

AUSTRALIAN UNIVERSITIES QUALITY AGENCY

2009 Quality Audit of Charles Sturt University (CSU)

The purpose of this document is to provide the overseas and Australian onshore partners of Australian higher education institutions some information about AUQA and its audits.

The Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA) is a national organisation in Australia, established by the Australian Commonwealth, State and Territory Ministers for Education. AUQA has a number of objectives, the first of which is to:

“Arrange and manage a system of periodic audits of:

- the quality of the academic activities, including attainment of standards of performance and outcomes of Australian universities and other higher education institutions;
- the quality assurance arrangements intended to maintain and elevate that quality;
- compliance with criteria set out in the National Protocols for Higher Education Approval Processes;

and monitor, review, analyse and provide public reports on the quality of outcomes in Australian universities and higher education institutions.”

In auditing an Australian institution, AUQA is concerned primarily with the existence and effectiveness of those processes (‘quality processes’) that the institution has put in place to achieve its stated objectives, produce the desired outcomes and meet the needs of the institution’s stakeholders. During its audits, AUQA checks the existence and effectiveness of many of the organisation’s processes, the results they produce and any subsequent actions taken by the organisation.

In 2009 AUQA will be carrying out an audit of Charles Sturt University. The two main themes for the audit are ‘Professional Education and Practice-based Learning’ and ‘Internationalisation’.

In addition to reviewing documents, AUQA interviews a range of people associated with the institution on its various Australian campuses, and its partners in other locations, including those overseas and elsewhere in Australia.

The Audit Panel will visit CSU’s Wagga Wagga Campus and will interview a wide range of the University’s staff, students, and community representatives.

Before this visit, your organisation may be selected for a visit by a delegation of the audit panel. Visits to university partner organisations usually involve interviews with senior management, teaching and administrative staff employed by the partner, and students studying for the University’s academic awards. It is very important in this respect to note that these visits are part of the audit of the Australian institution: the partner organisation itself is **not** under direct investigation by AUQA, except in as far as it is involved in the provision and/or support of the Australian institution’s courses.

Interviews usually involve groups of people and can last for about 45 minutes. The Audit Panel will have some specific questions to ask, which may be about any aspects of your

organisation or Charles Sturt University, and will be interested to hear matters that the interviewees wish to raise, but there is not usually time for extended discussion.

All comments made to the Audit Panel are treated in strict confidence, and will not be attributed to individuals.

The purpose of these interviews is to help the Audit Panel verify what it has read in the documentation and gain a detailed understanding of how CSU operates, rather than to test individual people's knowledge. Audits of any type are often associated with identifying problems. While this is necessary to achieve improvements, AUQA's audits are even more concerned with revealing and reporting on good practice and successes. The Audit Panel thanks in advance all those who will be giving their time to assist in the audit process.

Note: The way in which student and staff complaints are handled, and institutional appeal procedures, come within the scope of these audits. However, AUQA does not investigate individual cases or appeals, as this would detract from its ability to provide an independent coherent focus on the quality performance of institutions. It would also be incompatible with AUQA's emphasis on encouraging and assisting the improvement of quality in the sector.

For further information please see the AUQA website: www.auqa.edu.au