



Australian Capital Territory
EDUCATION AND TRAINING
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Mr Rob Carmichael
Audit Director
Australian Universities Quality Agency
Level 10
123 Lonsdale Street
MELBOURNE VIC 3000

Dear Mr Carmichael

Thank you for your email of 1 June 2005 to Dr Michele Bruniges, providing a copy of your letter of 20 January 2005 about the Quality Audit Action Plan submitted by the ACT Accreditation and Registration Council in July 2004. Unfortunately, there is no record of your January letter being received by the department. As Dr Bruniges is currently overseas, I am replying on her behalf.

I note that the AUQA has recognised that Council will submit a progress report on the implementation of the Action Plan in October 2006. I also note that AUQA has identified six items on which it expects a comprehensive response in that Progress Report.

I am pleased to provide the following interim response to your questions concerning particular action items from the Council's action plan:

<i>Item No.</i>	<i>Interim response</i>	<i>Completed</i>
4	Council have disaggregated the CRICOS endorsement process for higher education providers from the process for VET sector providers. Procedures and guidelines have been amended to reflect this change.	July 2004
5	A Council working party is currently finalising its review of terminology for higher education course accreditation, including a streamlined process that integrates more closely with provider approval.	July 2005
9	Council has clarified its policy on recruiting course assessment panel (CAP) members from universities outside the ACT. All CAPs formed since the AUQA audit have included at least one or more interstate academics. Council contributes to a national database of panel members maintained by higher education recognition officers.	Ongoing.
15	Policy and procedures for communication with stakeholders have been revised and annual reviews of the effectiveness of those changes will be conducted.	November 2004

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| 18 | Council note AUQA's position on this recommendation. | N/A |
| 19 | The Minister is aware of Council procedures for regulating Protocol 4 (Delivery Arrangements Involving Other Organisations). | N/A |

Please note this is an interim response and that a comprehensive progress report will be provided. Should you have any question regarding the above, please contact Anne Houghton on (02) 6205 7088.

Yours sincerely



Julie McKinnon
Deputy Chief Executive
9 June 2005

Attachment 2

ACT Accreditation and Registration Council

June 2004

Action Plan Based on AUQA Recommendations 1 - 20

No	Recommendation	ARC Response	Action plan	Timeline
1	That ACTARC take steps to strengthen its planning with respect to HE by aligning the objectives of the Draft Council Directions for 2003-05 with the 'Quality Objectives' for higher education listed in Section 4 of the AUQA Performance Portfolio; and approving the outcome as a statement of objectives for higher education	Agreed.	A review of the Council's Strategic Directions has commenced.	Early 2005
2	That ACTARC review the new ACT Standards for Non Self-Accrediting Higher Education Providers by conducting a pilot study using the re-registration of existing registered HE-only providers; and that ACTARC receive feedback on the effectiveness and usefulness of the Standards for HE use, prior to implementing them, <i>ab initio</i>	Agreed.	The pilot has commenced.	December, 2004.
3	That ACTARC liaise directly with the Department of Education and Training in NSW, in order to clarify and resolve the registration and accreditation status of the Canberra College of Theology for operating within the ACT	Agreed.	ARC will ask the Sydney College of Divinity to apply to register the delivery of the Bachelor of Theology in the ACT.	November, 2004.
4	That ACTARC disaggregate the CRICOS endorsement process for HE providers completely from the process for RTO registration in VET	Agreed.	No comment.	August, 2004.
5	That ACTARC review the use of terminology in the higher education accreditation application process, and to ensure consistent use across all forms of documentation.	Agreed.	No comment.	Ongoing.
6	That ACTARC review the current approach to the briefing, induction, and training of CAP Chairs and panel members; and that the briefing/training incorporate any changes to the approval procedures resulting from actions implemented in response to the recommendations of this Audit Report.	Agreed.	This is interdependent on other recommendations.	February, 2005.

7	That ACTARC ensure that site visits are carried out as a compulsory requirement of the HE course accreditation/re-accreditation process in the ACT, separate from site visits associated with RTO approval processes	Agreed.	Ongoing.	Ongoing.
8	That to avoid the possibility or perception of a conflict of interest, ACTARC avoid contracting any third party to act on the Agency's behalf in a HE approval process, if that same party has been contracted separately by the applicant to act for it as a 'proponent representative', or in similar capacity, in the same (or an inter-related) HE approval process	Agreed.	Conflict of interest must be avoided.	Ongoing.
9	That, in line with the National Protocol 3 criteria that a course should be comparable in requirements and learning outcomes to a course at the same level in a similar field at Australian universities, ACTARC recruit additional suitably-credentialed university-based academic discipline and subject experts to serve on CAPs, especially more widely from universities located outside of the ACT.	Noted.	ACT ARC practice is comparable with other states/territories. To be raised for discussion with representatives of other States/Territories.	Ongoing.
10	That ACTARC include an approved statement of objectives for higher education in the QMS documentation	Agreed.	No comment.	July, 2005.
11	That ACTARC review the higher education quality assurance processes covered by the Quality Management System against its own goals and objectives; take into account the recommendations and observations made by AUQA in this audit Report; and the QMS documentation be revised, as appropriate.	Agreed.	No comment.	July, 2005.
12	That, following evaluation of the trial processes, ACTARC consolidate the two sets of guidelines into a single, consistent Mid-term Review process	Agreed.	ACT ARC have consulted with our Higher Education Providers who have agreed to a single guideline.	June, 2004.
13	That ACTARC bring forward plans to protect the Agency's corporate knowledge, by adopting a comprehensive approach to succession planning, and by providing tailored training and development opportunities for individuals in its governance structures who demonstrate the potential for handling more senior responsibilities	Noted.	Succession planning and training are high priorities for the Council.	Ongoing.

14	That the ACTARC review the efficacy of its overall records management for HE applications, with a view to reducing risks to the integrity of the data, seeking efficiencies, and ensuring that complete and accurate records of all statutory processes are maintained.	Noted.	ACT ARC has a process of regularly reviewing records management. This is being maintained in the Department's implementation of the new TAR Act (2003).	Ongoing.
15	That ACTARC review its current procedures for the communication of all policy and procedural changes to all stakeholders, with a view to improving the quality of communication, both in terms of timeliness and clarity	Agreed.	No comment.	Ongoing.
16	That, as foreshadowed, ACTARC develop, seek approval for and, as required, implement regulations for the appointment of people with appropriate university credentials and experience on any advisory panel set up to consider an application to establish a university in the ACT under National Protocol 1; and liaise with other jurisdictions to develop more detailed guidelines, and so promote national consistency in university approvals	Agreed.	Regulations are now in draft. Liaison with jurisdictions.	November, 2004. Ongoing.
17	That, as foreshadowed, ACTARC develop, seek approval for and, as required, implement regulations for the appointment of people with appropriate university credentials and experience on any advisory panel set up to consider an application to establish a foreign university to operate in the ACT, under National Protocols 2; and liaise with other jurisdictions to develop more detailed guidelines, and so promote greater national consistency in the approval of foreign universities	Agreed.	Regulations are now in draft. Liaison with jurisdictions.	November, 2004. Ongoing.
18	That the ACTARC consult with the appropriate 'responsible authorities', including the Commonwealth, and any other state or territory authorities, that they may collectively resolve questions of extra-jurisdictional responsibility for the proper regulation of HE provision by the Australian Defence Forces under National Protocol 3	Not agreed.	ACT ARC does not agree that the evidence supports the panel's conclusion.	No further action.

19	That, as foreshadowed, ACTARC consult with the Office of the ACT Minister for Education, Family, and Youth Affairs, in order to confirm the need for, and the nature of regulations for the implementation of National Protocol 4 in the ACT	Noted.	The Office of the Minister is aware of the requirements for Protocol 4.	No further action.
20	That, in order to ensure that there is clearly stated delegation of jurisdictional authority, for the endorsement of HE courses for overseas students, ACTARC reference the Commonwealth ESOS Act (2000) and CRICOS in the ACT TAR Act (2003) Regulations	Noted.	No comment.	July, 2005.



Australian Universities Quality Agency

Chair: Professor Deryck Schreuder

Executive Director: Dr David Woodhouse

20 January 2005

Ms Fran Hinton
Chief Executive
Department of Education Youth & Family Services, ACT
Manning Clark Offices
PO Box 1584
Tuggeranong ACT 2901

Dear Ms Hinton

Quality Audit Action Plan

Thank you for your letter of 30 July 2004 concerning the submission of the ACTARC Action Plan and implications for the timing of submission of a Progress Report.

AUQA is now receiving the first Progress Reports from 2003 auditees, and hence we have had opportunity to more closely review the ACTARC Action Plan submitted in July 2004. I apologise for the delay in getting back to you before now.

With respect to the action items proposed in the plan to address the Audit Report's recommendations, please note as follows (if an action item is not mentioned below it is deemed to be fully satisfactory):

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No 4: We note there was a set target date of August 2004. Could you please indicate if this was achieved and also record in your Progress Report when it is due.

No 5: Please provide a target date for completion and comment in the Progress Report when it is due.

Page 2:

No 9: As it stands, this in itself is viewed by AUQA as not being a satisfactory response. Please clarify what the Agency intends to do as a result of the 'discussions' mentioned in the Action Plan item, or advise what other HEROS have said in these discussions.

Page 3:

No 15: Please provide a target date for completion and comment in the Progress Report when it is due.

No 18: AUQA notes that this recommendation has been rejected. Please note that AUQA is obliged to report on the issues raised by this recommendation under AUQA's Object No. 3.

No 19: We note that this issue is with the Office of the Minister. Please advise when you expect a regulation to be addressed.

Please don't hesitate to contact me if you have any questions re the above. We will be writing to you again about the Progress Report requirements closer to when it is due, which, as agreed, is now not until October 2006.

Yours sincerely

Rob Carmichael
Audit Director

cc: Anne Houghton & Chris Whitton, ACTARC; Anne Martin, Panel Chair