



Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021

I, Alan Tudge, Minister for Education and Youth, make the following Standards.

Dated 24 April 2021

Alan Tudge
Minister for Education and Youth

6 Governance and Accountability

6.1 Corporate Governance

1. There is a formally constituted governing body, which includes independent members, that exercises competent governance oversight of and is accountable for all of the higher education provider's operations in or from Australia, including accountability for the award of higher education qualifications, for continuing to meet the requirements of the *Higher Education Standards Framework* and for the provider's representation of itself.
2. Members of the governing body:
 - a. are fit and proper persons, and
 - b. meet the Australian residency requirements, if any, of the instrument under which the provider is established or incorporated, or otherwise there are at least two members of the governing body who are ordinarily resident in Australia.
3. The governing body attends to governance functions and processes diligently and effectively, including:
 - a. obtaining and using such information and advice, including independent advice and academic advice, as is necessary for informed and competent decision making and direction setting
 - b. defining roles and delegating authority as is necessary for effective governance, policy development and management; and monitoring the implementation of those delegations
 - c. confirming that the provision of higher education and research training and the conduct of research, whether by the provider or through an arrangement with another party, are governed by the registered provider's institutional policies, and the operations of the provider and any associated party(ies) are consistent with those policies
 - d. undertaking periodic (at least every seven years) independent reviews of the effectiveness of the governing body and academic governance processes and ensuring that the findings of such reviews are considered by a competent body or officer(s) and that agreed actions are implemented, and
 - e. maintaining a true record of the business of the governing body.
4. The governing body takes steps to develop and maintain an institutional environment in which freedom of intellectual inquiry is upheld and protected, students and staff are treated equitably, the wellbeing of students and staff is fostered, informed decision making by students is supported and students have opportunities to participate in the deliberative and decision making processes of the higher education provider.

6.2 Corporate Monitoring and Accountability

1. The provider is able to demonstrate, and the corporate governing body assures itself, that the provider is operating effectively and sustainably, including:
 - a. the governing body and the entity comply with the requirements of the legislation under which the provider is established, recognised or incorporated, any other legislative requirements and the entity's constitution or equivalent
 - b. the provider's future directions in higher education have been determined, realistic performance targets have been established, progress against targets is monitored and action is taken to correct underperformance
 - c. the provider is financially viable and applies, and has the capacity to continue to apply, sufficient financial and other resources to maintain the viability of the entity and its business model, to meet and continue to meet the requirements of the *Higher Education Standards Framework*, to achieve the provider's higher education objectives and performance targets and to sustain the quality of higher education that is offered

- d. the financial position, financial performance and cash flows of the entity are monitored regularly and understood, financial reporting is materially accurate, financial management meets Australian accounting standards, effective financial safeguards and controls are operating and financial statements are audited independently by a qualified auditor against Australian accounting and auditing standards
- e. risks to higher education operations have been identified and material risks are being managed and mitigated effectively
- f. mechanisms for competent academic governance and leadership of higher education provision and other academic activities have been implemented and these are operating according to an institutional academic governance policy framework and are effective in maintaining the quality of higher education offered
- g. educational policies and practices support participation by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and are sensitive to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge and cultures
- h. qualifications are awarded legitimately
- i. there are credible business continuity plans and adequately resourced financial and tuition safeguards to mitigate disadvantage to students who are unable to progress in a course of study due to unexpected changes to the higher education provider's operations, including if the provider is unable to provide a course of study, ceases to operate as a provider, loses professional accreditation for a course of study or is otherwise not able to offer a course of study
- j. the occurrence and nature of formal complaints, allegations of misconduct, breaches of academic or research integrity and critical incidents are monitored and action is taken to address underlying causes, and
- k. lapses in compliance with the *Higher Education Standards Framework* are identified and monitored, and prompt corrective action is taken.

6.3 Academic Governance

1. Processes and structures are established and responsibilities are assigned that collectively:
 - a. achieve effective academic oversight of the quality of teaching, learning, research and research training
 - b. set and monitor institutional benchmarks for academic quality and outcomes
 - c. establish and maintain academic leadership at an institutional level, consistent with the types and levels of higher education offered, and
 - d. provide competent advice to the corporate governing body and management on academic matters, including advice on academic outcomes, policies and practices.
2. Academic oversight assures the quality of teaching, learning, research and research training effectively, including by:
 - a. developing, monitoring and reviewing academic policies and their effectiveness
 - b. confirming that delegations of academic authority are implemented
 - c. critically scrutinising, approving and, if authority to self-accredit is held, accrediting or advising on approving and accrediting, courses of study and their associated qualifications
 - d. maintaining oversight of academic and research integrity, including monitoring of potential risks
 - e. monitoring and initiating action to improve performance against institutional benchmarks for academic quality and outcomes
 - f. critically evaluating the quality and effectiveness of educational innovations or proposals for innovations

- g. evaluating the effectiveness of institutional monitoring, review and improvement of academic activities, and
 - h. monitoring and reporting to the corporate governing body on the quality of teaching, learning, research and research training.
- 3. Students have opportunities to participate in academic governance.