Re: Response to HE Standards Panel Call for Comment No. 1 – Course design and Learning Outcomes (Coursework)

Dear Ms Jantti

I am writing to thank you on behalf of the Panel for providing feedback on the Panel’s Call for Comment No. 1 and to report on overall trends in the feedback. As previously noted, the Panel is using the feedback to review its approach and the content of the two standards released for comment.

The Panel was pleased to find that the overwhelming majority of responses to the Call for Comment supported the proposed format for the revised standards; that is taxonomic headings, stand-alone statements, reduced repetition and use of a narrative style.

The feedback on the contact of the two draft standards was also mostly positive but with several broad themes for improvement. Themes included reducing repetition further, consistent use of nomenclature, practicality of review periods, and the nature of the linkages between learning outcomes and course design.

There was also strong support for the concept of Reference Points from the majority of respondents although there were suggestions for improvements and issues raised in relation to the application of Reference Points which are being considered by the Panel in developing the concept further.

The points raised by respondents in relation to Reference Points included:

- The need for further explanation of the role of Reference Points in relation to achieving standards – some respondents interpreted Reference Points as a mandatory requirement, which is not intended.
- The implication that where Reference Points are included within standard statements, it could make the Reference Points standards in themselves.
- Whether Reference Points would have a role in TEQSA’s regulation of providers and in providing evidence of compliance.
Concerns regarding the varying standing and range of Reference Points included in the draft standards for comment.

- Whether international and statutory reference points should also be included.
- Suggestions for the inclusion of more reference points including some at the discipline level.
- Concerns that the Australian Qualifications Framework will only be included as a non-mandatory reference point.

The Panel has considered the above points and is preparing a communique in response. The Panel’s considerations have been used to review standards being drafted for other aspects of HE provision to be released for comment soon.

As previously noted, the Panel intends to post the responses to Call for Comment No. 1 on the Higher Education Standards website along with this summary. The Panel Executive has noted confidentiality requests received as part of responses. Please contact the Executive at info@hestandards.gov.au if you do not want your response posted or identified on the website.

Yours sincerely

Alan Robson
14 May 2013