



Higher Education Standards Panel

AFTRS Response to Call for Comments on the Draft Standards for Course Design and Learning Outcomes

1. FEEDBACK ON PROPOSED FORMAT

Q1. Broad support for the Proposed Format for the Standards?

AFTRS broadly supports the proposed format, in particular the simple taxonomic headings and the stand-alone standards statements.

Q2. Support for the inclusion of Reference Points?

AFTRS is not opposed to the concept of Reference Points but questions the need for them to be provided in the body of the standards document. For example, the Reference Points in the Learning Outcomes standards refers to the learning outcome statements developed for the field of study by Office for Learning and Teaching, or other. With there being multiple authoritative sources that could serve as Reference Points, there is the danger that the Reference Point list will be longer than the Standards themselves, thus undermining the clarity sought in the new format.

Q3. Suggestions in relation to the format of Standards?

AFTRS recommends that guidance on evidence be provided in a succinct 'Guide to Evidence' handbook. This could include Reference Points as defined in the Discussion Paper; exemplars of evidence that meets the standards; relevant templates; style guide etc.

2. FEEDBACK ON PROPOSED DRAFT STANDARDS FOR COURSE DESIGN (COURSEWORK)

Q4: Broad support for the proposed standards?

AFTRS broadly supports the proposed draft standards for Course Design. However, as all higher education providers are required to comply with the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) which is regulated through TEQSA, it is redundant to include specific reference to the AQF in the Standards themselves.

Q5: Suggestions in relation to the specific content of the standards?

AFTRS notes Point 4 in the Course Design standards includes a redundant reference to the AQF. It also introduces ambiguity with the term '*The nature...*' AFTRS recommends this Standard be amended to read '*The scope and content of*

the course and the expectation for student learning are consistent with the qualification to be awarded’.

3. FEEDBACK ON PROPOSED DRAFT STANDARDS FOR LEARNING OUTCOMES (COURSEWORK)

Q6: Broad support for the proposed standards?

The draft standards for Learning Outcomes present a challenge to not being repetitive, in respect of the draft Course Design Standards, and to maintaining clarity.

Q7: Suggestions in relation to the specific content of the standards?

a) AFTRS believes that Standard 2 repeats the mistakes of the Threshold Standards, 2011 by incorporating interpretation and description into the Standard. The draft Standard is that *‘the learning outcomes for each course of study are consistent with the qualification awarded’* i.e. that they reflect the AQF qualification type learning outcomes descriptors. However additional elements in the standard including *‘comparable with those for courses of study’* and *‘informed by international comparators’* undermine the clarity of the Standard, and undermines the integrity of the AQF.

AFTRS recommends the Standard 2 be simplified to *‘The learning outcomes for each course of study are consistent with the qualification awarded’* and that it follow on from the current Standard 3.

b) Standard 5 Learning Outcomes is repetitive of Standard 3 for Course Design in its requirement to being publically accessible in a current version. Appropriately designed courses that meet the Course Design Standard 3 will include learning outcomes: they are required to be publically accessible in a current version. If the issue in the Standard 5 Learning Outcomes is communication and transparency, it is sufficiently covered by Course Design Standard 3.