



Higher Education Standards Panel

Communique Number 10 – December 2013

Introduction

Welcome to the tenth Communique from the Higher Education Standards Panel (the Panel). The purpose of this Communique is to summarise the Panel's work during 2013 and to update the sector on the Panel's consultations.

Further details about the Panel and its work during 2013, including the Panel's previous communiqués, are available on the Panel's website (<http://www.HEstandards.gov.au>).

Technical amendments made to Threshold Standards

In early 2013, the then Commonwealth Minister for Tertiary Education, Skills, Science and Research made a series of technical amendments to the Threshold Standards. The amendments were based on a number of technical errors in the original Threshold Standards that were brought to the attention of the Panel during 2012.

The instrument (<http://www.comlaw.gov.au/Details/F2013L00194>) amending the Framework came into force on 16 February 2013. For further information on the technical amendments please refer to Communique 7 (March 2013).

Call for Comment Number 1 – Course Design and Learning Outcomes

In March 2013, the Panel released draft standards for Course Design and Learning Outcomes in Call for Comment Number 1 to seek the sector's comments on these central functions as well as on the concept of reference points and the proposed format and style of the standards.

Seventy-two responses were received to Call for Comment 1 with broad support for the concept of reference points, although some questions about the application of the concept were raised. Feedback from the sector was used by the Panel to formulate its definition of Reference Points as:

Significant codes or frameworks that the Higher education standards Panel judges to be of relevance to providers in considering how particular standards may be met or demonstrated.

The Panel reviewed the draft standards for Course Design and Learning Outcomes taking account of the feedback from the sector. As part of its response to the feedback, the Panel also provided an overview of the draft framework it is proposing for the revised standards. The proposed framework for the draft standards places the educational participation of students and the outcomes attained as the primary focus of the framework. Further information on the feedback to Call for Comment Number 1 and the Panel's response, including the organising framework for the draft standards, can be found in Communique 8 (May 2013).

Call for Comment Number 2 – Research, Research Training and Learning Outcomes (Research Training)

In May 2013, the Panel released draft standards for Research, Research Training and Learning Outcomes (Research Training) to seek feedback on the content of these standards and their proposed inclusion in revised standards.

Seventy-one responses were received to Call for Comment 2 with the majority of respondents indicating broad support for the draft standards. In response to the feedback, the Panel modified the

draft standards in relation to a number of requirements including supervision and the reporting of research performance. Further information on the feedback to Call for Comment Number 2 and the Panel's response can be found in Communique 9 (September 2013).

Consultations

In addition to releasing calls for comment, the Panel continued consulting with stakeholders throughout 2013 to inform its development of draft standards. The Panel has met with stakeholders on approximately 50 occasions during 2013. This iterative approach to consultation with stakeholders will continue in 2014.

Release of Draft Standards

The Panel is preparing to release the full set of draft standards to stakeholders for comment, but is conscious that further details on the implementation of the recommendations of the Review of Higher Education Regulation have yet to be announced. In view of the current demands on the sector and the time of year, the Panel has chosen to postpone its consultation on the draft standards until next year.

In the meantime, the Panel will continue to consider the parts of the standards that address criteria for providers, such as provider categories, and further develop definitions of terms used in the standards. The Panel will also consider the extent to which it may have a view on guiding the interpretation and application of the draft standards. The outcomes of this work will be released for comment in due course.

Providing Feedback to the Panel

If you wish to provide feedback on any matter raised in this or any other communique, or on other matters to do with developing standards, the Panel can be contacted at any time via the Higher Education Standards Executive at:

NEW EMAIL ADDRESS info@HEstandards.gov.au

PLEASE NOTE NEW WEBSITE <http://www.HEstandards.gov.au>

The Panel is grateful for the generous cooperation, support and constructive feedback it has received during the year. The Panel looks forward to continuing to engage in conversations with the sector and other stakeholders in the coming year. On behalf of the Panel, I wish you all a happy and safe festive season.

Alan Robson
Chair
Higher Education Standards Panel
December 2013

Distribution of Communiques

It would be helpful if the existing addressees of the Panel's communiques could look to passing the communiques on to interested parties within their constituencies. Anyone who wishes to be added to the distribution list can contact the email address above. Copies of communiques will be uploaded to the Panel's website as soon as practicable after distribution.