



THE UNIVERSITY OF
NOTRE DAME
A U S T R A L I A

Broadway: 140 Broadway
Darlinghurst: 160 Oxford Street
PO Box 944, Broadway NSW 2007
Telephone: (02) 8204 4400
Facsimile: (02) 8204 4422
Internet: www.nd.edu.au

ABN: 69 330 643 210

CRICOS PROVIDER CODE: 02651D

Higher Education Standards Panel Executive
8th April 2013

**Call for Comment (Number 1, March 2013)
Draft Standards for Course Design and Learning Outcomes.**

Dear Panel Executive

Thank you for this opportunity to comment on the proposed approach to revising the format and style of the draft standards. Feedback was sought from key academic groups at The University of Notre Dame Australia, in response to specific questions posed in the Higher Education Standards Panel's *Discussion Paper*. Permission is given to make these comments available on the Higher Education Standards website.

Feedback on Questions Posed for Proposed *Format* of the Revised Standards based on the Exemplar Draft Standards for Course Design (coursework) & Learning Outcomes (coursework)

Q1. Do you broadly support the proposed format for the standards? If not, why?

The proposed format is supported. The move from statement headings to taxonomic headings has improved the clarity and organisation of information. There also appears to be more consistency of style, on the basis of the Course Design and the Learning Outcomes exemplars.

Q2. Do you support the inclusion of Reference Points as proposed? If not, why?

The inclusion of Reference Points is supported. The Reference Points give important guidance to providers on appropriate evidence that would demonstrate compliance to a relevant standard. The particular reference points should be limited to peak national bodies or agencies and regularly checked for relevance and currency.

Q3. Do you wish to make any suggestions in relation to the format of the standards?

The narrative format results in a clearly articulated document. Although cognisant that the Reference Points are intended to be indicative rather than definitive and are not part of the standards, it would be useful if exemplar Reference Points could be linked more meaningfully to the standards statements rather than being listed in bulk at the end of the section without reference to the standards.

Feedback on Questions Posed for Proposed *Content* of Draft Standards for Course Design (Coursework)

Q4. Do you broadly support the proposed Standards for Course Design? If not, why?

There is broad support for the proposed Standards for Course Design.

Q5. Do you wish to make any suggestions in relation to the specific content of the Standards?

Standard 6 needs clarification. There is concern in relation to potential homogenisation of university offerings as an unintended by-product of this Standard. This would be a most unfortunate outcome for the Australian higher education sector in general and significantly detrimental to the identity of an institution.

A potential Reference Point for inclusion (i.e. without compromising AQF requirements) is international comparators. Although international comparators are mentioned in the Draft Standards for Learning Outcomes, no such mention is made in the Draft Standards for Course Design.

Feedback on Questions Posed for Proposed Content of Draft Standards for Learning Outcomes (Coursework)

Q6. Do you broadly support the proposed Standards for Learning Outcomes? If not, why?

In broad terms, there is support for the proposed Standards for Learning Outcomes.

Q7. Do you wish to make any suggestions in relation to the specific content of the Standards?

Along similar lines to the previous section on Course Design, the suggestion was again made to include international comparators in the Reference Points section.

It was suggested that “mastery” (point 3a) should be further qualified by wording along the lines of “... to the extent required by the AQF level”.

Please do not hesitate to contact me on () or if you require clarification.

Yours sincerely

Professor Margot Kearns
Pro Vice Chancellor, Academic