



Progress Report – October 2012

**International inter-university benchmarking of academic promotion
(IIB-AP)**

**University of Leicester, University of Newcastle upon Tyne, University of
Tasmania, University of Wollongong**

Professor Annette Cashmore, UK Project Leader

Professor Sandra Wills, Australian Project Leader

Contents	2
Progress against specified outcomes and deliverables	3
1. Review of Progress	3
Major achievements against schedule/project brief	3
Lessons learnt	4
Challenges met	4
Indicate if these challenges will have an impact on the outcomes, timeline or budget?	5
What is your estimation (%) of how far the project has progressed?	5
2. Formative Evaluation	5
What formative evaluation processes are being used?	5
What have you learnt from these processes thus far?	5
3. Events	5
4. Certification	6

Progress against specified outcomes and deliverables

I. Review of Progress

This benchmarking project aims to produce resources to guide and improve academic promotion policy and practice to reflect the recognition of teaching as core to the assurance of standards in higher education. A review of progress is reported below. The project is on schedule to have key deliverables available to the HEA by May, 2013.

Major achievements against schedule/project brief

Phase 1: Contextual Phase

- Established project plan with regular updates at core team meetings and project officers meetings.
- Employed project officers at each of the four universities to facilitate the implementation of the benchmarking project.
- Developed communication and collaboration schedules, for e.g. weekly university team meetings; weekly international co-leaders call; fortnightly international core team Skype; fortnightly international project officers Skype; and regular Skype meetings with external evaluator and project coordinator.
- Developed a schedule of payments with the HEA.

Phase 2: Research and Validation Phase

- Developed theoretical framework (using the literature review) for benchmarking promotions policies and processes.
- Completed a review of university promotion policies in Australia.
- Ethics approval (H0012869) via UTAS.
- Agreed benchmarking framework of six dimensions-planning and policy; leadership and culture; decision making structures and processes; application procedures; guidance and support; and outcomes, evaluation and review.
- Meeting with Australian Advisory Group by teleconference and face-to-face to provide feedback on the benchmarking framework (30th Aug, 2012).
- Meeting with UK Advisory Group (6th Nov, 2012) was cancelled. Individual phone interviews were organised to discuss the benchmarking framework with each UK Advisory member.
- Online survey on staff perceptions of promotion shared between universities; adapted to each context.
- Agreed validation instrument developed by UTAS for benchmarking framework.

Phase 3: Self-Review Phase

- University self-reviews are underway:
 - University of Leicester: Leicester team is working well (Prof Annette Cashmore; Dr Chris Cane, Craig Bartle and Prof Christine Fyfe (PVC for Students). Meetings have been conducted with various groups of colleagues involved in promotion to complete the template. Interviews have also been conducted.
 - University of Newcastle upon Tyne: Newcastle team is working well (Prof Steve McHanwell, Sue Robson, Elaine Hall) has set up an internal advisory group including PVC for T&L and high level support from the VC to drive the self-review. A schedule of meetings have been conducted (face-to-face or telephone).
 - University of Wollongong: 12 self-review group meetings have been held, as well as an institutional self-review workshop (over 100 staff). The self-review report is out for comment with certain people working on various sections.

- University of Tasmania: UTAS established a small team (Provost, Chair of Academic Senate, Secretary of Promotions Committee, Dr Angela Boyes and Dr Sara Booth) to oversee the coordination of the self-review template. The self-review report is in draft ready for validation with the group.
- Surveys of university staff underway: Leicester are sending out the survey 16th Nov, 2012; UOW have adapted survey to go out Nov 16th pending feedback from the DVC; Newcastle are using survey data from an internal project on promotions and sending out a further staff perception survey week of 19th November, 2012; UTAS has completed two surveys: 1) awareness of learning and teaching initiatives; and 2) staff perceptions of promotion (Responses =220 staff; 92 staff).
- Collection of statistics on promotion from each University has been organised.
- Comparative analysis of success rates across the four universities has been completed for 2010 & 2011 in addition to a report on differences between statistics collection
- Self-review software template has been developed by UTAS for the collection of data.
- Peer review workshop in Tasmania is organised.
- Suzi Hewlett, Director of OLT will be attending some of the peer review workshop.
- Organised payment with HEA for 31st Oct, 2012.
- Australian Dissemination Forum set as satellite event of Universities Australia conference (1Mar, 2013).
- Newcastle and Leicester Project teams have met to discuss UK Forum.

Lessons learnt

As always allocation of project staff takes longer than expected especially factoring in that UK summer holidays commenced at the time the project heard it was successful and this was doubly complicated this year by Olympics fever. However, there is a good working relationship within the core team since all had been working (slowly but passionately) on parts of this project for some time before HEA funding received. Time needed to be allowed to develop the working relationship between project officers in all four universities who have not worked together before as an international team and had not been familiar with this topic. A Collaboration Agreement was set up by UTAS but has not progressed. The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) has been used as the main document for collaboration.

Challenges met

Despite previous working knowledge of this topic the international team has also had to spend time refining their mutual understanding of the exact nature and relative importance of each deliverable e.g. a **benchmarking** framework for understanding the strengths and weaknesses of promotions policies and processes versus an **evidence** framework for evaluating teaching achievements in promotion. A key challenge has been the diverse contexts of each university and how the benchmarking project would be implemented.

Another challenge has been bringing the external reference group members together at a forum. A mixture of teleconference and face-to-face modes was used for the Australian external reference group meeting. The UK external reference group meeting was cancelled due to the unavailability of senior external reference group members to attend the face-to-face forum. Individual telephone meetings were held with UK external reference group members.

Benchmarking processes are well understood by the Australian Project Officers and the Project Coordinator who have worked together before on other benchmarking topics between the two Australian universities. Naturally it has taken longer for the UK universities to tailor the Australian processes to the UK context. The project was always intended to be an eighteen month project so that understandings could have time to build but it has been squeezed into nine months. However, the Project Coordinator has ensured that key milestones have been met.

The last challenge we have had is bringing the UK Promotions Policy data together and this still needs to be completed to provide an overview of the comparison of both countries' policies.

Indicate if these challenges will have an impact on the outcomes, timeline or budget?

No impact on timeline yet or budget but we might end up with more deliverables. Project Officers (in Australia) are working more than their currently allocated time but hopefully this will even out once the self-review and peer review phases are complete.

What is your estimation (%) of how far the project has progressed?



2. Formative Evaluation

What formative evaluation processes are being used?

- External evaluator, Prof Dorothy Whittington and International Advisory Groups.
- External evaluator has regular Skype meetings with Project Coordinator and has had a meeting with the two Project Leaders. She will be attending the Peer Review workshop in Tasmania.
- Validation instrument developed by UTAS.
- Universities keeping notes on changes to be made to benchmarking framework and the other tools and templates which are deliverables of the project.

What have you learnt from these processes thus far?

There has been some confusion about the scope of the project-whether it is looking at all promotions processes or teaching only-positions. We have refined our promotional materials and guides to provide greater clarity that the project is about the recognition of teaching in academic promotion.

3. Events

Provide details of events planned over the next six months.

Event Date	Event title, Location (city only)	Brief description of the purpose of the event	Number of participants	Number of higher education institutions represented	Number of other institutions represented
29-30 th Nov, 2012	Hobart	Peer Review Workshop	16	4	OLT, HEA External evaluator
1 Mar, 2013	Canberra	Satellite event at the Universities Australia Conference	Invitation and registration	TBC	TBC
April, 2013	UK	Dissemination Forum in the UK	TBC	TBC	TBC

4. Certification

Certification by project leader

I certify that this is an accurate representation of the progress of the project.

Project leader:

Signature: Date:

Certification by project leader

I certify that this is an accurate representation of the progress of the project.

Project leader:

Signature: Date:

Certification by DVC/PVC (Academic), or equivalent, or official delegate

I acknowledge submission of the Progress Report.

Full name:

Position:

Signature: Date: