

AUQA Report of an Audit of the
University of South Australia August 2004

UniSA Progress Report

November 2005



University of
South Australia

Contents

Contents	1
Overview	3
Introduction	3
A changing environment	3
The findings in context	3
For further information	5
Affirmation 1	6
Affirmation 2	7
Affirmation 3	9
Affirmation 4	10
Affirmation 5	11
Recommendation 1	12
Recommendation 2	13
Recommendation 3	15
Recommendation 4	16
Recommendation 5	17
Recommendation 6	19
Recommendation 7	20
Recommendation 8	21
Recommendation 9	22
Recommendation 10	23
Glossary and abbreviations	24

Overview

Introduction

This *Progress Report* forms a third major document in the AUQA audit of the University of South Australia. The first was the *UniSA Performance Portfolio* submitted to AUQA in December 2003 which sets out UniSA's quality assurance and improvement system and provides a self assessment of all aspects of our operations. The second major document was AUQA's *Report of an Audit of the University of South Australia* released in August 2004. All of these documents are published online and publicly available. All will provide background to the next round of AUQA audits, and together they constitute a longitudinal view of UniSA's attention to the quality of its endeavours.

The *Progress Report* has been written with AUQA's 'rule of thumb' very much in mind—that is:

could an intelligent person reading the recommendation/affirmation and response, understand what had been done and whether it addressed the issue?

The *Report* provides for each affirmation and recommendation an outline of its context and interpretation followed by the actions undertaken or planned and their status at the time of publication in October 2005.

A changing environment

AUQA's audit report was made in August 2004, based on an audit visit to the University at the end of March 2004. Since that time, far reaching changes affecting the Australian higher education sector have been mooted, particularly in the areas of funding (the Research Quality Framework, and the Learning and Teaching Performance Fund), Voluntary Student Unionism, and workplace relations (Higher Education Workplace Relations Requirements). Each of these has had a significant impact on universities, requiring actual or anticipated adjustments to policies, priorities, systems and resources.

UniSA's response to these actual and potential developments has occurred over the same period as actions on the AUQA findings.

The findings in context

The main function of this *Progress Report* is to address AUQA's audit findings that are classified as *affirmations* (of efforts already being undertaken by the University to address shortcomings it has already identified in its operations) and *recommendations* (of areas for improvement AUQA believes need attention). It is important to acknowledge that these findings were balanced in the audit report by a number of commendations of University systems, activities and operations, several of which are featured in AUQA's good practice database.

AUQA's findings are summarised below, with page references to AUQA's audit report.

AUQA commends...

Organisational overview and quality assurance

- 1 UniSA for its comprehensive annual review and planning cycle that provides a solid framework for quality improvement. page 9
- 2 the regular and productive monitoring and self-review of the University Council. page 11
- 3 UniSA's strong and effective management systems. page 12
- 4 UniSA's effectiveness in the management of change. page 13

Curriculum, teaching and learning

- 5 UniSA for the successful achievement of its goal of providing flexible delivery models. page 18
- 6 UniSA for its thorough system of course and program evaluation and review. page 23

International aspects

- 7 UniSA for the information and support services it provides to international students. page 26
- 8 UniSA for its quality assurance system for transnational programs. page 29

Research

- 9 UniSA's introduction of a number of systems and processes to manage and support research education, while noting that some are too recent for their effectiveness to be assessed. page 36

Community engagement

- 10 UniSA's commitment to, and range of activities in, community engagement, particularly the UniSA Northern Adelaide Project. page 38

Human resources

- 11 UniSA's attention to the training and development needs of staff. page 42
- 12 UniSA for the training of promotion committee members. page 43

Support and services

- 13 the highly-valued services provided to both students and staff by the Flexible Learning Centre. page 47
- 14 the UniSA Library for its active support of the University's needs, and particularly its attention to transnational programs. page 48
- 15 UniSA for its ability to identify and implement technological solutions that support its campuses and programs, both within Australia and overseas. page 49
- 16 UniSA for Blueprint 2005 which was soundly conceptualised and well-managed, and has engendered a positive spirit. page 50

AUQA affirms...

Organisational overview and quality assurance

- 1 That as UniSA reviews its budget model, it consider the balance of funding between central services and academic divisions, and between areas with greater and lesser opportunity to generate revenue. page 11

Curriculum, teaching and learning

- 2 That UniSA continue to develop its conceptualisation of Graduate Qualities by investigating strategies to measure their level of achievement, both during the program and after graduation. page 20
- 3 That UniSA make more systematic use of stakeholder input in program evaluation. Enhancing the effectiveness of divisional advisory boards may assist with both this and other aspects of external advice and input. page 23
- 4 That UniSA continue to investigate ways to increase the response rate of the on-line Course Evaluation Instrument to ensure its reliability. page 24

International aspects

- 5 That UniSA address issues relating to the equivalence of assessment between transnational and domestic versions of the same program. page 29

AUQA recommends...

Organisational overview and quality assurance

- 1 That UniSA provide a clear definition of benchmarking, and provide assistance to divisions and units in identifying, collecting and interpreting benchmarking data. page 14
- 2 That UniSA investigate, develop and use a greater range of relevant outcomes indicators to track progress towards its desired outcomes. page 14

Curriculum, teaching and learning

- 3 That UniSA ensure that incoming students are rapidly appraised of the meaning and obligations of student-centred learning, and assisted to benefit from it. page 19
- 4 That UniSA ensure that sufficient market research is carried out and systematic stakeholder input obtained when new programs are proposed. page 22

International aspects

- 5 That in order to achieve its aims in internationalisation in teaching, research and service, UniSA identify more specific performance indicators and targets, and strategies for achieving them. page 26

Research

- 6 That UniSA clarify the relationship between schools and research institutes, centres and groups, and resolve a number of related organisational issues. page 33

Community engagement

- 7 That UniSA develop a conceptual and strategic planning framework for its objective of community engagement, developing indicators and measurements, and pay explicit attention to evaluating its desired objectives. page 38

Human resources

- 8 That in its foreshadowed review of its budget model, UniSA consider how best to determine staff balances (eg casual v. continuing, academic v. general) to optimise achievement of its teaching, research and community objectives. page 45

Support and services

- 9 That UniSA ensure that, as it further develops support services for students and staff, the advice from the various sources is consistent and that unnecessary redundancies in information supply are avoided. page 47
- 10 That consistent with its aspiration to be student centred, UniSA investigate jointly with the students association ways to improve the levels of student representation on committees across schools and programs. page 48

For further information

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UniSA's *Performance Portfolio* can be found at <http://www.unisa.edu.au/mdu/pubs/pdfs/auqa.pdf>

AUQA's *Report of an Audit of the University of South Australia* can be found at http://www.auqa.edu.au/qualityaudit/sai_reports/reports/auditreport_unisa_2004.pdf

This *Progress Report* can be found at <http://www.unisa.edu.au/cha/staffinfo/AUQA.asp>

Affirmation 1

That as UniSA reviews its budget model, it consider the balance of funding between central services and academic divisions, and between areas with greater and lesser opportunity to generate revenue.

AUQA Audit Report, Section 1—Organisational Overview and Quality Assurance, page 11

Context and interpretation

In commenting on UniSA's budget, the AUQA panel noted that financial management had been good, achieving a financial turnaround after a difficult period, although resources remained tight. The balance of resource allocation was viewed as reasonable, but the panel felt that internal resourcing required careful monitoring.

Actions

1 Develop revised budget framework

The University is revisiting its budget and financial reporting framework so that resource allocation and financial reporting better support the University's business strategy. The corporate Priority Project 'Better Alignment of Business Strategy and Budget Framework' addresses five main characteristics:

- *incentives*—the need to ensure there are appropriate incentives in the budget framework, for example the incentive to earn commercial revenue and to encourage collaboration
- *fairness*—the need to ensure fairness in resourcing between activities and areas, for example recognising the different capacities across the University to earn commercial revenue
- *transparency*—the need to ensure that the budget framework and any resource allocation models can be easily understood and used
- *investment*—the need to ensure that the budget resources strategic activities appropriately
- *transition*—any changes in resource allocation to be made in an orderly manner with no significant immediate impact.

A draft concept paper was distributed for consultation in November 2004 to University managers and extensive modelling is being undertaken. A final budget framework is expected to be completed towards the end of 2005. It will be implemented in mid-2006 for developing the 2007 budget.

2 Examine resource allocation trends

A paper by the Executive Director: Finance and Resources examining trends in resource allocation over the period 2000–2006 was considered by Corporate Planning Group (CPG) in August 2005. Divisions' share of teaching revenue rose between 2000 and 2003 because of strong growth in fee-paying revenue despite flat levels of Commonwealth teaching funding. Between 2004 and 2006, the Divisions' share fell back to 2000 levels because of flatness in fee-paying revenue and some growth in Commonwealth teaching funding. Over the period, the surplus and contingency component increased, while the central units' share declined by close to 4%.

Resource allocation will continue as a focus for CPG as the University adjusts for the effects of recent government policy initiatives such as the Research Quality Framework.

Affirmation 2

That UniSA continue to develop its conceptualisation of Graduate Qualities by investigating strategies to measure their level of achievement, both during the program and after graduation.

AUQA Audit Report, Section 2—Curriculum, Teaching and Learning, page 20

Context and interpretation

UniSA's seven Graduate Qualities (GQs) are the distinctive characteristics the University wishes its graduates to possess. The AUQA panel note that UniSA was one of the earliest Australian institutions to enunciate these generic qualities and systematically embed them in curriculum.

The AUQA panel saw measurement of the extent to which GQs are achieved as a major gap. The Panel suggested an assessment matrix (analogous to the input matrix that details in which courses individual qualities are addressed) showing how the assessment for a course relates to the GQs. It notes that the sum of course-specific assessment may not be appropriate for assessing qualities which by their nature are holistic and reflect achievement across a whole program. The panel then proposes several forms of assessment of GQs:

- embedding within course-specific assessment tasks
- validation by members of the professions
- moderation of graduate portfolios
- capstone assessments.

The panel also suggests tracking of graduate careers and a Teaching and Learning Committee (TALC)-led top-down analysis of GQs to avoid unintended gaps in the course by course approach.

The affirmation is being discussed by:

- TALC
- Deans: Teaching and Learning
- Flexible Learning Centre (FLC) professional development staff.

Actions

1 Revise the Program Approval Manual

UniSA maintains a comprehensive *Program Approval Manual* setting out the requirements for documenting and presenting new or revised programs for approval by Academic Board. The *Program Approval Manual* has been revised, with an updated version approved by Academic Board in March 2005. The revised version includes a table similar to the matrix proposed by the AUQA panel. It requires program developers to identify which GQs are assessed in which courses by which techniques and tasks—the relevant paragraphs are included below:

4.1 Assessment tasks

Identify in the table below the kinds of assessment tasks that support the assessment of each of the Graduate Qualities 2–7. See examples of appropriate assessment tasks and techniques at <http://www.unisanet.unisa.edu.au/gradquals/staff/guides/GQassessbrief.doc>

Assessment task and techniques identified here should be reflected in the course statements.

Graduate Quality	Courses	Assessment tasks and techniques
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		

2 Assessment identified as a Priority Project for 2006

In mid-2005 CPG determined that student assessment, particularly in undergraduate programs, will be a Priority Project for 2006. A paper prepared by FLC professional development staff and a Dean: Teaching and Learning was presented to Senior Management Group in August 2005 detailing the approach to be taken. Assessment of GQs is central to the approach. The proposed amendments to the *Code of Good Practice: Principles of Student Assessment* were subsequently accepted by Academic Board.

In addition:

- the standard course evaluation instrument includes two core items about GQs. Student perceptions about the extent to which their course involves and develops GQs are gauged and the University aggregates the results from courses by program and by School to ascertain overall student perceptions about the program. In this way the University monitors the effects of the course and program design and assessment in developing GQs.
- the program approval process involves a review of the amount of appropriate assessment activity devoted to each of the Qualities and how this profile of assessment activity sits with the profile of intended capabilities of graduates.

The University has developed software (*Transcript 2*) that allows students to make records of their experiences and achievements (assessed experiences) in each of the GQs. The pattern of assessed achievements can be that which is specified in the program approval process. Students are encouraged to monitor their profile of development of the Qualities as part of their progression through a program and to undertake other experiences/achievements that strengthen or add to their profile. When students seek employment they are able to use the database of experiences and achievements in GQs to their advantage when making claims about their suitability as an employee.

As part of the Priority Project focusing on assessment in 2005–2006, capstone assessment will be explored. Capstone projects are set in the final year of a program and bring together many elements of the body of knowledge studied across courses during the program. This means that they also lend themselves extremely well to a holistic assessment of GQs as they have been acquired across the program, and of the extent to which they are present in the graduate about to begin professional practice.

Affirmation 3

That UniSA make more systematic use of stakeholder input in program evaluation. Enhancing the effectiveness of divisional advisory boards may assist with both this and other aspects of external advice and input.

AUQA Audit Report, Section 2—Curriculum, Teaching and Learning, page 23

Context and interpretation

The AUQA panel commended UniSA for its thorough system of course and program evaluation and review. However, they suggest that program evaluation and review, and program approval, would be enhanced by a more systematic engagement of stakeholders. They also noted that an internal audit in 2003 showed that there was considerable variability in the effectiveness of divisional advisory boards.

UniSA's *Program Approval Manual* requires significant stakeholder input into program development and the panel recommended a similar level in program review.

Actions

1 Ensure program review includes requirements for stakeholder involvement

The *Annual Program Review* and *Program Evaluation Report* guidelines which support the operation of policy A-35A.9 *Quality assurance and improvement: programs, courses and teaching arrangements* recommend consultation with external stakeholders, as follows:

Annual Program Review

Program Directors are responsible for compiling an annual report of their program. The proforma requires them to briefly summarise external evaluative processes and information gathered over the year—for example:

- formal professional accreditation
- program advisory panel reviews
- visits by representatives of professional bodies
- external assessment or moderation processes

Program Evaluation Report

Program Directors undertake a major program review at least every five years (more frequently if problems are identified in the Annual Program Report). The proforma for reporting includes a requirement to assess in some detail stakeholder satisfaction. Stakeholder groups explicitly identified are students, staff, graduates, professional associations, employers and other stakeholders, accrediting bodies and international partners or agents (if applicable).

2 Assess effectiveness of Divisional Advisory Structures

UniSA has a policy A-38.6 *Divisional Advisory Structures* that requires Division Pro Vice Chancellors, the Dean: Whyalla and Directors of Research Institutes to establish and maintain a coherent, efficient and effective approach to obtaining regular, reliable and timely advice about their core business from external stakeholders.

An internal audit of Divisional Advisory Structures was undertaken in November 2003 and as a result, the policy was revised (effective June 2004) to permit more flexibility to meet the needs of a range of academic disciplines and areas.

It also now includes the requirement that Divisions and Institutes report annually to Academic Board on the membership of, and activity undertaken by, their advisory structures. Divisions are implementing this requirement over the calendar year 2005 and expect to report to Academic Board in early 2006. The Division of Education, Arts and Social Sciences reported in May 2005 on the membership and activities in 2004 of its seven School Advisory Committees.

Affirmation 4

That UniSA continue to investigate ways to increase the response rate of the on-line Course Evaluation Instrument to ensure its reliability.

AUQA Audit Report, Section 2—Curriculum, Teaching and Learning, page 24

Context and interpretation

The AUQA panel noted that online administration University's Course Evaluation Instrument (CEI) had resulted in a decline in response rates and expressed the concern that response rates may have become too low to be valid. This was an issue of concern as the data informs performance indicators and course monitoring.

Course evaluation had been conducted as a pen and paper exercise within the University, but there were issues with data entry and aggregation of results. UniSA, as part of its online strategy, developed an online instrument that has the advantage of enabling automatic aggregation of responses for individual items of the survey instrument.

Initially, response rates fell as not all classes involved had ready access to computers. However, a number of related strategies has seen response rates steadily rising, as the following table indicates.

Period	Total CEIs	Responses	Online CEIs	Responses
2003	2038	34,125	1424	19,267
2004	3398	47,602	2550	32,622
2005 (to July)	1368	23,914	1051	18,996

It is anticipated that response rates will continue to show improvement over time as the University's online environment becomes more pervasive.

Actions

1 Automate generation of CEI

The increases in response rates above have occurred partly as a result of introducing a facility that automatically generates a CEI for all courses (ten core questions). The FLC administration automatically generates a CEI for every course at the end of each study period and an automated email notifies students that a CEI for their course/s is open. These 'automatic' CEIs collect students' feedback on the ten core items. However, many staff include additional questions.

Improvements may also be an indication of students' growing familiarity and level of comfort with the University's online approach to many areas of learning and administration.

2 Increase availability of computers

The University has worked to increase the number of computers available to students on all campuses, so that students have more ready access to the CEIs. In 2005 (to the end of July) more than 450 new computers were added to the student pool.

The University has also extended the coverage of its wireless network for students who have their own notebook or PDA devices.

3 Improve information to students on actions taken as a result of feedback

A new feature was added to the CEI facility in early 2005 that allows course coordinators to more readily inform students about actions taken in response to CEI feedback. The Course Coordinator can now quickly enter information that (for example) could summarise the CEI results and identify actions that had been taken as a result. This information then appears as a link on the course home page, and can be included in any online site.

Affirmation 5

That UniSA address issues relating to the equivalence of assessment between transnational and domestic versions of the same program.

AUQA Audit Report, Section 3—International Aspects, page 29

Context and interpretation

The AUQA panel noted that some UniSA transnational programs made heavy use of local staff, and observed that these staff were of good quality. However, they expressed the concern that these staff may therefore 'show initiative that may be at variance with UniSA's intentions'. They also noted that UniSA had taken specific actions to address this, particularly with transnational doctoral programs.

Actions

1 Extend Teaching @ UniSA to transnational staff

A detailed induction kit for partner teaching staff of coursework programs has been prepared, trialled and evaluated, and is now being used by program directors of offshore programs.

Teaching @ UniSA is being implemented offshore in 2006 and materials being prepared as part of the DEST funded project on transnational teaching will be made available to offshore teaching staff.

There is a comprehensive range of support material now available online (or under development) to support transnational teaching (see

<http://www.unisanet.unisa.edu.au/learningconnection/staff/practice/transnational.asp>)

2 Improve postgraduate supervision and program structure

The Dean of Graduate Studies has taken steps to improve postgraduate supervision as follows:

- the use of external examiners for PhD theses and the project component of the Professional Doctorates such as the Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) has been implemented to ensure consistency of assessment between transnational and domestic doctoral programs
- professional development programs to improve consistency in supervision between transnational and domestic doctoral programs have been developed including:
 - face to face workshops and focus groups for adjuncts supervising transnational PhD and DBA students
 - on-line workshop material
- newsletters/updates from the International Graduate School of Business doctoral team.

The Program Guide and Doctoral Portal provide UniSA policy and regulation information or relevant web links. The contracts developed for the employment of course facilitators and supervisors also require that the contracted person become familiar with a number of UniSA policies (and the contract provides web links to relevant policies).

3 Maintain focus on moderation of assessment

Processes for moderation of assessment in transnational programs depend on the degree of transnational activity by the particular Division. In the Divisions of Health Sciences, and Information Technology, Engineering and the Environment, the processes are School based, while in the Division of Business, the process is Division-wide. The Deans: Teaching and Learning are exploring examples of practice within Divisions and strategies to implement best practice as a standard, University-wide procedure.

The International Quality Steering Group discussed the issue at its October meeting and agreed to maintain a focus on the issue.

Recommendation 1

That UniSA provide a clear definition of benchmarking, and provide assistance to divisions and units in identifying, collecting and interpreting benchmarking data.

AUQA Audit Report, Section 1—Organisational Overview and Quality Assurance, page 14

Context and interpretation

The recommendation is made in a section of the AUQA audit report which discusses review, particularly Nominated and Vice Chancellor's reviews as set out in Policy A-35B.5 *Review*. However, it is assumed that specific mention of divisions and units in the recommendation indicates the intention of the panel to include in the scope of the recommendation annual review processes where benchmarking is a component, including the review of programs and courses as required by Policy A-35A.9 *Quality assurance and improvement: programs, courses and teaching arrangements*, and Policy RES-15.1 *Quality assurance and improvement in higher degrees by research*.

All of these policies give effect to the requirement of UniSA, set out in its Act, that:

5. (2) *The University must strive for excellence in teaching and research and for attainment of the highest standards in education.*

The assurance of excellence and high standards is governed by UniSA's policies and procedures that set out principles, criteria, processes and accountabilities for doing so. Excellence and high standards relate not only to UniSA's particular mission, but to UniSA's standing as an Australian university. Reflecting this, the policies include requirements to compare activities and performance with those of other institutions, to take account of the views of stakeholders and to make use of independent, external reviewers.

Benchmarking is included in the policies as an important tool for making informed judgments about quality—identifying areas of good practice and areas for improvement, and taking appropriate action.

Actions

1 Investigate benchmarking in UniSA policies

The Pro Vice Chancellor: Organisational Strategy and Change commissioned in mid-2005 a brief discussion paper on benchmarking that outlined the literature on benchmarking, described benchmarking as it is currently required by UniSA policy and offered observations and actions. It was noted that although the University demonstrates a consistent set of expectations across its principal quality assurance and improvement policies, the policies assume a level of understanding on the part of staff held accountable under the policies that may not be the case. Actions have been formulated that target levels of awareness and capability in key policy areas.

2 Develop guidelines that clarify benchmarking requirements for relevant UniSA policies

In September 2005 a set of guidelines was approved that support the requirements of policy A-35B.5 *Review*. The guidelines include explicit reference to benchmarking requirements, and clarify expectations.

Draft guidelines to support program evaluation (policy A-35A.9 *Quality assurance and improvement: programs, courses and teaching arrangements*) are under development and expected to be available towards the end of 2005.

3 Include links to benchmarking data sources in UniSAinfo Reporting

Ease of access to benchmarking data is an issue for Program Directors and program support staff, particularly where specific types of comparisons are mandated in evaluation policies. The UniSAinfo Reporting data environment has been developed over the last 18 months as the central data repository supporting University activities. Extensive training and rollout has been undertaken to familiarise users with the system and its contents.

UniSA purchased the 2004 Graduate Careers Australia (GCA) national dataset and SA and national GCA survey information is now available through UniSAinfo Reporting. Reference to this data is required for annual and periodic evaluation of programs and the new environment permits ready access and analysis.

Survey Managers across the Australian Technology Network of universities (ATN) have agreed in principle to share their GCA data once it is released by GCA, allowing comparisons and benchmarking up to three months earlier than release of the national dataset. A formal proposal for sharing will be submitted to the ATN Vice Chancellors' group in October 2005.

Recommendation 2

That UniSA investigate, develop and use a greater range of relevant outcomes indicators to track progress towards its desired outcomes.

AUQA Audit Report, Section 1—Organisational Overview and Quality Assurance, page 14

Context and interpretation

While the AUQA panel has commended UniSA for its comprehensive annual review and planning cycle that provides solid framework for quality improvement, they note that 'a gap exists in the use of hard qualitative and quantitative outcomes data, and much of the data is only indirectly related to the outcomes the University aspires to achieve'. Areas for attention mentioned in the body of the report for developing measures include:

- the achievement of Graduate Qualities
- direct measures of learning outcomes
- the impact of research
- outcomes for community engagement, apart from the UniSA Northern Adelaide Partnership (UNAP)
- the effectiveness or outcomes of IT usage.

This recommendation is also related to a number of other audit findings, namely:

- Affirmation 2—That UniSA continue to develop its conceptualisation of Graduate Qualities by investigating strategies to measure their level of achievement, both during the program and after graduation
- Recommendation 5—That in order to achieve its aims in internationalisation in teaching, research and service, UniSA identify more specific performance indicators and targets, and strategies for achieving them
- Recommendation 7—That UniSA develop a conceptual and strategic planning framework for its objective of community engagement, developing indicators and measurements, and pay explicit attention to evaluating the desired objectives.

Actions

1 Review of review and planning

A Vice Chancellor's *Review of review and planning* undertaken in 2004 noted, among other things, that the current set of visionary and strategic documents needed to be reviewed to ensure integration and consistency in approach. These documents, together with annual and medium term corporate priorities developed from review of performance and environmental scanning, effectively 'drive' the review and planning processes at the local level. The current set of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) lacks integration with the aspirations, directions and priorities set out in those documents.

A broad medium term plan for implementing the recommendations of the review has been drafted. It includes review and reshaping of the strategic documents and consideration of a revised and expanded set of KPIs that flow logically from these to drive review and planning.

Consultation with managers across the University on the medium term plan for review and planning began in July and will continue through to the end of 2005. During this period, the program and agendas for Corporate Planning Group (CPG) meetings in 2006 are developed. These will include a focus on strategy—reviewing and redeveloping as necessary the strategies and KPIs.

The updated framework will inform the planning process that commences in July 2006. Changes to the process that commenced in July 2005 were deliberately kept to a minimum in anticipation of the changes in the next cycle and to acknowledge some residual staff dissatisfaction at the changes undergone in the previous cycles.

2 Review and redevelop KPIs

Some groundwork has been done to gather information on which to base a review of KPIs, including a comparison of KPIs in use across the ATN group.

The Organisational Strategy and Change portfolio, through Planning and Assurance Services, will undertake a project that will:

- 1 evaluate current KPIs in terms of University vision/directions
- 2 investigate higher education KPIs in use in Australia and internationally, including ATN and other alliances, and include consideration of performance indicators associated with the Learning and Teaching Performance Fund and Research Quality Framework

- 3 identify a possible array of KPIs that can:
- serve to monitor and set targets for achievement of priorities and directions
 - map onto indicators for the sector to allow for benchmarking
 - provide reliable and valid measures of performance
 - provide some continuity with existing KPIs
 - evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the array and make recommendation on a manageable set.

The project will involve a series of interviews with relevant experts and planning system stakeholders. It will present an approach to establishing and using a revised set of KPIs. This may take the form of a framework that can be used as an appendix to the corporate plan, as well as a framework that allows for CPG to review and confirm/revise the KPI framework on an annual basis.

The project will be undertaken from October 2005, and report to CPG in early 2006 for implementation later in the year.

Recommendation 3

That UniSA ensure that incoming students are rapidly appraised of the meaning and obligations of student-centred learning, and assisted to benefit from it.

AUQA Audit Report, Section 2—Curriculum, Teaching and Learning, page 19

Context and interpretation

Student centred learning, with the Graduate Qualities and flexible delivery, characterise the learning environment of UniSA. The AUQA panel notes that moving to a student centred approach, which fosters and supports student agency in their own learning, places additional responsibility and resource burden on students. The panel notes that UniSA is achieving its aim of giving students more choice and responsibility and that by and large, student-centred learning has been quite well accepted by the student body. However, they believe that prospective and commencing students may be insufficiently aware of the implications of student centred learning and note that there is a limited window of opportunity for commencing students to get up to speed, particularly on the technologically-delivered support services and requirements.

Actions

1 Ensure commencing students are introduced to the concept of student centred learning

For 2005 commencers Learning Connection staff have ensured that students who attend *FirstConnection* (an academic orientation program) are introduced to the concept of student-centred learning and the ways in which it may differ from their previous learning experiences.

2 Provide resources and support for student centred learning

Flexible Learning Centre (FLC) professional development staff have prepared both teaching and learning guides about student-centred learning. Resources include, for example:

- guides to UniSA's online learning environment (see, for example, <http://www.unisanet.unisa.edu.au/learningconnection/student/learningAdvisors/onlinetools.asp>)
- workshops on transition to university
- checklists for the first few weeks (<http://www.unisanet.unisa.edu.au/learningconnection/student/learningAdvisors/fwOncampus.asp>)
- and things students need to know about studying at UniSA (<http://www.unisa.edu.au/newstudents/thingstoknow/default.asp>).

3 Include support of student centred learning as a criterion for small grants

At a 2005 planning day the Deans: Teaching and Learning endorsed a proposal to introduce small grants, on the pattern of the 2003 Assessment Development Grants, to encourage staff to make explicit to students aspects of student centred learning. Small grants will be announced in the second half of 2005.

4 Manage student burden in accessing online resources

To address concerns about a resource burden being redirected to students, the University Teaching and Learning Committee (TALC) prepared guidelines for teaching and learning resources. The seven main proposals in the guidelines were endorsed by Academic Board in June 2005 as follows:

2005/4/65 Academic Board resolved to approve:

- 1 That the required printing for 4.5 unit courses, that is, the printing necessary both to prepare and to submit assignments, including the printing of readings which cannot be accessed by the student in any other way, should not exceed 1/8 of a full year's print quota.
- 2 That where readings are provided to students these should be:
 - a Drawn from a wide range of sources to reflect the literature of the field.
 - b Provided to students at cost recovery.
 - c Photocopied rather than commercially published.
- 3 That readings may be provided in either electronic form or hard copy.
- 4 That where hard copy is provided, the quality of the copy should be at an acceptable standard and in a font size not less than Times Roman 10.
- 5 That a textbook should only be nominated where it is used in a substantial part of the course.
- 6 That a book referred to on a regular basis should be identified as a textbook.
- 7 That resources required for a course should be stated in the Course Information Booklet and costs associated with the acquisition of these resources should be part of the program approval process.

Recommendation 4

That UniSA ensure that sufficient market research is carried out and systematic stakeholder input obtained when new programs are proposed.

AUQA Audit Report, Section 2—Curriculum, Teaching and Learning, page 22

Context and interpretation

The recommendation occurs within the section on program approval and is related to Affirmation 3 that proposes more systematic use of stakeholder input in program evaluation.

The AUQA panel noted that the input which occurs is informal and anecdotal and needs to be more systematic. Academic Program and Policy Review Committee (APPRC) requires adequate data to permit it to decide on the viability and sustainability of programs.

Actions

1 Include requirements for market research and stakeholder input in program approval process

UniSA’s *Program Approval Manual* (last revision approved by Academic Board March 2005) now includes two directly relevant elements:

- the business case and
- a statement about consultation with stakeholders.

The business case requires the Division to identify the academic and other benefits to the University including relationship to:

- declared academic profile of the University
- other providers of similar programs
- national or international priorities or trends
- choice of partners where relevant.

Sections which must be completed systematically, with supporting data, include:

- detailed demand analysis with a requirement to detail consultation with industry, professional organisations and transnational partners
- quantitative information about industry support and demand for graduates, graduate employment rates, applicant demand, competitor analysis, projected and minimum intake and collaborative arrangements.

Sources of data for the demonstration of graduate demand may include:

- Australian Bureau of Statistics/DEST labour force statistics, eg:
 - www.gradlink.edu.au
 - www.dewrsb.gov.au/employment/publications
 - www.wpacareermedia.com.au
 - www.abs.gov.au
 - www.aihw.gov.au/labourforce/index.html
- employer surveys, eg: www.aim.com.au
- dedicated market research or survey information.

In addition, the curriculum case requires systematic stakeholder consultation as shown in the extract below:

2.1 Consultation with stakeholders

Stakeholder	Dates and processes	Summary of program development issues

Consultation with stakeholders and curriculum development issues

Briefly describe how program development issues raised by stakeholders (other academics, the professions, potential employers and other groups with particular interests) have influenced the structure, content and Graduate Qualities profile of the program. Discuss any major areas of disagreement with stakeholders and how these have been addressed.

Recommendation 5

That in order to achieve its aims in internationalisation in teaching, research and service, UniSA identify more specific performance indicators and targets, and strategies for achieving them.

AUQA Audit Report, Section 3—International Aspects, page 26

Context and interpretation

The AUQA panel notes that UniSA has adopted a definition of internationalisation that encompasses international and intercultural dimensions to its core activities. While the panel cited a number of good practices, they also observed that there is a tendency among some staff to equate internationalisation with transnational activity, and that the corporate KPIs (onshore and transnational load) do not reflect the scope of the University's internationalisation aspirations.

UniSA included in its KPIs from 2003 additional indicators—namely yield (duration of program x fees), cultural diversity, and market diversification—that measure performance beyond load and revenue targets and the panel was apprised of these.

Actions

1 Revise international strategy

UniSA had identified the need to revise its international strategy as one of its key strategies driving review and planning. The impetus for revision has in part come from the Vice Chancellor's *Review of review and planning*, and as a consequence of the findings of an internal readiness assessment for ISO certification for transnational program business cases.

An overarching international strategy is currently being developed, and will be reviewed with other key University strategies—see Recommendation 2 for further information. The review of strategies will precede and drive the review of KPIs for the 2006 planning cycle.

2 Expand the scope and conceptualisation of student mobility

During 2005, student mobility was reconceptualised from a narrow view of student exchange (numbers in versus numbers out) to one that encompasses a range of activity that provides opportunities for students for intercultural and international experiences. These include the traditional exchanges for undergraduate students, as well as such opportunities as international placements for postgraduate students, and attendance at international conferences by research students. The implementation plan for student mobility includes targets, timelines and key performance indicators, provision for resourcing of expanded opportunities for international experience, and integration of the concept of student mobility into program related policies and procedures. The plan was noted by Senior Management Group in April 2005.

3 Assess Graduate Qualities outcomes

Graduate Quality 7, that a University of South Australia graduate demonstrates international perspectives as a professional and as a citizen, is a major driver for internationalisation of the curriculum. Affirmation 2 discusses strategies for the measurement of the achievement of Graduate Qualities.

4 Continue to internationalise research

A similar process to the reconceptualisation of student mobility is being conducted in relation the internationalisation of research. This process will also develop a range of targets and performance indicators.

The concept of internationalisation of research was explored and debated by members of the University's Research Policy, and Research Degrees Committees. Issues raised during these discussions were further explored during one-on-one interviews with research leaders at UniSA. As a result, the internationalisation of research was reconceptualised to acknowledge elements such as the University's social responsibility within the global community, fostering an improved awareness and understanding of other cultures among our researchers and research graduates, the University's standing and legitimacy within the international research community, and the economic potential of international research collaboration.

The framework underlying the recently developed *Internationalisation of research strategy* acknowledges the need for balance between structured collaboration guided by current and desired corporate alliances and more informal research relationships that arise between individual researchers—often the strongest and most productive research relationships.

The scope of the *Internationalisation of research strategy* encompasses research education, research projects and collaboration, and professional development/scholarship opportunities for researchers. Numerous University-wide strategies will be implemented during 2006 with resulting improvement in key performance areas expected in 2007.

5 Enhance e-research capability

Progress in the internationalisation of research will be enhanced through the promotion of e-research within the University. E-research provides opportunities for enhanced research interactions and extended international participation with researchers and research students distributed globally. Research Policy Committee (RPC) has established an e-Research Implementation Group (e-RIG). The e-RIG will oversee the implementation of recommendations made in the report to the July 2005 meeting of Academic Board *e-Research: Implications for the University of South Australia* and make regular progress reports to RPC.

Recommendations of the e-research report are designed to:

- provide a mechanism to ensure researchers can access e-research opportunities
- define a base level of IT infrastructure for researchers engaging in e-research projects
- ensure UniSA is engaged in state or nation-wide discussions on middleware
- ensure the scope of UniSA's infrastructure planning process includes e-research.

Recommendation 6

That UniSA clarify the relationship between schools and research institutes, centres and groups, and resolve a number of related organisational issues.

AUQA Audit Report, Section 4—Research, page 33

Context and interpretation

This AUQA recommendation was made in the context of research priorities and concentrations. UniSA-recognised research concentrations form Groups, Centres or Institutes. Groups and Centres are located within or across Schools which in turn are located within Divisions. Institutes have traditionally been 'stand-alone' concentrations located independently of Divisions. Three new Research Institutes have been recently approved. Two of these are located within Schools while the third involves collaboration across three Divisions.

The interactions between elements of the organisation's structure—Research Groups, Centres, Institutes with Schools and Divisions can sometimes cause complexities around issues such as resources, funds, and supervision.

Actions

Two approaches have been taken to addressing the recommendation.

1 Clarify funding relationships

The Pro Vice Chancellor: Research and Innovation, has written a succinct paper clearly explaining the funding relationship between Divisions, Schools, and research concentrations. This paper has been distributed and discussed with Deans: Research within Divisions, Divisional PVCs and Heads of School.

2 Institute a Vice Chancellor's Review of reporting relationships

The Vice Chancellor commissioned a *Review of the reporting relationships between Divisions and Schools and Research Institutes and Centres*. The review was conducted by an external reviewer, Emeritus Professor Andrew Lister, and the Vice Chancellor received the report in August 2005.

The terms of reference for the review were to report on the most effective system of organising:

- the reporting relationships between Heads of Schools, Directors of Research Institutes and Research Centres, Pro Vice Chancellors of Divisions, Deans of Research and the Dean of Graduate Studies
- the relationship between research training in Research Institutes, Centres and Groups and programs offered by Schools which feed into the demand for research degree places in the Institutes and Centres.

The Review involved members of Senior Management, Directors of Research Institutes, Centres, and Groups, Heads of School, Divisional Deans of Research, and the Dean of Graduate Studies.

The *Review of the reporting relationships between Divisions and Schools and Research Institutes and Centres* clarified the reporting relationships between these organisational structures and the programs offered by Schools which feed into the demand for research degree places in the Institutes and Centres.

The paper developed in Action 1 above has been used to provide clarification in specific instances when management and research staff have been unsure how to proceed.

The Review report has been received, and an action plan addressing the findings has been developed and is undergoing consultation among the relevant stakeholders. The final action plan is expected to be presented to Academic Board late in 2005.

Recommendation 7

That UniSA develop a conceptual and strategic planning framework for its objective of community engagement, developing indicators and measurements, and pay explicit attention to evaluating the desired objectives.

AUQA Audit Report, Section 5—Community Engagement, page 38

Context and interpretation

The University's aspirations towards community engagement stem from its Act and include notions of building the capacity and resilience of the communities within which it works, in particular:

- providing educational programs for disadvantaged groups and Indigenous people,
- providing programs for the benefit of and to enhance the cultural life of the wider community, and
- working in collaboration with industry, commerce and the professions.

UniSA does not have specific KPIs for community engagement because of its embedded nature in teaching and research activities. It is evaluated as part of those activities and recognised and rewarded through mechanisms such as awards and promotion criteria.

The AUQA panel noted that the University has many useful community initiatives, but they generally lacked a holistic approach or unifying framework. An exception was the UniSA Northern Adelaide Partnership (UNAP) initiative, which received a commendation.

Actions

1 Develop a conceptual strategy for community engagement

A working group, convened by the Executive Director: International and Development, was established in mid-2005 to articulate a strategy for community engagement.

The University has engaged in formative discussions about community and regional engagement in the broader conceptualisation of UniSA's positioning statement about 'serving the community'. This broader conceptualisation will require a clearer vision of the University's communities as local, regional and international.

The strategy will identify key community audiences and develop targeted strategies and indicators that lend themselves to evaluation.

It is anticipated that by the end of 2005, the University will have formulated a strategy for wider discussion, and consideration of the strategy and performance indicators will form part of the activities in relation to Recommendation 2.

2 Sharpen focus on regional engagement

UniSA has been sharpening its focus and extending its regional engagement. A University Steering Group on Regional Engagement has been established, and the Dean of the Whyalla Campus of the University is the Director: Regional Engagement (located at Whyalla). His principal responsibility is to coordinate University activity for developing sustainable university experiences in regional South Australia.

As part of a broader community engagement approach, UniSA has been extending its regional engagement (which encompasses education, research and community development) and, as part of its regional engagement strategy, in 2005 UniSA established a regional centre at Mount Gambier. Regional engagement is a corporate priority project for 2005–2006.

Recommendation 8

That in its foreshadowed review of its budget model, UniSA consider how best to determine staff balances (eg casual v. continuing, academic v. general) to optimise achievement of its teaching, research and community objectives.

AUQA Audit Report, Section 6—Human Resources, page 45

Context and interpretation

UniSA's *Performance Portfolio* identified workload as a significant issue, particularly for academic staff. The AUQA panel noted that this was the most common concern raised at interview, noting further that this was in common with many Australian universities and a threat to the quality of course and program delivery.

UniSA identified workload and productivity as a corporate priority for 2003 and undertook a review which found several causes of heavy workload, including a high level of academic administration, lack of IT skills, instability of IT systems and growing student expectations. The review recommendations focus on increasing staff productivity in various ways.

However, it should be noted that UniSA's staff balances compare favourably within the sector—for example, academic salaries at UniSA are 56% of total salaries, compared with 53% nationally.

Actions

1 Reduce administrative tasks performed by academics

One approach has been relieving academic staff of administrative tasks by creating additional general staff positions in Divisions and Schools. Academic staff frequently cite the amount of administrative work they are required to do as detracting from academic work and increasing general staff support provides some relief. However, the balance of expenditure on general and academic staff will require ongoing monitoring to ensure the quality of program delivery is maintained.

2 Improve workforce planning

The review of UniSA's budget model will not explicitly address the balance of staff, as this is determined at the Division and School levels. However, UniSA has developed a framework and tools for workforce planning to assist managers to monitor and plan for recruitment, management and transition of staff in relation to their area's activities.

The University currently provides a broad workforce profile across a number of human resource indices through an Annual Workforce Profile report, and areas can drill down for information specific to their local areas using the UniSAinfo Reporting environment. The annual and medium term review and planning processes of the University require that key issues in workforce planning are addressed. In planning for 2006, particular emphasis is on attracting and retaining talent.

3 Develop research capacity

In setting its budget for 2006, the University has focused on funding improved research capacity, and will set aside special development funds for this purpose.

Recommendation 9

That UniSA ensure that, as it further develops support services for students and staff, the advice from the various sources is consistent and that unnecessary redundancies in information supply are avoided.

AUQA Audit Report, Section 7—Support and Services, page 47

Context and interpretation

The AUQA panel noted that the establishment of new support positions in schools might create the potential for the provision of conflicting advice to students to that provided by Campus Central, which provides a 'one-stop shop' for academic advice and services on each campus.

It should be noted that UniSA's intentions in establishing the positions in the schools were to provide additional administrative support to academic staff in the schools (see Recommendation 8, Action 1) and not to duplicate the student services provided by Campus Central.

Actions

UniSA has taken a number of approaches to ensure consistency in information provision to students about academic and support matters:

1 Provide improved information about Learning Connection services

Ask Learning Connection (AskLC) is an online interactive tool developed in March 2005 to provide information to students about the range of services offered through Learning Connection. This tool is now accessed by staff from other areas, including Campus Central, to ensure that referrals are appropriate and that information is consistent and up-to-date.

AskLC has been developed in-house and so provides the opportunity for expansion to other areas. For example, it will be used to provide information about the services (from a range of organisational units) that will continue to be available during the University closure between Christmas and new year. The possibility of expanding the facility into 'AskUniSA' during 2006 is being investigated.

2 Develop a Campus Central staff portal

The central unit Student and Academic Services (SAS) is building a new Campus Central staff portal. This will provide quick and easy access to all the most commonly used information about student administration (how-to guides and user manuals) as well as a specially designed induction site and links to campus specific information.

This portal, due for release in November 2005, will replace existing locally held information and become the single source of all user information provided by SAS. It will then also be available for other staff and units such as Learning Connection will also be able to store their training and information resources for Campus Central staff on the site.

3 Provide appropriate staff development for administrative staff

To provide additional administrative support for academic staff (see Action 1, Recommendation 8), a number of general staff administrative positions have been created over recent years (Academic Support Officers, Program Support Officers and School Executive Officers). In 2004, Human Resources ran a two day program for School Executive Officers that included orientation to role and main functions. In 2005, programs focusing on using data intelligently and IT skills for academic support have targeted Academic Support and Program Support Officers.

SAS is preparing a Program Support Officer induction kit with information and resources about all areas of student and academic administration and the first draft will be released for consultation early in 2006.

4 Improve communication between SAS and Campus Central

SAS is reviewing its communication with schools to inform more effective models for the different areas of functional responsibility.

SAS coordinated a Campus Central planning day in June 2005 with a high level of attendance by Campus Central staff and coordinators from SAS. The day focused on resolving issues that affected all campuses (including managing information and ensuring consistency). A report was submitted to the Student Academic and Administration Management Group (SAAMG) in late July 2005.

Action items include, among other things, development of a web-based bulletin board to improve communication, training to enhance knowledge of relevant policies and procedures, coordination with Information Strategy and Technology Services to reduce system down times, and process improvements. Progress on these actions will be monitored through SAAMG.

Recommendation 10

That, consistent with its aspiration to be student-centred, UniSA investigate jointly with the students association ways to improve the levels of student representation on committees across schools and programs.

AUQA Audit Report, Section 7—Support and Services, page 48

Context and interpretation

The AUQA panel noted that UniSA encourages the presence of students on committees and as class representatives but that this varies widely across Schools. The panel also noted that the Students Association itself recognised the difficulty of establishing a representative culture.

UniSA has a very high quality of student representation on University-wide committees but acknowledges that this is less effective, with uneven attendance, at local level committees.

Actions**1 Investigate the possibility of direct approaches to students**

The issue of making direct approaches to students to sit on committees was considered at the Student Services Subcommittee (SSSC) of Finance Committee, a forum for discussion on matters of common interest to UniSA and the Students Association. However, there has been no further discussion pending changes mooted under the government's stated aims for implementing Voluntary Student Unionism.

Glossary and abbreviations

APPRC	Academic Policy and Program Review Committee, a sub-committee of Academic Board
AskLC	Ask Learning Connection—an online interactive tool developed to provide information to students about the range of services offered through Learning Connection.
ATN	Australian Technology Network (comprises UniSA with Curtin University of Technology, RMIT, Queensland University of Technology and the University of Technology, Sydney)
Campus Central	Services and resources supporting student academic administration and providing staff campus services, located on each campus and reporting to the Division with the most students on that campus. Its activities are coordinated by Student and Academic Services.
CEI	Course Evaluation Instrument
Course	UniSA term for unit of study making up an academic program
CPG	Corporate Planning Group
DBA	Doctor of Business Administration
DEST	Department of Education, Science and Training
Division	Schools are grouped into Divisions, which are headed by a Pro Vice Chancellor
ED	Executive Director. UniSA has two Executive Directors:
ED:F&R	ED: Finance and Resources
ED:I&D	ED: International and Development
e-RIG	e-Research Implementation Group, a working group of Research Policy Committee
FirstConnection	Academic orientation program for commencing students run by Learning Connection
FLC	Flexible Learning Centre
GCA	Graduate Careers Australia
Graduate Qualities (GQ)	The set of seven qualities of a graduate of the University of South Australia
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
Learning Connection	Part of the Flexible Learning Centre, located on each campus and providing services and resources supporting teaching and learning to students and staff.
Portfolio	Units are grouped into Portfolios, which may be headed by a Pro Vice Chancellor or Executive Director.
Priority Project	Each year, UniSA's Corporate Planning Group identifies a small number of priority projects as a focus for action.
Program	Term used at UniSA for a course of study leading to an award.
PVC	Pro Vice Chancellor. UniSA has seven Pro Vice Chancellors:
PVC:R&I	PVC: Research and Innovation
PVC:ALS	PVC: Access and Learning Support
PVC:OSC	PVC: Organisational Strategy and Change
PVC:BUE	PVC: Business
PVC:EAS	PVC: Education, Arts and Social Sciences
PVC:IEE	PVC: Information Technology, Engineering and the Environment
PVC:HSC	PVC: Health Sciences
RDC	Research Degrees Committee
Research Institutes, Centres & Groups	UniSA terminology denoting defined levels of research concentration
RPC	Research Policy Committee
SAAMG	Student Academic and Administration Management Group
SAS	Student and Academic Services
School	The basic academic organisation in the University responsible for a group of related programs and disciplines
SSS	Student Services Subcommittee, a sub-committee of Council's Finance Committee
TALC	Teaching and Learning Committee, a sub-committee of Academic Board
Teaching @ UniSA	Professional development program for academic staff.
Transnational	Term used for UniSA international activity outside Australia
UNAP	UniSA Northern Adelaide Partnership