



Professional Accreditation as an External Benchmarking Tool

National Assessment and Review Summit 2017

19-20 Sept. 2017, Melbourne, Australia

Panel Session Overview

- **The Higher Education Accreditation 'Story' so Far**
Klaus Veil – Vice-President, Professions Australia
- **The Role of Professional Accreditation in External Benchmarking**
Michael Carpenter – CEO, Australian Psychology Accreditation Council
- **Accreditation Boards doing External Benchmarking – Examples**
Pam Pryor - Inaugural Registrar 2011-17, Australian OHS Education Accreditation Board

- **Q & A**

Who is "Professions Australia"?

- aka "Australian Council of Professions"
- The Alliance of professional bodies representing ~420,000 professionals
- Started early 1960s, Federated in 1971
- External review and accreditation of higher education courses by professional organisations is a common and well-established form of external benchmarking.
- Accreditation is a major focus of the PA Board – also professional ethics and governance.

Higher Ed Accreditation Activities (1)

- Collaborating on Accreditation with the Australian higher education sector since 2012
- "*Joint Statement of Principles*" with all universities signed in March 2016
- "*Joint Statement of Principles*" with non-university sector to be signed in Nov 2017
- Collaborating on Joint Best Practice Documents

Higher Ed Accreditation Activities (2)

Joint Higher-Education Action Plan:

- Joint activity of entire higher-education sector:
 - Australian Council of Professions ("Professions Australia")
 - Universities Australia (UA)
 - Australian Council for Private Education and Training (ACPET)
 - Council of Private Higher Education (COPHE)
 - ***200 organisations, 125,000 staff, 1.75m students!***
- Collaborating on Joint Best Practice Documents
- Joint 'Professional Accreditation Best Practices Summit' (Nov 2017)
- National Joint Statement (2017-18)

Higher Ed Accreditation Reviews

In the 12 months the higher education course accreditation has come under some scrutiny from government:

- General 'State of Accreditation' Review (Prof. Christine Ewan)
- Health Professions Higher-Ed Course Accreditation Review (Prof Mike Woods)
- Both reviews found that accreditation is progressing towards improved efficiency, but more efforts are required

Accreditation of higher education courses by professional organisations is a common and well-established form of external benchmarking. These accreditation processes are continually being

Michael Carpenter

Chief Executive Officer

Australian Psychology Accreditation Council



What is "Benchmarking"?

‘Evaluate something by comparison with a standard’

The role of professional accreditation

- Almost always at program level
- Varies in focus – public protection / protect students / ensure professional competence
- Varies in approach – quality improvement / policing / benchmarking (e.g. with overseas bodies)

Common features

Irrespective of focus/approach:

- Document submission, review by peers
- Accreditation requirements inc. benchmarking
- Physical visit to program provider
- Resourcing / staffing / facilities / are the right outcomes being achieved?

Professional accreditation & TEQSA

- Where's the intersect / overlap?
- Self-accrediting – different focus
- Not SAA – significant overlap

Some questions

- Where can/does professional accreditation add value?
- What does it do that it doesn't need to do?
- What is its role alongside TEQSA or ASQA?

Pam Pryor

Inaugural Registrar, 2011-17

Australian OHS Education Accreditation Board



HESF and external benchmarking

Standard 1.4.1

- The expected learning outcomes for each course of study are informed by national and international comparators.

HESF and external benchmarking

Standard 5.3.4

- Review and improvement activities ... regular external referencing of the success of student cohorts against comparable courses of study ...
- analyses of progression rates, attrition rates, completion times and rates
- assessment methods and grading of students' achievement of learning outcomes for selected units of study

External benchmarking: Some issues

- Sensitivities
- Competition
- Maturity and status of program and staff
- Identifying suitable benchmark
- ??

Accreditation – independent, third party benchmarking

One example

- Assessment criteria
- Assessment process
- Assessment panel
- Assessment report
- Annual report

Assessment criteria

- Accreditation criteria structured in line with HESF
- Content LO mapped to:
 - OHS Body of Knowledge LO
 - OHS capability statements
- Developed through national workshops with OHS educators and professionals
- International comparator with Global OHS Capability Framework

Assessment process

Initial assessment

- Application – self assessment against criteria
- Desk top audit
- Preliminary meeting of assessment panel (teleconference)
- Review of LMS material and interactions
- Panel face 2 face meeting
- (Telephone) interviews of students, staff and leadership
- Panel review
- Report

Assessment panel

- Educators, OHS professionals, education advisor
- Panel members have experience across a range of programs
- Panel members rotate so that there is 'cross fertilization'
- Program leaders of accredited programs invited panel members

Assessment report

- Informed by comparison with other programs
- Includes action plan

Annual review

Programs report on

- Achievement against action plan
- Annual 'risk' themes
- Student census data

Accreditation Board reports on

- Collated student census data
- Annual trends observed through accreditation

Accreditation and external benchmarking

	Criteria	Process	Panel	Report	Annual
Expected learning outcomes informed by national and international comparators	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Regular referencing of success of student cohorts against comparable courses					
Analysis of progression, attrition and completion	✓				✓
Assessment methods, grading and achievement of LO	✓	✓	✓	✓	

Education Awards

Judged on

- Technical and theoretical knowledge
- Ability to access, analyse and evaluate information
- Ability to solve problems related to OHS
- Communication skills to transmit knowledge, skills and ideas
- Demonstrated application of knowledge and skills in practical situations.

Q & A