MEET THE MEMBERS

ASIIN e.V., Germany

ASIIN e.V. has been an Observer of APQN since March 2007.

The ASIIN 2008 Annual Conference will be held on 27–28 October in Hanover, Germany. This year, discussions and workshops will focus on tools and practices for managing quality in higher education. The event also provides opportunities for information on accreditation procedures and other services in the field of quality assurance offered by ASIIN.

The conference is targeted at representatives of higher education institutions and stakeholders, at the members of ASIIN e.V., and at current and prospective members of its network of expert peers. It is expected that 250 to 300 participants will attend this event. Representatives of quality assurance agencies and higher education institutions from outside Germany are also welcome. The conference language is German.

Further information, the detailed programme and a registration form can all be found at the ASIIN e.V. website at www.asiin.de.

On 4–5 September 2008, the University of Cagliari (Sardinia, Italy) hosted a conference organised by ASIIN e.V. to mark the successful conclusion of the Euro-Inf project. This project, which was aimed at the development of pan-European standards and guidelines for the accreditation of informatics (or computing) programmes, was coordinated by ASIIN e.V., and involved partners from higher education as well as professional associations.

Dr David Woodhouse, Dr Marwan and Mr Robert Carmichael

They have jointly developed and now published the 'Euro-Inf Framework Standards and Criteria'. This document has been developed by informatics experts based on existing national accreditation standards and outcome descriptors, on discussions within the informatics communities on the national as well as on the European level, and on extensive testing in the course of reviews for informatics programmes at higher education institutions in several European countries.

The 'Euro-Inf Framework Standards and Criteria' are to be implemented and further developed by a European quality network for informatics programmes carried by the major European stakeholders.

For further information, please visit the project website at www. euro-inf.eu.

AUQA, Australia

The Australian Universities Quality Agency recently hosted Dr Marwan from Badan Akreditasi Nasional Perguruan Tinggi (BAN-PT), Indonesia. Dr Marwan stayed at AUQA for a one month internship during August this year. During his stay Dr Marwan observed an AUQA audit of an Australian university, attended the Portfolio Meeting for the audit of another university, and visited the Quality Unit of a third university. He also visited a State-based accreditation agency in Melbourne. This internship was sponsored by AusAid.

AUQA has published a number of reports that are now available on the AUQA website:
- 'Internationalisation of Australian Universities: Learning from Cycle 1 Audits' by Antony Stella & Colleen Liston, available at www. auqa.edu.au/files/publications/ internationalisation_final.pdf
- 'Community Engagement and Inclusion in Australian Higher Education: A Thematic Analysis of AUQA's Cycle 1 Audits' by Antony Stella & Jeanette Baird, available

We encourage members of APQN to submit content to be published in the new APQNews. This is intended to be a quarterly newsletter.

at www.auqa.edu.au/files/publications/community%20engagement%20and%20inclusion%20final.pdf

Dr David Woodhouse & Dr Antony Stella co-wrote a paper that is available on the website for The Observatory on Borderless Higher Education, London. The paper is called, 'Borderless Higher Education Down Under: Quality Assurance of Australian Cross-Border Initiatives'. For the abstract go to www.obhe.ac.uk/documents/view_details?id=564.

BDNAC, Brunei Darussalam

The Brunei Darussalam National Accreditation Council (BDNAC) Secretariat held a briefing on the roles and responsibilities of the BDNAC at the main hall of the Curriculum Development Section, Ministry of Education (MoE), Brunei Darussalam on the 28 May 2008.

The event started with the recitation of surah Al-Fatihah, followed by speeches by the chairperson, Datin Hajah Khadijah binti Haji Akbar and the guest of honour, Awang Haji Daud bin Haji Mahmud, MoE's Permanent Secretary (Higher Education).

In her speech, Datin Hajah Khadijah welcomed 50 guests comprising directors, assistant directors and government officers, particularly those who are involved in recruitment and human resource development (HRD), from various government ministries.

In his speech, the guest of honour, Awang Haji Daud, suggested the participants seek the advice of the BDNAC before recruiting or sending officers and staff for in-service training schemes, and to make sure that their qualifications are recognised and authentic.

The BDNAC, as granted by His Majesty The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan Negara Brunei Darussalam, is the sole body responsible for monitoring the recognition of qualifications since 1990. Under its Secretariat, the BDNAC issues benchmarks, standards, quality assurance, assessment and audit in university qualifications.

Among the objectives of the briefing was to inform the various ministries of the many aspects of accreditation methods. It was hoped that the information given would be disseminated among their respective departments.

Two officials from the BDNAC Secretariat, Datin Hajah Khadijah binti Haji Akbar (Acting Executive Secretary) and Miss Syahira Yusoff

Delegates from BDNAC at the AUQF dinner at Parliament House, Canberra

(Special Duties Officer Grade II) attended the Australian Universities Quality Forum (AUQF) in Canberra, Australia from 9–11 July 2008. They were registered for this event for the express purpose of giving them opportunities to learn more about the changing nature and practice of higher education quality assurance. The forum, entitled 'AUQF2008 Quality and Standards in Higher Education: Making a Difference', was also attended by academics and higher education quality practitioners from across the Asia-Pacific region. Discussions in the Forum were presented in several plenary and parallel sessions, and touched widely on a range of quality assurance and quality enhancement issues. Hence, the Forum offered a range of opportunities for learning and discussion of the changing nature and practice of higher education quality assurance.

MNCEA, Mongolia

The Mongolian National Council for Education Accreditation is celebrating its 10th anniversary on the 3 November 2008.

NZUAAU, New Zealand

The New Zealand Universities Academic Audit Unit (NZUAAU) has just begun its fourth cycle of academic audits of New Zealand's eight universities. The fourth cycle returns to a whole-of-institution audit after two cycles with more narrow foci – cycle 2 on research policy and management, support for research students and the research-teaching nexus;

cycle 3 on teaching and learning, programme delivery, and the achievement of learning outcomes.

In the eighteen months between cycles 3 and 4, the Unit has conducted three very focused audits, the last one (conducted during the first half of this year) being an audit against the sections of the Ministry of Education's 'Code of Practice for the Pastoral Care of International Students'. This audit concentrated on support services for international students, the monitoring of attendance to ensure student welfare, and accommodation provisions. New Zealand universities welcome significant numbers of students from the Asia-Pacific region, and audits identified the culture of care and commitment that is shown through the work of international student support staff. Over recent years, New Zealand universities have seen an increasing diversification of countries and cultures from which international students come, with those from China still making up the largest group, and numbers of students from Malaysia, India, Pakistan and the United States of America increasing. New Zealand universities had considerable input into the development in 2002 of the 'Code of Practice', much of which was built on the processes already in place. The Code itself is reviewed from time-to-time, and the Code requires universities to review their own processes and procedures annually to ensure their care for students continues to be relevant. The audits themselves identified areas for improvement as well as good practice in individual universities which will be shared through the publication of an overview report next month on the Unit's website (www.nzuaau.ac.nz/nzuaau_site/reports/reports.htm).

Also requiring the attention of the Unit at this time are the implications for universities arising from a stronger evaluative approach to academic audit that is being developed for the non-university tertiary institutions by the New Zealand Qualifications Authority under commission from the Tertiary Education Commission. This development is part of the

Presentation of ONESQA gift

Government's latest tertiary education reforms. The development of evaluation questions, and the evaluation indicators that might be expected in response to those questions, are concentrating on teaching and learning and the outcomes for students as learners. The challenge for the think tank drawn from the university sector to assist the Unit is to determine evaluation questions best suited to universities, and to extend this work into other areas which are of crucial importance to universities in New Zealand—the research environment to teaching and learning, the Treaty of Waitangi, academic and general staff, management and administrative staff, community engagement, external academic collaborations and partnerships, and, last but not least, institutional quality assurance. This is very

much in the early stages of a work in progress, and work by the Unit in this area will be shared with the university community before being made available to the wider community.

ONESQA, Thailand

ONESQA would like to announce that the first edition of their e-Journal will be published this week, and they invite APQN members to contribute articles to future editions by emailing info@onesqa.or.th.

ONESQA held a meeting with delegates from the Jakarta Province Educational Quality Assurance Institution on 15 September 2008 to discuss ongoing quality assurance programs. The meeting was a great success.

UMT, Pakistan

Standardised Assessment and Evaluation in Education

The Department of Education at the School of Social Sciences and Humanities (SSH) at the University of Management and Technology, Lahore, held a seminar on 'Standardised Assessment and Evaluation in Education'. Dr Bashir Gondal (Director, Provincial Educational Assessment System [PEAS]) conducted an interactive seminar on the standardised education assessment system initiated by the Government of Pakistan at both the national and provincial levels, in collaboration with the World Bank. The seminar was attended by PhD scholars of the Department of Education. The participants benefited greatly through an interactive session and discussed some pertinent issues regarding Educational Assessment and Evaluation practices in Pakistan.

GIQAC UPDATE

The Asia-Pacific Quality Network was awarded a Global Initiative for Quality Assurance Capacity (GIQAC) grant for USD$100,000 to cover the period May 2008 to April 2009. The APQN Board has established the GIQAC Management Committee to monitor the progress of projects listed under this grant. The nominated projects include:

- APQN Website: Expansion/ Maintenance and Database Development
- Internship and Cross-regional Staff Exchange Programme
- Training Materials and Resource Package
- Chinese Translation Project

Mr Lay Sopagna and Mr Pen Sithol from Cambodia on internship at PAASCU, Philippines

APQN website

APQN is now relying more on the internet as a platform for information sharing and training. This change has been further enhanced by the access to GIQAC funds, which has facilitated the expansion and development of a Members Only website that is due to be released soon.

The online moderated discussion forum on Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) has now concluded. The forum was organised at the request of APQN members who showed a keen interest in professional development on the subject of IQA.

A working group for the database of consultants and reviewers has also been established.

Internships

Two staff members from Cambodia have already travelled to the Philippines in August to participate in the first internship program hosted by the Philippine Accrediting Association of Schools, Colleges and Universities (PAASCU). The second batch of interns were deployed in late September and consisted of one intern from Bangladesh and one from Vietnam.

Training material development

A consultant was contracted to manage the collection of existing materials provided by the internet, members of the APQN Board, and QA agencies in other countries.

These resources were then analysed and the consolidation process has begun. Other Resource persons will be contacted to obtain more information to strengthen and consolidate the material pool.
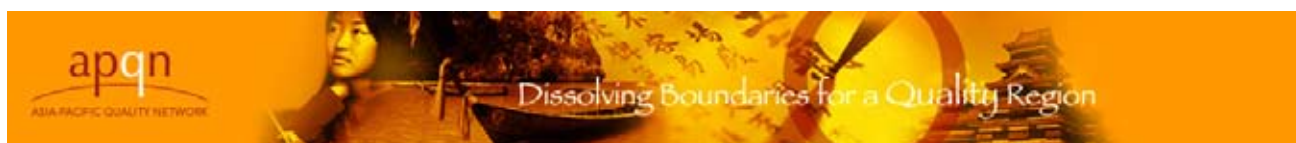
Chinese translation

On 20 June 2008, the Chinese translation project team had a meeting at Shanghai Education Evaluation Institute. Team members came from different provincial educational evaluation agencies. At the meeting the members discussed the project plan and assigned tasks. Team members look forward to completing a product of high quality.

A workshop on cross-border education was then held on the same day. After a brief introduction of APQN and the GIQAC project, Mr Jiang Yanqiao gave a report on cross-border education. The main ideas in this report are: characterising cross-border education, challenges arise from cross-border education, UNESCO-OECD Guidelines, UNESCO-APQN Toolkit, and China's practice for assuring the quality of cross-border education. Team members agreed that the translation project also gives them a good opportunity to understand cross-border education, and how to improve the quality of cross-border education.

The translation process is now progressing well, with continuous feedback and consultation with the translators and other team members.

For more information on GIQAC, go to http://portal.unesco.org/ education/admin/ev.php?URL_ ID=56703&URL_DO=DO_ TOPIC&URL_SECTION= 201&reload=1212761023

UPDATES TO THE APQN WEBSITE

Visit the APQN Virtual Library to read the following recently uploaded documents:

- As a World Bank DGF requirement, APQN underwent an external evaluation of its three years of funding. The Board then prepared an action plan based on the recommendations put forward in the external evaluation report. Both documents, 'External Evaluation of APQN' and the 'Action Plan for the External Evaluation of APQN' are available at www.apqn.org/virtual_library/reports.

- APQN is currently developing a Members Only website that is expected to go live this month. The website will be a password protected area available only to fully paid members of APQN and their staff (access will be restricted until membership fees are paid in full). The development of this website was assisted by the generous assistance given by APQN members who completed the recently distributed online survey. The results of the 'Website Survey Report' are available at www.apqn.org/virtual_library/surveys.

The Asia-Pacific Quality Network is expanding its Virtual Library and would like to ask if you have any papers, reports, presentations, good practices, etc. that you would like to share with other members. If you would like to contribute to the expanding Virtual Library, please send your content to the Liesha Northover, the APQN Administrator, at apqn@auqa.edu.au.

- APQN recently conducted an online workshop on 'Internal Quality Assurance'. The IQA Feedback Survey Report is available at www.apqn.org/virtual_library/surveys. Feedback from participants was positive and many suggestions for future topics were raised by members. As a result, APQN is currently planning its next moderated online forum on 'Writing Accreditation/Evaluation/Audit Reports'. More information will be available soon.

- NIAD-UE has facilitated the translation of the APQN-UNESCO Toolkit: Regulating the Quality of Cross-Border Education into Japanese. This document is now available at www.apqn.org/virtual_library/reports.

Several new staff movement activities have taken place among APQN members. Details of recent staff movement activities are listed at www.apqn.org/services/staff_movement/.

ARTICLES OF INTEREST

Diploma Mills
Results of the recent website survey conducted of APQN members showed that the membership wanted information on diploma mills. Useful information about diploma mills can be obtained from World Education Services (WES) at:
www.wes.org/ewenr/DiplomaMills.htm

Apex universities are the top in the country (Malaysia)
Action Plan of the National Higher Education Strategy:
http://thestar.com.my/columnists/story.asp?file=/2007/9/20/columnists/bravenewworld/18936622&sec=Brave%20New%20World

DIARY DATES

2009 APQN Conference and AGM
Ha Long City, Vietnam
4-6 March 2009
The main theme for the next APQN conference is:

'Quality Assurance in Higher Education: Balancing the National Contexts and International Aspirations'

The sub-themes for the conference are:
- Establishing and strengthening internal quality assurance in HEIs
- National and regional quality assurance networks
- Qualifications Frameworks (QF)
- Quality assurance issues in TNE
- Quality assurance strategy for small states
- QA issues in Open and Distance Learning

The first day of the APQN annual conference will be symposium open to APQN members only. The subsequent 2 days will be an open conference for local and international participants. For more infomration, visit www.moet.gov.vn/apqn/en/index.htm.

International Symposium on University Ranking
Hanoi, Vietnam
13 November 2008

USEFUL WEBSITES

Survey Monkey
APQN now uses Survey Monkey for its surveys. This could be a useful tool that members could also access. Create free online surveys at www.surveymonkey.com/Home_Landing.aspx

APQN region time zones
Remember that APQN has a link at the very bottom of the web pages that gives you exact real times for the different countries in our region. To access this useful tool, either click on the link 'Time Zones' at the bottom of every page on the APQN site, or go to www.apqn.org/tools/time_zones/.

The Observatory on Borderless Higher Education
The Observatory's primary purpose is to provide strategic information to enable institutional leaders and policy makers to make informed decisions relevant to their existing and/or future transnational higher education initiatives. This site is by subscription only. www.obhe.ac.uk/home

2nd International Conference on Assessing Quality in Higher Education (ICAQHE) 2008: Quality in Higher Education - Challenges and Practices
Lahore, Pakistan
1–3 December 2008

The Role of Independent Accrediting Agencies in Vietnam Higher Education
Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam
4 December 2008

APQN advertises events run by both APQN and its members. Full event details for the events below can be found at www.apqn.org/events, and for information about other events around the region and throughout the world, go to www.apqn.org/events/non_apqn.

UNESCO Portal on Higher Education Institutions
This site has been launched on the UNESCO Education website. To access this site, go to: http://portal.unesco.org/education/en/ev.php-URL_ID=56583&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html

UNESCO
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

For information, a permanent link has been created from the Higher Education Page (right hand column) under the section 'Tools', to the project website.