

**Think: Colleges Pty Ltd**

**Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA) Audit Preparations Strategy & Action Plan 2009**

**1. Overview**

The purpose of this document is to outline the strategy for the external quality audit by AUQA of Think: Colleges Pty Ltd in 2009. The aim of the strategy is to ensure that Think: Colleges Pty Ltd is well prepared for the external quality audit and is able to demonstrate various systems and processes in place to ensure *consistency, equivalence* and *evidence based* approach to quality assurance. The key focus areas of audit include:

- i. Institutional and Educational Objectives and Institutional Governance
- ii. Achieving Effectiveness in Teaching, Learning and other Core Functions
- iii. Organizational Structures, Decision Making Processes and Resources to Support Teaching & Learning
- iv. Maintaining a Commitment to Quality Improvement

The proposed strategy is based on effective ways of managing quality audits in a range of Universities and private Higher Education Providers in Australia. Attachment one provides a brief overview on the above key focus areas.

The external audit by AUQA is an excellent opportunity for Think: Colleges Pty Ltd to self assess itself and identify areas of good practice (with evidence) and areas where further improvement is needed. The areas needing improvement should be based on various review findings, performance data and consultation with various stakeholders so that the improvements are evidence based and they are addressed effectively before the external quality audit.

While Think: Colleges Pty Ltd is new and is currently aligning its learning & teaching with various support services, it is important that during this growth period the organization embeds quality in core and enabling support areas of the business. The external quality audit by AUQA should be used as an external lever to bring about change and improvement within the Think: Colleges.

The strategy outlined below could also be used with other Think: Colleges to be audited by AUQA e.g. Jansen Newman Institute of Counselling and Applied Psychotherapy (JNI) audit in 2011.

**2. AUQA Audit Preparations Strategy & Action Plan**

Key Strategies		
Strategy	Responsible person	Timelines
<p><b>a. Organizational wide Self Assessment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Discussions with senior staff</li> <li>- Feedback from teaching and admin staff</li> <li>- Analysis of student survey data</li> <li>- Review of key performance indicators</li> <li>- Informal discussions with students from all college</li> </ul>	<p>Mahsood Shah- Project Manager: Higher Education Quality Assurance</p>	<p>Oct -Nov 2008</p>

Key Strategies		
Strategy	Responsible person	Timelines
<p><b>b. Ongoing Communication</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Keeping staff in the loop (<i>Bugle newsletter</i>)</li> <li>- Review the results of communication survey 2008</li> <li>- Quality Management at Think: Education Group website accessible to all stakeholders</li> </ul>	Mahsood Shah	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Website to be ready in Nov 08</p>
<p><b>c. Operationalize Think: Stakeholder Survey Policy</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Inaugural Student Satisfaction Survey (SSS) aimed to measure total student experience</li> <li>- Strengthening Australian Graduate Survey (AGS) with 50% response rate in Dec 08</li> <li>- Strengthening collection and reporting on Student Evaluation of Subject &amp; Lecturer (SESL) Survey</li> <li>- Inaugural Employer Survey</li> <li>- Inaugural Staff Satisfaction Survey</li> <li>- Strengthening KPI reporting to the Academic Board, Sub Committees and Colleges</li> </ul>	Mahsood Shah	Nov 08-March 09
<p><b>d. Key Improvement Priorities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Endorsement of key improvement priorities by the Quality Committee</li> <li>- Priority will be based on the outcomes of the self assessment and survey findings</li> <li>- Keeping students in the loop</li> <li>- Poster campaign to inform students on improvements "<i>Your Feedback Matters</i>"</li> <li>- Final sign off by the Quality Committee</li> </ul>	Mahsood Shah & Dr. George Brown with the Quality Committee	Nov 08-March 09
<p><b>e. Preparation of the draft Performance Portfolio</b></p> <p>Four chapters using Approach, Deployment, Result and Improvement cycle</p> <p><i>Think Education @ Glance</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Governance and Strategic Planning</i></li> <li>2. <i>Learning &amp; Teaching</i></li> <li>3. <i>Enabling Support Services</i></li> <li>4. <i>Quality Management and Continuous Improvement</i></li> </ol> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Comments from all staff and students</li> <li>- Comments from the Academic Board and its Sub Committees</li> <li>- Comments from Senior Executive Group and Directors</li> </ul>	Mahsood Shah & Dr. George Brown	Dec 08 -March 09

Key Strategies		
Strategy	Responsible person	Timelines
<p><b>f. Managing the logistics of AUQA audit</b></p> <p>Management of the AUQA audit process (communication with AUQA, submission of the Performance Portfolio and supporting documents, preparatory visit, site visit, scheduling meetings with staff, students, alumni and industry/employers), request for additional information, communication with all interviewees, briefing and debriefing interviewees, responding to draft AUQA report and communicating key findings with stakeholders.</p>	Mahsood Shah & Dr. George Brown	April-June 09
<p><b>g. Actioning key Affirmation(s) and Recommendation(s)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Action plan to address affirmations and recommendations</li> <li>- 24 month progress report to AUQA</li> <li>- Gaining momentum from cycle one audit to cycle two (possibly in 2014)</li> </ul>	Mahsood Shah & Dr. George Brown with the Quality Committee	After the release of the AUQA public report

It is important to note that the AUQA audit of Think: Colleges Pty Ltd will be with colleges offering higher education qualifications such as Associate Degrees, Bachelor Degrees and Postgraduate Degrees. The colleges subject to AUQA audit in mid 2009 include: Billy Blue College of Design, William Blue College of Hospitality and Tourism and APM College of Business and Communication.

Further information on Think: Colleges Pty Ltd AUQA audit can be obtained by contacting Mahsood Shah ([mshah@think.edu.au](mailto:mshah@think.edu.au))

Further information on AUQA audit can be obtained at: [www.auqa.edu.au](http://www.auqa.edu.au)

**Attachment One  
Key Focus Areas in AUQA Audit**

Key Area	Quality Cycle & detailed areas of focus
<b>Institutional and Educational</b>	<b>Objectives and Institutional Governance</b>
	<p><b>Approach</b></p> <p>Strategic planning process            Institution mission and objectives            Leadership and communication            Institutional finance            Risk management            Governance structure</p> <p><b>Deployment</b></p> <p>Role and responsibility of the Academic Board            Role of Academic Board in monitoring quality            Responsibilities of sub committees and its role in monitoring quality            Induction of committee members            Student involvement in governance            Planning at College level and its alignment with the strategic plan            Consistency in the implementation of policies</p> <p><b>Results</b></p> <p>Key Performance Indicators to the Academic Board and sub committees            Review of the strategic plan (plans vs current performance)            Review of the Academic Board and sub committees            Surveys with stakeholders (students, staff and employers)            Strategic market analysis            Other reviews and audits</p> <p><b>Improvements</b></p> <p>Evidence of positive outcomes using KPI's            Trend improvement in stakeholder feedback result            Evidence of actions/improvements as a direct result of reviews and survey            Communicate with stakeholders on key actions planned/underway            Reward position behaviors</p>
<b>Achieving Effectiveness in Teaching, Learning and other Core Functions</b>	
	<p><b>Approach</b></p> <p>Strategic objectives in learning &amp; teaching            College level planning in relation to learning &amp; teaching            Governance structure in learning &amp; teaching            Course development and approvals process            Involvement of industry            Student admission and enrolment criteria</p>

Key Area	Quality Cycle & detailed areas of focus
	<b>Deployment</b>
	Learning & teaching policies and consistent implementation Student assessments Process used to detect Plagiarism Quality of teaching staff Professional development of teaching staff Learning and teaching infrastructure Synergy between colleges and administrative support services
	<b>Results</b>
	Learning & Teaching KPI's Student Satisfaction Survey Australian Graduate Survey Student Feedback on Subject Peer review of teaching Student complaints and follow up Employer Survey Review of courses to meet industry needs and profession
	<b>Improvement</b>
Improvements as a direct result of stakeholder feedback Improvements in course design, approval, delivery and monitoring Communicating actions as a direct result of student feedback Improvement in student experience	
<b>Organizational Structures, Decision-making processes and Resources to Support Teaching &amp; Learning</b>	
	<b>Approach</b>
	Leadership in support services Planning and resourcing of student support services Alignment of student support services with learning & teaching Consistency in student support service
<b>Deployment</b>	
Student admissions and enrolments Student orientation Student support Counseling Library Careers and employment Information technology Online learning Facilities Records management Campus life English language support Learning skills	

Key Area	Quality Cycle & detailed areas of focus
	Human resources strategy
	<b>Results</b>
	Stakeholder surveys (students and staff) Other feedback mechanisms Monitoring complaints
	<b>Improvements</b>
	Improvement in student experience Implementing key improvements based on survey results Communicating outcomes with stakeholders
	<b>Maintaining a Commitment to Quality Improvement</b>
	<b>Approach</b>
	Planning & Quality Management framework Leadership in quality management Role of the Quality Committee Staff engagement in quality Consistent approach to quality (college, campus, courses)
	<b>Deployment</b>
	College and Administrative unit understanding of quality Evidenced based approach to decision making Benchmarking Regular communication Consistency in policy implementation
	<b>Results</b>
	Survey with students, staff and employers Monitoring KPI's Monitoring student complaints Effective use of data to prove and improve quality outcomes
	<b>Improvements</b>
	Enhancement of stakeholder experience Acting on student feedback results Communicating improvements with stakeholders