



Strategic Plan 2012/2015

Introduction

The Asia-Pacific Quality Network Inc. (APQN) is a quality assurance network focussing on the provision of the education and training for quality assurance agencies in higher education in a region that contains over half the world's population; the Asia West Pacific region. APQN was founded in Hong Kong in January 2003, and was incorporated as an association in December 2004 in the State of Victoria, Australia. Since 10 June 2011, it has been registered as a non-profit organisation in Shanghai. As at 1 January 2012, APQN has 98 members representing 34 countries territories. The General Council of APQN is composed of full members (27), intermediate members (15), associate members (6), and institutional members (46), each represented by one nominated person, and is governed by a Board consisting of a President, Vice-President, Secretary/Treasurer, 4 other elected members, and up to 4 co-opted members. APQN also has 3 Observers coming from 3 different countries outside the Asia-Pacific region.

Initially, at its inception, APQN was funded by a grant (for 3 years) from the World Bank as well as membership subscriptions; however, from 2008 onwards World Bank funding ceased. From 2009 to 2011 it has also been a beneficiary of the Global Initiative for Quality Assurance Capacity (GIQAC) grant administered by UNESCO and this grant ends in June 2012.

Governments within the region are increasing the size of their national tertiary education sectors through both public and private provision. Students are being educated not only in traditional universities, polytechnics and colleges, but also increasingly in modern systems of open and distance learning. It is increasingly important therefore for governments and stakeholders to have certainty over their return on investment and that they are assured of the quality of the inputs, processes and educational outcomes of this raft of educational provision.

The expected and required benefits of tertiary education will only result if it is of high quality. This high quality provision requires effective quality agencies that can assist institutions raise the quality of the education they provide and can hold them accountable for their performance. The exact operational characteristics of quality assurance systems vary widely from country to country but are over time developing common practices and principles that allow for increasing comparability of higher education quality. These quality systems are not just important within each individual country, but have vital international and cross-border roles.

Professional associations of quality assurance agencies such as APQN help to advance academic quality, not only by pooling intellectual resources for sharing good practice, but also by agreeing on clear definitions of quality, internationally recognised standards, and uniform processes to determine whether standards are being met. The capacity of individual agencies is enhanced through the sharing of information, resources and expertise.

APQN has links with other bodies such as ASEAN, AQAN, AUN, APEC, and similar agencies such as INQAAHE, and is ideally placed to assist quality assurance agencies in the region to continue to be highly effective. This in turn has the potential to contribute to mutual recognition of quality assurance and qualifications, and hence regional/international professional mobility, leading to enhanced economic development.

1. Vision and Mission

1.1. Vision: To be a self-sustaining network of tertiary education related agencies and Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and be the first point of reference for its members for the provision of expertise, advice, discussion and consultation on all matters relating to quality assurance within the tertiary education sector.

1.2. Mission: To enhance the knowledge and capability of agencies and individuals within the Asia-Pacific region to provide quality education within their specific country tertiary education sector through a cooperative network platform.

2. Strategic Objectives

2.1. To enhance the quality of tertiary education in the Asia-Pacific region through sharing good practice.

2.2. To facilitate the sharing of information and experience between members including making available research in the theory and practice of quality assurance within tertiary education.

2.3. To provide information, advice, expertise and training to assist quality assurance agencies or individuals with quality assurance related issues.

2.4. To facilitate the process for cross-border recognition of tertiary qualifications within the region and with other countries.

2.5. To establish effective working relationships with relevant international and sector groups who can contribute to the work of APQN (this includes INQAAHE, AUN, AQAN, UNESCO – Asian Region, World Bank).

2.6. To be the primary point of contact for all quality assurance questions and discussions from network Quality Assurance bodies and individual universities.

3. Principles

APQN is:

- Committed to the principle of mutual help, capacity building and continuous improvement
- Oriented towards quality in education and service to its members
- Open in its information sharing
- Fair and equitable in dealing with its members

4. Goals and Actions (2012-2015)

Goal	Key actions
<p>1. Establish ongoing financial viability and security.</p>	<p>1.1. Clearly identify activities which hold the Network together and which are considered essential services to its members</p> <p>1.2. Set membership fees at a level which can pay for the activities identified above on a permanent basis</p> <p>1.3. Explore additional funding sources externally which can include donation, commissioned work, sponsorship of events by reputable organisations, or the provision of professional services</p> <p>1.4. Explore additional funding sources internally which can include the establishment of Development Fund*</p> <p>1.5. Explore the idea of an 'APQN fraternity' whereby people with a special connection to the Network can be called forth to provide advisory, training or other consultancy services on a pro bono basis</p> <p>1.6. At an appropriate time, review whether APQN can charge for the use of its logo as a quality label or establish subscription schemes for its publications</p> <p>1.7. Review the current cycle of conferences/workshops and consider co-hosting or sharing arrangements with sister organisations</p>
<p>2. Develop the APQN website to provide a platform for the communication and provision of services for APQN members.</p>	<p>2.1. Design, develop and facilitate a web-based discussion forum for members</p> <p>2.2. Identify options for service to be provided by an independent contracted supplier</p> <p>2.3. Ensure as much as possible wide regional participation on the Board through co-option</p>
<p>3. Design, establish, populate and maintain the database containing expert contacts and related information and make accessible to all members.</p>	<p>3.1. Review existing database to maintain relevance</p> <p>3.2. Canvass members to identify relevant requirements</p> <p>3.3. Revise database and relaunch</p> <p>3.4. Monitor and measure use</p> <p>3.5. Establish process and responsibility for ensuring currency of information</p>

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<p>4. Ensure the annual regional network conference is efficiently and effectively organised, delivers a quality output, and provides an opportunity for training.</p>	<p>4.1. Establish an APQN Programme Committee. (from existing Board members and past organisers) to guide the new host country organising committee</p> <p>4.2. Actively promote the conference</p> <p>4.3. Assist with organisation of sponsorship</p> <p>4.4. Obtain sponsorship for next conference</p> <p>4.5. Introduce a higher conference registration fee for non-members</p>
<p>5. Develop and make available, training material and facilitate and process the requests for physical training, support and advice from members.</p>	<p>5.1. Develop web-based process for storing and providing online opportunities for delivering training</p> <p>5.2. Identify, collate and store existing training material available across the network</p> <p>5.3. Identify and establish linkages with other training material providers for members</p> <p>5.4. Establish process for obtaining and building new training provision</p> <p>5.5. Monitor and measure both use and effectiveness</p> <p>5.6. Identify and develop opportunities for non member use that provides a monetary return to APQN</p>
<p>6. Strengthen APQN's external relations in particular with INQAAHE, other regional networks and networks within the Asia-Pacific region.</p>	

*Contributions by members against the prospects of obtaining dedicated professional consultancy services or for the specific purposes of helping younger agencies to develop financial deals with the hosting countries of conferences and workshops (eg. A local sponsorship requirement, a no-loss guarantee, charging for concurrent publications)