

AUSTRALIAN  
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QUALITY AGENCY

Report of an Audit of  
Griffith University

April 2004

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## ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

The following abbreviations and acronyms are used in this Report. As necessary, they are explained in context.

AUQA.....	Australian Universities Quality Agency
CEQ.....	Course Experience Questionnaire
EFTS.....	effective full-time students
FLAS.....	Flexible Learning and Access Services
GIHE.....	Griffith Institute for Higher Education
GRGS.....	Griffith Research Graduate School
HE.....	higher education
MCEETYA.....	Ministerial Council for Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs
PI.....	performance indicator
PVC.....	Pro Vice-Chancellor
RHD.....	research higher degree

The following are definitions applied by Griffith University to the terms ‘course’ and ‘program’. The same definitions are followed in this Report.

Course.....A unit of academic work, normally taken over a single semester, in which a student enrolls and on completion of which the student is awarded a grade, such grades appearing on the student’s academic record.

Program.....A program is an approved course of study leading to an award of the University. A student is admitted to a program, and on successful completion of all program requirements is awarded the degree to which the program relates. For Research Higher Degree Policy and the Professional Doctorate Policy, ‘program’ means the program of study and the research component undertaken during the period of candidature.

## OVERVIEW OF THE AUDIT

### *Background*

In 2003, the Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA) appointed an Audit Panel to undertake a quality audit of Griffith University.

This report of the audit provides an overview, and then details the Audit Panel's findings, recommendations and commendations. A brief introduction to Griffith University is given in Appendix A; the mission, values and objects of AUQA are shown in Appendix B; and membership of the Audit Panel is provided in Appendix C.

### *The Audit Process*

AUQA bases its audits on each organisation's own objectives, together with the MCEETYA National Protocols for Higher Education Approval Processes ([http://www.dest.gov.au/highered/mceetya\\_cop.htm](http://www.dest.gov.au/highered/mceetya_cop.htm)). The major aim of the audit is to consider and review the procedures an organisation has in place to monitor and achieve its objectives. Full details of the AUQA audit process are available in the AUQA Audit Manual (<http://www.auqa.edu.au>).

On 15 July 2003, Griffith presented its submission (Performance Portfolio), to AUQA, along with a number of supporting documents. The Audit Panel met on 11 August to consider these materials. The Audit Panel Chairperson and Audit Director undertook a preparatory visit to the University on 28 August. During that visit, preliminary clarification of issues and additional information were sought and arrangements for the on-shore Audit Visit discussed.

The Audit Visit took place on 20-23 October 2003. The Panel was primarily based at the Nathan campus, with staff and students located at sites other than the Nathan campus incorporated into the Panel's program. The Panel also spent one day at the Gold Coast campus. The Audit Panel spoke with approximately 200 people during the Visit, including the Chancellor and some external members of the University Council, the Vice-Chancellor and senior management, academic staff, general and technical staff, undergraduate and postgraduate students and representatives of staff unions and of the external community. Sessions at both the Nathan and Gold Coast campuses were reserved for any member of the Griffith community to meet the Audit Panel and three people took advantage of this opportunity.

This Report relates to the situation current at the time of the audit visit, which ended 23 October 2003 and does not take account of any changes that may have occurred subsequently. It records the conclusions reached by the Audit Panel based on the original documentation provided by Griffith University, additional documentation requested by the Panel as well as information gained through interviews, discussion and observation. Every attempt has been made to reach a comprehensive understanding of Griffith's activities as encompassed by the scope of the audit. Nevertheless, the Report does not purport to identify every aspect of quality assurance, its effectiveness or shortcomings.

The Report contains a summary of findings together with lists of commendations and recommendations. The latter suggest possible improvements and in some cases endorse actions already being undertaken by Griffith. It is acknowledged that recommendations in AUQA Audit Reports may have resource implications, and that this can pose difficulties for institutions. Accordingly, AUQA does not prioritise these recommendations, and recognises that it is Griffith University's responsibility to respond in a manner consistent with its local context.

The Audit Panel has structured this Report in a manner similar to the way in which the University structured its Performance Portfolio.

## CONCLUSIONS

This section summarises the main findings and lists the commendations and recommendations. It should be noted that other favourable comments and suggestions are mentioned throughout the text of the Report.

During the audit, but independently of it, the AUQA Board approved a policy whereby those recommendations that relate to matters identified and prioritised for attention by the auditee may be classified as 'affirmations' rather than 'recommendations'. This policy will not come into effect until the first audit beginning after the policy was approved, as it requires a change to the audit method that affects the entire audit process. However, had the policy been in place prior to the start of this audit, there are a number of recommendations in this Report that may well have been classified instead as affirmations in recognition of the University's own process of self-evaluation and improvement.

### *Summary of Findings*

In undertaking the audit of Griffith University, it was evident that a number of different features characterise the context in which the University operates. In very general terms, these are growth, change and a multiple campus environment. Griffith University was formally established by the Griffith University Act 1971. It underwent a significant number of institutional mergers in the period 1989-1991. These mergers brought with them marked growth in student and staff numbers and, with the inclusion of the Gold Coast campus, saw the University operating in one of the fastest growing demographic regions in Australia. Prior to the audit, the University had undergone restructuring of its senior executive positions. The new management structures appear to be operating effectively at this early stage to increase the collaborative activity across different areas within the University. Communication across portfolios from senior levels to academic elements is generally effective.

The Strategic Plan 2003-2007 sets out the University's strategic priorities in the areas of teaching and learning; research and research training; community partnerships; staff; and equity and diversity. These were developed from a major consultative exercise about the future strategic directions of the University undertaken during 2002 and known as the Griffith Project. The Griffith Project document is a clear statement of the University's history and encapsulates the major issues and challenges facing the University. It contains ten commitments which have now been encompassed within the Strategic Plan 2003-2007, one of which is to become one of Australia's top ten universities across the range of standard tertiary sector indicators by the year 2010. There is an evident commitment amongst staff to the University's strategic directions and particularly for the goals embodied in the Griffith Project. AUQA commends Griffith University for the careful, consultative change management processes used in recent planning and restructuring activities including the development of the Strategic Plan 2003-2007 and associated performance indicators and targets. Consistent with the University's ambition to achieve the position of being within the top ten of Australian Universities on a range of measures, it is recommended that the University adopt a more formal approach to the way in which it assesses its performance with external comparators.

The Council commissioned an external review of its operations in 2002. A number of changes have occurred as a result of this review and AUQA commends the Council for the establishment of a performance evaluation framework that is assisting it to evaluate the effectiveness of its own performance and make improvements where necessary.

The University has undertaken extensive review activity over recent years and there is evidence of this generally leading to improvements. The University has a clearly stated formal vision of its quality management system and has made an explicit commitment in its values statement to "continuous quality improvement and accountability as befits a learning organisation". There is further scope for the

University to inform staff about its quality management framework and the interrelationships of its various aspects. The new systems of regular reviews of faculties and of support service divisions are commented on favourably by the Panel in terms of their ability to assist the University's desire to receive greater external input in assessing itself.

Changes to the committee structures responsible for overseeing teaching and learning activities in the University have occurred relatively recently. It is recommended that these be reviewed after an appropriate time to ensure they are operating effectively; particularly since increased powers of delegation for quality assurance of teaching have been granted by the Academic Committee to standing committees. The Report discusses in some detail the current and proposed arrangements for the approval, review and evaluation of courses and programs and recommends that further attention be directed at the planned new arrangements to ensure they will be able to achieve the desired effect. The Panel details some issues for further reflection in this regard.

The University has been attending to the issue of the consistency of its academic programs across campuses. The work undertaken to date has been productive but further work is also recommended.

The University has made a significant investment in support of its Flexible Learning Management Plan. A review recently undertaken by the University has identified a number of issues and challenges it faces in further developing this area and the Panel encourages and supports this ongoing work. Learning Centres provided on all campuses to support on-line teaching and learning are well received by students. A particular area of commendation in support of students' learning, and the work of staff, is the Library which is noted for its responsiveness to the needs of its users across all campuses.

The University operates a relatively small number of programs transnationally through partnership arrangements. AUQA commends the University for the thorough self-review of its transnational teaching programs which has identified a number of areas where quality assurance arrangements for these programs needed to be developed or strengthened. A recommendation is that action be taken to improve the procedures for approving proposals for transnational teaching programs and for their review.

AUQA commends Griffith University for the improvements in a number of teaching-related outcome indicators. AUQA also commends the University for BuzzBack, a web-based interface for students to lodge complaints, compliments or concerns and receive responses to their comments from the University. The system is used for students to offer feedback on teaching, as well as more generally.

With respect to research, AUQA commends Griffith University for its strategies in identifying and resourcing areas of research concentration and for its management of the ongoing implementation strategies of the Research Centres policy. Improvements are noted in many aspects of the University's research and research training outcomes, although the Report includes several recommendations for improvement with respect to some specific aspects.

The Pro Vice-Chancellor (Equity and Community Partnerships) has overall responsibility for leadership in the University's equity and community partnerships activities. The position is relatively new and its establishment is regarded positively by many parts of the University and by many of its external stakeholders as a signal of the importance that the University attaches to both elements of the portfolio. To support this position the Office of Community Partnerships has also recently been established. The Panel comments positively about the potential of this Office to further enhance the links between the University's teaching, research and service activities.

The University is engaged with its various communities in diverse ways. AUQA commends Griffith University for the strong relationships it has established with these communities, and particularly with the Gold Coast community. Some examples of engagement of various forms are discussed in the Report. The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Committee, which acts as an advisory committee to Council, is an important mechanism through which Council can discuss with representatives of these communities the relationship between themselves and the University. The GUMURRII Centre, the

University's major support mechanism for Indigenous Australian students, is performing well in this core task. A recommendation is made that the Centre seek to establish stronger links with similar units in other Australian universities for mutually beneficial professional development and information sharing.

With respect to equity and diversity, a key strategic focus for Griffith, the University acknowledges that there is considerable further progress to be achieved to meet its objectives. The Panel agrees that further progress can yet be made in the achievement of objectives in this area. Nonetheless, trend data since 1999 indicates improved performance on a number of indicators and it is evident that the University is taking seriously its commitments to further improve.

The University's mission statement notes that "in the pursuit of excellence in teaching, research and community service, Griffith University is committed to internationalisation for the enrichment of Queensland, Australia and the international community". Several recommendations are made in the Report relating to how various objectives of internationalisation will be achieved and measured. AUQA commends the University's Excellence in Cultural Experiential Learning and Leadership program which is focused on enhancing international students' confidence and skills in academic, social and professional environments.

Various policies and procedures are discussed in the Report as they relate to staff and the University's human resource management and one recommendation with respect to the performance management of general staff.

A summary of commendations and recommendations follows. Note that these are not prioritised by the Audit Panel. They are listed below in the order in which they appear in the Report.

### ***Commendations***

1. AUQA commends the senior executive of the University for fostering, within the University and its broader communities, a culture of engagement, confidence and optimism.....9
2. AUQA commends Griffith University for the careful, consultative change management processes used in recent planning and restructuring activities including the development of the Strategic Plan 2003-2007 and associated performance indicators and targets..... 10
3. AUQA commends Griffith University Council for the establishment of a performance evaluation framework that is assisting it to evaluate the effectiveness of its own performance and make improvements where necessary..... 12
4. AUQA commends staff of Griffith University's Library for their responsiveness to the needs of students and staff across all campuses..... 19
5. AUQA commends Griffith University for the thorough self-review of its off-shore teaching programs which has identified a number of areas where quality assurance arrangements for these programs needed to be developed or strengthened.....20
6. AUQA commends Griffith University for the improvements in a number of teaching-related outcome indicators.....21
7. AUQA commends Griffith University for BuzzBack, a web-based interface for students to lodge complaints, compliments or concerns and receive responses to their comments from the University.....22

8.	AUQA commends Griffith University for its strategies in identifying and resourcing areas of research concentration and for its management of the ongoing implementation strategies of the Research Centres policy. ....	23
9.	AUQA commends Griffith University for the improved trend in many of its indicators of research and research training performance. ....	26
10.	AUQA commends Griffith University for the strong relationships it has established with its various communities, and particularly with the Gold Coast community. ....	29
11.	AUQA commends the evident commitment to equity that is demonstrated by the establishment of the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Equity and Community Partnerships) position. ....	30
12.	AUQA commends Griffith University for the Excellence in Cultural Experiential Learning and Leadership (Excell) program. ....	34

### ***Recommendations***

1.	That, in keeping with the objective to measure its performance against the ‘Top 10’ universities in Australia, Griffith University ensure that it undertakes sufficient and appropriate external comparisons. The University has itself identified the need for more, and more formalised, external comparisons. ....	11
2.	That Griffith University give further attention to embedding its quality management system in a systematic way throughout the University. ....	12
3.	That Griffith University clarify the roles and responsibilities of senior staff in the faculty and support service division review processes and ensure that there is a common understanding of how the review systems will contribute to the University’s commitments to continuous quality improvement and accountability. ....	13
4.	That, after some appropriate time, Griffith University’s Academic Committee commission a review of the recently established Programs Committee to ensure that it is operating effectively and that its delegated responsibilities for overseeing the quality assurance of teaching activities are being appropriately fulfilled. ....	15
5.	That the Principles for the Griffith Framework for Evaluating Programs, Courses and Teaching be amended to give effect to the University’s intent for a consistent, simple and systematic approach to program, course and teaching evaluation that allows comparability of data over time and that is applicable to both undergraduate and postgraduate programs. ....	17
6.	That Griffith University continue its efforts to ensure cross-campus equivalence of academic programs by providing opportunities for staff discussion and clarification of what this entails in practice. Consideration could be given to developing a set of principles to guide the University’s cross-campus offerings. ....	18
7.	That, as Griffith University has itself identified, improved procedures for approving proposals for transnational teaching programs and for their review be implemented. Contextual features of intended manner of program delivery, such as its language of instruction, must be taken into account in both approval and review. ....	21
8.	That Griffith University give continued attention to embedding its agreed graduate attributes effectively within its teaching programs. ....	22
9.	That Griffith University ensure that its policy on the minimum resources to be provided to research by higher degree students be implemented by academic elements across all campuses. ....	24

10. That Griffith University develop a more formal system of assuring the quality of supervision of research by higher degree students. ....25
11. That Griffith University further strengthen the mechanisms it has for actively involving postgraduate and research by higher degree students in policy development and the continuous improvement of activities that relate to their programs of study.....26
12. That Griffith University develop strategies for ensuring that research outcomes have an impact on state, national and international communities, as outlined in its research objectives. ....28
13. That Griffith University assist the GUMURRII Centre to establish stronger links with similar units in other universities in Australia to their mutual benefit. ....29
14. That Griffith University ensure that it has the means to monitor progress towards the achievement of all its internationalisation objectives. ....33
15. That Griffith University, through the Griffith Institute for Higher Education or otherwise, ensure that academic staff are supported in its objective of internationalising not only course content but also their approach to teaching.....33
16. That, as identified in the Performance Portfolio, Griffith University ensure that its general staff appraisal system is implemented consistently throughout the institution. ....37



## 1 GOVERNANCE, STRATEGIC PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT

### 1.1 *Context*

In undertaking the audit of Griffith University, it was evident that a number of different features characterise the context in which the University operates. In very general terms, these are growth, change and a multiple campus environment.

Griffith University was formally established by the Griffith University Act 1971. It underwent a significant number of institutional mergers in the period 1989-1991. These mergers brought with them marked growth in student and staff numbers and, with the inclusion of the Gold Coast campus, saw the University operating in one of the fastest growing demographic regions in Australia. Griffith University is currently Australia's ninth largest higher education institution in terms of student load. The growth that the University has experienced as the result of the mergers and its increasing enrolment trend is projected to continue for the immediate to mid-term future. Furthermore, at the time of the audit, the Federal Government had recently announced the allocation of medical places to the University, which it intends to use for the establishment of Griffith Medical School to be based at the Gold Coast campus. For further background information on the University, see Appendix A.

The University operates over five campuses (Nathan, Mt Gravatt, Logan, Gold Coast, and South Bank, where the Queensland Conservatorium and Queensland College of Art are located). Many programs are offered at more than one campus. All faculties and some schools operate across multiple campuses. (The Business Group was in the process of reviewing its structure at the time of the Panel's visit.)

Prior to the audit, the University had undergone restructuring of its senior executive positions. The new management structures appear to be operating effectively at this early stage to increase the collaborative activity across different areas within the University. Communication across portfolios from senior levels to academic elements (or organisational units) is generally effective. In the previous structure, Deans did not hold significant budget or line management responsibilities. This has now been rectified and is regarded by all concerned as a positive change.

#### **Commendation 1**

**AUQA commends the senior executive of the University for fostering, within the University and its broader communities, a culture of engagement, confidence and optimism.**

### 1.2 *Strategic Planning*

#### 1.2.1 Mission, Values and Vision

The University's mission statement notes that "in the pursuit of excellence in teaching, research and community service, Griffith University is committed to innovation, bringing disciplines together, internationalisation, equity and social justice and lifelong learning for the enrichment of Queensland, Australia and the international community". During the audit, the Panel was interested to discover how these commitments are played out throughout the various objectives and activities of the University. In general, it appeared to the Panel that these principles do feature prominently in guiding University developments. However, the maturity and consistency with which they are effected vary and in recognition of this, the University has initiated some reviews and activities to embed the mission more consistently. This will be further discussed in relevant sections of this Report.

### 1.2.2 Goals

The Strategic Plan 2003-2007 sets out the University's strategic priorities in the areas of teaching and learning; research and research training; community partnerships; staff; and equity and diversity. These were developed from a major consultative exercise about the future strategic directions of the University undertaken during 2002 and known as the Griffith Project.

The Griffith Project was initiated by the current Vice-Chancellor following his appointment in January 2002. One outcome of this consultation was a document that brings together a clear statement of the University's history and encapsulates the major issues and challenges facing the University. It contains ten commitments which have now been encompassed within the Strategic Plan 2003-2007. The commitments are that Griffith University:

- *becomes one of Australia's top ten universities across the range of standard tertiary sector indicators by 2010*
- *plans for expansion this decade to a student body of at least 35,000 undergraduate and postgraduate students*
- *secures a potential new campus site within the Gold Coast corridor, working closely with schools and TAFE to create an educational precinct*
- *commences planning for the enhancement of the University's professional training profile, with particular emphasis on allied health areas and architecture, along with planning for new specialisations within its existing arts, business and science offerings*
- *establishes new graduate schools, with a significant new commitment to postgraduate coursework and research training*
- *adopts during 2002 a Research Centre policy, and a research mentoring program based on centres*
- *commits to phased extension of internationalisation, with a target of doubling international education participation by the end of the decade*
- *establishes a dedicated commercialisation unit*
- *establishes an Office for Community Partnerships to build on the University's founding principle of addressing real world problems by organising multi-disciplinary teams from Griffith to tackle pressing social and policy problems in our region*
- *adopts a new marketing and branding strategy for the University*

There is an evident commitment to the University's strategic direction and particularly for the goals embodied in the Griffith Project. The Griffith Project has successfully captured the imagination of staff and external stakeholders to the extent that it continues to have a high profile, perhaps more so than does the subsequent Strategic Plan.

#### **Commendation 2**

**AUQA commends Griffith University for the careful, consultative change management processes used in recent planning and restructuring activities including the development of the Strategic Plan 2003-2007 and associated performance indicators and targets.**

### 1.2.3 Planning framework and resource allocation

The commitments of the Griffith Project have been embraced by academic and administrative elements of the University and are having a practical influence on planning and priority-setting at all levels throughout the organisation. Senior and middle managers are aware of the need to develop plans that identify the ways in which their units will contribute to the achievement of the University's objectives.

At the time of this audit, the University was implementing new planning, budgeting and organisational arrangements to support the commitments of the Griffith Project and the Strategic Plan 2003-2007. It appears that there is a strong alignment between the institutional objectives and 2004 budget allocations. The budget for 2003 and 2004 have both been single-year budgets. Preparation of the 2004 budget included revenue and expenditure projections through to 2007 but a single year budget was adopted by Council due to the (then) uncertainties surrounding the Federal Government's reform package. As recommended by the University's Budget Review Group, there is an intention to move to a longer timeframe budget once external funding circumstances become clearer.

### 1.2.4 Performance indicators

In approving the Strategic Plan, Council also approved a set of quantitative and qualitative performance indicators for each of the core areas of activity included in the Plan (teaching and learning; research and research training; community partnerships; staff; and equity and diversity). The senior executive group report on achievement of these indicators regularly.

A smaller set of fourteen indicators has been selected by Council as the group it will use to monitor progress towards the 'Top 10' objective. This set focuses on teaching; research and research training; equity and internationalisation and also includes one indicator of scale (in terms of student load). Council receives a report on these indicators at each of its meetings. These institutional-level indicators are providing a clear and useful way, for Council and for others within the University, to track performance.

The aspiration to be within the 'Top 10' of universities in Australia is an externally focused objective that requires explicit comparisons with other Australian universities to evaluate the extent of its achievement. The University has recognised that, to date, an external focus in the performance measurement of many of its activities has been relatively absent and that structured benchmarking has been rare. This conclusion is endorsed by the Panel.

#### **Recommendation 1**

**That, in keeping with the objective to measure its performance against the 'Top 10' universities in Australia, Griffith University ensure that it undertakes sufficient and appropriate external comparisons. The University has itself identified the need for more, and more formalised, external comparisons.**

The introduction of external reviews of faculties and organisational elements (see section 1.4.2) will be one way of obtaining increased external input into activities at these levels.

### **1.3 Governance**

The Council commissioned an external review of its operations in 2002. A number of changes have occurred as a result of this review, including Council refocusing its attention to strategic issues as opposed to operational ones, the adoption of a performance evaluation framework to assist Council to monitor its own performance, the development of an extended induction program for new Council members and a review of the Council's committee structure and committee membership. The Panel noted that Council members have a particularly clear, shared understanding of the Council's governance functions as distinct from operational responsibilities of managers within the University.

For several years Council has held an annual retreat at which the Chancellor leads a discussion of Council's performance and priorities for the coming year. Prior to the 2003 retreat, Council members completed an assessment questionnaire developed with the assistance of an external consultant which sought input on aspects of the Council's performance. The results of this exercise have been and will be used to further refine Council's operation.

The Council has initiated a review of risk management strategies within the University which was underway at the time of the audit.

### **Commendation 3**

**AUQA commends Griffith University Council for the establishment of a performance evaluation framework that is assisting it to evaluate the effectiveness of its own performance and make improvements where necessary.**

## **1.4 Quality Management System**

### 1.4.1 Overview

As part of the self-review process undertaken by the University prior to this audit, 86 self-review reports were prepared. A Plan-Implement-Review-Improve framework was adopted. This involved a large cross-section of University staff. The Performance Portfolio submitted to AUQA identifies, for each main area discussed, planned improvements identified from these self-reviews and give timelines for the achievement of each. Some of these are referred to directly in this Report.

The University has a clearly stated formal vision of its quality management system and has made an explicit commitment in its values statement to "continuous quality improvement and accountability as befits a learning organisation". Although the understanding of the various elements of the system and how they work together is variable amongst many staff, staff are nonetheless aware of the importance of the role played by various quality assurance measures developed by the University. There is further scope for the University to inform staff about its quality management framework and the interrelationships of its various aspects.

It was apparent to the Panel that there is an openness to review in recent years at the University, with evidence of ad hoc reviews having been undertaken in relation to specific areas or activities of the University. There is also evidence of activity and change being undertaken as a result of review findings or recommendations. Although they have proved valuable, the University has only more recently been attempting to understand its various review processes as part of an institutional quality management system.

### **Recommendation 2**

**That Griffith University give further attention to embedding its quality management system in a systematic way throughout the University.**

It will also be important to make explicit for staff how the new faculty and division review processes (see section 1.4.2) will integrate into existing elements of the University's Quality Management System and the role that staff will play in effectively implementing these systems.

#### 1.4.2 Faculty and support service division reviews

As noted above, the University's self-review identified, as an item for immediate improvement, the lack of systematic reviews of organisational elements or benchmarking. In May 2003, Council approved new policies for regular reviews of faculties and of support service divisions.

The Faculty Review Process Policy states that the purpose of the faculty reviews is "to improve the academic planning and performance of faculties and their constituent elements through a continuous cycle of self-assessment, benchmarking, critical reflection, forward planning and internal/external peer review". The terms of reference of the reviews cover all aspects of faculty activity (organisation and use of resources, teaching and learning activities, research and research training, industry and community partnerships, equity and diversity and internationalisation) with scope for faculty-specific items to be included in the review as appropriate. It is intended that reviews will be undertaken on a rolling cycle; will commence with a self-review submission from the faculty and that review panels will contain a majority of members external to the University.

The support service division reviews will focus on how the support area can contribute most effectively to the University's strategic directions and will assess the capacity of the area to undertake its core activities and to deal with new challenges or priorities. Reviews are to be five-yearly. As with faculty reviews, the process will begin with a self-evaluation and involve a majority of external members on the review team.

In the light of the University's commitment to continuous quality improvement and accountability, the Panel endorses the proposed systems of organisational unit reviews, which will introduce a regular and systematic evaluation of these entities.

It was evident to the Panel, however, that even at senior levels of the University there is still a need to specify and ensure a common understanding of the aims, scope and responsibilities of designated officers in the review processes. Few senior staff are aware of the role they will play as leaders of the review process within their groups or of mechanisms they might use to ensure that the maximum benefit is derived from every stage of the review process. The Panel suggests that this situation will need to be rectified for the review processes to operate in an optimal fashion.

Once this understanding has been achieved, and provided a robust system for ensuring follow-up of recommendations is used, the review system should add significantly to the University's ability to make evidence-based decisions about priorities for improvement. The reviews will also increase the external element to the University's quality assurances systems which have been recognised as being relatively absent to date.

#### **Recommendation 3**

**That Griffith University clarify the roles and responsibilities of senior staff in the faculty and support service division review processes and ensure that there is a common understanding of how the review systems will contribute to the University's commitments to continuous quality improvement and accountability.**

## 2 TEACHING AND LEARNING

### 2.1 Objectives

The Strategic Plan 2003-2007 strategic priorities for teaching and learning include:

- enhancement of the University's professional education profile;
- expansion this decade to a student body of at least 35,000 undergraduate and postgraduate students;
- internationalise the curriculum and methods of teaching and learning;
- a phased extension of internationalisation with a target of doubling international education participation;
- secure a potential additional campus site within the Gold Coast corridor, working closely with schools and TAFE to create an educational precinct;
- grow the proportion of coursework higher degree students to at least the national average.

The Strategic Plan also commits the University to reviews of three areas. These are:

- review of teaching programs to ensure the rhetoric of interdisciplinarity is achieved in practice, and to ensure consistency in program offerings across campuses;
- review of flexible learning initiatives to build commitment and explore new directions; and
- review of Griffith's niche degree strategy.

These reviews are scheduled for completion by the end of 2003. Although conceived of independently, the Executive Group has determined that the response to the reviews should be considered together and as part of the development of the Academic Plan, which was under development at the time of the audit. The Academic Plan will be used to provide an overarching vision of the academic profile of the University.

### 2.2 Policy and Management

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Teaching and Learning) has responsibility for oversight of teaching and learning strategic priorities and the academic profile across the University.

Academic Committee is the primary body for academic policies, practices and developments. It has a number of sub-committees of which Programs Committee and the Teaching and Learning Excellence Committee are the two primary teaching-related bodies. Programs Committee is responsible for considering program proposals and making accreditation and approval recommendations to Academic Committee. It is further discussed in section 2.3. The Teaching and Learning Excellence Committee has oversight of teaching and learning policy development and advice and the promotion of teaching excellence.

In recent years, Council has been increasing its delegation to Academic Committee and the Panel was informed that Council has confidence in the work of this group. In 2002, following a self-review of its operations, Academic Committee identified that it needed to increase its discussion and debate of issues of local and national strategic significance to the University and express its view of these issues. Meeting agenda now routinely include one substantive item for discussion and a standing item for 'oral statements by members'. A further outcome of the self-review has been a strengthened induction for new members of the Committee, including a briefing by the Chair and an induction kit. The operational changes made

to Academic Committee since its self-review have had the desired effect of strengthening the Committee's engagement with broad educational issues of importance to the University.

### 2.2.1 Student-centered education policy

The University adopted a new Student-Centered Education Policy in June 2003. This was too recent for the Panel to determine the effect of this policy on teaching within the University. Reference to the policy by staff suggested that student-centered education was seen as a way of providing a more integrated focus to various support services and teaching approaches including on-line and other flexible approaches.

## 2.3 *Program Approval and Review*

### 2.3.1 Approval and accreditation of programs

The Program Accreditation Policy requires as a first step the submission of a New Program Concept Proposal which is brought to the Executive Group by the relevant Group Pro Vice-Chancellor. Following approval of the Concept Proposal, a more detailed submission is prepared for the consideration of Programs Committee.

Programs Committee was established in June 2003 to replace Education Committee. It is responsible for considering program proposals and making a recommendation to Academic Committee. The Committee's terms of reference give increased delegation than was the case for the previous Education Committee. This change was made because it was found that the discussions taking place at Education Committee were being re-run in Academic Committee, with little practical benefit from such discussions. Academic Committee members have found the new Committee to be more efficient for Academic Committee's operations.

It was also intended that Programs Committee would place a stronger focus on quality assurance than had been the case with Education Committee. Programs Committee had held five meetings at the time of the Audit Panel's visit and it was therefore too early to evaluate the extent to which it is meeting its terms of reference. Given the important role played by the Programs Committee in the University's quality assurance of its teaching activities and Academic Committee's increased level of delegation to it, it will be important for members of Academic Committee to have confidence in Program Committee's work. The Panel considers that after some appropriate time (perhaps after 12 months or so) a review will be beneficial.

### **Recommendation 4**

**That, after some appropriate time, Griffith University's Academic Committee commission a review of the recently established Programs Committee to ensure that it is operating effectively and that its delegated responsibilities for overseeing the quality assurance of teaching activities are being appropriately fulfilled.**

### 2.3.2 Monitoring and review of programs

Program monitoring of undergraduate programs occurs through Annual Program Reports completed by Program Convenors. The reports include a Strengths-Weakness-Opportunities-Threats analysis and, as part of the reports, Program Convenors are asked to note the intended improvement actions. They also report on a range of centrally established indicators of demand and program outcome. Annual Program Reports are submitted by the Program Convenor to the Head of School, who forwards them to the Dean. The Dean then provides a summary report of the Faculty reports to the Teaching and Learning Excellence Committee. A sample of these reports selected and examined in detail by the Audit Panel suggest that these reports are being completed in a thorough fashion and are sufficiently analytical to allow for the

identification of improvement opportunities. Changes to this system were approved in September 2003 and are discussed later in this Report (see section 2.5).

This annual reporting on programs has been limited to undergraduate programs. In its self-review the University identified that a deficiency in its program evaluation policy has been the lack of a formal policy for the review of postgraduate programs. To date, such review has been the responsibility of schools or faculties if it has been felt necessary. The University has decided that it will implement, in 2004, a more systematic framework for postgraduate programs. The Panel endorses this intention.

The University also has provision for a program 'stocktake evaluation', which may be initiated by the relevant Faculty Dean. The stocktake evaluation is a more detailed investigation into a program than the annual report allows. Some of these evaluations have involved an element of external input, typically via one or more external member(s) being appointed to the evaluation panel. The factors that constitute sufficient grounds for such an evaluation include: a worsening trend or sudden change in key performance indicators; concerns over program viability; or other external considerations such as the need apply for re-accreditation of a professional program.

Since 1999, four stocktake reviews have been completed; a further four stocktake evaluations were in progress at the time of the audit. The Panel saw some completed evaluation reports. They are comprehensive documents that offer suggestions and advice for program improvement. The Panel also sought and was provided with evidence of follow-up action being taken as a result of these stocktake reports.

It appears that the stocktake system is a useful supplement to the annual program reports and that there is sufficient flexibility within the policy to allow for the timing and scope of evaluations, and the composition of evaluation teams, to be adjusted to individual requirements. With the advent of Faculty reviews (see section 1.4.2), there is a need to clarify the future place of stocktake reviews.

## **2.4 Course Approval and Review**

### **2.4.1 Approval of courses**

The Course Approval and Review Policy establishes course outlines as the official statement about the content, delivery, resource requirements and assessment of each course and as the key document considered in the approval of a course. Approval of courses involves peer review within the relevant school(s) and requires sign-off by the relevant Dean.

In preparing for this audit, the University identified the need for improvements in the consistency and comprehensiveness of the content of individual course outlines. It found that not all courses are supported by a current course outline and that, more generally, the system for managing course outlines requires improvement. In response to this finding, the Teaching and Learning Excellence Committee formed a working group to investigate ways of improving course outlines. Recommendations from the working group have now been accepted and it is intended that the Course Outline Policy will be revised to clarify that academic staff are required to develop a course outline in accordance with the standard template and to develop a document management process to ensure that ordering textbooks and other associated procedures are completed.

### **2.4.2 Review of courses**

With respect to course review, the University has also identified that practices are variable and that its course evaluation policy and processes require improvement. While the Panel endorses this finding and encourages action to rectify the situation, it appears that most academic elements have nonetheless established local systems for course evaluation and review and appear to be diligent in addressing issues of concern.

## 2.5 *New Arrangements for the Evaluation of Teaching, Courses and Programs*

The University's self-review identified the need for "a consistent, simple and systematic approach to the evaluation of teaching, courses and programs" and the Panel endorses this. 'Principles for the Griffith Framework for Evaluating Programs, Courses and Teaching' was approved by Academic Committee in September 2003. The Principles are described as constituting "the minimum standards required by the University in order to assure the quality of its curriculum, teaching and learning".

Under the new policy, existing annual program monitoring reports (see section 2.3.2) are to be supplemented by three-yearly evaluations of suites of cognate or related programs. Courses are to be evaluated after their first offering, after major revision, or where concerns are raised by students and otherwise routinely; normally a minimum of every two years.

The Principles outline a number of different suggested methods of evaluation, including student feedback (via standard instruments, focus groups, qualitative questionnaires); academic peer review, and external stakeholder evaluation. The policy states that "student feedback surveys with standard items, such as Student Evaluation of Teaching and Student Evaluation of Courses, will allow for the systematic collection and comparability of data over time". Although these instruments are included in the policy as 'suggested' evaluation methods, their use is not clearly mandated. It appeared to the Panel that the procedures outlined within the document will not achieve the desired outcome as it is expressed both within the document and by senior staff. The Panel's concern about the effect of the policy was reinforced by the lack of awareness among school and faculty staff of the planned changes.

Furthermore, as noted in section 2.3.2, the University has identified the need to formalise its review of postgraduate programs, which the Panel endorses. The evaluation framework is intended to include postgraduate programs, although the current policy gives relatively little consideration to the techniques applicable to the evaluation of programs at this level.

### **Recommendation 5**

**That the Principles for the Griffith Framework for Evaluating Programs, Courses and Teaching be amended to give effect to the University's intent for a consistent, simple and systematic approach to program, course and teaching evaluation that allows comparability of data over time and that is applicable to both undergraduate and postgraduate programs.**

## 2.6 *Academic Standards*

From its discussions with academic staff, it is clear to the Panel that a variety of views are held about what constitutes appropriate mechanisms and strategies for assuring academic standards. While staff were unable to point to an agreed University policy or practice on how standards are or should be assured, sound practice of various types is well embedded in some elements. In academic elements offering professional programs, considerable reliance is placed on meeting the requirements for professional accreditation.

In each faculty, a Faculty Assessment Board has been formed to oversee the implementation of University Assessment Policy in the faculty. Each semester, it reviews and approves the results in each course offered within the faculty. In faculties with schools across more than one campus, School Assessment Panels are formed as sub-committees of the Board.

A review of the operation of Assessment Boards undertaken in January 2003 identified diversity in their manner of operation. As a consequence, the University has decided to revise the membership and constitutions of both the Assessment Boards and Assessment Panels and to prepare guidelines for their work. The Panel supports this work. Aside from these considerations, the Faculty Assessment Boards and School Assessment Panels are working well as fora for discussions of assessment outcomes. To some extent, discussions of assessment practice also take place.

Various aspects of assessment policy and practice had recently been reviewed or were undergoing review at the time of the Panel's visit. These include the abovementioned review of the operation of Assessment Boards; academic misconduct and plagiarism (review ongoing); the Review of Academic Standing, Progression and Exclusion Policy (completed July 2003); and a review of the application of the criteria-based assessment policy.

The Teaching and Learning Excellence Committee's working party into academic misconduct is undertaking a thorough examination of the Academic Misconduct Policy. This has included a survey of faculty practices in relation to the policy. The review has highlighted a number of areas in which the policy is being differently interpreted and applied across the University and has recommended a number of constructive approaches to address these issues. The Panel endorses the work of the review group and encourages ongoing attention to strengthening the University's procedures with respect to academic misconduct.

## **2.7 Cross-campus equivalence**

Given the multi-campus nature of Griffith University, cross-campus consistency with respect to teaching is a major challenge currently facing the University, but one which is the subject of active consideration in the form of a major review initiated by the Griffith Project. The aim of the review is to find ways of ensuring that programs offered at different campuses are equivalent in terms of program objectives and outcomes. Faculty-specific reviews have been, or are being, undertaken in each faculty, overseen by the Deans, to examine whether programs are delivered consistently across campuses.

In discussions with staff, it was evident to the Panel that there is considerable confusion about what constitutes 'equivalence', with some staff interpreting equivalence to mean that content should be identical. In general terms, there is a tension between a desire to standardise programs to a certain extent whilst also retaining sufficient flexibility for appropriate forms of customisation. While these are issues that are not particular to Griffith University, there would be considerable benefit to the University in ensuring that staff discussion of them is fostered so that a more shared understanding may emerge.

### **Recommendation 6**

**That Griffith University continue its efforts to ensure cross-campus equivalence of academic programs by providing opportunities for staff discussion and clarification of what this entails in practice. Consideration could be given to developing a set of principles to guide the University's cross-campus offerings.**

## **2.8 Flexible Learning**

The University has had a Flexible Learning Management Plan since 1994 and has made significant investment to support the implementation of this Plan. Blackboard was adopted as the platform for the University's flexible delivery through the 'Learning @ Griffith' portal in 2001. Every course at the University has a site through this portal.

Learning Centres are located across all campuses and are developed in accordance with detailed design specifications. These provide for open access computer work areas, computer-equipped teaching rooms, a cluster of seminar rooms, group study areas, and a help desk. At the time of the Panel's visit there were 12 Centres in total, three of which allow 24-hour access to students. Nathan Campus is the site of a Postgraduate Learning Centre. Students met by the Panel commented very favourably about these facilities.

Griffith Flexible Learning and Access Services (FLAS) is located within the Division of Information Services and provides a wide range of support for on-line course developments within the University. Academic staff who have worked with FLAS speak highly of the services and support they received.

Within schools and faculties, there are moves to ensure that support from FLAS is directed towards those courses and programs identified strategically for on-line development. Success in this strategy will be important to ensure that the University gains maximum benefit from the very significant investment it has made in FLAS. Efforts to evaluate the effect and educational outcomes of this approach will also be important.

### 2.8.1 Flexible Learning Review

At the time of the Panel's visit, a Flexible Learning Review that had been initiated by the Griffith Project was close to completion. The Griffith Project noted that there is a need to "create a shared understanding of Griffith's flexible learning philosophy, a vision that encompasses the appropriate use of technology for student centered learning rather than the substitution of face-to-face teaching by on-line delivery" (Griffith Project 2002, p 16). The University-wide review was signalled as an opportunity to evaluate the University's investment in flexible learning to date and identify the next steps for the development for the learning centres and the support provided by Griffith Flexible Learning and Access Services, and the optimal mix of distributed learning techniques for undergraduate and postgraduate courses.

The review has identified that "there is a lack of consistently collected data on implementation, uptake and utilisation, the student experience and the educational outcomes" of the University's investment into flexible learning and has identified a number of major challenges confronting the University in this area, such as managing the diverse expectations of staff and students in relation to what flexible learning can offer and ensuring that the maximum return on investment is secured. The review makes a total of 20 recommendations which will now need to be considered and prioritised by the University. The consideration of these recommendations will be important to clarify the role of flexible learning within the University and move flexible learning to a more core consideration within the University's program planning. The Panel encourages and supports this ongoing work.

## 2.9 Information Services

The Division of Information Services provides library, information and communication technology, and learning support services (including resource development, information literacy and learning assistance) across all campuses. The Division provides support of the Learning Centres mentioned in section 2.8.1.

The Division has won a number of national awards, such as the 2000 ALIA Award for Innovation (Academic Libraries); the 2001 AVCC Best Solutions Award (OH&S Conference) and the 2002 ASCILITE Award for Best Web Project and Best Software Project.

### 2.9.1 The Library

The University maintains physical library collections at each of its campuses, which are supplemented by various electronic resources accessible from any location. The Library collection is generally found by both staff and students alike to be suitable for their needs. Whilst the physical book collection is distributed, requests for books held at another campus are processed quickly and students experience little difficulty in gaining access to other collections in a timely fashion. Students met by the Panel were highly appreciative of this service.

The Library has clear and concise documentation relating to its priorities and performance in key areas and is an active participant in the consortia and benchmarking projects. Library staff have strong service-orientation to their work and were strongly praised by both staff and students for this attribute.

### Commendation 4

**AUQA commends staff of Griffith University's Library for their responsiveness to the needs of students and staff across all campuses.**

### **2.10 Professional Development for Teaching**

Griffith Institute for Higher Education (GIHE) provides professional development services and programs for all academic staff. GIHE offers a range of activities and resources that are designed to assist academic staff to improve the quality of their students' learning and enhance the quality of their teaching practice. In particular, it offers workshops, seminars, symposia and on-line resources and provides consultations with individuals or faculties/schools on request. Flexible Learning and Access Services has particular responsibility for support staff in their flexible learning activities (see section 2.8). Staff met by the Panel that had attended a GIHE workshop, or otherwise interacted with the Institute, commented favourably on the support offered to them.

Since semester 1, 2003 all newly appointed academic staff without previous university teaching experience have been required to complete the non-award GIHE Certificate of University Teaching within 12 months of their appointment. The Certificate can be taken as an intensive program over two days or as a series of sessions throughout a semester. A total of 36 staff completed the Certificate in semester 1, 2003. It will be important for the University to monitor compliance with this policy, given the relatively low number of Griffith staff who have participated in this course in the past. An 'induction to teaching and learning' program has been developed by GIHE for new sessional staff, completion of which is mandatory. As with the Certificate program, a system will need to be developed to ensure compliance with the attendance policy.

With respect to evaluating its own effectiveness, GIHE is developing a system to gather information on both its "coverage and impact" across the University. The Panel endorses this activity and also encourages GIHE to consider ways of benchmarking its activities with other Australian universities.

### **2.11 Transnational Teaching Programs**

The University has taken a relatively conservative approach to the development of off-shore teaching partnership arrangements and at the time of the audit had a total of eight active agreements. At the time of the audit, it was involved in offering eight programs off-shore through partner organisations in Hong Kong, India, Japan and Singapore.

As part of the self-review leading up to the audit, the University undertook a detailed examination of all aspects of these programs. This has proved to be timely and identified a number of areas where quality assurance arrangements for these programs needed to be established or strengthened.

An illustration of this is a program being taught in a language other than English which now has a system of translation and moderation of assignments by Griffith staff. Prior to this mechanism being in place, there was no systematic way for the staff within the school to be sure that the marking standards being applied to this cohort of students were equivalent to those for students studying on-campus. In another program, the University's review revealed the necessity to obtain accreditation for the program by a professional accreditation body in the host country.

#### **Commendation 5**

**AUQA commends Griffith University for the thorough self-review of its off-shore teaching programs which has identified a number of areas where quality assurance arrangements for these programs needed to be developed or strengthened.**

While this self-review has been very positive in identifying areas for corrective action, there is a need for the University to extend and formalise the systems it has in place for maintaining institutional oversight of the approval and regular review of off-shore teaching programs so that it is better placed to address issues at the planning phase of a project.

Proposed off-shore programs are required to be approved by Programs Committee, according to the standard process for all programs. It appeared to the Panel that Programs Committee could take a stronger investigation of the proposed educational model and assessment/moderation procedures. Once approved, off-shore programs are reviewed along with other programs. Little consideration appears to be given to the special nature of these programs and the particular context in which they are operating. This is particularly the case when programs are being offered in languages other than English.

The University notes in its Performance Portfolio that it needs to implement improved procedures for approving proposals for off-shore teaching programs and for their review. The Panel concurs. This is a significant issue of institutional risk.

### **Recommendation 7**

**That, as Griffith University has itself identified, improved procedures for approving proposals for transnational teaching programs and for their review be implemented. Contextual features of intended manner of program delivery, such as its language of instruction, must be taken into account in both approval and review.**

## **2.12 Outcomes**

The University's performance indicators for teaching and learning include the following quantitative measures: student load; student satisfaction as measured by Course Experience Questionnaire (CEQ) profile scores; retention; pass rate; and employability. Qualitative performance indicators include the development of a five year academic plan (by 2004) and the completion of reviews initiated by the Griffith Project on niche degree, cross-campus consistency and flexible learning (by end of 2003).

The University can demonstrate a trend of improved performance across a number of measures. A commendable increase in its employment rate has been achieved in recent years (from 69% in 1998 to 81% in 2001). Its national position on this indicator is also showing improvement. CEQ scores on the generic skills scale have consistently been in the top ten nationally since 1998. Improving trends in the overall satisfaction and good teaching scales are also evident. Although there has been some recent improvement in student attrition, the University has recognised that its performance in student retention and attrition is of concern. This was one of the matters discussed in the Griffith Project and is noted in the University's Performance Portfolio as a targeted area for improved performance. In 2002 a Student Retention Project was funded by the Vice-Chancellor's Strategic Development Fund to develop a systematic framework of measures to improve performance in this area. Work is ongoing.

The University was the 2002 winner of the Institutional Award from the Australian Awards for University Teaching and has had finalists and winners in either the Law and Legal Studies or Arts and Humanities categories in 1999, 2000, 2001 and 2003. The University is a finalist for the 2003 Institutional Award, which is due to be announced in December 2003.

### **Commendation 6**

**AUQA commends Griffith University for the improvements in a number of teaching-related outcome indicators.**

#### **2.12.1 Graduate attributes and generic skills**

The University has specified the generic skills and abilities that graduates of a Griffith University bachelor's degree should demonstrate. A recent study undertaken by the University has examined the extent to which its teaching and assessment practices addressed the University's desired graduate attributes and generic skills. This demonstrated that the quality of course outlines in this regard could be significantly improved. The Panel notes that the Griffith Graduate Project has been aimed at sponsoring various activities that will link 'the Griffith Graduate' directly to curriculum design and delivery. In

addition, a Generic Skills Mapper Tool has been developed to enable staff to track the skills being developed at course level and across a whole program although few staff met by the Panel were aware of this tool.

### **Recommendation 8**

**That Griffith University give continued attention to embedding its agreed graduate attributes effectively within its teaching programs.**

#### 2.12.2 Feedback from students

Offices responsible for providing administrative or academic services to students typically seek student feedback via surveys which may be written or conducted on-line. Focus groups are also sometimes used. A University-wide Student Satisfaction Survey is also conducted regularly.

The University notes in its Performance Portfolio that “a weakness with past surveys was the lack of co-ordinated feedback of results and improvements to students” (p. 2.17). As a result, the University has in 2003 developed the BuzzBack website, designed to report to students the findings of student surveys and the changes that will be made as a result. It also includes an area where students can lodge a concern, comment or compliment, which is then responded to by the appropriate unit or element. Usage statistics suggest that the website is a useful additional vehicle for communication between the University and its students.

### **Commendation 7**

**AUQA commends Griffith University for BuzzBack, a web-based interface for students to lodge complaints, compliments or concerns and receive responses to their comments from the University.**

The opportunities for students to give feedback on teaching should be strengthened by the new evaluation policy discussed in section 2.4. As indicated in that section, there will be a need to tighten the policy to ensure that this opportunity is available to students on a consistent and systematic basis and that there is appropriate follow-up.

### 3 RESEARCH AND RESEARCH TRAINING

#### 3.1 Objectives

The University's strategic goal for research and research training is "to build on strengths of national prominence in research and research training, resulting in research outcomes that significantly impact in both scholarly communities and state, national and international communities" (Strategic Plan 2003 – 2007, p. 4).

Particular strategic priorities for research and research training include:

- develop Research Centres of strategic national and international significance, in line with the University's new Research Centres Policy;
- establish a dedicated commercialisation unit;
- evaluate support and training available for academics and administrative units undertaking entrepreneurial activity and conduct a consultative review of intellectual property provisions and the Work for Outside Bodies policy;
- establish new graduate schools, with significant commitment to postgraduate coursework and research training.

#### 3.2 Research Concentration

Research Centres are the centerpiece of the University's research strategy. A new policy relating to the role and operation of Research Centres was approved in August 2002. The Centres are expected to be the locus of "high-quality thematic research that derives a distinctive edge by combining disciplines or perspectives in addressing a range of problems" (Strategic Plan 2003-2007, p 4).

In implementing the policy a comprehensive selection process was undertaken, with existing and proposed Centres applying for recognition as a centre in one of three categories. This selection process involved input from external reviewers. Centres are categorised as Category A, B or C Centres based on factors such as the number of staff in the Centre, the level of performance of its members and the Centre's future development plans. Council has now formally approved Centres in each of the categories. In addition, a number of provisional centres were recognised. These Centres have been provided with developmental support and were invited to submit a revised application within six months.

A Research Centre Implementation Group has been formed to oversee and manage the implementation of the policy. This Group has cross-University representation and includes some students. It was evident to the Panel that the new approach to research centres has been well received by the University community. In particular, the selection process was undertaken with a strong developmental emphasis which has been especially valued by staff. Now that the first phase has been completed, the Implementation Group faces significant challenges in identifying an agreed approach to the appropriate forms of relationship between academic elements and Research Centres and specifying the lines of responsibility and accountability for staff and RHD students. While these are challenging issues that may take time to resolve, the Research Centre Implementation Group has a good understanding of the various complexities and the importance of securing a generally agreed position.

#### Commendation 8

**AUQA commends Griffith University for its strategies in identifying and resourcing areas of research concentration and for its management of the ongoing implementation strategies of the Research Centres policy.**

### **3.3 Research Policy and Support**

The Office for Research provides a range of services to new and established researchers including advice on research funding sources, research grant applications and research ethics. The services offered by the Office for Research are regarded very highly by new career and experienced researchers alike and staff in this area have a strong client-oriented approach to their work.

The Griffith Project noted the need for a more commercial approach to research with an emphasis on “entrepreneurship with integrity”. One of the objectives of the Strategic Plan is to establish a dedicated commercialisation unit and this has been achieved with the recent creation of the Office for Commercialisation. There is a considerable amount of optimism from staff that the Office for Commercialisation will lead to improvements in the support offered to them in identifying and negotiating with potential commercial opportunities for their research. Early indications suggest that this is beginning to happen.

The Intellectual Property Policy was being reviewed at the time of the audit, with particular emphasis being placed on addressing the ownership of flexible learning products. Some tools have been developed to assist staff assess the potential commercial attractiveness of their research, although no staff met by the Panel were aware of these. The Work for Outside Bodies Policy and its accompanying procedures were also under review. It appears that this review is timely, since the general perception amongst staff is that the policy is cumbersome and overly restrictive. It will be important for the University to ensure that both reviews lead to the implementation of more appropriate policy in both areas and that this is implemented effectively.

### **3.4 Research Training Objectives**

The University notes in its Performance Portfolio that it wishes to attract and train high-quality research students in its areas of research strength. A particular objective for its research training program is “to establish new graduate schools, with significant commitment to postgraduate coursework and research training”.

#### **3.4.1 Management of research training**

At the time of the audit, a proposal for the establishment of Griffith Research Graduate School (GRGS) had recently been approved. This is consistent with the objective included in the Strategic Plan. The aim of GRGS is to improve the effectiveness of research training across the University. It is intended that it will oversee all aspects of the administration of RHD candidates through to completion and have an important quality assurance role in monitoring the implementation of relevant University policy. The Dean of Graduate Studies (formerly the Dean, Postgraduate Education) heads the School.

In some areas, there is a need for the University to increase its ability to ensure that policies are being effectively implemented by academic elements across all campuses. An illustration of this is the University statement on the minimum resources to be provided to all RHD students, which is not being met by some schools. Students met by the Audit Panel described highly variable satisfaction with the resources available to them.

#### **Recommendation 9**

**That Griffith University ensure that its policy on the minimum resources to be provided to research by higher degree students be implemented by academic elements across all campuses.**

The University has noted, from student feedback, that there is a need to attend to the intellectual climate that surrounds RHD students during their program. Efforts have already been made to increase student awareness of opportunities, at a University level, to participate in research seminars and other events. The Panel considers that there is considerable scope for the Griffith Research Graduate School to lead and

provide guidance to academic elements on such matters which are recognised institutional imperatives. Its establishment should provide considerable benefits to the University's ability to further enhance its management of its RHD programs and the support for these students.

### **3.5 Quality Assurance of Supervision**

Supervisors for RHD students are formally appointed by the Dean, Graduate Studies on the recommendation of the relevant Faculty Dean. Since August 2003, University policy requires that all RHD students be appointed at least two supervisors. Principal supervisors are expected to demonstrate a record of successful supervision and to have substantial relevant research experience. Less experienced supervisors are appointed initially as a co-supervisor. Under the previous policy, it was possible that in special circumstances one supervisor would be appointed and a small number of students are still in this situation.

The University has recognised the important role that supervision plays in the successful completion of RHD students and has been taking active steps in recent times to improve training and development opportunities for supervisors. For instance, GIHE and the then Office of the Dean, Postgraduate Education have jointly developed supervisor training workshops. From 2003, these workshops are offered as part of a Certificate in Postgraduate Education. In 2002, approximately 230 academic staff attended a supervision workshop. The Panel's discussions with staff who have attended the workshops suggest that they are generally well-appreciated.

The Griffith Research Graduate School oversees a system of annual progress reports which are completed by student and supervisor. Major responsibility for monitoring progress and assessing the annual progress report rests with the supervisor and Faculty Dean. Issues arising from progress reports that are not able to be satisfactorily resolved at Faculty level are referred to the Dean of Graduate Studies. While these reports are used by some students to raise problems or concerns, other students met by the Panel had little confidence that doing so would result in any action being taken.

#### **Recommendation 10**

**That Griffith University develop a more formal system of assuring the quality of supervision of research by higher degree students.**

##### **3.5.1 Communication and feedback with RHD students**

The University uses the annual Postgraduate Research Experience Questionnaire (PREQ) to monitor the quality of its research training programs. PREQ results for the past three years show results in keeping with national averages on all items except 'research infrastructure' and 'intellectual climate' where student satisfaction is below the national average. The University is working to address these issues. Internal surveys are also conducted periodically (most recently in 2002).

The University has instituted some useful discussion fora with RHD students. Examples include the Dean, Graduate Studies' Advisory Group, which meets approximately once per semester and the Postgraduate Forum, a monthly meeting at which students and staff can discuss issues such as time management, research ethics, managing relationships with supervisors etc. Students also have access to considerable amounts of written information about the University's policies and procedures for research training in the form of emails from the GRGS, handbooks and via the website. Nonetheless, postgraduate and RHD students need to feel more fully part of a chain of communication and see evidence of the outcomes of their participation in surveys and through representative positions. The Panel noted the significant goodwill most RHD students have toward supporting the University and that many students have a genuine desire to make a contribution to the University's improvement efforts. Some students perceive that their input in this regard is generally not well appreciated by the University.

**Recommendation 11**

**That Griffith University further strengthen the mechanisms it has for actively involving postgraduate and research by higher degree students in policy development and the continuous improvement of activities that relate to their programs of study.**

**3.6 Research Outcomes**

The quantitative performance indicators for the 'Top 10' objective for research are: total research income; share of ARC discovery and link grants; involvement in Co-operative Research Centres (CRC); number of publications and patents; and RHD load and completions. The Strategic Plan identifies other additional quantitative and some qualitative indicators to be met, with targets for achievement.

There is evidence of improvement in a number of research performance measures in recent years. All classes of research income (competitive grants and other public sector income, industry income, CRC funding) have increased per FTE academic staff since 1998. Research publications and RHD load have also increased in this time. The proportion of academic staff with a PhD has increased from 55% in 1998 to 67% in 2003. Of the six indicators in the 'Top 10' indicator scorecard, one (involvement in CRC) already places the University within the top ten of Australian universities.

**Commendation 9**

**AUQA commends Griffith University for the improved trend in many of its indicators of research and research training performance.**

## 4 COMMUNITY SERVICE AND PARTNERSHIPS

### 4.1 Objectives

The Strategic Plan goals for these areas of activity are:

- To develop further the strong sense of commitment in the University to our communities, through sustained levels of interaction, and to be recognised as an integral part of those communities through contributions to their cultural, social and business development
- To establish a structure and systematic processes for planning, stimulating, further developing and co-ordinating the community engagements of the University, especially through partnerships; and
- To focus efforts in international partnerships to broaden the education of students and to increase the University's international standing

### 4.2 Leadership and Strategy

The Pro Vice-Chancellor (Equity and Community Partnerships) has overall responsibility for leadership in the University's equity and community partnerships activities. The position is relatively new, with the incumbent starting in the role in May 2003. The establishment of the Pro Vice-Chancellor portfolio is regarded positively by many parts of the University and by many of its external stakeholders as a signal of the importance that the University attaches to both elements of the portfolio.

To support this position the Office of Community Partnerships has also recently been established. The Office has a number of specific objectives to strategically and systematically strengthen the University's existing links with its communities. It has been tasked with promoting the University externally and to scan issues of current concern to the community and identify those to which the University can make a contribution. As the Office of Community Partnerships becomes established the University has identified the need for it to establish effective communication strategies with other offices in the University, with academic elements and key community partners.

The Office of Community Partnerships is too new for the Panel to comment on its effectiveness in supporting the University's objectives in community service and partnerships. What is apparent is the significant potential for the Office to further enhance the links between the University's teaching, research and service activities.

The Community Service Committee which has been responsible for providing advice on the strategic framework and promotion of community service within the University was under review at the time of the audit. The review will examine the role, membership and operation of the Committee in the context of the new portfolio and is timely.

The University has targeted that a conceptual and strategic framework for community partnerships should be developed by the end of 2003 and that subsequently a quality assurance framework within which to monitor and assess community partnerships will be developed. The Panel supports and encourages this ongoing work.

### 4.3 Activities and Outcomes

The University supports a number of multidisciplinary community partnership projects that are intended to foster opportunities for teaching, learning and research.

One example is the EcoCentre at the Nathan Campus which provides environmental education and training programs to the community and particularly to primary and secondary school students. The EcoCentre has strong links with State Government departments and Brisbane city authorities and has formed a Community Network of 16 community groups. The Network provides opportunities for productive links amongst the member groups and between member groups and the University. In one instance, this has led to a successful research project grant.

Another illustration is the Logan Education Alliance which comprises ten schools from the Logan region, the Logan Institute of TAFE and the University. For the University, the Alliance has provided a structured means of gaining input from local schools in the planning, delivery and content of the Bachelor of Education program and has allowed University staff to work more closely with members on research and professional development projects. This has led to joint conference presentations and research grant applications.

The strategic objective that the University's research and research training will "build on strengths of national prominence in research and research training, resulting in research outcomes that significantly impact in both scholarly communities and state, national and international communities" links strongly the University's research and community service activities. Most academic staff met by the Panel could point to ways in which their individual research intersects with local communities. The Office of Community Partnerships is yet to give consideration to how this objective will be supported. It is clear that close and effective links with the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) and the Office for Research will be important for any work in this area. Defining measures to assess not only activity but also impact will be a challenge.

#### **Recommendation 12**

**That Griffith University develop strategies for ensuring that research outcomes have an impact on state, national and international communities, as outlined in its research objectives.**

In addition to these institutional projects, the Panel was provided with many examples of the ways in which academic and some general staff interact with communities. The Strategic Plan notes that the University wishes to consider the role of general staff in fostering community partnerships. The Panel requested and was provided with information about the ways in which general staff are supported in community engagement projects. In part, this is achieved through the annual competitive round of Community Service Grants, which are available to any member of staff. Since 1999, 9 projects led by general staff have been funded through this scheme (with an average grant of approximately \$6,000). In addition, various service units of the University are engaged in activities in conjunction with State Government departments and other local universities, TAFEs and colleges.

#### **4.4 Regional Engagement**

Each of the University's campuses is situated in diverse communities. The Panel was provided with examples of different forms of engagement by staff at each site that respond to the needs of these various groups.

The University's campus at the Gold Coast is in an area that is one of the fastest growing demographic regions in the country. In 2000, a review of the status of the Gold Coast campus in relation to the University was undertaken. In particular, the review committee was asked to consider the possibility of the campus becoming a university in its own right. The main recommendation of the review committee's "that the educational interests of the Gold Coast region are best served by the Gold Coast campus continuing as an integral part of the multi-campus Griffith University". Following Council's acceptance of this recommendation, it appears that there is now widespread acceptance by staff and the community of this position. Gold Coast community members met by the panel are particularly positive about the process of consultation and engagement that took place during and after this review. The Gold Coast

Advisory Council comprises leaders from the Gold Coast region and has been an effective way of progressing many of the development priorities for the campus.

The Panel was given examples of strong and innovative links between the Logan Campus and its community.

#### **Commendation 10**

**AUQA commends Griffith University for the strong relationships it has established with its various communities, and particularly with the Gold Coast community.**

#### **4.5 Relationships with Indigenous Communities**

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Committee is advisory to Council. The Chancellor has recently become a member. The Panel considers that this Committee is an important mechanism through which Council can discuss with representatives of these communities the relationship between themselves and the University.

The GUMURRII Centre is the major support mechanism for Indigenous Australian students. The Centre provides learning resources, and individual consultations and tutorials on all campuses and maintains permanent offices on both the Nathan and Gold Coast campuses. A student support officer is based on each campus and is available to all Indigenous students.

The GUMURRII Centre staff are increasingly becoming involved in giving guest lectures or substantive teaching into courses across the University. This has led to some discussion whether there should be formal academic programs offered through the Centre. While Centre staff are willing to provide this assistance, the demand is such that staff feel that the calls on their time are relatively high.

The GUMURRII Centre is serving well the needs of the Indigenous Australian students at the University and its staff feel supported by the senior executive in their work. However, Centre staff must rely heavily on one another for support and mentoring and it appears to the Panel that there would be considerable benefit in the Centre seeking to establish formal links with similar units in other Australian universities for mutually beneficial professional development and information sharing.

#### **Recommendation 13**

**That Griffith University assist the GUMURRII Centre to establish stronger links with similar units in other universities in Australia to their mutual benefit.**

## 5 EQUITY AND DIVERSITY

### 5.1 Objectives

The University's goal in relation to equity and diversity is "to be a model of best equity practice and policies and a national and international leader in equity issues".

The Equity Strategy 2002-2005 contains different objectives from the Strategic Plan, with a range of strategies, targets and indicators. Strategic priorities for equity are:

- Widen the equity agenda to embrace diversity through an organisational change strategy
- Review current structures to ensure they include a focus on strategies to support the achievement of equity outcomes through utilising diversity for effectiveness and productivity
- Develop a long-term and integrated approach to equity and diversity, embedding the concepts and principles into the key planning approached and business plans of the University
- Develop an ongoing series of events and activities that will further the goals of the diversity agenda
- Review and revise, where necessary, staff and student targets to reflect demographic changes, changes to DEST definitions and measures and the impact of Government policy initiatives
- Increase the number of women in senior academic positions
- Improve retention and success rates for Indigenous Australian students
- Continue to implement the Disability Action Plan to achieve targets in this area
- Increase participation by students from low socio-economic backgrounds

### 5.2 Management

The position of Pro Vice-Chancellor (Equity and Community Partnerships) has oversight of the achievement of equity and diversity objectives within the University.

#### **Commendation 11**

**AUQA commends the evident commitment to equity that is demonstrated by the establishment of the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Equity and Community Partnerships) position.**

The recent reshaping of the function of deans has meant that they have line management responsibility for equity. The University has recognised that some additional support is required to assist managers to pursue and report on equity-related strategies at faculty and within academic elements. It has noted in its Performance Portfolio that in addition to providing assistance with planning and implementation of strategies at local levels, there is a need to improve the availability of equity performance data to faculties.

The Panel's examination of minutes from meetings of the Equity Committee indicates that the Committee is operating effectively in analysing data and trends, planning strategies and monitoring their effect across the range of equity issues. Task groups are occasionally formed as a means of progressing action in particular areas.

### 5.3 Outcomes

The Strategic Plan lists four performance indicators:

- Proportion of low socio-economic status (SES) students
- Number of staff and students with disabilities
- Number of Indigenous Australian staff and students
- Number of women in senior positions

The Council's 'Top-10' report indicators are proportion of low SES students, higher education equity program grant success, and indigenous support fund grant success. The HEEP indicator is selected for the Council's report because it is a composite measure. In relation to these three measures the University is already demonstrating performance within the top ten of Australian universities; an excellent achievement. In these areas the University has comparative information which assists it to assess the achievement of its objective to be "a model of best equity practice and policies and a national and international leader in equity issues". However, no formal international comparisons have been made to date and such information will be required for the University to adequately assess its performance against this objective.

The University notes in its Performance Portfolio that in equity-related areas "outcomes do not yet mirror aspirations. These include achieving not only equity targets but also an organisational culture in which benefits of building diversity are understood and diversity is embraced in all that the University does". The Panel agrees that further progress can yet be made in the achievement of objectives in this area. Nonetheless, trend data since 1999 indicates improved performance on a number of indicators and it is evident that the University is taking seriously its commitments to further improve in this area.

In terms of encouraging a responsive organisational culture, the September 2002 paper 'Enhancing the Equity Agenda at Griffith University: Equity through Diversity' has provoked useful discussion and debate on these issues throughout the University.

#### 5.3.1 Staff outcomes

The proportion of women in positions at Levels D & E has been increasing in recent years and in 2003 accounts for 22% of staff (compared with 17% in 1999). Although this figure remains below the target of 25%, the improvement trend is encouraging. Women account for 30% of staff at Pro Vice-Chancellor level and above in 2003 (an increase from 25% in 1999) and 46% of Dean/Academic Director positions (an increase from 21% in 1999).

The proportion of Indigenous Australians and people with disabilities on staff have remained static since 1999. A Task Group was formed in 2001 to develop strategies for achieving the target for Indigenous Australian staff and it has stimulated considerable activity. One action has been the appointment of an Indigenous Co-ordinator in 2002 whose role is to develop links with Indigenous Australian alumni and various community agencies to increase the number of Indigenous Australian applicants for vacancies.

The University operates an Academic Staff Equity Development Program which enables six academic staff per year from an equity group to be released from teaching requirements for one semester so that they may concentrate on research/PhD work. This has proved a highly successful practical measure of support for these staff.

#### 5.3.2 Student outcomes

The University's equity indicators for commencing students in 2002 were below national average for indigenous, low SES and female RHD students and slightly above the average for students with disabilities. Further work is clearly required. The Panel considers that the measures discussed in section 5.2 could have the potential to improve significantly the focus of attention on equity considerations at the

local level. Ongoing close attention to the performance indicators will be important. The Panel notes that the retention rate for indigenous students is above the national average and has been trending up since 2001. The retention of students from low socio-economic backgrounds is also above the national average. The Disability Support Service was particularly mentioned positively by some students met by the Panel. It has been found to be a highly responsive and supportive service by these students.

## 6 INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITIES

The University notes in its Performance Portfolio that: “while our commitment to internationalisation is expressed across the five core strategic areas, the report on international performance is consolidated into a single chapter” (p. ii). The Panel has discussed elements of internationalisation elsewhere in this Report, as relevant. Transnational teaching programs are discussed in section 2.11.

### 6.1 Objectives

The University’s mission statement notes that “in the pursuit of excellence in teaching, research and community service, Griffith University is committed to internationalisation for the enrichment of Queensland, Australia and the international community”.

Four priority areas for internationalisation identified in the Strategic Plan are:

- Internationalising students’ education experience, including the curriculum and methods of teaching;
- Increasing the numbers of international students;
- Developing research centres of international significance; and
- Building strategic international partnerships

The internationalisation indicator selected for the ‘Top 10’ scorecard is the number of on-campus international students. The Panel noted that this indicator captures progress on only one dimension of internationalisation described in the Plan. Given the other priority areas, it will be important for the University to develop performance indicators that measure progress on these other dimensions.

#### **Recommendation 14**

**That Griffith University ensure that it has the means to monitor progress towards the achievement of all its internationalisation objectives.**

### 6.2 Internationalising Students’ Education Experiences

Internationalising the student experience at Griffith University is brought about through various means, including the presence on campus of staff and students from outside Australia, and opportunities for local students to undertake international exchanges as part of their programs. In 2002, 124 Griffith University students undertook an international exchange, with 139 international students based at the University on exchange. These numbers both represent increases on 2001 figures.

As noted above, the University wishes to internationalise the student experience not only through the curriculum but also through its approach to teaching. Most academic staff are aware of the desirability of introducing international perspectives into their courses through the curriculum and, in general, this is occurring. Undergraduate students certainly commented positively about the way in which international dimensions are introduced into courses in a relevant manner. In terms of internationalising teaching methods, most academic staff met by the Panel were unaware that this is an emphasis of the University and were unclear how it might be achieved.

#### **Recommendation 15**

**That Griffith University, through the Griffith Institute for Higher Education or otherwise, ensure that academic staff are supported in its objective of internationalising not only course content but also their approach to teaching.**

### **6.3 *Increasing the Numbers of International Students***

One of the commitments arising from the Griffith Project is to increase the percentage of on-shore international students to 25% of the total student population. International students currently comprise 17% of the student population. Extensive planning and resource commitment will be required to ensure that facilities and services are provided to accommodate this staged growth.

A strategy is included in the International Centre Business Plan for the geographical areas that should be the target for recruitment. In achievement of this objective, the University has identified that it wishes to establish strategic alliances with selected international universities. Such alliances may also prove to be of value in terms of furthering the University's objectives for the increased internationalisation of its research.

### **6.4 *Developing Research Centres of International Significance***

The University is in the process of implementing a new policy on Research Centres (see section 3.2). The aim of such Centres is to develop core research that is nationally and internationally significant. The policy is at such an early stage of development that the Panel is unable to assess this strategy's success in this regard. The University notes in its Performance Portfolio that it will need to provide targeted assistance to Research Centres to develop or extend their international links and the Panel endorses this.

### **6.5 *Support for International Students***

In addition to the range of support services provided to all students, on-campus international students are supported by the International Office and its International Student Advisers.

The Excellence in Cultural Experiential Learning and Leadership (Excell) is being used by a number of academic elements with significant international student numbers. The program was jointly developed by an international team, one member of which is a staff member of the University. The program is focused on enhancing international students' confidence and skills in academic, social and professional environments. Examples of topics covered include contributing in a team setting, initiating social contact, disputing cultural stereotypes and giving effective feedback. International students met by the Panel who had been involved in the Excell program found it to be highly valuable to them.

## **Commendation 12**

### **AUQA commends Griffith University for the Excellence in Cultural Experiential Learning and Leadership (Excell) program.**

In 2002 the International Office undertook an International Student Satisfaction Survey as part of the general Student Satisfaction Survey. The results revealed generally high student satisfaction with many of the Office's services including its information booklet, airport reception, and the International Student Advisers. Orientation was identified as an area of significant student dissatisfaction. The response to this finding has been swift, with a revised orientation program developed for use in semester 2, 2003. The effectiveness of this change is yet to be evaluated, but the Panel endorses the ongoing improvement work in this area.

At the time of the audit, the Internationalisation Committee was undertaking a review of international student performance data across the University. This information may also be of value in identifying new forms of required support or in allowing for targeting of existing support mechanisms.

Given the University's goal for the increased growth in its recruitment of on-shore international students, it will be vitally important that plans for the necessary associated increases in academic and support services are well developed.

## 7 STAFF

The Office of Human Resource Management (OHRM) supports all staffing functions within the University. Academic staff development is the responsibility of GIHE (see section 2.10).

### 7.1 Objectives

The overriding objective for the University with respect to staffing is “attracting, developing and retaining highly qualified staff who are able to contribute to the goals of the University” (Strategic Plan 2003–2007).

In 2001 Council disestablished the Human Resource Committee and Staff Development Committee and replaced them by the Staff Support and Development Committee. In the following year, as part of the review of Council committees mentioned in section 1.3, the Staff Support and Development Committee was requested by Council to assess its role and operations. As a result, the Staff Support and Development Reference Group reporting to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Teaching and Learning) replaced the Council committee. Concurrently, the Staff Support and Development Plan was reviewed to determine progress against its targets and the decision was taken to mainstream the principles of the Plan into strategic and operational planning.

The Staff Support and Development Plan (2000) listed six key improvement areas and goals:

- *improving communication within the University;*
- *developing leadership and management capability;*
- *promoting staff involvement in collaborative planning processes;*
- *recognising the work achievements of staff;*
- *ensuring corporate systems support people in their work; and*
- *improving access to learning and development opportunities.*

For each of these areas the Plan identified specific actions and strategies.

The two strategic priorities for staffing identified in the Strategic Plan are:

- *To develop options for a more flexible profile and performance appraisal system for academics; and*
- *To explore career development options for general staff to ensure opportunities to build skill profiles*

These objectives and those of the Staff Support and Development Plan will be discussed in subsequent sections.

### 7.2 Improving Communication within the University

The University has recognised that communicating effectively across its multiple sites poses a significant challenge. In general, it appears that this is being well managed. There are numerous vehicles for the centre of the University to communicate with academic elements and units. Among them are the Vice-Chancellor’s monthly electronic newsletter, that was particularly commented on favourably by many staff. The Panel has already noted, and commended, the communication strategy that was used by the University in the development of the most recent Strategic Plan (see Commendation 1).

The University has conducted a Staff Attitude Survey biennially since 1998 covering administrative and support office staff and this allows it to gain an appreciation of the value placed by staff on these various services and of the areas for continued improvement. One of the items highlighted in the Strategic Plan is the need to develop and implement a method for measuring organisational climate across both academic and administrative work areas. Given the amount of change taking place, the Panel endorses this.

As commented in section 1.1, the new management structure of the University appears to be operating in such a way as to increase collaborative activity across elements.

The Panel met representatives of one staff association represented on campus and noted the strong, positive relationship between this group and the University.

In terms of upward flowing communication, staff met by the Panel are generally satisfied with their ability to make input into decision-making processes at both the corporate and local levels.

### **7.3 *Promoting Collaborative Planning***

The Staff Support and Development Plan includes as an objective that: “staff will have access to performance information and feedback that is meaningful, timely and relevant”.

As noted earlier in this Report, the consultation undertaken for the Griffith Project has led to a widespread acceptance amongst staff of the main strategic priorities for the University and has had the effect of providing a single focus, at the corporate level, for planning at other levels throughout the University.

Staff met by the Panel felt included in the development of objectives and strategies at the local level and generally had an appreciation of the ways in which these objectives link, in a broad sense, to those of the Griffith Project and Strategic Plan.

### **7.4 *Recognising the Work Achievements of Staff***

As one means of fulfilling this objective, the University offers a number of awards for achievement and service medals for staff whose work has been outstanding. Newsletters and other public fora, such as the website, also publicly recognise outstanding contributions of staff

### **7.5 *Ensuring Corporate Systems Support People in their Work***

#### **7.5.1 Induction**

Induction of new staff is a joint responsibility of the Office of Human Resource Management (OHRM) and the staff member's immediate supervisor. OHRM has devised hard-copy and online induction materials and also offers a one-day tour of the University. The website includes specific information for sessional and casual staff. Staff met by the Panel who have either completed the on-line training or attended a face-to-face session report that it is very useful

OHRM is aware that not all staff complete the online orientation and the Office is currently investigating strategies to increase its uptake. It is also looking at ways of reinforcing with supervisors their responsibility to induct staff

For academic staff, GIHE runs a day-long orientation session each semester. This is discussed earlier in this Report (see section 2.10).

### 7.5.2 Appraisal

University policy requires that all staff undergo mandatory annual performance review, except academic staff at the highest increment within the salary range who are appraised biennially. Processes are in place for senior executive, academic managers and academic staff and general staff.

The University's self-review has identified that the general staff performance appraisal scheme is not being applied consistently and this was also evident to the Panel in its interviews with some general staff. The OHRM has identified this as an area of priority for 2003-2004 and this is supported by the Panel.

#### **Recommendation 16**

**That, as identified in the Performance Portfolio, Griffith University ensure that its general staff appraisal system is implemented consistently throughout the institution.**

### 7.5.3 Academic Work Profiles

The Griffith Project notes that "the challenge for Griffith is to develop [an academic work] profile and performance appraisal system that reflects more accurately the range of academic work" and a consultation document outlining the proposed new approach has been prepared. The proposal suggests that individual academic staff would have increased flexibility to negotiate their work profile with their Head of School in the context of organisational needs. Following the conclusion of the first phase of consultation with staff, the proposal is the subject of negotiation for the Enterprise Bargaining Agreement. It is envisaged that further consultation with staff will be required. The Panel endorses the work being undertaken on this project

### **7.6 *Improving Access to Learning and Development Opportunities***

The University has a commitment to providing improved development opportunities for staff and had the objective in its Staff Support and Development Plan that "staff will be able to access learning and development opportunities that will assist them to develop their skills and knowledge and help them with their work and their careers".

A variety of programs are in place including seminars and workshops offered by OHRM, GIHE and Information Services; the Academic Studies Program; study assistance; and a general staff mentoring program.

Staff Attitude Surveys have revealed that career development as a particular issue for many general staff. As noted above, the Strategic Plan includes as an objective "to explore career development options for general staff to ensure opportunities to build skill profiles". It is intended that during the course of 2003, an integrated framework for general staff career development will be developed. The Panel supports this ongoing work.

Another area of focus in recent times has been the development of staff leadership and management capability. A management development program for general staff at HEW 5-7 was introduced in semester 2, 2003. Evaluative information on this program was not available at the time of the audit. Work is also underway on a comprehensive leadership and management staff development program. A Leadership for Women program is also planned.



## APPENDIX A. GRIFFITH UNIVERSITY

Griffith University was formally established by the Griffith University Act 1971 and admitted its first students in 1975. Between 1989 and 1991, the University was involved in four amalgamations with the Mt Gravatt campus of the Brisbane College of Advanced Education, the Gold Coast College of Advanced Education, the Queensland Conservatorium of Music and the Queensland College of Art. The University now comprises five campuses extending from Southport in the Gold Coast to South Bank in Brisbane.

The academic elements of the University are structured into three groups: Arts and Education, Business and Law and Health and Science. Each group is headed by a Pro Vice-Chancellor. Within the groups, sit faculties and schools. All faculties and many schools operate across more than one campus.

The University offers degree programs across a wide range of disciplines. The planned establishment of Schools of Medicine, Dentistry and Oral Health, and Pharmacy at the Gold Coast campus will supplement programs in physiotherapy, nursing, exercise science, biomedical science and other health sciences available at this campus.

Griffith University offers approximately 90 courses through Open Learning Australia (OLA) and offers for degree programs that may be completed on the basis of OLA study.

### Key Statistics 2002

Student Load (EFTSU)	
Total	22, 762
International	3, 883
Research higher degree	876
Coursework postgraduate	2, 236
Total Staff FTE (not including casual staff)	
Total	3, 152
Academic	1, 302
General	1, 850
Annual Revenue (2002):	\$350, 696, 000

## APPENDIX B. AUQA'S MISSION, VALUES, & FOUR OBJECTS

### *Mission*

- By means of quality audits of universities and accrediting agencies, and otherwise, AUQA will provide public assurance of the quality of Australia's universities and other institutions of HE, and will assist in improving the academic quality of these institutions.

### *Values*

AUQA will be:

- *Thorough*: AUQA carries out all its audits as thoroughly as possible.
- *Supportive*: recognising institutional autonomy in setting objectives and implementing processes to achieve them, AUQA acts to facilitate and support this.
- *Flexible*: AUQA operates flexibly, in order to acknowledge and reinforce institutional diversity.
- *Co-operative*: recognising that the achievement of quality in any organisation depends on a commitment to quality within the organisation itself, AUQA operates as unobtrusively as is consistent with effectiveness and rigour.
- *Collaborative*: as a quality assurance agency, AUQA works collaboratively with the accrediting agencies (in addition to its audit role with respect to these agencies).
- *Transparent*: AUQA's audit procedures, and its own quality assurance system are open to public scrutiny.
- *Economical*: AUQA operates cost-effectively and keeps as low as possible the demands it places on institutions and agencies.
- *Open*: AUQA reports publicly and clearly on its findings in relation to institutions, agencies and the sector.

### *Objects*

- Arrange and manage a system of periodic audits of QA arrangements relating to the activities of Australian universities, other self-accrediting institutions (SAIs) and state and territory HE accreditation bodies.
- Monitor, review, analyse and provide public reports on QA arrangements in SAIs, and on processes and procedures of state and territory accreditation authorities, and on the impact of those processes on quality of programs.
- Report on the criteria for the accreditation of new universities and non-university HE courses as a result of information obtained during the audit of institutions and state and territory accreditation processes.
- Report on the relative standards of the Australian HE system and its QA processes, including their international standing, as a result of information obtained during the audit process.

## **APPENDIX C. THE AUDIT PANEL**

Associate Professor F. T. Chan, Principal Program Director and Head, Division of Information Technology, School of Professional and Continuing Education, The University of Hong Kong

Ms Robyn Harris, Audit Director, Australian Universities Quality Agency

Mrs Ann Johns, Education Business Unit Leader, CPA Australia, Melbourne

Professor Sue Johnston, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Teaching and Learning), University of Tasmania

Professor Mark Tennant, Dean, University Graduate School, University of Technology, Sydney (Panel Chair)

Observer:

Professor Jan Thomas, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Academic), Murdoch University