26 June 2014

Higher Education Standards Panel Executive
info@HEstandards.gov.au

Dear Sir/Madam,

Re: Proposed revisions to the Higher Education Standards Framework (Consultation Draft April 2014).

The Council of Australian University Librarians welcomes the opportunity to respond to the Proposed Higher Education Standards Framework – Consultation Draft April 2014.

We are pleased to offer the following responses to the questions listed in your issues paper.

Q1. Do you broadly support the proposed Framework? If not, why?

CAUL broadly supports the proposed standards framework and notes the efforts to ensure the standards framework is concise and provides needed direction and advice.

CAUL believes, however, that they can be further clarified through the explicit reference to libraries (and their collections), notably in sections: 2.1 Facilities and 3.3 Learning Resources and Educational Support. Libraries play a critical role in the acquisition, management and discovery of core and supplementary information resources. True learning occurs when students engage with a range of information resources, beyond the recommended materials, for this underscores the attributes of a successful student, i.e. that of being an independent, informed and critical learner. Articulating the criticality of library facilities, resources and services is essential to student success and applies to all providers of higher education.

In adopting this suggestion, the nexus between the HES Framework and other reference points such as the National Code of Practice for Registration Authorities and Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students, 2007 (Standard, 14.2) is made clear.

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

Yes.

Missing is the statement that has been used in other documents about reasonable accommodation. The reference is to access – we know that students do complain that because they live outback with poor bandwidth. This is a barrier – whether or not it is unexpected may be debatable. We recommend adding “Reasonable” before access.

To ensure that students have access to core and supplementary information resources, services and facilities to facilitate the achievement of learning outcomes, an explicit reference to libraries and library collections should be made within section 3.3. An example of how this could be addressed is offered below.
For Section 2 Learning Environment, we recommend:

2.1.1 Facilities\textsuperscript{11}, whether physical or virtual, are fit for their educational and research purpose and accommodate the numbers and educational or research activities of the students and staff that use them.

For Section 3.3 Learning and Library Resources and Educational Support we recommend:

1. The learning and library resources\textsuperscript{19} that are specified or recommended for a course of study relate directly to the learning outcomes, are up to date, of appropriate format for the mode of study and, where supplied as part of a course of study, are accessible when needed by students. All users have access to supplementary information resources and materials relevant to the course of study.

2. Where learning and library resources are part of an electronic learning management system, all users have timely access to the system and training is available in use of the system.

3. Reasonable access to learning and library resources does not present unexpected barriers, costs or technology requirements for students, including for students with special needs and those who study off campus.

4. Students have access to learning and library support services that are consistent with the requirements of their course of study, their mode of study and learning needs of student cohorts, including arrangements for supporting and maintaining contact with students who are off campus.

\textsuperscript{19} ‘learning and library resources’ includes library collections (electronic and print), recommended and supplementary resources, creative works, notes, laboratory facilities, studio sessions, simulations and software.

Prepared on behalf of the Council of Australian University Librarians by:

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