

National and Institutional Drivers for Quality Assurance and Assessment – An Australian Perspective

Professor Charles Webb
Deputy Vice Chancellor, Teaching & Learning
Charles Darwin University, Australia

Quality Assurance and Assessment in Australia Higher Education - Where From?

- Pioneering the transition from elite to mass higher education
 - Increased number and diversity of University providers
 - Increased number and diversity of participants
- Pressures to seek commercial opportunities
 - Alignment with industry needs
- Increased activity in the international marketplace
- Challenges for the efficacy of institutional quality controls
- Promoted the need for a rigorous, internationally recognised national higher education quality assurance framework

Elements of Australia's Current HE Quality Assurance Framework

- Australian State and Territory Governments
 - Legislate the establishment of universities and exercise QA responsibilities standardised in the National Protocols for Higher Education Approval Processes
- Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF)
 - A public register of endorsed post compulsory education providers and comprehensive system of qualifications titles and standards
- Universities
 - Self accrediting bodies responsible for maintaining the quality of their own academic standards
- Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA)
 - Principal national quality assurance agency in higher education with responsibility for quality audits of higher education institutions
- Commonwealth Government
 - Legislative framework
 - Performance Management Tools (GDS and CEQ)
 - Learning and Teaching Performance Fund
 - Institutional Assessment Framework

Current Challenges and Future Drivers in Australian Higher Education – Where to?

- Bradley review of Australian Higher Education
 - Australia falling behind in participation and vital need for more qualified and skilled people in the workforce
 - Increased participation to be met from currently under-represented equity group cohorts
 - Indications that quality of the educational experience is declining and the established mechanisms for assuring quality nationally need updating
- Initial Commonwealth Government response to Bradley review
 - Commitment to significantly increase proportion of young Australians with a university qualification
 - Creation of a new student-centred, demand-driven higher education system and a demand driven funding system
 - New approach to quality assurance, accreditation, and regulation. with establishment of a national regulatory and quality agency for higher education,
 - Agency will accredit all providers and carry out audits of standards and performance,
 - Establish objective and comparative benchmarks of quality and performance and collect richer performance data in areas such as selection, retention, exit standards, and graduate outcomes

Institutional Responses to Future QA environment – Charles Darwin University (CDU)

- Post Bradley challenges and opportunities for CDU
 - Institutional context,
Age, size, location and nature of constituents
Rapid change in delivery mode and quality control challenge
- Strategic responses
 - Whole of institutional commitment to best practice flexible delivery
 - Strong emphasis on technology enabled resource based provision and learning outcomes focus
 - Strong strategic partnership with *Blackboard Australia Pty Ltd*
 - Imminent move to implementation of Blackboard Learn
 - Extensive use of Blackboard training consultants
 - Introduction of Blackboard Community System
 - Australian first pilot of Blackboard Outcomes System
 - Institutional planning
 - Assessment tracking and reporting