



Office of the
Vice-Chancellor
Armidale NSW
Australia 2351
Phone
Fax

www.une.edu.au

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Emeritus Professor Alan Robson AM CitWA
Chair
Higher Education Standards Panel
GPO Box 1672
MELBOURNE VIC 3001

Via email: info@HEstandards.gov.au

Alan
Dear Professor Robson,

Re: University of New England's Response to Call for Comment (Number 1, March 2013)

I write in response to your invitation to provide feedback on the *Draft Standards for Course Design and Learning Outcomes*. UNE's response has been compiled following consultation with members of the University's Academic Board and other interested personnel.

UNE broadly supports the format of the draft standards and the inclusion of the reference points as proposed. UNE's Academy has made a number of suggestions in respect of the draft standards as outlined in attachment one.

I look forward to the opportunity to comment on further drafts of the revised Higher Education Standards Framework as they are developed.

Yours sincerely,

Jim Barber
Professor Jim Barber
Vice-Chancellor and CEO
University of New England

Draft Standards for Course Design and Learning Outcomes

UNE broadly supports the format of the draft standards and the inclusion of the reference points as proposed in the *Call for Comment (Number 1, March 2013)*. After consultation with Academic Board and other interested staff, UNE wishes to make specific suggestions in relation to the wording of a number of the draft standards.

HES Draft Standards for Course Design (Coursework)

Standard 1: The provider utilises defined processes for designing and assuring the quality of the design of each course of study and the qualifications to which it leads

UNE suggests that professional accreditation should be mentioned in this standard, with the wording amended to read:

The Higher Education Provider utilises defined processes, including professional accreditation requirements where relevant, for designing and assuring the quality of the design of each course of study and the qualifications to which it leads.

Standard 3: Course design encompasses the rationale for the course of study, course structure, modes of delivery, learning outcomes, methods of assessment, entry requirements and pathways, programmed student workload, articulation arrangements, exit pathways, pathways to further study and any compulsory requirements for completion and that these features of all courses of study are documented and publically accessible in a current version

This is a very long and ambiguous single sentence. UNE suggests that a list of dot points may provide greater clarity. It is also unclear whether all of the items on the list are required to be publically accessible in a current version or whether is it just the last item in the list (i.e. any compulsory requirements for completion) that are required to be documented and publically accessible.

Reference Points: Australian Qualifications Framework (January 2013); The requirements for professional accreditation of the course of study and registration of graduates where applicable

UNE suggests that the reference points should be the same as for Learning Outcomes (Coursework), as they are also relevant to Course Design, i.e. include: 'Learning outcomes statements developed for the field of study by Office for Learning and Teaching discipline communities or other disciplinary professional bodies.'



HES Draft Standards for Learning Outcomes (Coursework)

Standard 1: The learning outcomes to be achieved on completion of a course of study are specified for each course of study

UNE suggests that the wording be amended to include the requirement that outcomes are accessible. This would mean that standard 5 could be deleted with the wording amended as follows:

The learning outcomes to be achieved on completion of a course of study are specified and available to staff, students and publically accessible in a current version for each course of study.

Standard 2: The learning outcomes for each course of study are consistent with the qualification awarded, are comparable with those for courses of study that lead to the same or a similar qualification in Australia and are informed by international comparators

UNE suggests that the wording be amended to include reference to accrediting bodies with wording amended as follows:

The learning outcomes for each course of study are consistent with the qualification awarded and, where applicable, consistent with accrediting bodies' requirements, are comparable with the learning outcomes for courses of study that lead to the same or a similar qualification in Australia and are informed by international comparators.

Standard 3: The learning outcomes for each course of study are informed by:

- a. the mastery of specific disciplinary and/or interdisciplinary knowledge and skills that characterise the field of study
- b. the generic skills and attributes required of graduates
- c. the application of generic skills and attributes in the context of the field of study including the communication skills required, and
- d. the requirements of employment related to the field of study.

UNE has identified potential overlap between items b. and c. In addition, the reasoning behind the decision by the Higher Education Standards Panel to specifically identify communication skills within this context, and not other generic skills, is not understood.

Standard 5: The specified learning outcomes for each course of study are available to the staff and students who are involved and are publically accessible in a current version.

Should UNE's suggestion for amended wording to standard 1 be adopted, standard 5 becomes redundant.