

9 July 2013

Dear HESP members,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Draft Standards for Research, Research Training and the Learning Outcomes (Research Training). Whilst individual member institutions are also making submissions, the Council of Deans and Directors of Graduate Research (DDoGS) members provided feedback on a number of common issues.

Overall, DDoGS is supportive of the proposed standards for Research Training including the Guiding Principles used to guide the Panel in their development. However, it is felt that a small number of principles have not been adequately addressed.

Guiding Principle: “Research training is critically dependent on a culture and context of research activity, without which research training should not be contemplated.”

Whilst reference is made in draft Research Training Standard (DRTS) 3 to “research active” principal supervisors, the draft standards do not adequately address the need to ensure that a suitable research environment exists – i.e. capability, resources and infrastructure for the field of research. It is suggested that reference to these areas be included either as a standalone standard or in draft Research Training Standard point 1a.

Guiding Principle: “Research training should be supervised only by ‘research active’ supervisors and only in fields where the provider has sufficient capability, resources and infrastructure for the field of research and proposed candidature.”

Generally, members support the concept of research active principal supervisors but also noted that broad and varied meanings of the term will be promulgated, with the possibility of multiple versions of research active within individual institutions. It is not expected that the HESP provide a formal definition of research active but rather acknowledge that there will be individual institutional differences.

DDoGS wish to make three further comments.

First, DDoGS recommend that further work needs to be undertaken to strengthen the definition of Reference Points to ensure that they do not become de facto standards.

Second, there may be ambiguity around the scope of the DRTS in relation to their applicability to Honours coursework and programs. It is recommended that clarification is provided and reference be made specifically to Research Masters and Doctoral programs.

Third, DDoGS is generally supportive of the proposed standards for Research and the Learning Outcomes (Research Training). However, it is considered that the examination of a thesis is not a learning outcome. We suggest that Learning Outcome (Research Training) 4 be integrated into the Research Training Standards.

Yours sincerely,

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