Chapter 3 PROVIDER COURSE ACCREDITATION STANDARDS

Summary Statement to Provider Course Accreditation Standards

Under the *Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011*, universities and other higher education providers will have, or may be authorised to have, the authority to self-accredit one, more, or all of their courses of study. Higher education providers that are registered in the “Australian University” provider category and meet the requirements under section 45(1) of the *Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011* are authorised under the *Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011* to self-accredit each course of study that leads to a higher education award that it offers or confers. Where a higher education provider has this authority with respect to a given course of study, the higher education provider will not need to apply to have that course of study accredited by TEQSA against the criteria listed in the Provider Course Accreditation Standards.

However, higher education providers who are authorised to self-accredit remain responsible under the *Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011* for ensuring that their self-accredited courses of study comply with the Provider Course Accreditation Standards, and will need to consider the detailed criteria as part of their self-accreditation practice.

When conducting compliance assessments under the *Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011*, consistency with the Provider Course Accreditation Standards will be assessed in relation to both TEQSA-accredited and provider-accredited courses of study.

In these Standards, unless the contrary intention appears, the terms and phrases used have the same meaning as in the *Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011*.

**Standards for each higher education award**

1. Course design is appropriate and meets the Qualification Standards
2. Course resourcing and information is adequate
3. Admission criteria are appropriate
4. Teaching and learning are of high quality
5. Assessment is effective and expected student learning outcomes are achieved
6. Course monitoring, review, updating and termination are appropriately managed
Section 1 Course design is appropriate and meets the Qualification Standards

1.1 The course of study meets the Qualification Standards.

1.2 There are robust internal processes for design and approval of the course of study, which:
   • provide realistic projections of the demand and resources required for the course of study;
   • take account of external standards and requirements, e.g. published discipline standards, professional accreditation, input from relevant external stakeholders, and comparable standards at other higher education providers; and,
   • provide for appropriate development of key graduate attributes in students including English language proficiency.

1.3 The content of the course of study is drawn from a substantial, coherent and current body of knowledge and scholarship in one or more academic disciplines and includes the study of relevant theoretical frameworks and research findings.

1.4 Where the course of study is in an emerging or highly specialised field of knowledge or is strongly multidisciplinary, the higher education provider demonstrates that course of study content draws appropriately on more established bodies of knowledge.

1.5 The design of the course of study shows appropriate consideration of entry and exit pathways, including articulation from other studies and to further studies.

1.6 Course of study documentation clearly presents the rationale, objectives, structure, delivery methods, assessment approaches and student workload requirements for the course of study, and includes any compulsory requirements for completion of the course of study.

1.7 Course documentation shows that the course of study has an overall coherence and is designed to provide appropriate engagement by students in intellectual inquiry consistent with the nature and level of the units being taught and the expected learning outcomes of the course of study.

1.8 When the course of study is a Masters Degree (Research) or a Doctoral Degree, the higher education provider ensures that:
   • academics who are the primary supervisors of students are actively carrying out research and publishing in the relevant discipline area;
   • students are able to form part of a scholarly intellectual community for their discipline and participate in the life of this community; and,
   • available benchmarks are used as a guide to appropriate provision of policies, supervision, services, resources and support for students.

1.9 The course of study is designed to ensure equivalent student learning outcomes regardless of a student’s place or mode of study.
1.10 If the course of study is to be offered through arrangements with another entity whether in Australia or overseas, the course documentation specifies the detailed quality assurance arrangements that have been made with the other entity to ensure student learning outcomes are equivalent to those when the course of study is offered directly by the higher education provider.

Section 2 Course resourcing and information is adequate

2.1 Resourcing for the course of study is adequate to meet the higher education provider’s projected enrolments for the course of study and for students to achieve the expected learning outcomes.

2.2 The higher education provider ensures that all students readily have access, directly through the higher education provider or arranged by the higher education provider, to electronic and/or physical library and information resources required to achieve the learning outcomes of the course of study.

2.3 The higher education provider ensures there are adequate IT resources to facilitate student learning consistent with course of study requirements, as well as necessary access to specialised teaching facilities required specifically for the course of study, such as laboratories or studios.

2.4 The higher education provider demonstrates that accurate and current information and advice about the course of study is provided to prospective and current students.

Section 3 Admission criteria are appropriate

3.1 Admission criteria for the course of study:
   • are appropriate for the Qualification Standards level of the course of study and required learning outcomes;
   • take account of external benchmarks; and,
   • ensure that students have adequate prior knowledge and skills to undertake the course of study successfully.

3.2 The higher education provider ensures that students who are enrolled are sufficiently competent in the English language to participate effectively in the course of study and achieve its expected learning outcomes, and sets English language entry requirements accordingly.

3.3 Credit for previous studies or skills (including articulation, recognition of prior learning and credit arrangements) is consistent with the Qualification Standards and preserves the integrity of the higher education award to which it applies.

3.4 Decisions on the admission of students are made by appropriately qualified personnel under delegated authority.
Section 4 Teaching and learning are of high quality

4.1 The numbers, qualifications, experience, expertise and sessional/full-time mix of both academic staff who teach or tutor the course of study, and support staff, are appropriate to the nature, level, and mode of delivery of the course of study and the attainment of expected student learning outcomes.

4.2 The higher education provider ensures that staff who teach students in the course of study:
   • are appropriately qualified in the relevant discipline for their level of teaching (qualified to at least one Qualification Standards level higher than the course of study being taught or with equivalent professional experience);
   • have a sound understanding of current scholarship and/or professional practice in the discipline that they teach;
   • have an understanding of pedagogical and/or adult learning principles relevant to the student cohort being taught;
   • engage students in intellectual inquiry appropriate to the level of the course of study and unit being taught; and,
   • are advised of student and other feedback on the quality of their teaching and have opportunities to improve their teaching.

4.3 The higher education provider ensures that academic staff who teach on a course of study are reasonably available for students seeking academic assistance for units within the course of study.

4.4 The higher education provider has effective mechanisms to identify and support students who are at risk of not progressing academically.

4.5 The higher education provider has effective arrangements to assure the quality of student work placements, practicum and other forms of work-integrated learning in the course of study, including assuring the quality of supervision.

Section 5 Assessment is effective and expected student learning outcomes are achieved

5.1 Assessment tasks for the course of study and its units provide opportunities for students to demonstrate achievement of the expected student learning outcomes for the course of study.

5.2 Assessment is undertaken by appropriately qualified academic staff, and timely, adequate feedback is provided to students on their assessed work.

5.3 Course management and coordination, including moderation procedures, ensure consistent and appropriate assessment.

5.4 The higher education provider maintains, monitors and acts on comparative data on the performance of students in the course of study, including information on the performance of student cohorts by entry pathway, mode of study and place of
study, such data to include: student attrition; student progress; course completions; and grade distributions.

5.5 The academic standards intended to be achieved by students and the standards actually achieved by students in the course of study are benchmarked against similar accredited courses of study offered by other higher education providers.

5.6 The higher education provider is able to demonstrate appropriate progression and completion rates and that students who complete the course of study have attained key graduate attributes including an appropriate level of English language proficiency.

Section 6 Course monitoring, review, updating and termination are appropriately managed

6.1 The higher education provider ensures the course of study is systematically updated, through internal revision and external reviews, and that its coherence is maintained.

6.2 Should the higher education provider discontinue the course of study, there are effective teach out or course transition plans for all students enrolled in the course of study to ensure that these students are not disadvantaged.