Unitec New Zealand Limited

Meeting of Te Poari Whai Kounga | Quality Alignment Board (QAB)
10 March 2021

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 ten (10) 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 10 committees. The timeline for delivery of these reports was modified to better align with the cycles of PAQCs, however a number of reports were unable to be delivered by the due date with various reasons cited such as lockdown disturbances and high teaching preparation workload for some PAQC Chairs.

It is important to note that no cycle of reporting has ever received all reports by the due date, which puts additional pressure on the writer of this summary as well as inhibiting the Boards ability to understand and have confidence in the mahi of the PAQC's.

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

- Applied Business
- Architecture
- Community Studies
- Computing
- Design and Contemporary Arts
- Electrical & Mechanical Engineering
- Landscape and Interior Design
- Language Studies
- Medical Imaging
- Trades & Services

Report were not received from the following:

- Bridging Education & Supported Learning
- Building Construction
- Engineering and Surveying
- Environmental & Animal Science

- Nursing
- Performing and Screen Arts
- Social Practice
- Unitec Pathways College

Summary Review

The main focus for the first report of 2021 was to reflect on the function and governance of the PAQC during 2020 with a view to acknowledging what went well and what needed improvement. Of particular note with regard to what went well was the way that the PAQC's continued to operate under the constraints of lockdown during the first half of 2020. Understanding how a meeting may be held in a meaningful way via on-line tools was a useful outcome of the situation that we found ourselves in. Some PAQC's continue to mix the modes as required to ensure that there is maximum representation at each meeting.

The 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

What is working well?

There was a general feeling that a good committee culture was developing with members becoming faster at moving through agendas and engaging more readily with the materials as they become more comfortable with their roles within the committee structure.

Student representation on committees is embedding well and providing useful insight into the business of the committee. It is noted however that there is still an outstanding issue related to the employment and payment of Student Reps. Therefore, not all PAQC's have established and consistent student representation.

During 2020 PAQC support for PEP and interim PEP has improved with an improved level of self-evaluation.

Making time and space for school champions (industry, priority group support) to report progress.

The establishment of the PAQC Chair Forum was seen as a very positive development during 2020 with direct support being given to Chairs to enable constancy across all committees.

What improvements have been/will be made for 2021?

Further work can be done with a number of committees to provide some 'critical friend' perspective training for the senior academics on committees who are still unsure of their mandate within the

committee with regard to asking questions about programmes where the subject of their questioning is in effect their line manager.

There is still some confusion regarding the 'power' that the PAQC has to make demands of programmes and individuals and there needs to be further conversation regarding the role of intervention versus enquiry.

One PAQC suggested that a priority for 2021 would be to create more space at PAQC for discussion by employing delegated approvals by role holders such as APM or by PAQC chair action between meetings so that the PAQC meeting space is clearer.

What support is required (actions required) to achieve these improvements?

The main theme in this area was to continue the development of committee members with regard to understanding their role in the committee and the role of governance.

Risk Management

Given the delivery date of these reports coinciding with the first Lockdown of 2021, there was a focus in the reports on ongoing preparation and contingency planning for any future disruptions to teaching due to further lockdowns.

PAQC's report that they are regularly reviewing the register, however there is an inconsistent approach to the completion of the register itself, therefore there is a concern about the value of the Committees reviewing them. Some committees report that they are still struggling to understand their role in reviewing the register and this will be passed on to others to offer assistance. The actual outcomes of risk are dealt with via the Risk Assessment report, therefor this summary report will not dwell on the content of the register.

2. Student support and achievement

Priority Group Strategies

Each PAQC reported on initiatives and activities being undertaken in their Schools which give each committee assurance that strategies are being undertaken and that they should expect to see improved student engagement, performance and achievement during 2021. There was acknowledgement that not as much improvement as expected was achieved during 2020, however this was deemed to be symptomatic of the unusual nature of lockdowns and disruption to learning caused by Covid. Individual reports go into detail about the initiatives that working for them.

Student Feedback

Student course evaluation continue to be regarded as a problem by the majority of PAQC's. While Ako Ahimura have been tasked with addressing some of the known issues, it must be noted that this is a recurring issue being raised in every report for the past year.

They report that they are not assured that the process for gaining student feedback is adequate. Low response rates continue to impact the ability to draw meaningful conclusion. This view is based on reviewing the last 3 semesters. It is reported that programmes have attempted to improve student engagement with the online survey with a range of strategies including blocking class time to do the survey, however they report that the response rates are not significantly shifting.

There is also continued concern among those programmes that do not follow the standard semester structure that there students remain excluded from the process.

It is noted by some that student survey reports are available very late, and by that date, to collate and action any feedback it is too late and students have gone. Staff did not get reports in sufficient time and there is little evidence that there is consideration or action.

Some School still employ paper-based surveys which are not specifically supported administratively, and which create additional reporting requirements, however it is demonstrated that the engagement by students with paper-based in-class surveys far outstrips the percentage completion rates for on-line surveys.

Some Schools have suggested that a revised and resourced SGID system should be explored to ensure deeper evaluation of a snapshot of courses for each cohort.

3. Academic quality outcomes

Moderation

The majority of the reporting was around process rather than outcomes with the majority of committees reporting that Moderation is happening according to plan. Moderation planning is being migrated to a centralised reporting source over the course of this semester and will become more visible for all staff to assist them to prepare well in advance when their course is scheduled.

The quality of both internal and external responses to moderation were noted by some as being variable and there is an overall desire to establish a more robust collaborative structure for end of course moderation with colleagues from other subsidiaries of Te Pūkenga.

Research

Generally, PAQC's are confident about the compliance of all programmes based on the status allocated by the research office, however the question of assuring that all level 7 and above programmes are taught by research active staff is unable to be answered in any deliberate way as there is currently no formal process for this advice to be shared with PAQC.

One PAQC drew a percentage weightage from their overall ratings to establish that 79% of their staff were 'green lit' however this is not confirmed for each individual programme as it is based on whole of School rating figures.

4. Programme design, delivery and review

Course Evaluation and Planning
There is a growing confidence that the CEP is becoming a better tool for managing quality of courses, and that the feedback and resulting changes noted in CEP are being made in a timely and transparent way. It was noted that some information included in the CEP, such as those suggesting programme improvements are not easily transferred to the programme improvement forms, therefore the evidence that exists in the CEP for any suggest change is needing to be copied and repeated between platforms. There is a concern that if a change suggested in a CEP by a lecturer who no longer teaches a course is in danger of being lost as it is unclear how to ensure that the data transfers to the correct place.

Programme Evaluation and Planning (PEP)

Preparation for the 2020 End of year PEP is well underway with each PAQC scheduling a dedicated meeting to review them prior to submission.

Degree Monitoring

PAQC's reported that Monitor reporting for 2020 was completed within agreed timelines and was generally very complimentary of the programmes and their outcomes.

All recommendations from Monitors reports are included in the PAQC work plan and regularly reviewed. A summative review of actions is scheduled to be part of the forthcoming PEP process. However some Committees have not yet received reports and responses due to the late scheduling of visits during 2020.

Preparation for Monitoring in 2021 is on track and is reported in an associated QAB agenda item.

Consistency Review

Those programme who engaged in Consistency Reviews during 2020 are reported in full in the Consistency report in this meeting. Some improvements in the gathering of data for Consistency have been reported with more use of Alimni channels being used.

Professional Accreditation/Other

For the information of the committee, a number of Programmes will be undergoing a Professional Accreditation exercise this year. These includes:

- Combined Bachelor of Engineering Technology and NZ Diploma in Engineering (aligned with Monitor visit)
- Bachelor of Nursing (aligned with Monitor visit)
- Bachelor of Teaching ECE
- Combined Bachelor of Architectural Studies and Master of Architecture Professional (aligned with Programme Review)
- Bachelor of Landscape Architecture (aligned with Programme Review)
- Master of Osteopathy (aligned with Monitor visit)

Stakeholder Engagement

Some committees provided assurance that their stakeholder engagement activities are robust and are supporting delivery of their programmes. However, some expressed concern that there is still no direct link between activity and improvement for programmes and students. There is a general feeling that the link between the activities of Stakeholder Engagement and its direct effect on teaching and learning is not explicit.

It is important to note that some programmes have demonstrated strong links with industry with regard to recent new programme developments and also programme changes. This suggests that when there is a specific need to demonstrate the connections, that this can be done, however it is the BAU that seems to be less visible.

Programme Review

A number of Programme Reviews are scheduled for 2021 and are included in the tracker for that activity. There were no specific issues cited from any of the Programme Reviews which occurred

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. The Chairs have requested guidance from QAB as to the levels of their responsibility. While some activities require the signature of the chair, the overall authority of both the Chair and the PAQC in general is not clear. This is especially so for teaching staff. There is a perceived conflict of interest with APMs reporting to members of the PAQC who are reporting to the APMs.

2. Committees expressed concern about the establishment of the ongoing supporting role known as LOP and would like to seek some assurance that this key role will continue to build on the excellent work undertaken during 2020.

Please note that identified 'risks' that are recorded in the risk register are not carried forward into this section.

Associated actions:

1. With the changing membership of committees and the establishment of new roles in each School, the Chairs have expressed a desire to create specific support and training in QA matters, over and beyond the function of the PAQC, for new programme co-ordinators.

2. Architecture noted that there is a need for support around MCD/Course Descriptors. They have identified a historical legacy of un-recorded changes and recorded changes by persons outside of the School. There are variations and changes that do not align with their understanding of what these documents should contain. TKK is assisting the School in this review.

Attachments

PAQC Chair's reports from the following Committees:

- Applied Business
- Architecture
- Community Studies
- Computing
- Design and Contemporary Arts
- Electrical & Mechanical Engineering
- Landscape and Interior Design
- Language Studies
- Medical Imaging
- Trades & Services