

Unitec New Zealand Limited

Meeting of Te Poari Whai Kounga | Quality Alignment Board (QAB)

21 October 2020

Title	Programme Academic Quality Committee (PAQC) Reports to QAB
Provided by:	Steve Marshall, Lead, Quality Partnering, Te Korowai Kahurangi (TKK)
For:	APPROVAL

Recommendations

- That the Committee accepts seventeen (17) 3rd Quarter PAQC Chair's reports
- That the Committee accepts this summary review of received PAQC Chair reports and approves the recommendations made as a result of the review.
- That the Committee discusses the items identified by PAQC as requiring escalation and determine a response for each.

Purpose

The purpose of these PAQC Chair's Reports is to provide QAB with a clear understanding of the mahi that is being undertaken at PAQC level and to allow the QAB to have assurance that this mahi is contributing to outcomes for students and stakeholders, and that it is compliant.

The report also allows for a formal channel of escalation for any issues that the PAQC wishes to refer to the QAB. However, it is important to note that this is not the only channel for any such escalated issues.

Report Summary

PAQC Chair reports were received from 17 committees. The timeline for delivery of these reports was modified to better align with the cycles of PAQCs, however a number of reports were delivered after the due date which led to the late completion of this report.

Reports included in this submission are from the following PAQC's:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| • Applied Business | • Environmental & Animal Science |
| • Architecture | • Landscape and Interior Design |
| • Building Construction | • Language Studies |
| • Community Studies | • Medical Imaging |
| • Computing | • Nursing |
| • Design and Contemporary Arts | • Performing and Screen Arts |
| • Electrical & Mechanical Engineering | • Social Practice |
| • Engineering and Surveying | • Trades & Services |
| | • Unitec Pathways College |

No report received from the following:

- Bridging Education & Supported Learning

Summary Review

There is a general sense from this Quarter of reporting that the PAQCs are bedding down and are gaining confidence in their governance role. There is still a level of confusion surrounding the extent to which Governance should over-ride Management with some PAQCs reporting that they feel that they have little agency in a governance role for some areas where they have not received enough information to be able to consider.

There was a theme in the reports that some PAQCs feel their Agendas are not well aligned with the requirements of the QAB for reporting purposes, which leads to the requirements of these reports not being met due to there being no schedule of discussion in the meetings that occurred during the cycle. A particular point in this report is the request to discuss Research, which was not formerly formed part of any PAQC agenda presented this cycle.

A few of the Chairs have requested better guidance on who is responsible for the setting of Agenda items for committee meetings and have pointed out that there is very little emerging from other staff in the Schools, therefore there is a greater reliance on items coming in from the likes of QAB, TTK and elsewhere.

The 3rd Quarter reports cover four main areas along with a standard quality summary. The following represents an overview of each area:

1. Overview

General Committee Health Check

Most PAQCs have met more than once since the last report, including special meetings to consider and respond to the Interim Programme Evaluation Report (PEP).

Those PAQCs with programmes directly participating in the External Evaluation Review (EER) report that they feel prepared and ready for the challenge. This is based on solid preparation activities which includes the recently completed PEPs and the associated Ata Korero. The committees acknowledged the support from Te Puna Ako and Te Korowai Kahurangi which has been widely acknowledged as being collegially focussed and very supportive.

Student representation on Committees is improving with the majority of Committees reporting that Reps are now in place, if not yet attending regularly. The employment and associated HR process is still causing issues, however this is being looked into to find improvements. It is acknowledged that there are specific challenges for those PAQCs where programmes only run for 1 semester or out of sequence with standardised semesters.

Progress against Key Actions

The majority of committees have a work plan that is based on the outcomes of PEPs, Monitoring, Review and Professional Accreditation/Review report recommendations, as well as the risk register. Some PAQCs have asked for greater clarity around the nature of work planning for a 'governance' perspective given that the majority of the recommendations and action plans are managerial in nature, and are also being addressed in other for fora. There is a desire to align the various task lists into a single action plan that can be monitored, rather than updated in each meeting. Work is currently underway with TTK Quality Partners to simplify and clarify the work plans.

Risk Management

Committees regularly receive updates from Academic Programme Managers (APMs) on progress of actions to mitigate risk. There is a growing uptake of APMs using the reporting template to summarise key risks for the PAQCs. This is contributing to a deeper understanding for PAQC members and allows them to gain assurance of risk mitigation. As a consequence of the questions asked around risk in these reports, there was little reporting or analysis of any outstanding issues as the process of gaining assurance from APMs that the risks were mitigated was seen to be sufficient. Most PAQCs reported that there is adequate explanation for high and extreme ratings and that there are emerging plans to mitigate them.

Of those risks which were mentioned, the most consistent risk identified was around declining EFTS, and in particular the decline in International Students due to Covid restrictions. This was a particular concern for English Language programmes.

There was also an identified risk for *Students not adequately supported in their learning* based on low numbers of staff having completed the required Badges. PAQCs acknowledge this concern and refer the issue back to the HoS and APMs to work with staff to increase compliance.

One PAQC also noted concerns around student support in relation to enrolment and orientation advice with increasing numbers requesting extensions or special consideration due to pressures of full-time work. This is related to other concerns raised around student self-enrolment where some students were automatically able to enrol in 75 credits in a semester without approval, which was seen to result in increased failure rates due to high workload. This issue has already been addressed with a solution undertaken and reported elsewhere in this meeting's agenda.

There was also a risk identified regarding the assessment retention policy, with particular concern around electronic assessment material on Moodle. The PAQC reports that it is unclear for staff about how to manage the back-up of assessment and to gain access to historic assessment after a cycle has completed.

2. Student support and achievement

Priority Group Strategies

ISeeMe initiatives were reported as becoming well established in most programmes. While it was acknowledged that there was no real impact seen from the initiative in Student Course Completions (SCC) as yet, there is a growing body of anecdotal evidence from a range of staff, that students are engaging more as a result of ISeeMe actions. PAQCs were able to identify where there were weaknesses and have established action plans to address the issues. Reporting against the outcomes and associated action planning are located in PEPs.

A number of PAQCs report confidence that the resourcing of student support is comprehensive, and that this will enable the full implementation of ISeeMe, which in turn should assist with supporting students better. Committees generally reported that the relationship with MAIA/Pacific/LOP Centre is strengthening.

Some PAQCs have reported delays in rolling out strategies due to Covid.

Student Success

The second Covid19 lockdown affected the start of S2, 2020, and it has been reported by a majority of PAQCs that this has led to some students disengaging. It is forecast by many that this

may affect SCCs by end of the semester, even though staff are working well to support students to catchup.

However, some reports detailed a surprising increase in student success given the expectations of Covid disruptions. While there are a large number of Covid related deferred courses and grades, as well as an up-tick in APC applications, the general feeling is that these will result in improved student outcomes as they are resolved.

PAQCs report a significant drop in unreported grades other than those affected by Covid extensions.

Student Feedback

There is little substantive evidence from the majority of these reports that student feedback is being used for improvement and little to suggest that there are robust processes for reporting outcomes of feedback to students.

PAQCs again reported that response rates were quite low at the end of Semester 1, and PAQCs with programmes that do not follow the standard Unitec academic calendar cycle commented that there are specific issues for them in gathering data that is centrally driven around a timetable that does not suit their students (Languages and UPC in particular), or for students who were not on-campus and focused on course work at the time (MI, Nursing, Trades Apprenticeships, etc.).

Despite this commentary, there was confidence expressed that the outcomes of student feedback were being considered and acted upon. It was difficult for some PAQCs to gain insight into this as the evidence sits in CEPs and there is no structured approach to reporting at a whole of Programme level, other than in the PEPs which did not necessarily include this.

Some PAQCs, however, confirm that they are confident that student feedback is closing the loop with feedback to students on actions being taken, however a number cannot offer the same confidence. Those programmes that still employ paper-based in-class evaluations, and which employ multiple mechanisms including Head of School student fora, end-of-semester student feedback fora, student representation at PAQC and monitor interviews with students, report that they have greater confidence as the return rate is higher and can be actioned more immediately. It must be mentioned that Languages reports an excellent system for both gathering, responding to, and feeding back student feedback which may be reported more widely as a model for others.

3. Academic quality outcomes

Moderation

The majority of the reporting was around process rather than outcomes. The silence of the majority of reports on any *known issues* and or *mitigation plans* does not provide enough of a narrative to be able confirm that moderation results are either complimentary and not showing any issues; or if this is unknown. Further work is required to develop reporting structures that enable both the process and value of moderation to be captured.

PAQCs acknowledged that there are challenges for the completion of external moderation due to Covid, with a few commenting that they will slip behind in their cycle of moderation due to external partners being unable to complete the work.

Research

There was very little specific commentary which discussed Research outputs and how they contribute to learning. The recent Research Report was not discussed and research is not a standard item on the agenda of PAQCs.

Some PAQCs identified research outputs as a risk for some Degree programmes, however it was generally reported that Research Leaders in Schools were aware of the risk and were supporting staff well. Other programmes which are green lit in Research Tracking are confident in their activities.

4. Programme design, delivery and review

The following sections were only reported on if there was activity during the reporting period. Below are some highlights from the reports. The majority of these activities during the reporting period were reported in PEPs.

Course Evaluation and Planning

There is a marked up-tick in utilisation of the on-line CEP with most PAQCs reporting that they are aware of the CEPs being started by teachers for Sem 2, 2020. However, some indicated that they are not confident that CEPs are being fully used as a basis for reflection, evaluation and decision making.

A small number of Schools reported that there is still resistance from some staff to change from word versions to the on-line version of the CEP.

Programme Evaluation and Planning (PEP)

The PAQCs have recently approved the interim PEPs and their feedback is incorporated in each report. There was general feedback that there is an emerging confidence in the PEP process including the use of Āta-kōrero conversations. There was a specific mention of the assistance from TKK Quality Partners for evaluation of the PEPs in PAQC processes.

The process of evaluating the PEPs in the PAQC still requires improvement as in some instances the PEPs were delivered so late, that an acceptable level of reflection and analysis was not possible given the required deadlines. That said, there were examples of good practice, where some PAQCs fielded out PEPs to individual members to independently review. These members then fed back their findings to the full committee who asked questions of APMs and then entered their evaluation. This was seen as an efficient use of the committee resource.

There is a general request for the template for the 2020 final PEP to be distributed sooner rather than later, to allow the PAQC to familiarise themselves with the requirements in advance.

Degree Monitoring

Reporting focussed mainly on the activity of completing Monitors visits that were scheduled during the reporting period, with little discussion about any value or outcomes.

A large number of Monitoring visits have occurred during this cycle as Programmes play catch-up on the delays due to Covid in Semester 1. The majority of these visits have provided very positive feedback, and most are still awaiting the finalisation of the reports prior to the PAQC responses being confirmed.

One programme did not receive a Monitors Report from 2019 despite their best efforts to continually communicate with the Monitor. As a result, they will be changing their Monitor for 2020.

Consistency Review

Those programmes that undertook Consistency Review in 2020 report gratitude for the support received from TKK in the preparation of their reviews. All consistency reviews held in this reporting cycle have been positive and some have had verbal feedback from the assessment panels that their presentations were excellent, however there was little discussion about how the learning from the review would be incorporated into improving learner outcomes.

There is little evidence of ongoing preparation for future consistency reviews from those programmes that are required to gather data every year. In part this is due to a lack of centralised planning and support. A 'graduate outcomes' project is currently underway to establish a set of guidelines and to create support mechanisms.

Professional Accreditation/Other

There was no activity during this reporting cycle, with some Programmes preparing for review next cycle.

Stakeholder Engagement

Some Industry Advisory Committee (IAC) activity was noted as having occurred in the reporting period, however there was little or no discussion about outcomes from these meetings, or how any outcomes are used to improve programme outcomes.

Programme Review

Programmes scheduled for 5-year review in this reporting cycle have either completed or are nearing completion. A number of reviews have been postponed due to Covid. No outcomes of completed reviews were discussed.

Graduate Outcomes

Some reports mentioned the process for gathering data about graduate outcomes, however there was little discussion regarding the outcomes themselves. The Graduate Outcomes project may assist in providing better data in the future for this discussion to occur.

5. Escalations

The following have been drawn from specific issues noted in reports and collated into themes. These have been raised to the QAB for advice and resolution.

1. Assessment retention policy – A definitive process needs to be created and communicated for staff to ensure the retention of Moodle based assessment that enables samples to be easily retrieved at any time by any staff member.
2. Student Course Evaluation Surveys – Further clarification is required around the nature of the questions and the possibility of modified versions for each level and/or type of qualification, including those that run over half of the semester (as in NZDB5) or outside semester timetables (NZCRE) which have been left out of the usual survey timing.
3. Academic Service Time Allocation for Committee Members - Improvements are required to be made to ensure greater engagement in pre-meeting review of agenda and documentation by increasing academic service time allocation for members in 2021.

4. SEATS issues cause ongoing workload issues for staff - The constant non- performance of digital tracking needs to be addressed as it is causing frustration for everyone from HOS, APM, DL, Staff, LOP and importantly the students.

Actions already underway:

1. Moderation reporting being centralised to include both process and value.
2. Credit limits for self-enrolment to be established.
3. Graduate Outcomes project underway to ensure mechanisms for gathering timely and regular data for programme review and improvement

Attachments

PAQC Chair's reports from the following Committees:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| • Applied Business | • Environmental & Animal Science |
| • Architecture | • Landscape and Interior Design |
| • Building Construction | • Language Studies |
| • Community Studies | • Medical Imaging |
| • Computing | • Nursing |
| • Design and Contemporary Arts | • Performing and Screen Arts |
| • Electrical & Mechanical Engineering | • Social Practice |
| • Engineering and Surveying | • Trades & Services |
| | • Unitec Pathways College |
-