December 2008

Final Report

TEACHING QUALITY INDICATORS PILOT PROJECT

GRiffith University
Prepared by: Lynda Davies
Appendix 1: People Involved

National project leadership
(see p 1, Section 1.2)

Professor Judyth Sachs, Macquarie University, Pilot Universities Leader, Member Reference Group
Professor Denise Chalmers, UWA (formerly ALTC), Project Leader, Member Reference Group
Kate Thomson, ALTC and Macquarie University, Research Assistant and Project Officer
Katie Lee, ALTC, (formerly Research Assistant and Project Officer)
Tina Cunningham, ALTC, (formerly Research Assistant and Project Officer)
Becky Walker, ALTC, (formerly Research Assistant and Project Officer)

Pilot universities
Deakin University
Griffith University
Macquarie University
University of Queensland
University of South Australia
University of Tasmania
University of Western Australia

Griffith University project leadership
Membership of Griffith University’s TQI Leadership Group
(see p 4 Section 2.3)

Professor Sue Spence PVC(Learning and Student Outcomes), Chair
Professor Kerri-Lee Krause, Director GIHE,
Professor Nick Buys, Dean L&T, (Health)
Professor Royce Sadler, GIHE (Assessment Project Stage 1)
Dr Duncan Nulty, GIHE (assessment and evaluation)
Margaret Buckridge, GIHE, (teaching scholarship)
Dr Heather Alexander, Assoc. Director, GIHE (Assessment Project, Stage 2)
Dr Arthur Poropat, (Business)
Sue Wilkinson, School Administration Officer, (Education)
David Edwards, Dean L&T, (Science, Engineering, Environment and Technology)
Lynda Davies, Project Officer and Senior Research Assistant
Griffith University’s TQI Project Team
Professor Sue Spence, PVC(LSO)
Lynda Davies, Project Officer and Senior Research Assistant

Membership of Griffith University’s Assessment Policy Review Working Party
(see p 4 Section 2.3)

Professor Sue Spence, PVC(LSO), Chair
Dr Heather Alexander, Learning and Teaching Committee, (GIHE)
Mary Forster, Nominee, Academic Registrar (examinations & timetabling)
Dr Duncan Nulty, Nominee, Director, GIHE (assessment and evaluation)
David Edwards, Chair, Ctte of Chairs of Assessment Boards (SEET)
Dr Cathy Jenkins, Ctte of Chairs of Assessment Boards (Arts)
Professor Claire Wyatt-Smith, Ctte of Chairs of Assessment Boards (Education)
Professor Lorelle Frazer, Ctte of Chairs of Assessment Boards (GBS)
Professor Paula Baron, Ctte of Chairs of Assessment Boards (Law)
Professor Nicholas Buys, Ctte of Chairs of Assessment Boards (Health)
Assoc. Professor Jay Younger, Ctte of Chairs of Assessment Boards (QCA)
Professor Peter Roennfeldt, Ctte of Chairs of Assessment Boards (QCGU)
Dr Glenn Finger, Chair, Faculty Learning and Teaching Committee (Education)
Professor Royce Sadler, GIHE (Assessment Project Stage 1)
Lynda Davies, TQI Project Officer, and Secretary
Griffith University stakeholder engagement and communication strategies  
*(see Section 2.4)*

Examples of the main stakeholders at Griffith University include:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Who</th>
<th>Why</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DVC(A), PVC (LSO),</td>
<td>Project sponsors and leaders, provides advocacy for the project.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GIHE (Director and colleagues)</td>
<td>Advocates of the project; experts in learning and teaching and assessment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning and Teaching Committee (LTC)</td>
<td>Members of LTC include a cross-section of academic managers and academics who need to be kept abreast of developments in assessment, and who could be in decision-making positions about learning and teaching. Assessment Policy Review Working Party reports to this group.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deans Learning and Teaching</td>
<td>It is intended that this group could be users of the indicators developed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Executive Group (VC, DVCs, PVCs Directors)</td>
<td>Having agreed to the university’s participation in the project, they will need to be kept informed of progress. May need its support for recommendations arising from the project.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Administration Officers</td>
<td>These staff see the assessment system in operation and can offer perspectives on what is working and what is not.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course convenors</td>
<td>It is intended that this group could be users of the indicators developed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic staff</td>
<td>Need their input on whether the indicators and associated processes are useful and manageable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational Excellence Committee</td>
<td>One of its functions is rewarding excellence in learning and teaching through the internal teaching awards process. The indicators may be useful to them in their judging process.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The list of stakeholders does not represent all the interested parties identified by the project team, but it highlights the different underlying purposes of interaction between the project team and members of the university. As a natural part of the project’s development, new stakeholders were identified and others needed less interaction than anticipated.
## Appendix 2: Outcomes

### Broad institutional, strategic learning and teaching policy audit

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Broad strategic theme</th>
<th>Examples from Strategic Plans</th>
<th>Approaches suggested in the Strategic Plans</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Supporting staff</td>
<td>Adopt innovative approaches to curriculum design and assessment supported by professional dev’t and peers. Develop good practice guides. Help staff build evidence of good practice and excellence. Review assessment policies and practices and amend as appropriate.</td>
<td>Professional dev’t to acquire and improve relevant knowledge and skills in designing assessment; policy structures; system structures.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning priority areas</td>
<td>Research-based learning; life-long learning; Work Integrated Learning; Internationalisation and diversity; ethics and social justice.</td>
<td>Appropriate assessment is integral to particular learning and teaching priority areas Griffith has identified as distinct to its student experience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program planning</td>
<td>Clearly communicate the goals and objectives of the program and course, linking them to L&amp;T activities, and assessment criteria and standards. Design assessment that is fair and has standards appropriate for the discipline.</td>
<td>Programme planning (and its associated processes); disciplinary expertise; program evaluation and review.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formative feedback</td>
<td>Design early formative assessment tasks designed to gauge students’ knowledge and to determine gaps.</td>
<td>Providing feedback upon which students can build knowledge and appropriate understandings, and apply them in future.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student capability</td>
<td>Setting assignments that provide students with opportunities to demonstrate their grasp of the discipline and its context. Design activities and assessment that support students in becoming independent learners.</td>
<td>Enhance student capability of recognising assessment design, knowing why it is designed and applied; and knowing how to address assessment requirements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality assurance and enhancement</td>
<td>Whole-of-program curriculum planning and alignment of assessment with learning goals. System support is implemented to underpin new framework for assuring academic integrity. Processes need to take into account whole student learning cycle.</td>
<td>Systemic, systematic, and peer processes that identify and promote good practice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Project Broad Aims</td>
<td>Griffith Project outcomes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Examining and revising the university’s relevant policies and practices that impact on the quality of learning and teaching | • Audited Griffith’s current assessment policies and practices.  
• Established the Assessment Policy Review Working Party to review the university’s current assessment policies and procedures.  
• Debated the current research in assessment to inform the review of the policies and procedures.  
• Drafted the Assessment Policy Statement of Principles based on the TQI Statements and Quality Indicators of Good Practices in Assessment.  
• Identified procedures and practices that need consideration and alignment with the policy’s Statement of Principles.  
• Developed draft structure for the policy to be considered by the university’s senior academic committees.                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Establishing (and combining existing) necessary infrastructure and systems to gather and interpret data and implement trial initiatives | • Recommended changes to the SET and SEC instruments to allow use of CEQuery on open-ender, qualitative responses.  
• Together with evidence from the use of the TQI ‘Statements and Quality Indicators of Good Practices in Assessment’, this will facilitate access to much more immediate analysis of data for curriculum review purposes.  
• Analysed a faculty’s CEQ results on assessment, focussing on feedback as part of a professional development workshop and for one of the two applications for a learning and teaching grant. This analysis establishes a baseline for the faculty to refer to as it embarks upon intervention initiatives.  
• Established benchmarking capabilities between semester reporting, Griffith University CEQ results, and national data sets.  
• Drafted initial sections of Benchmarking Statements on Assessment and submitted to project leadership, reference group and pilot university network.                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Reviewing and embedding initiatives for long-term activity                                | • Two major Griffith learning and teaching Grant projects over two years have been funded that will build on the work of the Griffith TQI and use the ‘Statements and Quality Indicators of Good Practices in Assessment’.  
• Identified functions for the Committee of Chairs of Assessment Boards to monitor and review assessment matters on a quality assurance cycle.  
• Recommended an organisational restructure and reporting of the assessment boards throughout the university to encourage alignment and consistency between faculty, group and university-wide boards.                                                                                                                                 |
| Reporting on outcomes of the local pilot project to provide feedback to the national level | • Submitted reports to National Leadership, Reference Group, Universities Australia, AUQF 2008, AUQA, and Griffith’s Leadership Group as per Section 2.6.4. Papers have been planned for AuQF 2009 and for submission to relevant international assessment journals once sufficient data from the Griffith TQI Project is gathered. |

Table 1: National Project aims mapped to Griffith Project outcomes
Table 2: Griffith Project strategies, approaches and methodologies and outcomes mapped to national project refined outcomes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Griffith strategies, approaches and methodologies</th>
<th>National Project Broad Aims</th>
<th>Griffith project outcomes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Research and consultation | • Contribution to scholarship on teaching and learning indicators  
                              • Opportunity for institutional renewal | • Part of the annotated bibliography has been devoted to the development of quality indicators in the higher education sector.  
                              • The annotated bibliography contributed to the identification of good practices in assessment that have underpinned the development of Griffith’s Statements and Quality Indicators of Good Practices in Assessment.  
                              • Reports on methodology and advice for other institutions submitted to national project leadership may contribute to the sector’s understanding.  
                              • Presentation to AuQF 2008 outlining methodology. |
| Testing and review | • Testing a framework and model of teaching quality indicators, trialled in different types of universities | • Griffith’s Statements and Quality Indicators of Good Practices in Assessment have been tested by academics from various disciplines including Arts; Music; Law; Management; Sciences; Health; Education; Engineering; Social Sciences; and academic development (higher education); and in the context of different roles including Course (subject) Convenors; Heads of School; academic teaching staff; Chairs of Assessment Boards; specialists in assessment.  
                              • The “Statements and Quality Indicators of Good Practices in Assessment” were used to audit the University’s current assessment policy and exemplars from the sector nationally and internationally. |
| Professional development | • Building a shared language regarding teaching performance | • Inaugural Griffith Learning and Teaching Week – TQI featured in two of the workshop/seminars.  
                              • Various professional development forms include: workshops; production of the annotated bibliography with ‘Implications for practice’ sections; Good Practice Guides; extended interviews with testing group. |
| Quality assurance related tasks and reporting | • A multi-level approach to teaching quality  
                              • Opportunity for institutional renewal | • Identifying the level/role at which responsibility rests for various activities measured by the ‘Statements and Quality Indicators of Good Practices in Assessment’ including: institutional, program/course/teacher, group/faculty/school.  
                              • See ‘Testing and review’ (above) for list of roles involved in the testing of the Statements and Quality Indicators of Good Practices in Assessment.  
                              • Engaging staff from all levels of the university in the consultation process as the policy and procedure review undertaken and in the development of the ‘Statements and Quality Indicators of Good Practices in Assessment’ and making recommendations to relevant governing bodies. |
Implementation plan for assessment at Griffith University, 2009 and beyond

Griffith University now intends to build on the TQI Project in its activities in enhancing learning and teaching in the following way:

Assessment policy
The Assessment Policy Review Working Party will continue its drafting and workshopping of the assessment policy review recommendations it made at the end of 2008 to present to both the Learning and Teaching Committee and the Academic Committee in early 2009. Once the new policy is approved, there will be change-management processes conducted that includes activities such as professional development workshops for faculty/group/schools; chairs of assessment boards and heads of school.

It is intended that a re-structure of the assessment boards across the university occur, including the formation a new assessment sub-committee of the Learning and Teaching Committee. The new policy and the Statements and Quality Indicators of Good Practice in Assessment (SQI) will inform the work of those re-structured boards.

The new policy will also be incorporated into the activities of, and resources for, the ‘Promoting Good Practices in Assessment’ project that has been competitively funded ($150,000) by the university for 2009-2010.

Professional development
There are a number of assessment initiatives will intersect with the outcomes of the TQI Project and they include, but are not limited to the following.

As mentioned above, there are two internal learning and teaching Grant projects awarded in relation to assessment (a) ‘Promoting good practices in assessment’; and (b) ‘Developing and implementing a feed-forward approach to assessment and teaching in the Faculty of Arts’ ($50,000). As part of these projects, further good practice guides in assessment and other professional development resources will be produced for academic staff at Griffith.

There will be work undertaken to support the university’s new Principles to Promote Excellence in Teaching in relation to assessment and it is anticipated that there will be workshops for heads of school, course convenors, and chairs of assessment boards around the new policy and the principles. Many of the aspects of the SQI have been incorporated into the principles.

The university is also continuing its work on curriculum planning and review and how, where and when assessment programs are explicitly addressed in these processes.

The outcomes of the AUQA cycle 2 audit of the university requires work on the moderation of marking and the calibration of academic achievement standards. It is anticipated that the professional development resources produced for the TQI Project can support this work.

It is anticipated that journal articles and conference presentations will be forthcoming in 2009-2010 on assessment and the university’s approach to the TQI Project to disseminate the professional development work undertaken and the outcomes achieved.

Quality assurance and enhancement
The university will be re-designing its quality assurance and enhancement framework (QA&E) for assessment in 2009-2010. As a prelude to that work, the Statements and Quality Indicators of Good Practice in Assessment (SQI) have been mapped to the university’s QA&E framework – the PIRI Model – for consideration in the new system.
The re-designed Student Evaluation of Courses (subjects) and Student Evaluation of Teaching instruments will include some specific questions on assessment and feedback, and the two open-ended questions have been based on the CEQ questions so that the current CEQuery software can be applied and used to analyse the responses in relation to assessment. It is anticipated that assisting staff and course convenors interpret that data in relation to the SQI will be part of the new QA&E processes.
Appendix 3: Outputs

Institutional assessment policy benchmarking analysis process for policy review
(see p 12, Section 2.6.2)

Members of the Assessment Policy Review Working Party indicated that the first component of the policy, and its constituent procedures and guidelines to be reviewed would be the statement of intent (or purpose, or philosophy, or set of principles. Members were therefore asked to: (a) consider the existing Griffith assessment policy; (b) summarise the points with which they agreed; (c) summarise what they saw as the major limitations of, or problems with, the existing policy; (d) summarise any gaps perceived in the existing policy; and (e) consider the exemplars provided and if there were any points, style, structures, or language that could be adapted, identify and collate those points.

The table below shows the way in which the TQI indicators in assessment were used to benchmark the Griffith University Assessment Policy against the exemplar policies. The indicators used in this exercise were in the form as at May-June 2008 and have changed substantially since then.

**Task**
Analysis of existing Griffith University Assessment Policy Approved Doc No. 2007/0017538 and assessment policies from the following universities:

- Otago University (Otago)
- University of Endinburgh (UoE)
- Oxford Brookes University (OB)
- University of Queensland (UQ)
- University of New England (UNE)
- University of Tasmania (UTAS)
- University of South Australia (UniSA)

**Method**

- Analysis conducted of philosophy of assessment, or statement of principles (or intent) of assessment and audited against Griffith University's Assessment Teaching Quality Indicators as at June, 2008. Table 3 (below) show analysis of both the focus points of Griffith's TQI.
- The responses represented in the column exemplar universities show which policies contain reference to the focus point, and are on a ‘yes/no’ basis. The GU column is also on a ‘yes/no’ basis.
- The analysis was initially meant to encompass only the focus and indicators identified in the policy and practices dimension at institutional level, however, most of the exemplar policies extended beyond that into issues or focus points that Griffith TQI has identified as more appropriately sitting in the assessing for learning function at program, course and teacher level.
Table 3: Analysis of the focus points of Griffith Universities TQI

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focus</th>
<th>Reference to &quot;Focus&quot; found in Exemplar Uni policies</th>
<th>Reference to &quot;Focus&quot; found in current GU policy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5.1 links are made clear to students showing how this alignment works over a whole program and within a course;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2 it is made clear how each assessment task relates to the learning aims and objectives; [and learning outcomes]</td>
<td>UTAS, UoE, Otago, UNE</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3 it is shown how graduate attributes are embedded in the curriculum and assessed across program and within a course;</td>
<td>UTAS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.5. communicating these criteria and standards to students, teaching teams, relevant School and Faculty Boards etc.;</td>
<td>UQ, UNE</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.6 undertaking robust local peer processes to calibrate both the standards within the teaching element and discipline, and develop the judgement required of academics when applying those standards to determine quality of student work submitted to ensure consistency;</td>
<td>UQ</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.2 teachers’ expectations for assessment (including criteria and standards descriptors) in writing, in a timely manner with opportunity for students to seek clarification.</td>
<td>UTAS, UoE, UQ</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**New Items not currently contained in Griffith’s TQI assessment dimension indicators**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focus</th>
<th>Reference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quality Assurance in terms of certification for external purposes.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is clear progression in the assessment requirements in terms of higher order thinking.</td>
<td>UTAS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provides clear information for staff to make judgement about student progress and to evaluate effectiveness of teaching.</td>
<td>UTAS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintain anonymity of students work during marking and security of assessment process.</td>
<td>UTAS, UoE, UQ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment to be fair, valid, reliable, transparent including clear appeal processes.</td>
<td>OB, UTAS, UoE, UQ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practicable and cost effective.</td>
<td>UoE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inclusive, recognising needs of diverse student body, not disadvantaging anyone.</td>
<td>UTAS, UniSA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serious consideration given to students’ perception of potentially offensive and exclusive nature of subject content, assessment methodology or schedule.</td>
<td>OB</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Comments

- **Griffith University** -- the statement articulating the university's philosophy of assessment is general in nature, at an abstracted level and does not express principles of assessment explicitly, although some are evident. More of the principles expressed in the other universities' philosophy sections can be found in Griffith's section ‘Assessment requirements for a course’.

- **University of Tasmania** -- a lot of the focus points of the TQI Project are found in the ‘Sub-ordinate principles’.

- **University of Edinburgh** -- mostly motherhood statements.

- **University of Otago** -- sees formative feedback, progression and health of students linked to workloads as an important issue.

- **University of Queensland** -- no discernible philosophy or statement of principles. Reads like a set of procedures/guidelines.

- **University of New England** -- most of the detail on marking and feedback found in section ‘Advice to students’ not in the principles section.

- **Oxford Brookes University** -- the four guiding principles are very clearly situated in an ‘equity’ framework and are expressed as such.

- **University of South Australia** -- while striving for reliable and valid assessment forms, recognises "human judgement is a significant element in indicators of achievement". Sees students taking responsibility for their own learning as crucial, fits feedback into that context. Lists principles without reference to each other, but does spell-out what type of course they apply to.
Introduction

This trial and evaluation report is a summary of the findings made from extensive interview data gathered during the testing and evaluation of the Statements and Quality Indicators of Good Practice in Assessment (SQI) and will focus on two points.

What findings from the interviews prompted changes to the SQI

What advice did the participants give to the Project Team about how the SQIs could be used?

To explore those points above, the report is structured as follows.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aim:</th>
<th>what the project team needed the testing and evaluation phase to achieve</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The instrument – SQI</td>
<td>a brief description of what was tested and evaluated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Method</td>
<td>how the testing and evaluation was conducted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feedback</td>
<td>the main points raised by participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changes:</td>
<td>a brief description of the types of changes made to the SQI as a result of the testing and feedback</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusions and Recommendations:</td>
<td>advice from participants on how the SQIs can be used</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Aim

It was anticipated that feedback from the testing and evaluation of the Statements and Quality Indicators of Good Practice in Assessment (SQI) would: (a) suggest ways to improve the expression of the items, their arrangement and structure; (b) test the viability of the SQI across the university; and (c) affirm the strengths of the approach taken. As such, it was also anticipated that changes would be made to the draft document so that the Griffith TQI Project could present to the ALTC and the sector a tested and reviewed suite of quality indicators on assessment.

The Instrument – SQI

As one of the eight pilot universities participating in the national Teaching Quality Indicators (TQI) Project sponsored by the ALTC, the Griffith TQI Project has developed the Statements and Quality Indicators of Good Practice in Assessment or SQI. They are a suite of quality indicators that universities can use at multiple levels to:

- examine their assessment policies and procedures
- review the assessment design at program and course (ie subject) level
- provide guidance on strategies to improve assessment practices.

The SQI have been developed through a rigorous research and evidence-based process that has defined what Griffith's TQI Leadership Group considers good practice in light of the sector’s needs, and current strategic learning and teaching priorities.
In mid-September, 2008, the project team and TQI Leadership Group believed the SQI were ready for testing and evaluation by academic colleagues across the university (see Attachment A).

Method

Each academic staff member participating in the trial was presented with a copy of the SQI and asked to comment on them in relation to specific questions and to bring to bear upon the SQI their experience and knowledge of assessment practice. The version presented to each participant remained static, and no changes were made to the SQI until the trial process concluded. This was to ensure colleagues were considering and commenting upon the same document in the same form.

Colleagues from across the university were approached to participate in the trial to represent the major disciplinary groups – science (engineering); education; business (management); law, health (foundation year and psychology); arts; performing arts (music); and the social sciences.

The participants also represented a range of academic roles including dean (learning and teaching); head of school; course convenor; teaching academic; academic staff developer; and chair of assessment board.

Ethics approval for the research was sought and received and project information sheets and informed consent forms were provided to each participant accordingly (GIH0908HREC).

Through an interview process, participants were asked the following questions:

1. In what capacity/role would you look at the instrument? e.g., teaching academic, head of school, course convenor etc.
2. In light of your practice, and role, do the indicators work? Do they make sense?
3. Do the sources of evidence make sense?
4. Is there anything missing from either the list of good practices, or the sources of evidence?
5. Is the language clear?
6. Is there any overlap in how the good practices are categorised?
7. Do statements of good practice and their lists of behaviours flow well?
8. Is this a useful task to undertake?
9. How could this instrument be used, e.g., curriculum review, program review, peer-review of teaching etc?

Each interview typically took between one-and-a-half hours and three hours and covered not only the specific questions listed above, but also wide-ranging discussions about assessment theory and practice, the experiences participants’ felt were relevant to the SQI and their opinions of assessment process at the university.

Feedback

Positive Feedback

- Language of the SQI was well-pitched to communicate with academics who don’t have expert technical knowledge of assessment.
- The SQIs provided a useful lens through which to scrutinise their assessment practice and a systematic way of addressing the issues.
- The SQIs provide both an affirmation of good practice, and a challenge to improve.
- For some staff, taking part in the testing of the SQI and the interview constituted a developmental activity that improved their knowledge-base as to assessment
For those in organisational roles (such as head of school, course convenor, dean (learning and teaching), the SQI provide a useful and comprehensive check-list for review of assessment in a course.

Less Positive Feedback

While there is ideal practice and good practice, sometimes there has to be pragmatic practice that makes the best of what is available (e.g., time for feedback).

Some academics were aware of the tensions between assessment as a learning activity and assessment as an accrediting process and they called for support to help them achieve both aims.

A developmental and incremental approach may be needed when using the SQI for improvement, so staff are not trying to do too much at once. For example, during a semester, a school could agree to focus on one of the four Statements of Good Practice and work on reviewing and improving their practice collectively.

Even though the university can, and should, set expectations and standards, and establish rules and practices, the needs of external accreditation processes also have to be taken into account.

Some participants said that the SQI on their own won’t drive change, and to improve practice staff need not only professional development resources, but the opportunity to actively learn about assessment.

Changes

Some of the amendments made to the items were the result of direct re-wording of phrases during the interview, others came about through continued discussion and reflection on the substantive issues behind the item.

Feedback from staff prompted change not only to the wording of the items, but to the organisation and structure of the section ‘sources of information and evidence’.

Some of the items were changed in response to the various perspectives and particular disciplinary contexts within the university.

Conclusions and recommendations

Conclusions

- There is a need for supportive and developmental work to be undertaken to assist academic staff build foundational assessment knowledge.
- In the teaching and convening context, the SQI are seen to be a useful way to introduce new academic staff to the good practices in assessment the university wants, a way of reviewing teaching activity and existing assessment, and a tool for planning assessment.
- At the Institutional level, the SQ give heads of school a way to start conversations about assessment in situations where courses need improving. Staff have pointed out, however, that in the best interests of staff education, it is important to separate any developmental activity from performance management.
- The value of engaging with the SQI as a way to start thinking about assessment was acknowledged by participants.
- There is concern that the SQIs will become a ‘tick-box’ activity.
- Resources can complement active engagement and they can articulate the principles underlying good assessment practice, but unless academic staff understand the
principles, good practice won’t persist and poor understanding of assessment may recur.

- When staff are encouraged to engage with assessment during specific learning and teaching fora, situated in their school or faculty context, they are able and willing to reflect on their practice and to learn more about fundamental assessment theory.

**Recommendations**

1. Consistent, widespread good practice in assessment relies upon academic staff having some understanding of the technical knowledge underlying assessment. Since most academic staff do not encounter this knowledge in the course of becoming teachers in higher education, the university needs actively to explore what developmental opportunities might best bring them to this understanding.

2. The university should create opportunities for academics to scrutinise and discuss their own assessment practice in a context of specific discipline or area knowledge (e.g., through school or faculty learning and teaching forums).

3. The university should motivate staff to participate in professional development activities that are relevant to their schools and faculties.

4. The University should use the SQI in professional development activities for heads of school, chairs of assessment boards, program and course Convenors. They should be provided to new staff as a key institutional resource at induction workshops such as Academic Transition to Griffith, Workshops for Casual Academic Staff New to Teaching, and Foundations of University Teaching, and follow-up developmental workshops made available.

5. The SQI should be introduced to staff as a crucial strategic activity for the institution, and should not be presented only as a passive opt-in resource.

6. The university needs to make available expert assistance with moderation to schools or departments who need it; it also needs to offer professional development sessions for Schools on how to conduct moderation effectively.

7. The university needs to consider how the SQI can be made to serve as the routine instrument for continuing review of assessment across the institution.
Attachment A: Testing Version of the SQI

Principle: Assessment enhances learning and demonstrates student achievement

**Statement of Good Practice #1**: Assessment tasks are designed to facilitate student learning

This occurs when:
- there is consistency between course aims and objectives, graduate attributes and what is assessed;
- tasks test how well students have learned what the program and course set out to teach;
- tasks are appropriate to student year-level in relation to breadth, depth and quality of learning;
- there is an appropriate combination of formative and summative tasks to maximise learning opportunities;
- the timing of assessment tasks is spread appropriately so students can benefit from feedback and avoid work overload at peak times;
- students learn to monitor the quality of their own work-in-progress by practising with models and examples of different standards;
- a variety of forms of assessment are used to accommodate differences in students’ learning styles, and are appropriate to the mode of teaching and type of material being taught; and
- assessment loads for students are commensurate with the credit-point value of the course.

**Statement of Good Practice #2**: Assessment processes and practices are fair and clearly communicated to students

This occurs when:
- task specifications are clearly stated;
- the criterion areas against which the task will be marked are clearly established, with the opportunity for students to seek clarification;
- examples of performances that meet the criterion areas at different standards are discussed with students;
• the processes of marking and how the individual marks will be combined to form the final grade are explained to students;
• tasks are accessible to all students in the course including those with special needs;
• appropriate and useful feedback is provided in a timely fashion to facilitate ongoing learning;
• disciplinary assessment guides and glossaries of terminology (including task-types and any differences from University-wide applications) are provided;
• attempts are made to educate students about academic integrity, with requirements and processes being made clear; and
• anonymity of students' work is maintained when possible and practicable.

**Statement of Good Practice #3: Assessment produces marks and grades that are reliable and valid, and certify students’ achievements.**

This occurs when:
• the mark allocated for an assessment task reflects the standard of the students’ work regardless of how other students perform;
• robust local and cross-institutional benchmarking is used to calibrate and develop academics' grasp of the standards they use when making judgements about the quality of students’ work;
• the appropriate criterion areas and standards used during marking and grading is communicated to relevant School and Faculty Boards;
• moderation of assessment tasks occurs between members of teaching teams and relevant School colleagues; and
• the University meets its legislative responsibilities to attest to students’ levels of achievement.

**Statement of Good Practice #4: Quality assurance and enhancement cycles are implemented to monitor and improve assessment practices and outcomes.**

This occurs when:
• feedback is obtained regarding the quality of assessment and there is an attempt to improve subsequent practices based on this feedback;
• the content of policies and documentation regarding assessment is reviewed to ensure that it is aligned with current theories, empirical evidence, and international good practice; and
• results from the cyclical review of assessment practices are used to develop and improve staff skills.

Sources of evidence: Where do we look? How do we know we’re following good practices and doing them well?
• Institutional assessment policy clearly articulates its underpinning philosophy, theoretical and evidence-based models;
• Institutional assessment policy specifies the good practices it has identified and the expectation that they will be followed;
• University assessment policies and procedures are regularly reviewed;
• Institutional policy outlines its quality assurance and enhancement processes for assessment at University, Group/Faculty, Program and Course levels requiring appropriate elements to monitor, evaluate and report on assessment issues in a regular cycle including:
  o Program approval processes,
  o Annual program review processes, and
  o course approval documents.
• policies spell out the requirements for academic integrity and the consequences for plagiarism and other breaches;
• academic integrity data showing instances and nature of plagiarism and other breaches;
• data on instances and nature of academic appeals;
• reports from School and Faculty Boards of examiners;
• assessment practices rewarded through staff appraisal, promotion processes and award programmes;
• assessment work is given appropriate recognition in workload allocation policies and models;
• program and course guidelines set expectations for feedback relevant to the program and course type;
• specifications for assessment tasks and directions for completing them are provided e.g. course outlines;
• evidence of consideration and appropriate action taken based on student and peer evaluations of course assessment programme;
• satisfaction ratings and comments from student evaluations: SET, SEC, AUSSE, CEQ, other surveys, focus groups;
• results from peer review of assessment tasks and their design at course level;
• levels of staff participation in professional development events on assessment at central, Group and School/Departmental levels;
• usage data for online professional development resources on assessment.
Principle

Griffith University’s Teaching Quality Indicators Project has been guided by research into the theoretical literature on good principles and practices of assessment in higher education; assessment practice at Griffith University; and assessment policies used across Australia and overseas.

This work has shown that assessment inevitably shapes how students approach learning, including what they focus on and how they go about learning it, and is used for a variety of purposes. Necessarily, assessment underpins the core values and principles of the University’s learning and teaching strategic plans and a clear enunciation of what drives assessment at the University is important for students, staff, and the broader community.

It is accepted, therefore, that the primary purpose of assessment is to:

- promote student learning; and
- provide information upon which judgements are made about students’ work and the standards their performances exhibit.

In doing this, the University has a commitment to processes that are transparent, fair, reliable and valid. To articulate the purpose of assessment, Griffith adopts the following Statements of Good Practice.

Statement of Good Practice #1: Assessment tasks are designed to advance student learning

This occurs when:

1.1. there is consistency between what is assessed, course aims and objectives, graduate attributes, and the way things are taught;

1.2. tasks test how well students have learned what the program and course set out to teach including the appropriate graduate attributes;

1.3. tasks test appropriately the increasing complexity of intellectual activity, and require students to demonstrate their growth in understanding and development of skills;

1.4. the sophistication of learning that is expected to be demonstrated through assessment matches the students’ year-level of candidature;

1.5. there is an appropriate combination of formative and summative tasks to maximise learning opportunities;
1.6. a variety of forms of assessment appropriate to the mode of teaching and type of material being taught are used;

1.7. without compromising the essential requirements of the assessment task reasonable adjustments are negotiated, in line with legislative obligations, for students with specific requirements; and

1.8. the amount of assessment in the course is commensurate with its credit-point value, and the spread of assessment across the semester is co-ordinated at Course and Program level to balance workloads for staff and students.

**Statement of Good Practice #2: Assessment processes and practices are clearly communicated to students to facilitate their learning**

This occurs when:

2.1. types of assessment tasks and their weightings are described in the course outline;

2.2. students are informed about the purpose and aims of assessment tasks;

2.3. the way in which the quality of assessment performances will be judged is explained to students;

2.4. examples of assessment performances demonstrating different academic achievement standards are worked through with students so they can learn to monitor the quality of their own work-in-progress;

2.5. the processes of marking, and how the individual marks will be combined to form the final grade, are explained to students;

2.6. constructive and respectful feedback is provided in a timely fashion to facilitate ongoing learning;

2.7. students are provided with the opportunity to learn the skills that enable them to comply with University academic integrity rules; and

2.8. information about the University’s expectations of, and processes for, academic integrity is provided to students.

**Statement of Good Practice #3: Assessment practices are fair, produce marks and grades that are reliable and valid, and certify students’ achievements.**

This occurs when:

3.1. the mark allocated for an assessment task reflects the standard of the students’ work regardless of how other students perform;

3.2. mark allocation, and the system of marking, properly represents the overall judgement of the standard achieved by the students’ performance;
3.3. benchmarking occurs at School, Faculty or Group level to calibrate academics’ understanding of the academic achievement standards used when judging the quality of students’ work;

3.4. moderation of assessment tasks occurs between members of teaching teams or relevant School colleagues; and

3.5. the appropriate criterion areas and academic achievement standards used during marking and grading is communicated to relevant School and Faculty Boards.

**Statement of Good Practice #4: Assessment policies and practices are planned, implemented, reviewed and improved**

This occurs when:

4.1. assessment practices are given consideration in cyclical reviews of teaching, Programs, Courses and academic units;

4.2. staff use feedback from peers and students to improve subsequent assessment practices;

4.3. professional development opportunities are provided to staff to assist them in improving assessment practices;

4.4. staff participate in professional development activities relevant to assessment (e.g. workshops, conferences, relevant literature etc.);

4.5. the content of policies and documentation regarding assessment is reviewed to ensure that it is aligned with current theories, empirical evidence, and international good practice; and

4.6. students are informed of their responsibility for understanding assessment requirements, the academic achievement standards expected of them, and the need to make use of feedback.
Sources of information and evidence: How do we know we’re following good practices and doing them well?

The identification of Good Practices in Assessment stated above is intended to assist academic staff and students to look at the assessment occurring in their course and to evaluate its quality. Sources exist to which staff can turn for information. To assist staff identify those sources and the types of information available, examples relevant to “Convening and Teaching” have been prepared. See below.

In addition to the good practice at Program, Course and Teacher level, there is a range of good practice at institutional level that deals with policy, procedure and quality assurance. To assist staff identify those sources and the types of information available, more examples relevant to “Institution and Administration” have also been prepared. See below.

Both sets of examples are set out in relation to the Statements of Good Practice, the sources of information you might seek, and the type of evidence that is available from those sources. The examples listed are a sample only of all of those available.

Sources of information and evidence available for Convening and Teaching

**Good Practice Statement #1:** Assessment tasks are designed to advance student learning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source:</th>
<th>results from peer review of assessment tasks and their design at course level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What to look for:</td>
<td>tasks are considered to test appropriately the increasing complexity of intellectual activity, and it is agreed that they require students to demonstrate their growth in understanding and development of skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>it is agreed that the variety of forms of assessment offered in the course is appropriate to the mode of teaching and the type of material being taught</td>
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</table>

**Good Practice Statement #2:** Assessment processes and practices are clearly communicated to students to facilitate their learning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source:</th>
<th>Course Outlines</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What to look for:</td>
<td>Requirements for assessment tasks are set out for students, and directions for completing them are provided</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>what feedback is, how it will be offered, how it supports the learning aims and objectives of the course, and the benefits from taking it on board is communicated to students</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Good Practice Statement # 3:** Assessment practices are fair, produce marks and grades that are reliable and valid, and certify students’ achievement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source:</th>
<th>outcomes of meetings between members of teaching teams or relevant colleagues</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>What to look for:</strong></td>
<td>evidence that moderation of assessment tasks occurs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>calibration of academics’ understanding of the academic achievement standards they use when judging the quality of students’ work occurs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Good Practice Statement # 4:** Assessment policies and practices are planned, implemented, reviewed and improved

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source:</th>
<th>results from peer review of assessment tasks and their design at course level</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>What to look for:</strong></td>
<td>evidence of consideration and appropriate action taken based on student and peer evaluations of course assessment programme</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Use of professional development resources on assessment or attendance at workshops</td>
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</table>

**Source:** Student Evaluations of Teaching (SET), Student Evaluation of Courses (SEC), AUSSE, Course Experience Questionnaire (CEQ), other surveys, focus groups

| **What to look for:** | satisfaction ratings and feedback comments from student evaluations relevant to assessment |
Sources of information and evidence available for the Institution and Administration

**Good Practice Statement #1:** Assessment tasks are designed to advance student learning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source:</th>
<th>Institutional assessment policy</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What to look for:</td>
<td>analysis shows that the policy clearly articulates its underpinning philosophy, theoretical and evidence-based models</td>
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</table>

**Good Practice Statement #2:** Assessment processes and practices are clearly communicated to students to facilitate their learning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source:</th>
<th>Institutional assessment policy and Framework for Academic Integrity</th>
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<tr>
<td>What to look for:</td>
<td>policies spell out the requirements for academic integrity and the consequences for plagiarism and other breaches</td>
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<td>academic integrity data shows instances and nature of plagiarism and other breaches</td>
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<td>data on instances and nature of academic appeals</td>
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</table>

**Good Practice Statement #4:** Assessment policies and practices are planned, implemented, reviewed and improved

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source:</th>
<th>GIHE reports to Pro Vice Chancellors and Heads of School</th>
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<tr>
<td>What to look for:</td>
<td>analysis shows that the policy specifies the good practices it has identified and the expectation that they will be implemented</td>
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<td>the policy outlines its quality assurance and enhancement processes for assessment at University, Group/Faculty, Program and Course levels</td>
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<td>rates of staff participation in professional development events on assessment within central, Group, Faculty or School/Department contexts</td>
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<td>usage data for online professional development resources on assessment</td>
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<td>Reference</td>
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<td>grading overall</td>
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<td>Biggs, 1992</td>
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<td>Biggs, 2003</td>
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<td>Crooks, 2007</td>
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<td>Kohn, 2006</td>
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<td>Nulty, Kift, and Sweep, 2007</td>
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<td>Race, Brown &amp; Smith, 2004</td>
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<td>Ramsden, 2003</td>
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<td>Sadler, 1987</td>
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<td>Sadler, 2002</td>
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<td>Sadler, 2005</td>
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<td>Yorke, 2003</td>
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<tr>
<td>Crook, Terry</td>
<td>Key Factors in Effectiveness of Assessment for Learning&quot; AERA Annual Meeting, Chicago. 9 Apr. 2007.</td>
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### Reference

**Performance Indicators**

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