



University of
South Australia

University of South Australia AUQA Progress Report

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Overview

The AUQA audit cycle 2 was conducted at the University of South Australia in August 2009 and its report released in October 2009. The audit focused on two themes – internationalisation, and building workforce capacity to improve teaching and learning and enhance research performance.

The audit panel interviewed almost 300 people, including the Chancellor and external Council members, senior management, academic and professional staff, external stakeholders, and undergraduate and postgraduate students (including external, Indigenous and international students). The panel visited four offshore partners and spent four days in Adelaide. The audit included a brief teleconference with staff of the Centre for Regional Engagement.

The AUQA report issued in October 2009 contained nine commendations, five affirmations and four recommendations. UniSA was commended for:

- its strategic and comprehensive approach to a research culture across all disciplines
- its approach to teaching and learning issues, and the STEP2010 project.

AUQA recognised the importance of UniSA's workforce strategy and the aspirations expressed in New Horizons to achieving our goals in teaching and research, commending:

- the clarity of direction and communication of New Horizons to engage and inspire staff at all levels
- the strategic use of resources for workforce planning.

The quality of UniSA's underpinning systems was also recognised, with specific commendations for:

- the sophisticated use of management information to initiate and monitor evidence-based change and improvement
- the strategic approach to implementing human resources and teaching and learning support programs
- the quality of planning and implementation of the withdrawal from transnational education and overall leadership and management of the associated teach-out processes
- the systems and processes, both onshore and offshore, for dealing with student issues.

The University received affirmations in the areas of:

- the implications of the teaching-research nexus, and the workload implications of STEP2010 and ReNEW
- the management of new academic staff
- enhancing the international dimension of the student experience
- our approaches to plagiarism and English language proficiency.

Recommendations covered:

- a more strategic approach to benchmarking of academic standards
- the role of Academic Board
- developing a shared understanding of our revised internationalisation strategy
- improving feedback to students about their suggestions.

AUQA Progress Report – the UniSA approach

The AUQA Progress Report is the result of extensive activity over the last twelve months conducted under the guidance of the University's Senior Management Group (SMG). At its 4 November 2009 meeting SMG circulated the AUQA Audit Report and developed an action plan to respond to the recommendations and affirmations. A senior manager was nominated to take a lead role¹ for each recommendation and affirmation with a view to providing progress updates in April and October 2010.

At its November 2009 meeting, Academic Board was provided with a presentation outlining the results of the AUQA Audit and the University's approach to responding to the recommendations and affirmations. The Chancellor, Vice Chancellor and Chair of Academic Board met to develop a strategy for providing the Board with regular verbal updates from the Vice Chancellor and other members of SMG during 2010 and beyond.

Throughout 2010 senior managers have worked through their respective portfolio governance groups and across the matrix of Division, portfolio and Unit responsibilities to systematically improve processes, systems and structures aligned to the recommendations and affirmations. Many of these activities have also been integrated into the University's corporate planning framework thereby promoting sustained effort and ongoing monitoring.

Considerable progress has been made in response to the 2009 AUQA Audit. The institution's desire to strengthen the teaching-research nexus is evident in the very substantial growth in doctorally-qualified academic staff and the University's 2009 position as equal eighth in the nation² is a testimony to this focus.

The University continues to make first-class appointments, reinforcing its commitment to Australian higher education. In February 2010 the University appointed Professor Joanne Wright (formerly Pro Vice Chancellor at Sussex University in the United Kingdom) to the role of Deputy Vice Chancellor: Academic and in October 2010 Mr Nigel Relph (formerly Director Corporate Affairs, Queen Mary University of London) was appointed to the role of Pro Vice Chancellor: International and Development. Recent appointments such as Professor Abebe Zegeye (Hawke Institute), Professor Salman Sayyid (International Centre for Muslim and Non-Muslim Understanding), Professor Marianne Berry (Australian Centre for Child Protection), Professor Pauline Harris (Lillian de Lissa Chair in Early Childhood Education) Anthony Finn (Defence and Systems Institute), Professor Steffen Lehmann (Zero Waste SA Research Centre for Sustainable Design and Behaviour) and Professor Thomas Nann (Ian Wark Research Institute) illustrate UniSA's ability to attract world-class staff.

In September 2010 the University launched *Horizon 2020*³, its statement of strategic directions and ambitions for the next decade. Significant investments in teaching and learning, research, technology and other resources will continue into the future. *Horizon 2020* also reaffirms the University's commitment to effective governance, efficient organisation and good management. The University provided an interim update to AUQA on 26 October 2010 and will continue to provide updates during 2011. This report presents the University's progress as at February 2011.

¹ The bold text in the responsibility column in the following tables denotes the principal person with responsibility

² Refer DEEWR staff statistics 2009, note that in 2010 UniSA's percentage of academic staff with a doctorate has grown to 65% and preliminary figures for 2011 indicate 66% of staff have a doctorate

³ <http://www.unisa.edu.au/horizon2020/default.asp>

No.	Recommendation	Responsibility	Context and Actions	Status: Complete
1.	<p>AUQA recommends that UniSA take a more strategic approach to benchmarking and the validation of its academic standards to facilitate continuous improvement at school and institute levels and within disciplines.</p>	<p>Deputy Vice Chancellor: Academic Chief Operating Officer Deputy Vice Chancellor: Research and Innovation</p>	<p>The DVC: Academic commenced in February 2010 and implemented a review of the Teaching and Learning infrastructure, process and operations to ensure alignment with University objectives and the external environment.</p> <p>The three major aims of the review were to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the University continues to engage in strategic teaching and learning planning and review of academic standards • Strengthen the definitions articulated in the University’s Teaching and Learning Academic Standards Framework • Ensure benchmarking is an implicit part of developing and monitoring clear and consistent standards. <p>A review of the teaching and learning committee structure and terms of reference aimed to align structures and responsibilities with the University’s strategic objectives and position these committees to monitor and respond to the changing external environment and demands of students. Terms of reference of committees include specific reference to monitoring teaching and learning indicators against performance benchmarks.</p> <p>The University continues to value, and obtain insights from, benchmarking activities conducted as part of activities such as EQUIS and the professional accreditation of a majority of its coursework programs.</p>	<p>Consultations with Division Executives, Heads of School, Unit Directors, Central Unit staff and students and through open forums for all staff at all campuses completed. The plan for restructuring teaching and learning governance committees and changes to the Academic Board Charter have been approved by Council.</p> <p>Changes to Teaching and Learning Committee terms of reference include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To develop for Academic Board approval a Teaching and Learning Strategy that encompasses equity student participation objectives • To provide for Academic Board consideration an annual monitoring report on the Teaching and Learning Strategy. <p>Changes to the Academic Board Charter include: To monitor and benchmark academic standards via:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual monitoring and benchmarking of student recruitment, achievement and retention including by equity group and by cohort • Annual monitoring and benchmarking of student experience data including by equity group and cohort • Annual monitoring of developments in the taught portfolio.

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2.	AUQA recommends that UniSA consider strengthening the role and standing of the Academic Board primarily in relation to academic standards and quality assurance in line with its charter.	Chancellor/ Vice Chancellor Director: Council Services and Chancellery Chair: Academic Board Deputy Vice Chancellor: Academic	Chancellor, Vice Chancellor, Director: Council Services and Chancellery and Chair: Academic Board developed Terms of Reference for a review. The review, entitled 'Improving Standards and the Role of Academic Board' focused on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The role of Academic Board in the context of the formation of TEQSA and the changing national academic standards environment • Up-down communication channels from Divisions and sub-committees and the academic community • Seniority of membership • Proposed changes to the teaching and learning committee structure including strengthening the terms of reference of the Academic Board by elaborating responsibility for the approval and monitoring of a Teaching and Learning Strategy and annual action plan • Improving the information flows and accountabilities of the sub-committees of Academic Board to focus the business of the Board and improve its effectiveness in dealing with matters of strategic importance. Three full professors stood in the recent election for a Chair to Academic Board. This level of interest from senior academic staff further illustrates the renewed standing of Academic Board within the organisation.	University Council endorsed the new teaching and learning governance structure in December 2010. The DVC: Academic is responsible for the implementation of the approved changes to the University's teaching and learning committee structure. Academic Board, the Teaching and Learning Committee and the Student Experience Committee commenced operating in 2011 with new terms of reference. Changes to the Academic Board Charter include the monitoring and benchmarking of academic standards via: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual monitoring and benchmarking of student recruitment, achievement and retention including by equity group and by cohort • Annual monitoring and benchmarking of student experience data including by equity group and by cohort. Work to refine definitions of minor and major amendment and thus the responsibility between Academic Standards and Quality Committee (formerly Academic Policy and Program Committee) and Divisions will be completed by the end of 2011 and in concert with the development of the Program and Course Management System. A skills analysis of relevant roles will be undertaken and a program of training and support put in place to ensure successful transition of responsibilities.

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3.	<p>AUQA recommends that UniSA provide a clearer definition of its revised internationalisation agenda and improve internal communication and understanding of its objectives, priorities and core activities.</p> <p><i>Continued next page...</i></p>	<p>Pro Vice Chancellor: International and Development</p>	<p>The University has been working towards a clearer understanding of internationalisation.</p>	<p>A number of recent developments have had a significant influence on UniSA's approach to internationalisation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During the past nine months the University has been developing <i>Horizon 2020</i>, which defines the institution's aspirations for the next decade. <i>Horizon 2020</i> was released at the end of September 2010 and will guide the development of a comprehensive internationalisation plan. <i>Horizon 2020</i> states that our graduates will have international experience, our programs will balance international perspectives with national priorities, and our activities will be shaped and informed by intercultural and global relationships and perspectives • Australia has seen significant changes and challenges in the international student recruitment environment which have presented an opportunity to re-define internationalisation • A new PVC: International and Development commenced early in October 2010. The new PVC has lived and worked in the UK and Malaysia and has extensive experience of developing collaborations with universities in Asia, the Indian Sub-Continent and the Americas. This experience affords the PVC a truly international perspective which will inform his approach to internationalisation. This international perspective and experience is common to the majority of UniSA staff, with more than 70% of staff being of international origin

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4.	AUQA recommends that UniSA design and implement a consistent mechanism, including in relation to transnational education programs, that enables students to be informed more productively of actions taken as a result of student feedback and student surveys and the outcomes of those actions.	Deputy Vice Chancellor: Academic Pro Vice Chancellor: International and Development	<p>Regular evaluation is an essential component of the University's quality assurance and informs planning for quality improvement.</p> <p>The reviews of teaching and learning and governance structures proposed a new sub-committee of Academic Board, the Student Experience Committee (SEC), to replace the Student Services Advisory Group. The terms of reference of the SEC extend to include formal responsibility for reviewing student experience data and formulating and monitoring University-level action plans and ensuring appropriate feedback loops to students.</p> <p>Evaluation discussions are a key agenda item of this committee. 'Closing the feedback loop' has become a standing item on meeting agendas and is the opportunity to report across the University the actions resulting from feedback. The Student Feedback website has been established to let students know about upcoming evaluation activities and summarise responses to student feedback.</p> <p>http://www.unisa.edu.au/ltu/survey/default.asp</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A staff SharePoint site established to monitor evaluations involving students and associated feedback mechanisms • Student Feedback website established and enhanced in consultation with students • Student portal currently being modified to provide a gateway to the Student Feedback website • SEC began operation in February 2011 with the term of reference: <i>To ensure students receive appropriate responses to their feedback.</i> • SMG hosted annual student lunchtime forums on each campus to openly discuss the University's strategic directions and canvass comments and feedback from students • The Vice Chancellor and DVC: Academic host annual dinners for students holding leadership positions to discuss feedback from the student body.

No.	Affirmations	Responsibility	Context and Actions	Status: Addressed
1.	<p>AUQA affirms UniSA in its attempts to address the implications of the teaching-research nexus, including workload measures and the workload implications of the implementation of the Teaching and Learning Framework (STEP2010) and the new research concentrations strategy (ReNEW).</p> <p><i>Continued next page...</i></p>	<p>Deputy Vice Chancellor: Academic</p> <p>Deputy Vice Chancellor: Research and Innovation</p> <p>Vice Chancellor</p> <p>Director: Human Resources</p> <p>Divisional Pro Vice Chancellors</p>	<p>The challenge for UniSA is to grow and promote research activity and ensure its teaching is delivered by research-active staff. The Workforce Strategy recognises that UniSA needs to connect its active researchers with the teaching agenda where they are not otherwise connected, and that teachers need to engage with research not in isolation but as an integral part of academic work.</p> <p>The ReNEW policy outlines the minimum time commitment for full membership of a Research Centre or Institute, and the Frameworks of Cooperation between the Heads of partner Schools and Directors of Research Institutes clearly articulate the contribution of academic staff to the research activity of the relevant Institutes and the contribution of the Institute to the teaching programs of the relevant Schools.</p> <p>Frameworks of Cooperation between Research Institutes and their partnering Schools have been developed as a way of harnessing the primary research orientation of an Institute and the primary educational orientation of a School to best mutual advantage in order to promote cooperation and collaboration.</p> <p>The Frameworks detail agreements between an Institute and partnering Schools in the areas of the teaching-research nexus, honours and HDR training, developing careers, and research culture.</p>	<p>Frameworks of Cooperation between each Research Institute and Schools have been approved by SMG for all six UniSA Research Institutes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hawke Research Institute • Institute for Sustainable Systems and Technologies • Institute for Telecommunications Research • Ian Wark Research Institute (The Wark™) • Sansom Institute for Health Research • Ehrenberg-Bass Institute for Marketing Science. <p>UniSA continues to promote (eg through on campus face-to-face meetings, staff announcements) to its staff that the default academic profile at UniSA is that of a research productive teaching academic.</p>

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2.	<p>AUQA affirms UniSA's recognition of the need for more consistent management of the experience of newly appointed academic staff, in particular sessional staff.</p> <p><i>Continued next page...</i></p>	<p>Director: Human Resources (providing coordination through Workforce Planning Group)</p> <p>Divisional Pro Vice Chancellors</p>	<p>The HR Unit has been working on an Academic Career Development for Sessional Staff framework since the release of the AUQA report. Key actions include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Redevelopment and wide promulgation of the Quick Guide for sessional staff • Development and promotion of resources to support the management sessional staff • Development of training workshop for program directors and course co-ordinators on working with sessional staff • Career development workshop for sessional staff • Refocusing of the Sessional Staff Working Group to assist in building professional development. The 2011 UniSA Enterprise Agreement provides for two additional development opportunities for sessional staff: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Teaching Focused Roles: Contracts of up to three years duration may be offered to casual teaching staff to assist them in a transition to full-time status 2. Early Career Development Fellowships: Casual staff who have completed or are completing a PhD may apply for Early Career Development Fellowships of three years duration. • Inclusion of more sessional staff data in data suites to assist management of these staff by Heads of School. Review of existing data sets on sessional staff that may help inform strategy development • Refining sessional staff management in Schools and Divisions (part of the University-wide Service Improvement Project) including a more systematic approach to the induction of new staff 	<p>Completed – February 2010</p> <p>Completed – March 2010</p> <p>Completed – May 2009</p> <p>Completed – November 2010</p> <p>Completed – EB accepted by staff 2 February 2011 and at time of writing is awaiting approval by Fair Work Australia</p> <p>Completed – March 2010</p> <p>Implemented in Division of ITEE with other Divisions to follow.</p>

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3.	AUQA affirms UniSA in its programs and activities to enhance the international dimension of the student experience.	Deputy Vice Chancellor: Academic Pro Vice Chancellor: International and Development	<p>A key theme of <i>Horizon 2020</i> is the improvement and enhancement of the student experience. Key activities/achievements in this area include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approval from the Vice Chancellor for further funding of the <i>Global Experience</i> program, enabling the continuation of this highly regarded program, which provides students with opportunities to develop their intercultural skills and to participate in international experiential activities both within and outside of Australia Participation in the International Student Barometer (ISB). UniSA is developing action plans in response to its inaugural ISB results Triangulation of international student responses to the 2010 Australasian Survey of Student Engagement against previous years' results, Australian Technology Network benchmarks and ISB areas for improvement The establishment of <i>The Globalist</i> – a magazine produced by UniSA students which is part of the prestigious Global 21 network. Global 21 is a student-run international affairs network that gives students the chance to showcase their work on the world stage, exchange ideas and network with students, think-tanks and businesses world-wide. <p>During July to August 2010, the DVC: Academic conducted reviews of University governance structures and the student experience. The outcomes of these reviews are being used to inform a new Teaching and Learning plan. In October, the DVC: Academic asked the University's Academic Board to approve the new governance structures including the formation of the Student Experience Committee. The SEC has formal responsibility for reviewing student experience data and oversight of student surveys such as the International Student Barometer.</p> <p>In addition, the PVC: International and Development will review UniSA's international groups and committees throughout 2011.</p>	<p>In 2011 the new Student Experience Committee (a sub-committee of Academic Board) was formed. Membership includes the DVC: Academic, PVC: International and Development, the UniLife (student association) President and other UniLife nominees.</p> <p>The terms of reference of the SEC include the development of an annual student experience action plan (to be approved by Academic Board) and to review on an annual basis all data relating to student experience, including by cohort group (e.g. international students), and benchmark them against the top five universities in Australia. It is expected the SEC will establish a number of working groups that will include international student representation.</p> <p>A number of University-level working groups include international student representation, including the Orientation Strategy Working Group and the New Learning Centre Building Steering Group - user reference group.</p> <p>A UniSA hosted induction program for UniLife (UniSA's student association) elected student representatives has been developed to ensure all student representatives have a sound understanding of UniSA and the national and international Higher Education context. The program includes presentations that discuss internationalisation in the context of the careers strategy and social experiences.</p>

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4.	AUQA affirms UniSA in its policy approach to academic integrity and encourages continued vigilance across all academic programs irrespective of location.	Deputy Vice Chancellor: Academic	<p>The University has adopted a holistic approach to academic integrity and plagiarism with four pillars that support its implementation to form an educative model: policy and penalties; information and education; assessment design; and detection.</p> <p>The University Teaching and Learning Committee (TALC) instigated a two-part review of UniSA's approach to academic integrity. The first part of the review focused on current national and international best practice relating to academic integrity with the aim of establishing if UniSA's current approach was aligned to good practice.</p> <p>The second part of the review focused on operational issues. The Learnonline component of the Personal Learning Environment will provide the opportunity to embed Turnitin functionality as a formative part of assessment.</p>	<p>Part one of the review was received by the Teaching and Learning Committee in May 2010 and is currently being used in Divisions and Schools.</p> <p>New data reports have been developed and provided to Deans: Teaching and Learning and Heads of School.</p> <p>Stage two of the review has included developments in Learnonline and demonstrations of the new functionality have been provided to TALC, Academic Program Policy Review Committee, Heads of School and SMG throughout September and October 2010. Implementation via Learnonline will occur during 2011.</p> <p>Turnitin software has been used to check all student assignments since December 2009 including those delivered in offshore locations and in a language other than English (ie programs delivered in Mandarin in China). Students in all locations are regularly reminded (through multiple communication channels) that their assignments will be checked by the software and all students confirm their understanding of this protocol during assignment submission. In China this acknowledgement has been translated into Chinese and students are asked to sign this form prior to assignment submission. A bilingual interface for Turnitin (currently under development) will allow this process to be conducted online.</p> <p>An external review focusing on operational issues will be conducted in 2011.</p>

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5.	<p>AUQA affirms UniSA's English language proficiency for students is a significant and immediate issue that needs to be addressed, and supports timely conclusion of the current discussion about the implementation of the English language proficiency project, including the testing of student proficiency and where required the provision of additional support and guidance for students.</p>	<p>Deputy Vice Chancellor: Academic</p> <p>Pro Vice Chancellor: International and Development</p>	<p>In the second half of 2009 consultations facilitated by the Learning and Teaching Unit with each Division focused on clarifying understanding of the provision of 'proficiency'.</p> <p>From discussions of disparate concerns a set of common principles was distilled and presented to SMG. Driven by a call for discipline-specific approaches, a way forward was endorsed which officially disbanded the English Language Proficiency Steering Group established under the original 2006 corporate project. Instead, a project management approach under the executive sponsorship of the DVC: Academic was adopted to guide future progress of ELP activities.</p> <p>SMG also supported the establishment of discipline-based pilot projects in Divisions in 2010 to trial different approaches and interventions. Pilot projects were established in two Schools: the School of Nursing and Midwifery and the School of Communication, International Studies and Languages. These pilots provided an assessment of the additional support, guidance and resource requirements.</p> <p>Outcomes of the pilots have provided a curriculum, validated language assessment test and information about the costs of intervention. Future options were considered by SMG in November 2010 and have been approved for implementation in 2011.</p> <p>UniSA continues to monitor its programs and benchmark entry standards in line with professional accreditation requirements and national and international higher education trends. Changes in entry standards are presented to, and approved by, Academic Board.</p>	<p>A University-wide approach to English Language Proficiency at UniSA, predicated on six principles developed in consultation with academic staff, will be implemented from 2011. The approach will offer a range of interventions and resources appropriate for different levels of proficiency. Specific interventions will be provided for students in most need as identified through a validated language assessment test. These interventions may include individual feedback on language-related issues identified in assignments and access to individual support from Language and Learning advisers. Any student may be recommended to take the diagnostic test based on their performance in an assessment task.</p> <p>All students will retain access to up-to-date online resources and workshops.</p>