan and International Recruitment Procedure.

The University has recognised as an area of risk its reliance on a few major source countries for international students onshore and is developing plans to mitigate this risk. The University's processes for agent selection and review appear appropriate, although UOW could give thought to formalising feedback on agent performance from entering students.

For the new partnership between UOW and Laureate Education, UniAdvice will start to take a role in student admissions. AUQA expresses some concern that this expansion of UniAdvice's function could lead to a conflict of interest, whereby the same entity separate to the University is both marketing the University and making delegated decisions on admission.

AUQA observes that arrangements for student recruitment need to contribute to an overall vision for internationalisation at UOW. The Audit Panel formed the view that operating these functions through a business entity (ITC Ltd) may have reinforced an emphasis at UOW on 'internationalisation as recruitment' at a time when other institutions have moved to a more mature and nuanced approach.

AUQA recommends that the University review the appropriateness of its arrangements for onshore recruitment of international students through UniAdvice, and, because of the recent arrangements with Laureate Education, the offshore admissions role of UniAdvice, to ensure that providing these services through UniAdvice is the most appropriate way to exercise control and minimise risk.

Recommendation 6

AUQA recommends that the University of Wollongong review the appropriateness of its arrangements for onshore recruitment of international students, and some offshore admissions functions, through UniAdvice, to ensure that these functions are undertaken in ways that minimise risk.

4.6.2 International Student Experience and Outcomes

UOW has implemented a range of improvements to the advice and assistance given to international students onshore, and students welcome these improvements and the sense of safety they feel from, for example, the excellent security services on the main campus.

UOW is attending appropriately to feedback from onshore international students, including areas for improvement identified through the ISB (section 3.1.3). These areas include making Australian friends, and AUQA encourages the continuation of efforts to enhance the integration of different groups for genuinely multicultural experiences, at all teaching locations. Support for international students to develop their English language proficiency is addressed in section 3.5.2.

The Audit Panel visited the Sydney Campus of the University's postgraduate Sydney Business School (SBS), which operates from the Innovation Campus in Wollongong as well as in Sydney. Academic staff of the School teach at both locations and at some education centres. The new premises in Sydney support the clear vision that SBS has to position itself as an innovative and business-oriented provider.

Student accommodation in Wollongong, especially for international students, is a major issue and one that the University has recognised. International students made vocal complaints about the need to pay a non-refundable fee to apply for university accommodation, and to do so each year. It was felt that with large numbers of applicants for relatively small numbers of places, this was both an excessive burden on applicants and an unwarranted source of income

to the residences. AUQA supports the University taking further action to address accommodation problems for international students in Wollongong, and for students studying at SBS.

There is very good learning and welfare support for international postgraduate students at SBS in Sydney but the University needs to address the isolation felt by international postgraduate students of SBS on the Innovation Campus in Wollongong, because the Innovation Campus is physically separate from the University's main Wollongong Campus.

As a small campus, certain services and activities cannot be as well supported at SBS Sydney Campus as they are for students on the main campus in Wollongong. AUQA encourages the University to keep under close review all aspects of support at the SBS Sydney Campus, being mindful of ESOS requirements and even more of the experience it aims to provide for all its students.

Regarding international student outcomes, AUQA urges the University to make greater efforts to close the gap between success rates for international students and those for domestic students onshore (section 3.1.1), and to aim for grade distributions for international students that mirror or exceed those of domestic students across all courses.

4.7 Educational Partnerships Offshore

4.7.1 Coordination and Management

Since the 2006 AUQA Audit Report, the University has undertaken a more systematic approach to management and quality assurance for its transnational education, although this approach is still evolving.

Primary responsibility for managing partnerships lies with the Director, Transnational Education and Alliances, who reports to the DVC (International). The negotiation of contracts and host country approvals for offshore teaching appear to have been appropriately managed in the period since the 2006 AUQA audit, and some partnerships have been terminated with adequate teach-out. Less positively, from the University's self-review and amount of new and draft documentation supplied to the Audit Panel, it appears evident that the University did not act to formalise its policies and procedures for quality assurance of offshore teaching until late 2009 and early 2010. These procedures are yet to be fully implemented.

Since 2010, UOW has paid greater attention to ensuring that formal management committee meetings are held between partners, and has audited and improved a range of administrative processes between the partner and the University. New policies and procedures have been developed and are being implemented, including procedures for: the annual review of TNE programs; assessment of new transnational education programs; approval of transnational partner teaching staff; and the quality assurance of transnational education, including teaching and learning at UOWD.

New documentation for offshore partners is being developed but these partners had no or little knowledge of a proposed new handbook for offshore partners or of the proposed standards for student support. The drafts of these documents appear incomplete and not yet well developed. It is still unclear how UOW policies will be applied to offshore teaching partnerships, especially regarding student grievances where local practice often prevails.

Similarly, student evaluations at partner institutions are conducted by the partner, although UOW conducts an 'exit survey' at the time of graduation and has conducted some student focus groups with partners in Singapore. The University does not use SEQ at partner locations although it plans to do so.

AUQA finds the University's current contracts with partners have yet to fully reflect the new procedures and arrangements specific to each location. As an example, the contract for teaching in Hong Kong (section 4.7.6) is a standard contract that contains clauses which are irrelevant to the nature of the arrangements and a quality assurance schedule that requires much greater articulation and precision. AUQA urges UOW to complete as expeditiously as possible its review and augmentation of the adequacy of its schedule of quality assurance procedures in its offshore teaching contracts.

From the sample of partnerships visited, AUQA is inclined to agree with UOW that many weaknesses lie in central monitoring and documentation rather than in the academic conduct of the courses. Processes for approval of partner teaching staff appear to be observed consistently and students do have access as promised to UOW online resources. Most partners use their own student feedback surveys and the full surveys are sent back to UOW for review, although it is not evident to students what changes are made as a result of review by UOW. UOW now is aware of major aspects of its management of transnational partnerships that need improvement, including the student experience and a sense of belonging to UOW. AUQA notes as a positive development the intention of the International Student Engagement Committee (ISEC) to consider the student experience for students at offshore teaching partnerships.

AUQA finds that the University has not yet reached a standard of uniform good practice in its management of offshore teaching partnerships, despite the codification of good practices for transnational education that has been occurring since 2005 in Australian higher education. This is of some concern, given a recommendation on quality assurance for transnational education in the 2006 AUQA Audit Report.

There is a need for the University to give more holistic oversight to its offshore teaching partnerships, to ask itself what these partnerships are doing to assist its vision for internationalisation and what sort of experience it believes students at these partnerships should have, including an experience of UOW. This holistic oversight needs to include ongoing review of potential academic and reputational risks in offshore teaching partnerships. Such risks should be considered carefully when assessing the benefits or consequences of new offshore relationships. The University has developed an offshore teaching budget model to fully cost each of its offshore teaching arrangements but AUQA suggests the University review this to ensure that indirect costs are adequately accounted for.

Recommendation 7

AUQA recommends that the University of Wollongong benchmark and review its arrangements for oversight and management of all aspects of offshore teaching partnerships and implement changes to ensure that it is operating in accordance with recognised good practice.

UOW intends to operate a different teaching model in its partnership with Laureate Education, starting with INTI in Malaysia, whereby courses will be taught in their entirety by offshore staff. Given this new approach, and that the University's quality assurance for its existing offshore partnerships is not yet fully mature, AUQA urges the University to have all elements

of its proposed quality assurance model for this partnership externally reviewed prior to and then following their implementation.

4.7.2 Academic Quality Assurance

Among the improvements recently adopted by UOW are University-wide arrangements for academic quality assurance of subjects taught offshore, based on existing processes in the Faculty of Commerce. (The Faculty of Informatics has had its own processes as well.) The processes include moderation of subject outlines by a UOW academic designated as the quality assessor for the subject, at least for the first time the subject is offered. These processes appear to be robust, especially when the academics from both institutions have met each other and formed a good working relationship.

At the end of each semester, a faculty assessment committee meeting between UOW and the partner is organised to review the proposed distribution of marks, comparative student outcomes (at UOW and at the partner location) and a report from the subject coordinator. After results have been declared, a sample of the major piece of continuous assessment and a sample of exam scripts is sent to the UOW quality assessor for review. The quality assessor prepares a report on the achievement of the learning objectives and outcomes, and offers collegial advice and recommendations for the next time the subject is delivered. Should any serious concerns be identified, a more intensive and fully moderated process (Tier 2 Quality Assurance) is employed the next time the subject is offered.

These quality assurance arrangements mean that assessment is fully moderated only in specific circumstances; otherwise, assessment is reviewed with advice for the next teaching period. While this arrangement may be appropriate for well-established academic relationships, the Audit Panel expresses a concern that successive quality assessors and faculty assessment committee meetings may not be well-placed to identify serious or systemic issues or to assure others that learning outcomes are equivalent.

AUQA encourages the University to benchmark its moderation processes for offshore partnerships with those of other well-regarded Australian universities teaching offshore and to consider whether further improvements are required to ensure the equivalence of academic outcomes across all teaching locations.

In addition, the University is encouraged to find ways in which UOW and partner staff may be assisted to develop collegial relations and better common understanding of teaching matters.

4.7.3 Approval of Marketing and Promotional Material for Offshore Partnerships

AUQA observes considerable variability in the quality of marketing and promotional material for UOW courses offered through teaching partnerships. UOW's courses are promoted using the University's international rankings and Good Universities Guide ratings, ie using the reputation of UOW, with lesser or no reference to student experience or graduate satisfaction for the specific partnership. While the brochure from the Singapore Institute of Management (SIM, section 4.7.4) is detailed and accurate, the brochure for UOW courses at PSB Academy (PSB, section 4.7.5) is sketchy and contains few details.

The brochure from IRI/Sino Education (section 4.7.6) gives a misleading impression of the extent of the orientation program. For the masters course, English for Academic Purposes is stated to be provided but is not offered to students when requested. It is not clear to the Audit Panel whether anyone at UOW has approved the student referral incentive scheme operated by IRI for UOW courses.

The University has established procedures for approval of marketing material and appears to observe requirements for sign-off by designated academics and managers. However, AUQA finds there is a lack of effective oversight by UOW of marketing materials for offshore teaching partnerships, possibly due to responsibilities being divided between academic program directors, the Transnational Education and Alliances Unit, UniAdvice (which is sometimes consulted), and the DVC (International), so no one person has complete responsibility. As part of the larger review of responsibilities and oversight for offshore partnerships, AUQA urges the University to improve its arrangements for approval of promotional material for offshore teaching.

4.7.4 Partnership with SIM, Singapore

UOW delivers IT courses at bachelor and graduate diploma levels through SIM. There is a large cohort of students enrolled and the partnership has been in operation since 2005. SIM lecturers conduct all teaching and assess all items in first and second years, while UOW staff provide lectures in intensive mode in third year, supported by SIM tutors.

Both parties are happy with the arrangements. Management committee and assessment committee meetings occur regularly. Moderation of subjects and assessment appears robust, and there is good communication between UOW academics and SIM academics. All SIM tutors are lecturers for the UOW courses as well, which helps with access to UOW and also with continuity in students' studies. Students say they are mostly happy with the teaching and SIM monitors student evaluations of teaching very closely.

SIM is a very large provider of higher education, and so is able to provide a good campus and a range of student support services, such as counselling and student clubs and activities.

UOW has a very strong partner in SIM. This has significant advantages but could potentially be a disadvantage if the Australian university does not actively manage arrangements to ensure that UOW students at the partner have the type of experience that UOW wishes them to have. On the evidence considered by the panel, there is little knowledge or awareness of UOW among UOW students at SIM, and they appear more likely to identify as SIM students than as UOW students. One reason for this is that students have only limited exposure to UOW academics until their third year. Greater involvement by UOW at the outset of the program and closer review by UOW of the facilities and welfare support for students would benefit students.

AUQA encourages the University to give greater attention to ensuring that UOW students at SIM acquire early in their studies a sense of the University of Wollongong and its expectations for its students.

4.7.5 Partnership with PSB Academy, Singapore

UOW delivers niche courses in commerce at bachelor level through PSB Academy. Having started with part-time students, UOW now offers full-time courses as well. PSB is a well-established provider in Singapore and the UOW courses are designed not to compete directly with PSB's other partnered programs, but rather to offer specialisations, eg supply chain management, that are not so readily available. Again, both parties are happy with the relationship.

Subjects are taught either by PSB academics or intensively by UOW academics. The contract states that 60% of subjects are delivered by UOW and 40% by PSB, although the Audit panel was informed that the actual allocation of subjects to one or the other partner is somewhat

flexible. Students are likely to be able to interact with UOW staff at a fairly early stage of their program.

Students may have to do a foundation year at PSB before entering the UOW degree and before then, they may be required to undertake additional English language classes, which assist in ensuring that students are sufficiently proficient in English when they start the UOW course. The only English language support available for UOW students at PSB is online through the LDU website at UOW.

The structure of the full-time UOW program at PSB allows students to undertake 12 subjects each year, four per trimester, and so complete a bachelor degree in two years. As not all subjects are offered each trimester, any students who miss a subject or do not pass it may have to wait some time before they can take it again, although there is some flexibility built into the program.

Processes for moderation of subjects, when taught by PSB staff, and for assessment appear to be working adequately. Although PSB students quite often do not seem to achieve the same level of higher grades as UOW domestic students their failure rate is lower than the average.

Like SIM, PSB is large enough to maintain a good range of student support services, including well-developed support for arriving international students. There are active student clubs. While library resources at PSB are known to be rather weak, there is good awareness of the availability of online resources from UOW.

4.7.6 Partnership with IRI, Hong Kong

UOW offers a Bachelor of Nursing (conversion, ie post-diploma) and a Master of Nursing course in Hong Kong through its partner, IRI (a member of the Sino Education group). All the teaching is done by UOW academics in intensive mode, with additional teaching and learning through online resources and activities, some of which involve students from both countries learning together. The subject outlines show some sensitivity to the presence of students in Hong Kong as well as in Australia, although it appears that some subjects are not offered in Hong Kong. There appears to be minor inconsistency in information about the course on the UOW website.

IRI appears to provide very little to UOW students. The premises are cramped and, while just adequate for teaching, do nothing to suggest to students that they have any relationship with an established university. The 'library' consists of a copy of each required text and a small number of reference works of varying age and relevance. The computer lab is available if it is not being used for classes, and new computers have recently been installed.

There were two management committee meetings between IRI and UOW in 2010. However, senior oversight by a non-executive director of Sino is notional and most of the management of the partnership is undertaken by a junior administrator at IRI. The UOW courses are approved by the Hong Kong Council for Nursing Education for continuing professional development. UOW did not appear to have been actively involved in a forthcoming application for re-accreditation by the Council.

Students have come from a background in nursing practice and some have little prior familiarity with current expectations for academic writing. Some also struggle initially with some of the activities through the internet, although there is awareness of the online resources from LDU and online resources are used in teaching. The visiting lecturers provide

support and there is embedding of academic literacies in some subjects, but UOW needs to make greater efforts to meet the learning needs of this specific cohort.

AUQA urges UOW to review the strategic role and the operation of this partnership.

4.8 University of Wollongong in Dubai

The University of Wollongong in Dubai (UOWD) is a registered trading name and a business unit of ITC Ltd, which is recognised in both Australia and the UAE as the legal entity for the University of Wollongong in Dubai. UOWD thus has the ITC Board as its governing body, although it has its own Board of Trustees as well. UOWD is recognised as a private university in the UAE. UOWD has internationalised successfully, with over 100 nationalities on campus.

Students in Dubai are UOWD students although they are also counted as UOW students in the University's reporting to DEEWR and, for most courses, graduates can exchange their UOWD testamur for a UOW testamur. The provision of services and support from UOW to UOWD is formalised through an educational heads of agreement document that is currently being revised.

The President of UOWD, a former dean at UOW, has a firm vision for UOWD, involving greater breadth and depth of academic activities. The UOWD Strategic Plan outlines the elements of this vision and how it will be achieved. Since the 2006 AUQA Audit Report UOWD has expanded its suite of offerings: a degree in engineering is in the process of being accredited in the UAE and the University has started to offer PhD and Doctor of Business Administration programs. This expansion of operations has been accompanied by a restructure of academic operations into three faculties under the leadership of new deans.

AUQA finds these developments to be positive and appropriate, and notes that the non-academic staff at UOWD appear highly professional and engaged. On administrative systems, AUQA observes that UOWD is limited by having to use systems from ITC Ltd (human resources and finance) and UOW (student administration) that do not interface effectively with each other.

One major issue for UOWD has been the quality of accommodation in the student residences. A new coordinator is starting to address the problems. Students are generally happy with student services. UOWD has introduced various sustainability initiatives, in keeping with a growing awareness of environmental issues in Dubai.

UOWD has many sound processes, including its subject and teacher evaluation processes, which are more frequent and consistent than those used at UOW.

The commencement of higher degrees by research at UOWD was not accompanied by development of appropriate rules for doctoral study. UOW's rules are being used in the interim and new staff position means this issue is now being attended to. AUQA considers the need for appropriate policies should have been anticipated by UOW and UOWD.

Similar quality assurance mechanisms between UOW and UOWD apply as for offshore teaching partnerships (section 4.7.2). Overall student achievement appears comparable between UOW and UOWD. Student outcomes at UOWD are weaker in some subjects than for the same subjects at UOW and slightly stronger in others.

In AUQA's view, English language proficiency is likely to be an issue for some students at UOWD, although other factors may play a role. UOWD students take the first year of their

four-year program as a general education year and are accepted into this program with an IELTS score of 5.5, as the University takes this first year to be equivalent to a foundation year. The Head of the Centre for Language and Culture at UOWD has developed three language subjects for the general education year but these have not yet been offered pending approval by the Commission for Academic Accreditation. AUQA urges UOWD, through UOW, to ensure that these additional English language subjects are introduced into the general education year for undergraduates as soon as practicable.

Affirmation 11

AUQA affirms the introduction at the University of Wollongong in Dubai of additional English language subjects into the general education year of courses.

The Audit Panel heard from several sources a concern about the extent to which the quality of learning and teaching at UOWD is being maintained. There is acknowledged unevenness in the quality of teaching and of students, and academic staff turnover has been high. There is a perception among some students that UOWD is hiring academic staff for their qualifications irrespective of whether they can teach well and engage students. This perception may be incorrect but needs to be addressed by UOWD, as such perceptions may pose a reputational risk for UOW as well as for UOWD.

While UOWD is within the scope of the University's annual Academic Risk Assessment, the University needs to more fully assess the academic risks associated with UOWD through its ongoing academic risk assessment, and to involve ITC personnel in this process.

AUQA considers that the University Council needs to exercise greater responsibility in the oversight of UOWD and recommends additional work is undertaken by UOW, as well as by UOWD, to mitigate any possible reputational risk associated with the academic operation of UOWD. AUQA further urges the University to ensure that a comprehensive risk framework and register are implemented for ITC Ltd, including consideration of academic risks.

Recommendation 8

AUQA recommends that the University of Wollongong exercise greater oversight in the identification and mitigation of potential reputational risks associated with the University of Wollongong in Dubai.

The main underlying issue for reputational risk is the strength of the relationship between UOW and UOWD. Formally, the goals of UOWD are consistent with those in the UOW Strategic Plan. However, an inherent feature of the structural arrangements between UOW and UOWD is an ongoing tension between a close relationship and one that is more independent. The tension can be more or less productive, depending on how well each of the entities is interacting with the other and how well any risks are being managed. UOWD could be expected to wish to become more independent over time, although this should be accompanied by a strengthening of collegial relationships and mutual trust between the two entities.

At present, UOWD is seen by some academics at UOW as just like any other partner university (so a collegial relationship exists) and by others as closer to an offshore teaching partner (so a supervisory relationship is required). This uncertainty over the nature of the academic alliance reflects a rather marked absence of academic exchange and visits for the past few years. The absence of close academic relationships between UOW and UOWD inevitably creates risks for

academic quality assurance. Although UOW staff have been heavily involved in the accreditation of several courses in the UAE, AUQA observes there is at least one instance when UOWD has acted on accreditation issues without sufficient initial involvement of UOW. Closer academic relationships between UOW and UOWD will further strengthen academic quality assurance and would enhance the ability of UOWD to respond to opportunities for new courses and modifications to existing courses that would benefit the higher education needs of the UAE, while ensuring the maintenance of quality.

The University has expressed a desire now to strengthen teaching and research links, and AUQA strongly suggests that UOW and UOWD academics be given further opportunities to build collegial bridges with each other.

Affirmation 12

AUQA affirms the development of greater and closer collegial academic relationships between the University of Wollongong and the University of Wollongong in Dubai.

To date there has been little effort by UOW to leverage the significant advantages it has at UOWD to support internationalisation of teaching, student and staff mobility, or internationalisation of research. The University has an investment of enormous future promise in UOWD, and AUQA urges UOW to make better use of the relationship for global engagement.

5 DATA

Notes

The UOW benchmarking group consists of: Macquarie University, Murdoch University, the University of Tasmania, and the University of Technology, Sydney. The sector is taken to be the higher education Table A providers as listed in the *Higher Education Support Act 2003*, section 16–15.

Item 5.1: First year retention

		2005	2006	2007	2008
		%	%	%	%
Domestic first year retention rate	UOW	86.54	85.99	86.56	88.64
	Benchmark group	83.56	83.00	82.25	83.66
	State – NSW	82.24	82.95	82.33	83.73
	Sector	80.73	81.12	80.73	81.90
International first year retention rate	UOW	86.22	83.02	89.43	90.46
	Benchmark group	91.23	89.43	86.80	90.11
	State – NSW	88.05	87.74	86.17	89.80
	Sector	87.42	87.95	89.02	90.08

Source: UOW 2010 Institutional Performance Portfolio (draft).

Item 5.2: First year success

		2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
		%	%	%	%	%
Domestic first year success rate	UOW	90.13	90.71	90.84	91.00	89.91
	Benchmark group	86.36	86.00	86.48	86.70	86.22
	State – NSW	86.99	86.64	86.01	86.03	85.91
	Sector	85.72	85.51	85.08	85.38	85.54
International first year success rate	UOW	82.41	82.18	79.74	83.74	82.39
	Benchmark group	81.30	80.68	80.71	83.83	84.59
	State – NSW	82.34	81.33	81.76	82.99	85.25
	Sector	82.05	82.38	83.50	84.72	85.33

Source: UOW 2010 Institutional Performance Portfolio (draft).

Item 5.3: Undergraduate retention

		2005 %	2006 %	2007 %	2008 %
Domestic first year retention rate	UOW	86.65	86.79	86.27	88.30
	Benchmark group	84.18	84.12	82.58	84.01
	State – NSW	83.96	84.47	83.65	84.98
	Sector	82.42	82.86	82.50	83.38
International first year retention rate	UOW	76.75	74.28	85.88	85.17
	Benchmark group	82.32	81.52	81.25	83.55
	State - NSW	83.54	82.29	82.73	85.12
	Sector	83.01	83.10	84.23	84.68

Source: UOW 2010 Institutional Performance Portfolio (draft).

Item 5.4: Undergraduate success

		2005 %	2006 %	2007 %	2008 %	2009 %
Domestic undergraduate success rate	UOW	90.46	90.96	90.97	90.85	90.73
	Benchmark group	88.63	88.47	88.44	88.68	88.43
	State – NSW	88.56	88.57	88.11	88.33	88.07
	Sector	87.88	88.05	87.66	87.99	87.95
International undergraduate success rate	UOW	78.85	80.57	83.69	83.30	83.50
	Benchmark group	84.03	83.88	84.99	85.33	86.35
	State – NSW	84.02	84.15	85.11	85.15	86.24
	Sector	84.76	85.08	85.81	86.46	87.04

Source: UOW 2010 Institutional Performance Portfolio (draft).

Item 5.5: Equity groups access rate

		Access Rate			
		2008		2009	
		%	Rank	%	Rank
Postcode indicator	Low SES students (under 25)	23.25	9	24.18	9
	Low SES students (all ages)	23.31	8	23.56	9
	Regional students	18.63	14	19.60	13
	Remote students	0.26	30	0.26	29
Students with a disability		10.76	1	10.50	1

Source: UOW 2010 Institutional Performance Portfolio (draft).

Item 5.6: Equity groups participation rate

		Participation Rate			
		2008		2009	
		%	Rank	%	Rank
Postcode indicator	Low SES students (under 25)	23.02	10	23.44	10
	Low SES students (all ages)	22.59	8	23.00	9
	Regional students	18.91	14	19.61	14
	Remote students	0.20	31	0.21	30
Students with a disability		10.85	1	10.79	1

Source: UOW 2010 Institutional Performance Portfolio (draft).

Item 5.7: Equity groups retention rate

		2005	2006	2007	2008
		%	%	%	%
Low SES students (aged under 25)	UOW	89.14	88.68	86.97	88.31
	Benchmark group	85.38	84.35	82.53	84.09
	State – NSW	84.48	84.80	83.32	84.39
	Sector	82.52	82.63	81.75	82.47
Low SES students (all ages)	UOW	84.60	85.10	83.21	85.10
	Benchmark group	80.08	79.03	77.08	79.10
	State – NSW	79.62	79.99	79.10	80.35
	Sector	78.10	78.06	77.25	78.13
Students from regional locations	UOW	84.91	83.31	83.27	85.44
	Benchmark group	79.59	78.61	78.67	78.15
	State-- NSW	79.02	78.73	78.41	79.34
	Sector	77.61	77.45	77.19	77.68
Students from remote locations	UOW	86.39	91.61	81.78	91.99
	Benchmark group	72.64	71.06	68.11	71.65
	State – NSW	72.60	74.03	72.38	73.60
	Sector	69.44	69.84	67.68	69.12
Students with a disability	UOW	82.63	82.93	82.07	82.14
	Benchmark group	79.71	80.61	79.10	79.24
	State – NSW	78.47	77.53	76.71	79.01
	Sector	76.42	76.89	76.56	77.14

Source: UOW 2010 Institutional Performance Portfolio (draft).

Item 5.8: Equity groups success rate

		2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
		%	%	%	%	%
Low SES students (aged under 25)	UOW	90.71	90.98	91.21	91.42	90.80
	Benchmark group	87.88	87.64	87.67	88.15	87.81
	State – NSW	88.08	87.90	87.00	87.01	86.52
	Sector	86.56	86.71	86.08	86.31	86.02
Low SES students (all ages)	UOW	90.67	91.15	90.95	90.97	90.76
	Benchmark group	87.26	86.97	86.96	87.06	87.17
	State – NSW	87.10	86.92	86.14	86.11	85.55
	Sector	86.08	85.98	85.47	85.68	85.32
Students from regional locations	UOW	91.06	91.77	92.13	91.95	92.01
	Benchmark group	88.90	88.97	88.65	88.88	88.93
	State – NSW	87.65	87.39	86.57	86.97	86.09
	Sector	87.79	87.72	87.38	87.80	87.54
Students from remote locations	UOW	89.02	95.98	95.89	91.00	93.86
	Benchmark group	81.17	81.96	83.17	84.81	84.12
	State – NSW	83.85	84.06	83.77	82.99	82.71
	Sector	82.31	80.57	81.58	81.42	81.55
Students with a disability	UOW	89.80	89.79	89.04	89.02	88.80
	Benchmark group	85.75	85.98	85.67	85.41	85.41
	State – NSW	83.70	83.27	82.67	83.36	83.13
	Sector	83.28	83.32	83.08		83.44

Source: UOW 2010 Institutional Performance Portfolio (draft).

Item 5.9: Students identifying as Indigenous: retention and success Rates

		2005 %	2006 %	2007 %	2008 %	2009 %
Students identifying as Indigenous retention rate	UOW	76.24	71.72	78.38	82.93	N/A
	Benchmark group	64.80	68.52	64.06	69.30	N/A
	State – NSW	68.33	69.33	67.10	72.23	N/A
	Sector	64.33	65.50	62.82	66.27	N/A
Students identifying as Indigenous success rate	UOW	84.08	89.70	85.00	84.83	77.34
	Benchmark group	73.38	72.77	74.77	73.81	70.68
	State – NSW	74.34	75.34	75.16	75.88	74.07
	Sector	69.80	68.55	69.26	70.14	69.58

Source: UOW 2010 Institutional Performance Portfolio (draft).

Item 5.10: CEQ overall satisfaction level of agreement by field of education

2009 Overall Satisfaction	Level of Agreement		
	UOW %	Benchmark group %	Sector %
Natural and Physical Sciences	86.99	77.78	76.72
Information Technology	78.38	66.44	65.47
Engineering and Related Technologies	73.85	65.93	67.43
Architecture and Building	-	61.42	60.18
Agriculture, Environment and Related	76.92	83.84	75.77
Health (excluding Nursing)	89.61	76.45	70.56
Nursing	60.00	58.33	57.05
Education	75.37	65.64	64.13
Management and Commerce	79.12	67.75	67.90
Society and Culture	80.81	76.43	75.52
Creative Arts	68.32	62.87	67.50

Source: UOW 2010 Institutional Performance Portfolio (draft).

Item 5.11: CEQ overall satisfaction comparative level of agreement

		2005 %	2006 %	2007 %	2008 %	2009 %
Level of agreement	UOW	75.16	77.64	75.81	79.13	78.66
	Benchmark group	72.77	72.87	75.15	72.74	70.28
	State – NSW	69.32	70.07	71.83	70.47	69.83
	Sector	69.43	69.95	70.94	70.49	69.87

Source: UOW 2010 Institutional Performance Portfolio (draft).

Item 5.12: ISB student satisfaction 2009 and 2010

Performance Measures	2008		2009	
	UOW %	National %	UOW %	National %
Overall satisfaction level	89.2	87.2	86.9	85.8
Overall learning experience	88.0	85.7	85.6	83.9
Overall satisfaction with arrival experience	88.4	85.4	87.8	86.5
Overall support experience	91.1	85.8	89.3	86.3
Overall living experience	87.3	88.7	85.8	86.0

Source: UOW Performance Portfolio p106, Table 3.17.

Item 5.13: UOW Student Experience Questionnaire: first year satisfaction

	2006 %	2007 %	2008 %	2009 %	2010 %
Information Received from Faculty about Course of Study					
First year	64.8	71.7	71.8	74.0	77.3
Undergraduate	61.8	70.2	70.9	72.3	75.6
Academic Advice Received					
First year	-	-	-	71.3	77.3
Undergraduate	-	-	-	72.3	75.6
Learning Support					
First year	-	-	80.8	82.9	79.8
Undergraduate	-	-	82.5	83.0	79.5
Teaching Quality					
First year	-	71.3	78.1	80.4	78.3
Undergraduate	-	75.2	82.5	83.4	80.0
Course Quality					
First year	81.5	74.3	79.2	82.4	83.0
Undergraduate	81.5	78.1	81.5	83.8	82.1

Source: UOW Performance Portfolio p40, Table 2.6.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: THE AUDIT PROCESS

In 2011 the Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA) appointed an Audit Panel to undertake a quality audit of the University of Wollongong (UOW or the University). Within the scope of the particular audit, AUQA's Cycle 2 audits emphasise institutional standards and performance outcomes, with attention to benchmarking activities and their effect on standards and outcomes.

Quotations taken from the Performance Portfolio are identified in this Report as (PF p).

The mission, objectives, vision and values of AUQA are shown in Appendix B, membership of the Audit Panel is provided in Appendix C, and Appendix D defines abbreviations and technical terms used in this Report.

Full details of the Cycle 2 audit process are available in the AUQA Audit Manual.

AUQA preselected the theme of 'international activities' for the audit of the UOW, taking into account: the proportion of international students at UOW and in offshore locations, including a substantial number of students at the University of Wollongong in Dubai; the significance of internationalisation for the University's strategic directions; and recommendations from the Cycle 1 audit, including Recommendation 10, which was that the University establish a more comprehensive framework for the quality assurance of its offshore activities.

The theme of 'enabling undergraduate learning at UOW', one of two themes proposed by UOW, was selected by AUQA in view of its significance for the University's mission and plans for growth and its centrality to matters of academic standards.

The Audit Panel selected a further two affirmations and two recommendations from the 2006 Cycle 1 Audit Report for follow-up.

On 22 December 2010, UOW presented its submission (Performance Portfolio) to AUQA, including 70 supporting materials. The Audit Panel met on 8 February 2011 to consider these materials.

The Audit Panel Chairperson and Audit Director undertook a Preparatory Visit to UOW on 23 February 2011. During that visit, the answers to questions and additional information requested by the Panel were discussed, as well as the Audit Visit program.

A visit to the University of Wollongong in Dubai (UOWD) and to four educational partners of UOW in the delivery of offshore programs was conducted from 5 to 11 March 2011. A written report of these activities was circulated to the full Audit Panel prior to the main Audit Visit. A visit to one of UOW's campuses, the Sydney Business School in Sydney, was held on 25 March 2011. The main Audit Visit to the University's North Wollongong Campus took place between 28 and 31 March 2011.

In all, the Audit Panel spoke with over 400 people in the course of the audit, including the Vice-Chancellor, the Chancellor, the President of UOWD, senior management, academic and general staff, external stakeholders, undergraduate and postgraduate students (including external, Indigenous and international students), and offshore partners. Open sessions were available for any member of the University community to meet the Audit Panel but no one took this opportunity.

AUQA expresses its appreciation to Professor Rob Castle, Ms Lynn Woodley, Ms Tanya Barton-Saad, Ms Jan Sullivan and others at UOW for their professional and friendly assistance and excellent organisation

throughout the audit process. AUQA also thanks UOW for its ready production of additional information and for granting the Panel secure access to its intranet for the period of the audit.

This Report relates to the situation current at the time of the Audit Visit, which ended on 31 March 2011, and does not take account of any changes that may have occurred subsequently. The Report records the conclusions reached by the Audit Panel based on the documentation provided by the UOW as well as information gained through interviews, discussion and observation.

While every attempt has been made to reach a comprehensive understanding of the University's activities within the scope of the audit, the Report does not identify every aspect of quality assurance and its effectiveness or shortcomings. To keep the audit within reasonable bounds, the Panel did not visit the Innovation Campus, the Shoalhaven Campus or UOW education centres, although the Panel spoke with staff and students from the Shoalhaven Campus and graduate students based at the Innovation Campus.

APPENDIX B: AUQA'S MISSION, OBJECTIVES, VISION AND VALUES

Mission

AUQA is the principal national quality assurance agency in higher education with the responsibility of providing public assurance of the quality of Australia's universities and other institutions of higher education, and assisting in enhancing the academic quality of these institutions.

Objectives

AUQA is established to be the principal national quality assurance agency in higher education, with responsibility for quality audits of higher education institutions and accreditation authorities, reporting on performance and outcomes, assisting in quality enhancement, advising on quality assurance; and liaising internationally with quality agencies in other jurisdictions, for the benefit of Australian higher education.

Specifically, the objectives of AUQA are as follows:

1. Arrange and manage a system of periodic audits of:
 - the quality of the academic activities, including attainment of standards of performance and outcomes of Australian universities and other higher education institutions;
 - the quality assurance arrangements intended to maintain and elevate that quality;
 - compliance with criteria set out in the National Protocols for Higher Education Approval Processes; and
 - monitor, review, analyse and provide public reports on the quality of outcomes in Australian universities and higher education institutions.
2. Arrange and manage a system of periodic audits of the quality assurance processes, procedures, and outcomes of State, Territory and Commonwealth higher education accreditation authorities including their impact on the quality of higher education programs; and monitor, review, analyse and report on the outcomes of those audits.
3. Publicly report periodically on matters relating to quality assurance, including the relative standards and outcomes of the Australian higher education system and its institutions, its processes and its international standing, and the impact of the National Protocols for Higher Education Approval Processes on Australian Higher Education, using information available to AUQA from its audits and other activities carried out under these Objectives, and from other sources.
4. Develop partnerships with other quality agencies in relation to matters directly relating to quality assurance and audit, to facilitate efficient cross-border quality assurance processes and the international transfer of knowledge about those processes.

Vision

To consolidate AUQA's position, as the leading reference point for quality assurance in higher education in and for Australia. Specifically:

- AUQA's judgements will be widely recognised as objective, accurate and useful, based on its effective procedures, including auditor training and thorough investigation.
- AUQA's work will be recognised by institutions and accrediting agencies as adding value to their activities, through the emphasis on autonomy, diversity and self-review.
- Through AUQA's work, there will be an improvement in public knowledge of the relative academic standards of Australian higher education and an increase in public confidence in Australian higher education.
- Through AUQA's work with other quality assurance agencies, the international quality assurance requirements for Australian higher education institutions will be coherent and rigorous, avoiding duplication and inconsistency.
- AUQA's advice will be sought on quality assurance in higher education, through mechanisms including consulting, training and publications.
- AUQA will be recognised among its international peers as a leading quality assurance agency, collaborating with other agencies and providing leadership by example.

Values

AUQA will be:

- *Rigorous*: AUQA carries out all its audits as rigorously and thoroughly as possible.
- *Supportive*: AUQA recognises institutional autonomy in setting objectives and implementing processes to achieve them, and acts to facilitate and support this.
- *Flexible*: AUQA operates flexibly, in order to acknowledge and reinforce institutional diversity, and is responsive to institution and agency characteristics and needs.
- *Cooperative*: AUQA recognises that the achievement of quality in any organisation depends on a commitment to quality within the organisation itself, and so operates as unobtrusively as is consistent with effectiveness and rigour.
- *Collaborative*: as a quality assurance agency, AUQA works collaboratively with the accrediting agencies (in addition to its audit role with respect to these agencies).
- *Transparent*: AUQA's audit procedures, and its own quality assurance system, are open to public scrutiny.
- *Economical*: AUQA operates cost-effectively and keeps as low as possible the demands it places on institutions and agencies.
- *Open*: AUQA reports publicly and clearly on its findings in relation to institutions, agencies and the sector.

AUQA's Mission and Objectives were revised in March 2007, as recommended by MCEETYA.

AUQA's Vision and Values have been modified accordingly.

APPENDIX C: THE AUDIT PANEL

Dr Colleen Liston, Higher Education Consultant (Chair)

Dr Jeanette Baird, Audit Director, Australian Universities Quality Agency

Professor Emeritus Tom Prebble, Educational Consultant, New Zealand

Professor David Rich, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) and Provost, University of Tasmania

Professor Sue Spence, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic), Griffith University

Observers:

Professor Hussain Alalwaji, Consultant, National Commission for Academic Accreditation and Assessment, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Dr Leonard Webster, Audit Director, Australian Universities Quality Agency

APPENDIX D: ABBREVIATIONS AND DEFINITIONS

The following abbreviations and definitions are used in this Report. As necessary, they are explained in context.

ALTC	Australian Learning and Teaching Council
AUQA	Australian Universities Quality Agency
AUSSE	Australasian Survey of Student Engagement
AVCC.....	Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee (now Universities Australia)
CEQ.....	Course Experience Questionnaire
COPTA	Code of Practice — Teaching and Assessment
CSO.....	comparative student outcome
DEEWR	Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations
DEST	Australian Government Department of Education, Science and Technology
DVC.....	Deputy Vice-Chancellor
ECAC.....	External Course Advisory Committee
EFTSL.....	equivalent full-time student load
ESOS	Education Services for Overseas Students
ESOS Act.....	<i>Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000</i> (Cwlth)
FISU	Faculty International Support Unit
FTE.....	full-time equivalent
FYE.....	first year experience
GDS.....	Graduate Destination Survey
HDR	higher degree by research
IAC.....	International Alliances Committee
IELTS.....	International English Language Testing System
ILTS.....	Internationalisation in Learning and Teaching subcommittee (of UEC)
ISB	International Student Barometer™ survey
ISEC	International Student Engagement Committee
IT	information technology
LDU.....	Learning Development Unit
MCEECDYA	Ministerial Council on Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs (established on 1 July 2009)
MCEETYA.....	Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (now disbanded)
National Protocols	<i>National Protocols for Higher Education Approval Processes</i>
PASS	Peer Assisted Study Sessions (program)
PF p	Performance Portfolio page reference
PIO.....	Primary Investigation Officer

PIRS	Performance Indicator Reporting System
Portfolio	Performance Portfolio
PSB	PSB Academy
QAS	Quality Assurance Subcommittee
SBS	Sydney Business School
SEQ.....	Student Experience Questionnaire
SES.....	Student Evaluation of Subjects (survey)
SIM	Singapore Institute of Management
UEC.....	University Education Committee
UIC	University International Committee
ULT	University Learning and Teaching (course)
UOW	University of Wollongong
UOWD	University of Wollongong in Dubai
WCA	Wollongong College Australia

