

Australian Universities Quality Agency Ltd
ACN 092 938 200

Minutes of AUQA Board Meeting 2005/2

10.00am 22 June 2005

AUQA Board Room
Level 10, 123 Lonsdale Street
Melbourne, VIC 3000

1. **ATTENDANCE**

Present

Professor Deryck Schreuder (Chair)
Mr Bill Burmester
Ms Stella Axarlis
Rev. Mark Harding
Mr Clive Hildebrand
Professor James McWha
Professor Ingrid Moses
Professor Millicent Poole*
Professor Peter Sheehan*
Mr Terry Werner
Dr David Woodhouse

* Directors Poole and Sheehan attended by teleconference

Apologies

None

In attendance (for all or part of the meeting)

Dr Jeanette Baird (AUQA)
Ms Dorte Kristofferson (AUQA)

Secretariat

Mr Robert Carmichael

The Chair welcomed those in attendance, and in particular welcomed Director Werner to his first meeting of the AUQA Board.

It was noted that although some of the papers were marked 'confidential' that they were appropriate for discussion within AUQA and that those in attendance were welcome to stay for those items.

2. **MINUTES OF MEETING 2005/1**

The Board **confirmed** the Minutes of meeting 2005/1 held on 24 March 2005.
(Previously circulated)

3. **MATTERS ARISING NOT LISTED ELSEWHERE ON THE AGENDA**

The Chair indicated that the overview paper on regional and inter-regional links requested last meeting had been included for discussion under this item. The Chair thanked the ED and AUQA staff for preparing the Paper. There was a discussion on the salient issues of the global, regional, and inter-regional contexts that held particular significance for the forthcoming review of AUQA.

4. AUDIT MATTERS

4.1 Audits 2004

The Board received and **noted** Paper AB2005/2/4.1 being a report on the 2004 audit program, and including summary feedback reports for Bond University; Charles Sturt University; and Deakin University.

4.2 2005 Audits

The Board received Paper AB2005/2/4.2 being a report on the 2005 audit program and **noted** progress with the planning and implementation of the current round of audits.

4.3 Audits 2006

The Board received **Confidential** Paper AB2005/2/4.3 being a report on the planned audit program for 2006. With respect to the proposed audit of the Australian College of Theology in 2006, it was **agreed** that a statement should be added to the schedule to indicate that this audit was subject to the arrangements being developed by DEST for the auditing of NSAs for HESA purposes.

Action: Executive Director

4.4 Review of Audit Findings

The Board received **Confidential** Paper AB2005/2/4.4 and attachment, being a Draft Report of the review of AUQA audit findings prepared by Professor Susan Holland, a paper that was held over from the previous meeting. There was detailed discussion on the nature of the report and its key findings, and noting that unlike the earlier Martin Report which had been prepared for publication, the Holland report had been prepared purely for the consumption of the Board. On this basis the Draft Report was **approved**. It was also **agreed** that AUQA should do a meta-analysis of the research quality issues raised in the Holland Report, and that a statement of what AUQA had done in relation to research quality should be communicated to Sir Gareth Roberts as part of the RQF consultations.

Action: Executive Director / J Baird

5. CHAIR'S REPORT

The Chair gave an oral report, covering four observations that he wished to bring to the Board's attention:

- That the strategic issues were becoming more and more significant for the Board's attention;
- That he was detecting that there was a range of views about AUQA's role being put in the current higher education policy debates;
- That international practises and partnerships was a critical area for concern for AUQA, and that the Board had a role to credential the agency's overseas operations; and that
- When in Mauritius and South Africa (SA) recently, the Chair took the opportunity to learn more about the SA quality assurance system for universities, and encouraged Directors to engage with SA universities and the SA Quality Agency.

6. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

The Board received Paper AB2005/1/06 and attachments, being a report from the Executive Director on AUQA activities since the last report. The Executive Director led directors through the report by drawing attention to specific items.

The Executive Director reported on the business covered at the 2005 AGM that was held on 20 April and tabled a letter sent to the members of AESOC dated 14 June, and an attached paper, clarifying certain aspects of AUQA's Activities and advising the members that this paper would be received by the directors at AB2005/2. With respect to the participation of the members at future AUQA AGMs it was **agreed** that, if it was not the State or Territory Minister who would attend, then the most senior person responsible for higher education in that State or Territory should attend.

Action: Executive Director

It was also suggested that the ED should investigate whether it would be possible to synchronise the holding of future AGMs to coincide with meetings of AESOC or MCEETYA, or perhaps with any dinner or luncheon being organised for those events, that would provide an opportunity for AUQA directors to meet with the members.

Action: Executive Director

Director Hildebrand also suggested that a non-executive Director should also attend the AGM as a matter of course, and this was **agreed** to.

Action: Executive Director / Board Secretary

Finally, with respect to item 38 in the ED's report, it was noted that the Media Policy was in need of revision. It was **agreed** that a revised draft version would be circulated with the draft Minutes and put on the agenda for approval at the next meeting.

Action: Executive Director / J Baird

7. FINANCE MATTERS

7.1 Financial Statements

The Board received paper AB2005/2/7.1 and Statements being the Financial Statements to the end of May 2005 and Directors' Report. The Executive Director explained that when the deficit shown had the audit fees and DEST grant added it came back close to the budgeted figure, and this was **noted** by the Board.

7.2 Finance Committee matters

The Executive Director reported that the budget increases from MCEETYA shown are from July 2006, and not 2005 as indicated by MCEETYA in their letter, and this was **noted**. There were no other Finance Committee matters for consideration by the Board.

8. AUQA POLICY AND BOARD ISSUES

8.1 Review of AUQA

8.1.1 Board's Self-Assessment

The Board received Paper AB2005/2/8.1.1 and Attachments, being the results of the Board self-review, deferred from the last meeting. After discussion of how to proceed, it was **agreed** that after minor changes to the questionnaire, including an additional item and the adoption of a three point scale, the survey will be distributed and the Chair will contact Directors for 'one-to-one' interviews and to bring a report back to the final meeting of the Board for 2005 in November.

Action: Executive Director & Director Hildebrand; Chair

8.1.2 Self-Review and External Review of AUQA

The Board received **Confidential** Paper AB2005/2/8.1.2 and Attachment, being a report on the Self-Review and External review of AUQA. The Chair invited the Executive Director to introduce the item. He described the current status of the self-review process and then asked Audit Director Dorte Kristoffersen to take the Board through the major issues pertaining to the External Review.

There followed a detailed discussion about the suitability of the proposed names on the long list of external reviewers and why they had been selected. The Board also received a tabled 'Request For Tender' (RFT) document to advertise for an external secretariat to service the external review.

After due consideration of the suitability of the individuals proposed, and the nature of the tasks involved, the Board **approved** the long list of reviewers for submission to the Members and agreed that tenders be invited for the role of secretariat.

Action: Executive Director / Dorte Kristoffersen

8.2 AUQA Policies

The Board received Paper AB2005/2/8.2 and Attachment being guidelines on AUQA's involvement in activities for Australian institutions: Guidance on specific requests for AUQA participation. The Executive Director spoke to the paper and after discussion of the intent of new policy, subject to minor amendments it was **approved** as providing an appropriate set of general principles. It was also **agreed** that the examples that had been embedded in the paper to aid its discussion at the Board should be removed.

Action: Executive Director / J Baird

8.3 AUQA Object 4

The Board received paper AB2005/2/8.3 and Attachment, being a progress report on Addressing Object 4. It was clarified that the final report would ultimately have to go the Members through MCEETYA. In this respect, it was suggested that should the final report contain strong recommendations concerning changing AUQA's current role in the sector that there might also need to be some changes made to AUQA's constitution, and it was **agreed** that should this need to happen, that this would also have to be a matter for approval by MCEETYA.

Action: Executive Director

8.4 AUQA Cycle 2 Audits

The Chair introduced the item by outlining the main questions about the shape of Cycle 2 and their convergence with issues arising from the review of AUQA. There followed a lengthy discussion about the various options canvassed in the paper and other issues raised by Directors in the course of the debate. One such issue was that if cycle 2 were to involve 'thematic' audits, 'themes' should not be defined as areas of content (such as specific disciplines), but as topics that relate to aspects of Quality Assurance.

It was **agreed** that the Cycle 2 Options document should be further refined taking into account the evolving climate, and developed as a discussion document for consultation with the sector.

Action: Executive Director

8.5 Board Membership

The Board **noted** that Mr Ian Hawke, Director, Office for Higher Education, Queensland, had been nominated to replace Ms Leigh Tabrett on the Board, and that Mr Hawke's name would go forward to the Members for formal approval.

8.6 AUQA Occasional Publications Editorial Board

The Board received Paper AB2005/2/8.6 and Attachment, being an initial report from the AUQA Occasional Publications Editorial Board. The Chair invited Dr Jeanette Baird, the AUQA Audit Director with carriage of responsibility for AUQA publications to speak to the paper.

There followed a discussion of what exactly AUQA was trying to achieve by the occasional publications initiative, and whether it in any way compromised AUQA's quality audit role within the sector. It was **agreed** that some details of the proposal currently before the AUQA Board needed to be thought about further, and that the Directors of the Editorial Board would review the current Paper, taking into account the issues raised at this meeting.

Action: Jeanette Baird/Director Harding

9. DEST MATTERS

9.1 AUQA Responses to Issues Papers

The Board **noted** that it had already received the Papers in question by distribution prior to the meeting, for discussion under various items on the agenda, as appropriate.

9.2 Strategic Assessment Group

The Board received Paper AB2005/2/9.2 and Attachment being an update on the work of the Strategic Assessment Group (SAG). It was **noted** that, as discussed earlier under the 'Self Review and External Review of AUQA' and the 'AUQA Cycle 2 Audits' items above, there had been some recent developments on a number of fronts, all of which hold implications for the strategic positioning of AUQA in the emerging higher education policy environment. The Board also received an oral report from Director Sheehan on the current situation re the development of the RQF, noting the implications for AUQA's role. The Chair thanked Director Sheehan for the report.

It was stated that the current SAG position paper needed to be reworked somewhat, in order to put more emphasis on what needed to be done to establish a stronger national QA framework for the sector, and to re-affirm that AUQA as the independent quality audit authority is a 'keystone' within this structure, and that its current role should therefore be further enhanced and built upon.

It was **agreed** that SAG would consider further input from Director Burmester in order to broaden the paper in this way, and that the revised paper would then be presented to the Members.

Action: Strategic Assessment Group

9.3 Non Self-Accrediting Institution audits

Because the papers for the next meeting of the NSAI Working Group had not been received by the time of the AUQA Board meeting, Directors received an oral progress report on the work of the Group from Mr Robert Carmichael, the serving AUQA representative.

Mr Carmichael reported that AUQA had agreed to participate in the trialling of two of the audit Models, but that it was not yet clear whether there would be a trial for each of the three proposed models. Director Burmester cautioned against the premature notification of any audits involving NSAs until after the trialling arrangements had been discussed by the Working Group.

10. AUSTRALIAN UNIVERSITIES QUALITY FORUM

The Board received Paper AB2005/2/10 being a proposal to introduce a prestigious Quality Award for presentation at AUQF 2006.

After a discussion of the advantages and the disadvantages of AUQA being identified with the making of such an award, and considering possible names for the award, it was agreed by those present to **approve** the announcement of the 'Australian Higher Education Quality Award' at AUQF 2005, for presentation at AUQF 2006 in Perth.

Action: Martin Carroll

11. OTHER BUSINESS

As there were no other items of business raised by Directors, the Chair thanked all Directors for their contributions, and noting his recently announced new appointment, especially Director Burmester for his contributions while serving on the Board.

12. PROPOSED MEETING DATES 2005 AND TIME OF MEETINGS

Meeting No. 3 **7 September** – 10.00am (AEST)

Meeting No 4 **22 November** – 10.00am (AEST/DST)

Signed:.....

Chair AUQA Board.....

Date:.....