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

Via email: info@HEstandards.gov.au

Dear Professor Robson,

**Re: UNE Response to Call for Comment – Draft Standards for Research,
Research Training and Learning Outcomes (Research Training)**

I am pleased to respond to the Panel's invitation to the University of New England
(UNE) to respond to the Call for Comment (Number 2, 28 May 2013) on the
abovementioned Draft Standards. This response is as a result of wide consultation
with members of the University's Academic Board, its sub-committee for Higher
Degree Research and other interested members of staff.

UNE broadly supports the proposed standards for Research, Research Training and
Learning Outcomes (Research Training). Suggestions by UNE are reflected under
each standard in Attachment A.

Thank you for this opportunity to contribute to the draft Standards. I look forward
to participating in further drafts of the Higher Education Standards Framework in
future.

Yours sincerely

Professor Annabelle Duncan
Acting Vice-Chancellor and CEO
University of New England

UNE Response to Call for Comment – Draft Standards for Research, Research Training and Learning Outcomes (Research Training)

1. Draft Standards for Research

Q1. Do you broadly support the proposed standards for Research? If not, why?

The standards for research are broadly supported. They encompass the responsibilities associated with undertaking research in higher education.

Q2. Do you wish to make any suggestions in relation to the specific content of the standards?

#3 Staff engaged in research are formally inducted into their roles. This needs clarifying and possible rephrasing. It implies a separate employment status when most academic staff have contracts that require engagement with research.

#4 The concept of "research-active" staff is defined and complied with in the implementation of research policy and practices. "Research-active" is a nebulous and contentious phrase, unlikely to allow for cross-sector equity if each provider has its own definition of "research-active". Categories such as 'research productive' and 'research development' may be more appropriate.

2. Draft Standards for Research Training

Q3. Do you broadly support the proposed standards for Research Training? If not, why?

The standards for Research Training are broadly supported.

Q4. Do you wish to make any suggestions in relation to the specific content of the standards?

There is duplication in the draft standards, e.g. 1c and 5 regarding induction; 7 – 8 regarding monitoring. It is suggested that these standards could be restructured to remove repetition/duplication.

3. Draft standards for Learning Outcomes (Research Training)

Q5. Do you broadly support the proposed standards for Learning Outcomes (Research Training)? If not, why?

The standards for Learning Outcomes (Research Training) are broadly supported.

Q6. Do you wish to make any suggestions in relation to the specific content of the standards?

There is duplication/overlap with 3 (c & e) regarding skills. These draft standards could be combined into one point related to technical, generic and transferrable skills. The learning outcomes would then be: 3a – Understanding; 3b – Planning; and 3c – Skills.

It is considered that #4 – *Assessment of theses* – is not a learning outcome, rather better suited to Standards for Research Training.

#4b also suggests, in its current iteration, that a Masters research degree may be passed by only one examiner. It is considered desirable that Masters research be examined by at least two experts – one external and one internal – providing a more objective assessment and increased credibility to the award.

4. Overall or General Comments

Q7. Do you wish to make any Overall or General Comments about the form, style, scope or any other aspects of the proposed set of research-related standards?

UNE has no further comments.