

THE UNIVERSITY OF
NEW SOUTH WALES



**Australian Universities Quality Agency Audit
of
University of New South Wales
July 2005**

***UNSW Progress Report
October, 2007***

Background:

The University of New South Wales (UNSW) was audited by the Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA) in October 2005, after the University submitted its Performance Portfolio based on an institutional self-assessment in July 2005. AUQA published its Audit Report in March 2006. Since that time, UNSW has been addressing the Affirmations and Recommendations identified in the Report, together with issues identified by senior management at UNSW in the text of the Audit Report and issues considered as improvement priorities in the UNSW Performance Portfolio. Progress on implementation has been tracked in the UNSW AUQA Action Plan, under the auspices of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) in consultation with the Vice-Chancellor and all members of the Executive Team, with regular reports being provided to the Executive Team and to Council.

This Progress Report provides an account of what has been achieved to date with regard to the Affirmations and Recommendations in the AUQA Report, what actions are still outstanding and what actions are proposed in the future. Most of the findings of the institutional self-assessment and the AUQA Audit Report have already been addressed either having been completed or embedded in the ongoing management of the University. In some instances, the senior management of the University has made the decision that the current climate is not the appropriate time to pursue implementation of a recommendation.

Affirmations:

1. AUQA affirms UNSW's intention of more clearly delineating the governance-management interface (p.11)

- A review of the UNSW Register of Delegations has been conducted to ensure consistency with modern corporate practice and good governance.
- Several revisions have been made by Council to the delegations to further increase Council's ability to focus on strategy and policy by delegating management issues to management and clarifying lines of accountability within senior management.
Revisions included:
 - increasing the financial delegations to senior management members within their areas of accountability and ensuring consistency across portfolios
 - making the composition of selection committees more flexible
 - entrenching the principle that personnel decisions should be made at one point remove from the supervisor (hence the Vice-Chancellor is now able to appoint Pro-Vice-Chancellors reporting to a Deputy Vice-Chancellor, and senior appointments reporting directly to the Vice-Chancellor have been delegated by Council to Nominations and Remuneration Committee of Council
 - delegating to the Vice-Chancellor authority to promote, establish or participate in companies and other incorporated bodies consistent with the budget and strategy approved by Council; and to the Vice-Chancellor or his nominee from the Executive Team to provide all statements of compliance required to be made by the University or by Council (excluding the financial accounts),
- There are ongoing discussions regarding further revisions to the Delegations.

- The frequency of meetings of Council and its committees has been decreased; the Chancellor's and Buildings & Grounds Committees have been disbanded; Council meetings have been restructured to focus on high level strategy.

Affirmation completion date: First review completed July 2006; assessment ongoing.

2. AUQA affirms the need in a highly devolved organisational structure for UNSW to find ways of facilitating cross-boundary interaction and in this respect affirms UNSW's efforts to develop new means of communication among senior managers, deans and heads of school.(p.13)

- Since taking up the role in June 2006, the Vice-Chancellor has met with staff from all Faculties and Divisions twice to present the University's strategic direction and provide an opportunity for discussion;
- The Vice-Chancellor holds monthly touchbases with each Dean. These meetings are ongoing;
- A series of strategic meetings is underway, with each Dean meeting with the Vice-Chancellor, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic), the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) and the Director of Strategy to discuss Faculty Strategic Planning. Two series have been completed and a third series is scheduled for November 2007;
- Vice-Chancellor's Advisory Committee (VCAC) retreats and VCAC/Heads of School (HOS) Forums are held regularly. In particular:
 - in the latter part of 2006 a VCAC retreat and a forum for Deans, HOS and leading researchers were held, with the focus on improving UNSW's research performance and evaluating the strategic role of the Head of School;
 - a VCAC Strategic Retreat was held in April 2007;
 - Four VCAC/HOS Forums are scheduled each year:
 - Two were held in May 2007 on issues of concern to Heads of School;
 - The August Forum covered a range of strategic issues - research; budget and financial management; information & communication technology change;
 - A further forum, also to cover a range of strategic issues, is scheduled for November 2007;
 - VCAC meetings have been effectively restructured, separating items for noting, providing more time for discussion on strategic issues;
 - The nature of discussions both at VCAC and VCAC/HOS forums is much more interactive (e.g. topics are suggested by Heads of School and presented by Heads of School rather than simply data presented by Senior Management);
- Non-confidential outcomes of VCAC meetings are now emailed regularly to Associate Deans and Heads of Schools and Faculty General Managers.;
- Faculty General Managers meet fortnightly and members of the Executive Team regularly attend these meetings to address issues of concern; Faculty General Managers are also invited to selected VCAC meetings and VCAC/HOS Forums;
- A web review has commenced with a view to establishing a staff intranet.

Affirmation completion date: Ongoing

3. AUQA affirms UNSW's development of a new Planning and Review Process and encourages the University to ensure that operational plans include relevant targets, to assist in monitoring faculty and divisional outcomes against the Strategic Plan (p.14)

- The Vice-Chancellor has established Key Performance Targets (KPTs) for Executive Team members and Deans:
 - KPTs are aligned to the University's Strategic Priorities and are outcomes focussed;
 - A component of the KPTs is related to the senior officer's role and a component is related to the University as a whole;
 - New Heads of School have bonus payments linked to achievement of KPTs;
 - Within each faculty and division, the concept of assigning responsibility with clear accountability but corporate ownership is flowing down.
- Faculty Learning and Teaching Plans, which articulate from the UNSW Learning and Teaching Plan 2005-07, are required under the Faculty Learning and Teaching Performance Indicators. Progressively there is greater inclusion of operational targets within these Plans.
- In August 2007, the Vice-Chancellor presented "Blueprint to Beyond 2010 - UNSW Strategic Intent" to Council. The Strategic Intent was circulated to staff to inform Faculty and Divisional Strategic and Operational Planning. For the strategies under each objective, measures are being identified. For each measure there will be identification or establishment of support initiatives, a responsible VCAC member, a base line metric, and targets revised annually and identification of data source/responsibility. In addition, the Vice-Chancellor, Deputy Vice-Chancellors Research and Academic and the Director of Strategy are meeting with each Dean to focus on Faculty Strategy and the development of goals and measures in line with the University's Strategic Intent. Deans are meeting with their Faculties on the strategic and operational planning to underpin the Faculty Strategic Plan.

Affirmation completion date: Ongoing

4. AUQA affirms UNSW's intention to significantly improve its career development processes, as a priority task of the new Organisation and Staff Development Services section within Human Resources, and in this regard suggests that the University pay particular attention to career paths for non-tenured and conjoint staff. (p.19)

- Within Human Resources, a range of strategic initiatives is underway to address matters:
 - The Vice-Chancellor has requested the implementation of an enterprise-wide performance management system that is aligned to the Strategic Direction and Priorities of the University. The rationale of the performance management system is to support individual performance to achieve University and personal career goals. As such, the philosophy and culture of career development will be incorporated into the UNSW performance management system.
 - The first phase of the UNSW performance management system is the design and implementation of an academic performance management system. Human Resources is currently liaising with the Deans and Heads of School of each Faculty to progress this initiative by December 2007. The professional and

- technical performance management system will be implemented in early 2008 following consultation and discussion from mid to late 2007.
- The performance management system will initially focus on continuing, fixed term and full-time and part-time staff but ultimately could be expanded to encompass other categories of staff.
 - The UNSW Leadership and Management Development Framework was launched in July 2007 with particular focus on the development needs of Heads of School, Associate Deans, Research Centre Directors and Levels 10-13 managers.
 - The Academic Women in Leadership (AWIL) Program has again been offered in 2007. The program aims to support:
 - increased numbers and proportion of academic women in University management and decision-making
 - women as role models for other staff and students
 - a culture of gender inclusive leadership in senior management and decision-making, acknowledging diversity among womenFor the participants, the program aims to provide senior academic women with the opportunity, skills and insight into leadership to foster their talents and to encourage them to find the highest level of fulfilment in leadership roles in the university.
 - A mentorship program, identifying and partnering mentors with Deans and other senior staff, has been developed and will be introduced before the end of 2007.
- Within Learning & Teaching @ UNSW there is now clear planning that addresses some of the career development issues (<http://www.unsw.edu.au/learning/pve/sessional.html>), including:
 - the recruitment of a staff member to specifically support sessional teaching staff;
 - development of a Sessional Teaching Staff Strategic Action Plan;
 - A website has been developed within the Faculty of the College of Fine Arts supporting sessional teaching:
(<http://www.cofa.unsw.edu.au/staff/sessionalstaff/index.html>).

Affirmation completion date: Ongoing.
Progress report from HR in December 2007.

5. *AUQA affirms UNSW's efforts to ensure that its graduate attributes are contextualised for each discipline and professional area and encourages the University to complete the process of mapping graduate attributes to all programs. (p.29)*

- There remains an uneven response to the mapping and embedding of relevant graduate attributes. However:
 - the new Program Review and Approval Policy, Procedures, Toolkit and resources will address this in 2007;
 - the UNSW Learning & Teaching Plan 2008-2010 has been drafted around the need for greater program coherence, including the explicit embedding of the development and assessment of contextualised graduate attributes, as the primary internal driver;
 - the UNSW Faculty Learning & Teaching Performance Indicators continue to recognise and reward faculties who show evidence of faculty learning & teaching plans that are aligned with the UNSW Learning & Teaching Plan.

- The introduction of a Secondary Testamur for 2008 graduates, recording students' (benchmarked) non-academic achievements, will further support the development of graduate attributes.

Affirmation completion date: Ongoing into 2008.

6. AUQA affirms UNSW's introduction of the new Course and Teaching Evaluation and Improvement process and in particular the thorough way in which the rationale and nature of the process has been documented. (p.29)

- The CATEI Online process was developed, piloted and has been in full operation across the University since Session 1, 2007. The option of paper-based evaluations has been retained.
- The reporting mechanism to academics, students and to meet Faculty requirements has been very significantly expanded. The mechanism has also been developed to meet the original CATEI objectives and to allow comparison with CEQ outcomes.
- Improved CATEI reporting processes to the Head of School and Dean have been developed by the Associate Deans (Education).

**Affirmation completion date: Process completed February 2007.
Refinements to the system ongoing.**

7. AUQA affirms UNSW's establishment of Scientia and NewSouth Global Professorships to broaden its base of outstanding researchers and to foster multidisciplinary research (p.32)

- Twenty-seven internationally recognised researchers across the Faculties of Science, Engineering, Business, Medicine and Arts & Social Sciences have been supported as Scientia professorships in 2007;
- Five NewSouth Global Professors were appointed in 2005 to initial 5 year fixed terms and all are continuing in 2007;
- UNSW has recognised that it must provide special support for and particular recognition of research performance to be a truly world class university. To that end, the 2007 Vice-Chancellor's Strategic Priorities Fund was created to lay the foundations for UNSW to appropriately support research. Of the \$20m allocated to the fund, to date approximately \$16m has been distributed to support research initiatives, including strategic hires, and \$837,000 has been allocated to support strategic initiatives in learning and teaching. This is ongoing budgetary support for strategic research initiatives.

Affirmation completion date: Ongoing.

8. *AUQA affirms UNSW's establishment of the Graduate Research School to improve the consistency and quality of postgraduate research training processes and support across the University, noting as a priority the need for improved University-wide quality assurance in respect of research supervision and student feedback. (p.37)*

- The Graduate Research School was established in October 2005. The School delivers under one structure the full range of services designed to support postgraduate research students from information on scholarships and career opportunities to thesis submission and graduation. Positive outcomes to date include:
 - **Activities to improve the consistency and quality of postgraduate research training processes and support across the University**
 - Development of the 2007 Research Student Handbooks and Postgraduate Coordinators Handbooks, providing consistent advice on all higher degree research candidatures
 - Dean of Graduate Research mentors students at risk of non-completion (overtime, lapsed candidatures); an overall reduction in overtime students has been achieved;
 - Thesis submission and examination processes standardised across all Faculties allowing thesis examination times to be calculated and targets set for reduction
 - Operation of all higher degree committees reviewed to ensure consistency across the University
 - All academic Board policies related to higher degree research students have been reviewed (3 revised policies approved in 2006) or are under review in 2007.
 - **Key activities that have improved University wide quality assurance in research supervision include:**
 - New Academic Board policy on Higher Degree Research Supervision defining eligibilities, roles and responsibilities of supervisors and mandatory appointment protocols effective from 1 January 2007
 - A program of supervisor training workshops for new and inexperienced supervisors introduced in 2006
 - Higher Degree Research Policy and Procedure briefing sessions provided to all new UNSW staff
 - Feedback on supervision assessed by exiting students provided to VCAC, Deans and Heads of Schools
 - **Key activities to improve University wide quality assurance in student feedback include:**
 - introduction of the NSW Graduate Research School Higher Degree Research Student Exit Survey in February 2006, modelled on the PREQ and including free-form comments from students. A response rate of 60% was achieved in the first year with high satisfaction rates with the overall experience. Lower satisfaction with funds to support conference travel has been addressed with the introduction of a new central scheme in 2007.
 - Exit surveys for all students who withdraw from candidature are conducted by the Dean of Graduate Research.

Affirmation completion date: Completed April 2007.

Recommendations:

1. AUQA recommends that, in the further evolution of its quality system, UNSW emphasise integration with strategic planning processes, as well as the responsibility of senior managers to demonstrate leadership and ownership of the system.(p.10)

- Accountability has been embedded in the development of Key Performance Targets for senior managers which have been aligned to the University's Strategic Priorities (refer to the response to Affirmation 3 above) and in the University's Values, which have been outlined in the Strategic Intent. Areas of strategic importance have been mainstreamed, e.g. staff and student equity. Benchmarking of research performance, including international benchmarking, has been undertaken - the emphasis is that quality is part of UNSW's day-to-day operations;
- An embedded approach to promoting quality improvement in Learning and Teaching is being taken in relation to key policy areas, program review/approval and Faculty Learning & Teaching Performance Indicators.

Recommendation completion date: Ongoing

2. AUQA recommends that the UNSW Council implement regular reviews of its performance and the performance of individual members of Council. (p.11)

- In April 2007 Council approved that an external consultant be appointed by the Nominations and Remuneration Committee to conduct a comprehensive review of Council's performance through individual interviews with members, senior management and other relevant stakeholders.
- Recommendations will be made to 8 October 2007 Council.

Recommendation completion date: October 2007

3. AUQA recommends that UNSW ensure that Key Performance Indicators are clearly linked to the University's Strategic Plan and to faculty and divisional outcomes, and that the format in which they are presented enables Council to easily assess performance against target (p.15)

- A comprehensive review of administration and support functions by external consultants together with UNSW team members was conducted from October 2006 to April 2007. The review included benchmarking against Sydney, Melbourne and Monash Universities. Separate reviews of IT, procurement, financial systems and processes and of management structures were conducted and rolled in under this umbrella. Implementation of the review's recommendations will take 2-3 years and targets have been clearly identified, and will be linked with the budget process
- Benchmarking data showing UNSW's position in the Group of Eight (Go8) against all key indicators is now produced periodically and discussed by senior staff;
- The Vice-Chancellor has met individually with Deans to set KPTs for their faculties, to improve UNSW's performance in the Go8 against key benchmarks. A proportion

of these KPTs will become targets for Heads of School, as the performance management system is implemented across the University. The Vice-Chancellor also set KPTs for Executive Team members for Divisions. The targets for the Vice-Chancellor's direct reports are all aligned to the University's Strategic Priorities and 2007 Goals, on which the Vice-Chancellor will report to Council;

- The Vice-Chancellor reports to each Council meeting on the University's performance against key indicators;
- Initiatives in all key areas have been implemented, including:
 - Project Optimum, to improve research performance in research cluster areas (schools, centres and other research groups);
 - AAA Scholarships offered to the dux of every school in NSW and ACT;
 - Seminars for staff on flexible ways to transition to retirement, to take advantage of changes to superannuation legislation in July 2007;
 - Scholarship Review chaired by the Chief Executive of the UNSW Foundation;
 - The Vice-Chancellor's \$20M Strategic Priorities Fund created through redirection of funds from administration and support functions. Faculties and Divisions were invited to submit proposals which were prioritised against the University's strategic objectives;
 - Executive Team and VCAC have held strategic planning sessions and the Strategic Intent was presented to Council in August 2007. The Strategic Plan will then be finalised and will include measurable targets aligned with the institutional KPTs. It will be updated annually and feed into the Annual Report.
 - Faculty Strategic and Operational Plans to support the Strategic Intent will be developed by end 2007.

Recommendation completion date: **Last quarter 2007;** Review recommendations implementation 2009-2010.

4. AUQA recommends that UNSW develop a comprehensive University-wide human resources strategy, to identify the future mix of skills required to achieve its overarching strategic priorities and that top level management at the University commit to the development and implementation of such a strategy. (p.17))

- Since mid 2006, the Vice-Chancellor has engaged in a strategic consultation process to develop the UNSW Strategic Priorities. These Priorities are now finalised and are incorporated into the Strategic Intent *Blueprint to Beyond 2010*.
- To ensure alignment between the UNSW Strategic Priorities and the Human Resource Strategy, the Director Human Resources has commenced a consultation process with Faculty Deans to identify their key issues and priorities regarding workforce planning, attraction & retention, performance management, learning and development, leadership and management development, succession planning, talent development, career development, reward and recognition, and remuneration.
- Critical information obtained during this data collection phase will enable Human Resources to develop an enterprise-wide HR framework that ensures a consistent approach to HR strategy across the organisation but allows implementation flexibility at the local level.

- A draft HR Strategy document will be developed and submitted to the UNSW Executive Team for consideration before submission to the Vice-Chancellor's Advisory Committee.
- Human Resources has been restructured at senior management level to facilitate a focus on Human Resources strategy.
- The establishment of the Vice-Chancellor's Strategic Priorities Fund has enabled strategic hires to be made in areas of research strength.

Recommendation completion date: December, 2007

5. AUQA recommends that UNSW implement a program to regularly assess the organisational climate and levels of staff satisfaction within the University and to systematically follow up the findings, including the provision of feedback to staff. (p.18)

- The decision has been taken not to proceed with this recommendation in the short term.

Recommendation completion date: Not applicable

6. AUQA recommends that UNSW articulate the ways in which student equity and access objectives contribute to the achievement of its vision and that UNSW develop a stronger planning framework, with internally-set targets, for achieving improved equity and access outcomes (p.22)

- UNSW has developed a stronger planning framework through the establishment of a dedicated Student Equity Unit under the portfolio of the PVC (Students) & Registrar. The Unit is fostering closer links with areas such as the UNSW Institutional Analysis & Reporting Office to raise performance in targeted areas. The University is supporting the work of the Unit through appropriate resources and through the setting of relevant Key Performance Targets at senior level.
- A revised methodology for the allocation of undergraduate places for ACCESS eligible students was introduced in 2007:
 - The ACCESS Scheme is a special method of entry for domestic "new to higher education" students who have experienced long-term educational disadvantage.
 - The new methodology acknowledged that the level of concession granted to disadvantaged applicants in the admission process should be determined by the degree of disadvantage experienced by individual applicants.
 - The outcome of the new methodology is that more ACCESS students were admitted to UNSW in 2007, with larger numbers admitted to high demand programs such as Medicine, Combined Law, Optometry and Commerce.
 - Total ACCESS offers increased from 547 in 2006 to 635 in 2007, being 5.81% and 6.41%, respectively, of all offers to the University.
- The Diploma in Science, Engineering & Technology has been developed as an enabling program, providing a flexible pathway for those students who have a range of gaps in their assumed knowledge and thereby do not meet the standard entry requirements.

- The Dip(SET) will provide an entry pathway for approximately 50 students each year from a variety of backgrounds, including rural, remote, Indigenous, mature age and other Category B students;
- The program provides an opportunity for students to broaden their scientific skills base, to strengthen their academic literacy, and to develop their critical and analytical thinking.
- On successful completion, students with a credit average who satisfy the appropriate assumed knowledge requirements will transfer automatically to BE and BSc programs and will be eligible for advanced standing in successfully completed courses that form part of that program.

Recommendation completion date: Mid 2007.

7. *AUQA recommends that UNSW define its understanding of 'the student experience', to guide future goals and strategies, taking into consideration the issues of diversity and inclusivity across the student body. (p.23)*

- A Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Students) was appointed in May 2007 with responsibility for driving excellence in all the student areas, including through the development and implementation of performance indicators around maximising the student experience. The Pro-Vice-Chancellor has accountability for the strategic direction and overall performance of the student experience from recruitment through to admissions, student support for local and international students, student equity, scholarships and careers and employment.
- Activities in progress to help UNSW define its understanding of 'the student experience' include:
 - The appointment of a dedicated project officer to drive the development of the Secondary Testamur project;
 - Development of additional 1000 bed accommodation on site
 - New single student organisation (<http://www.arc.unsw.edu.au/>)
 - Student representatives meeting regularly with the Chief Operations Officer, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) and the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Students) & Registrar, and twice yearly with the Vice-Chancellor.
- The National Survey of Student Engagement in Learning and Teaching was administered to students in 2005 and 2006 and outcomes reported to the Committee on Education of the Academic Board. Whilst there is a significant improvement in students' experience of active learning and inquiry based approaches to learning and teaching, the quality of the online learning experience and the valuing of diversity in the learning experience were poorly rated. The restructure of Learning and Teaching @ UNSW in late 2006/early 2007 is intended to address this.

Recommendation completion date: Ongoing

Additional information provided February 2008:

Since the appointment of the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Students) in 2007, the University has been working towards the development of a statement that encapsulates the "UNSW Student Experience". Market research commissioned in 2007 into understanding the decision-making processes of high school students when considering their choice of university has informed the development of our statement. It is expected to be finalised in the first half of 2008, and will appear in all promotional material, including student recruitment as well as on the web pages of the PVC (Students).

8. AUQA recommends that UNSW review and revise its Guide for Submission of Academic Proposals to ensure that programs are aligned with the University's strategic priorities and Learning and Teaching Plan (p.25)

- A revised Program Approval and review of policy and process has been developed in alignment with the University's strategic priorities and 2005-07 Learning and Teaching Plan. The revised Proposal has been considered by the Committee of Education of the Academic Board and distributed to Faculties for final comment by the end of August 2007. The September Committee of Education will review the final Proposal for endorsement by the October 2007 meeting of the Academic Board with immediate implementation to follow.

Recommendation completion date: Late 2007

9. AUQA recommends that UNSW develop a policy on the systematic external review of programs and that each faculty be required to consider the need for external program advisory committees or other mechanisms to ensure that new programs and courses are developed and implemented in consultation with relevant stakeholders (p.26)

- The decision has been made that there is not the current need for an external review. Many of the faculties already undergo systematic external reviews because of professional accreditation for their programs, e.g. Medicine, Engineering, Social Work, Optometry, Education, Psychology and Aviation. The Faculty of Business will pursue accreditation. The Faculty of Arts & Social Sciences systematically reviews all programs.

Recommendation completion date: Not applicable

10. AUQA recommends that UNSW develop a plan and governance arrangements for the future development of online learning and online courses throughout the University (p.30)

- The oversight of an ongoing set of functions to balance learning and teaching and IT and administrative service needs is now the responsibility of the DVC (Academic) and the Chief Operations Officer.
- The Online Learning and Teaching Strategic Committee has wide representation and reports to the Chief Operations Officer and DVC (Academic).

Recommendation completion date: Implementation of change to start in 2007 for completion late 2007.

11. AUQA recommends that UNSW prepare an overall plan for research development, which explains the roles research centres, areas of research strength and multidisciplinary research are expected to play in achieving its vision and which includes means to monitor outcomes.(p.33)

- An overall plan for research development is in train. Parts of this strategy are already in place including:
 - Project Optimum - a research management tool for monitoring research performance across the university and driving the development of research strategy at the School and Faculty levels;
 - Project Refresh - Strategic Research Initiatives - \$20M allocation of research funding in areas of strategic importance to UNSW;
 - Areas of Research Strength - UNSW is reviewing and refining the identified areas of Research Strength which will be used to promote UNSW's research capabilities and capacity and to inform resource allocation;
 - Establishment of the UNSW Research Strategy Office - a new office with the specific aim of providing strategic advice on "grantsmanship" to UNSW Researchers to increase grant success, increase grant size and access a greater range of funding sources for research;
 - Research Centres - introduced an ongoing program of reviewing and closely monitoring UNSW's Research Centres and our involvement in externally funded research centres, to minimise risk and increase accountability and to ensure that Centres add value to UNSW's research effort;
 - Restructure of UNSW Research Services - morphed into a new office - Grants Management Office with an increased focus on applications compliance and effective grant management;
 - Research Staff Development- increased focus on researcher development at all stages of career from mentoring early career researchers to advanced grant writing skills.

These initiatives are still to be consolidated into a unified strategic plan. This will be achieved before the end of 2007.

Recommendation completion date: End 2007.
Centres Secretariat established.
Centre reviews underway and ongoing.

12. AUQA recommends that UNSW undertake additional benchmarking of research performance, particularly at international level (p.34)

- Additional benchmarking of research performance has been undertaken.

Recommendation completion date: Completed June 2006

Additional information provided February 2008:

During the preparation work for the AUQA submission, UNSW undertook detailed benchmarking across a range of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). The activities benchmarked included Research, Learning and Teaching, Student Recruitment, International and Community Engagement. The KPIs for each activity were sub-classified into students, staffing, the environment, resources and income and expenditure. The breadth of benchmarking occurred at institutional, state, national and international levels and against specified peer institutions both locally and overseas.

UNSW purchases annually the Thomson ISI citation rates for world universities and has also purchased the national Citation Register of all Australian publications and authors. A gap analysis against Research and Learning & Teaching benchmarks is presented to the April meeting of the UNSW Council annually, using these and other data sources.

13. AUQA recommends that UNSW identify the role it wishes community engagement to play in achieving its vision of being 'Australia's leading international research university' and, having done so, develop a plan to recognise, support and evaluate relevant community engagement activities.(p.43)

- The University's vision has been revised as part of the strategic planning process. Community engagement is integral to supporting the University's aspiration. Our objective with regard to Community Engagement is to be a "valued member of key communities, making an impact on contemporary issues". UNSW will achieve this this by:
 - being recognised as a key source of expertise in our communities and a significant contributor to public debate;
 - ensuring vibrant and expanding linkages and partnerships with donors, business and the professions, community organisations, government, academic and internal bodies;
 - developing and maintaining highly valued reciprocal relationships with alumni and former staff;
 - achieving high standards in environmental sustainability.
- Restructure has been undertaken within the UNSW Foundation to better support the University's strategic direction for Community Engagement:
 - In late 2006 the roles of the Marketing and Development Office were separated. The UNSW Foundation, established in 1998 as the University's fundraising arm, assumed responsibility for all alumni and development activities and its brief was reoriented from funds management to funds creation and building relationships with alumni. As part of these changes, three new positions were introduced: Chief Executive, Director and Assistant Director. In addition, the UNSW Chancellor became the Chair of the Foundation Board to emphasize the significance of the Foundation to the University and external communities. A significant number of new Board members have been appointed.
 - All Foundation activities are under review to enable the University to build partnerships with external stakeholders and the wider community.
 - The Foundation extended its reach internationally in 2006 with the addition of development officers in the UNSW Hong Kong Ltd Office, in Singapore and an advisor in the United States.

Recommendation completion date: Ongoing

14. AUQA recommends that UNSW develop a communications improvement plan focused on expanding productive interactions across the University in a sustainable manner. (p.44)

- Initiatives to improve communication to date include:
 - the introduction of News@UNSW, a fortnightly electronic bulletin for staff,
 - broadcast emails to staff on more urgent matters,
 - announcements posted on the staff portal MyUNSW to keep staff across the University up to date with major developments and new policies on campus.,
 - comprehensive communication plans are also developed for specific projects. These include "town hall" meetings, fora with particular groups such as Heads of School and the creation of purpose built web pages to provide regularly updated information on particular projects, and the opportunity for feedback.

- The University is aware of the need to improve communication with students. Since taking up duty in May 2007, the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Students) & Registrar has developed a Student Communication Plan to provide a systematic method of regular communication with students. The Plan involves both formal (monthly electronic newsletters posted on the myUNSW student portal; the establishment of a Student Liaison Group) and informal ('Town Crier' campus forum meetings with the PVC; electronic noticeboards; UNSW TV and UNSW Arc website advice of support services) initiatives. Funding is being sought to enhance the myUNSW portal, to provide increased functionality and user friendliness which will encourage students to use it as their sole entry point to the UNSW Web.

Recommendation completion date: December 2008.