

HESTANDARDS - Info

From: Janet A. Baker <>
Sent: Monday, 8 April 2013 2:29 PM
To: HESTANDARDS - Info
Cc: Nicholas Vardaxis; David Cummings; Chris Currie
Subject: Response to Call for Comments on Draft Standards for Course Design and Learning Outcomes from Open Universities Australia

Attention: Higher Education Standards Panel Executive

Response to Call for Comments on Draft Standards for Course Design and Learning Outcomes from Open Universities Australia

Open Universities Australia (OUA), Australia's national open access higher education organisation, provides access to online units and programs from leading Australian higher education providers.

OUA commends the work of the Higher Education Standards Panel in refining both the format of the Threshold Standards and the content. It welcomes the clarity of the information and the elimination of duplication. It also considers the use of the Reference Points a considerable advance in developing the Standards in that it makes it much clearer, for example, the relationship between the role of Standards and the information available in the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF, January 2013) by specifically indicating that the Standards and the Australian Qualifications Framework are to be considered as part of the required approach and that achieving the Standards requires adherence by providers to the requirements of the AQF.

It would like to offer the following comments:

OUA, as an organisation that facilitates access to higher education, would in particular appreciate careful consideration given to the development of standards around Educational Experience to provide guidance relating to the principles of open access provision, an approach in which Australia has been a world leader and innovator.

Similarly, with regard to Representation Standards, clear consideration around information for prospective students through open access would be welcomed.

OUA is also very supportive of efforts around Enablers Standards, including ways in which data analytics can be used to support opportunities for student success. We look forward to Standards in this area facilitating the opportunities in this area.

Lastly, as an open access organisation where students are not in a course of study but may be working towards an award or qualification and requiring an understanding of the specified learning outcomes and information about course design for the award or qualification they are working towards, we would like more consistency across the

sector in the use of terminology. A 'course of study' has a particular meaning in the sector and refers to students who have been accepted into a particular program of learning that leads to the award of a qualification at a higher education provider. According the AQF a 'course' itself is one example of a program of learning which is defined as a course, curriculum, training package, units of study, or structured workplace learning that leads to the award of a qualification. We would suggest that for consistency, the Standards use the same definition as the AQF and talk about a program of learning. Moreover, it would then specifically include students in the Open Universities Australia open access model.

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Leading online learning. Open Universities Australia is the national leader in providing open and flexible access to quality tertiary education, enrolling more than 250,000 students since 1993. We provide access to over 1700 units and 180 qualifications taught by more than 20 of Australia's leading universities and higher education providers.

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