



***Draft Standards for Course Design
and Learning Outcomes –
Feedback from the Association for
Academic Language and Learning
April 16th 2013***

Background to AALL and its interest in the Standards

The Association for Academic Language and Learning (AALL) is pleased to provide comment on the *Draft Standards for Course Design and Learning Outcomes*. AALL (<http://www.aall.org.au>) is the peak national body for the community of over 400 academic language and learning (ALL) educators working in higher education institutions across Australia to enhance students' learning and communication, that is, their academic and professional language and communication development and English language proficiency.

ALL educators work with students, both domestic and international, at all levels of study in higher education. Increasingly this work occurs in partnership with discipline academics and involves curriculum design and the production of learning resources that support the development of **all** students' disciplinary appropriate communication.

AALL was represented on the Steering Committee convened by AUQA to develop the *Good Practice Principles for English Language Development for International Students* (GPP) (2008)¹ and the panel that subsequently redrafted those Principles into *English Language Standards for Higher Education* (ELSHE)². More recently, AALL was represented at the 2013 national symposium *Five Years On: English Language Competence of International Students*³, convened by International Education Association of Australia and supported by the Australian Government through the Australian Education International.

Importantly, the recently released document *TEQSA Terms of Reference for the Quality Assessment: English Language Proficiency*⁴ makes reference to AALL's submission to the GPP and notes that many students, not just international students, are unprepared for meeting academic requirements such as 'critical analysis and essay writing and in communicating effectively in oral and written English' (p.2). Consequently, the TEQSA assessment covers English language proficiency for **all** students.

It is from this background and the now widely acknowledged and theoretically supported understanding that language and communication development occurs best within the context of the disciplines that AALL offers the following comments.

¹ <http://www.innovation.gov.au/HigherEducation/ResourcesAndPublications/HigherEducationPublications/OtherPublications/Pages/GoodPracticePrinciples.aspx>

² <http://www.aall.org.au/sites/default/files/FinalEnglishLanguageStandardsMay2012.pdf>

³ http://www.ieaa.org.au/Events/ShowEvent_IEAA.asp?id=391&page=1

⁴ <http://www.teqsa.gov.au/sites/default/files/EnglishLanguageProficiencyQATerms.pdf>

Concept of Reference Points

Q. 2 In the context of the information provided in the *Background* section of this submission, and in support of the third point (sub sections a, b, c and d) identified in the draft Learning Outcomes (Coursework) Standards, AALL would support the addition of the following reference points:

- *Good Practice Principles for English Language Development for International Students* (GPP)
- *English Language Standards for Higher Education* (ELSHE)
- *TEQSA Terms of Reference for the Quality Assessment: English Language Proficiency*

Course Design (Coursework)

Q.5 At the risk of potential overlap with the information in Learning Outcomes but also in consideration of the research that indicates that course design is critical for the achievement of the third point identified in the Learning Outcome (Coursework) Standards, AALL suggests that there is some mention of generic skills, attributes, communication in the list (point 3) of what should be encompassed in course design.

Learning Outcomes (Coursework)

Q. 7 AALL is very supportive of the inclusion of point 3 and its sub-components in the proposed draft standards.

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President AALL
On behalf of the AALL Executive Committee