

Benchmarking and Peer Review: Assuring Quality through Collaboration



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Contents

01	Introduction	
02	Definitions	
03	International quality assurance agencies on peer review	
04	Australian Regulatory Overview	
06	Institutional Context: University of Tasmania	
06	Snapshot: HEA Benchmarking Project on Promotions Policies & data	
07	Snapshot: Ako Aotearoa Benchmarking Project	
08	Snapshot: International Student Employability Benchmarking Project	
09	Snapshot: Council of Private Higher Education (COPHE) Benchmarking Project	
10	National Support Mechanism for Peer Review	
11	Lessons Learnt	

01 Introduction



01 Definitions

Definitions

Benchmarking

... a structured, collaborative, learning process for comparing practices, processes or performance outcomes. Its purpose is to identify comparative strengths and weaknesses, as a basis for developing improvements in academic quality. Benchmarking can also be defined as a quality process used to evaluate performance by comparing institutional practices to sector good practice. (TEQSA, 2014)

Peer review of assessment

‘the practice of colleagues providing and receiving feedback on one another’s unit/subject outlines, assessment tasks and marking criteria to ensure that assessment is aligned to intended learning outcomes and includes a calibration process to ensure comparability of achievement standards and an opportunity for professional learning’. (Booth et al., 2015)

Benchmarking (Booth, 2013)

		Direction of Focus	
		Internal Formative	External Summative
Organisational Roles	Administrative Staff/Managers	1. Information <i>- Benchmarking of Data only</i>	2. Presentation <i>- Sector Benchmarking</i> <i>- Ranking</i>
	Faculty	3. Research for Improvement	4. Educational Research
	Senior Executives	<i>- Standards Benchmarking</i> <i>- Projects informed by research</i>	<i>- Standards Benchmarking</i> <i>- Projects informed by research and validated by external reference groups</i>



Calibration (2015)

1 International quality assurance agencies on peer review

International Support Mechanism in Peer Review

Support Network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ INQAAHE ✓ ENQA ✓ Global Quality Assurance Register ✓ European Quality Assurance Register [EQAR] ✓ Council of Higher Education Accreditation [CHEA] ✓ Asia Pacific Quality Network <p>Intergovernmental bodies [UNESCO]; national government agencies</p> <p>Global alliance of QA networks; accreditation councils and associations</p> <p>International network on benchmarking</p>
Effective Support Resources	<p>International online peer review tool</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Training Forums ✓ International fora <p>Global Quality Information Portal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Peer review panels <p>Benchmarking and calibration</p>
Policy Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ INQAAHE reviewed against Guidelines of Good Practice-: Alignment to 18 QA bodies ✓ ENQA reviewed against European Standards and Guidelines ✓ Global Quality Assurance Register in HE (GQAR) ✓ European Quality Assurance Register [EQAR) engaged in review of agencies ✓ CHEA: International Quality Principles ✓ Asia Pacific Quality Register (APQR)

Benchmarking and peer review [with calibration] –a possibility at the international level?

Benchmarking methodology has huge potential. APQN did a project a few years ago and we never got to evaluate. Methodology has lots of applications [*Academic Quality Agency, New Zealand*]

Really enjoyed it. Thanks for the organisation, one of the best organised events I have been to for a long time. Very useful when you are an external examiner and you learn more than you give [*National External Examiner*]

It was very valuable. TEQSA was set up as an arm's length, it is important for us to get out there and hear the collegial discussion. Devil is in the follow up, we will be looking to see if collegial discussion took place and were followed up by actions [*Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency*]

International benchmarking network ?

Trust all well with you. Thank you for the copy of final report and the efforts you and your team made to bring it all together. Very much appreciated.

Have there been any developments on establishing a benchmarking network? I ask as Portsmouth is looking at ways of gathering more insights and details on the strategies and activities outlined by Australian and NZ universities at our meeting in Hobart and wondered if a network could facilitate the process.

As well as being interested in how any network might continue to support development of international students' employability through the curriculum, we would be open to widening the brief to include developing and accrediting international students' enterprise and entrepreneurship.

2 **Benchmarking**

National Support Mechanism in Peer Review

Support Network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ TEQSA Transition Workshops in preparation for the revised Higher Education Standards Framework (2015) for Jan 1, 2017 ✓ University of Tasmania (UTAS), Education Services (ESA) Australia, Higher Ed Services (HES) <p>National benchmarking network College of Peers/ College of Experts</p>
Effective Support Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ National online peer review tool [UTAS online benchmarking tool] <p>National searchable clearinghouse in good practice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Peer Review Workshops <p>Register of Experts/Assessors/Reviewers Website</p>
Policy Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Higher Education Standards Framework (2015) ✓ TEQSA Guidance Note on benchmarking ✓ Alignment to reaccreditation and Private Providers

Australian Regulatory Context

Updated Higher Education Standards Framework (2015)

1.4.1: The expected learning outcomes for each course of study are specified, consistent with the level and field of education of the qualification awarded, and **informed by national and international comparators.**

5.3.1: All accredited courses of study are subject to periodic (at least every seven years) comprehensive reviews that are overseen by peak academic governance processes and **include external referencing and other benchmarking activities.**

5.3.4: Review and improvement activities include **regular external referencing of the success of student cohorts against comparable courses of study**, including:

- a. Analyses of progression rates, attrition rates, completion times and rates and, where applicable, comparing different locations of delivery, and
- b. The assessment methods and grading of students' achievement of learning outcomes for selected units within courses of study.**

7.3.3 **Information systems and records are maintained, securely and confidentially** as necessary to:

- b. Prevent unauthorised or fraudulent access to private or sensitive information, including information where unauthorised access may compromise academic or research integrity

Institutional Context: University of Tasmania

- Cycle 1 and Cycle 2 AUQA Audits
- Benchmarking Strategy 2016-2018.
- Academic Quality and Standards Committee approved three benchmarking priorities for 2016:
 - **Governance of third party arrangements;**
 - **Course Approval, Accreditation and Review Processes; and**
 - **Technology Enhanced Learning and Teaching.**
- Benchmarking Policy and Procedure
- Benchmarking Projects and Reports
- Online benchmarking tool
- Contract Research



Benchmarking Process



- Who is preparing the institutional context statements?
- What data and self review information will be shared?
- Where and when will the peer review take place?
- How long will the peer review workshop take?
- Who will coordinate the peer review?
- How will the benchmark partners contribute to the workshop?
- What evaluation strategies will be used?



Snapshot: HEA Benchmarking Project

1. University of Wollongong, Aust
2. University of Tasmania, Aust
3. University of Leicester, UK
4. Newcastle University, UK

Summary of Good Practice Benchmarks

(for full version, see [Promoting Teaching: Good Practice Benchmarks](http://www.promotingteaching.com) on www.promotingteaching.com)

Plans & policies

1. University plans
2. Promotion policies

Promotion applications

8. Forms and guidelines
9. Evidence
10. Systems

Perceptions & practices

3. University leaders
4. Leaders of academic units
5. Peers

Promotion committee

11. Membership
12. Preparation
13. Procedures
14. External input
15. Transparency

Promotion applicants

6. Career planning and advice
7. Academic mentors and supervisors

Outcomes & review

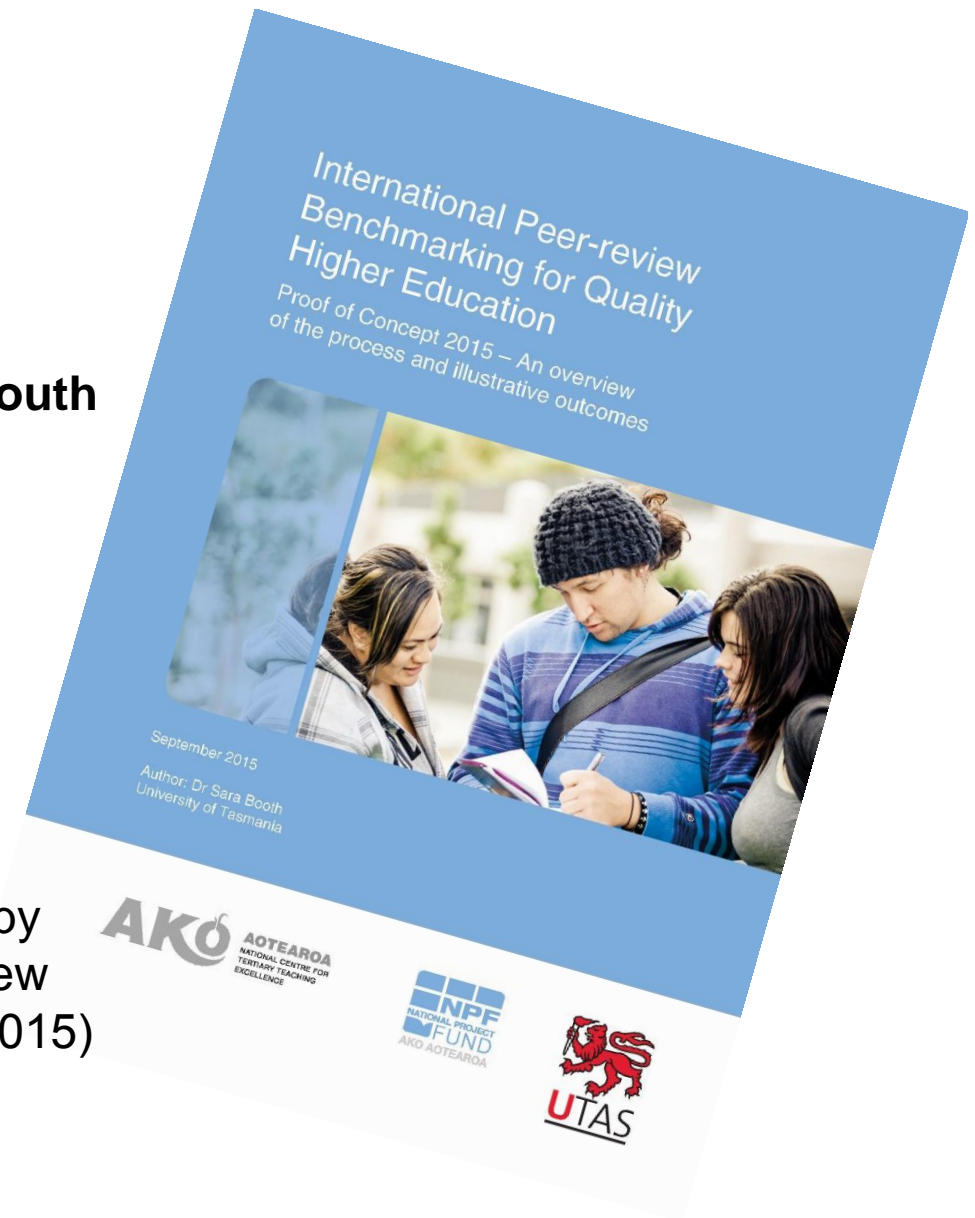
16. Equitable outcomes
17. Review cycle
18. Positive perception



Snapshot: Ako Aotearoa Benchmarking Project

1. Auckland University of Technology
2. Lincoln University
3. Birmingham City University
4. The Arts University Bournemouth
5. Swinburne University
6. University of Tasmania
7. Victoria University

- Repeated recommendation in Academic Audit reports conducted by the Academic Quality Agency for New Zealand's Universities (Cameron, 2015)



Snapshot: Ako Aotearoa Benchmarking Project

Teaching Quality

Participating universities: Birmingham City University, Swinburne University of Technology, University of Tasmania, and Victoria University (Australia)

Good practice

- Appropriate strategies, plans and policies in place for student achievement, academic standards and teaching quality
- Internal teaching awards
- Alignment of internal teaching awards to national awards
- Resources for online teaching
- Internal and external surveys to evaluate teaching
- Performance monitoring in annual and course reviews

Snapshot: Ako Aotearoa Benchmarking Project

Teaching Quality

Participating universities: Birmingham City University, Swinburne University of Technology, University of Tasmania, and Victoria University (Australia)

Areas for improvement/further development

- Reduce the number of strategies (all)
- BCU support for staff with poor quality teaching is a work in progress
- Swinburne is about to commence data modelling to identify unit metrics that can be used for course quality
- UTAS will undertake a mapping exercise with all teaching and learning policies to identify gaps
- VU needs to consolidate and complete work on policy renewal

Snapshot: Ako Aotearoa Benchmarking Project

Areas for sharing across the KPIs

- UK PSF Booklet [BCU]
- Committee on University Academic Programmes (CUAP) policies on approval, development and review [AUT and LU]
- National teaching standards discussion with UK, Australia and NZ

Snapshot: International Student Employability & Mobility Benchmarking Project 2015-2016


1. Edith Cowan University (ECU), Australia
2. Massey University, New Zealand
3. Memorial University of Newfoundland, Canada
4. Plymouth University, United Kingdom
5. Swinburne University of Technology, Australia
6. Ulster University, United Kingdom
7. University of Otago, New Zealand
8. University of Portsmouth, United Kingdom
9. University of

Australia China Business Council (ACBC)
 Australian Collaborative Education Network (ACEN)
 Australian Government Department of Education and Training
 CPA Australia
 Federal Group, Tasmania
 Hobart City
 High Commission of Canada
 Higher Education Academy (HEA)
 Higher Education Services (HES)
 Navitas
 Stornaway, Tasmania
 St Ann's Homes, Tasmania
 Tasmanian Government and Department of Education
 Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA)
 The Australian Industry Group (Ai Group)
 The International Education Association of Australia (IEAA)
 University of Auckland
 Universities Australia (UA)
 Universities New Zealand (UNZ)



Common areas for improvement for higher education organisations, government and industry resulting from the benchmarking process

- Restructure internships/placements to work with business
- Build capacity for more employers to participate in WIL
- Forum for international student employability [to be supported by HES, Universities Canada, Universities NZ, Universities UK]
- More coordination with different levels of government-local, national and international: see Memorial and Government of Newfoundland as an example of good practice. Swinburne and UOW have very strong local government relationships
- More opportunities for alumni to work with universities in mentoring arrangements
- Institutional IT support system for tracking WIL placements
- Better tracking of data for international students and student mobility
- Consideration of an international instrument for international students that can be used by this benchmarking group
- Consideration of establishing a benchmarking network on international student employability

Institutional Recommendations	Priority L, M, H	Responsible Person/s
<p>1. Develop a whole of university student employability strategy across all campuses, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clarify responsibilities and resourcing across the Executive portfolios, DVC Academic and DVC Global Strategy (1.1) Align University Education Committee and Internationalisation Committee strategies for employability, with inter faculty and inter unit collaboration between Associate Deans Education and International, and Graduate Career Development and Employability Unit (GCDE) & , International Engagement and Coordination (IEC) (1.1) Develop reporting systems and KPI measures linked to university and divisional strategic plans, and faculty accountability targets (1.1c) 	H	DVC Academic DVC Global Strategy
<p>1. Develop an institutional WIL plan aligned with the national WIL Strategy, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A central WIL office to drive the common strategy, synergising with faculty based activities (1.2d) Acquire web based systems to track, manage and report on WIL activities e.g. InPlace http://www.quantumit.com.au/products/inplace/ and Practera http://practera.com/login) [1.2c] Continue to develop student skills and understanding of workplace practice and culture, through programs such as  UNIVERSITY of Wollongong and the Certificate in Global Workplace Practice, and components embedded in degree programs (1.3) 	H	DVCA GCDE Vice Chancellor's Advisory Group (VCAG) of Senior Executives and faculty Executive Deans

Snapshot: Council of Higher Education Private Providers (COPHE)

Australian Academy of Design
Adelaide College of Divinity
Adelaide College of Ministries Inc.
Alphacrucis College
Australasian College Health & Wellness
Australian College of Physical Education
Australian Institute of Music
Australian Institute of Professional Education
Avondale College
Blue Mountains International Hotel Management School
Bond University
Campion College
Christian Heritage College
College of Law
Endeavour College of Natural Health
Excelsia College
Governance Institute Australia Ltd
International College of Management, Sydney
Institute of Internal Auditors - Australia
John Paul II Institute
Kaplan Business School
Macleay College
Marcus Oldham College
Martin Colleges (Study Group)

Montessori Institute
Moore Theological College
Morling College
Perth Bible College
Photography Studies College, Melbourne
SP Jain School of Global Management
Tabor College Adelaide
Tabor College Victoria
Tabor College Tasmania
The Tax Institute
TOP Education
Torrens University
Universal Business School Sydney (Group Colleges Australia)
University of Divinity
UOW College
Whitehouse Institute of Design, Australia
Australian College of Theology
Sydney College of Divinity

Snapshot: Council of Higher Education Private Providers (COPHE)

The aims of this national benchmarking project are to:

1. Compare first year transition support practices and pathways with HE institutions;
2. Compare student cohort data [retention, completion, attrition] in first year courses/programs/papers;
3. Compare student experience data in first year [for e.g. item student support in Student Experience Survey (SES) or other comparative survey data]

Four key outcomes for this benchmarking project include:

1. National workshop [16 & 17 June, 2016]. Day 1 is the AIR SIG Forum which ACER has kindly invited COPHE members to presentations from TEQSA, QILT, a session on private providers and universities; and a SIG Group for Private Providers. Day 2 will be hosted by Tabor Adelaide and will focus on presentations from the Department of Education on HEIMS data and student cohort analysis data and introduction to benchmarking project.
2. Peer review workshop: Areas of good practice, areas for improvement and areas for sharing [late October, 2016];
3. Final Report with individual recommendations for each institution [November, 2016];
4. Report to the COPHE Board and TEQSA.

Feedback from benchmarking workshops

- Meeting and connecting with so many universities and hearing what was going on in other countries
- The actual data collected was invaluable
- Excellent pre-workshop gathering of material which then informed a large amount of the conversation
- Contextualising provision and building confidence in QA judgements
- The wide variety of presentations from various stakeholders and panels to discuss and agree recommendations moving forward
- Collaboration with national and international peers to compare and contrast
- The collaborative nature of all participants and goodwill in sharing ideas and practices

3 **Peer Review of Assessment**

National Support Mechanism in Peer Review

Support Network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ University of Tasmania (UTAS), Education Services (ESA) Australia, Higher Ed Services (HES) ✓ Peer Review of Assessment Network ✓ College of Peers/ College of Experts
Effective Support Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ National online peer review tool ✓ National searchable clearinghouse in assessment ✓ Workshops/Masterclasses in peer review Register of Experts/Assessors/Reviewers ✓ Websites Journal
Policy Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Alignment to accreditation and Deans Councils ✓ Alignment to reaccreditation and Private Providers ✓ Alignment to reward and recognition ✓ Alignment to course review/course quality/teaching quality (Booth et al, 2015)

Universities Australia: An Agenda for Australian Higher Education 2013-2016: A smarter Australia

- Theme 1: Increase Australians' university participation
- Theme 2: Develop a globally engaged university sector
- Theme 3: A powerful research and innovation system that drives economic and social progress
- **Theme 4: Efficiency, investment and regulation**

University actions

- **Introduce external peer moderation of assessment standards**
- Integrate technologies to support teaching and enhance the student experience

Context setting: Peer review of assessment

Building capacity for peer review and evaluation of practice

Discipline Scholar Networks and Threshold Learning Outcomes projects

Quality Verification System (QVS), Innovative Research Universities (IRU), Academic Calibration Process; Achievement Matters (Watty et al., 2014); Inter-University Moderation Project (Krause et al., 2014); External Examiner System (UK)

Fitness of purpose and fitness for purpose of assessment: Emeritus Prof Geoff Scott: Peer review of program level outcomes (2015). Also builds on Scott's (2014) work on networks

Peer Review of Assessment Network (Booth, et al., 2015): national support mechanism for peer review of assessment; feedback also pointed to other forms of peer review

Ewan, C. & Freeman, M. (2015) Found evidence of improved assessment practices with the development of threshold learning outcomes (TLOs); the establishment of networks; and the important role Deans Councils play in leading efforts on academic standards. Yet, they also found three noticeable gaps: 1) the absence of non-self-accrediting and private providers in these academic quality projects; 2) the lack of an evidence base for quality assurance; and 3) the lack of external referencing.

Context setting: Peer review and evaluation of practice

Building capacity for peer review and evaluation of practice

HEFCE (2015) Report recommended strengthening the external examiner system through establishing a College of Peers process; also expressed interest in the use of online software

Recognising and rewarding teaching: Australian teaching standards and expert peer review: Emeritus Prof Denise Chalmers (2015): Pool of endorsed and training teaching and learning experts to carry out reviews

Professionalisation of the Academic Workforce 2020 (James et al., 2015): Trusted evaluation of professional practice could be strengthened and diverse opportunities for education and training for teaching in higher education could be strengthened

	Verification (eg. QVS, IRU)	Moderation (eg. LaTS)	Calibration & double blind (eg. AMA)
Primary intent	QA (& QE)	QA (& QE)	QA & QE
Scope	Selected final UoS	Selected final UoS	Selected degree standards/TLOs
Disciplines	Multiple (11)	Multiple (12)	Accounting
Level	Bachelor	Bachelor	Bachelor + Master
Reviewers	1 academic	1 academic per partner	2 anonymous academics +/- professionals (3 rd potentially)
Standards	Implicit in reviewers	Implicit in reviewers	Explicit (agreed nationally 2010)
Calibrated	Not explicitly	Not explicitly	Yes by workshops
Products viewed	Tasks (inputs) & outputs in final unit of study	Tasks (inputs) & outputs in final unit of study	Tasks (inputs) & outputs in degree evidencing standards
Data selection	Stratified	Stratified & de-identified	Random & de-identified
Sample outputs	12=3 per grade	4=1 per passing grade	Minimum 5 per agreed standard
Reviews	Manual submission files & aggregation	Manual submission files & aggregation	Online submission & auto aggregation
Authority	Institutional	Institutional	Disciplinary

Collaboration: University of Tasmania, Higher Ed Services and Education Services Australia



Value Proposition

Development of a secure online tool that will enable peer review of assessment between and within higher education institutions. A scalable solution that will underpin and support benchmarking, peer review networks, national compliance and industry accreditation



Value Proposition

Initial research has identified further potential benefits including:

- **Cost, time and resource efficiencies** compared to existing peer review processes
- Identification and promotion of **inter-institutional best practice**
- Facilitation of **reporting requirements** to TEQSA
- Alignment with **accreditation standards**
- **Data security:** data storage and data transfer
- **Scalable** and transferable peer review model



Institution Administrator – Dashboard

The screenshot displays the 'Institutions' section of the dashboard. On the left, a sidebar identifies the user as 'Sue Read' and their role as 'INSTITUTION ADMINISTRATOR'. The main content area shows the 'University of Tasmania' profile, including its address, email, phone, and fax. Below this, tabs for 'FACULTIES' and 'USERS' are visible, with a 'NEW FACULTY' button. A grid of six faculty cards is shown, each with a name, email, and a small eye icon.

Left Sidebar:

- Sue Read
- INSTITUTION ADMINISTRATOR
- Manage institution
- ANU Faculty
- Faculty of Nursing 3
- Faculty of Engineering
- Faculty of Nutrition
- Faculty of Nursing 1
- Faculty of Nursing 2
- Faculty of Law
- IT

Top Bar: ← Institutions

University of Tasmania #UoT

Address: , Churchill Avenue 7005 Hobart Tasmania Australia
Email: test@test.com
Phone: +61 3 6226 2999
Fax: +61 3 6226 2018

Tabs: FACULTIES | USERS


NEW FACULTY

Faculty Cards:

- ANU Faculty #ANU1 user@utas.edu.au
- Faculty of Nursing 3 #CONM sue.read@utas.edu.au
- Faculty of Engineering #FENG Sara.Booth@utas.edu.au
- Faculty of Nutrition #FNUT sue.read@utas.edu.au
- Faculty of Nursing 1 #UNF1 user@utas.edu.au
- Faculty of Nursing 2 #UNF2 Sara.Booth@utas.edu.au

Map: AUSTRALIA

Review Manager- Upload documents


Sue Read





REVIEW MANAGER ▾

Review Applications

Review Types




Question Templates

← Review Applications ?






DETAILSDOCUMENTSCOORDINATORSREVIEWERSREVIEWSWITHDRAWN

Marking criteria

Type	File Name	Size	Date	Download	Edit	Delete
pdf	food-waste-report.pdf	2167085	2016-03-03 7:47 am			

Drop files here to upload

Work samples

Type	File Name	Size	Date	Download	Edit	Delete
pdf	food-waste-report.pdf	2167085	2016-03-03 7:47 am			

Alpha Trial Feedback

Divergent experience: Some trial participants are less familiar with the peer review process than others. Professional development of peer review and the OPRT is welcomed.

Economies of scale: To save time, question templates could be reusable across faculties and/or pre-generated question templates could be available

Inter-institutional communication: The ability to communicate within the tool will enhance the effectiveness of the review process and allow for operational efficiencies.

User experience: Clearer process flow is needed for the different roles. Video tutorials are very helpful and preferred to user manuals

National Support Mechanism in Peer Review Institutional Level

Organisational Support and Resources

Training for External Assessors and Course Teams

Calibration Workshop



Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7
Accreditation	Peer review calibration		Peer review calibration			Reaccreditation

National Support Mechanism in Peer Review Discipline Level

Organisational Support and Resources

Training for External Assessors and Course Teams

Calibration Workshop



Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Accreditation	Peer review Calibration	-	Peer review Calibration	Reaccreditation

04 Digital Student Data Project

Universities Australia: An Agenda for Australian Higher Education 2013-2016: A smarter Australia

- Theme 1: Increase Australians' university participation
- Theme 2: Develop a globally engaged university sector
- Theme 3: A powerful research and innovation system that drives economic and social progress
- **Theme 4: Efficiency, investment and regulation**

University actions

- Introduce external peer moderation of assessment standards
- **Integrate technologies to support teaching and enhance the student experience**

- Collaborative effort involving Universities Australia's 39-member universities as well as all University New Zealand universities
- **Key Objectives:**
 - Credential integrity and security through the ability to provide third-parties with a verified document from a secure and trusted source reducing the need for the production and verification of hard copy documents and opportunities for fraud.
 - Productivity improvements for universities through streamlined academic record production and management and, most significantly, the ability for universities to provide and access secure academic records from local and, critically, international institutions via international nodes.
 - Student mobility and data portability through giving students control of their academic records in a form that is easily accessible and secure both locally and globally.

Lessons Learnt

- International/national/institutional support mechanisms for benchmarking and peer review
 - Benchmarking needs to move from an event to an institutional process with an overall strategy/policy/procedures.
 - Importance of evidence based decision making to drive quality improvement
 - Importance of closing the loop and demonstrated evidence of improvement
 - Efficient online benchmarking tool to collect data
 - Importance of networks for calibration and collaboration to validate outcomes
-
- To be successful there has to be bottom-up empowerment (Ellis & Moore, 2006)
 - Collaboration and openness (Sciulli, Smith & Ross, 2009)
 - Shared conversation and a form of peer development (Leppisaari et al, 2011)



Having two days to talk about excellence in teaching in such depth with such openness was an inspiration. For me, when I think of the last few days: all the hallmarks that OLT aspires to. I did have a deep belief that collaboration, particularly across institutions and internationally, is what builds innovation and leadership for innovation and I saw all that here today.

[Ako Aotearoa Benchmarking Project, 2015]

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