

Disciplines Setting Standards

Learning and Teaching Academic Standards Project

Professor Christine Ewan
Project Director

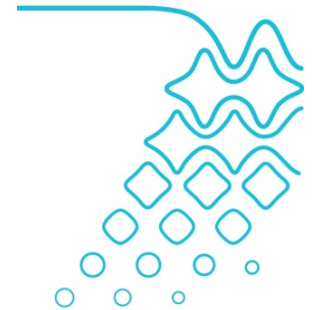
ACDICT Annual Council Meeting
17 September 2010

The new TEQSA will be at the centre of a new standards-based quality assurance framework....

Key to the success of the new quality assurance arrangements – and meaningful academic standards in particular – will be the active involvement of the academic community....

Discipline communities will ‘own’ and take responsibility for implementing academic standards... within the academic traditions of collegiality, peer review, pre-eminence of disciplines and, importantly, academic autonomy....

*Australian Government, 2009
Transforming Australia’s Higher Education System p.32*



TEQSA will have a **regulatory** role mediated through

- Provider standards: Protocols for recognition and accreditation of NSAs and maintenance of a register of approved HEPs



TEQSA will have a **regulatory** role mediated through

- Provider standards: Protocols for recognition and accreditation of NSAs and maintenance of a register of approved HEPs
- Qualification standards: Australian Qualifications Framework (under review)



TEQSA will have a **regulatory** role mediated through

- Provider standards: Protocols for recognition and accreditation of NSAs and maintenance of a register of approved HEPs
- Qualification standards: Australian Qualifications Framework (under review)
- Information standards: Institution level indicators of performance for inclusion in 'My University' website (under development)



TEQSA will have a **quality assurance function** for core HE activities

Research standards:

- The Excellence in Research for Australia Initiative (ERA)



TEQSA will have a **quality assurance function** for core HE activities

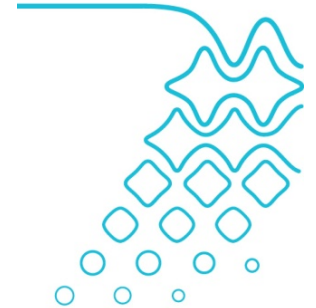
Research standards:

- The Excellence in Research for Australia Initiative (ERA)

Learning and Teaching Academic Standards:

- Learning outcomes (LTAS project)
- Teaching and assessment
- QA and continuous improvement

www.deewr.gov.au/HigherEducation/Policy/teqsa/Documents/HIEDArrangements_Diagram.pdf



Preparing for TEQSA quality assurance in learning & teaching



Phase 1: Disciplines setting academic standards – LTAS demonstration project

Preparing the sector for TEQSA quality assurance in learning & teaching



Phase 1: Disciplines setting academic standards – LTAS demonstration project

Phase 2: Sector and TEQSA negotiating protocols and processes for demonstrating that standards are being met

Academic standards: a working definition for the LTAS project



- Academic standards are learning outcomes described in terms of discipline specific knowledge, skills and capabilities
- Expressed as **threshold learning outcomes** that a graduate of any given discipline (or program) must have achieved

Why “threshold learning outcomes”?

- Protect autonomy and diversity by providing institutional scope for “aspirational LOs” matched to mission
- Disciplines, not institutions or TEQSA “own” and define the core attributes of their discipline
- Aligns with professional accreditation
- Simplify international benchmark comparisons
- TLOs only one component of QA



Why do we need this?

- “Brand Australia” – global trends



Why do we need this?

- “Brand Australia” – global trends
- Increased diversity of students, providers and modes of provision



Why do we need this?

- “Brand Australia” – global trends
- Increased diversity of students, providers and modes of provision
- More diverse inputs require reassurance that output standards are maintained



Why do we need this?

- “Brand Australia” – global trends
- Increased diversity of students, providers and modes of provision
- More diverse inputs require reassurance that output standards are maintained
- Emerging disciplines without established benchmarks



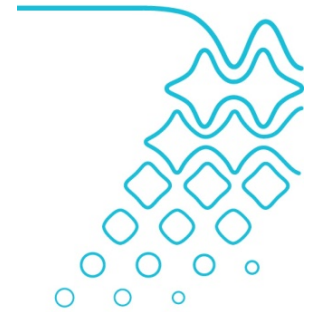
How will diversity and academic autonomy be protected?

- Individual institutions may set their own standards **over and above** the defined threshold to suit their mission



How will diversity and academic autonomy be protected?

- Individual institutions may set their own standards **over and above** the defined threshold to suit their mission
- Individual institutions will determine the curriculum, resources, teaching and assessment methods leading to the achievement of the threshold learning outcomes in their institution



What principles underpin the identification of academic standards?

- Academic standards should be expressed as assessable learning outcomes



What principles underpin the identification of academic standards?



- Academic standards should be expressed as assessable learning outcomes
- Input and process (eg lab hours) may support but are **not** substitutes for learning outcomes

What principles underpin the identification of academic standards?



- Academic standards should be expressed as assessable learning outcomes
- Input and process (eg lab hours) may support but are **not** substitutes for learning outcomes
- Existing professional accreditation standards will be built upon

What principles underpin the identification of academic standards?

- Academic standards should be expressed as assessable learning outcomes
- Input and process (eg lab hours) may support but are **not** substitutes for learning outcomes
- Where professional accreditation standards exist they are the starting point
- Threshold learning outcomes will be defined eventually by each discipline community for each level of AQF qualification (ie bachelors, masters, doctorate)



- Regular review and a supporting infrastructure will be required to maintain currency with knowledge and practice



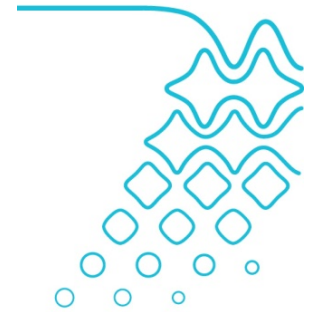
- Regular review and a supporting infrastructure will be required to maintain currency with knowledge and practice
- Threshold academic standards must be comparable with appropriate international standards



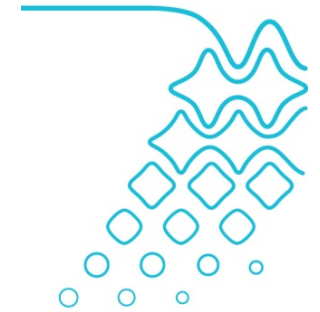
- Regular review and a supporting infrastructure will be required to maintain currency with knowledge and practice
- Threshold academic standards must be comparable with appropriate international standards
- Processes for demonstrating graduate achievement of standards must be efficient, transparent, sustainable and include external reference points



- Regular review and a supporting infrastructure will be required to maintain currency with knowledge and practice
- Threshold academic standards must be comparable with appropriate international standards
- Processes for demonstrating graduate achievement of standards must be efficient, transparent, sustainable and include external reference points
- Processes for assuring academic standards must not give rise to perverse consequences (eg standardisation of curricula)



In this context 'L & T academic standards' means:



The minimum expected capabilities of:

- any Australian graduate eg with a BSc
- majoring in a specific discipline in any degree eg BSc (Chemistry) or BNursing from
- any self accrediting institution or accredited higher education provider

Discipline Scholars

- Architecture & Design
- Arts, Social Sciences & Humanities
- Building
- Business, Management & Economics
- Creative & Performing Arts
- Education
- Engineering & ICT

- Health, Medicine & Vet Science

- Law

- Science (including Mathematics)

Prof Sue Savage (QUT)

Prof Iain Hay (Flinders)

A/Prof Sidney Newton (UNSW)

A/Prof Mark Freeman (Sydney)

Prof Jonathan Holmes (UTas)

TBA (2011)

Prof Ian Cameron (UQ)

A/Prof Roger Hadgraft (Melbourne)

A/Prof Maree O'Keefe (Adelaide)

Prof Amanda Henderson (Griffith)

Prof Mark Israel (UWA)

Prof Sally Kift (QUT)

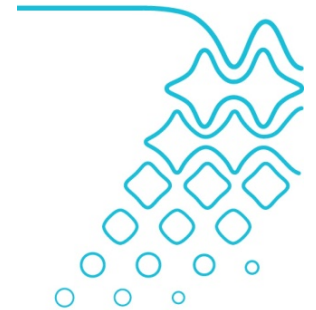
Prof Sue Jones (UTas)

Prof Brian Yates (UTas)



What process have we followed?

- Establish Discipline Reference Groups.
- Develop draft minimum learning outcomes for degrees in specified disciplines.
- Circulate drafts for comment and feedback twice.
- Redraft learning outcomes and consult with Deans' Councils re implementation
- Publish examples, lessons learned and peer reviewed resources to inform subsequent disciplines' work – work in progress and at completion.



Beyond 2010



Outcomes and experience gained available for institutions, disciplines and TEQSA to:

- facilitate access by TEQSA to a well informed group of discipline communities able to assist in developing the new framework.
- inform negotiations around the new quality and standards framework
- assist other disciplines with the process of setting standards
- assist higher education providers with curriculum review and assessment