

Quality Assurance Framework

1. Purpose

The purpose of this Quality Assurance Framework (QAF) is to guide activities and endeavours that will contribute to the development of an institution-wide culture of comprehensive and on-going quality assurance and continuous quality improvement, that will ensure alignment with both mandated higher education standards and with good practice. In particular, the QAF operates to enable the institution to meet the standards set out in the Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021, made under the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011. More broadly, the QAF operates to drive the sustainable development of the institution; to establish and embed good practice across the institution; to enable the achievement of the institution's strategic and operational goals and priorities; and to deliver institutional effectiveness.

2. Scope

The Framework applies to:

- The Institutes governing bodies / committees and operational committees.
- Staff of the Institute, particularly members of Executive Management in exercising designated responsibilities and leadership to embed a culture of quality assurance and quality improvement across the Institute as a whole.
- All students, staff, and other stakeholders of the Institute.

3. The Framework

At its highest level, the QAF is formed by a set of principles and a particular Quality System, namely PIRI (Plan, Implement, Review, Improve). These elements work together to inform and drive quality assurance, quality improvement, and alignment with higher education standards and good practice across the institution.

3.1. Principles

- 3.1.1. Strategic oversight of quality assurance and quality improvement, and alignment with mandatory higher education standards and good practice is at the highest levels of governance.
- 3.1.2. Appropriate governance bodies, including committees and advisory groups, are in place and operating effectively.
- 3.1.3. Implementing quality assurance and achieving quality improvement are coordinated by, and cascade from, the highest levels of management.
- 3.1.4. Key external reference points and higher education sector benchmarks inform the development and review of plans, systems, policies, processes, practices, programs and courses, and identify and implement quality improvements.

- 3.1.5. Clear and transparent plans, systems, policies, procedures and processes relating to higher education provision are in place and are accessible; implemented and regularly monitored; reviewed and improved.
- 3.1.6. Clear and transparent processes are in place and implemented for regular and systematic monitoring, evaluation and reporting of higher education provision outcomes, including external benchmarking and performance measurement against targets, indicators and external standards.
- 3.1.7. A clear, transparent and comprehensive suite of review processes is in place and implemented according to a timetable approved by the Board of Directors (the Board) and, where appropriate, the Academic Board.
- 3.1.8. Reporting in relation to quality assurance and quality improvement, and alignment with higher education standards and good practice, utilises both quantitative and qualitative data, is evidence-based, comprehensive, analytic, consistent, accurate and reliable at all levels of governance and management.
- 3.1.9. Opportunity and encouragement are provided for appropriate internal and external involvement in the maintenance of higher education quality standards and quality improvement, and the achievement of good practice, including through use of feedback from students, graduates, employers, academic and professional staff, professional and industry bodies, and other stakeholders.
- 3.1.10. The institution supports students and staff in the pursuit of quality improvement and the maintenance of standards, including through appropriate resourcing of quality management and quality assurance processes.
- 3.1.11. The institution's claims about the quality and standards of its higher education offerings are validated by the ongoing operation of an effective quality assurance system.

3.2. Quality System

PIRI (Plan, Implement, Review, Improve) is a cyclical system for ongoing quality improvement and is the chief means by which the principles of the QAF are embedded, and demonstrated, in all of the institution's activities and endeavours. PIRI is summarised as follows:

- 3.2.1. **Plan:** Formulation of plans, policies, processes, timelines and responsibilities for achieving outcomes intended to maintain or improve quality, including performance standards, measures, indicators, targets; and methods and frequency for performance monitoring and reporting.
- 3.2.2. **Implement:** Implementation of the planned arrangements, including regular monitoring and reporting on progress, efficacy and outcomes.
- 3.2.3. **Review:** Ongoing and summative review, based on evidence and analysis, of the extent to which planned and implemented arrangements are delivering intended outcomes, including evaluation of the efficacy and impact of the planned and implemented arrangements.

- 3.2.4. **Improve:** Ongoing evidence-based identification of improvements and changes to be incorporated in new or recalibrated plans, policies and processes in order to contribute to enhanced or improved outcomes.



3.3. Span of the QAF

The QAF encompasses all areas of endeavour and activity, including but not limited to:

- Corporate Governance
- Academic Governance
- Management of the Institution
- Student Experience
- Student Support, Safety and Wellbeing
- Learning and Teaching
- Scholarship and Research
- External Engagement, including Industry Engagement and Reputation Management
- Information and Communications Management
- Marketing and Promotion

3.4. Policies and Procedures

3.4.1. Policies and procedures are a key subsidiary component of the QAF, contributing wholly, or in part, to quality assurance and quality improvement, and alignment with relevant standards and good practice. In particular, policies and procedures structure actions, initiatives and behaviours to align with higher education standards and good practice and underpin the sustainable development of the institution and the achievement of its strategic and organisational goals and priorities. All mandated and other necessary policies will be in place and effectively implemented.

3.4.2. Responsibilities for the implementation of policies and procedures are typically specified in the relevant documentation. The relevant documentation indicates the next due review date for the policy or procedure, and arrangements are in place and

responsibilities assigned to ensure reviews are conducted in a timely fashion with identified deficiencies expeditiously rectified and identified improvements implemented.

3.5. Planning and Budgeting

- 3.5.1. Systems for, and approaches to, planning and budgeting are key subsidiary components of the QAF designed to enable, including through appropriate resourcing, the implementation of the institution's strategic and operational priorities and the achievement of its strategic and operational goals.
- 3.5.2. These systems and approaches are clearly and transparently documented, including in policies and procedures, and rigorously followed, and are themselves the subject of regular reviews. Where reviews identify deficiencies, these are expeditiously rectified, and identified improvements are implemented.

3.6. Monitoring and Reporting

- 3.6.1. Systems for, and approaches to, monitoring and reporting progress in relation to strategic and operational goals, and more granular desired outcomes, are key subsidiary components of the QAF. Monitoring and reporting enable responsible entities, such as the Board and the Academic Board, as well as responsible individuals, such as the Chief Executive Officer, to assure themselves of appropriate progress in regard to strategic and operational objectives, and other desired outcomes. Where monitoring and reporting reveal inadequate progress or suggest possibilities for improvement, plans may be recalibrated to achieve effectiveness and related interventions initiated.
- 3.6.2. These systems and approaches are clearly and transparently documented, including in policies and procedures, including in the Reporting Framework, and rigorously followed, and are themselves the subject of regular reviews. Where reviews identify deficiencies, these are expeditiously rectified, and identified improvements are implemented.

3.7. Reviews

- 3.7.1. Systems for, and approaches to, conducting reviews of organisational areas and functions, institutional effectiveness, academic programs and their constituents, including their delivery, and performance of staff, are key subsidiary components of the QAF. At most levels reviews include external input from relevant professional and academic experts. Reviews include input from other external and internal stakeholders, such as industry bodies, employers, graduates, students and staff, as appropriate. Review reports, including their commendations and recommendations, enable responsible entities, such as the Board and the Academic Board, as well as responsible individuals, such as the Chief Executive Officer, to assess the degree to which higher education standards are being met, good practice followed, and institutional effectiveness achieved. Recommendations, in particular, enable

responsible entities and individuals to appreciate the need for specific quality improvements and implement initiatives to secure them.

- 3.7.2. These systems and approaches are clearly and transparently documented, including in policies and procedures, and rigorously followed, and are themselves the subject of regular reviews. Where reviews identify deficiencies, these are expeditiously rectified, and identified improvements are implemented.

3.8. External Reference Points

- 3.8.1. Use of external reference points, including benchmarking in particular, is a key subsidiary component of the QAF. Benchmarking enables a comparison of the institution's performance in relation to significant outcome indicators, structures, processes and practices, with that of other relevant entities or groups of entities, or against relevant generally agreed standards, such as those set by professional bodies or national associations. Benchmarking provides an independent, external measure against which the performance of the institution may be judged, either in whole or in part, enabling responsible entities, such as the Board and the Academic Board, as well as responsible individuals, such as the Chief Executive Officer, to assess the degree to which higher education standards are being met, good practice followed, and institutional effectiveness achieved. Benchmarking enables responsible entities and individuals to appreciate the need for specific and general quality improvements and implement initiatives to secure them. Moderation and peer review function similarly.
- 3.8.2. Systems for, and approaches to, utilising external reference points are clearly and transparently documented, including in policies and procedures, and rigorously followed, and are themselves the subject of regular reviews. Where reviews identify deficiencies, these are expeditiously rectified, and identified improvements are implemented.

4. Responsibilities

4.1. The Board of Directors (the Board)

is accountable to the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency for quality assurance and compliance with higher education standards.

4.2. The Academic Board

is responsible for academic governance, academic quality assurance and academic quality improvement, and compliance with higher education standards, including but not limited to those pertaining to learning and teaching, research and scholarship, student support and academic support.

4.3. Committees and Advisory Bodies

are responsible, and accountable to the Board or the Academic Board, for contributing as required to academic governance, quality assurance, quality improvement, and compliance with higher education standards.

4.4. The Chief Executive Officer

is responsible, and accountable to the Board, for quality management and ensuring compliance with higher education standards across the range of all of the institution's endeavours and activities.

4.5. The Director of Higher Education

is responsible, and accountable to the Chief Executive Officer and the Academic Board, for quality assurance, quality improvement and compliance with relevant higher education standards, including but not limited to those pertaining to learning and teaching, research and scholarship, student support and academic support.

4.6. Heads of School

are responsible and accountable to the Director of Higher Education and to the Academic Board, for quality assurance, quality improvement and compliance with relevant higher education standards within their respective areas.

4.7. All Employees

are responsible, and accountable to their supervisor, for participating as required in the implementation of the quality system, in quality assurance and quality improvement processes, and processes for compliance with higher education standards as they pertain to each employee's work and area of operation.

4.8. All Students

have a responsibility to contribute to quality assurance and quality improvement, including providing constructive feedback on teaching, learning, student support, the student experience, and the institution's facilities and resources.

5. Relevant Documents

- APAC Benchmarking Policy and Procedure
- APAC Course Development and Review Policy and Procedure
- APAC Governance Framework
- APAC Moderation Policy and Procedure
- APAC Policy Framework
- APAC Reporting Framework
- Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000
- Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021 (Cth)

- National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018
- Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011 (Cth)

6. Definitions

- **Quality Assurance** means the management and organisational processes in place for verifying and demonstrating that the standards and quality of higher education provision by the institution align with higher education sector obligations and norms.
- **Quality Improvement** means the management and organisational processes in place for ongoing improvement of higher education provision by the institution.
- **Quality Management** means the operational oversight and coordination of quality assurance and quality improvement, including efforts to ensure alignment with mandated higher education standards and good practice.
- **Higher Education Standards** means standards made under the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011 and other codified quality-related standards applicable to Australian higher education providers, such as the National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018.
- **The Board** refers to the APAC Board of Directors.

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