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## Recognising and rewarding teachers

One of the most influential factors in students' learning is the knowledge, judgement and skill of their teachers. A recent paper by ACER Principal Research Fellow Dr Lawrence Ingvarson in Professional Development in Education reviews the Scottish Chartered Teacher Scheme in the light of international interest in policies designed to promote teacher quality.

The Scottish Chartered Teacher Scheme emerged in 2001, designed to recognise and reward teachers who attained high standards of practice. The scheme aimed to attract and retain effective teachers, and to ensure all teachers continue to engage in effective professional learning.

Some key features of the Scottish scheme include:

- Those gaining chartered teacher status receive a pay rise of about 20 per cent.
- The standards-based professional learning is of a very high quality. Gaining chartered teacher status calls for a major commitment of time, effort and money from teachers.
- Chartered teacher status is portable – not tied to a particular position or job with a particular school.

Dr Ingvarson said the teaching profession in countries like Australia and Scotland is still not fully comfortable with the idea of better pay for better teaching, rather than better pay for extra jobs. In the early 1990s most Australian states allocated often trivial extra work to full-time advanced skills teachers to justify the extra pay, rather than thinking about how their expertise might best be used. A flaw in some Australian schemes in the 1990s was the failure to adapt to the idea that a teacher might be worth more as a practising teacher.

"Teachers themselves often found it difficult to live with the idea. They looked for extra work to justify their pay rise, leading to more stress," Dr Ingvarson said.

One of the main strengths of the Scottish scheme is the extent to which universities have been mobilised to develop new master's degree programs. The scheme seems to have a high level of credibility with teachers, and offers a viable alternative to crude merit pay schemes that are usually short-lived and limited in their effects on professional learning.

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Dr Ingvarson's paper was based on an address given to the National Chartered Teacher Conference in Edinburgh in June 2008.

**Article reference:**

Ingvarson, L. (2009). Developing and rewarding excellent teachers: the Scottish Chartered Teacher Scheme. *Professional Development in Education*. 35(3) September, pp. 451-468.

Full text copies of the article can be [purchased online](#) from informaworld.

A limited number of offprint copies of the article is also available. To request a copy please contact [Dr Ingvarson by email](#).

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## Quality standards and regulation discussed

Australian Universities already have rigorous quality assurance measures in place that deliver a world-class university system but, according to speakers at a University of Melbourne seminar on August 31, more needs to be done to ensure adequate assessment of student achievement and graduate outcomes.

Professor Alan Robson, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Western Australia and current chair of the Group of Eight and Dr Hamish Coates, Principal Research Fellow with the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) delivered the third in a series of seminars conducted by the University of Melbourne's Centre for the Study of Higher Education (CSHE) and the LH Martin Institute for Higher Education Leadership and Management on 31 August. The seminar, *Quality Standards and Regulation: the start of a new era*, examined the role of the new Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) in monitoring quality and institutional performance.

Funding for the new agency was announced in the 2009 budget and its establishment represents a core component of the Rudd Government's response to the Bradley Review of Higher Education. When it is fully operational in 2012 TEQSA will assume the role of national regulatory agency and develop a new quality assurance framework.

Both Professor Robson and Dr Coates argued that a major challenge for the new agency will be in assuring the public that universities are meeting minimum academic standards for students.

Despite the seminar's title, Professor Robson declined to use the term 'a new era' as this implied the university sector would be starting from scratch in terms of quality assurance. He insisted that the existing system of audits, accreditation, state government regulation and reporting; research and assessment exercises and peer review, international ranking systems and reputation indicate there is already a vast amount of quality monitoring going on within Australian universities.

"Australia has a quality system. It is intensive and rigorous. It's not perfect, it needs improving but we're not starting from scratch," Professor Robson said.

"I would argue that the existing system has delivered a comprehensive high quality university system with universities aspiring to quality and excellence in research, innovation, student learning, teaching, and community and industry engagement."

Professor Robson argued that the public is primarily concerned with knowing that universities are meeting minimum academic standards. He suggested a method of 'light-touch' external examiners would help address concerns over academic standards.

"I propose a system where you have external examiners accredited by the quality agency (TEQSA). Universities choose the examiners from the list. You only do external examination of final year units. You do it once every three years and the results have got to be available for the quality audit when the quality audit comes around. Now that to me is an example of a system that could work. It's not terribly intrusive and it would guarantee, I believe, minimum standards."

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In his presentation Dr Coates supported an increased emphasis on student assessment in the quality assurance process but warned the setting of minimum standards should not mean all institutions aim for the same standards. There is, he said, a need for universities to aim for excellence and for the system to stimulate diversity.

According to Dr Coates more sophisticated methodologies than setting minimum standards are available and feasible and university sector could adapt methodologies for assessment and reporting currently being used in the schools sector.

Dr Coates said national performance indicators for Australian universities have not been defined since 1989 and it is time we thought through what really counts in Australian higher education. Dr Coates argued that universities need to identify the things that count, set external reference points, collect quantitative data and use it to highlight strengths and identify areas for improvement, provide information to potential students on what they should be doing and assure the public that minimum standards are being met. This would require the gathering of a large and diverse collection of data.

Dr Coates said that the principles around university quality assurance are very complex and the way forward may be difficult.

He called on universities to report the results of quality assessments saying such reporting was an area in which Australia has done quite badly in comparison to other countries in the last few years.

“Satisfying all of these principles is not going to be easy. It’s not going to be quick but it needs to be done if the system is to have the desirable impact,” he said.

Further information about the seminar including video of seminar and presentation slides is available from <http://www.cshe.unimelb.edu.au/>

This article was originally published in [Campus Review](#) on 7 September 2009.

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## ACER UPDATE

### Masters joins expert working group

ACER's chief executive Professor Geoff Masters has accepted an invitation to become Deputy Chair of the Transforming Learning and the Transmission of Knowledge Expert Working Group of the Prime Minister's Science, Engineering and Innovation Council (PMSEIC). The PMSEIC was established in 1997 as the Government's principal source of independent advice on issues in science, engineering and innovation and aspects of education and training. The council discusses major national issues in science, engineering and technology and their contribution to the economic and social development of Australia with discussion informed by Expert Working Groups' independent reports focusing on areas of special interest to the Government.

### Conference to discuss the attractiveness of the academic profession

ACER is participating in the LH Martin Institute's first international conference The Attractiveness of the Academic Profession: The Management Challenge, on October 1-2 in Melbourne. The conference will provide the opportunity to explore the relative attractiveness of the Australian academic profession in comparison to its major competitor systems.

This conference will draw on the results of a major international comparative study on the changing nature of the academic profession undertaken by the University of New England's Centre for Higher Education Management and Policy (CHEMP) and the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER). The Changing Nature of the Academic Profession (CAP) project was conducted in around 20 countries over 2007-2008. It will also be the first opportunity for the researchers involved to use the international dataset that the project has generated. Further information is available from the

[LH Martin Institute website](#)

### Schools First awards update

The first round of applications for Schools First closed in August and more than 1500 applications were received. ACER has been responsible for evaluating the applications. Schools could apply for an Impact Award, which recognises excellence in school-community partnerships, and/or a Seed Funding Award, which recognises the potential for excellence in these partnerships. According to assessors, applications showed remarkable diversity in terms of the projects that have been set up. The stories were sometimes quite moving; many were inspirational; nearly all showed an excellent understanding of the important contribution that such partnerships can make to improving educational outcomes for students. The three partners – ACER, the Foundation for Young Australians and the National Australia Bank – are all heartened by the level of commitment shown by school communities to harnessing the expertise that exists in these communities. For more information visit [www.schoolsfirst.edu.au](http://www.schoolsfirst.edu.au)

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