

Draft Standards for Research

The proposed draft set of standards for research encompass responsibilities for the conduct of research, the skills of the staff involved, an academic governance framework, maintenance of a repository of research outputs, reporting and analysis of research outputs by the provider and a reference to the *Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research*⁵.

The concept of being ‘research active’ is applicable to various aspects of research, research training and research governance and the Panel believes it is in the interests of the provider to define what it means by ‘research active’ and to apply the concept consistently and equitably throughout the provider’s research-related activities.

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?

1. ECU supports the proposed Research Standards in principle, with the proviso that the measures should not introduce a heavy burden with respect to reporting requirements

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

2. With respect to 6b. ECU suggests the following bolded amendment:

“analysed by reference to national **and/or** international comparators”

as, depending on the field of research, international comparators may not be appropriate.

Draft Standards for Research Training

The Panel sees research training as being part of an active research context. Consequently, the draft Standards for Research Training presuppose that the provider conducts research in the field in which research training is offered and meets the Standards for Research as a *pre-requisite* for offering research training. The Standards for Research Training then build on the underpinning foundation of requirements of the Research Standards to address the specific requirements for research training in a research environment.

The proposed draft Standards extend the academic governance requirements of the current research standards to address research training, to codify requirements for supervision and induction and to encourage the development of independent capabilities. The draft Standards also address the quality and standing of research arising from research training and monitoring and improvement of research training.

The draft Research Training Standards require that *formal* coursework associated with research training complies with the same requirements as any other coursework offered by the provider, thus avoiding duplication of standards statements for coursework here. Similarly, the overall course of study undertaken by research students will be addressed by standards for Course Design and need not be duplicated here. It is proposed to incorporate courses of study involving research into a future revision of the Standards for Course Design so that they encompass both coursework and research training.

There is again a reference to the *Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research*⁶, in this case proposing guidance on research training in particular. The Panel has had discussions with the Deans and Directors of Graduate Research in relation to work being undertaken to exemplify good practice in research training and the Panel expects that this work will be a reference point as well.

⁵ <http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/guidelines/publications/r39>

⁶ Ibid.

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?

1. ECU broadly supports the proposed standards for Research Training, and acknowledges the importance of clear, consistent standards within the research training environment. The standards largely reflect ECU's academic governance framework relating to research training, and will reinforce work already undertaken through our close involvement with the Deans and Directors of Graduate Schools work on codifying good practice in research training.

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

1. Amend 1.d. by the inclusion of the text "reporting and reviewing" such that it reads:

"d. monitoring, maintaining, reporting and reviewing progress;"

2. Amend 4. By inclusion of the text "and/" prior to the word "or" such that it reads;

"...the principal supervisor holds a doctoral degree and/or has equivalent research experience."

3. With respect to the use of the word "goals" in 8, ECU would prefer the use of "targets" as this is a more quantifiable term and also aligns with ECU's use of the term in this context.

Draft standards for Learning Outcomes (Research Training)

These draft standards statements focus specifically on the learning outcomes for research training. Readers are asked to note that where a research-based course of study also includes a formal coursework requirement, the standards for Learning Outcomes (Coursework)⁷ would also be applicable to the course of study. Like the draft Standards for Learning Outcomes (Coursework), the draft Standards incorporate assessment of the learning outcomes as well as the outcomes themselves.

The Panel is exploring the possibility of combining the standards for Learning Outcomes (Coursework) and Learning Outcomes (Research Training) into a single set of standards statements for Learning Outcomes, while still retaining the distinctive outcomes and different methods of assessment within the combined set. This would avoid duplication of the first two standards statements in the current drafts.

⁷ Released with Call for Comment Number 1.

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?

1. ECU broadly supports the proposed standards for Learning Outcomes (Research Training). The proposed standards reflect closely the knowledge and skills requirements of the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF).

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

1. No, the standards are clear and set at an appropriate level.

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?

1. ECU notes that performance measures and forms of evidence through which institutions can demonstrate meeting the set standards need to be detailed in future consultations. ECU wishes to reiterate that these measures should not place unreasonable reporting requirements on institutions.