



University of
South Australia

University of South Australia AUQA Progress Report

Produced for: Australian Universities Quality Agency

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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 12 months conducted under the guidance of the University's Senior Management Group (SMG). At its 4th November 2009 meeting the 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. Subsequently the Board was updated with the University's progress in responding to these items via the annual Corporate Performance Report issued May 2010.

Throughout 2010 the SMG has 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.

Collectively the University believes 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 growth in PhD 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) into the role of Deputy Vice Chancellor: Academic and in October 2010 Mr Nigel Relph (formerly Director Corp Affairs Queen Mary University of London) was appointed into the role of Pro Vice Chancellor: International and Development.

In September 2010 the University launched Horizon 2020³ its 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. In furthering these ambitions the University looks forward to updating AUQA on its progress during 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 PhD has grown to 65%

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

No.	Recommendation	Responsibility	Context and Actions	Status
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 & Innovation</p>	<p>The DVC: Academic commenced 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 is 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 will include specific reference to monitoring teaching and learning indicators against performance benchmarks.</p> <p>A proposal for the restructuring of teaching and learning committees has been drafted and discussed with stakeholders with a recommendation for a staged implementation from 2011 onwards.</p>	<p>Consultations from May to July 2010 with Division Executives, Heads of School, Unit Directors, Central Unit Staff with open forums for all staff at all campuses.</p> <p>DVC: Academic will present an overall plan for restructuring teaching and learning governance to Academic Board in November 2010.</p> <p>Implementation – from Jan 2011 onwards</p>

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2.	<p>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.</p>	<p>Chancellor/ Vice Chancellor</p> <p>Director: Council Services & Chancellery</p> <p>Chair: Academic Board</p> <p>Deputy Vice Chancellor: Academic</p>	<p>Chancellor, Vice Chancellor, Director: Council Services & Chancellery and Chair of Academic Board developed Terms of Reference for a review. The review, entitled 'Improving Standards and the Role of Academic Board' focused on:</p> <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. 	<p>Chair of Academic Board has initiated a working group to examine the role of School and Division boards in relation to Academic Board. Outcomes likely end 2010.</p> <p>DVC: Academic will take responsibility for actions arising from the review as part of overall plan for restructuring teaching and learning governance. This will be the focus of a presentation by DVC: Academic to Academic Board in November 2010.</p>

No.	Recommendation	Responsibility	Context and Actions	Status (progress to date)
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>Deputy Vice Chancellor: Research</p> <p>Pro Vice Chancellor: International and Development</p>	<p>During 2010 the Deputy Vice Chancellor: Research consulted with key governance groups to develop a strategic plan titled <i>Building World Class Research and Innovation 2011-2015</i>. This plan clearly articulates UniSA's objectives and future activities in research and innovation. Related objectives in the plan include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building strong relationships with international first class research partners for the purposes of benchmarking, research collaboration • Building opportunities for bilateral or joint HDR programs • Recruiting research students from international institutions to UniSA • Recruiting first class research active staff from the cognate network of international institutions. 	<p>Strategic plan titled <i>Building World Class Research and Innovation 2011-2015</i> approved by Senior Management Group during October 2010.</p> <p>DVC: Research will present plan to Academic Board in November 2010 and Council in December 2010.</p> <p>Implementation – from January 2011 onwards</p>

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4.	<p>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.</p>	<p>Deputy Vice Chancellor: Academic</p> <p>Pro Vice Chancellor: International and Development</p>	<p>Regular evaluation is an essential component of the University's quality assurance and informs planning for quality improvement.</p> <p>The Student Services Advisory Group (SSAG) is a working group to the DVC: Academic. It facilitates cooperation to improve current student services and facilities and uses student evaluation to inform service improvement plans.</p> <p>Evaluation discussions are a key agenda item of this group. Reporting of evaluation activity has been formalised using an institution-wide survey cycle database with input from unit directors and posted on the SSAG SharePoint site.</p> <p>'Closing the feedback loop' has become a standing item of the group's 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> <p>The reviews of teaching and learning and governance structures will propose a new sub-committee of Academic Board, the Student Experience Committee (SEC) to replace SSAG. The terms of reference of the SEC will extend to include formal responsibility for reviewing student experience data and formulating and monitoring University level action plans and ensure appropriate feedback loops to students.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluation database developed • SSAG SharePoint site established • Student feedback website established and enhanced in consultation with students • Student portal currently being modified to provide a gateway to the student feedback website. • DVC: Academic will present an overall plan for restructuring teaching and learning governance to Academic Board in November 2010.

No.	Affirmations	Responsibility	Context and Actions	Status
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 & 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 and 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 Institute 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 effect in order to accommodate 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>Implications of the teaching-research nexus have been articulated in the University's Enterprise Bargaining Agreement.</p>	<p>Frameworks of Cooperation between each Research Institute and School have been approved by Senior Management Group 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>In progress</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 this since release of the draft AUQA report. Potential actions were captured in a report on Academic Career Development to the Workforce Strategy Advisory Group meeting in October 2009. The priority focus has been on sessional staff. A key problem is compliance with new protocols for sessional staff management introduced in 2008.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Redevelopment and wide promulgation of the Quick Guide for sessional staff • Joint email to all managers on resources available to support 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 and monitoring the application of protocols • Inclusion of more sessional staff data in data suite 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 University-wide Service Improvement Project) 	<p>Completed – February 2010</p> <p>Completed – March 2010</p> <p>Completed – May 2009</p> <p>Planned for November 2010</p> <p>In progress</p> <p>Completed – March 2010</p> <p>Currently being implemented in Division of ITEE with others to follow.</p>

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3.	<p>AUQA affirms UniSA in its programs and activities to enhance the international dimension of the student experience.</p>	<p>Pro Vice Chancellor: International and Development Deputy Vice Chancellor: Academic</p>	<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 Global Experience program, enabling the continuation of this highly regarded program. - Participation in the International Student Barometer (ISB). UniSA is developing action plans in response to its inaugural ISB results. - International student responses to the 2010 Australasian Survey of Student Engagement will be triangulated against previous years' results, Australian Technology Network benchmarks and ISB areas for improvement. <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 will ask the University's Academic Board to approve the new governance structures. Included in these structures is a Student Experience Committee. This group will have formal responsibility for reviewing student experience data, including oversight of student surveys such as International Student Barometer.</p> <p>In addition, the Acting Pro Vice Chancellor: International and Development has also commenced the process of reviewing the University's international groups and committees. This review will be concluded by the new PVC: I&D and will be implemented throughout 2011.</p>	<p>Completed</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>In progress</p> <p>DVC: Academic will present an overall plan for restructuring teaching and learning governance to Academic Board in November 2010.</p> <p>Review of University governance structures. Implementation 2011. Update on progress to AUQA 2011.</p>

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4.	<p>AUQA affirms UniSA in its policy approach to academic integrity and encourages continued vigilance across all academic programs irrespective of location.</p>	<p>Deputy Vice Chancellor: Academic</p>	<p>The University has adopted a holistic approach to academic integrity and plagiarism with four tenets that support its implementation to form an educative model: policy and penalties; information and education; assessment design and detection.</p> <p>University Teaching and Learning Committee has 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 purpose of establishing if UniSA's current approach was aligned to good practice.</p> <p>The second part of the review focused 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 has been received by the Teaching and Learning Committee in May 2010 and is currently being used in Divisions and Schools.</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 Senior Management throughout September and October. Implementation via Learnonline will occur during 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 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 the provision of proficiency.</p> <p>From these discussions of disparate concerns a set of common principles was distilled and presented to Senior Management Group (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 and a project management approach under the Executive sponsorship of the DVC: Academic was adopted to guide future progress of ELP activities.</p> <p>The SMG also supported the establishment of discipline based pilot projects in Divisions in 2010 to trial different approaches and interventions. These pilots will provide an assessment of the additional support, guidance and resource requirements.</p> <p>Pilot projects were established in two Schools: School of Nursing and Midwifery and the School of Communication, International Studies and Languages. A report of these pilots has been/will be forwarded to relevant governance groups in 2010.</p> <p>Outcomes of the pilot in the School of Nursing and Midwifery have provided a curriculum, validated language assessment test and information about the costs of intervention. Based on the pilots, models for implementation will be jointly considered by the DVC: Academic and the PVC: I&D. Future options will be considered by SMG in November 2010 for implementation in 2011.</p>	<p>Pilot project in School of Nursing and Midwifery completed and results reported to English Language Advisory Group.</p> <p>Pilot project in School of Communication, International Studies and Languages has been identified and is due for implementation in Study Period 5, 2010.</p> <p>Discussion of models by SMG November 2010 for implementation 2011.</p>