

MEMORANDUM

TO HIGHER EDUCATION STANDARDS PANEL EXECUTIVE

FROM DEPUTY VICE-CHANCELLOR AND VICE-PRESIDENT (RESEARCH)

SUBJECT HIGHER EDUCATION STANDARDS PANEL – RESPONSE TO THE CALL FOR COMMENT
(NUMBER 2, 28 MAY 2013)

DATE 19 JUNE 2013 **REF** 2013/12

Please find attached a response from the University of Adelaide on proposed revisions to the current higher education Threshold Standards, in relation to Research, Research Training and Learning Outcomes, as per the call for comment (Number 2, 28 May 2013).

PROFESSOR MIKE BROOKS
Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Vice-President (Research)

Higher Education Standards Panel Call for comment (Number 2, 28 May 2013)

Comments provided by the University of Adelaide, June 2013

Draft Standards for Research

Call for Comments:

Feedback on the proposed draft Standards for **Research** is invited by the Panel. It would be helpful if feedback could be framed around the following questions:

- Q1. Do you broadly support the proposed standards for Research? If not, why?
- Q2. Do you wish to make any suggestions in relation to the specific content of the standards?

Q.1. Generally fine, although standard 4 on having a definition of 'research active' may be problematic, as the term is open to various interpretations across the sector.

Q. 2. No.

Draft Standards for Research Training

Call for Comments:

Feedback on the proposed draft Standards for **Research Training** is invited by the Panel. It would be helpful if feedback could be framed around the following questions:

- Q3. Do you broadly support the proposed standards for Research Training? If not, why?
- Q4. Do you wish to make any suggestions in relation to the specific content of the standards?

Q3. Yes.

Q4. Yes. In reference to the Research Training standards document:

Standard 3. As mentioned above in relation to Q.1, while we support the sentiment, a tight definition of "research active" is elusive, and interpretation of this phrase is varied. Reference points in this section which has the same sector consensus will be hard to find, but maybe some boundaries can be developed as necessary.

Standard 6

As written this appears to be hard to audit although we agree entirely with the spirit of this standard.

Standard 8b

While we can see reference points relating to the PREQ and internal surveys, the matter of supervision quality is one which needs some strengthening. It's difficult but not impossible to measure, yet we all recognise it when we see it. We would emphasise that research environment and supervisor quality are the essence of good research training, and should be linked and given comparable status in any Research Training discussion. Research environments seem under-represented in the standards.

Draft standards for Learning Outcomes (Research Training)

Call for Comments:

Feedback on the proposed draft Standards for **Learning Outcomes (Research Training)** is invited by the Panel. It would be helpful if feedback could be framed around the following questions:

- Q5. Do you broadly support the proposed standards for Learning Outcomes (Research Training)? If not, why?
- Q6. Do you wish to make any suggestions in relation to the specific content of the standards?

Q5. Yes.

Q6. Yes.

Outcome 2 is weak and open to variable interpretations. We agree with the sentiments, but overseas there are variable levels of quality and strengthening of this outcome would seem desirable.

Outcome 4

We completely agree with a free-standing Research Masters, but if a Masters is linked to an externally assessed PhD, this rule is restrictive and administratively cumbersome. This may well become a problem in joint programs such as a MRes/PhD.

In general we would note the lack of emphasis on original research in the Learning Outcomes.

Call for 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?

Q7. No