MINISTERIAL REVIEW
OF
CENTRAL QUEENSLAND UNIVERSITY
- MELBOURNE INTERNATIONAL CAMPUS

AUGUST 2007
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<td>AEI</td>
<td>AUSTRALIAN EDUCATION INTERNATIONAL</td>
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<td>GCMG</td>
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<td>CPA</td>
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<td>CQU</td>
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<td>(COMMONWEALTH) DEPARTMENT OF IMMIGRATION AND CITIZENSHIP</td>
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<td>DIIRD</td>
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<td>MCEETYA</td>
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B. REVIEW TERMS OF REFERENCE

Terms of Reference

Overview

The integrity and ongoing maintenance of high quality provision in education and training services, to both domestic and overseas students, is vital to the social, cultural and economic wellbeing of the Victorian community.

Accordingly, the Victorian Government has in place a robust system for the registration and regulation of education and training providers.

In terms of the provision of higher education to overseas students, the requirements for the approval of courses and providers are set out in:

- The Victorian *Tertiary Education Act 1993*
- The Commonwealth *Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000*

together with supporting guidelines, regulations and codes of conduct.

In March 2007, overseas students enrolled at the Melbourne campus of Central Queensland University (CQU Melbourne) in Management Accounting as part of a Masters program publicly protested in relation to a number of matters, in particular:

1. The content of an examination question which they claimed to be not reflected in the course syllabus;
2. The marking of that examination question and the weighting given to it; and
3. The failure of CQU to award conceded passes for students who were marginally failed.

The students subsequently lodged a formal complaint with the Office of Training and Tertiary Education (OTTE).

At the request of the Minister for Skills, Education Services and Employment, Professor W.G. Carson conducted a limited review of the complaints under section 11A of the *Tertiary Education Act 1993*. While this review concluded that complaints as to (1) & (2) could not be reasonably sustained, it was recommended that CQU give favourable consideration to the students’ representations in respect of (3). The reviewer also noted there were a number of other matters that he had not had the time, or opportunity, to consider but which might be further investigated.

In respect of finding (3), CQU has declined to act in accordance with the recommendation on grounds it would undermine the academic policy in place.

Accordingly, the Minister has directed that a full review under section 11A of the *Tertiary Education Act 1993* be undertaken of the operations of CQU Melbourne in respect of the initial complaints and the organisation’s overall compliance with the regulatory framework for the provision of higher education to overseas students.
Scope of Review

From the perspective of maintaining high quality provision in Victoria, the review will examine, consider and report with findings and recommendations on:

(i) the complaints of students submitted to OTTE, having regard to the findings of the review by Professor Carson;
(ii) any other matters raised by Professor Carson on which he made no findings;
(iii) the operations of (CQU Melbourne) against the obligations imposed by the Tertiary Education Act and the ESOS Act, particularly in relation to:
  a. marketing and promotion of courses to overseas students;
  b. academic, financial and staffing resources made available for provision of these courses;
  c. the standard of premises, equipment, materials and resources available to overseas students at CQU;
  d. student welfare and support services;
  e. grievance handling policy and processes; and
(iv) any findings and/or recommendations of AUQA relevant to (CQU Melbourne).

The Review will be reported to the Minister by 6 August 2007.
1. **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Melbourne International Campus of Central Queensland University occupies a niche position in Victoria’s international education sector. Recent adverse public attention derives from a partially informed critique of its ‘different’ approach to the recruitment of, and provision of, education services to overseas students. The fact is that it attracts students who might not otherwise afford overseas education, or be able to gain entry to universities with less flexible entry requirements. This approach might be seen as an expression of the diversification of the Australian higher education offer. Its bona fides depend on alignment within the frameworks set for Australian higher education qualifications [AQF] and compliance with national service standards for overseas students [ESOS-National Code]. There have been doubts raised about the former by AUQA (2006), and student and industry complaints have challenged the latter.

This Review was commissioned by the Minister for Skills, Education Services, and Employment to investigate and report on concerns as set out in the Terms of Reference (pp 6-7), particularly in relation to student complaints about alleged inadequacies in examination procedures and marking policies, but also taking into account the broader obligations imposed by various statutory instruments on providers of education services in Victoria to overseas students.

The Review Panel has reached three broad conclusions.

1. Consistent with an AUQA Audit in 2006, OTTE course approval processes in 2005 and 2006, and the Carson Review of Student Complaints in 2007, the Review Panel found no evidence of non-compliance by CQU or its Melbourne International Campus with the ESOS National Code. Insofar as these earlier audit accreditation and inquiry processes identified matters for attention, the Review Panel found that there have been demonstrable improvements to student support at CQU, and CQU is taking credible measures to address the teaching and learning issues identified.

2. Recent complaints in Victoria about curriculum, examination process, and teaching quality were amplified by student anxiety about exam failures in the context of imminent changes to Australia’s skilled migration assessment processes. The Review Panel concurred with the findings of the Carson Report that many of the student claims of fundamental failures in process, or deliberate exploitation, cannot be sustained. The Review Panel notes that CQU have responded to some of the Carson Report’s recommendations for clarification of related policy and adjustment to process.

3. Nonetheless, there are aspects of the CQU/C_MS business model and pedagogical issues between the academic leadership of CQU and staff at the CQU Australian International Campuses that leave the potential for a recurrence of student dissatisfaction and further questioning of CQU-MIC bona fides. As identified in earlier reviews, these vulnerabilities seem to be rooted in the processes of curriculum development and assessment that do not adequately take into account the characteristics and expectations of student cohorts that CQU actively attracts to its international campuses. A linked process of internal review and change management is in hand at CQU, but these particular vulnerabilities need to be addressed as a matter of priority, and definitive changes reported by CQU to the VRQA, along with its responses to other recommendations of this report, by November 2007.
# KEY FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATIONS

From the perspective of maintaining high quality provision in Victoria, the Review will consider, examine and report with findings and recommendations on:

## 1. STUDENT COMPLAINTS

**Terms of Reference:** The complaints of students submitted to OTTE, having regard to the findings of the review by Professor Carson.

### Review Panel Findings

The Review Panel found that the complaints submitted by the CQU Melbourne students with regard to the exam could not be sustained (see 3.18 – 3.28)

The Review Panel concurred with the finding of Professor W.G Carson that the policy of the CQU Faculty of Business and Informatics, with regard to the status of Pass Conceded and Pass Terminating Grades, had been unclear at the time of the student complaints in March 2007 (see 3.22).

The Review Panel found that CQU had taken action since March 2007 to clarify the Faculty policy with regard to the availability of Pass Conceded and Pass Terminating grades (see 3.23). However, the Review Panel also found that CQU had made certain representations to students since the Carson Review that are arguably misleading. These actions include: 1. Representations to CQU students that the decision not to award Pass Conceded or Pass Terminating grades was made on the basis of concerns regarding professional accreditation, rather than on the basis of Faculty policy; and 2. Representations made to CQU students in an email distributed to students on Friday 30 March which omitted relevant findings of the Carson Report whilst emphasising others in a way which could be construed as misleading (see 3.11 and 3.22).

The Review Panel found that Professor Carson’s recommendation that Pass Conceded and Pass Terminating grades be awarded to all CQU Melbourne students who had met the necessary threshold for such grades (52 students in total) had been rejected by CQU on the basis that it would be inequitable to allow only this particular 2007 cohort to seek special consideration for the subject *Issues in Management Accounting*.

The Review Panel found that the CQU Melbourne student complainants did not follow the complaints or grievance processes correctly. This is supported by evidence documented by the CQU Student Ombudsman, and also, in the history of student correspondence with OTTE (see 3.26). Nor did OTTE actively pursue the students to advise them of the correct procedures for complaint.

The Review Panel found no evidence to suggest that CQU failed students as “a revenue raising exercise” (see 3.30)
1. **Student Complaint Recommendations**

**Recommendation 1:** That CQU clearly document and inform all students who met the necessary requirements for a supplementary exam in the subject *Issues in Management Accounting* in March 2007, that the decision not to award Pass Conceded and/or Pass Terminating Grades was made on the basis of Faculty Academic Policy and not for reasons of Professional Accreditation.

**Recommendation 2:** That CQU report to the Minister for Regional and Rural Development, Skills and Workforce Participation, on progress implementing follow-up actions in response to the Carson Report recommendations by 30 November 2007. These follow-up actions include: 1. Academic Board review of the sequencing of subjects offered in the Masters of Professional Accounting; and 2. CQU “Review of the distribution of responsibilities between Rockhampton and the Melbourne campus with a view to balancing centralised control against local autonomy.”

2. **OTHER MATTERS**

**Terms of Reference:** Any other matters raised by Professor Carson on which he did not have the opportunity to make any findings.

**Review Panel Findings**

1. **Changes of Grade:** The Review Panel found that there are matters, including timely and constructive communication with affected students from the faculty in Rockhampton, that deserve priority attention (see 3.27).

However, the Review Panel also found that measures had been taken by CQU to bolster consistency in marking policy and marker practice, to clarify its review of grades policy and to improve the usefulness of assessment feedback to students (see 3.27).

2. **Standard of Teaching:** The Review Panel found no evidence of widespread dissatisfaction with the standard of teaching. On the contrary it heard strong commendations from students about the competence and student-centric approach taken by a number of CQU staff. The Panel saw evidence of CQU/C_MS investment at two international campuses in academic staff development, including for casual staff, and in the development of pedagogies that respond to the characteristics of student cohorts at those campuses (see 3.27).

3. **English Proficiency:** The Review Panel found that there was no evidence amongst the academic staff with whom it met to support this allegation and neither was this seen as an endemic issue by students interviewed by the Review Panel (see 3.27).

4. **Academic Staff Oversight:** The Review Panel considers that this issue ultimately lies
within the competence and responsibility of the University. The Review Panel also found that in his 2006 Report, the CQU Student Ombudsman had clearly identified some improvements which could be addressed by the Faculty of Business and Informatics with regard to the need for staff sensitivity in relation to communicating with students about review of grade and examination feedback (see 3.27).

2. Additional recommendations following from the Carson Report

Recommendation 3: That the CQU Faculty of Business and Informatics attend to the recommendations detailed at pp.6-21 by the CQU Student Ombudsman in the CQU Student Ombudsman Annual Report 2006.

3. ESOS COMPLIANCE

Terms of Reference: The operations of CQU Melbourne against the obligations imposed by the Tertiary Education Act 1993 and the Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000, particularly in relation to:

1. Marketing and Promotion of courses to overseas students;
2. Academic, financial and staffing resources made available for provision of these courses;
3. The standard of premises, equipment, materials and resources available to overseas students at CQU;
4. Student welfare and support services; and
5. Grievance handling policy and processes.

Review Panel Findings

The Review Panel found no evidence of non-compliance with the National Code, or with the ESOS Act. The Review Panel also found measures taken by CQU to integrate ESOS compliance into a comprehensive University Risk Management Program (see 4.18).

1. Marketing and promotion of courses to overseas students: The Review Panel found that some elements of CQU marketing information could be construed as misleading and it would be in CQU’s interest to conduct a quality audit of its website and publications to eliminate potentially misleading information (see 4.21-4.22). The Review Panel found no evidence of systemic weaknesses in CQU’s management of its offshore or onshore agents (see 4.27). The Review Panel also found no evidence that a recruitment incentive scheme utilised by the University breached any legislative requirements (see 4.25).

2. Academic, financial and staffing resources made available for provision of these courses: The Review Panel found that teaching arrangements at CQU Melbourne are well coordinated, with recent developments fostering more inclusive academic involvement in curriculum and pedagogy (see 4.30-4.34) The Review Panel also saw evidence that the provision of academic and student support services and facilities was comparable to other Australian University campuses (4.32).
3. The standard of premises, equipment, materials and resources available to overseas students at CQU: The Review Panel found no evidence of significant deficiency with regard to resources available to the provision of courses. However, the Review Panel found that the CQU Melbourne library acquisition policy, that minimizes the holding of prescribed texts, could be usefully reviewed (see 4.36 but also 4.50). The Review Panel also found that CQU could manage risk more effectively by either incorporating the cost of prescribed texts into the CQU course fee cost, or by providing students with an accurate understanding of the total cost of course materials pre-arrival (see 4.50).

4. Student welfare and support services: The Review Panel found that CQU-MIC students have access to, and are encouraged to use, a range of student support services that are similar in scale and quality to those in a number of other universities in Australia (see 4.42).

5. Grievance handling policy and processes: The Review Panel found that the CQU Melbourne students had not properly followed the grievance procedures as directed by the CQU Student Ombudsman (see 4.46 and 4.47). The Review Panel also found that, for students who study at a self-accrediting interstate university, the available grievance processes have the potential to be confusing and onerous, owing to the need to channel grievances back through the jurisdiction in which the university’s founding legislation is established (see 4.47).

3. ESOS and Legislative Recommendations

Recommendation 4: That CQU conduct a quality audit and review of its website and publications to eliminate potentially misleading information.

Recommendation 5: That CQU review the library acquisition policy minimising the holding of prescribed texts at its Australian International Campuses with a view to enlarging the number of available prescribed texts at AIC’s.

Recommendation 6: That CQU review the scheduling of prescribed texts across courses to ensure that these, in aggregate, constitute a reasonable cost and that an accurate estimate of the full cost is made explicit in course information.

Recommendation 7: That the revised National Protocols for Higher Education Approval Processes address the lack of clarity regarding the investigation of a complaint where the particular self-accrediting higher education provider operates across borders. This would ensure that investigation could be conducted by an ombudsman in the jurisdiction in which the complaint occurs.
4. AUQA

**Terms of Reference:** Any findings and/or recommendations of the Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA) relevant to CQU Melbourne.

**Review Panel Findings**
The Review Panel found that CQU had taken a number of specific actions to address systemic issues raised by the AUQA review (see 5.5-5.14 and 5.29).

The Review Panel found that the issues identified above were all being addressed in one way or another by CQU. However, the Review Panel also found that more needs to be done specifically by the Faculty of Business and Informatics with regard to curriculum formulation (see 5.29) and, more generally by CQU, with regard to improving student exposure to a wider range of the University’s academic staff (see 5.21 and also 6.18). The Review Panel considers that implementing the full suite of AUQA recommendations will address relevant teaching issues.

**4. AUQA Recommendations**

**Recommendation 8:** That the CQU Faculty of Business and Informatics improve curriculum and assessment formulation. For example, by giving students early warning of their progress during term, sequencing course material in a manageable and helpful way, and providing staged examples and case studies of gradually increasing difficulty and complexity.

**Recommendation 9:** That CQU continue to attend to all of the recommendations of the 2006 AUQA Audit Report, but particularly take action with regard to (AUQA Recommendation 9) developing “a systematic approach to encouraging and resourcing research-informed teaching” at its Australian International Campuses, improving overseas students’ exposure to experienced and research active academic staff.
2. INTRODUCTION

CENTRAL QUEENSLAND UNIVERSITY AS IT HAS EVOLVED TODAY

2.1 To address the Terms of Reference of this Review, it will be helpful, indeed necessary, to set out something of the context of the University, and the teaching arrangements it has established, particularly in Melbourne. A few comparisons with other Australian universities (course providers) are warranted. Understanding and appreciating this context is a preliminary to making judgements and assessments of policies and practices, and of their appropriateness and effectiveness.

2.2 The institution which is now CQU was founded 40 years ago (in 1967) and has been a University under legislation in the State of Queensland for 15 years (from 1992). Central Queensland, as a geographical Division of Queensland, has its major regional centre in Rockhampton (population around 70,000) and extends west to Emerald, north to Mackay (population around 70,700) and south to Gladstone (population around 42,000). As Gavin Moodie has recently pointed out, the earlier Tertiary Education Commission believed a local population of at least 200,000 is needed to sustain a university. As Moodie has observed:

“Since the population of Central Queensland is rather less than that and the population within ready commuting distance of the University’s foundation campus at Rockhampton is only 70,000, CQU could not be sustained as a conventional on-campus university. It therefore introduced distance education in 1974 and soon had more distance students than internal students.”

2.3 The CQU 2006 Annual Report states that, of the 7069 (eftsl) Australian students enrolled, 2521 are internal, 2868 are external, and 1679 are multimodal.

2.4 Especially over the past decade, the University has dramatically recruited international students. The 2006 Annual Report records that the growth has been from 1642 in 1996, to 10,056 in 2006. This is an increase of 512 percent in the ten year period. When all international students are added, including those studying by distance and by multimodal, the figure is an equivalent full time study load (eftsl) of 11,379, significantly higher than the Australian student load.

2.5 But the international students are predominantly studying in Sydney and Melbourne, with the comparative numbers (these are numbers of students not eftsl) in 2006 being: Sydney 6483; Melbourne 4370; Brisbane 1096; Gold Coast 575; Rockhampton 317; and others, including students in Fiji and Singapore, bringing the grand total to 14,222.

2.6 So, the key characteristics of the student body of the University can be summed up as many more international than domestic, more external and multimodal than on-campus among the domestic students, and a big concentration of overseas students in Melbourne and Sydney, with relatively very few international students on the Central Queensland campuses.

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2.7 Most, if not all, Australian universities see themselves as having differentiating features. But the differences here are profound and lie at the heart of much of the questioning about the nature of the University.

**MIXED MESSAGES ABOUT CQU IN RECENT YEARS**

2.8 In recent years, CQU has been positively commended with multiple Education Export Awards, both in Queensland and nationally. The Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA) report (February 2006) states: “There is no doubt that CQU, in conjunction with its partners, is one of the most successful recruiters of international students among Australian universities.”

2.9 It has also been commended for its ‘international support services and pastoral care’ at the Queensland Education and Training International Awards (Annual Report, 2006). It has high ratings from the Good Universities Guide 2007 for Positive Graduate Outcomes, Cultural Diversity and Indigenous Participation, among other things.

2.10 Yet at the same time, the University has been the subject of damaging allegations about its international operations. On the one hand, some commentators, supported by student allegations, have questioned the quality of CQU’s course offerings, observing that: “There is a view that a degree at Central Queensland University in a place like Sydney is more about getting permanent residency and more about the dollars it can produce for the university than it is about the standard of the degree that you, as a student, end up with.”

2.11 On the other hand, recent student complaints have centred on the high failure rates of international students in some courses, and the inflexibility of CQU with respect to its policy of Pass Conceded and Pass Terminating grades in its Masters level postgraduate programs (see 3.21-3.23 below). This lead to protests, including the threat of a hunger strike by students at the Sydney campus in March 2006, and similar protests and threats at the Melbourne campus in March 2007 (the latter incident ultimately leading to this review).

2.12 In addition, commentators have pointed to issues related to the operation of the skilled migration program that imply the misalignment of curriculum with professional accreditation, the dilution of entry qualifications, including English language standards, the possibly inappropriate facilitation of assessment of academic progress. They point to the consolidated impact of these factors on the job-readiness of overseas students, primarily interested in education as a channel to permanent settlement, who select institutions and courses on the basis of their prima facie professional standing, cost and ease of entry. CQU is cited in these commentaries and collocated with concerns about “the curriculum content of the courses in question and whether they can be regarded as equivalent to that needed to obtain professional level work with an Australian employer.”

2.13 Unravelling these many issues, separating them and examining the interactions between them, constitute the core work of the Review Panel and of this Report.

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CQU INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITIES COMPARED WITH OTHER AUSTRALIAN UNIVERSITIES

2.14 Although there are fluctuations between years, CQU has the highest number of international students studying in Australia. As earlier noted, the largest numbers of these students are in Sydney and Melbourne, with numbers in Brisbane and on the Gold Coast, still well ahead of the much smaller number studying in Central Queensland campuses.

2.15 On a smaller scale, the University of Ballarat has a similar pattern of teaching in central locations in Sydney and Melbourne. The 2006 Annual Report of that University records a total of 4372 international students, of whom 3150 are full degree students in Australia, and within that number, 518 are at campuses of the Ballarat catchment region, with the remainder studying ‘through third party provider teaching sites in Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide and Geelong’. As with Central Queensland University, the majority of these international students are enrolled in postgraduate coursework programs, with much smaller enrolments in undergraduate courses. A further similarity between the profiles of the Melbourne and Sydney based international students of the two universities is that the predominant fields of study in both institutions are Business, with a main emphasis on Accounting, and programs in Information Technology.

2.16 Other universities providing similar programs for international students in Melbourne include Victoria University, RMIT University, Monash University and Swinburne University. Among the students we met, there seemed to be a good knowledge of alternative programs, perhaps helped by arrangements made by CQU for their students to use library facilities in some of these ‘competitor’ universities.

2.17 When offshore enrolments of international students are taken into account, CQU does not have the largest international student body in Australia. Using 2005 data sourced from University Annual Reports, Monash University has the largest international cohort (17,168), followed by Curtin University (16,092), RMIT University (15,017) with CQU in fourth place (13,837). Next is Macquarie University (9556).

2.18 A different ordering again arises when comparing international student fee revenue. Here, for 2005 in $million, the order is Monash University (174.3), University of Melbourne (168.1), University of Sydney (136.8), with CQU fourth (132.1), and RMIT University next (129.8).

2.19 When international student fee revenue is seen as a proportion of the total university revenue (a measure of the dependence of the university on international fees), CQU is by far the most dependent, with the highest proportion by far at 45.7 percent, followed by Macquarie University at 26.5, RMIT University at 25.4, Curtin University at 24.5, and Monash University next at 19.0 percent.

CQU-C_MS ARRANGEMENTS

2.20 At its simplest, for CQU, C_MS is a joint venture partner, whose role is to manage the Australian international campuses, to manage the delivery of CQU courses to the international students at these sites, and to undertake the bulk of the work of recruiting and promoting the University to prospective students.
2.21 Note 37 to the 2006 Financial Statements describes the principal activity of the Company as delivering CQU academic product to international students at the Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane and Gold Coast international campuses.

2.22 But this simplicity is complicated by C_MS being part owned by the University itself. It is described as jointly owned by the University and by a private for profit entity, Kallawar Holdings Pty Ltd. It is governed by a Board of four Directors, two nominated by the University and two nominated by Kallawar. The Notes to the Financial Statements for 2006 state that: “Whilst the consolidated entity owns 50% of the equity of C_Management Services Pty Ltd, it is able to govern the financial and operating policies of the company by virtue of the fact that it holds the casting vote at meetings of the board of directors.”

2.23 The Objectives of C_MS constitute the management of the following:

- Potential applicants
- Student enrolment
- Academic delivery
- Some aspects of assessment
- Graduation
- Student services
- Marketing and recruitment
- Creation of an environment that gives each student every opportunity to successfully graduate
- Financial viability

2.24 In contrast to the way that other third party providers teach and support student learning under contract, or in partnership, with other Australian universities, both in onshore and in offshore programs, the Review Panel formed the view from CQU-C_MS interactions that here there is much greater interdependence, and CQU direct staff involvement with what occurs within areas of C_MS responsibility.

2.25 An International User Group has been recently established “to progress the development of joint strategic directions and manage operational matters as appropriate across the interface between CQU and C_MS, and to provide a forum for collaboration and cooperation on matters that will benefit the joint business of CQU and CMS.” Chaired by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, with core representation at senior level from both sides, the Group appears to meet regularly and reasonably frequently, involving other staff by invitation as appropriate.

2.26 Other interfaces occur at a variety of levels, including between CQU Deans of Faculties and Directors of Divisions with C_MS Divisional Managers and related senior staff, and between counterpart staff in the various support services, and importantly, between CQU course coordinators (in other places called subject coordinators) and C_MS lead lecturers relating to curriculum and assessment within individual courses (subjects).

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7 Ibid
8 Central Queensland University. CQU International User Group Committee Terms of Reference. 1.Establishment. p.1
2.27 Teaching staff appointed by and to C_MS are required to be ‘approved’ by appropriate staff at CQU. Some senior staff of C_MS hold adjunct appointments at CQU, including at Professor and Associate Professor ranks. These staff may be members of the CQU Academic Board and/or members of Academic Board committees, through which they play a part in the shaping of the policies and procedures of the University.

2.28 The extent of these interactions has increased markedly in the last year or so.

2.29 Internally, C_MS has a ‘Head Office’ structure covering all aspects of international student activities, and a structure for the staff on each international campus. In fact, the head office staff physically reside in the campuses, and some have roles on both organization charts.

2.30 In its February 2006 Report, AUQA questions aspects of the CQU and C_MS relationship. Drawing attention to the composition of the C_MS Board, for example, it notes that the Chancellor and Deputy Chancellor represent the University, with the Chancellor being Chair and having the casting vote. It notes: “however, that vote must be cast in the interests of C_MS,” which implies that CQU may be unable to direct the activities of C_MS. And it “queries the prudence of Chancellor and Deputy Chancellor being the members of the C_MS Board representing the ownership interest of the University,” as in the event of dispute “there will be no internal possibility for escalating consideration of the dispute prior to turning to external parties.” AUQA calls for greater transparency of governance, management and relationship between the two enterprises, recommending a restructure “sufficiently transparent and robust to enable Council to effectively exercise its governance responsibilities for the University's entire affairs.”

TEACHING AND ASSESSMENT AT CQU-MELBOURNE INTERNATIONAL CAMPUS

2.31 The teaching staff are employees of the C_MS company. There are presently 21 staff with ongoing appointments and 88 casual staff. The Review Panel was told that, of these staff, 16 have doctoral qualifications and 3 are presently studying for doctorates. Four staff hold adjunct appointments with CQU.

2.32 In most subjects there are 4 hours of class contact per week, comprising two hours of lectures and two hours of tutorials. Students undertaking a postgraduate Masters by coursework normally take three subjects per semester (a total of 12 subjects). The year is structured into three 12 week terms, though fewer students enrol in the summer semester, known as term 3. Generally, a coursework Masters degree is completed in four terms of study. However, CQU also offers a more extended 16 subject Masters of Professional Accounting degree which is completed in five terms, for students who choose a more comprehensive program of studies. Undergraduate programs comprise 24 subjects, usually taken at the rate of 4 subjects per semester.

2.33 In addition to class contact time, there is a prescribed textbook which students are expected to own personally, and the resource materials supplied include comprehensive study guides which evolved from the distance education focus of CQU in earlier times.

2.34 Most lectures are available on tape for students to use at other times. There is a lead lecturer in each course who participates in the teaching, and coordinates the teaching, of other staff,

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and who in turn interacts with the course coordinator, who is usually a CQU staff member at Rockhampton, but could increasingly be drawn from staff at the international campuses.

2.35 Assessment in most courses is a combination of an examination (70 percent) and a mid-course assignment (30 percent), both of which are centrally set, so they are the same for all of the teaching sites. The setting of the examination is the responsibility of the course coordinator. While the practice has been for lecturers and tutors not to know the contents of exam papers in advance, a pattern is now developing where senior staff members at each of the sites have opportunity for input into the papers, to ensure alignment between the expectations of the examiner, and the teaching and learning at the different sites. Marking is coordinated and moderated to ensure comparability of assessment between markers and between sites.

2.36 There is a local campus library at each site. The Melbourne library has 5.5 equivalent full-time staff, and it is open 160 hours per week, holds 12,000 monographs, and has access to 16,000 journals through 41 on-line data bases. During orientation, and in the early weeks of semester, there are training sessions for students in use of the library.

2.37 In summary, the conclusion of the Review Panel is that teaching arrangements are tightly knit and well coordinated, and that students are supplied with ample learning materials. Some of the teaching staff, with whom the review panel spoke appear enthusiastic and committed professionals, keen to give students helpful assistance. The Review Panel was concerned that a few errors are still reported on examination papers, despite increasingly thorough attempts to have papers checked, with involvement from the international campuses. But appropriate systems do appear now to be in place.

C_MS STUDENT SERVICES

2.38 Among the criticisms directed against CQU have been statements to the effect that the University took little account of the circumstances and needs of the students, being primarily interested in the fees it could gain, so treating the students as ‘cash cows.’ The extensive range of student services available for students, which are well publicized, well structured, and carefully integrated, provides a quite different perspective. The enthusiasm and commitment of the staff offering these services was very like the parallel services provided in other Australian universities.

2.39 There is a student monitoring program, which keeps track of the academic performance of individuals, a regular tracking of attendance at tutorials, and where possible, at lectures. Class sizes, particularly at postgraduate level, are in the main, small enough to enable this. This leads to identifying ‘Students at Risk’ in much the way this is done by faculties in other universities which monitor student progress carefully.

2.40 A separate program called ‘Retention’ seeks to check and follow up students in week 3 (of the twelve week semester), in order to give early identification and offer help to those students experiencing difficulties.

2.41 The Review Panel visited and met with staff from the Learning Skills Unit at both the Melbourne and Sydney campuses. These Units provide a free service to all students, focusing on English language assistance, but related to assignment preparation, and personal one-on-one guidance. A large number of workshops cater for small groups of students (from 2 to 20) on topics such as researching and referencing, essay writing, report
writing and oral presentations.

2.42 At Melbourne, the Learning Skills Unit is in a prominent location next to a coffee shop, has 5 permanent staff augmented with casuals at peak assignment and exam periods, and is well advertised to students through, for example, the orientation program which is built into the enrolment process.

2.43 The Training Employment and Career Coaching (TECC) unit assists students and graduates with their career development through services based around tailored career guidance to meet individual goals and needs. The Unit offers the following services: workshops on writing resumes; interview skills and understanding business culture; help with preparing job applications; connecting to community projects and opportunities for volunteer positions; presentations from employers and industry professionals; and information sessions about professional associations, such as the Australian Computer Society, the Australian Institute of Management, Charter Accountant, and Certified Practicing Accountant, for example. TECC organizes an industry exchange program to assist induction into the workforce through opportunities for students to work for professional organizations for defined times with scope to move to ongoing positions.

2.44 In summary, the Review Panel concludes that students at the Melbourne campus of CQU have access to, and are encouraged to use, a range of student support services that are similar in scale and quality to those in other universities in Australia.
3. 2007 STUDENT COMPLAINTS

REFERENCE

3.1 The Review Terms of Reference required the Panel to examine, consider and report with findings and recommendations on

(i) the complaints of students submitted to OTTE, having regard to the findings of the review by Professor Carson; and

(ii) any other matters raised by Professor Carson on which he made no findings.

BACKGROUND AND CHRONOLOGY OF STUDENT COMPLAINTS

3.2 On Thursday 15 March, a group of overseas students enrolled at the Melbourne campus of Central Queensland University (CQU-MIC) publicly protested on the steps outside Parliament House and outside the Department of Education at 2 Treasury Place, Melbourne. The students who were enrolled in Issues in Management Accounting, a compulsory subject in the University’s Masters of Professional Accounting program, publicly protested in relation to a number of matters, in particular:

(a) The content of an examination question which they claimed to be not reflected in the course syllabus;

(b) The marking of that examination question and the weighting given to it; and

(c) The failure of CQU to award conceded passes for students who were marginally failed.

3.3 On Friday 16 March, a group of students lodged a formal complaint with the General Manager of the Office of Training and Tertiary Education (OTTE) in the Department of Innovation, Industry and Regional Development.

3.4 However, as the complaint letter was not signed by an individual nominee and the general CQU-MIC campus address was documented as the students’ address for correspondence, it was impossible for the General Manager to formally respond to the students advising them of the status of their complaint, or an expected date of resolution, without routing the letter back via CQU-MIC.

3.5 Later on Friday 16 March, the General Manager forwarded the complaint to the Campus Director at CQU-MIC and invited a response from CQU. The General Manager also advised the Campus Director that the Deputy Secretary would appoint Emeritus Professor W.G. Carson, the Chair of the Minister’s Higher Education Advisory Committee (HEAC), to consider the complaint and make whatever investigations he saw fit with a nominated discipline expert who was externally appointed by HEAC and approved by CQU. Mr Michael Scorgie, an accounting expert, was nominated to assist Professor Carson with the investigation.

3.6 From 16 March until 21 March, Professor Carson and Mr Scorgie conducted a limited review of the students’ complaints under section 11A of the Tertiary Education Act 1993.
The review findings are documented in the Carson Report. According to the Carson Report, 178 of approximately 400 students had not achieved pass marks. 122 of the students met the necessary requirements to be granted a supplementary exam and 56 students had failed the exam.

3.7 While the Carson Report concluded that the students’ complaints as to (1) & (2) could not be reasonably sustained, it nevertheless recommended that CQU-MIC give favourable consideration to the students’ representations in respect of (3): That CQU consider awarding conceded passes to students who had marginally failed.

3.8 Professor Carson also noted that there were a number of other matters that he had not had the time or opportunity to consider but which might be further investigated. These included the following matters (addressed below at 3.27):

(a) The students complained that continuous changes of grade take place, particularly in relation to marks allocated for assignments.

(b) The students complained about the standard of teaching, claiming that lecturers and tutors only ‘go through the slides’ and seldom have answers to questions posed by the students.

(c) The English language proficiency of tutors was said to be inadequate.

(d) One named teacher has a continuing record of high failure rates across the different courses in which he has carried responsibility.

3.9 On Thursday 29 March, the review findings were documented and a copy of the Carson Report was provided to the Vice-Chancellor of CQU, with a letter from the Deputy Secretary of OTTE summarizing the recommendations and urging the University to take the necessary action to respond.

3.10 On Thursday 29 March, the students publicly protested a second time at the Department. Professor Carson and the Acting Manager of the Higher Education Regulation Division, met with the aggrieved CQU students at 2 Treasury Place to provide informal feedback about the findings of the Carson Report.

3.11 On Friday 30 March, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor reached mutual agreement with the Minister’s office that CQU would be given until Monday 2 April to provide written form evidence that CQU’s PT/PC policy, alleged by students to have been changed in 2006, was in fact made in 2002.

3.12 On Friday 30 March, an email was forwarded by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor to all of the 122 CQU students who had failed, or achieved borderline results, in the Issues in Management Accounting exam. CQU distributed the email to the students without prior consultation with any member of the Department (OTTE). Amongst other things, the email summarized and extracted Professor Carson’s findings with respect to the exam. The email did not, however, draw attention to recommendation (3): That CQU consider awarding conceded passes to students who had marginally failed. Nor did the email expressly, or by implication, refer to any other of the findings documented by Professor Carson.

3.13 Later on Friday 30 March, the Minister publicly announced that a full review under section 11A of the Tertiary Education Act 1993 would be undertaken of the operations of CQU.
Melbourne with respect to the initial complaints and the organisation’s overall compliance with the regulatory framework for the provision of higher education to overseas students.

3.14 On Monday 2 April, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor of CQU, wrote to the Deputy Secretary of OTTE responding to the recommendations of the Carson Report. The response received from the Deputy Vice-Chancellor of CQU in respect of (3) was that CQU was unable to make such a decision because it “would undermine the academic policy in place in the Faculty since 2002.” According to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, it would undermine the Faculty academic policy, for the following reasons:

(1) There is no precedent for the Faculty offering a Pass Conceded (PC) or Pass Terminating (PT) grade for a Master of Accounting course in the past 5 years;

(2) If the University was to do so now, it would be extremely inequitable for the other students in the past 5 years who were not able to receive these grades; and

(3) Were such a ruling to be made, it would not assist a number of the protesting students who have received grades between 40 per cent and 43 per cent as they would fall outside the result required to be eligible for PC/PT grading (i.e. 44 per cent to 46 per cent for PT and 47 per cent to 49 per cent for PC).

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor’s letter also requested a meeting between the Vice-Chancellor and the Minister. A formal response to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor’s letter was later sent by the Deputy Secretary acknowledging the university’s response and informing the university that a meeting with the Minister would be inappropriate prior to the completion of the Ministerial Review.

3.15 On Thursday 5 April, on receiving advice from the Department that the Carson Report is a confidential document, one of the CQU students submitted a Freedom of Information (FOI) request to Freedom of Information Victoria. The student requested that the Carson Report be made available to the CQU students affected by the exam results.

3.16 Freedom of Information Victoria blocked the request under section 31(1)(a) of the Freedom of Information Act 1982. This provision “exempts from release any document if its disclosure would, or would be reasonably likely to prejudice the investigation of a breach or possible breach of the law or prejudice the enforcement or proper administration of the law.”

3.17 On Wednesday 2 May, Freedom of Information Victoria formally informed the student that, pursuant to section 31(1)(a), the Carson Report “forms part of an on-going investigation into CQU” and that “[S]hould this report be released prior to the completion of this investigation it would likely jeopardise the final outcome of the investigation as well as affect the integrity of the investigative process while the matter remains ongoing.” The correspondence from the Freedom of Information Officer also informed the student that an appeal could be lodged within 28 days, and that a subsequent application for access to the documents could also be submitted at a later date.

3.18 The members of the Ministerial Review Panel were formally appointed and commenced their investigations on Thursday 17 May.
THE REVIEW PANEL’S INVESTIGATION

3.19 On Tuesday 3 July and Wednesday 4 July, the Review Panel met with groups of students representing those involved in the complaints, as well as graduate students, current students, academic staff involved in teaching the courses which were the subject of complaint, student support staff, and staff involved in the enrolment and orientation processes.

3.20 On the basis of these interviews and documents, the Review Panel concludes that the conclusions and recommendations of the Carson report remain valid.

3.21 The Review Panel notes that the Deputy Vice-Chancellor provided three key reasons for CQU’s refusal to implement Professor Carson’s recommendation that Pass Conceded and Pass Terminating grades be awarded to those students who met the necessary threshold requirements for such grades. In summary the reasons are as follows: 1. That such action would set a precedent contrary to academic policy; 2. That it would not be equitable for students who had been subject to the Faculty policy previously (or in the future); and 3. That the number of students meeting such threshold requirements was not significant.

3.22 The Review Panel also notes that, on some occasions in the history of the student complaints, CQU has justified not awarding Pass Conceded or Pass Terminating grades on the basis of concerns regarding students’ eligibility for professional accreditation. The Review Panel notes, in passing, that this does not constitute a satisfactory or adequate response to Professor Carson’s recommendation, because CPA policy allows for one such grade in a qualifying student’s academic record. Furthermore, the Review Panel considers it important and recommends that CQU make clear to students that the reason for not awarding Pass Conceded and Pass Terminating grades in this particular instance be accurately reflected as a decision made on the basis of CQU academic policy and not with reference to CPA requirements.

3.23 Professor Carson’s report clearly identified ambiguity with regard to the communication of the Faculty policy concerning Pass Conceded and Pass Terminating grades. His report noted that it was possible for students in the affected postgraduate cohort to have been lead to believe that Pass Conceded and Pass Terminating grades were available to them. In response to Professor Carson’s findings, CQU acknowledged, accepted and took action to clarify the policy and ensure this was communicated clearly to students.

3.24 The Review Panel notes that 52 students (out of 400 in total) achieved marks above the threshold that would have warranted consideration for Pass Conceded or Pass Terminating grades, if the undergraduate policy had been applied, as students claim to believe, to the postgraduate subjects. 5 of the Supplementary exam students would have been granted Pass Conceded marks by achieving between 47 and 49 per cent, and 47 of the students would have been granted Pass Terminating marks by achieving between 44 and 46 per cent.

3.25 The Review Panel acknowledges that it is within the purview of CQU’s responsibility to establish academic policy it deems appropriate to maintaining the integrity of CQU awards. However, the Review Panel also notes that Standard Number 8 of the current National Code (Complaints and Appeals), which was not in effect at the time of the incident, but which is now in effect, makes provision for a finding in favour of the affected students where the students follow the complaints and appeals process correctly, viz:
If the internal or any external complaint handling or appeal process results in a decision that supports the student, the registered provider must immediately implement any decision and/or corrective and preventative action required and advise the student of the outcome.

3.26 The Review Panel agrees with Prof. Carson’s related conclusion that actions committed or omitted by the University potentially contributed to affected students having an expectation of access to consideration for the award of Pass Conceded or Pass Terminating grades. At the same time, as reported in the 25 July note to the Review Panel from the CQU Student Ombudsman (see also paras 4.46 and 4.47), the students’ group submission to him on this and other matters was discounted properly on procedural grounds.

3.27 The Review Panel notes that CQU rejected Professor Carson’s related recommendation in March, prior to the current National Code coming into effect. It is arguable that under the current National Code requirements, CQU would have had more onus placed upon it to have responded positively to the external review’s recommendations and to have facilitated submissions from the affected students. However, the Review Panel regards it as appropriate that CQU establish its academic policy (while having a parallel responsibility to communicate this clearly to all students) and that there are arguable considerations about the inequity of allowing only this 2007 cohort of potentially eligible students to seek special consideration for the subject Issues in Management Accounting. The Review Panel considers that Professor Carson’s recommendations on this matter have been responded to adequately by CQU.

3.28 The Carson Report also listed the following issues as worthy of further investigation:

The students complained that continuous ‘changes of grade’ take place, particularly in relation to marks allocated for assignments. The Review Panel noted the CQU’s Student Ombudsman’s 2006 Annual Report which highlighted issues related to marking and review of grades processes and the preponderance of these at two international campuses (Sydney and Melbourne) and primarily in the Faculty Business and Informatics. The Review Panel found that there are matters, including timely and constructive communication with affected students from the faculty in Rockhampton, that deserve priority attention. However, the Review Panel also noted measures taken by CQU to bolster consistency in marking policy and marker practice, to clarify its review of grades policy and to improve the usefulness of assessment feedback to students.

The students complained about the standard of teaching, claiming that lecturers and tutors only ‘go through the slides’ and seldom have answers to questions posed by the students. The Review Panel found no evidence of widespread dissatisfaction with the standard of teaching. On the contrary it heard strong commendations from students about the competence and student-centric approach taken by a number of CQU-MIC staff. The Panel saw evidence of CQU/C_Ms investment at two international campuses in academic staff development, including for casual staff, and in the development of pedagogies that respond to the characteristics of student cohorts at those campuses.

The English language proficiency of tutors was said to be inadequate. The Review Panel acknowledged the possibility that with some 80 casual CQU-MIC staff there are likely to be a few, as might be found at other university campuses particularly in technical disciplines, who are less articulate than others in communicating to students with English as a second or foreign language. However the Review Panel
observed that there was no evidence amongst the academic staff with whom it met to support this allegation and neither was this seen as an endemic issue by students interviewed by the Review Panel.

*One named teacher has a continuing record of high failure rates across the different courses in which he has carried responsibility.* As CQU is a self-accrediting institution, this issue was deemed to lie within the competence and responsibility of the University. However, comments made in the conclusions of this report concerning curriculum development, exam planning and assessment practices are relevant. The Review Panel noted that teaching non-English speaking background students from a variety of cultural milieu requires a high degree of sensitivity. The Review Panel notes the related comments of the CQU Student Ombudsman in his 2006 report about the need for staff sensitivity in relation to communicating with students, *inter alia*, about review of grade and examination feedback.

3.29 The Review Panel also noted that Professor Carson recommended “that CQU review its distribution of academic and organisational responsibilities between Rockhampton and the Melbourne Campus, with a view to balancing centralised control against local autonomy” and supports this recommendation and the comments associated with it.10 The Review Panel was made aware of a more collegial approach to examination and assessment between CQU and MIC staff and welcomes this move.

3.30 The Review Panel became aware that CQU MIC staff do not uniformly welcome this move. The Review Panel believes that, on balance, such a move will greatly enhance the educational experience of students at MIC, as will the appointment by CQU of a Chair of Intercultural Education with the appointee to lead the existing Intercultural Education Research Institute. As indicated elsewhere, the Review Panel recommends that CQU address as a matter of urgency those pedagogical issues that have given rise to the series of student complaints and continuing high failure rates in certain subjects.

3.31 The Review Panel found no evidence to suggest that CQU “failed students in large numbers as ‘on (sic) revenue raising exercise’.”11

3.32 The Review Panel was informed that CQU had altered the sequencing of its courses in response to issues raised by the students, and had brought forward the date of its supplementary examinations. The Review Panel sees both of these moves as indicators that CQU is addressing at least some of the issues raised by the students.

3.33 The Review Panel notes that CQU has acknowledged that there have been mistakes in examination papers in the past two years and that more attention is now being paid to vetting the questions and checking the accuracy of the examination papers. It is regrettable that mistakes were also found in the most recent set of examination papers.

3.34 The Review Panel was impressed by the support services in place for students at CQU-MIC and the competence and enthusiasm of the staff involved.

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11 Letter from Student Representatives. Central Queensland University Melbourne Campus. Undated. See Appendix to the Carson Report.
3.35 CQU-MIC was requested to supply details of its actions in response to the Carson Report and replied on 17 July, that the letter from the Deputy Vice Chancellor, dated 2 April, 2007, was its response. The Review Panel believes that the Carson Report contains recommendations to which CQU-MIC should respond and regrets that apparently no such action has occurred. The Review Panel recommends that CQU-MIC urgently address the issues in the Carson Report and the Review Panel’s Report, and report follow-up actions to the Minister by 30 November, 2007. This timetable allows CQU to consolidate work required in preparing for and responding to the AUQA 2006 Audit, the DEST Institutional Framework Review scheduled for November 2007 and matters raised in the Carson Report and this Report.
4. ESOS ACT & TERTIARY EDUCATION ACT COMPLIANCE

REFERENCE

4.1 The Review Terms of Reference required the Panel to examine, consider and report with findings and recommendations, *inter alia*, on:

“(iii) the operations of CQU Melbourne against the obligations imposed by the *Tertiary Education Act 1993* and the *Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000*, particularly in relation to:

a. marketing and promotion of courses to overseas students;
b. academic, financial and staffing resources made available for the provision of these courses;
c. the standard of premises, equipment, materials, and resources available to overseas students at CQU;
d. student welfare and support services; and
e. grievance handling policy and processes.”

THE ESOS NATIONAL FRAMEWORK

4.2 The fundamental objectives of the ESOS framework are to ensure that registered institutions act within nationally consistent standards to:

- Provide overseas students with accurate information about courses offered by Australian providers;
- Enrol students based on a structured assessment of their ability to successfully complete the academic program in which they are enrolled; and
- Provide students with the teaching and learning services needed to support successful completion.

[The framework also acts to safeguard the integrity of Australia’s migration program by imposing obligations on institutions to encourage and support the overseas student’s compliance with the terms of their entry visa and to report breaches of those terms.]

4.3 National Protocols for Higher Education Approval Processes, agreed between Commonwealth and State/Territory Ministers, guide the interaction of interdependent Commonwealth and State/Territory legislation and regulations and the actions of various Commonwealth and State/Territory agencies aimed at safeguarding the standards of education services provided to overseas students. [See Table 4.1 below]

4.4 The accreditation of CQU-MIC programs and the monitoring of its recruitment and education of international students involve Victorian, Queensland and Commonwealth legislation and government agencies.
4.5 Since the Review was commissioned:

- The (revised) National Code of Practice for Registration Authorities and Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students (National Code) came into effect from 1 July 2007;

- The Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (ETRA), replaced, *inter alia*, the Tertiary Education Act 1993 (TEA) and created the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Agency (VRQA); and

- The State’s responsibility for the accreditation of higher education providers and referral to the Commonwealth Register for Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students (CRICOS) was transferred from the Office of Training and Tertiary Education (OTTE) to the VRQA.

4.6 The primary legislative instruments and agencies now involved in the review and accreditation of CQU-MIC and its programs for overseas students are set out in the table at the end of section 4.

4.7 CQU also operates in New Zealand in association with Global Campus Management (NZ) Pty Ltd and is reviewed there by New Zealand Quality Agency (NZQA).

4.8 C_MS operates under CQU (e.g. AVCC Code of Ethics for International Student Programs) and its own (eg ISO 9001:2000 Quality Management System) quality management policies, plans and infrastructure. C_MS has appointed a Divisional Quality Manager and each International Campus has a designated Campus Quality Manager and each work with Internal Audit counterparts to implement a rolling compliance and continuous improvement program. The findings of this QA cycle inform changes in service delivery.

4.9 Ongoing management of quality issues and/or compliance related issues are addressed via operational communications within CQU-MIC, between CQU-MIC and C_MS Divisional Units and each of these with relevant contact points within CQU. These are consolidated by formal governance structures such as the International Users Group which reviews progress against key quality or compliance issues and the development and implementation of relevant elements of the CQU Risk Management Plan.

4.10 Under the newly revised (1/7/07) National Code, registered self-accrediting providers are required to undertake an independent audit of their whole-of-institution ESOS compliance and attest to such compliance at least every 5 years in a declaration of conformity to a Registration Authority. CQU envisage building this into their forward Risk Management Planning and this will encompass CQU-MIC.

4.11 CQU-MIC initially sought confirmation that its actions were to be assessed by the Review Panel against the National Code that existed up to March, 2007. As the Review progressed, CQU advised that it believed it had adjusted existing arrangements and put in place measures that would ensure compliance with the new National Code. The Review Panel’s comments below are made in that context.

4.12 In the main, CQU-MIC’s students are highly focused on the vocational outcomes of their programs. A significant subset is primarily interested in gaining certification to improve their prospects of permanent settlement. The current student cohort is predominantly from South Asia sub-continental countries and offshore communities. Their prior experience with
comparable education processes, expectations about Australian higher education, and academic achievement, varies significantly. CQU makes a virtue of its “Extensive Recognition of Previous Learning…which can effectively reduce a three-year degree to 12 months” [http://www.mel.cqu.edu.au/public/information/withus.asp]. Thus, reducing the time available for such students to adjust to new teaching and learning processes.

4.13 Many students also have heavy financial and family pressures on them to achieve employment and/or offshore settlement outcomes. Generally it has been thought that the relatively lower cost of CQU programs is more likely to attract those students who are at the margins of financial viability to undertake overseas study, and who are compelled by that circumstance to engage in employment in parallel with their studies. While this is a fair characterization of part of the overseas student cohort, it does not apply only to CQU. As Appendix E to this report shows, the cost of a Masters degree in Professional Accounting is comparable at CQU, Ballarat, Victoria and RMIT Universities.

4.14 Given these factors, and the high proportion of overseas students (61.7%)\(^\text{12}\) in its student load, CQU is more likely than other Australian universities to have a higher proportion of their student population encountering adjustment, welfare and academic performance difficulties.

4.15 If the student outcomes promised by CQU are to be realized consistently, and CQU’s, Victoria’s and Australia’s reputation as a preferred international study destination is to be advanced, the set of factors outlined above adds to the importance of CQU-MIC:

- having in place robust selection and pre-departure briefings;
- while maintaining the integrity of the qualification, its standing with relevant professional bodies, developing curriculum and assessment processes that respond to the characteristics of the international intake; and
- applying proportionately greater resources to active management of student progress, to enhancing staff capabilities in teaching to these students, and encouraging early and ongoing student access to professional learning support.

4.16 The Review Panel found evidence of several initiatives that demonstrated CQU’s awareness of the complexity and the scale of these challenges and, within a structured quality assurance framework, evidence of an emerging inventory of pragmatic responses. Some of these responses are referred to elsewhere in this report and below. Much of this innovation draws on experience at and input from the International Campuses, including CQU-MIC, where the bulk of CQU’s overseas student interactions occur. CQU-MIC staff cited opportunities for increased involvement in program and pedagogy development and in the configuration of assessment and the design of support services.

ESOS COMPLIANCE

4.17 Past assessments of CQU’s ESOS compliance include the following:

- The AUQA Review Report (February 2006) which commended CQU for the comprehensive nature of the institution’s ESOS Manual.

\(^{12}\) Central Queensland University. Central Queensland University Annual Report 2006. Student Statistics. p. 31
• The Higher Education Advisory Committee Accreditation Panel in November 2006 reviewed CQU’s application for accreditation for five academic programs, which noted some minor concerns that some marketing material could make clearer the ‘city-bound’ nature of the MIC campus, but in other respects assessed the CQU-MIC as complying with ESOS requirements.

• Professor Carson’s speedy review of incidents leading to student dissatisfaction in March 2007, which saw no new evidence that suggested that CQU was not complying with relevant elements of the ESOS Act and its associated National Code.

• Close reviews of CQU’s ESOS compliance by DEST/AEI in 2006 noted only anecdotal reports of misleading advice by CQU’s offshore agents to prospective students, which were not able to be substantiated.

4.18 Subject to the observations made below on items highlighted in its Terms of Reference, the Review Panel agrees with the overall conclusions of these assessments. It found no evidence of material non-compliance with the National Code. The Review Panel has also noted subsequent measures taken by CQU to integrate ESOS compliance into a comprehensive University Risk Management Program and to transfer the corporate responsibility for the auditing of compliance from the International Office to the Internal Audit Division of the University.

Marketing

4.19 Information: Some CQU international marketing collateral reviewed by the Panel still gives prominence to campus profiles that reflect the student populations, environment and amenities at the non-urban north Queensland campuses. However, the print and website material for specific CQU-MIC courses provide a fair representation of the city-bound nature of the campus, its environment and amenity.

4.20 Some graduates reported initial surprise at the ‘non-traditional nature’ of the campus, but subsequently found convenience in its compact nature and consequent accessibility of its services, and its academic, support and administrative staff. They compared this favourably with the reported experiences of fellow international students at other institutions.

4.21 Some website statements, while factually correct, have elements that may lead prospective students to inaccurate conclusions about the nature of the campus environment, for example under ‘5 Star Ratings’ at www.mel.cqu.edu.au/public/information/fivestar.asp it says:

(1) “More than half of CQU’s students are international students.” This may be true for CQU overall, and is technically correct for the city campuses, but it implies that a sizeable proportion of the students at its Australian International Campuses are not international students.

(2) “Editors (of the Good Universities Guide) confirmed that the cost of living at CQU’s five Central Queensland campuses is among the most affordable in Australia, too.” Again, while this may be accurate, it has little relevance for the bulk of CQU’s international students who live in higher cost urban environments in Sydney and Melbourne.

4.22 Nonetheless, these potentially misleading elements are moderated by accurate information at other website pages. For example, the downloadable DVD at:
The Review Panel was advised by several students that they and their sponsors had undertaken significant research via the internet, via personal testimonials from current and former students, and via agents when determining their study destination in Australia. Nonetheless, it would be in CQU’s interest to undertake a thorough edit of its web pages to eliminate the potential for students, their sponsors and others to misinterpret the representations made by CQU and to brief the incoming marketing staff and consultants accordingly.

Recruitment and Recruitment Agents

The panel was made aware of non-specific sector concerns about CQU recruitment practices and the actions of some of their agents. These matters included:

1. CQU offering material incentives and discounts to existing students to ‘recruit’ overseas students to CQU programs;

2. CQU agents misrepresenting the standing of CQU, the relevance of the Good Universities Guide Star Ratings; and

3. CQU applying “soft” entry level requirements.

CQU advise that a “study with family and friends” incentive program rewards students with vouchers to be redeemed for products of “related educational use” when they refer a friend or contact for enrolment. The amount is tied to the number of subjects and length of study undertaken by the enrolling student. Family members are also entitled to a small discount on their fees. The Review Panel noted that the practice of offering discounts to family members of current students, or incentives for current students in return for referrals of prospective students, was not, in and of itself, inappropriate. Although the Review Panel did not investigate practices elsewhere, panel members are aware of practices in some other universities which are not dissimilar. At CQU, the details of the program are clearly documented, and so are transparent and open to scrutiny.

Of the Students interviewed by the Review Panel, none expressed concerns with the behaviour of agents, or the accuracy of information provided. Some students did note that the ‘ratings’ cited by CQU were a significant initial attraction, but paid more attention to the standing of CQU qualifications, personal references about its teaching and learning environment and relative course cost. CQU has a documented process for the vetting and accrediting of potential agents and for feedback on their performance. This forms part of the auditable procedures set out in the CQU ESOS Manual.

As in the previous reviews (see 4.14), the Review Panel found no evidence of systemic weaknesses in CQU’s management of its offshore and onshore recruitment agents.

During the Review, CQU and C_MS Senior Executive staff made a major investment of time to organise and present at a conference in India with some 300 staff of their recruitment agents and staff from the Indian sub-continent and the Middle East. The purpose of this conference, inter alia, was to provide an update on the obligations on providers and their agents as set out in the revised National Code.
4.29 CQU has positioned itself with domestic and international students as a provider with ‘flexible’ entry standards. The AUQA review in 2005/6 [See Section 5.0] expressed some concern at the dissonance of CQU’s advanced standing provisions with the Australian Qualifications Framework. There was some evidence from student interviews conducted during the review that some students were accepted who appeared to have a limited prospect of success. There was no evidence that this was a systemic problem, but given the catchment from which CQU draws, it is likely to have a higher proportion of problematic students than other universities. On the other hand, the panel interviewed a student that had transferred as a non-performing student from an established Victorian university who responded well to the closer and more structured performance monitoring at CQU-MIC and became a high academic achiever and gained an early professional appointment.

Resources for the Provision of Courses

1. Academic and Teaching and Learning Support.

4.30 Paragraphs 2.31-2.37 above cover the Review Panel’s assessment of these aspects. As indicated earlier, the Review Panel’s conclusion is that:

- teaching arrangements are tightly knit and well coordinated;
- students are supplied with ample learning materials;
- generally the teaching staff interviewed appeared enthusiastic and committed professionals, keen to give students helpful assistance; and
- appropriate systems appear now to be in place for examination paper preparation, though a few errors were still reported despite increasingly thorough attempts to have papers checked, with involvement from the staff at international campuses.

2. Financial

4.31 The Financial Notes to the Central Queensland University Annual Report 2006 show that of the $172.5 million income received by CQU from ‘Fees and Charges’, $144.96 million derives from fee-paying overseas students and a further $14.1 million from ‘Management fee income’, which is assumed to be paid largely by C_MS for direct services and support it receives from CQU for the delivery of CQU academic programs at the international campuses. $87 million is the management fee for all contracts, not only C_MS, with accommodation leases reported separately as $12.49 million. It was not possible, nor was it properly a matter for this Review to undertake a forensic review of what proportion of the revenue flows/payments to C_MS were assigned to the delivery of services to international students and what proportion was passed on as dividends to the two key shareholders, CQU and Kallawar Pty Ltd.

4.32 Overall, however, the Review panel saw evidence of the provision of academic and student support services and facilities of standards comparable to some other Australian university campuses.

3. Staffing

4.33 CQU-MIC reported that there were 21 staff with ongoing appointments and 88 casual staff. Of these staff, 16 have doctoral qualifications and 3 are presently studying for doctorates. Four staff hold adjunct appointments with CQU. CQU-MIC also noted support for staff
undertaking discipline related research, annual staff development workshops in which casual staff participated. The Review Panel met with a number of academic staff leaders in Rockhampton and Melbourne to discuss key aspects of curriculum development, teaching techniques, exam preparation and assessment, and student performance monitoring.

4.34 The Review Panel noted that while the overwhelming balance of experience in teaching to international students lay with C_MS appointed academic staff, they reported little opportunity in the past to contribute to the development of curriculum and the pedagogy. There is evidence of positive development in this area, including:

- The creation of the Centre for Intercultural Education based at the Sydney International Campus and its input to an annual CMS staff development program (see also 5.23 below).
- The foreshadowed appointment of a Chair of Intercultural Education, a CQU academic appointment, to be located at either the Sydney or Melbourne international campus.
- An annual staff development program that includes two day workshops on key themes in pedagogy and curriculum.
- Support and encouragement for staff to undertake qualifications upgrades.
- Support for staff to undertake research related to their teaching disciplines.
- The closer involvement of international campus Course Directors and Lead Teachers with Course Coordinators at the CQU Faculty level on a range of academic matters, including curriculum and assessment, and including quality control of exam marking.

4. Physical Amenity, Equipment

Library

4.35 The CQU-MIC library has 5.5 equivalent full-time staff, and it is open 160 hours per week, holds 12,000 monographs, and has access to 16,000 journals through 41 on-line data bases. During Orientation, and in the early weeks of semester, there are training sessions for students in use of the library. This activity is supported by close liaison between Library staff and the staff of the Learning Skills Unit to provide specific modules related to research and assignment preparation.

4.36 Some students raised concerns about the insufficient copies of ‘expensive’ prescribed texts held by the Library. Library holdings of prescribed texts are limited to a few copies. This complements a policy of actively encouraging students to purchase their own copies of prescribed texts, but offset somewhat by agreements for CQU-MIC students to have access to nearby educational and public libraries.

Buildings and Classrooms

4.37 The Review Panel inspected the extended CQU International campus facilities in Melbourne, in two buildings, and in Sydney, where the undergraduate and postgraduate campuses occupied separate buildings. These facilities bespoke a vocationally and business orientated campus environment. Each had adequate teaching and learning classrooms and
supplied student study areas and basic canteens. Adequate provision also had been made for student support service delivery and student association activity. CQU indicated that at both sites it timetabled courses to ensure compliance with building load specifications of the relevant certifying agencies.

4.38 The CQU-MIC has 10 computer laboratories with some 100 networked computers available for student use. Security arrangements allow these to be accessible for extended hours during term time and are made available for 24/7 during peak assignment and examination periods. Students who were interviewed commended the facilities and access to them though noting, not surprisingly, high demand around assignment deadlines.

Student Welfare and Support Services

4.39 Paragraphs 2.38-2.44 above describe an integrated suite of student support services that encompass the monitoring of student performance, a process for identifying ‘students at risk’ – starting with the enrolment and re-enrolment processes, the active promotion of the services of the Learning Skills Unit (with proactive referral by academic staff of students in need). A program of monitored community service opportunities for students supplements career guidance and employment placement services which were highly commended by those students interviewed by the Review Panel.

4.40 The Review Panel saw evidence of ‘compulsory’ and structured orientation programs. It was provided with examples of orientation materials and it visited a session on ‘cross-cultural appreciation’ provided as part of that program.

4.41 CRICOS registered providers are required to advise DIAC of the commencement of enrolling students and to monitor and report on unsatisfactory progress and attendance. Self-accrediting Universities can be exempted from monitoring student attendance at lectures and tutorials. Notwithstanding this exemption, CQU-MIC undertakes attendance monitoring primarily to supplement other indicators of ‘students-at risk’, though this attendance checking is not 100%. Students are provided a minimum of 4 hours face-to-face teaching per subject each week in the form of 2 hours of lectures and 2 hours of tutorials. Tutors are required to mark attendance rolls, lecturers are not, but a number do. CQU-MIC bases its attendance monitoring on its tutorial attendance records. While the Review Panel heard anecdotal evidence of some manipulation of the tutorial attendance [students arriving late in tutorials just to achieve an ‘attendance tick’] these records appeared to be sufficiently robust to be used effectively by academic and support staff to identify students ‘at-risk’ and in progress counselling.

4.42 The Review Panel concludes that CQU-MIC students have access to, and are encouraged to use, a range of student support services that are similar in scale and quality to those in a number of other universities in Australia.

Grievance Policy and Processes

4.43 C_MS has a system for online lodgement of concerns/complaints which is promoted to students during the ‘compulsory’ orientation sessions. Most students who were interviewed by the Review Panel were aware of the processes for raising concerns or complaints with staff and generally reported academic, support and administrative staff to be accessible and approachable. They were aware of the procedures for escalating matters that could not be resolved through direct approaches to staff and, in particular, were aware of the role of the

4.44 The Review Panel’s visits to the Melbourne and Sydney campuses coincided with examinations and the Review Panel noted that hard copy and ‘plasma screen’ information about ‘review of grade’ processes were prominently available at student enquiry counters. This information and information about grievance processes is also referred to, and relevant University policy and procedures are signposted, in the orientation materials provided. The orientation materials include a CD version of the International Student Guide for the Melbourne International Campus 2007, which is also available on the campus website, http://www.mel.cqu.edu.au/.

4.45 However, the Review Panel also noted the CQU Student Ombudsman Annual Report 2006, which highlighted issues related to marking and review of grade processes, and the preponderance of these at two international campuses (Sydney and Melbourne), primarily in the Faculty of Business and Informatics. The Review Panel noted the Ombudsman’s recommendations for improvements in the timeliness and constructiveness of marking feedback from the faculty in Rockhampton, and clarity about the presentation of grounds for grade reviews.13

4.46 On Wednesday 25 July, responding to queries from the Review Panel, the CQU Student Ombudsman informed the Review Panel that, on 20 March 2007, he had received a student petition from the CQU Student Association Academic Support & Advocacy Officer, on behalf of a group of CQU MIC students. However, the petition did not provide any indication that it had the consent of those students on whose behalf it had been submitted. The CQU Student Ombudsman noted that “the students were given precise instructions on how to appeal disputed grades or marks, but neither (the particular) student, nor any of the others named on the petition, proceeded to bring their cases to my office.” The CQU Student Ombudsman subsequently ‘declined jurisdiction’ when the students shifted the focus of their protest to Parliament House in Melbourne.

4.47 The Review Panel notes that significant ambiguities continue to surround the processes for appeal, or recourse, through the State Ombudsman where a self-accredited institution offers its courses in another jurisdiction. Students in such circumstances are required to appeal through the ombudsman in the jurisdiction under which the university’s self-accrediting authority is established, rather than through the jurisdiction in which the students actually reside and complete their studies. The Review Panel notes that the revised National Protocols for Higher Education Approval Processes could usefully address this problem more explicitly. The Review Panel also notes that it may be necessary to explicitly broach the issue of a protocol between jurisdictions, so that the offices of the ombudsman in each jurisdiction can hear appeals or grievances in the given State in which they occur, rather than being re-routed to a separate jurisdiction.

4.48 Overall the Review Panel found evidence that, since the 2005 AUQA Review, the public protests by students in March 2006 and 2007, and the subsequent Carson Review (2007), CQU-MIC has strengthened academic and administrative staff procedures and practices to ensure compliance with the ESOS Act and the revised National Code and other regulatory requirements. These actions will be supported and consolidated by a more comprehensive

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risk management framework with responsibility for compliance audits transferred from the International Programs area to the Internal Audit unit of CQU.

4.49 These risk management processes inform a continuous improvement program. There is evidence that innovation and initiatives by staff at AIC’s, where the balance of educational and operational experience with international students is located, is being incorporated into CQU policy, program and administrative development.

4.50 The review Panel recommends that CQU:

• conduct an audit of all marketing materials to eliminate information that, while technically correct, might lead to misinterpretations of the nature of the international campuses, and the structure and credit arrangements for CQU degree programs;¹⁴

• review the scheduling of prescribed texts across courses to ensure that these, in aggregate, constitute a reasonable cost and that an accurate estimate of the full cost is made explicit in course information; and

• in the light of assessments of the reasonableness of the ‘prescribed text’ load, review current library acquisition policy that minimizes the holdings of prescribed texts.

4.51 The Review Panel found that Ministerial Guidelines for the operation of reviews of accreditation by OTTE, that include assessment of ESOS compliance, appear not to have been revised formally since 2002. Associated checklists and procedural guidance to review panels also require updating.

4.52 The transfer of responsibility from the Higher Education Regulation Division over to the new VRQA provides an opportunity for the following:

1. For an integrated review of VRQA processes and interactions with cognate processes and cycles of AUQA, and other State (Victorian and interstate) and Commonwealth agencies (e.g. DEST) to improve their effectiveness and to minimise the diversion of institutional resources from teaching and learning, student support quality improvement and strategic and business planning [Education and Training Reform Act 2006 Section 4.2.2 (m)]; and

2. To align VRQA guidelines, work programs and processes with Victorian self-accrediting institutions’ planned commissioning of the independent external audit of their whole-of-institution ESOS compliance, which is now required at least every five years under the revised National Code.

3. Within that context, to explore a proactive role for VRQA in promoting best-practice in quality assurance and service delivery of education services to international students offered in, or from, Victoria.

¹⁴ For example, the Review Panel noted what appears to be a printing error in the 2006/7 Masters of Professional Accounting brochure, which does not list all of the compulsory subjects. See also (4.12). The statement cited at 4.12 concerning recognition of prior learning is quoted directly from the CQU website at: http://www.mel.cqu.edu.au/public/information/withus.asp
Table 4.1 Overseas Student Services - Legislation and Authorities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Jurisdiction</th>
<th>Legislation/Regulations/Instruments</th>
<th>Responsible/ Involved Agencies</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Victoria</td>
<td>1. Education and Training Reform Act 2. Ministerial Guidelines for Accreditation, Authorisation to Conduct and Endorsement.</td>
<td>Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA)</td>
<td>Empowers the designated State/Territory Authority to review and accredit institutions/courses in accordance with the relevant national code* below and refer recommendations to the Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students (CRICOS).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5. AUQA REVIEW FEBRUARY 2006

REFERENCE

5.1 The Review Terms of Reference required the Review Panel to examine, consider and report with findings and recommendations, inter alia, on:

- “(iv) any findings and/or recommendations of the Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA) relevant to CQU Melbourne.”

BACKGROUND

5.2 AUQA conducted an audit of Central Queensland University in late 2005 and published its report in February 2006.\(^\text{15}\)

5.3 Review Panel consultations with DEST and AUQA indicated that both agencies considered the 2006 Audit to have vented serious issues regarding governance, academic management and business and strategic planning. Each agency noted the dominant role that the recruitment of international students played in the ongoing viability of CQU and aspects of the management of this exposure that warranted closer attention.

5.4 CQU is required to report to the Commonwealth by October 2007 on measures taken to respond to the findings of the audit. It is envisaged that DEST will draw on this follow-up report when conducting its bilateral planning and performance review discussion with CQU later in 2007.

5.5 The Review Panel was provided with a copy of CQU’s progress report (as at 6 July 2007) on follow-up to the AUQA findings\(^\text{16}\). CQU noted that a Review of International Administrative Functions at CQU was completed in November 2006 and reflected recognition of the strategic priority of international activities and the benefits of closer interaction with C_MS staff and structures on strategic, operational and critical incident management. This relationship is given effect at the top level via the International Users Group (IUG):

“The purpose of the International Users Group is to progress the development of joint strategic directions and manage operational matters as appropriate across the interface between CQU and C_MS, and to provide a forum for collaboration and cooperation on matters that will benefit the joint business of CQU and C_MS.”\(^\text{17}\)

5.6 The Review Panel were provided with Minutes of the 12 April and 16 May 2007 meetings of the IUG. These set out specific actions taken to addresses systemic issues raised by the AUQA review, and specific issues (including exam preparation, supplementary exam scheduling and assessment management issues) related to student dissatisfaction incidents in 2006 and 2007. Preparations for compliance with the revised National Code, including agent contracts and professional development were also addressed.

\(^{15}\) Australian Universities Quality Agency. Report of an Audit of Central Queensland University (February, 2006).

\(^{16}\) Central Queensland University. AUQA Action Plan. Corporate Services Projects (Quality Office) (6 June, 2007).

\(^{17}\) Central Queensland University. Terms of Reference International User Group. (20 July, 2007).
5.7 Other relevant information and documents were provided during the Review Panel’s visits to the Melbourne and Sydney International Campuses.

AUQA FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.8 AUQA findings and recommendations relevant to CQU Melbourne are set out below, along with related Review Panel observations and references to related tabled CQU documentation.

5.9 [Rec 1.] AUQA recommended that CQU: “develop a more comprehensive risk management framework incorporating the current legislative compliance framework and also strategic and operational risks across the spectrum of University activities.”


5.11 AUQA believed: “that the University has insufficient governance control over the affairs of C_MS and, thereby, over half of its educational activities…There are also concerns regarding scholarship and equivalence” [Section 3.6 of the AUQA Report]. AUQA went on to recommend that CQU: “restructure the governance arrangements for its partnership with C_MS in a manner that is sufficiently transparent and robust to enable Council to effectively exercise its governance responsibilities for the University’s entire affairs.”

5.12 CQU have put to the Queensland Minister for Education a submission aimed at restructuring the relationship between CQU and a newly created entity Global Campus Management which absorbs CQU’s interests in C_MS and other interests of the Skinner Group. CQU envisages that it will at the same time distance itself from the corporate and operational governance of the new entity, but exercise more effective quality and risk control via a series of formal contracts and service level agreements.

5.13 The Review Panel did not have access to the proposed subsidiary agreements or the time or the resources to make an informed judgement on the likely impact of this revised arrangement, if it is approved by the Queensland Minister for Education, Training and the Arts, on the standing of the Melbourne International campus, or the CQU courses it provides. This may require closer scrutiny by the VRQA in consultation with its counterpart agency in Queensland.

5.14 AUQA noted that with CQU’s relatively low standards for entrance and advanced standing, and in order to achieve graduate learning outcomes equivalent to national standards [AUQA Rec. 7], the teaching and learning experience must be stronger, and the University must provide a high level of student learning support - particularly for international students. This report comments elsewhere on the measures taken by C_MS at the Melbourne campus through provision of learning materials, the development of staff, the proactive student monitoring program, the extensive learning skills support inventory. The Review Panel believes C_MS have responded well to this AUQA observation.

5.15 AUQA also recommended [Rec. No 5] the development of: “an integrated planning and reporting framework, in conjunction with the strategic plans for C_MS”. The Review Panel noted changes to formal administrative (eg IUG) and academic governance (eg Academic
Board Committees) structures that included C_MS representation and participation in several levels of governance and planning.

5.16 AUQA concluded that CQU’s advanced standing practices are not equivalent to national standards and recommended Central Queensland University take greater cognisance of national higher education standards (such as the AQF and AVCC Guidelines, and benchmarks with comparable degree programs at other universities) when determining advanced standing for its degree programs.

5.17 The Review Panel noted CQU’s representations that its approach to entry level requirements was linked to its mission of increasing the accessibility of higher education in its catchment populations. It pointed to the 20 year old (Skills for Tertiary Education Preparatory Studies) (STEPS) program as an example of the measures in place to ensure that students achieve at an appropriate level. AUQA also noted that the CQU Academic Board expressed little awareness of these issues, and suggested that it needed to be more involved in decisions about advanced standing. In presentations to the Review Panel by Academic Board officers it was clear that the AUQA critique had been acknowledged and the university is conducting a review of its advanced standing processes and benchmarking credit transfer and articulation practices at other universities. This needs to be progressed urgently.

5.18 AUQA observed that curriculum development was a high risk area for the University: “The pool of academic talent on which the University can rely appears light by comparison with some other universities” and “a large number of teaching staff are junior and lack curriculum development expertise, or – especially at AICs and FIC – are casual/sessional staff, who are not expected to contribute to the curriculum development (and research) activities of the University.” Furthermore, AUQA [Rec. No. 8] suggested that those staff at CQU who are involved in curriculum development do so without a strong understanding of the AIC/FIC [incl. MIC] student cohorts and this needed to be improved.

5.19 AUQA also observed that students at AICs are taught by staff not required in their terms of employment to be research active, or undertake professional development, and this may not allow programs and qualifications to validly be described as equivalent to those derived at CQU ‘domestic’ campuses, and the “poor performance of the University against its teaching-research nexus commitments lies at the heart of AUQA’s overall concern about the quality of education at CQU.”

5.20 C_MS senior staff and academics noted that:

- A number of AIC staff were practicing professionals who brought to the classroom significant experience in the application of disciplines in the work place, a feature regarded highly by international students with strong vocational aspirations;
- A number of sessional staff were also employees of other public universities; &
- The proportion of staff holding doctoral qualifications was increasing.

5.21 The Review Panel noted that while the overwhelming balance of experience in teaching to international students lay with C_MS appointed academic staff, they reported little

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19 Ibid. p.31
opportunity in the past to contribute to the development of curriculum and the pedagogy. There is evidence of significant development in this area, including:

1. The creation of the Centre for Intercultural Education based at the Sydney International Campus and its input to an annual C_MS staff development program (as mentioned above at 4.34).

2. The foreshadowed appointment of a Chair of Intercultural Education, a CQU academic appointment to be located at either the Sydney or Melbourne campus.

3. An annual staff development program that includes two day workshops on key themes in pedagogy and curriculum.

4. Support and encouragement for staff to undertake qualifications upgrades.

5. Support for staff to undertake research related to their teaching disciplines.

6. The closer involvement of Course Directors and Lead Teachers at AIC’s with Course Coordinators at the CQU Faculty level on a range of academic matters, including curriculum and assessment, and including quality control of exam marking.

5.22 The Review Panel noted that these measures go some way to addressing the AQUA observation “that for large courses it is common practice for CQU course coordinators to contract large numbers of casual staff (who have, in many cases, never taught the course) to mark the examination”; and expressed “concerns about this in terms of academic quality…it is not obvious that casual marking staff will provide a higher standard of marking than AIC or other partner staff who are experienced in teaching the course”; and recommended, as with curriculum development (see 3.7 above), that “there may be opportunity for closer collaboration and sharing of academic responsibilities between CQU and C_MS academic staff.”

5.23 AUQA also noted that the “CQU Student Ombudsman’s Annual Report [2004] shows that the number of complaints over review of grades (the largest category of issues dealt with) has increased considerably from 36 in 2002 to 143 in 2004. These increases were in the Faculties of Business and Law, Informatics and Communications, and the vast majority from the AICs. At least 49 were supported, indicating that many of the complaints were not without substance. This may warrant a meta-level analysis in order to determine whether and, if so, how, the issue is systematic.” This appears to have been an enduring problem as the 2006 Student Ombudsman’s Annual Report again refers to increases in student complaints over review of grades and assessment issues, focused largely on the international campuses in Sydney and Melbourne, and primarily in the Faculty of Business and Informatics.

5.24 The Review Panel notes that the University has taken steps to address some of the legitimate concerns expressed by international students to, and the related findings of, the Carson Review in March 2007. As foreshadowed in the DVC’s e-mail to the Deputy Secretary of DIIRD on 27 April 2007, CQU has taken steps to:

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20 Ibid. p.32
21 Ibid. p.32
(1) “redress the development of exams and implement new quality-control measures to reduce the number of irregularities occurring in exam preparation;

(2) “reconsider its Review of Grade policy to ensure that procedures are more transparent to students”; and

(3) prepare “a document for students which stipulates the conditions under which the policy is in effect and what steps students need to take to apply the policy to their individual situation.”

5.25 AUQA Recommended that CQU align and resource its ICT capacity to the needs of a flexible mode, multi-campus University in which students are studying at all times. The Review Panel observed in Melbourne and Sydney well resourced computer laboratories and lecture/tutorial rooms supported by ICT equipment. Both campuses provided students secure 24 hour access to these facilities during semester. Students reported favorably on the access to and the ‘up-time’ of these facilities, noting that there was the usual peak demand around assignment deadlines and exam time. They also commended the access to lecture and other learning support materials on the campus intranet.

5.26 AUQA recommended [Rec 18] that CQU develop campus-specific plans for coordinating, reviewing and reporting on student services, and support for improving systems for determining and ensuring operational-level service standards at the AICs. C_MS staff at the Melbourne and Sydney campuses now have quality assurance programs in place, supported by the creation of a corporate unit dedicated to maintaining the campuses ISO accreditation.

5.27 Overall, the Review Panel saw tangible evidence that CQU and C_MS staff had attended to, and had taken, or had in hand, a number of measures to develop practical responses to AUQA’s observations. However, consistent with concerns raised elsewhere in this report and the CQU Student Ombudsman’s 2006 Annual Report, the Review Panel considers that more needs to be done by some subject coordinators within the Faculty of Business and Informatics to improve curriculum and assessment formulation, for example, by giving students early warning of their progress during term, sequencing material in a manageable and helpful way, and providing staged examples and case studies of gradually increasing difficulty and complexity.
6. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The CQU International Business Model

6.1 From the outset CQU’s viability has been challenged by its multi-campus overheads and limited Central Queensland student catchment from a widely spread population of around 200,000. CQU intakes are now under further stress as potential regional students, both school leavers and mature-age, in a tight labour market opt for jobs ahead of higher education.

6.2 In 1994, in concert with a commercial partner (converted in 1999 to a join-venture entity C_Management Services [CMS]), CQU developed a business model to leverage internationally its standing as an Australian University and its teaching and course material assets developed from its experience with distance education to begin to harvest a significant proportion of surge in international student interest in Australia. It created urban campuses dedicated to international students (Sydney – 1994, Melbourne – 1997, Brisbane and Fiji [since closed] – 1998, the Gold Coast – 2001 and most recently in Wellington, New Zealand). It offered its programs by distance education and mixed modes via partner centres in Hong Kong, Shanghai and Singapore [The latter sites are being phased out to cease teaching in 2008]. Its international education offer focuses on highly vocationally orientated programs in IT and business management. It provides flexible entry and prices that appeal to international students who might otherwise not gain entry to, or not be able to afford, an offshore education, and to those seeking permanent residency under Australia’s skilled migration program. In these respects, it is not unlike some other Victorian higher and vocational education providers. The model has enabled CQU to repatriate to Central Queensland significant income from these activities.

6.3 The Queensland Government, IDP Pty Ltd, the Good Universities Guide, Australia Education International, and the audit conducted by AUQA in 2005 have provided awards or commendations for CQU’s international student recruitment successes.

6.4 The Queensland Government has under consideration a submission from CQU for restructuring the business model for its international campuses. This aims to address concerns expressed in the AUQA Audit about governance, performance accountability and fiduciary vulnerabilities related to the current arrangements. The Review Panel notes that more information on the detail of these proposed arrangements is required. This is particularly relevant to ascertain any implications for the ongoing status of CQU-MIC as an extension of an institution accorded self-accrediting status in another jurisdiction (MCEETYA’s National Protocols for Higher Education Approval Processes). The VRQA, in consultation with State and Commonwealth counterpart agencies, might address this issue also in the context of the current national review of those MCEETYA protocols.

The Impact on Victoria

6.5 An analysis by CQU indicates that its Melbourne International Campus (MIC) contributes some $132 million annually to Victorian GDP. This benefit might be discounted to around $90-100 million by the proportion of fee surpluses repatriated to CQU (Rockhampton) to its

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commercial partner, and as commissions to agents offshore, and by other factors that moderate the estimate of student expenditure in Victoria. CQU-MIC, nonetheless, remains a significant player in the Victorian and the Melbourne economies and, as its students have compulsory private health insurance and do not receive transport subsidies afforded to domestic students, it does so largely without cross-subsidy from the Victorian taxpayer.

6.6 Against this clear economic benefit, there is an emerging and repeated concern generated by student criticisms and competitor comments that the quality of CQU international education services and related marketing practices are adversely impacting the international reputation of Australian universities. This is presented also as affecting Victoria’s standing in countries such as India, for example, where Victoria is investing in promoting itself as a quality international study destination, as a source of quality research and innovation, as a highly effective target for direct foreign investment, and as a preferred settlement option for highly skilled migrants.

6.7 This ‘case-against’ CQU-MIC has been built on an admixture of:

- concerns about CQU’s compliance with national standards for its degrees (Australian Qualifications Framework), expressed anecdotally and also expressed in the 2005 AUQA Audit;
- concerns about CQU academic quality control and its impact on promoting Victoria as a quality international higher education study destination;
- presentation of the CQU business model as ‘overly commercial’ and concerned more with revenue flows than the quality of education programs and student outcomes;
- allegations about CQU’s inappropriate promotion of the overseas student program as a pathway for skilled migration;
- competitor disdain for marketing practices, such as those that provide incentives to current students to recruit new students; and
- recurring and publicly aired overseas student complaints about aspects of the teaching, assessment and progression policies and practices at CQU-MIC.

A number of these matters are dealt with within the Review Panel’s report and summarized below.

6.8 CQU-MIC has begun to address its capacity to develop timely and effective responses to criticisms of its programs, service delivery and to the handling of student complaints. The Review Panel noted that CQU-MIC had not been included in consultative arrangements established by the Department of Education (or more recently, the Department of Innovation, Industry and Regional Development) around international education, marketing and industry developments. Given its significant role in the Victorian economy and its potential to influence offshore perceptions of the Victorian higher education offer, consideration should be given by DIIRD to including CQU-MIC in future consultative arrangements.

Student Complaints

6.9 The Review Panel concurred with the Carson Report’s findings about CQU-MIC’s handling of the complaints of students disaffected by exam outcomes in March 2007. It agrees that the CQU-MIC regulations concerning review of grades had been communicated to students and that there was no evidence that students had been ‘deliberately’ exploited as a revenue strategy. The Review Panel agreed with the Carson Report’s concerns about exam
preparation and the need to clarify some dissonance in assessment regulations that applied to postgraduate programs.

Operational Activities and Legislative Obligations at CQU Melbourne

ESOS Compliance

6.10 The Review Panel noted, and it agrees with, AUQA’s earlier commendation of the comprehensive nature of CQU’s ESOS Operations Manual, and also noted the strengthening of its capacity for related internal compliance audits. Consistent with the Carson Report and preceding reviews, the Review Panel found no material non-compliance with ESOS National Code, but noted that it would be in the interests of the institution, prospective and enrolled students for CQU-MIC to:

- conduct an audit of all marketing materials to eliminate information that, while technically correct, might lead to misinterpretation;
- review the scheduling of prescribed texts across courses to ensure that these, in aggregate, constitute a reasonable cost and that an accurate estimate of the full cost is made explicit in course information; and
- in the light of assessments of the reasonableness of the ‘prescribed text’ load, review current library acquisition policy that minimizes the holdings of prescribed texts.

Tertiary Education Act 1993 (Repealed) and the Education and Training Reform Act 2006

6.11 The Panel found that Ministerial Guidelines for the operation of reviews of accreditation by OTTE, that include assessment of ESOS compliance, appear not to have been revised formally since 2002. The transfer of responsibility to VRQA provides an opportunity for the following activities:

- for an integrated review of VRQA processes and interactions with cognate processes and cycles of AUQA, and other State (Victorian and interstate) and Commonwealth (e.g. DEST) agencies, to improve their effectiveness and to minimise the diversion of institutional resources from teaching and learning, student support quality improvement, and strategic and business planning [Education and Training Reform Act 2006 Section 4.2.2 (m)]; and
- to align VRQA guidelines, work programs and processes with Victorian self-accrediting institution’s planned commissioning of the independent external audit of their whole-of-institution ESOS compliance, which is now required at least every five years under the revised National Code.

6.12 Within that context, to explore a proactive role for the VRQA in promoting best-practice in quality assurance of the delivery of education services to international students offered in, or from, Victoria.

AUQA

6.13 The Review Panel saw tangible evidence that CQU and C_MS staff had attended to, and had taken, or had in hand, a number of measures to develop practical responses to AUQA’s observations. However, consistent with concerns raised elsewhere in this report, the Review Panel considers that priority attention needs to be given to curriculum and assessment formulation.
CONCLUSION

6.14 The Review Panel concludes that, overall, the leadership of the Melbourne International Campus of CQU shows a responsible and professional commitment to its overseas students, and an understanding of the reality of student needs, and of their lives and circumstances in another country.

6.15 It seems clear that marked improvements have been introduced in the education and support available at the campus over the past two years in response to public concerns, to an audit conducted in September 2005 by the Australian Universities Quality Agency, and to new arrangements initiated recently by the management of the University. Some recent appointments of key staff at both the Melbourne and the Sydney campuses have impressed the Review Panel with the enthusiasm and effectiveness of their approach to student needs and concerns.

6.16 While acknowledging the positive leadership of the Vice-Chancellor and the recently appointed Deputy Vice-Chancellor, the Review Panel is less sure that there exists at Rockhampton a parallel understanding within the Academic Board and the Faculty of Business and Informatics of the pressures and circumstances of overseas students in Melbourne and Sydney. Those whose daily lives are oriented to the needs of regional Australian students in central Queensland communities perhaps cannot be expected to share an inward understanding of the patterns of learning and the expectations of recently arrived overseas students negotiating living in inner capital cities.

6.17 Adapting to a different cultural learning style takes time, and students need progressive assistance and help which goes beyond empathy (important though that is) to the learning and mastery of specific techniques for the study of course content and preparation for assessment approaches, including problem solving within formal examination settings. Those responsible for individual subjects (courses, in the terminology currently used in the University) need to have a confident knowledge of curriculum development, including the progressive sequencing of content material, teaching through case study examples and techniques of reliable and valid assessment. Without this knowledge and skill, the problems that have surfaced with such publicity in the recent past could well recur, despite the best efforts of institutional leaders both at Rockhampton and at the capital city sites.

6.18 In terms of its student and staff composition, and of its resourcing, the University today is fundamentally different from the institution which was designated a University by Act of the Queensland parliament in 1992. If one views the University and its company partner as a consortium entity, this entity has responsibility for a total student body in which well over half are overseas students based in eastern Australian capital cities. This overseas student body contributes more to the University’s revenue than does the Commonwealth government. Yet while the students on the central Queensland campuses are taught principally by ‘teaching and research’ academic staff, those on the capital city international campuses are taught principally by staff who are perhaps more junior, and who see their role as essentially ‘teaching only.’ While many in this latter group have valuable industry experience and are effective teachers, overall this situation appears to the Review Panel to be inequitable and unnecessary. It could be rectified by making gradual changes over time.

6.19 By comparison with 1992, the entity today could be characterized as a largely private higher education institution, primarily teaching overseas students in Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane, but contracted as well to the Commonwealth government to teach the student
communities of Rockhampton, Mackay, Gladstone, Bundaberg and Emerald.

6.20 But the better qualified teachers, and the decision makers, in the main, are to be found in places far distant from where the majority of the student body resides. Curriculum and assessment decisions are being made far from where most students are taught.

6.21 To articulate this is not necessarily to imply that there is something inherently wrong in these arrangements. Indeed, the Review Panel has formed the opinion that the leaders of both the University and the C_MS are making genuine enhancements to the quality of the education and the assessment arrangements, and as a consequence, what is offered to international students today is an education in an environment that, for many students at this stage of their learning in a foreign, English speaking country, is highly suitable and is valued by them. Our impression is that the University and the C_MS are building mutually beneficial interconnections at a range of levels. Each clearly needs the other, the success of each is significantly dependent on the other.

6.22 Despite these desirable developments at the high order level of the institutional leadership, there remain instances which suggest to the Review Panel that the possibility of further cases of student disquiet and examination irregularities still exists. These potential problems are multifaceted and do not derive from staff inadequacies alone. In part they are due to the enrolment of people whose prospects of success in their chosen course might be questioned. This might be traced in some cases to lack of prerequisite subject knowledge, or to slowness in building the needed confidence with written and/or spoken English, notwithstanding attaining the formal levels required for admission, or to difficulties in modifying deeply ingrained methods of ‘rote learning’, or to an insufficient level of sustained motivation to complete the rigorous requirements of a degree level program. In other cases, the students have the capacity and the will to succeed, but are overcome by external problems relating to accommodation, or to money, or to the adaptations needed to prosper educationally in an unanticipated cultural learning milieu.

6.23 Whereas some students are successful in all, or nearly all, their subjects, all or nearly all the time, and a few others have obviously made an error of choice and should be counselled out quickly, the real problems are with those who, in each term, have partial success - say, passing one subject, failing one, and getting a supplementary exam in a third. There are students whose record over time shows this as an enduring pattern, and in the end, some of them complete and others depart without a finished course. This is a long standing phenomenon in universities world-wide, it has applied over the decades, and it is not confined to overseas students. But in the Australia of today, it does put such students under enormous pressures. First, to repeat costs more money, and this in itself is a strain when course fees are as they are. Second, it can bring tensions over visa eligibility for international students, adding to the pressure. Third, it can raise issues to do with self-worth to a heightened state, as a student contemplates revealing to family members through distant communication methods that he or she is not living up to their expectations and the high hopes that have been invested in future success.

6.24 This is not to suggest for one moment that appropriate standards be waived, or the requirements for professional practice undermined. Reputational damage then would be enormous: for the Faculty, for the University, and even more for the standing of Australian education. But equally, the Review Panel believes that responsibility to fee-paying overseas students requires that institutions make fair and reasonable efforts to assist towards success.
6.25 Our conclusion is that, as regards a whole range of support mechanisms, the Melbourne campus is doing well, and in general the local teaching arrangements are better than simply satisfactory, but in terms of curriculum and assessment formulation, for example, giving students early warning of their progress during term, sequencing material in a manageable and helpful way, providing staged examples and case studies of gradually increasing difficulty and complexity, more needs to be done by some subject coordinators within the Faculty of Business and Informatics.
A. REVIEW PANEL MEMBER BIOGRAPHIES

Professor Kwong Lee Dow was appointed to Chair the Review Panel. Professor Lee Dow has had more than 40 years involvement with the education sector – as a teacher, as the Dean of the Faculty of Education, and as Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Vice-Chancellor of The University of Melbourne. He was also acting Vice-Chancellor of the University of Ballarat and has chaired the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority.

Mr Roger Peacock is an expert in international education, university development, and relationships with Asia. He was Vice-Principal (University Development) at The University of Melbourne and Head of the International Division at the Department of Education Science and Training.

Rev Dr Harold Pidwell is a former Dean and Chief Executive Officer of the Melbourne College of Divinity. He has served on Higher Education Review Panels for Victoria, Tasmania, New South Wales, Queensland and New Zealand.
B. REVIEW PANEL PROCESS AND PROCEDURE

The Review Panel was established under reference from the Minister for Skills, Educational Services and Employment, and under authority of Section 11A of the *Tertiary Education Act 1993*, having regard to the findings of a preceding review by Professor Carson (the Carson Report), and from the perspective of maintaining Victoria’s reputation for, and promoting the actual delivery of, high quality higher education.

The Review was initiated by early meetings of the Review Panel considering the Terms of Reference, the formulation of a project plan, reporting protocols, documented arrangements and resources.

This led to a draft project plan being agreed, tasks allocated, and an activity timetable being developed. During a phase of document review and desktop research, a draft issues map, consultation plan and suggested appointments, were decided.

After informing the Office of Higher Education in the Queensland Department of Education, Training and the Arts, a first visit was made to Central Queensland University in Rockhampton, where discussions were held with the Vice-Chancellor, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, President of Academic Board, Dean of the Faculty of Business and Informatics, and other staff advised by the Vice-Chancellor.

One member of the Review Panel visited the Australian Department of Education, Science and Training in Canberra for discussion with nominated officers from the Higher Education and International Education sections. Particular focus was given to compliance with the ESOS Act and the associated National Code, and to the Department’s interactions with the AUQA Report on Central Queensland University.

An initial visit to the Melbourne campus then enabled the Review Panel to meet with the senior staff of C_MS there, hosted by the Chief General Manager of the International Campuses, and the Melbourne Campus Director. This first visit included a comprehensive briefing on the Company, its structure and relationship to the campuses and to CQU, with an extended discussion of issues relevant to the Review Panel’s Terms of Reference, and a presentation and further discussion of the range of activities at the Melbourne campus. A brief inspection of the facilities at both 108 and 123 Lonsdale Street was made.

Before further visits were made to the Melbourne campus, the Review Panel had a meeting with the Executive Director of the Australian Universities Quality Agency, for detailed background discussion of the AUQA Report of its audit of the University, which had been conducted in 2005 (to campuses in Central Queensland, the Melbourne and Sydney campuses, and to overseas campuses) and reported formally in February 2006.

At the suggestion of the Chief General Manager of the international campuses, the Review Panel visited the Sydney campus (at 333 and 400 Kent Street Sydney) to allow the making of comparisons and similarities, and the Review Panel was hosted by the Campus Director there. Meetings were arranged with a number of senior staff and leaders of support service facilities, and a brief inspection of both sites was also made.

A further 2 days of meetings were held at the Melbourne campus, to enable the Review Panel to have unhurried meetings with groups of current students (including some who were dissatisfied and others who were well satisfied), with a group of recent graduates (including both Bachelor and Masters
graduates), a group of academic staff (including both ongoing and casual staff), and a group of leaders of various student support services. In addition, the Review Panel met with staff responsible for the enrolment process, which occurs before the start of each teaching semester, and the Review Panel was able to view each of the stages of enrolment process, which was occurring during the visit. This included the structured orientation program for students new to the University.

The Review Panel visited the Office of the recently established Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority, meeting with the Director and Deputy Director for discussions on the legislative basis for the role of the new Authority, and how it will become involved with issues arising from this report. While the Review is conducted under the legislation current at the time of its initiation, with changes to ESOS and the Code at the national level, and changes to responsibilities here in Victoria, it is in the interests of all concerned to be anticipating actions which are consistent with future requirements and planning on the basis of a new legislative environment.

In the final stages of report preparation, the Review Panel built into the timeline an opportunity for a draft of the report to be viewed by involved parties as appropriate to address and correct where necessary matters of fact.
## C. REVIEW PANEL CONSULTATIONS AND CONTACTS

**Victorian Ministerial Review Meetings at CQU Rockhampton – Thursday 7 June 2007**

All meetings on Thursday 7 June took place in the Vice-Chancellor’s Conference Room in the Chancellery Building (Building 1) at CQU Rockhampton from 11:00am – 4:00pm.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>List of Meetings and CQU Staff Attendees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Review Panel Meeting with Vice Chancellor and Deputy Vice Chancellor | Professor John Rickard, Vice-Chancellor  
Professor Angela Delves, Deputy Vice-Chancellor |
| Overview of Processes | Associate Professor Kevin Tickle, Deputy Dean, Faculty of Business and Informatics  
Ms Kathy Ramm, Executive Officer International  
Professor Gus Geursen, PVC and Executive Dean, Faculty of Business & Informatics |
| Meeting with Course Coordinators | Associate Professor Jessica Kennedy (Head of School of Accounting and Marketing and CC in Accounting Theory)  
Professor John Rolfe (Course Coordinator in Economics)  
Mr Rakesh Gupta (Course Coordinator in Finance) |
| Meeting with President of Academic Board | Professor Robert Miles, President of Academic Board  
Ms Anne Harzer, Secretary to Academic Board  
Ms Jan Lynch, Secretary to Education Committee of Academic Board |
| Meeting with Staff Responsible for Professional Development | Ms Leone Hinton. Head, Academic Staff Development, Division of Teaching and Learning Services  
Professor Alex Radloff, Pro Vice Chancellor (Academic Services) |
| Other Staff Involved in the Student Journey | Ms Mary McKavanagh, Director of Student Services  
Mr David Cardnell, Deputy President of Academic Board  
Ms Chris Galinovic, Secretary to Appeals Committee |
Meeting with the Commonwealth Department of Education, Science and Training – Friday 8 June 2007

Mr Roger Peacock representing the Review Panel visited Canberra to brief DEST representatives on the Review and consult with them on issues set out in the Terms of Reference.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>DEST Staff Attendees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Meeting with DEST</td>
<td>Ms Linda Laker. Branch Manager – International Quality Branch.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Australian Education International</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ms Lois Sparkes. Branch Manager - Quality Branch, Higher Education Group.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Victorian Ministerial Review Meeting at CQU Melbourne International Campus – Tuesday 19 June 2007

All meetings on Tuesday 19 June took place in the Conference Room on level 8 at 123 Lonsdale St from 9:30am - 5:00pm.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>CQU and CMS Staff Attendees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mr Darryl Stewart. State Director Victoria. C_Management Services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ms Nola Burns. Associate Director Administration. C_Management Services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>All staff noted above.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>All staff noted above.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Discussion about Student Services and Review Panel Activities</td>
<td>All Staff noted above.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Meeting with Dr David Woodhouse at AUQA – Monday 25 June 2007

The Review Panel met with Dr David Woodhouse to brief him on the Review and consult with him regarding issues identified by the AUQA Audit Report (February, 2006).

The meeting on 25 June occurred in the office of Dr David Woodhouse at Level 10, 123 Lonsdale St.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>AUQA Attendee</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Meeting with AUQA CEO</td>
<td>Dr David Woodhouse – Chief Executive Officer. Australian Universities Quality Agency</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Victorian Ministerial Review Meeting at CQU Sydney International Campus – Monday 2 July 2007

The Review Panel met with senior academic and executive staff at the CQU Sydney International Campus, at the invitation of Professor Ken Hawkins, to compare and contrast the services and programs offered in Sydney with the CQU operations in Melbourne.

All meetings on Monday 2 July took place in an academic meeting room at 400 Kent St from 11:30am – 1:30pm followed by a tour of the campus sites from 1:30pm – 2:30pm.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>CQU and CMS Staff Attendees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Presentation and Overview of CQU Sydney | Mr Geoff Wessling. State Director NSW  
Dr Alison Owens. Associate Director Academic  
Mr Steven Holliday. Associate Director Finance  
Ms Susan Loomes. Associate Director Administration |
| Discussion about student services, finance, administration and academic curriculum design and support at Sydney and interaction between AIC’s. | Mr Geoff Wessling. State Director NSW  
Dr Alison Owens. Associate Director Academic  
Mr Steven Holliday. Associate Director Finance  
Ms Susan Loomes. Associate Director Administration |
| Tour of the Campus Sites and Services at 333 and 400 Kent St | Mr Geoff Wessling. State Director NSW |
### Victorian Ministerial Review Meeting at CQU Melbourne International Campus – Tuesday 3 July 2007

All meetings on Tuesday 3 July, with the exception of the enrolment and orientation session, occurred in the Conference Room on level 8 at 123 Lonsdale St from 9:30am – 5:30pm.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Attendees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Meeting with current CQU-MIC complainant students</td>
<td>Masters of Professional Accounting student.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Masters of Professional Accounting student.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Apologies were received from 1 student.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meeting with current undergraduate CQU-MIC students</td>
<td>Masters of Accounting student.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Masters of Accounting student.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Masters Information Systems &amp; Technology student.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Masters of Information &amp; Technology student.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review Panel Debrief</td>
<td>Professor Angela Delves. Deputy Vice-Chancellor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mr Darryl Stewart. State Director Victoria. C_Management Services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enrolment and Orientation Session Overview and Observation</td>
<td>Ms Nola Burns. Associate Director Administration. C_Management Services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mr Trent McHenry. Associate Director (Finance). C_Management Services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visit to Learning Skills Unit</td>
<td>Ms Tania Vitale. Manager, Learning Skills Unit C_Management Services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meeting with CQU-MIC Academic Staff</td>
<td>Mr Phillip Minca. Program Facilitator for Postgraduate Accounting Courses and Lead Lecturer for Finance and Auditing Courses. Full-time Permanent Academic Staff Member.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ms Shweta Agarwai. Lead Lecturer for Accounting and Law courses. Full-time Permanent Academic Staff Member.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mr Gilbert Afful. Lead Lecturer and tutor for Accounting Courses. Casual Academic Staff Member.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ms Dilini Ranaweera. Lead Lecturer and Tutor for Accounting and Economics Courses. Casual Academic Staff Member.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
All meetings on Wednesday 4 July occurred in the Conference Room on level 8 at 123 Lonsdale St from 11:45am – 5:30pm.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Attendees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Meeting with graduate, or former, CQU-MIC students</td>
<td>Masters of Information Systems &amp; Technology student.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Masters of Accounting student.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Masters of Information Systems &amp; Technology student.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bachelor of Accounting student.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meeting with Student Support Services Staff</td>
<td>Ms Deepa Mathews. Manager Training Employment &amp; Career Coaching (TECC) Unit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ms Tania Vitale. Manager, Learning Skills Unit. C Management Services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mr Darryl Stewart. State Director Victoria. C Management Services.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Meeting with Lynn Glover, Director of the VRQA at St Andrews Place – Thursday 5 July 2007

The Review Panel met with the General Manager and Deputy Manager of the VRQA to brief them on the Review and to consult with VRQA representatives regarding the transitional provisions of the Tertiary Education Act 1993 and the new regulations under the Education, Training and Reform Act 2006.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Attendees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Meeting with VRQA General Manager</td>
<td>Ms Lynn Glover. Director – Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mr Rob Fearnside. Deputy Director - Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
D. SCHEDULE OF TABLED DOCUMENTS AND PRESENTATIONS

Commonwealth Legislation

*Education Services for Overseas Students Act (2000)*


*National Code of Practice for Registration Authorities and Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students (1 July 2007)*

Victorian Legislation

*Tertiary Education Act 1993 (Vic)*

*Education Training and Reform Act 2006 (Vic)*

Reports


Documents Tabled By Central Queensland University and C_Management Services


Central Queensland University, “Central Queensland University - Proposal to Strengthen its Existing Joint Venture Initiative with its Commercial Partner.” Briefing Paper prepared for the Queensland Government. 10 August, 2006.


## E. VICTORIAN INTERNATIONAL COURSE FEES COMPARED 2007

Masters Professional Accounting Programs Comparative Per Annum Fee Costs  
- Ranked from Highest Fees to Lowest Fees Per Annum -

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Unit Fee</th>
<th>Course Fee</th>
<th>Length</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monash University</td>
<td>Masters Professional Accounting</td>
<td>16 units $2,940 per unit</td>
<td>$23,520 per annum</td>
<td>2 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IELTS 6.5</td>
<td>Master of Practising Accounting</td>
<td>12 units $2,940 per unit</td>
<td>$23,520 per year</td>
<td>1.5 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total: $47,040</td>
<td>1.5 years</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RMIT University</td>
<td>Masters Professional Accounting</td>
<td>12 units $2,220 per unit</td>
<td>$17,760 per annum</td>
<td>1.5 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IELTS 6.5</td>
<td>Total: $26,640</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victoria University</td>
<td>Master of Business (Professional Accounting)</td>
<td>12 units $2,100 per unit</td>
<td>$16,800 per annum</td>
<td>1.5 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IELTS 6.5</td>
<td>Total: $25,200</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Queensland University</td>
<td>Masters Professional Accounting**</td>
<td>12 units $2,370 per unit</td>
<td>$14,220 per annum</td>
<td>2 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IELTS 6.0</td>
<td>Graduate Certificate/Masters Professional Accounting</td>
<td>16 units $2,370 per unit</td>
<td>$14,220 per annum</td>
<td>2.5 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total: $28,440</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Ballarat</td>
<td>Masters Professional Accounting</td>
<td>16 units $1,750 per unit</td>
<td>$14,000 per annum</td>
<td>2 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IELTS 6.0</td>
<td>Total: $28,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melbourne Institute of Technology*</td>
<td>Master of Commerce (Professional Accounting)</td>
<td>16 units $1,750 per unit</td>
<td>$14,000 per annum</td>
<td>2 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IELTS 6.0</td>
<td>Total: $28,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Melbourne Institute of Technology is a 3rd party provider which offers degree programs in association with the University of Ballarat.

In addition to meeting the English requirements above (or an approved equivalent), applicants for these postgraduate programs also need to have completed a bachelors degree or its equivalent.

**CQU also offers a 2.5 year Masters of Professional Accounting at the same fee cost for students who have no bachelors degree, but equivalent Year 12 qualification.
Central Queensland University Annual Report - Student Statistics 2006

Student Statistics – Relevant Extracts from CQU 2006 Annual Report
The following tables contain 2005 full year final data (previously not available for the 2005 annual report) and 2006 preliminary data.

**Total Student Load (EFTSL) by Funding Type**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DEST Funded</td>
<td>6608.5</td>
<td>6213.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Fee Paying</td>
<td>757.8</td>
<td>690.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overseas Fee Paying</td>
<td>11382.2</td>
<td>11395.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RTS</td>
<td>146.8</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>18895.3</td>
<td>18448.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**International Student Numbers by Campus**

<table>
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<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
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