ASIA-PACIFIC QUALITY NETWORK

Annual Report
2006-2007
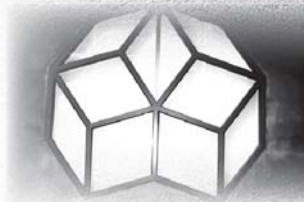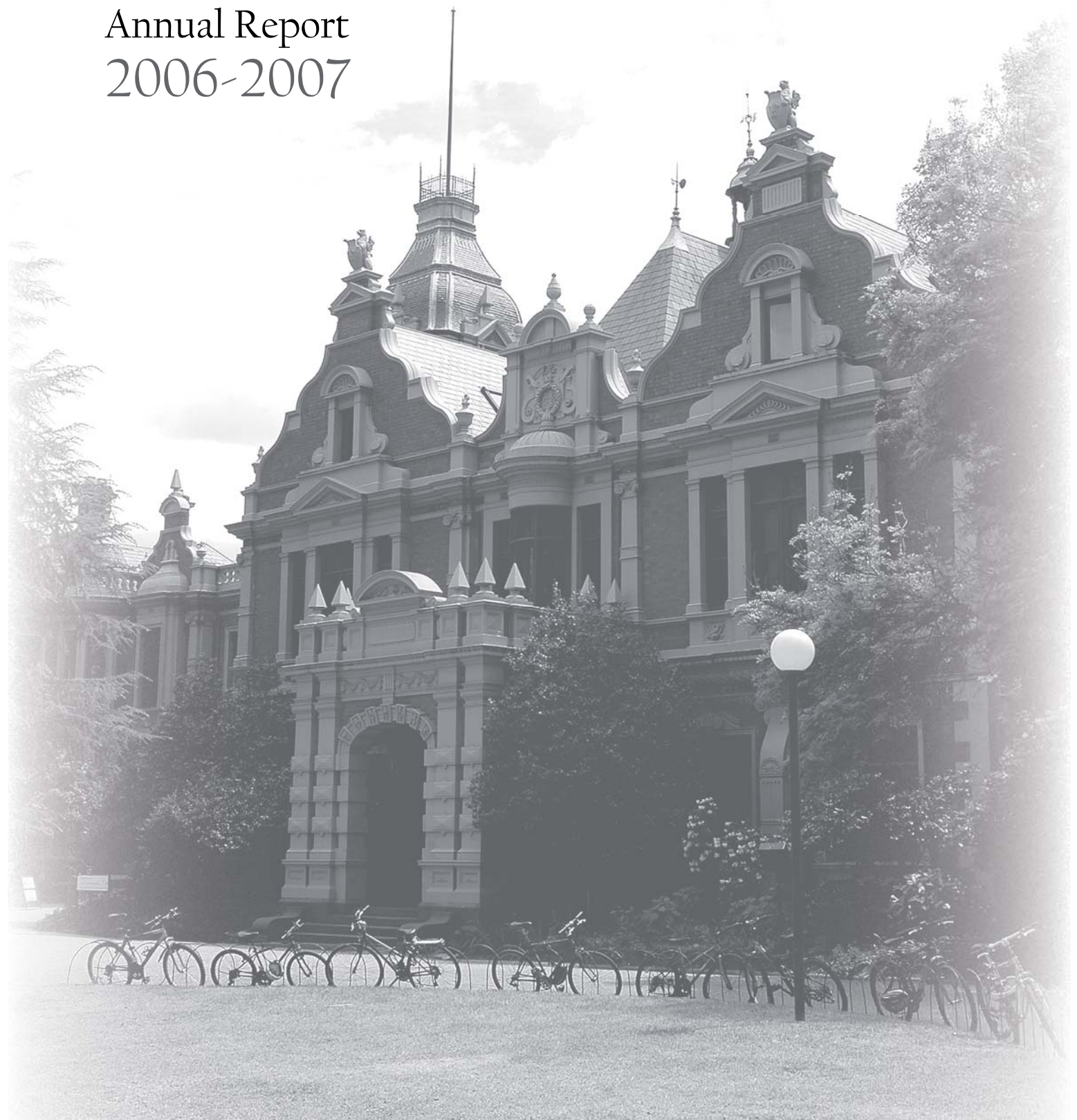
apqn
ASIA-PACIFIC QUALITY NETWORK

Annual Report
2006-2007

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ASIA-PACIFIC QUALITY NETWORK

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INTRODUCTION

THE NETWORK

THE BOARD

BOARD ACTIVITY

Introduction

This Annual Report covers the reporting period 1 October 2006 to 31 December 2007. It reports on the achievements of the Asia-Pacific Quality Network's governance, project achievements and finances.

The Network has been a recipient of the World Bank development grant facility (DGF) for three years covering the period 1 October 2004 to 31 December 2007. The DGF resources were intended to strengthen the capacity of accreditation agencies and quality assurance professionals in countries within the APQN region. The DGF provided support to existing regional civil society associations of accreditation to help them build capacity to:

- coordinate organisational functions and mutual recognition of credentials

- sustain ongoing review of participating organisations to assure a high quality of organisational performance

- encourage leadership to help individual agencies develop tools and strategies to sustain the value of quality assurance

- serve as an advocate for accreditation of tertiary education to the public, governments, and institutions

- provide research, policy analysis, and service to its member institutions

- nurture the core academic values central to tertiary education and quality assurance: collaboration, independence, academic freedom, open and transnational cooperation and exchange of ideas, procedures and standards

This report covers the six main components of the grant, the Network's governance and finances.
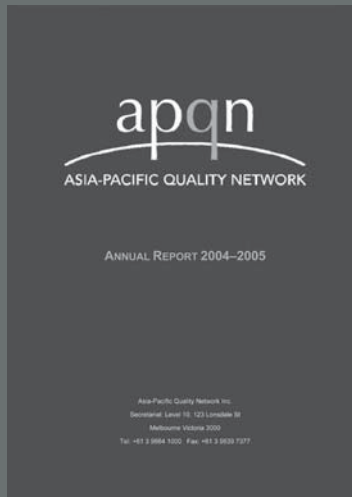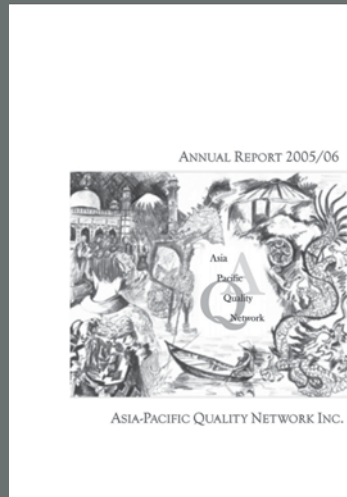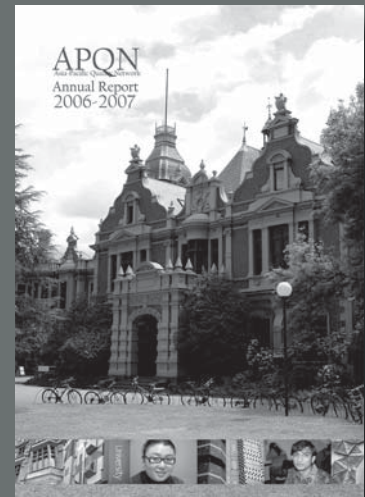

PHOTOGRAPH BY CLAIRE GRESTY

The Network

The journey so far...

| Year 1 (2004–2005) | Year 2 (2005–2006) | Year 3 (2006–2007) |

The seed of the idea of an Asian/Pacific network was planted at the first regional meeting in Oman (2003), and a name, the Asia-Pacific Quality Network, was subsequently formulated. Dr David Woodhouse of the Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA) established a secretariat within his offices in Melbourne, Australia, and funding all initial establishment costs. An Administrator was soon employed (2004) to manage the necessary requirements for the Network to become a legal entity with a formalised Constitution, a well developed constituency and a substantive website.

Funding was then acquired through a World Bank grant to facilitate the necessary establishment and operational costs and as a means to disseminate funds to developing countries as deemed applicable by World Bank guidelines.

At a meeting in Hong Kong (January 2005) three office bearers were provisionally approved for office. An official election then took place in Wellington New Zealand (March 2005), at a regional Annual General Meeting (AGM), where a full board of seven was inaugurated (the Board structure has since included up to four co-opted members, so that by 2007 it consists of 11 members). Members, making up the General Council, were deemed prospective members pending a formal application process.

Subsequent AGMs took place in Shanghai China (2006) and Kuala Lumpur Malaysia (2007). The next AGM will be held in Chiba Japan (2008). Other APQN sponsored workshops and conferences have been conducted in almost 20 countries around the region, and many staff movement activities, each receiving varying degrees of APQN support, have also taken place between member agencies.

Cooperation between member agencies is vital for the success of any network. Since APQN's inception, several Memoranda of Cooperation and Memoranda of Understanding have been signed between APQN member agencies. This is evidence of the mutual collaboration and agreement across our immense region.

Future activities will be focused around dissemination of information to members through a members' only area on the APQN website (www.apqn.org), and through increased focus on other activities.

Our Vision

To be a self-sustaining Network by 2010, in which it will come naturally to members to use APQN as a first point of reference for advice or support.

Our Mission

To enhance the quality of higher education in Asia and the Pacific region through strengthening the work of quality assurance agencies and extending the cooperation between them.

Our Objectives

The purposes of APQN are:

- to promote good practice in the maintenance and improvement of quality in higher education in the Asia-Pacific region

- to facilitate research in the region into the practice of quality management in higher education and its effectiveness in improving the quality of higher education in the region

- to provide advice and expertise to assist the development of new quality assurance agencies in the region

- to facilitate links between quality assurance agencies and acceptance of each others' decisions and judgements

- to assist members of APQN to determine standards of institutions operating across national borders

- to permit better-informed international recognition of qualifications throughout the region

- to assist in the development and use of credit transfer schemes to enhance the mobility of students between institutions both within and across national borders

- to enable members of APQN to be alert to dubious accrediting practices and organisations

- where appropriate, represent the region and promote the interests of the region, e.g. vis-à-vis other networks and international organisations

Our Values

APQN is:

- committed to high quality higher education

- supportive of quality agencies in the region

- efficient in its operations

- open in its information sharing

Our Methods

APQN achieves its purposes through a range of methods, including:

- dissemination of information through newsletters, documents, journals and books, whether in paper-based or electronic form

- training and development through seminars, workshops and conferences

PHOTOGRAPH BY CLAIRE GRESTY

The Board

Concepcion Pijano
President designate
PHILIPPINES

Akihiko Kawaguchi
Vice-President designate
JAPAN

Dorte Kristoffersen
Secretary/Treasurer
HONG KONG

Zita Mohd Fahmi
MALAYSIA

Jiang Yanqiao
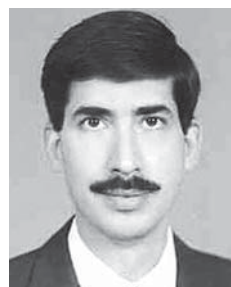CHINA

Nuanthip Kamolvarin
THAILAND

Colin N Peiris
SRI LANKA

Antony Stella
AUSTRALIA

Jagannath Patil
INDIA

Sohail Naqvi
PAKISTAN

Mike Willing
NEW ZEALAND

Board Activity

2005–2007

The Board of 2005–2007 met on 4 February 2007 in Kuala Lumpur Malaysia for its final meeting before the newly elected Board took office. The newly elected Board of 2007–2009 were invited to join in at the end of the final meeting of the Board of 2005–2007 for handover.

2007–2009

The election for the new APQN Board was conducted electronically in December 2006. The newly elected Board took up its term of office at the end of the APQN AGM in Kuala Lumpur Malaysia on 5 February 2007. This Board formally met for the first time at a meeting on 7 February 2007.

Resignation of the APQN President

Mr Peter Cheung of the Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications (HKCAAVQ) resigned from his position as President of APQN. The reason for this was that Ms Dorte Kristoffersen, currently the Secretary and Treasurer of the Network, joined HKCAAVQ in October 2007 as the Deputy Executive Director. An untoward consequence of this was that one of them had to leave the APQN Board; since Article 38 in the APQN Constitution stipulates that 'no two of the elected Board members should be from the same member organisation'.

Restructure of the Board

The resignation of the APQN President necessitated a restructure of the APQN Board due to vacancies arising.

The Constitution does not include a process for a change among the Board office bearers, and there is no requirement for a re-election to the Board. The Board was therefore primarily guided by Article 50 in the Constitution which suggests that 'when an occasional vacancy occurs on the Board, the Board shall make an appointment to fill the vacancy for the remainder of the vacating Board Member's term of office'.

On that basis the Board now has the following composition until the next election in 2009:

- The elected Vice-President, Mrs Concepcion Pijano, of Philippine Accrediting Association of Schools, Colleges and Universities, took over as President

- Dr Aki Kawaguchi, of National Institution for Academic Degrees and University Evaluation, was appointed by the Board as the new Vice-President through a decision reached by electronic ballot

- Professor Colin Peiris, of Quality Assurance and Accreditation Council of Sri Lanka, who was already co-opted to the Board, was appointed as Board member

- Mr Mike Willing, of New Zealand Qualifications Authority, was co-opted to the Board

Updated information about the Board is available on the APQN website at www.apqn.org/about/board/.

assurance practices and systems in developing countries and territories as well as countries in transition by supporting training and knowledge-sharing activities; such activities shall be proposed and undertaken by autonomous regional and international non-profit networks of quality assurance professionals and institutions.' (GIQAC Operational Procedures Manual, January 2008, UNESCO Paris)

The GIQAC is a World Bank initiative to streamline funding distribution to the regional QA Networks. UNESCO and the World Bank will be managing this.

UNESCO Meetings

UNESCO invited an APQN representative to attend the 9th Session of the Regional Convention of Academic Recognition in Seoul, Korea. The APQN Board and Finance Committee approved the Vice-President, Mrs Concepcion Pijano, to represent the Network.

UNESCO invited APQN to attend a meeting on Higher Education and Participatory Development on 2 May 2007. The APQN Board was represented by Dr Nuanthip Kamolvarin who is based in Bangkok, Thailand.

Earlier in 2007 the APQN President was invited to be a keynote speaker at the 11th UNESCO-APEID conference, Reinventing Higher Education: Toward Participatory and Sustainable Development, which was held in Bangkok Thailand from 12–14 December. The Secretary/Treasurer, Ms Dorte Kristoffersen, represented APQN.

PUBLICATIONS

APQN was invited to write an article for the 2007–2008 issue of European Asia-Pacific Business (EAPB), the official annual publication of the European Australian Business Council (EABC). The magazine provides essential information and contacts for businesses operating between the two regions. EAPB distributes to business and government leaders in the European Union and throughout the Asia-Pacific. The official website is at www.europeanasiapacificbusiness.net.

Constitutional Changes

At the APQN AGM on 5 February 2007 held in Kuala Lumpur Malaysia, the Board proposed to the General Council the introduction of a new membership category; that of Institutional Member. The proposal was approved by the General Council and a subsequent formal submission was made to Consumer Affairs Victoria, Department of Justice. This amendment was officially approved on 7 March 2007 and has now been incorporated into the Constitution, version 6.1, on the APQN website at www.apqn.org/virtual_library/.

Meeting of the INQAAHE Board with the Regional Representatives

Toronto, Canada (2 April 2007)

A meeting of the INQAAHE Board and 10 Regional Representatives was held at the Sheraton Hotel in Toronto, Canada. The APQN Board was represented by Ms Concepcion Pijano. Rick Hopper of the World Bank and Stamenka Uvalic-Trumbic of UNESCO were also present to make a presentation of the GIQAC project.

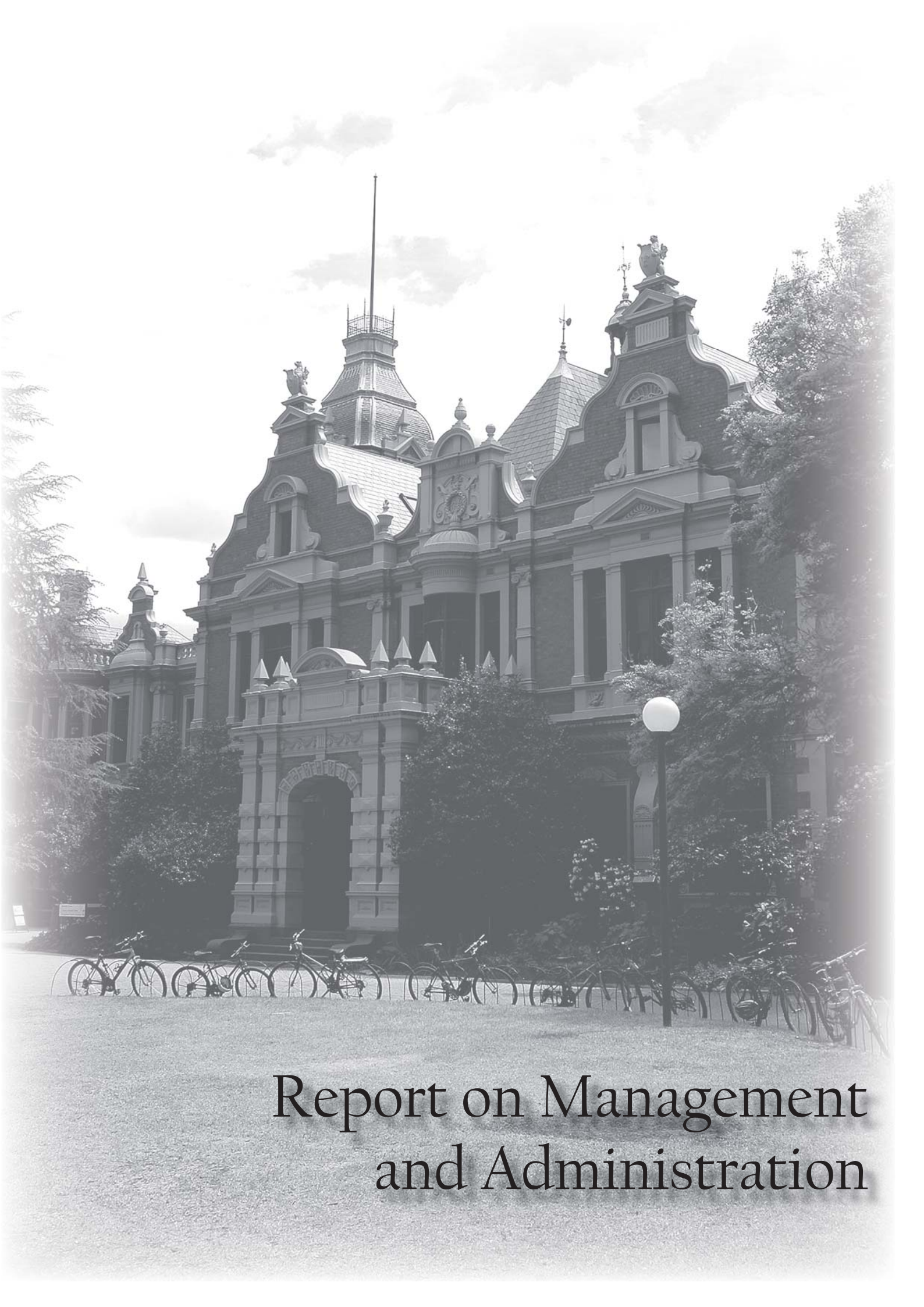The Global Initiative for Quality Assurance Capacity (GIQAC) is a World Bank initiative. GIQAC is a fund established for dissemination through UNESCO to regional and global quality assurance networks. It is intended to 'build capacity and engender robust quality

Report on Management and Administration

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

VICE-PRESIDENT'S REPORT

SECRETARY/TREASURER'S
REPORT

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

MEMBERS – GENERAL COUNCIL

President's Report

The period under review has been a remarkably productive year for APQN. Amidst a major restructuring of its Board, it has continued to thrive, expand its scope of activities, and increase its membership.

Born in Hong Kong in January 2003 and nurtured through contributions of external quality assurance agencies and the development grant facility (DGF) from the World Bank (2004–2007), APQN is now five years old. It has 55 members in various categories representing 27 countries and territories in the Asia-Pacific region, with the newly established institutional membership category totalling eight members. It also has five observers from four countries outside the region.

The highlight of the year's activities was the conference and annual general meeting held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia on the theme, 'Emerging Challenges, Emerging Practices: Sharing a Global Vision of Quality Assurance in Higher Education'. The event drew the largest number of participants in APQN history – 275 participants from 44 countries participated in the conference.

Through the support and generosity of the World Bank, training and knowledge-sharing activities were undertaken in various countries such as Pakistan, Vietnam, Bangladesh, Laos, the Philippines and China. Regional staff exchanges, which provided practical experience to quality assurance professionals across the region, were put in high gear. Delegates from about 20 countries participated in these workshops and staff movement activities. The level of commitment and regional cooperation among external quality assurance agencies continued to flourish.
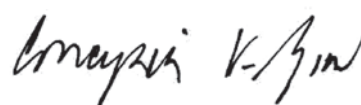
A major activity of the period under review was the UNESCO-International Institute of Educational Planning (IIEP) distance education course on 'External Quality Assurance: Options for Higher Education Managers', which was jointly organised by the IIEP, APQN, and the UNESCO Office in Bangkok. Sixty officials from various ministries and quality assurance agencies across the region, representing 13 different countries, participated in the online training program. The course generated a lot of interest among APQN members and has produced laudable and tangible results. It has also forged stronger links between quality assurance agencies and strengthened their capacity to develop robust quality assurance practices and systems.

It is with some degree of anxiety that APQN welcomes the New Year as the DGF from the World Bank ends. As the year was ending, however, a major breakthrough developed and a window of opportunity opened with the announcement that the World Bank and UNESCO have established a partnership to support a Global Initiative for Quality Assurance Capacity (GIQAC). The GIQAC 'aims to support capacity building in quality assurance in higher education in developing countries and in countries in transition'. As the only association linking all quality assurance bodies in the region, APQN hopes that it will be given the opportunity to access resources from the GIQAC so it can continue to build on its past achievements, and to respond to the needs of a region that contains over half of the world's population.

In 2007, APQN will enter an exciting phase in its history as it learns to fend for itself, even as it strives to support its members, strengthen existing alliances with its current partners both regional and international, and develop new partnerships to ensure a sustainable future. It will remain steadfast in its commitment to enhance the quality of higher education in Asia and the Pacific through strengthening the work of quality assurance agencies and extending the cooperation between them.

Welcome to these exciting times!

Concepcion V. Pijano
President-designate

Vice-President's Report

In recent years APQN has deeply depended on the World Bank development grant facility (DGF) for its activities. Income for 2006–07 from various sources, including the DGF, membership fees and interest, and income from project work, totalled about USD395K.

In October 2007, at the time when President Peter Cheung resigned from the position and Concepcion Pijano, the then Vice-President became the President, I was appointed Vice-President by the Board. As such, I am relatively new to this role.

In my time as Vice-President designate I have carried out another important task for APQN as Chair of the Local Planning Committee (LPC) for the 2008 APQN Conference and AGM. The Conference, with the theme, 'Future of Quality Assurance in Asia Pacific – Cooperation amidst Diversity', will be held in Japan in February 2008.

Project Groups

In my capacity as Vice-President I am also responsible for Project Groups. Project Groups (PGs) are created by the Board as a mechanism through which matters of common interest to APQN members are addressed. PGs should identify common areas of interest among APQN members and facilitate work on these areas with shared responsibilities from various agencies across the region. Until recently, APQN could provide seed money for a project not exceeding

USD2,500. This has now been reduced to USD1,000 per project.

Finance Committee

APQN has a Finance Committee with representation of APQN. Presently the Finance Committee consists of myself as Chair, and Concepcion Pijano, Dorte Kristoffersen, Colin Peiris and John Jennings as members.

The terms of reference of the Committee are to:

- advise the Board on financial and risk-related matters
- review the end of year accounts
- recommend a budget for the subsequent year to the Board for approval
- propose to the Board of APQN criteria for provision of grants and other financial support
- develop a funding manual which includes matters relating to the DGF and its relationship to APQN
- set out APQN policies and priorities for funding
- consider applications from members for grants and other financial support in the light of the criteria established by the Board

Six Finance Committee meetings were held within the reporting period of this Annual Report.

Akihiko Kawaguchi

Dr Akihiko Kawaguchi
Vice-President designate
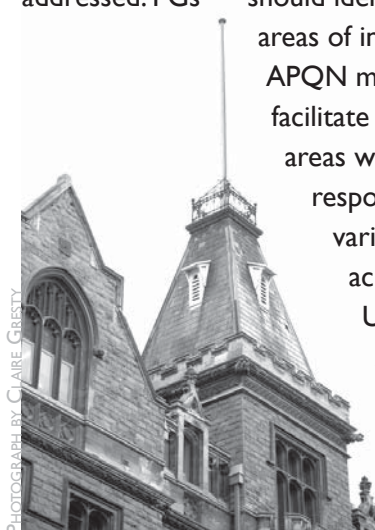
Secretary/Treasurer's Report

It is with both pride and trepidation that I am addressing you as Secretary/ Treasurer of APQN at the end of 2007 and APQN's three year anniversary of being a legally incorporated association.

The image of a child has often been used about APQN in the past and there is no doubt that APQN is no longer a baby, but a strong and well-nourished person, which has been able to live up to its objectives at large.

Due to the commitments and efforts of our members, APQN has hosted and provided help for capacity building through training, workshops and secondment.

We have developed a number of resources such as an online discussion forum which builds on a very successful online course run in cooperation with IIEP. More resources are underway through project groups and reports, such as the recently published report entitled *Qualification Frameworks in the Asia-Pacific Region*.

I hope that the existence of APQN and the structure for sharing of information that it represents, together with the specific activities, offers sustainable structures for knowledge that will allow us to continue as an active network in the future.

This is where the anticipation comes into play. The World Bank development grant facility (DGF), which was the seed money that APQN has been fortunate enough to receive since the 4th quarter of 2004, came to an end on 31 December 2007. Let me take this opportunity to thank the World Bank for its support in this crucial start phase. This is now the real test for APQN. The relations among members, the services offered by the Network and the structures for compilation and sharing of knowledge need to prove our strength. The Board will continue its

efforts to improve the services of the Network, and thus strengthen our platform for quality QA in the region. I am delighted by APQN's possible role in participating in the regional QA discussion by various stakeholders, such as the Brisbane Communiqué initiative and UNESCO.

There is no APQN without members, and one of the biggest achievements in the past year is the increase in membership and the addition of institutional membership. The Board will focus on improving the services of the Network for the benefit of all members.

Thank you for your support in the past and let me emphasise that we need to continue to work as a team to sustain the value of APQN.

I look forward to our continued cooperation.

Ms Dorte Kristoffersen
Secretary-Treasurer

The Secretariat

PREPARATION FOR THE EXTERNAL EVALUATION

The Secretariat has prepared the Terms of Reference (ToR) for the external evaluation of APQN. The ToR were approved by the Board before being sent to the World Bank for approval. Following approvals they were submitted for tender to three external evaluation agencies. Bateman Giles Pty Ltd was selected to be responsible for the evaluation.

FINANCIAL TRANSITION

On 1 October 2006 APQN saw the official financial transition of all its accounting functions from the Center for Quality Assurance in International Education (CQAIE) to the APQN Secretariat.

TRAVEL CONSULTANCY

From the inception of the Network until the end of March 2007, APQN utilised the services of Outer Cape Travel Agency Inc. in Wellfleet MA, USA. Outer Cape Travel managed all itineraries for eligible members to attend events around the region. Notification was served on 20 March 2007 stating that Outer Cape Travel would cease its operations—and therefore service to APQN—within two weeks.

The Secretariat was faced with a new challenge; interviewing potential corporate travel consultants. Four companies were approached to submit a proposal, and subsequent interviews occurred. The APQN Secretariat chose Executive Travel Management (Geelong, Victoria) to manage its travel account. They have extensive reporting capability and solid customer service. To date the service from Executive Travel Management has been exceptional.
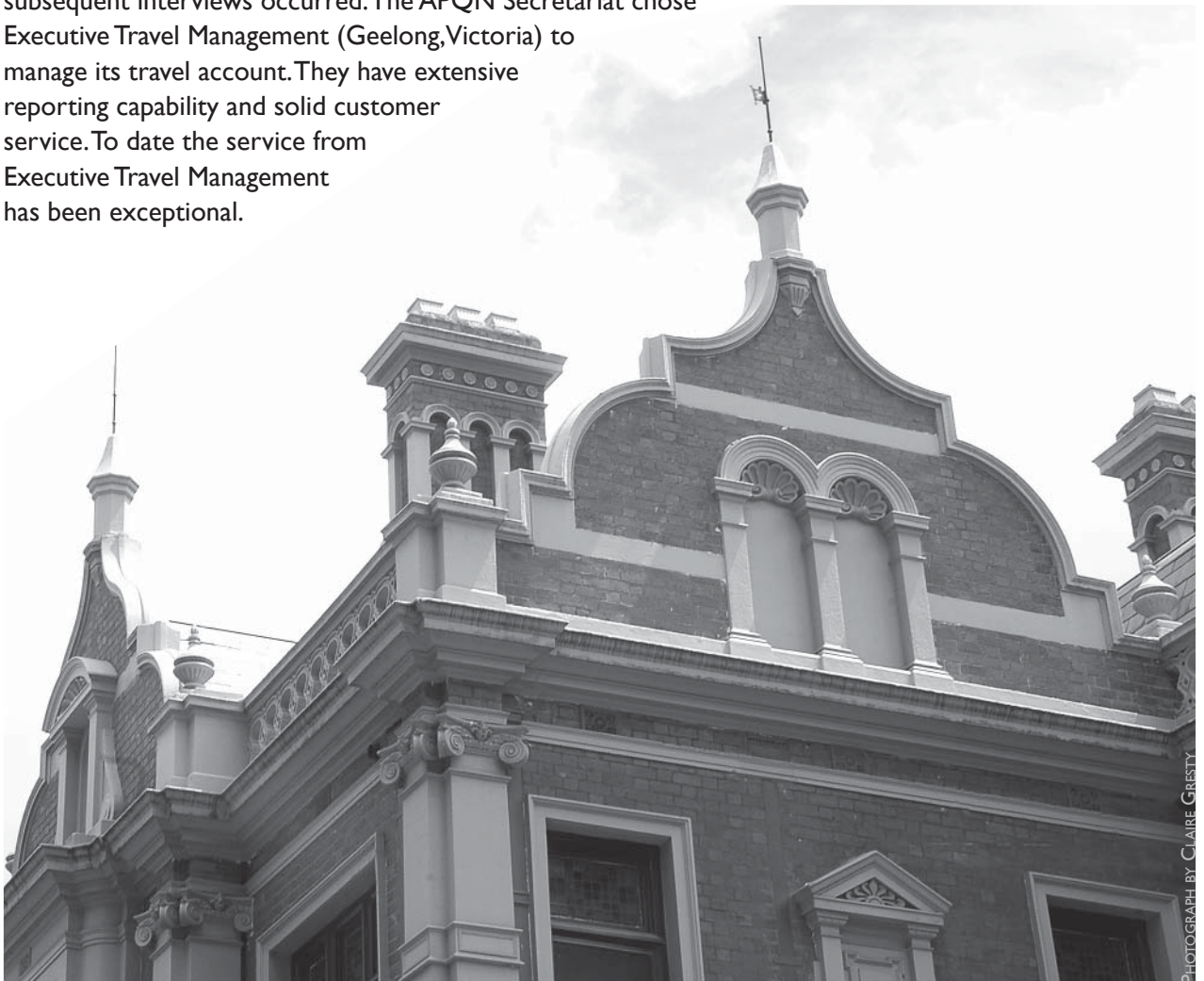
PHOTOGRAPH BY CLAIRE GRESTY

Website

WEB STATISTICS

Web statistic reports are compiled by the APQN Secretariat on a monthly basis. Some of the major findings from the web statistics reports include:

- remarkable interest in presentations from past events
- steady interest to the non-APQN events database
- steady increase in mailing list subscribers

MAILING LIST

Great effort has been channelled into expanding the APQN mailing list. Utilising the mailing list function as a tool has increased regional and global awareness of the Network and its activities. By broadening our reach we aim to promote the Network within the region and beyond. Our members, and the quality assurance community at large, benefit from the informative updates periodically issued through this media. The Network itself benefits through establishing additional contacts in countries where we previously didn't have any contacts. Emails are often received from subscribers with

expressions of gratitude and thanks for keeping them informed of current events and activities. To register on the mailing list go to www.apqn.org/tools/mailing_list/.

PUBLICATIONS

APQN is constantly expanding its Virtual Library. Some of the most recent additions to the library include:

- SEAAIR Electronic Newsletter
  www.apqn.org/virtual_library/newsletters/
- APQN Annual Report 2005–2006
  www.apqn.org/virtual_library/reports/
- Good Practices for Accreditation Councils in Pakistan
- Quality Assurance in Higher Education: A Shifting Paradigm
  www.apqn.org/virtual_library/articles/
- Understanding Quality Assurance Frameworks in the Asia-Pacific Region: Indicators of Quality
  www.apqn.org/project_groups/reports/
- Bonn Declaration on Regional Cooperation in Quality Assurance in Higher Education
  www.apqn.org/virtual_library/reports/

A link to the event presentations was also added to the Virtual Library and www.apqn.org/virtual_library/presentations/.

Organisational Structure

General Council

President — Vice-President — Secretary/Treasurer — Four elected members — Up to four co-opted members

APQN Board

Project Group Leaders

Committee Chairs

APQN Administrator

Project Group Members and Observers

Committee Members
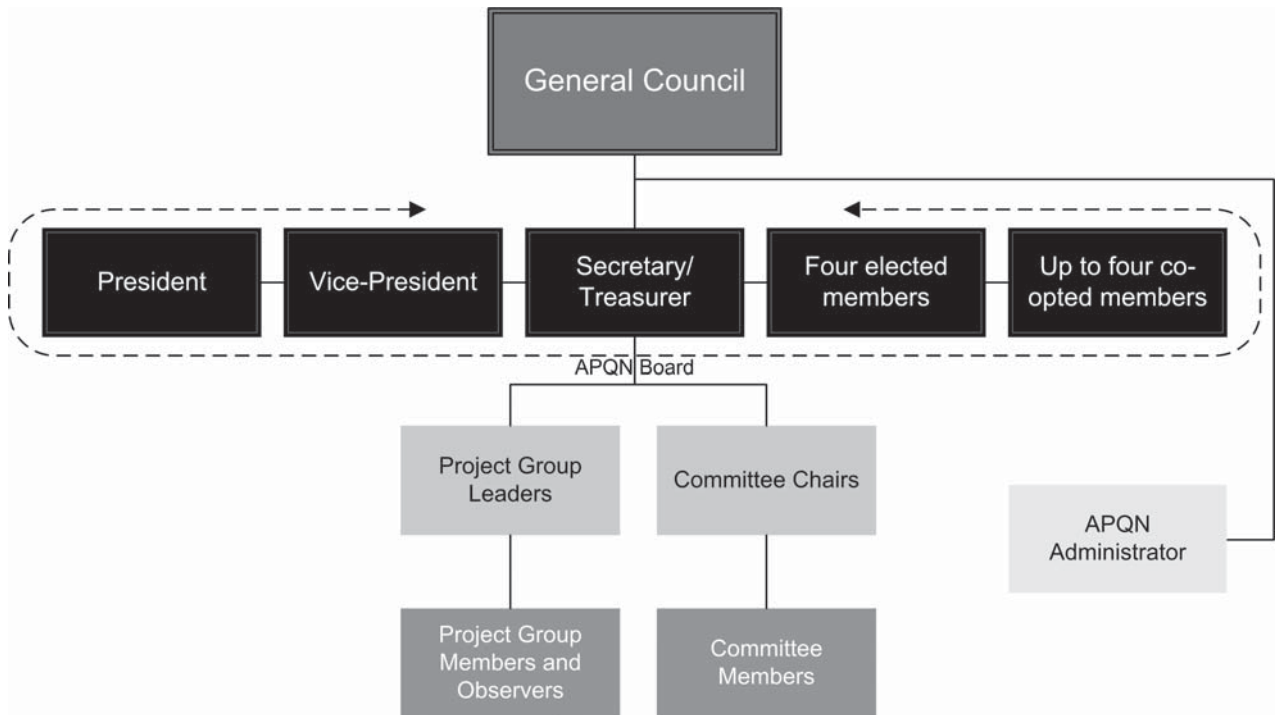
Members - General Council

The application and review process for approving a new member into the Network is quite rigorous, resulting in APQN's membership growing slowly.

The inclusion of Institutional Member in the APQN Constitution earlier in 2007 has broadened the scope of APQN to increase membership. Over the past 15 months APQN has averaged approximately 2.16 new members per month.

One of APQN's main objectives is to promote good practice in the maintenance and improvement of quality in higher education in the Asia-Pacific. The network now brings together the main constituencies with an interest in quality assurance.

APQN has carefully constructed membership criteria for the different levels of membership. The criteria are available at www.apqn.org/membership/criteria/, and the online application form is available at www.apqn.org/membership/application/. When an interested party initiates an application, a PIN code will be issued so the applicant can continuously work on the application by accessing the application in progress through the 'Edit Existing Application' log in.

The fee structure for membership to APQN is USD$200–300 per year depending on membership category, with an additional joining fee of USD$500.

Potential members with queries about the Network, the fees or the application process, can contact the APQN Administrator, Liesha Northover (apqn@auqa.edu.au).

PHOTOGRAPH BY CLAIRE GRESTY

APQN now boasts:

- ◆ 23 Full members
- ◆ 9 Intermediate members
- ◆ 15 Associate members
- ◆ 8 Institutional members
- ◆ 5 Observers

This brings the total number of members across all categories to 60. Twenty-six of those members were approved into the Network during this reporting period, 1 October 2006 to 31 December 2007.

The 26 new members are shown in the following table:

Country	Member level	Agency
Australia	Associate	Australian Qualifications Framework Advisory Board
Australia	Full	National ELT Accreditation Scheme Ltd
Australia	Full	Queensland Office of Higher Education
Bangladesh	Associate	University Grants Commission
Bhutan	Associate	Royal University of Bhutan
China	Full	Yunnan Higher Education Evaluation Office
Ethiopia	Observer	St Mary's University College
Fiji	Associate	University of the South Pacific
Germany	Observer	ASIIN e.V.
Hong Kong	Institutional	The Hong Kong Institute of Education
Kazakhstan	Intermediate	National Accreditation Centre of Kazakhstan
Nepal	Intermediate	University Grants Commission
New Zealand	Full	ITP Quality
Macau	Institutional	Macau University of Science and Technology
Mongolia	Associate	University of the Humanities
Pakistan	Institutional	University of Karachi
Pakistan	Institutional	University of Management and Technology
Pakistan	Institutional	Allama Iqbal Open University
Pakistan	Institutional	NWFP Agricultural University
Pakistan	Institutional	Institute of Quality and Technology Management
Pakistan	Institutional	National University of Sciences and Technology
Russia	Full	Agency for Higher Education Quality Assurance and Career Development
Taiwan	Full	Higher Education Evaluation and Accreditation Council of Taiwan
Turkey	Observer	Dokuz Eylul University
United Kingdom	Observer	Improving Dispute Resolution
Vietnam	Associate	Centre for Educational Evaluation and Accreditation

WE WELCOME YOU TO APQN!

Report on Activities

EVENTS

STAFF MOVEMENT

DATABASE OF CONSULTANTS
AND REVIEWERS

PROJECTS

PROJECT GROUPS

FUTURE EVENTS

Pakistan

First International Conference on Assessing Quality in Higher Education (ICAQHE) 2006: Prosperity through Quality Education

Lahore (11–13 December 2006)

Following discussions of the Quality Assurance Committee of the Higher Education Commission (HEC) of Pakistan, a series of conferences were proposed to be held every two years on the subject of Quality in Higher Education. This first conference was sponsored by HEC, APQN and UNESCO, and was organised by the Institute of Quality & Technology Management, University of the Punjab, and University of Management and Technology, Lahore.

The objectives of the conference were:

- to gain knowledge on current issues of quality in higher education worldwide
- to interact with leading authorities and practitioners of quality assurance and assessment in higher education
- learning processes for enhancement of higher education in developing countries

Thirty-six papers were chosen for presentation in the conference. Seventeen of those were from international speakers from Australia, USA, Jordan, Iran, Chile, Switzerland, Germany, India, Sri Lanka, UK, UAE and Canada. Foreign delegates included participants from Samoa, Thailand, Malaysia, Japan and Vietnam.

Honorable Governor of Punjab Lt. Gen. (Retd) Khalid Maqbool was the chief guest at the opening ceremony. He expressed the government's commitment to improving the quality of higher education provided and to align it with the internationally recognised standards. He stressed the need for developing close liaison between universities, the government and the public. He also stressed the need to adopt modern teaching techniques and revision of syllabi along those lines. The government of President Pervez Musharraf has taken several steps to improve the higher education sector, and universities have been set up in both the public and private sectors to supplement the efforts of the government in promoting higher education.

At the end of the conference, the participants approved recommendations at a global level, institutional level, and individual level. The global level recommendations consisted of developing international benchmarking, standardising performance indicators, recognition of gratification and improving academic governance of universities. At an institutional level it was recommended that further investigation into specific areas be carried out—such as quality assurance mechanisms, enhanced involvement of all stakeholders in quality assurance, personal and professional development, research and evaluation, graduation rate, dropout rate, employment rate, developing mechanisms for introducing the culture of quality in teaching and research, identifying outcomes, developing mechanisms for collaborative research links, and developing best practices and innovation.

More information pertaining to this event is available at www.apqn.org/events/past/details/?id=103. Furthermore, the measureable results from the APQN feedback questionnaires are available at the end of this section. There were seven sponsored participants/speakers at this event and three forms were returned.

Malaysia

Emerging Challenges, Emerging Practices: Sharing a Global Vision of Quality Assurance in Higher Education (Conference and AGM)

Kuala Lumpur (4–7 February 2007)

Forty-four countries from around the world were represented with a total of 275 participants at this conference, making it the largest conference in APQN's personal history.

Based on the above findings of a A comprehensive evaluation of this event foudn the following:

- respondents generally felt that the conference had been well organised

- the content of the conference was good and relevant

- the overall evaluation of the conference was positive, with many of participants offering compliments such as: the conference was good, informative, enlightening and even excellent

- two main things about the conference that could have been improved were conference scheduling/programming and time management during sessions

Several recommendations were then made based on teh feedback from participants.

More information pertaining to this event is available at www.apqn.org/events/past/details/?id=102. Lembaga Akreditasi Negara (National Accreditation Board), or LAN, now Malaysian Qualifications Authority (MQA), compiled a very comprehensive report that is available upon request. Furthermore, the measurable results from the APQN feedback questionnaires are available at the end of this section. There were 26 sponsored participants at this event and nine forms were returned.

Vietnam

Internal Quality Assurance: Key Factors for Ensuring and Enhancing Quality in Higher Education Institutions

Ho Chi Minh City (12–13 March 2007)

The two-day Workshop was organised and hosted by the Centre for Educational Testing and Quality Assessment of Vietnam National University – Ho Chi Minh City (VNU-HCM), under the leadership of Deputy Director of the Centre, Dr Vu Thi Phuong Anh. The facilitators were Dr AJ (Ton) Vroeijenstijn, a consultant and quality assurance expert based in the Netherlands, and Dr Jeanette Baird, Audit Director at the Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA). Vietnamese quality assurance experts and some international participants provided valuable assistance and input. Professor Tran Van Nghia and Dr Pham Xuan Thanh of the General Department of Education Testing and Accreditation (GDETA) of MOET also participated actively, which was helpful in discussion of current quality assurance (QA) issues for Vietnamese universities.

The Workshop was designed to achieve several overlapping but distinct aims. The principal aim was to ensure participants become familiar with the ASEAN University Network (AUN) QA criteria, as expressed in the Manual on the AUN QA Guidelines prepared by Ton Vroeijenstijn, to be able to use the Manual in developing their IQA systems and seeking AUN-QA recognition. A secondary purpose was to discuss the development of internal quality assurance (IQA) systems within Vietnamese (and possibly other) universities.

Specific purposes of the workshop were to:

- ◆ enhance awareness of the importance of the role and development of Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) in Higher Education

- ◆ create a forum to discuss issues related to Quality Assessment and Accreditation following AUN criteria

- ◆ build up a regional and sustainable network in QA for most of the faculties of VNU-HCM member universities and other QA agencies in Vietnam

- ◆ formulate an action plan for VNU-HCM member universities to participate in accrediting and achieving the AUN-QA label according to the AUN criteria in the near future

Expected outcomes of the workshop were:

- ◆ improved knowledge about IQA systems and how to write a good self-assessment report following the AUN criteria

- ◆ faculties of VNU-HCM member universities formulate a plan to enhance the IQA system

More information pertaining to this event is available at www.apqn.org/events/past/details/?id=174. Furthermore, the measurable results from the APQN feedback questionnaires can be found at the end of this section. There were eight sponsored participants at this event and seven forms were returned.

Bangladesh

Development of Measurements for Higher Education Quality Assurance

Dhaka (30–31 May 2007)

This workshop was hosted by the American International University – Bangladesh (AIU-B), in collaboration with the University Grants Commission and with sponsorship from APQN. The two trainers were Prof. Colin Peiris of Quality Assurance and Accreditation Council (QAAC), Sri Lanka, and Mrs Concepcion Pijano of Philippine Accrediting Association of Schools, Colleges and Universities (PAASCU).

The rationale for conducting this workshop was:

- quality assurance is fundamental and *sine qua non* in the pursuit of quality in higher education

- the need for a common understanding and better appreciation of the concept and application of parameters, standards or indicators as a measure and the basis for defining quality within the national and regional contexts

- providing inputs and an appropriate venue in sharing ideas, experiences and frameworks that can be adopted to meet the requirements of the country in evolving quality assurance in higher education institutions

- designing a common framework, mechanism and structures based on local and international experience complementary to the needs of higher education institutions in Bangladesh in particular, and the South Asia region in general

- responding to the challenge of global competitiveness and rapid technological changes

- emerging strong public perceptions, high expectations and demands for quality

The statement of purpose for the workshop was to:
- define clearly a set of essential parameters that can be used in the regional and national contexts and at the institutional level

- discuss comprehensively the intent, nature and scope, dimensions and mode of application of quality assurance from various perspectives

- exchange ideas, information and experiences necessary to develop the framework and mechanisms of quality assurance

- propose a model for quality assurance such as accreditation of academic programs

- enhance institutional capacities in program monitoring and evaluation for quality assurance applying standard parameters or benchmarks

More information pertaining to this event is available at www.apqn.org/events/past/details/?id=179. Furthermore, the measureable results from the APQN

PHOTOGRAPH SUPPLIED BY AIU–BANGLADESH

feedback questionnaires are available at the end of this section. There were ten sponsored participants at this event and eight forms were returned. An additional four self-sponsored delegates from Pakistan attended the event.
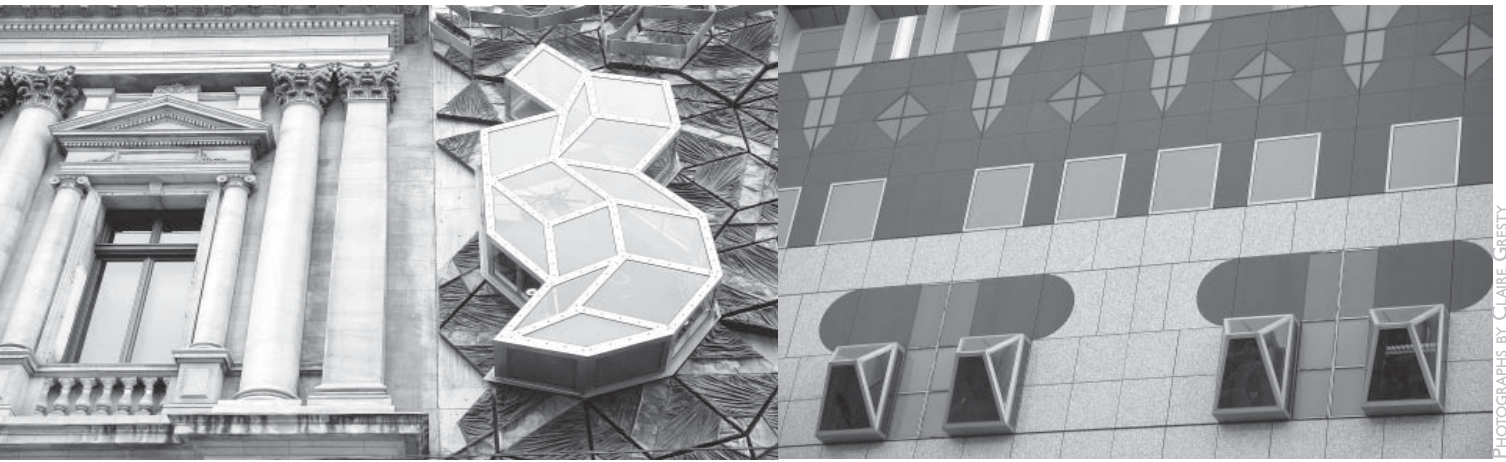
China

Round Table Meeting

Shanghai (29 May 2007)

At the Board meeting on 7 February 2007, Mr Peter Cheung and Dr Jiang Yanqiao agreed to work towards improving connections with China. A round table discussion, that the Shanghai Educational Evaluation Institute (SEEI) held at their own expense earlier in 2007, was conducted as an attempt to increase the number of Chinese members.

As a result of this meeting taking place, a workshop was proposed to focus on regional QA agencies in China (see below). An introductory document including information about APQN and how to become a member was also produced in the Chinese language. China is an area with potential for recruitment of far more members. The workshop was an important element in that strategy.

Quality Enhancement: Theory of External Quality Assurance and its Practice in China

Kunming (7–9 November 2007)

The workshop on Quality Enhancement: Theory of External Quality Assurance and its Practice in China was held in Kunming, Yunnan province in China. This workshop was jointly sponsored and organised by Asia-Pacific Quality Network (APQN), Shanghai Education Evaluation Institute (SEEI), and Yunnan Higher Education Evaluation Center (YHEEC). Except for two foreign experts, there were 45 participants from external quality assurance agencies and higher education institutions from throughout China.

The objectives of the workshop were to:

- promote communication and cooperation among the quality assurance agencies in China

- strengthen capacity building for the quality assurance agencies

- increase mutual understanding between the Chinese Ministry of Education and the quality assurance agencies

- engage more quality assurance agencies in China to join the APQN family

During the three-day workshop, seven scholars gave keynote speeches, including Mrs Concepcion V. Pijano, APQN President, Mr Peter Cheung, Executive Director of the Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications, Dr Tony Davies, New Zealand Education Attaché to the Gulf States, Dr Jiang Yanqiao, Executive President of Shanghai Education Evaluation Institute.

Mr Zhu Hongtao, Director of the Evaluation Department of Higher Education Office of the Chinese Ministry of Education, Mr Lin Mengquan, Director of the Evaluation Department of China Academic Degrees and Graduate Education Development Center, and Mr Li Yadong, Deputy President of Shanghai Education Evaluation Institute, presented their special reports.

Following animated discussions and active interaction, nine common themes emerged:

1. Educational quality assurance is a kind of systematic science that needs further study and practice.

2. It is urgent to establish a comprehensive quality assurance agency at the national level, and much more attention should be paid to building the national qualification framework.

3. For the external quality assurance system, the key players are not only the external quality assurance agencies, but also the national and local governments, the professional associations and society.

4. Internal quality assurance is the key of educational quality enhancement, and the culture of continuous improvement of higher education institutions (HEIs) should be supported.

5. Capacity building is necessary for the quality assurance agencies in China.

6. The ultimate goal is to establish an educational quality assurance system with Chinese characteristics, and the international perspectives should be combined with the local context.

7. As the largest education receiving country in the world, China has to establish and strengthen the quality assurance and regulation system for cross-border education as soon as possible.

8. Proper attitude and commitment to the cause of quality assurance will augur well and direct future achievements.

9. Quality assurance needs the integrated and cohesive efforts of the governments, higher education institutions and the quality assurance agencies.

During the workshop, three agencies, including Higher Education Evaluation Center of Yunnan Province, Education Evaluation Institute of Liaoning Province, Education Development Research and Evaluation Center of Guangdong Province expressed willingness to apply for membership of APQN. It was agreed that the next workshop would be hosted by Education Development Research and Evaluation Center of Guangdong Province in Guangzhou in 2008.

After the workshop, evaluation questionnaires were distributed by the host and 30 were returned. The collected questionnaires show that all participants were highly satisfied with this workshop, although 30% of the participants wanted more time for interaction and communication. This will be addressed in future workshops.

Philippines

Training Workshop for Accreditors
Manila (28–29 November 2007)

The International Training Workshop for Accreditors was conducted in Manila, Philippines on 28–29 November 2007. This training not only responded to the expressed needs of the course participants but also made concrete the vision and mission of APQN, which is 'to enhance the quality of higher education in Asia and the Pacific region through strengthening the work of quality assurance agencies and extending the cooperation between them'.

The overall objectives of the training workshop were to:

- orient the participants with the processes and procedures to be followed during a survey visit;

- give the participants an overview of the work and responsibility of the Visiting Team, including hands-on experience in accreditation work;

- enable the trainees to understand the PAASCU process of training accreditors and learn to replicate or adapt it in their respective countries and within their own local contexts;

- gain a better understanding of how the accrediting agencies operate on a day-to-day basis and discover some best practices being done in the country

- contribute to the capacity building efforts of quality assurance agencies in the Asia-Pacific region

Based on the evaluation and feedback from the participants, the training workshop in Manila was successful in achieving its objectives. It is hoped that the training workshop provided not only an avenue

for participants to draw from and share lessons on 'best practices' in quality assurance systems, but more importantly in contributing to their own capacity building efforts. This will pave the way for more robust quality assurance practices and systems in countries across the region.

More information pertaining to this event is available at www.apqn.org/events/past/details/?id=217. Furthermore, the measureable results from the APQN feedback questionnaires are available at the end of this section. There were eight sponsored participants at this event and all eight forms were returned.

1. Reforming the national education system.

2. Resolving the quality and the promotion of the equitable access

3. Solving teachers and administrators' problems

4. The construction and expansion the technical and vocational institutions and training centers by following the implementation of the three educational programmes:

> (i) equitable access
> (ii) quality and relevance
> (iii) administration and management

Lao PDR

Workshop on Quality Assurance

Vientiene (11–13 December 2007)

Following a study visit of Australia and New Zealand supported by APQN, the Ministry of Education requested support from APQN to organise a Workshop in Lao PDR. The Lao Ministry of Education in collaboration with the Asia Pacific Quality Network held the workshop on Quality Assurance at Don Chan Palace in Vientiane, Lao PDR.

This workshop was seen as a capacity building process, and also as a forum to exchange information and ideas between specialists in the region. It provided participants with opportunities to discuss qualifications frameworks and quality assurance agencies.

APQN sponsored delegates at a workshop in Manila, Philippines

Quality assurance for all education levels is crucial for improving the quality and relevance of education. The Ministry of Education is committed to implementing the four priority projects of the government, namely:

Some emerging issues that need to be addressed are the recognition of academic qualification in the context of the changing environment of education at all levels, such as e-education, transnational higher education, virtual universities, corporate universities, etc.

The main objectives of the workshop were to:

- disseminate the experiences and lessons learnt from the study visit to Australia and New Zealand

- share the experiences and lessons learnt from the region on the establishment of a quality assurance agency, the development of a qualifications framework, educational standards and the process of accreditation, educational testing, assessment and quality audit

- discuss the establishment of an adequate quality assurance agency based on the experiences and lessons learnt from the region in terms of structure and the mechanism of management

At the invitation of the Department of Higher, Technical and Vocational Education, invited speakers came from Cambodia, Malaysia, Philippines, Hong Kong, Thailand and Vietnam, as well as other international organisations such as UNESCO, SEAMEO RIHED.

A total of 60 Laotian participants came from the Ministry of Education, Line Ministries, Universities, Vocational Education Development Centers and Colleges, the Research Institute for Educational Science, and other stakeholders from public and private sectors.

Outcomes of the workshop include:

1. The need to urgently establish a quality assurance agency, including the clear formulation of the role, mandate, tasks and functions of this new agency. Lao PDR is an ASEAN member and is prepared to enter the Asean Free Trade Area by the year 2008.

2. Further support may be requested from APQN to prepare for the establishment and functioning of a QA agency in Lao PDR to promote the exchange of expertise and to strengthen the capacity building in Lao PDR.

3. In the connection with the educational reform and the reorganisation of the department structure of the Ministry of Education, there were some suggestions to convene a meeting to discuss the role and mandate of a new quality assurance agency in order to avoid the duplication with other departments and institutions concerned.

Fiji

Quality Audit Workshop

Suva (14–15 December 2007)

The Quality Audit Workshop was held in mid-December 2007 with 36 participants from the University of the South Pacific (USP). USP is the APQN member in Fiji. Ms Miriam Weisz from RMIT in Melbourne Australia was responsible for the workshop.

The objectives of the workshop were to:

- outline the principles of a quality management system and the roles of quality facilitators in that regard

- identify the major gaps in USP's existing systems and discuss possible strategies to effectively address these

- discuss planning, implementation and evaluation of internal review/auditing processes as well as monitoring outcomes from reviews

- enable faculty quality facilitators to write in-house quality management manuals and to plan and implement their own annual quality cycles effectively

The participants were given an overview of a typical audit process with an emphasis on the AUQA audit process, including the audit visit, and most importantly the development of an implementation plan in response to the audit report and the continuous follow-up required in that regard. Discussions in small groups focused on the types of questions that could arise during an audit and how to prepare appropriate evidence to support the university's self evaluation.

As a follow up to these discussions role plays to simulate an audit visit with the point of departure in a Performance Portfolio (self-evaluation report) were conducted. Areas that were unclear, a challenge, or needed further evidence, were then collated, and an action plan was developed to follow up on findings from the preceding session.

The workshop also allowed participants to develop an action plan for the next two months related to their upcoming audit and to identify what the various groups across the university would have to do, the expected outcomes, the timeframes and responsibilities.

The participants' feedback was very positive and it was highlighted that the value of the workshop was that it was directly related to work current going on in USP.
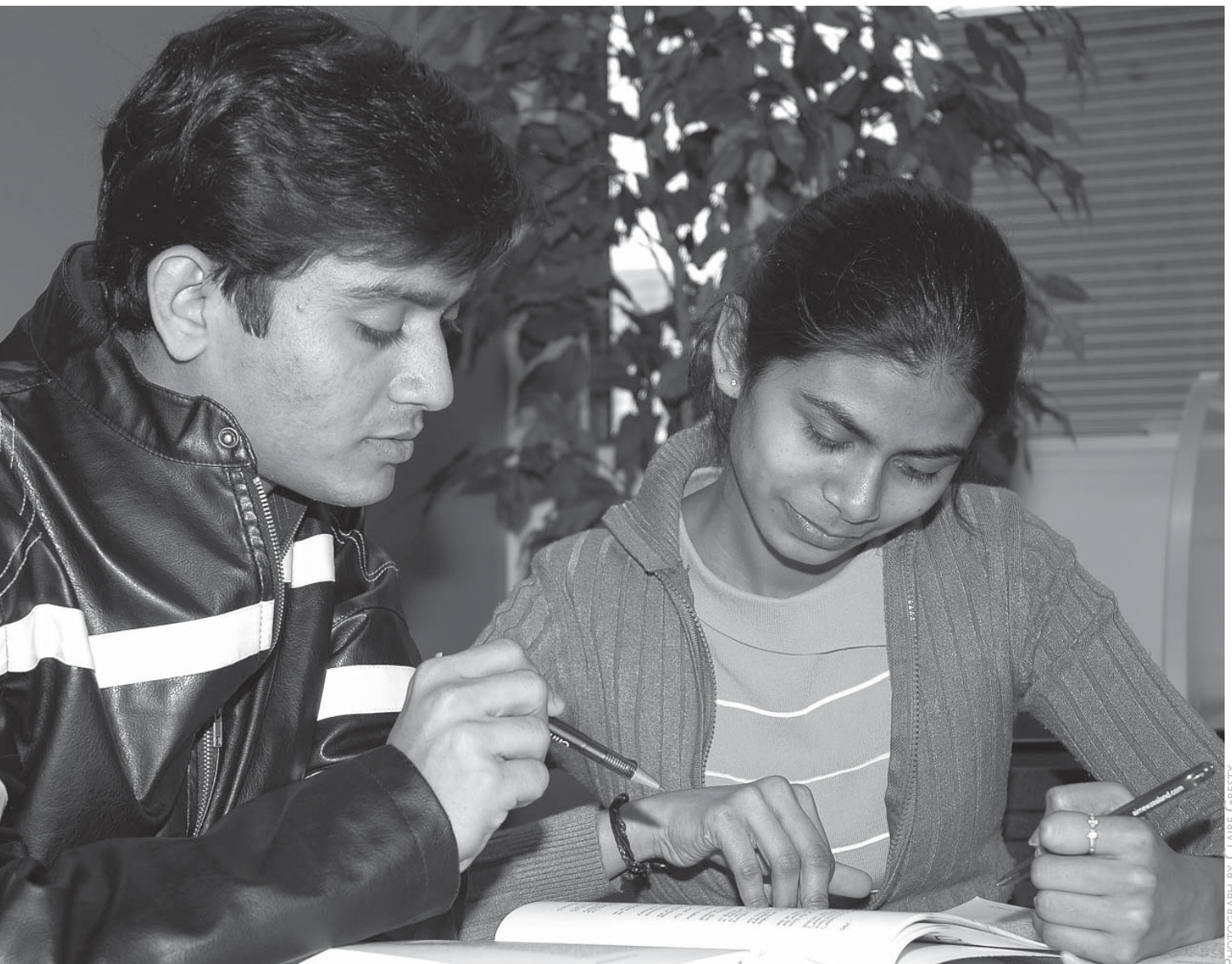
The following tables illustrate feedback from questionnaires completed by sponsored participants at events supported by APQN and hosted by member agencies. The figures do not include the support extended to the trainers at those events, nor do they include feedback from local participants.

How would you rate the service provided by the Secretariat prior to attending this event?

	Bangladesh	Malaysia	Pakistan	Philippines	Vietnam
■ Excellent	8	8	2	8	6
▨ Good	0	1	1	0	0
□ Fair	0	0	0	0	0
▨ Average	0	0	0	0	1
□ Poor	0	0	0	0	0

Country
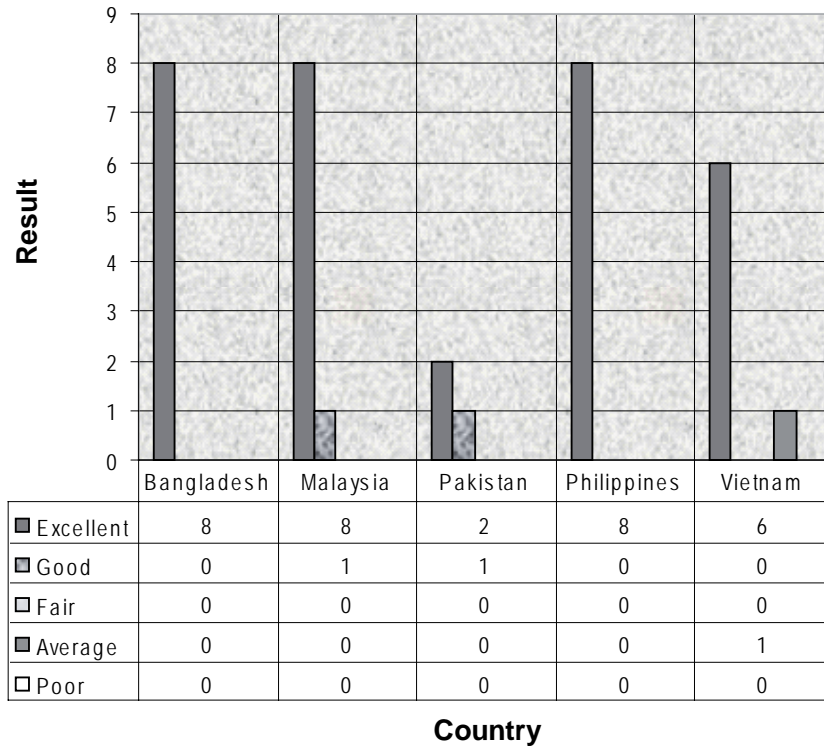
How would you rate the service provided by the host agency while attending this event?

	Bangladesh	Malaysia	Pakistan	Philippines	Vietnam
■ Excellent	7	7	2	8	4
▨ Good	1	2	1	0	2
□ Fair	0	0	0	0	1
▨ Average	0	0	0	0	0
□ Poor	0	0	0	0	0

Country
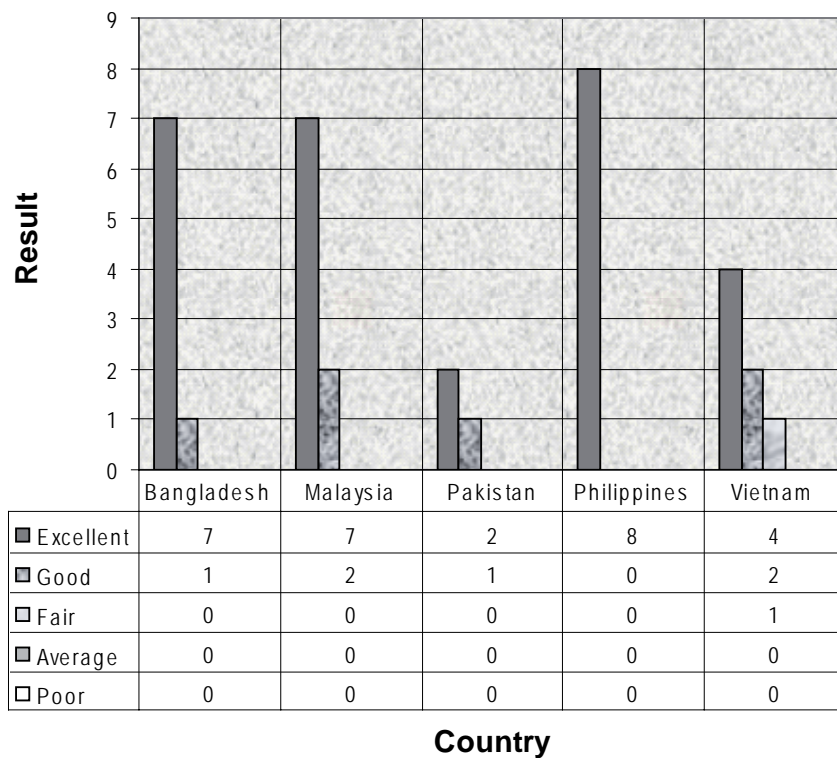
How would you rate the service provided by the workshop trainers over the duration of this event?

	Bangladesh	Malaysia	Pakistan	Philippines	Vietnam
■ Excellent	7	5	1	8	6
■ Good	1	3	2	0	2
☐ Fair	0	0	0	0	0
■ Average	0	0	0	0	0
☐ Poor	0	0	0	0	0

Country
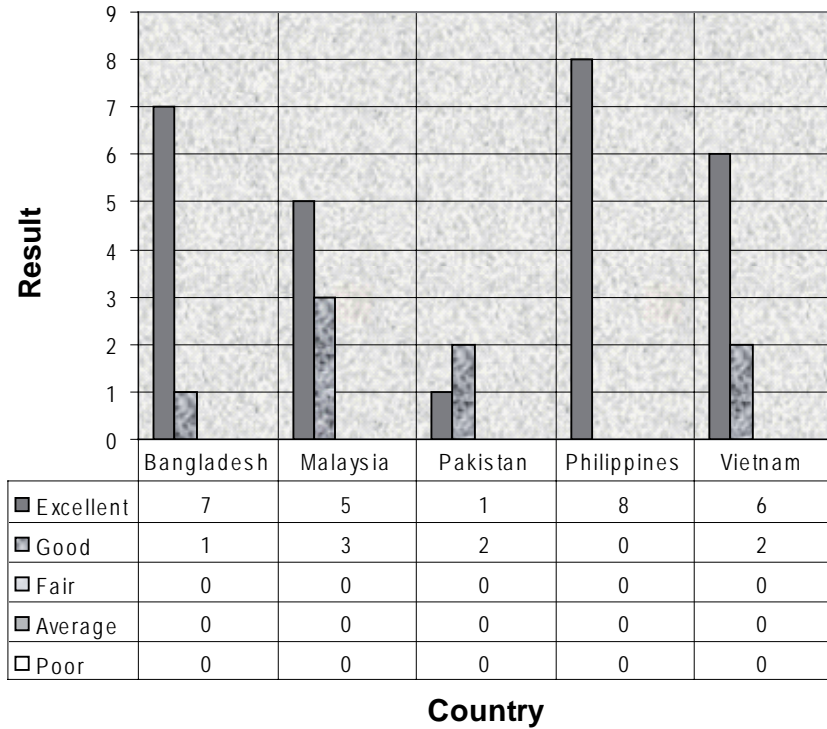
How would you rate the usefulness of the infomration provided over the duration of this event?

	Bangladesh	Malaysia	Pakistan	Philippines	Vietnam
■ Excellent	4	7	2	6	4
■ Good	4	2	1	2	3
☐ Fair	0	0	0	0	0
■ Average	0	0	0	0	0
☐ Poor	0	0	0	0	0

Country
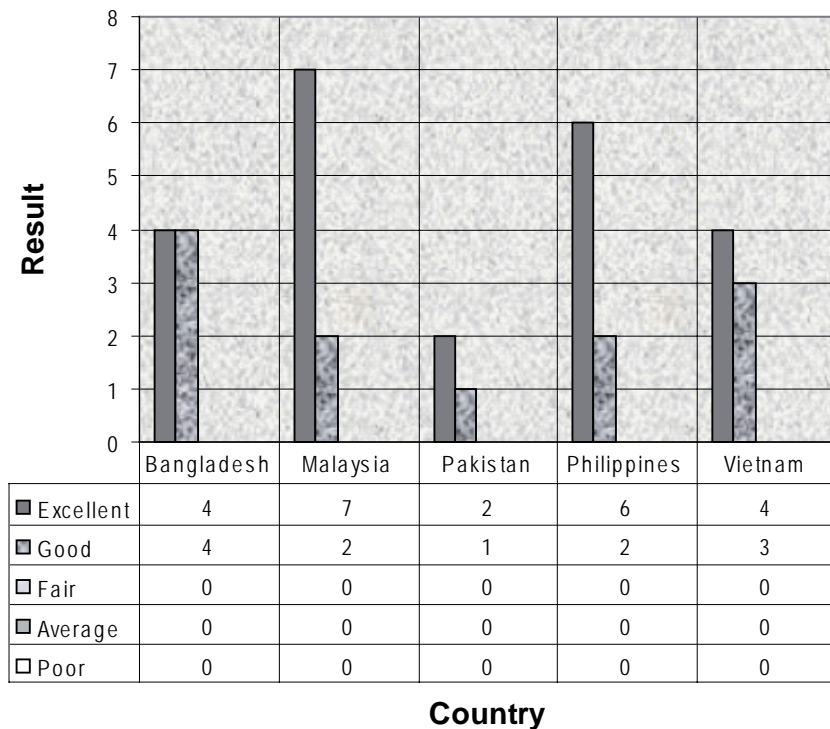
Staff Movement

APQN has facilitated three agency-supported staff movement activities, three APQN-sponsored staff movement activities, and six partially-sponsored staff movement activities during this reporting period.

AGENCY SPONSORED

The agency-sponsored staff movement activities were driven primarily from established Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) and Memoranda of Cooperation (MoCs) between the agencies involved. The MoUs and MoCs were created out the agencies connecting more completely through association with APQN. The regional MoU and MoC agreements are all available at www.apqn.org/services/mou_moc/.

Name	Seconded from	Seconded to	Dates
Fan LuLu (China)	Shanghai Educational Evaluation Institute (SEEI)	Hong Kong Council for Academic Accreditation (HKCAA)	22 January – 2 February 2007
Sandra Wong (Hong Kong)	Hong Kong Council for Academic Accreditation (HKCAA)	Shanghai Educational Evaluation Institute (SEEI)	13–23 November 2006
Hailey Lam (Hong Kong)	Hong Kong Council for Academic Accreditation (HKCAA)	Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA)	29 October – 4 November 2006

Laotian delegation at AUQA offices in Melbourne, Australia

APQN Sponsored

APQN has facilitated three APQN-sponsored staff movement activities within the reporting period.

Name	Seconded from	Seconded to	Dates
Phonephet Boupha (Lao PDR)	Department of Higher, Technical and Vocational Education, Ministry of Education	Study tour to New Zealand and Australia	30 September – 9 October 2007
Sikhamth Mitaray (Lao PDR)	Department of Higher, Technical and Vocational Education, Ministry of Education	Study tour to New Zealand and Australia	30 September – 9 October 2007
Litou Bouapao (Lao PDR)	Department of Higher, Technical and Vocational Education, Ministry of Education	Study tour to New Zealand and Australia	30 September – 9 October 2007

These staff movement activities are also listed on the APQN website at www.apqn.org/services/staff_movement/.

Shared APQN–Agency Sponsorship

The shared APQN–agency-sponsored staff movement activities came predominantly through applications for support to the Finance Committee. In most instances the costs were shared between APQN, the visiting agency and the host agency.

Name	Seconded from	Seconded to	Dates
Fang Le (China)	Shanghai Educational Evaluation Institute (SEEI)	Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA)	4–15 December 2006
MS Shyamasundar (India)	National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC)	Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA)	20–24 November 2006
Rama Kondapalli (India)	National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC)	Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA)	20–24 November 2006
Colin N Peiris (Sri Lanka)	Quality Assurance and Accreditation Council of Sri Lanka (QAA)	The National Accreditation Agency of the Russian Federation (NAA)	30 September – 6 October 2006
JL Ratnasekera (Sri Lanka)	Quality Assurance and Accreditation Council of Sri Lanka (QAA)	The National Accreditation Agency of the Russian Federation (NAA)	30 September – 6 October 2006
LL Ratnayake (Sri Lanka)	Quality Assurance and Accreditation Council of Sri Lanka (QAA)	The National Accreditation Agency of the Russian Federation (NAA)	30 September – 6 October 2006

Database of Consultants and Reviewers

Despite discussions about the availability of the databases at AGMs in both 2006 and 2007, there has been very little activity on the online databases of reviewers and consultants. Some information has been updated and some agencies have referred to it for consultants.

The consultant who conducted the training workshop for the University of the South Pacific (USP) in December 2007 has been identified via this database.

The online database of reviewers and consultants was updated in March 2007.
The databases can be viewed at www.apqn.org/services/.

Projects

APQN has embarked on a number of external and internal projects. For the purposes of clarity all external projects are referred to as 'projects' and all internal projects are referred to as 'project groups'.

TOOLKIT: REGULATING THE QUALITY OF CROSS-BORDER EDUCATION

The Toolkit is a joint project between UNESCO and APQN and is drafted as a practical guide for governments and policy makers and other relevant parties in setting up regulatory frameworks for cross-border education.

The Toolkit was published late in 2006 and distributed to APQN members at the AGM in Kuala Lumpur on 5 February 2007. An electronic version of the Toolkit is available at www.apqn.org/files/virtual_library/reports/.

Due to the populatiry of the Toolkit it was reprtinted late in 2007 and disseminated to new APQN members.

TOOLKIT PHASE II: A COMPENDIUM OF SAMPLE COUNTRY MATERIALS ON REGULATORY FRAMEWORKS

Following on from this project was the Toolkit Phase II: A Compendium of Sample Country Materials on Regulatory Frameworks. This second phase was completed in June 2007.

Phase II of the Toolkit is a collection of sample materials from different countries (including providing countries and receiving countries) relating to regulatory systems which are already set up and in operation.

Phase II is divided into the following sections:
1. Legislations and Regulations
2. Guidelines and Related Information
3. Application Forms
4. Assessment Reports
5. Codes of Practice
6. UNESCO-OCED Guidelines for Quality Provision in Higher Education

These materials are illustrations of different systems and options for the reference of individual governments and related regulatory organisations. It is currently available on the UNESCO website at www.unescobkk.org/index.php?id=6470.

INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR EDUCATIONAL PLANNING (IIEP) – APQN COURSE ON EQA

The IIEP distance education course on 'External Quality Assurance: Options for Higher Education Managers' was created with the objective of helping teams made up of national decision-makers, managers and officials in charge of quality assurance in higher education institutions to set up a new national mechanism of quality assurance, to develop their existing systems and to evaluate their current practices. The objective of this course was thus more geared towards institution building than the development of individual capacities.

This course was first implemented in the Anglophone African region in September 2006. After successful results a second course was implemented for the Asia-Pacific region and was jointly organised by IIEP, the Asia-Pacific Quality Network (APQN), and the UNESCO

Office in Bangkok. This new distance education course ran from 2 April to 29 June 2007.

Sixty participants benefited from the course. They were managers and officials working for ministries of education, higher education institutions and external quality assurance agencies in 13 different countries. Of a total of 14 institutions initially registered, 13 completed the course. One institution had to withdraw from the course due to a coinciding heavy workload which left no time to devote to the distance education training.

The course material consisted of five instructional modules and a guide with practical information on the

was to be in charge of reminding participants about the work schedule and tasks, of organising work sessions to respond to group assignments, and of making sure that the group accomplished all of the tasks assigned to them.

Communication heavily relied on email facilities, and in the case of the online debates, a special mailing list was used. In addition, a private website was created with the purpose of making available the training materials, submissions by all of the institutions, comments by the instructors on the participants' work and other documents related to the course, with the possibility of uploading all of these documents.

The overall evaluation of the course was extremely positive. The complete evaluation report, *Distance Education Course – External Quality Assurance: Options for Higher Education Managers*, is available at www. apqn.org/virtual_ library/reports/.

course (learning material, course design, assignments, schedule, etc). Each module was accompanied by a specific task. Modules 1, 3 and 4 were accompanied by a group assignment. Modules 2 and 5 invited participants to join an online debate animated by a moderator. The moderators were Michaela Martin, IIEP, Course Coordinator, and Dr Molly Lee, UNESCO-Bangkok, two facilitators from APQN namely Ms Concepcion Pijano (Philippines) and Dr Antony Stella (Australia) facilitated the discussions.

With the exception of the online debates which required individual participation, teamwork was the core of the course. In order to get their work organised, each team had to nominate a coordinator among its members who

BRISBANE COMMUNIQUÉ

APQN, with assistance from AUQA, has completed a scoping study and, under the direction of Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR), is organising a workshop to be held on 18 January 2008, just prior to the 2008 APQN Conference and Annual General Meeting (AGM) in Japan.

For further information on the Brisbane Communiqué project, see Fundraising section at the end of this report.

Project Groups

Projects groups (PGs) were established at the Network's inception and were formally approved in 2005. An additional PG (PG13) was established in 2006, and another (PG11) was approved late in 2007. The APQN Board has approved a revised set of guidelines for the Project Groups, which can be viewed at www.apqn.org/project_groups/.

QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORKS *[PG2]*

Dr Manuel Corpus (Project Group Leader)

Executive Director, Accrediting Agency of Chartered Colleges and Universities in the Philippines (AACCUP)

The Project Team met in Hong Kong in January 2007 and were able to craft, revise, update and finalise the report, *Qualification Frameworks in the Asia-Pacific Region*, including five country studies.

This report is available on the website at www.apqn.org/project_groups/reports/.

QA OF DE/E-LEARNING *[PG3]*

Takahiro Saito, Ph.D. (Project Group Leader)

Associate Professor, National Institution for Academic Degrees and University Evaluation (NIAD-UE) [and visiting scholar, Center for Studies in Higher Education, University of California, Berkeley]

In October 2006 the project group circulated an electronic questionnaire survey to all APQN members. The questionnaire covered policies and practices related to quality assurance of distance education and e-learning within the APQN member agencies.

The survey showed that most of the APQN member agencies do not have specific criteria for these new modes of education delivery, and that they treat distance education and e-learning as a variety of traditional face-to-face education. This result was presented to APQN members and discussed at the APQN Conference and AGM in Kuala Lumpur on 5 February 2007. Following that event the major request from members to the project group was to identify reference points and information about quality assurance of distance education and e-learning outside the region.

This led to literature research being undertaken and discussions amongst project group members including experts of distance education and e-learning was also. The project group is in the process of identifying specific aspects of distance education and e-learning by focusing on:

- physical/psychological distance between faculty/university and students
- invisible (or difficult to monitor) learning/education processes
- unsual settings for smaller number of faculties to large number of students
- a high technological aspect

It should be noted that some other important aspects—such as ties to vocational programs, for-profit universities and/or open entry, and cross-border, education—were omitted from the study and delegated to other researchers or prospective APQN research projects.

Indicators of Quality *[PG4]*

Dr Antony Stella (Project Group Leader)

Audit Director, Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA)

The project on Indicators of Quality was initiated with the objective to identify the practices followed in the Asia-Pacific region to denote/indicate quality of higher education—both quantitative and qualitative—and to understand how QA agencies use those practices and notions for making quality assurance decisions. With a slow start in 2003 when discussions on networking the QA agencies of the region was initiated, the project gained momentum after the establishment of the Asia-Pacific Quality Network (APQN) in 2005. The project was completed in November 2007.

The background document and the survey questionnaire were developed as a part of the project and they were discussed in the APQN Conference and AGM in Shanghai in 2006. Survey questionnaires were sent to all the full and intermediate members. The response rate was 75% in the case of full members and 50% in the case of intermediate members.

The survey revealed that, there are varying emphases on defining quality in the APQN region. Variations range from 'fitness for purpose' to 'conformance to standards'. In spite of the variations 'quality improvement' seems to have a key place in the QA regime of the region. QA agencies use indicators of quality, variously named, and use them as a combination of quantitative and qualitative indicators. Most agencies emphasise the qualitative nature of most of the indicators they use.

Indicators of quality used by the agencies are in the public domain and involvement of the higher education sector in developing the indicators of quality could be observed. Statements of good practices and codes of practices seem to be the predominant way of using indicators. Most respondents use the indicators for guiding reviewers, for guiding HEIs towards improvement, and for quality assurance decision making.

All APQN members indicated that non-adherence to the indicators has consequences that vary from 'recommendations and advice' for further action to 'funding sanctions or denial of approval' to offer a program.

The APQN members were sent a framework on Indicators of Quality (IQF) that had ten major indicators and sub-indicators developed in a meeting of QA

agencies. In general, the IQF was found to be relevant, and due to variation in emphases the QA agencies prioritise them differently. There were many positive responses and expressions of willingness to cooperate further on refining a common IQF for the APQN region. Suggestions for the next stages include: spelling out micro indicators; developing statements of good practice; fixing quantitative norms; defining different levels of quality; inter-agency benchmarking projects; common terminology for the APQN region; more research on indicators of quality, and project among agencies that agree to a set of common indicators. However, this approach is not free from challenges and concerns.

The concern that 'Indicators of Quality'—in whatever form—might become tools for comparing quality/quality assurance without taking into account the purposes and contexts of different quality assurance systems within the different places of the region, emerged strongly in some responses. The challenge is to balance the diversities and meaningful cooperation. The report has identified a set of actions to address these challenges and to strengthen the collaboration among APQN membership.

The completed report is available at www. apqn.org/project_groups/reports/.

MUTUAL RECOGNITION *[PG8]*

Ms Dorte Kristoffersen (Project Group Leader)

Deputy Executive Director, Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications (HKCAAVQ)

The APQN project group on Mutual Recognition (MR) met after the APQN Conference and AGM 2007 in Kuala Lumpur to decide on the next steps to take. In the past the project group has focused on establishing the definitions of MR, the needs for MR in the region, and the most immediate barriers. These activities led the group to concentrate its activities on MR with respect to decisions related to transnational education.

On that basis the project group decided that the necessary next step was to develop and test measures that in the short run will enable quality assurance agencies to make use of each other's work, i.e. the review reports and outcomes of these reports, when they review foreign providers/local providers operating offshore. The experiences gained from this exercise should be a step towards considering the possibility of establishing more formal agreements of cooperation and eventually mutual recognition of agencies' reports/outcomes in regard to transnational education activities. Making increased use of each other's work, and eventually discussing the possibilities of more formal cooperation between two or more quality assurance agencies, requires that the agencies have a thorough understanding of and trust in each other's processes. An understanding of the processes is a necessary component to have confidence in the outcomes of those processes.

There are two obvious areas where it is relevant to make extended use of each other's work, i.e. when an agency, either in a provider and/or receiver country, review a (foreign) branch campus or a partnership arrangement between a local and foreign institution.

The members of the project group have prepared a description and analysis of their quality assurance frameworks for transnational education activities, i.e. how the agencies check the quality of providers operating overseas and the academic activities of foreign providers operating in the country of the agency.

The data is now ready to be analysed with a view to identify the quality criteria applied in the review processes and the sources of evidence used. Furthermore the analysis should address major gaps and differences in the approaches and suggestions for ways to address these.

When the project group met in February 2007 it was hoped that the shared information on transnational education (TNE) quality frameworks would be able to be tested in a cooperative project by two of the participants of the project group. This project still has to be confirmed.

Senior Registrar Mrs Connie Lok from the HKCAAVQ joined the project group in 2007.

TRANSNATIONAL EDUCATION *[PG11]*

Dr Antony Stella (Project Group Leader)
Audit Director, Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA)

This project group was approved late in 2007. The Project Group leader is currently determining a constituency.

STUDENT PARTICIPATION IN QUALITY ASSURANCE *[PG13]*

Dr Jagannath Patil (Project Group Leader)

Deputy Adviser, National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC)

The project group has completed its second year with much activity undertaken jointly by NAAC and APQN. A report summing up the total activities is available at www.apqn.org/project_groups/current/.

Some of the actions taken in this project group include:

- a book on Best Practices in 'Student feedback and Participation' edited by Dr J Patil and published by NAAC
- a post conference publication on 'Student Participation in Quality Enhancement', edited by Dr J Patil and Prof VS Prasad, was published by NAAC in June 2007
- NAAC taking up various activities to promote student participation besides APQN-supported initiatives
- NAAC celebrated last year as 'NAAC 2006 Year of Student Participation in Quality Assurance'

The project on Student Participation in Quality Assurance aims at fulfilling the following key objectives:

- to collect, analyse and disseminate theory, good practices and experiences of student participation in quality assurance in the Asia-Pacific region
- to promote the exchange of good practices in student participation in quality assurance between different countries

Some of the activities so far include a survey that was conducted involving APQN member agencies about the status of:

- student participation in quality assurance agencies
- student participation in internal quality assurance in higher education institutions in their respective countries

A similar survey was conduced in accredited higher education institutions across India. Meetings were held with students in different parts of the country. It is proposed to continue and supplement the survey by adopting different methods.

A joint project proposal by APQN and NAAC was submitted to SII, Netherlands based on the work done by this project group. The group met during the APQN Conference and AGM in Kuala Lumpur to discuss the progress and chalk out further strategies.

Dr Patil visited Australia as a recipient of the Endeavour India Executive Award from the Government of Australia. This opportunity was used to further the work of the project relating to the Pacific region with the help of AUQA from July to September 2007. The visit was very beneficial. He also ran a workshop on Student Participation in Quality Assurance was conducted at the Australian Universities Quality Forum (AUQF) in Hobart Tasmania.

Dr Patil was invited to present at the National Education Conference of National Liaison Committee (NLC) at Melbourne on 9 July 2007 on student participation in quality assurance. This was a good opportunity to interact with various overseas student unions. Observing Monash Experience Questionnaire – MEQ – survey and visits to similar units in other universities, gave insight into student engagement practices in the Australian tertiary education sector. Many universities invited Dr Patil to make presentations or conduct workshops on student participation in quality assurance:

- Monash University , Melbourne
- RMIT University, Melbourne
- Victoria University, Melbourne
- Griffith University, Brisbane
- Queensland University, Brisbane
- Southern Queensland University, Toowoomba
- University of Western Sydney

A strong link was established with the Council of Australian Post-Graduate Associations (CAPA) in Melbourne, Australia. A workshop with student groups convened on 21 September 2007 at Melbourne University. This was partially sponsored by APQN.

A workshop was also facilitated by Dr Patil at the Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications (HKCAAQV).

Inteneded future activities include:

- a book on 'Good Practices in Student Participation in Asia-Pacific Region'
- a proposal for an Asia-Pacific Student Network
- an online forum to promote student participation in quality

The final report of this phase of the project is expected to be submitted at the 2008 APQN Conference and AGM in Japan.

Future events

Japan

FUTURE OF QUALITY ASSURANCE IN ASIA-PACIFIC: COOPERATION AMIDST DIVERSITY

Chiba (19–22 February 2008)

The National Institution for Academic Degrees and University Evaluation (NIAD-UE) is hosting the 2008 APQN Conference and AGM in Japan. The event is currently being prepared by the International Advisory Committee (IAC) and the Local Planning Committee (LPC).

The conference will focus on the mutual recognition and cross-border mobility toward diversity in the Asia-Pacific region. It mainly consists of the plenary sessions and parallel working sessions. Plenary sessions relate to the sub-themes of the Conference, which are 'Mutual Recognition and Standards', 'Quality Assurance of QA Agencies', 'Respect of Diversity and Network Activity', and two other topics, 'UNESCO-APQN Toolkit' and 'Brisbane Communiqué'. Parallel working sessions, relate to the sub-themes mentioned above.

An Open Symposium, broadly targeted to the higher education community will be held on the first day. The theme of the Open symposium is: What's 'University'? – from QA community – . Guest speakers and panellists are from QAA of UK, HEEC of China, OAQ of Switzerland, and UNESCO.

Contributions for parallel working sessions were submitted from those intending to attend the conference. Twelve contributions were selected among 31 submitted in total.

The impressive conference website opened in July 2007 at www.the-convention.co.jp/apqn2008/.

APQN Conference and AGM 2009

A call for expressions of interest to host the 2009 event was sent to members on 27 March 2007. Vietnam will host the event through the collaborative efforts between the APQN members in Vietnam, and this will be led by General Department of Education Testing and Accreditation (GDETA). The date has yet to be confirmed, but it is expected to take place in early March 2009.

Online Forums

MODERATED ONLINE DISCUSSION FORUM

Internal Quality Assurance

APQN members have expressed interest in professional development on 'internal quality assurance'. Given that the World Bank funding ended on 31 December 2007, the APQN Finance Committee, in its 3 September 2007 meeting, recommended that the Online Forum of the APQN website (www.apqn.org/forums/register/register.php) be used more effectively to facilitate online discussions on the topic.

The plan for the online discussion involves three facilitators with an overall coordinator who will moderate the semi-structured discussions on internal QA. This area of the APQN website will continue to be developed.

UNMODERATED ONLINE DISCUSSION FORUM

APQN Board members are responsible for monitoring the unmoderated online discussion forum on a monthly basis.

Non-APQN Events Database

APQN maintains a database of quality assurance related conferences and events around the world. This has proven to be a valuable page with consistently high monthly hits.
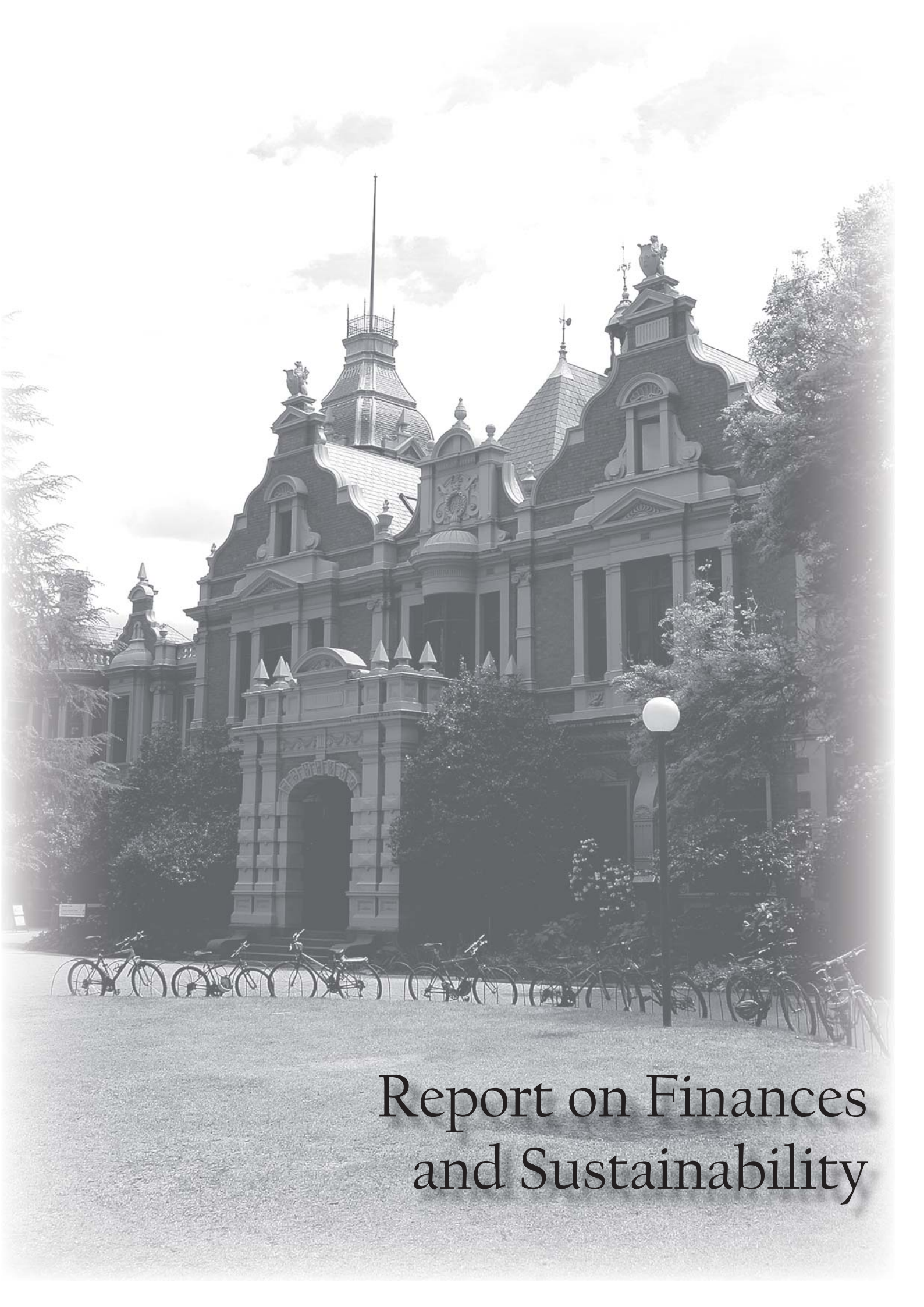
The non-APQN events page is continually updated, and members and mailing list subscribers are periodically notified of updates.

PHOTOGRAPH BY CLAIRE GRESTY

Report on Finances
and Sustainability

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

The Finance Committee

Income Statement

Balance Sheet

SUSTAINABILITY

Fundraising

Financial Statements

THE FINANCE COMMITTEE

The term of office for the APQN Finance Committee follows the same format as the term of office for the APQN Board. However, due to the major restructure of the Board resulting from the resignation of the President, the Finance Committee also saw a restructure. Given this restructure, Mike Willing of the New Zealand Qualifications Authority left the Finance Committee due to being appointed to the Board, and John Jennings of New Zealand Universities Academic Audit Unit joined the Finance Committee.

The quantity and variety of requests for support submitted to the APQN Finance Committee on a quarterly basis have been steadily increasing over the past year. It has been noticed also that members are often unsure of the 'real' cost of the activities they are budgeting for, and considerable amendments are often made to the submitted budget.

During this reporting period, APQN tendered three accountants to carry out the external audit of the APQN accounts at the end of 2007. A recommendation was presented to the Finance Committee at its meeting in September 2007, and the recommendation was approved.

In addition to the numerous workshops and conferences open to international sponsored participants, the APQN Finance Committee also approved support for:

* a consultant to assist the University of the South Pacific run a course in internal quality assurance

* a workshop in Laos

* the development of an online discussion forum on internal quality assurance for APQN members and facilitated by members of the Asia-Pacific QA community

Furthermore the APQN Board is negotiating an extension to the DGF to assist Badan Akreditasi Nasional Perguruan Tinggi (BAN-PT) and the Indonesian government to organise a training workshop early in 2008.
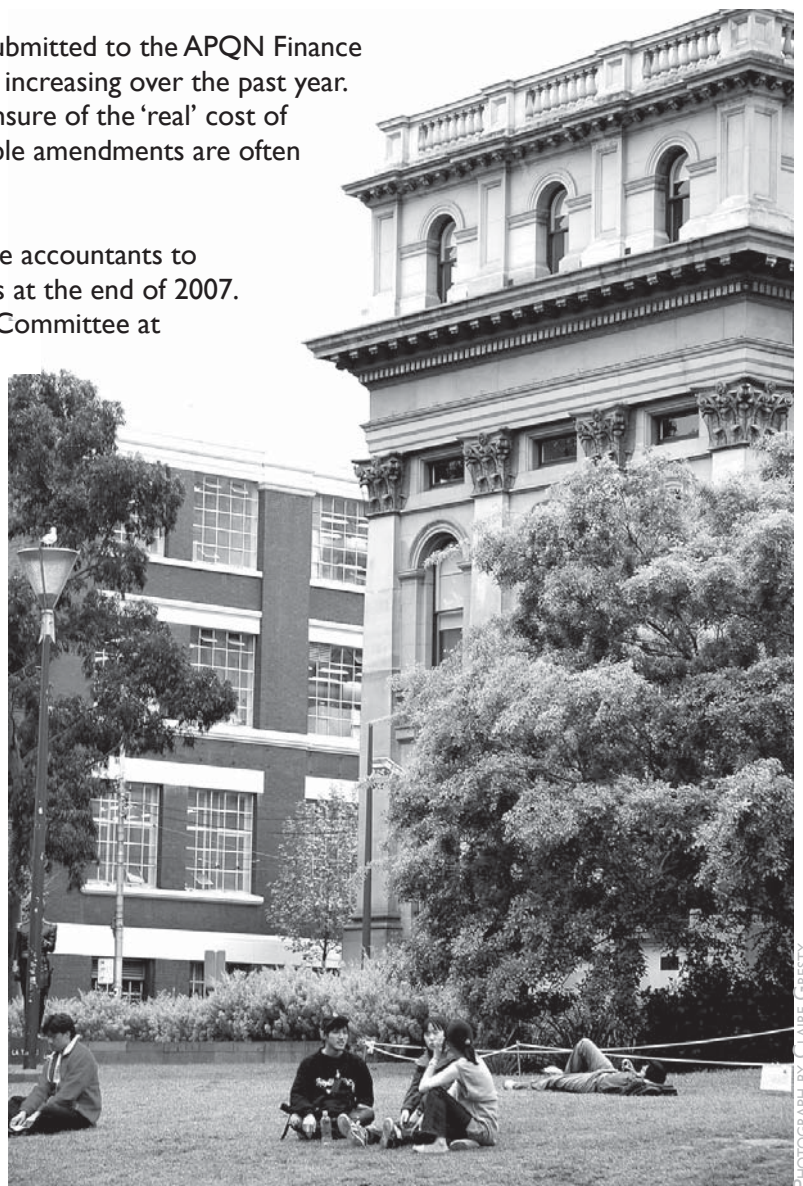
PHOTOGRAPH BY CLAIRE GRESTY

INCOME STATEMENT TO 31 DECEMBER 2007

Categories/ Programs	Consulting	Training	Goods	Admin.	APQN M'ship fees	Interest received	Actual	Budget 2007	Others converted to USD	Total APQN
	USD	USD	USD	USD	USD	USD	USD	USD	USD	USD
INCOME										
Initial joining and annual fees					21,266.01		21,266.01	**15,000**		**21,266.01**
Interest received						11,479.86	11,479.86	**2,000**	305.11	**11,784.97**
Grants received from World Bank	168,200	108,000	30,000	56,000			362,200.00	**362,200**		**362,200.00**
The Brisbane Communiqué								**0**	44,412.64	**44,412.64**
TOTAL INCOME	168,200	108,000	30,000	56,000	21,266.01	11,479.86	394,945.87	**379,200**	44,717.75	**439,663.62**
EXPENSES										
1. Training								**134,000**		
1.1 Conferences										
* Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia	39,615.05	22,594.90	538.61				62,748.56			**62,748.56**
* Chiba, Japan	4,476.15						4,476.15			**4,476.15**
1.2 Workshops										
* HCMC, Vietnam	11,527.97	5,188.75	149.29				16,866.01			**16,866.01**
* Dhaka, Bangladesh	11,302.25	13,423.42	284.93				25,010.60			**25,010.60**
* Kunming, China	5,485.08		61.80				5,546.88			**5,546.88**
* Manila, Philippines		12,557.41	95.20				12,652.61			**12,652.61**
2. Consulting activities								**44,000**		
* Bangalore, India			493.00				493.00			**493.00**
* Lahore, Pakistan	1,480.00		22.09				1,502.09			**1,502.09**
*Vientiane, Lao PDR	1,033.41	14,867.00	35.00				15,935.41			**15,935.41**
* Suva, Fiji	5,100.30		60.02				5,160.32			**5,160.32**
*The Brisbane Communiqué									1,000.00	**1,000.00**
3. Reviewers/consultants								**20,000**		
*APQN Toolkit – Phase I			1,488.00				1,488.00			**1,488.00**
*APQN Toolkit – Phase II	1,000.00						1,000.00			**1,000.00**
* IIEP online training course		12,508.00	53.60				12,561.60			**12,561.60**
4. Staff movement								**11,000**		
* Lao PDR	9,962.05		29.85				9,991.90			**9,991.90**
5. Advisory services								**13,200**		
* UNESCO/INQAAHE	2,630.92						2,630.92			**2,630.92**
* Project groups			3,284.78				3,284.78			**3,284.78**
* Online project internal QA	500.00		30.10				530.10			**530.10**
6. Finance, admin. and liaison								**137,000**		
* Administration/audit				42,305.82			42,305.82		95.02	**42,400.84**
* Bank fees/TT fees				847.64			847.64		91.30	**938.94**
* CQAIE liaison				5,021.71			5,021.71			**5,021.71**
* Fundraising	6,675.85		200.11				6,875.96			**6,875.96**
* Secretariat/accounting	45,934.11		157.18				46,091.29			**46,091.29**
*Website/clearinghouse			8,477.68				8,477.68			**8,477.68**
7. Other								**20,000**		
*APQN membership fees			7,600.00				7,600.00			**7,600.00**
* Others/miscellaneous			3,766.40				3,766.40			**3,766.40**
TOTAL EXPENSES	146,723.15	81,139.48	26,827.64	48,175.17	0.00	0.00	302,865.43	**379,200**	1,186.32	**304,051.75**
NET SURPLUS/(DEFECIT)	21,476.85	26,860.52	3,172.36	7,824.83	21,266.01	11,479.86	**92,080.44**	**0**	43,531.43	**135,611.86**

	Actual USD	Budget 2007 USD
SURPLUS CARRIED FORWARD FROM PREVIOUS YEARS		
2006 CQAIE fund transfer		12,501
Secretariat Oct–Dec 2006	(12,501)	(12,501)
2006 Membership fees		13,277
Membership fees prior to 2006		24,316
TOTAL SURPLUS CARRIED FORWARD		**37,593**

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2007

	2007 December USD	2006 December USD	2006 September USD	2005 September USD
ASSETS				
Cash	240,133	50,094	56,479	19,242
Accounts receivable	0	0	0	2,462
Membership fees receivable	2,400	0	0	0
Other receivable	0	0	0	0
TOTAL ASSETS	242,533	50,094	56,479	21,704
LIABILITIES				
Accounts payable/GST payable	34,859	0	0	20,176
Accruals	36,724	0	0	0
TOTAL LIABILITIES	71,583	0	0	20,176
NET ASSETS	**170,950**	**50,094**	**56,479**	**1,528**
EQUITY				
Retained earnings	37,593	24,316		
Current year earnings	135,612	13,277		
Currency translation differences	(2,255)	0		
Net assets transferred from CQAIE as at 01/10/2006	0	56,479		
APQN activities Oct–Nov 2006 funded by CQAIE transfer	0	(43,978)		
NET EQUITY	**170,950**	**50,094**	**56,479**	**1,528**

Notes to Financial Statements

1. In the last week of December 2007 APQN was granted an extension of the DGF to 31 March 2008.

2. These are unaudited financial statements. Financial audit is postponed to include activities ending 18 months to 31 March 2008.

3. After including all commitment of expenses, the surplus from the World Bank funding equals USD$59,335 as at 31 December 2007.

	USD
Surplus from Consulting activities	21,477
Surplus from Training activities	26,861
Surplus from Goods activities	3,172
Surplus from Administration activities	7,825
	59,335

4. Reconciliation of cash availability as follows:

	USD$'000
Cash at bank (USD and AUD accounts)	240
Membership receivables	3
Payable to suppliers/GST payables	(35)
Accruals for all commitments	(37)
Surplus of World Bank funding	(59)
	112

APQN's available funds represented by:	
2007 membership fees received/receivable	21
2007 interest received	11
Income from Brisbane Communiqué project (before payment of expenses)	43
2006 membership fees received (Oct–Dec)	13
Membership fees and interest received prior to Oct 2006	24
	112

Sustainability

For APQN to be a self-sustained network it needs a minimal level of funds to maintain basic operations and levels of activity. It is to this end that various Board members have made approaches to grantmakers. The following pages illustrate these approaches.

Fundraising

ASEAN Universities Network (AUN)

In October 2007, Associate Professor Nuanthip Kamolvarin and Ms Dorte Kristoffersen met with the Deputy Executive Director of the ASEAN Universities Network (AUN).

The meeting between APQN and AUN took place in a very positive and cooperative atmosphere. The parties present agreed there was a range of areas of common interest and that we should:

- keep each other informed about our activities and events and consider whether any of our events are suitable to be organised collaboratively

- consider projects that could be suited for a joint project proposal, such as further development of criteria

- consider if there are any ways of the two networks establishing a more formal relationship, such as through affiliate membership

There has already been indirect cooperation with AUN. Ton Vroijenstijn, who has worked with AUN to prepare their manual for the implementation of the AUN quality assurance guidelines, was one of the facilitators at the APQN workshop held in Vietnam in March 2007 and the guidelines document was used for the training.

Asian Development Bank (ADB)

Research into projects to be funded by the Asian Development Bank has been undertaken, and efforts at preparing a draft project proposal for submission to the APQN Board are underway.

Asia-Pacific Recognition Network (APARNET)

In May 2007, UNESCO contacted the APQN Board requesting an expression of interest for hosting the Asia-Pacific Recognition Network (APARNET).

APARNET was established to promote and facilitate discussion on qualifications recognition and related issues amongst the National Academic Recognition and Information Centres (NARICs) of the Asia-Pacific region. It includes country reports prepared by the signatory countries, a discussion forum and information about the recognition conventions, as well as a section on quality assurance.

The Association of Southeast Asian Institutions of Higher Learning (ASAIHL)

In October 2007, Associate Professor Nuanthip Kamolvarin and Ms Dorte Kristoffersen met with Dr Professor Adulya, President of The Association of Southeast Asian Institutions of Higher Learning (ASAIHL).

The purpose of the meeting was to present APQN, and especially APQN's institutional membership category, to ASAIHL.

AusAid

A representative of the APQN Board held a meeting with AusAid in July 2007. The meeting was primarily aimed at presenting APQN to AusAid, and discussing opportunities for future cooperation. AusAid's primary priority in education is primary education, but it also has a general objective of poverty reduction, which is indirectly related to quality assurance.

Brisbane Communiqué

The Brisbane Communiqué initiative was launched at the inaugural Asia-Pacific Education Ministers' Meeting in Brisbane, Australia on 3–4 April 2006. Ministers and senior officials from twenty-seven countries across the region issued the Brisbane Communiqué, in which they agreed to collaborate on key goals related to the recognition and quality of education and training in the region (for more details see www.brisbanecommunique.dest.gov.au/). To date the Communiqué has been signed by 52 countries in the broader Asia-Pacific region.

The overarching objective of the Brisbane Communiqué initiative is to better position the education systems and approaches of the broader Asia-Pacific with international developments, thus ensuring transparency and mutual trust between countries' education systems.

A Senior Officials Working Group (SOWG) has been set up under Australian chairmanship to move the objectives forward until the ministers meet again in 2008. The SOWG has developed a broad programme of work to move forward on the Brisbane Communiqué goal of developing quality assurance frameworks for the region linked to international standards, including courses delivered online. They are to:

- undertake a scoping study of quality assurance arrangements in the region to identify problems, gaps and solutions already in existence
- hold a workshop with key stakeholders across the region to discuss the findings of the scoping study and to inform the development of a regional framework

- develop a draft regional quality assurance framework, based on the European Bologna Process model and the work done by the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA), for consideration by Asia-Pacific Ministers of Education

The SOWG is interested in ensuring that its work does not duplicate work already underway in the region. It is also keen to work in partnership, wherever possible, with countries and organisations in the region where the Brisbane Communiqué objectives and activities overlap or complement each other.

The SOWG is of the view that the mission and purpose of APQN fit well with the Brisbane Communiqué goal relating to quality assurance of higher education. The Chair of the SOWG, Deputy Secretary Dr Wendy Jarvie, therefore approached APQN in January to enquire whether it was possible to:

- discuss with the Board whether APQN would be in a position to undertake a scoping study of quality assurance arrangements in the Brisbane Communiqué countries in 2007, and in the longer term opportunities of further cooperation

- address APQN members at the APQN Conference and AGM 2007 in Kuala Lumpur to inform them about the Brisbane Communiqué initiative

The Chair of the SOWG was given a slot in the APQN Conference and AGM program in order to address the members and other delegates and subsequently had a one hour discussion with the Board, at which time the Board accepted to undertake the scoping study. The study has brought in external income to APQN.

APQN will continue to discuss with the SOWG

other forms of cooperation and means through which APQN can support the achievement of the Brisbane Communiqué objectives to the benefit of APQN and the ministries of education alike.

The Brisbane Communiqué will host a workshop on on the Scoping Study on Monday 18 February 2008, the day prior to the opening of the 2008 APQN Conference and AGM. The Brisbane Communiqué Task Force, based within the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) in Australia, has obtained financial support from AusAid to finance participants from less developed countries to attend the workshop. A majority of the participants are from APQN member

agencies. The APQN Secretariat has been contracted by the Brisbane Communiqué to organise the workshop.

Board members have had meetings with Brisbane Communiqué representatives over the last six months.

The Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs

The Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which has been supporting higher education development in developing countries for many years, approached the APQN past President Mr Peter Cheung in the first half of 2006. APQN was invited to submit a proposal to The International Institute Cooperation Programme (SII in Dutch) within the context of the Ministry's plans to increase this support during the next five years. It was decided that APQN should submit a proposal based on the APQN project group on Student Participation in Quality Assurance led by Dr Jagannath Patil under the title 'Promoting Quality Literacy and Student Participation in Quality'. It was submitted as a joint proposal from the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC), India and APQN. It proposes to take further the work already done in this regard with an emphasis on promoting quality literacy and capacity development of students as prime beneficiaries of quality higher education.

European Commission (EC)

APQN approached the European Commission (EC) in July 2007 about possible areas of cooperation in quality assurance of health education. This initiative did not lead to any results.

APQN hired a consultant, Mr Andrew McRae, to research funding opportunities with the Eurpoean Commission.

SEAMEO

On 2 February 2007, Dr David Woodhouse, Executive Director of the Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA) and Dr Antony Stella, Audit Director, AUQA met with Dr Edilberto de Jesus, Director of the SEAMEO Secretariat in Bangkok. Dr de Jesus was optimistic about the Network's efforts to strengthen the quality assurance developments in the SEAMEO countries. The various stages of development of the quality assurance initiatives in SEAMEO countries were discussed. The ones that need more capacity development and the ones where political intervention will be required were noted. Dr de Jesus agreed to explore various options to strengthen the participation of the SEAMEO countries in the APQN region. Possibilities of supporting the participation of

representatives from SEAMEO countries in quality assurance meetings were also discussed.

Mrs Concepcion Pijano and Ms Dorte Kristoffersen followed this meeting up with another meeting in December 2007.

University of Alicante

In January 2007, APQN was contacted by the project office of the University of Alicante which was interested in preparing a project application under the Edulink programme, which is a European Commission sponsored program. The object of the project was to help universities in the South Pacific develop a quality management system based on the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) Excellence Model.

The plan was to identify the participating universities in the South Pacific island states.

APQN was invited to be the local coordinator and thus a partner in the project.

Due to the limited number of universities in the region which were anticipated to benefit from the project, the University of Alicante never finalised the application.

US Foundations

In March 2007, the Center for Quality Assurance in International Education (CQAIE) contacted the Ford Foundation's regional offices in Beijing, New Delhi, Jakarta, Hanoi and Moscow, on behalf of APQN. No replies have been received to date.

The Gates-Hewlett Foundation was also approached; however, it was discovered that the Foundation only supports initiatives in primary education, so the response was negative.

APQN hired a consultant, Mr Andrew McRae, to research funding opportunities with the Ford Foundation.

PHOTOGRAPH BY CLAIRE GRESTY

APQN Annual Report 2006~2007

Our Mission

To enhance the quality of higher education in Asia and the Pacific region through strengthening the work of quality assurance agencies and extending the cooperation between them.

apqn

ASIA-PACIFIC QUALITY NETWORK

WWW.APQN.ORG