AAGLO Newsletter 1

September 2011

Introduction

Welcome to the first newsletter of the Assessing and Assuring Graduate Learning Outcomes (AAGLO) project. The purpose of this newsletter is to provide our Reference Group, key stakeholders and project participants with information about the project.

Ethics Approval

Ethics approval was granted by The University of Sydney on 31 August 2011 and has subsequently been granted by The University of Queensland. We anticipate that ethics approval will be in place for RMIT University by the end of September.

Project Evaluator

Margaret Buckridge (Griffith Institute for Higher Education) has accepted our invitation to be project evaluator and has commenced working with us.

Project Progress

In the project establishment stage we continued a broad literature review of relevant topics – graduate learning outcomes, assessment practices, internal and external quality assurance processes – and identified related projects with whom ongoing communication is likely to be mutually beneficial. We have also conducted roundtable consultations on the assessment of graduate learning outcomes at the recent HERDSA and UK Assessment in Higher Education conferences.

We are now in the process of identifying academics in Australian universities who are able to contribute examples of assessment and assurance practices that provide convincing evidence of student achievement of graduate learning outcomes. Using these examples we will develop guidelines for effective practice that are supported by exemplars.

Our data collection will focus on interviews with representatives of the discipline groupings established during the recently completed Australian Learning and Teaching Council (ALTC) funded Leaning and Teaching Academics Standards (LTAS) project. The disciplines we have selected are Business, History, Law, Engineering, Drama and Performance Studies, Veterinary Science and Chemistry.

As we are interested in assessment and assurance at both the course and program level we have sought assistance from the LTAS Discipline Scholars in identifying interviewees with teaching and curriculum leadership responsibilities.

AAGLO Summaries

As part of our project activities we will be producing a series of summary documents of key outcomes which will not only document project progress but serve consultation and dissemination purposes. The first of these, AAGLO Summary 1: The ALTC AAGLO project and the international standards agenda, is available on our website and the second will be available shortly.

Consultative Activities

The following activities are representative of the Project Team’s activities aimed at keeping up to date with discipline projects and national and international movements in the area of assessment and assurance of graduate learning outcomes:

- attended the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) briefing (HERDSA Conference, Gold Coast, July 2011)
- visited six Scottish universities (July 2011)
- visited the Organisation for Economic Development and Co-operation and development (OECD) (July 2011)
- attended the Networking in Standards-Related Projects meeting (Sydney, August 2011).

We have established productive relationships with several other projects, some discipline-specific, that have strong connections to the AAGLO project. Please let us know of opportunities you are aware of to further our communication with others working in this area and for broadening the basis of our consultation.

Capital City Fora

We are planning to hold a series of capital city fora in early 2012 to report our finding and collect additional examples of practice. We will be providing some financial support to support the participation of academics for regional universities.

AAGLO Project Team

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