

Dear Colleagues

The purpose of this email is to provide you with an update on developments on the Peer Review of Assessment (PRAN) Project (Booth et al, 2015). An important part of supporting this strong network, which developed out of the PRAN Project, is providing updates on developments and resources in relation to initiatives in peer review of assessment, and now more broadly peer review of teaching in the higher education sector.

### **Status of PRAN Final Report**

The PRAN Final Report (Booth et al, 2015) is currently being published by the Office for Learning and Teaching (OLT) and will be available in the near future. The project aimed to develop and test a sector-wide framework for calibrating and assuring achievement standards within and across disciplines through the establishment of a peer review of assessment network. The project has involved the participation from 36 universities, 22 private providers and 22 Deans Councils, including the Higher Education Academy, Ako Aotearoa and New Zealand's Academic Quality Agency. With an increasingly deregulated HE sector involving over 185 higher education providers Australian HE is in a unique position to establish comparability of standards in the peer review of assessment.

### **OLT National Teaching Fellowship: Professor Denise Chalmers**

Professor Denise Chalmers has received an OLT National Teaching Fellowship on recognising and rewarding teaching. Part of her Fellowship will include investigating and proposing a process of external peer review of teaching portfolios for promotion and the feasibility of establishing a registry of a College of Peers comprised of endorsed and trained teaching and learning experts to carry out the reviews. Denise is interested in linking with the College of Peers process recommended in the PRAN Final report (Booth et al, 2015). If anyone is interested in discussing her work can contact Denise on: [denise.chalmers@uwa.edu.au](mailto:denise.chalmers@uwa.edu.au)

### **Developments in the UK**

Recent developments in the UK have put a focus on strengthening the external examiner system. The recent HEFCE (2015) [report](#) recommended strengthening the external examiner system through establishing discipline communities [i.e. Colleges of Peers]. The Report also expressed interest in the use of online software to enable blind peer review. The Higher Education Academy is interested in ongoing developments in Australia in regards to peer review.

### **Developments in Australia: Education Services Australia: Development of sector wide online peer review tool**

Education Services Australia (ESA), a not-for-profit organization owned by the Ministers of Education, has *developed a proof of concept peer review tool* with UTAS which has built-in functional requirements that can be adjusted for any model of peer review in assessment, including a clearinghouse of good practice in assessment and register for peer reviewers. Plans are underway to add peer review of teaching. However, the implementation of the online peer review tool can only be sustained by a coordinated network of support across the HE sector.

### **Proposed OLT Extension Grant: Trial of College of Peers process and online peer review tool**

The University of Tasmania in partnership with Education Services Australia is submitting an OLT Extension Grant on August 31<sup>st</sup>, 2015.

**The purpose of setting up a College of Peers is to provide:**

- National and international support network and website in peer review;
- Face-to-face workshops and forums on different models of peer review;
- Access to online peer review tool, including clearinghouse of good practice and peer review register; and
- Training package for peer review; international journal of peer review and other online resources.

We so far have received 28 Letters of Support for the Extension Project [universities, private providers, Deans Councils, HEA organisations such as AQA, TEQSA and Ako Aotearoa]. See [[www.utas.edu.au/serru/nprn](http://www.utas.edu.au/serru/nprn)]

Some of the activities include:

**Activity 1:** Establish support networks in peer review: **Group 1:** RMIT, QUT, Curtin, UOW and Deakin; **Group 2:** ECU, CQU, UWS and UNE; **Group 3:** The Deans Councils, Engineering, Nursing and Midwifery and ICT, **including industry and accreditation representation;** and **Group 4:** COPHE and the HE Private Provider-Quality Network [HEPP-QN].

**Activity 2:** UTAS lead the coordination of support for the College of Peers process [Bristol University leads the Economics Network] by providing updates and expansion of PRAN website, emails and communications, web resources, and forums.

**Activity 3:** To ensure sustainability of the College of Peers, UTAS and ESA set up an organisational support structure, business plan and registration process for future subscribing HE institutions and Deans Councils to use peer review tool and resources including benefits and services in peer review [for e.g. [www.economicsnetwork.ac.uk](http://www.economicsnetwork.ac.uk) ].

**Activity 4:** Test a sector wide online peer review tool with 4 groups outlined in Activity 1 [ESA will do this].

**Activity 5:** Develop online support resources in peer review [assessment and teaching], including international journal in peer review and training package on how to give peer review [work with HERDSA, OLT Fellows, CADAD/ACODE]

**Activity 6:** Set up forums and workshops for professional development in peer review. Liaise with national and international HE organisations such as QAA, AQA, Ako Aotearoa, HEA, Higher Education Services, Universities Australia and TEQSA to set up national and international linkages in peer review.

**Higher Education Services: Higher Education Compliance and Quality Forum [HECQN]**

Higher Education Services (HES) are organising a Forum on November 4 and 5 at the Park Royal Hotel at Melbourne Airport under the theme 'Securing Standards'. Submissions are welcome, particularly sessions around 10-15 minutes or several short sessions on a related theme up to 30 minutes. **There will be a stream for Peer Review of Assessment/Teaching.** Submissions to the Convenor of HECQN, Jacqui Elson-Green at [jacqi@hes.edu.au](mailto:jacqi@hes.edu.au) by Monday 31<sup>st</sup> August. Key speakers include:

- Emeritus Prof Kwong Lee Dow
- New TEQSA CEO, Anthony McClaran
- Julie Hare – Higher Education Editor, The Australian
- Neil Robinson, Registrar at Melbourne - Digital Student Data Taskforce
- Emeritus Prof Geoff Scott - who will speak about the outcomes his national senior teaching fellowship involving some 2000 L&T leaders from around the world. The focus has been on assuring the quality of achievement standards and their valid assessment in Australian HE.

- Prof Denise Chalmers – *National Senior Teaching Fellowship (2015)*
- *Title: Recognising and rewarding teaching: Australian teaching criteria and standards and expert peer review*
- Sally Varnham - “Students as partners in reviewing course quality - findings from an OLT funded international project”
- Assoc Prof Jon Yorke - ‘Breaking bad? Contract cheating and the threat to standards’

There'll also be a number of panel discussions and meetings of the NSW/ACT and Victorian Quality Managers Networks.

<http://www.hes.edu.au/events/hes-higher-education-compliance-and-quality-network-forum/>

**Please send this email onto other academic colleagues interested in peer review of assessment and teaching.** We look forward to providing you with regular updates on the Network.