

9 July 2013

Higher Education Standards Panel Executive  
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CRICOS Provider No. 00120C

Dear Panel members,

**Re: Your Call for Comment: Research, Research Training, and Learning Outcomes**

Thank you for providing the Australian National University with an opportunity to comment on draft standards for Research, Research Training, and Research Training Learning Outcomes. I have provided separate comments about each of these three areas in the attached document.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you would like to discuss any of the issues raised.

Yours sincerely

Professor Jenny Corbett  
**Pro Vice-Chancellor, Research and Research Training**

ANU is in broad agreement with the suite of draft Standards but has the following specific comments:

### **Comments on Draft Research Standards**

Standard 5: We support the idea of an accurate, secure and up-to-date repository of research but the Standards present an opportunity to bring consistency across the sector. At present there are many different approaches to meeting this need and most are not consistent or inter-operable. It would be useful to specify in the Standard that the sector should work towards a consistent structure for repositories. A Reference point on this would be a way to clarify how consistency might be achieved.

### **Comments on Draft Research Training Standards**

Standard 1: The Discussion paper makes reference to the importance of the research environment but the standards do not include this. The ANU's view is that the Standard should address this criterion specifically. We suggest the addition of an additional clause to the effect that research training should be conducted in fields where the provider can demonstrate sufficient capability, resources and infrastructure for the field of research and proposed candidatures. In admitting candidates providers should take into account the quality of the research environment in the specific fields in which the candidature will be conducted.

Standards 3 and 4: We suggest that Standards 3 and 4 be combined to state: "Each research student is supervised by a principal supervisor who is research active in the relevant field of research and, in the case of students for research higher degrees, holds a doctoral degree or has equivalent research experience. To ensure continuity of supervision throughout the candidature, at least one associate supervisor with relevant research expertise should be identified at the time of admission."

Standard 5: At present this Standard could be read to mean that all the training mentioned should be specific to the field of research. Adding a comma after the word 'property' would improve clarity.

### **Comments on Learning Outcomes**

The Standard makes no mention of capacity for original research which is an important outcome of research training. We suggest that Standard 3 includes an additional element that candidates show, at a level consistent with the qualification, a capacity for original contribution to knowledge.

Standard 3e: This Standard is too broad and demands an unattainable level of skill. While it is highly desirable that candidates have generic skills that are transferrable across different environments it does not seem necessary to require that they be transferable across different fields of research. The nature of research higher degrees is to develop specialist knowledge in a field of research and even generic skills will have a degree of field specificity. Candidates could be expected to have skills in cognate disciplines but the current wording of the Standard could be interpreted to mean that science graduates should be able to carry out humanities research and vice versa. This is either unattainable or will be met at a trivial level. We recommend dropping the words "and fields of research".