



Australian Government



Office for  
**Learning & Teaching**

# **Growing external peer review of learning outcomes and national benchmarking capability**

Project Leader: Dr Sara Booth  
University of Tasmania



# Peer Review of Assessment Network (PRAN)

## **External Reference Group**

Professor Richard James, Melbourne University

Professor Kerri-Lee Krause, UWS

Professor Emeritus Royce Sadler, UQ

Emeritus Professor Chris Rust, Oxford Brookes University, UK

Di Weddell, OLT

Dr Michael Evans, Kaplan

## **Core Peer Review Network Team**

Dr Sara Booth, Project Leader, University of Tasmania

Assoc Prof Mark Freeman, The University of Sydney

Assoc Prof Heather Alexander, Griffith University

Prof Ron Oliver, Edith Cowan University

Mr Mark Thompson, Edith Cowan University

Prof Jane Fernandez, Avondale College

Mr Royson Valore, UWS

## **Project Officers**

Dr Jeff Beckett, University of Tasmania

Dr Cassandra Saunders, University of Tasmania



# Session Aims

- Aims, outcomes and deliverables of OLT project
- Key areas identified in workshops and Forum
- Builds on current/past projects and networks
- Key lessons in effective networks
- Peer Review of Assessment Network
- Possible next steps/findings
- Feedback: Any suggestions?





# Proposed Revised Higher Education Standards Framework

1.4.1: The expected learning outcomes for each course of study are specified, consistent with the level and field of education of the qualification awarded, and **informed by national and international comparators.**

5.3.1: All accredited courses of study are subject to periodic (at least every seven years) comprehensive reviews that are overseen by peak academic governance processes and **include external referencing and other benchmarking activities.**

5.3.4: Review and improvement activities include regular **external referencing of the success of student cohorts against comparable courses of study**, including:

- a. Analyses of progression rates, attrition rates, completion times and rates and, where applicable, comparing different locations of delivery, and
- b. The assessment methods and grading of students' achievement of learning outcomes for selected units within courses of study.



# Aims

The aims of this national Peer Review of Assessment Network are to:

- Provide a forum for sharing and disseminating good practice in external peer review of assessment across different contexts
- Identify key academics experienced in external peer review of assessment
- Provide professional learning opportunities for academics and benchmarking partners
- Identify the key checkpoints for effective networking on the area



## Outcomes

- National framework for the peer review of assessment
- National network in peer review of assessment
- **Establishment of Strategic Relationships**
- Ako Aotearoa and the Academic Quality Agency (AQA) to progress implementation of a peer review of assessment network across New Zealand's higher education institutions
- Higher Education Academy (HEA) to progress implementation of the peer review of assessment through a proposed project



## Deliverables

- A project website [which has received 6060 hits and 2505 downloads from June to November, 2014]  
<http://www.utas.edu.au/student-evaluation-review-and-reporting-unit/nprn>
- A National Peer Review of Assessment Network Framework with recommendations for each of the four levels (sector, disciplinary, institutional & individual)
- Presentations to the Australian Council of Deans, university networks and seven State-based workshops
- A National Peer Review of Assessment Network Forum [12<sup>th</sup> November, 2014] which consolidated and engaged key players across the sector with the outcomes
- The Final Report to OLT.





## So far... it builds on the work in peer review of assessment

- Quality Verification System (QVS): Go8
- Innovative Research Universities (IRU): Academic Calibration Process (ACP)
- Achievement Matters: External Peer Review of Accounting Standards (Watty et al., 2014)
- Inter-University Moderation Project (Krause et al, 2014)
- External examiner system
- Fitness of purpose and fitness for purpose of assessment to develop work ready plus graduates: Emeritus Prof Geoff Scott

## It builds on the following networks

- Discipline Scholar Networks
- Disciplinary Networks [ Interior Design and Architecture; Music; Theology; Business; ChemNet; and the Economics Network; ACCLAIM, Sustainability Network]





## Key areas identified in workshops

- Practical aspects in peer review of assessment and how to implement it at their respective institutions
- Policy and processes that have been identified as best practice
- Online moderation tool and other resources available
- Models of peer review of assessment, their progress and how to implement them
- Strategies for identifying peer review partners



## Key areas identified in Peer Review of Assessment Network Forum

- Opportunity to share understanding and experiences of standards and peer review processes across the sector; thereby ensuring consistency of approach across both universities and private providers
- Contribution to quality assurance in their respective institutions, both at the institutional and course level
- Professional development opportunities, aligned to performance management and promotion processes
- Opportunity to network and form a collaborative group of like-minded peers; and
- Support provided by peers



## Key Lessons on Effective Networks

- Need to link and leverage what is currently happening in assessment
- Change is learning and the best learning is collaborative learning that has a framework which has an agreed improvement focused and is quality assured
- Tough –fellow travellers further down the same path- the key source of learning for adults
- Just as peer groups counts for students so too it counts for staff
- Information is not learning-learning (change/QI) is a profoundly social process
- Saves reinventing the wheel- always someone further down the path you are on who has learnt what works best
- Helps achieve consistency and equivalence of quality teaching and outcomes for students (thus **calibration**) (Scott, 2014a)



## Key Lessons on Effective Networks

- New IT tools can enable just in time and just for me links to successful solutions
- Learning your role via mentoring, visits and observations
- It breaks down the silos and inefficiency of loose coupling in times of rapid change and challenge to traditional models of higher education
- There is much overlap between peer networking in higher education and what characterises the most effective university-community engagement projects
- Do it for yourselves in a coordinated linked and leveraged way to assure quality and consistency otherwise government will step in and do it for you
- Networks enable you to synergise around common priorities
- Networks of practitioners not on paper and assist scale up with attention to CQII and what works 'on the ground'. (Scott, 2014a)





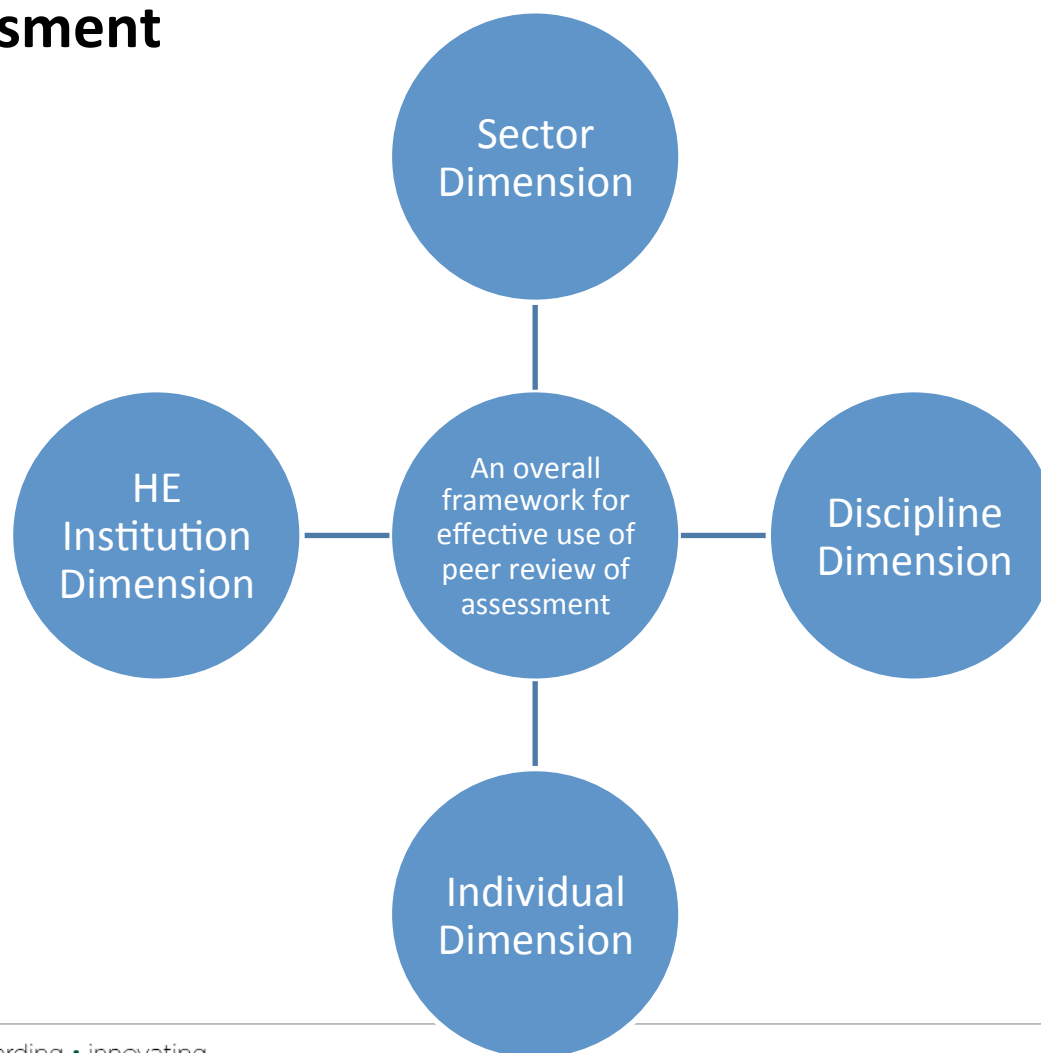
# Framework for Effective Use of Peer Review of Assessment

## Objectives:

1. Enhancement of the quality of assessment of student achievement through a *shared national objective* to improve assessment of achievement standards and;
2. Assist HE institutions, particularly those not aligned to university networks, to identify the key checkpoints to ensure the quality and relevance of assessment.



# Framework for Effective Use of Peer Review of Assessment





## Sector Dimension

<b>Support Networks</b>	University networks e.g.. Go8, IRU, RUN, ATN Peer Review of Assessment Network [PRAN] option for non-aligned institutions and Deans Councils
<b>Leadership Support</b>	Strong, deft leadership and coordination and of the network Clear complementary roles for different players, e.g. Institutional coordinators
<b>Policy Support</b>	Good Practice Principles in the Peer Review of Assessment Framework for Effective Use of Peer Review of Assessment Peer Review of Assessment Steering Group
<b>Effective Support Resources</b>	National, searchable clearinghouse of good practice in assessment National, online benchmarking tool



## HE Institution Dimension

<b>Support Networks</b>	University networks and/or other support networks, e.g. QUT's Higher Education Research Network (HERN)
<b>Leadership Support</b>	Strong, deft leadership and coordination of the network Senior Executive leadership of academic governance processes in external peer review of assessment Clear complementary roles for different players, e.g. institutional and/or disciplinary coordinators
<b>Policy Support</b>	Good Practice Principles in the Peer Review of Assessment Alignment to academic governance processes and committees Alignment to assessment, course review and accreditation policies and processes Alignment to workload, probation, performance management and reward and recognition policies and processes
<b>Effective Support Resources</b>	Professional learning opportunities, e.g. workshops for sessional staff Institutional register of trained assessment support peers and reviewers Online benchmarking tool Integrate with other forms of peer review Internal research grant process Consideration of paying an honorarium





## Discipline Dimension

<b>Support Networks</b>	Colleges of Peers, e.g. Associate Deans L&T Network Direct links with University and institutional networks
<b>Leadership Support</b>	Strong, deft leadership and coordination of the network Clear complementary roles for different players, e.g. Discipline coordinators/ Associate Deans (L&T), Chairs of Deans Councils and other Academic Committees
<b>Policy Support</b>	Good Practice Principles in the Peer Review of Assessment Alignment to accreditation and industry requirements
<b>Effective Support Resources</b>	Professional learning opportunities, e.g. Annual Forum on calibration Alignment to Threshold Learning Outcomes (TILO) projects



## Individual Dimension

<b>Support Networks</b>	<b>University networks and/or other support networks</b>
<b>Leadership Support</b>	Clear complementary roles for different players, e.g. course/program and/or discipline coordinators
<b>Policy Support</b>	Good Practice Principles in the Peer Review of Assessment Alignment to course outcomes, mapping, assessment, grading, calibration and learning designs Recognition in workload, probation, performance management and reward and recognition processes
<b>Effective Support Resources</b>	Other disciplinary or cross-disciplinary peers



## Possible next steps/findings

In order to assist HE institutions to do this consistently and effectively recent research across the sector (Booth et al., 2014; Hancock et al., 2015; Freeman & Ewan, 2014; Scott, 2014b) these are the possible next steps :

- 1) the importance of networking and professional development;
- 2) the establishment of a national online benchmarking tool and clearinghouse of good practice in assessment
- 3) Modelling a process for assessing learning outcomes with peak bodies (such as Business Deans Council)



**Feedback**

**Any suggestions?**

**What would you like to know more about?**

**What has been missed?**

**How do we turn this project into a process  
and make it sustainable?**





## References

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