National support mechanism for peer review

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ALTA Forum
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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
Updated Higher Education Standards Framework (2014)

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.
Context setting: Peer review and evaluation of practice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Building capacity for peer review and evaluation of practice</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discipline Scholar Networks and Threshold Learning Outcomes projects</td>
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<tr>
<td>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)</td>
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<td>Fitness of purpose and fitness for purpose of assessment: Emeritus Prof Geoff Scott: <em>Peer review of program level outcomes</em> (2015). Also builds on Scott’s (2014) work on networks</td>
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<td>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</td>
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<td>Ewan, C. &amp; 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.</td>
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Context setting: Peer review and evaluation of practice

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<tr>
<td>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</td>
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<td>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</td>
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<td>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</td>
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Framework for Effective Use of Peer Review of Assessment

- Clear roles for different players, e.g. institutional and/or disciplinary coordinators
- Workshops for staff
- Training for peer review
- Honorarium

- Recognition in workload, probation, performance management, reward and recognition

- HE Institution Dimension
- Sector Dimension
- Discipline Dimension

- Online peer review tool [ESA]
- Workshops and forums [HES]
- National network in peer review [UTAS]
- Good practice principles in peer review

- College of Peers Process – Deans Councils & AD (L&T)
- Accreditation
- Program level outcomes and threshold learning outcomes projects
Sector dimension

- Online peer review tool [ESA]
- Workshops and forums [HES]
- National network in peer review [UTAS]
- Good practice principles in peer review

ACTIVITIES

- UTAS/ESA/HES website for network
- Signed collaborative agreement
- Shared services support model with two not-for-profit organisations: ESA and HES
  - External Reference Group: Good practice principles
- Monthly bulletins, subscription to network, workshops/forums [in progress]
- Subscription to online peer review tool and reporting [in progress]
- Link to other forums/networks

“Poor review is the responsibility of the provider not the regulator. We can’t meet standards without peer review. It is a very important part of the standards.”

[Emeritus Prof Alan Robson, Higher Education Standards Panel (HESP), 14th May, 2014]
Institution dimension

- Clear roles for different players, e.g. institutional and/or disciplinary coordinators
- Workshops for staff
- Training for peer review
- Honorarium

ACTIVITIES

✅ UTAS website for network-universities and private providers
✅ Monthly bulletins, subscription to network [in progress]
✅ Workshops/forums aimed at:
  - Quality directors/managers
  - Associate Deans (L&T)
  - Academics (peer reviewers and reviewees)
  - Academic Senates [in progress]

- Register and contact details for universities/private providers for peer review projects
✅ Institutional subscriptions to the network/online peer review tool [in progress]
Discipline dimension

- Online peer review tool [ESA]
- Workshops and forums [HES]
- National network in peer review [UTAS]
- Good practice principles in peer review

ACTIVITIES

✓ College of Peers process [in progress]
✓ Alignment to accreditation [in progress]
✓ TLOs
✓ Annual workshop on comparing program level outcomes/assessment across the sector [in progress]
✓ Calibration and discussion on discipline standards
Individual dimension

• Recognition in workload, probation, performance management, reward and recognition

ACTIVITIES
• Reward and recognition process for undertaking peer review
• Training peer reviewers/reviewees and aligning to course level outcomes
Participating HE institutions

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<td>Edith Cowan University</td>
<td>Adelaide College of Divinity</td>
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<td>Central Queensland University</td>
<td>Alphacrucis College</td>
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<td>Western Sydney University</td>
<td>Australian Institute of Professional Education</td>
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<td>Swinburne University</td>
<td>Avondale College</td>
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<td>RMIT</td>
<td>Eastern College Australia</td>
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<td>University of Tasmania</td>
<td>Harvest Bible College</td>
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<td>University of Wollongong</td>
<td>Moore Theological College</td>
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<td>QUT</td>
<td>SP Jain School of Global Management</td>
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<td>Curtin University</td>
<td>Griffith College</td>
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<td>James Cook University</td>
<td>ACDE</td>
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<td>Federation University</td>
<td>Tabor Adelaide</td>
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## Participating Deans Councils

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<th>Council</th>
<th>Universities</th>
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<tr>
<td>Australian Council of Deans of Education (ACDE)</td>
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<td>Australian Council of Deans of Information and Communications Technology (ACDICT)</td>
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<td>Deans Council of Nursing and Midwifery-Including the universities in list below:</td>
<td>Southern Cross University, University of Newcastle, Griffith University, Victoria University, RMIT, James Cook University, University of Western Sydney, University of Southern Queensland, University of South Australia, Federation University, Newcastle University, Latrobe University, Notre Dame University</td>
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<td>Australian Council of Engineering Deans (ACED)</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Council of Australasian Tourism Hospitality Education (CAUTHE)</td>
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Peer Review Process
Peer review of assessment and benchmarking

Workshop Questions:
1. Consider the draft peer review of assessment processes- what are the collaborative opportunities/challenges for implementation with ACDICT?

2. Consider the benchmarking procedure- what are the collaborative opportunities/challenges for implementation with ACDICT (Australia/New Zealand)?