

Commonwealth of Australia

Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011

Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2011

I, GREG COMBET, Minister for Industry and Innovation and Minister for Climate Change and Energy Efficiency for Minister CHRIS EVANS Minister for Tertiary Education, Skills, Science and Research, make the following standards under subsection 58(1) of the *Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011*:

1. the Provider Registration Standards;
2. the Provider Category Standards;
3. the Provider Course Accreditation Standards; and
4. the Qualification Standards.

Dated: 22 December 2011

SIGNED

GREG COMBET

Minister for Industry and Innovation and Minister for Climate Change and Energy Efficiency
for Minister CHRIS EVANS Minister for Tertiary Education, Skills, Science and Research

1 Name of Instrument

This legislative instrument is the *Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2011*.

2 Commencement

This legislative instrument commences on the day after it is registered on the Federal Register of Legislative Instruments.

3 Threshold Standards

In accordance with Part 6 of Schedule 3 of the *Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (Consequential Amendments and Transitional Provisions) Act 2011*, the following Threshold Standards are specified:

- (a) the Provider Registration Standards;
- (b) the Provider Category Standards;
- (c) the Provider Course Accreditation Standards;
- (d) the Qualification Standards.



Australian Government

**Department of Industry, Innovation, Science, Research
and Tertiary Education**

HIGHER EDUCATION STANDARDS FRAMEWORK

Version 1: DECEMBER 2011

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1 PROVIDER REGISTRATION STANDARDS	1
SUMMARY STATEMENT TO PROVIDER REGISTRATION STANDARDS.....	1
SECTION 1 PROVIDER STANDING	2
SECTION 2 FINANCIAL VIABILITY AND SAFEGUARDS.....	2
SECTION 3 CORPORATE AND ACADEMIC GOVERNANCE	3
SECTION 4 PRIMACY OF ACADEMIC QUALITY AND INTEGRITY	4
SECTION 5 MANAGEMENT AND HUMAN RESOURCES.....	5
SECTION 6 RESPONSIBILITIES TO STUDENTS	5
SECTION 7 PHYSICAL AND ELECTRONIC RESOURCES AND INFRASTRUCTURE	7
CHAPTER 2 PROVIDER CATEGORY STANDARDS	8
SUMMARY STATEMENT TO THE PROVIDER CATEGORY STANDARDS.....	8
SECTION 1 "HIGHER EDUCATION PROVIDER" CATEGORY	9
SECTION 2 "AUSTRALIAN UNIVERSITY" CATEGORY	9
SECTION 3 "AUSTRALIAN UNIVERSITY COLLEGE" CATEGORY	10
SECTION 4 "AUSTRALIAN UNIVERSITY OF SPECIALISATION" CATEGORY	11
SECTION 5 "OVERSEAS UNIVERSITY" CATEGORY	12
SECTION 6 "OVERSEAS UNIVERSITY OF SPECIALISATION" CATEGORY	12
CHAPTER 3 PROVIDER COURSE ACCREDITATION STANDARDS	13
SUMMARY STATEMENT TO PROVIDER COURSE ACCREDITATION STANDARDS	13
SECTION 1 COURSE DESIGN IS APPROPRIATE AND MEETS THE QUALIFICATION STANDARDS.....	14
SECTION 2 COURSE RESOURCING AND INFORMATION IS ADEQUATE	15
SECTION 3 ADMISSION CRITERIA ARE APPROPRIATE	15
SECTION 4 TEACHING AND LEARNING ARE OF HIGH QUALITY.....	16
SECTION 5 ASSESSMENT IS EFFECTIVE AND EXPECTED STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES ARE	16
ACHIEVED.....	16
SECTION 6 COURSE MONITORING, REVIEW, UPDATING AND TERMINATION ARE APPROPRIATELY	17
MANAGED.....	17
CRITERIA FOR AUTHORISING 'SELF-ACCREDITING AUTHORITY'	18
CHAPTER 4 QUALIFICATION STANDARDS	20
SUMMARY STATEMENT TO QUALIFICATION STANDARDS.....	20
SECTION 1 HIGHER EDUCATION AWARDS DELIVERED MEET THE APPROPRIATE CRITERIA	21
SECTION 2 CERTIFICATION DOCUMENTATION ISSUED IS ACCURATE AND PROTECTS AGAINST	22
FRAUDULENT USE	22
SECTION 3 ARTICULATION, RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING AND CREDIT ARRANGEMENTS	23
MEET THE APPROPRIATE CRITERIA	23

Chapter 1 PROVIDER REGISTRATION STANDARDS

Summary Statement to Provider Registration Standards

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*.

1 Provider standing

The higher education provider is reputable and accountable for the higher education it offers.

2 Financial viability and safeguards

The higher education provider has the financial resources and financial management capacity to sustain higher education provision consistent with the Provider Registration Standards.

3 Corporate and academic governance

The higher education provider shows sound corporate and academic governance of its higher education operations.

4 Primacy of academic quality and integrity

The higher education provider maintains academic quality and integrity in its higher education operations.

5 Management and human resources

The higher education provider's higher education operations are well-managed and human resources are appropriate.

6 Responsibilities to students

The higher education provider defines and meets its responsibilities to students, including the provision of information, support and equitable treatment.

7 Physical and electronic resources and infrastructure

The higher education provider ensures there are well-maintained physical and electronic resources and infrastructure sufficient to enable the achievement of its higher education objectives, across all its locations in Australia and overseas.

Section 1 Provider standing

The higher education provider is reputable and accountable for the higher education it offers.

- 1.1 The higher education provider has education as a principal purpose, with governance and management of its Australian higher education operations located in Australia.
- 1.2 Members of the higher education provider's corporate governing body and the higher education provider's key personnel demonstrate that they are 'fit and proper' persons.
- 1.3 The higher education provider takes responsibility for the quality of every course of study leading to the higher education award it is accredited to award.
- 1.4 The higher education provider accurately discloses to TEQSA all information, documents and assistance required by TEQSA, which will include:
 - details of the history of the higher education provider, its parent entities, its predecessors and related entities, and the history of all these entities of prior applications for approval to provide education or related services in Australia and overseas;
 - any conditions or sanctions placed on approvals including deregistration;
 - details of its arrangements with other entities for the delivery of course of study, their history of prior applications for approval to provide education or related services, and of any conditions or sanctions placed on their approvals including deregistration;
 - details of the higher education provider's agents; and,
 - details of the higher education provider's operations, including information which may be classed as commercial-in-confidence information.
- 1.5 The higher education provider's history, and the history of its parent entities, its predecessors and related entities, shows a sound track record in managing business operations and in the provision of education or related services at an acceptable level of quality and in accordance with any applicable regulatory or accreditation requirements.
- 1.6 The higher education provider complies with applicable State/Territory and Commonwealth laws and regulatory requirements.

Section 2 Financial viability and safeguards

The higher education provider has the financial resources and financial management capacity to sustain higher education operations consistent with the Provider Registration Standards.

- 2.1 The higher education provider is financially viable and has the capacity to sustain quality in its current and planned higher education operations, using realistic projections of student demand and income from all sources.

- 2.2 The higher education provider applies, and demonstrates the capacity to continue to apply, sufficient financial resources to ensure the achievement of its higher education objectives.
- 2.3 The higher education provider has business continuity plans and financial and tuition safeguards in place for students should the higher education provider cease to provide a course of study, cease to operate as a higher education provider or suffer a major incident affecting the operations of the higher education provider.
- 2.4 Financial aspects of the higher education provider's higher education operations are well-managed in accordance with legal requirements and Australian accounting standards and the higher education provider has effective arrangements for the detection and prevention of fraud and mismanagement.
- 2.5 The financial records of the higher education provider are accurate and independently audited by an appropriately qualified auditor.

Section 3 Corporate and academic governance

The higher education provider shows sound corporate and academic governance of its higher education operations.

- 3.1 The higher education provider has a corporate governing body that has responsibility for oversight of all of the higher education provider's higher education operations, including conferral of its higher education awards, and to which management is accountable.
- 3.2 The higher education provider's corporate governing body has a majority of external members and uses a full range of expertise required for effective governance of the higher education provider, including higher education expertise and independent financial expertise, through its membership and/or through external advisors.
- 3.3 The higher education provider's corporate governance arrangements demonstrate a clear distinction between governance and management responsibilities.
- 3.4 The higher education provider's corporate governing body regularly monitors potential risks to the higher education provider's higher education operations and ensures the higher education provider has strategies to mitigate risks that may eventuate.
- 3.5 The higher education provider's corporate governing body ensures that all delegations (including financial, academic and managerial) are appropriate, documented, observed and regularly reviewed.
- 3.6 The higher education provider's corporate governing body has approved a current strategic plan that:

- shows the higher education provider has clarity about its future directions for higher education;
 - identifies key performance indicators;
 - is adequately communicated to internal and external stakeholders; and,
 - guides management decision-making.
- 3.7 The higher education provider's corporate governing body protects the academic integrity and quality of the higher education provider's higher education operations through academic governance arrangements that provide a clear and discernable separation between corporate and academic governance, including a properly constituted academic board and course advisory committees.
- 3.8 The higher education provider's corporate and academic governance arrangements demonstrate:
- the effective development, implementation and review of policies for all aspects of the higher education provider's academic activities including delivery of the higher education provider's courses of study by other entities;
 - the maintenance of academic standards, with appropriate mechanisms for external input, in accordance with international conventions for good academic practice; and,
 - effective quality assurance arrangements for all the higher education provider's higher education operations, encompassing systematic monitoring, review and improvement.

Section 4 Primacy of academic quality and integrity

The higher education provider maintains academic quality and integrity in its higher education operations.

- 4.1 The higher education provider's objectives for its higher education operations include the cultivation in students of critical and independent thought and the capacity for learning throughout life.
- 4.2 The higher education provider promotes and protects free intellectual inquiry and expression in its higher education learning, teaching, and research activities.
- 4.3 The higher education provider protects academic integrity in higher education through effective policies and measures to:
- ensure the integrity of student assessment;
 - ensure the integrity of research and research activity;
 - prevent, detect and address academic misconduct by students or staff, including cheating and plagiarism;
 - ensure that academic staff are free to make public comment on issues that lie within their area of expertise; and,
 - ensure that the awarding of multiple awards, including higher education awards offered in conjunction with another entity, protects the integrity of the higher education awards offered by the higher education provider.

- 4.4 Research carried out under the higher education provider's auspices meets appropriate codes of conduct, safety, and ethics clearance requirements, and is consistent with legislative or other regulatory requirements and any applicable national guidelines.
- 4.5 Where the higher education provider has an arrangement in place with another entity to manage or deliver some or all of a course of study on its behalf, the higher education provider has effective mechanisms to manage and quality assure all aspects of the arrangement, including admission and support of students and delivery of the course of study to ensure student learning outcomes equivalent to those for the same or a cognate course of study when delivered by the higher education provider.

Section 5 Management and human resources

The higher education provider's higher education operations are well-managed and human resources are appropriate.

- 5.1 The higher education provider has sufficient appropriately qualified personnel to manage and to provide academic leadership for the higher education provider's higher education operations.
- 5.2 The higher education provider has the necessary staff positions, filled by appropriately qualified and experienced personnel, and access to other human resources, to achieve its higher education objectives, which include the achievement of expected student learning outcomes.
- 5.3 The higher education provider manages its human resources to ensure effective:
- workload management; merit-based selection and promotion processes;
 - induction;
 - performance review;
 - grievance procedures; and,
 - professional development of its personnel.
- 5.4 The higher education provider's administrative systems, policies, procedures and practices ensure the effective management of its higher education operations.
- 5.5 The higher education provider maintains adequate records for all its higher education operations, with appropriate confidentiality and security.
- 5.6 The higher education provider compares its performance on teaching, student learning outcomes, graduate outcomes, and research with other higher education providers, and uses regular, valid and reliable feedback from internal and external stakeholders to improve its higher education operations.

Section 6 Responsibilities to students

The higher education provider documents its responsibilities to students and meets its responsibilities to students, including through the provision of information, support and equitable treatment.

- 6.1 Prior to enrolment and during their studies, all students are informed about their relationship with the higher education provider, which includes:
- any contractual arrangements;
 - the obligations of the higher education provider; and,
 - the rights and obligations of the student.
- 6.2 All students have ready access to information about all charges, conditions, refunds, and costs involved in studying with the higher education provider, including course-specific costs and tuition assurance arrangements.
- 6.3 The higher education provider and its agents and other entities with which it has arrangements for the delivery of a course of study provide current, accurate, adequate, and openly accessible information for prospective and enrolled students on all matters relating to their studies for higher education awards offered by the higher education provider, including information on:
- the higher education provider offering the higher education award and the higher education awards that will be awarded for each course of study;
 - the higher education provider's registration status and the accreditation status of each course of study;
 - formal recognition of each course of study by professional bodies;
 - structure, credit points and duration or volume of learning for each course of study;
 - admission criteria, recognition of prior learning and credit and articulation to and from other studies;
 - content and assessment for each unit in the course of study;
 - when and where the course of study will be offered, including the units that will be offered in any teaching period; and,
 - availability of student support.
- 6.4 Students have ready access to effective grievance processes, which enable them to make complaints about any aspect of the higher education provider's higher education operations, including operations provided by other entities on behalf of the higher education provider, without fear of reprisal, and which provide for review by an appropriate independent third party if internal processes fail to resolve a grievance.
- 6.5 The higher education provider identifies and adequately meets the varying learning needs of all its students, including:
- the provision of orientation courses and transition support; and,
 - ongoing academic language and learning support.
- 6.6 Students are informed of and have appropriate access to:
- advocacy support, for example in relation to the higher education provider's academic and procedural rules; and,
 - a range of personal support services adequate to meet the needs of the student body, such as counselling, health, welfare, accommodation and career services, provided by appropriately qualified personnel.

- 6.7 The higher education provider promotes an inclusive and safe culture, ensures there are appropriate security arrangements for all its locations, and advises students of actions they can take to enhance their safety and security both on and off campus.
- 6.8 As appropriate to its scale and scope, the higher education provider has student representation within its deliberative and decision-making processes and encourages students to participate in these processes.

Section 7 Physical and electronic resources and infrastructure

The higher education provider ensures there are safe, well-maintained physical and electronic resources and infrastructure sufficient to enable the achievement of its higher education objectives, across all its locations in Australia and overseas.

- 7.1 The higher education provider ensures that there are safe, well-maintained facilities and infrastructure sufficient to achieve expected student learning and research outcomes, as appropriate to the scale, scope, location, mode of delivery and nature of its courses of study, including:
- classrooms and other teaching and learning spaces;
 - library and/or learning resource centre spaces and collections, and electronic learning resources;
 - laboratories and technical facilities;
 - appropriate work environments for personnel who are on site, including research students;
 - facilities for student support services; and,
 - student meeting and recreation areas.
- 7.2 The higher education provider has adequate IT infrastructure and software to support student learning in its courses of study, including a website with current content, and ensures that students and personnel have ready access to online information and resources.
- 7.3 The higher education provider ensures that all students, regardless of mode of study, have access to one or more contact people who can respond to queries in a timely manner and has effective arrangements to actively maintain contact with and support students who are remote from or away from its locations.
- 7.4 The higher education provider maintains the adequacy and security of facilities and resources through effective capital and IT planning and project management, adequate for its scale and scope.

Chapter 2 PROVIDER CATEGORY STANDARDS

Summary Statement to the Provider Category Standards

Diversity in Australia's higher education system, both within and between higher education providers, is important to meet diverse and changing student, employer and community expectations. The Provider Category Standards are designed to reflect and formalise key elements of this diversity, through the use of titles that are well-understood internationally and which are meaningful to the general public.

All providers of higher education that gain registration by TEQSA through meeting the Threshold Standards become 'Higher Education Providers'. This category title signals to the public that the provider is a bona fide provider of quality higher education in Australia.

Higher education providers are able to seek approval within a particular provider category under subsection 18(1) of the *Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011*. There are several provider categories that use the word 'university':

- Australian University
- Australian University College
- Australian University of Specialisation
- Overseas University
- Overseas University of Specialisation.

A higher education provider must meet the additional criteria for use of a provider category that uses the word 'university'.

If a higher education provider was, immediately before the commencement of the *Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011*, registered under State or Territory law relating to higher education, the higher education provider will automatically be taken to be a registered higher education provider for the purposes of the *Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011*.

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*.

Section 1 “Higher Education Provider” Category

The higher education provider offers an Australian higher education award and/or an overseas higher education award

- 1.1 The higher education provider meets the Threshold Standards and offers at least one accredited course of study.
- 1.2 The higher education provider has a clearly articulated higher education purpose that includes a commitment to and support for free intellectual inquiry in its academic endeavours.
- 1.3 The higher education provider delivers teaching and learning that engage with advanced knowledge and inquiry.
- 1.4 The higher education provider’s academic staff are active in scholarship that inform their teaching, and are active in research when engaged in research student supervision.

Section 2 “Australian University” Category

The higher education provider offers an Australian higher education award

- 2.1 The higher education provider self-accredits and delivers undergraduate and postgraduate courses of study that meet the Qualification Standards across a range of broad fields of study (including Masters Degrees (Research) and Doctoral Degrees (Research) in at least three of the broad fields of study it offers).
- 2.2 The higher education provider has been authorised for at least the last five years to self-accredit at least 85% of its total courses of study, including Masters Degrees (Research) and Doctoral Degrees (Research) in at least three of the broad fields of study.
- 2.3 The higher education provider undertakes research that leads to the creation of new knowledge and original creative endeavour at least in those broad fields of study in which Masters Degrees (Research) and Doctoral Degrees (Research) are offered.
- 2.4 The higher education provider demonstrates the commitment of teachers, researchers, course designers and assessors to the systematic advancement and dissemination of knowledge.
- 2.5 The higher education provider demonstrates sustained scholarship that informs teaching and learning in all fields in which courses of study are offered.
- 2.6 The higher education provider identifies and implements good practices in student teaching and learning, including those that have the potential for wider dissemination nationally.

- 2.7 The higher education provider offers an extensive range of student services, including student academic and learning support, and extensive resources for student learning in all disciplines offered.
- 2.8 The higher education provider demonstrates engagement with its local and regional communities and demonstrates a commitment to social responsibility in its activities.
- 2.9 The higher education provider has systematic, mature internal processes for quality assurance and the maintenance of academic standards and academic integrity.
- 2.10 The higher education provider's application for registration has the support of the relevant Commonwealth, State or Territory government.

Section 3 "Australian University College" Category

The higher education provider offers an Australian higher education award

- 3.1 The higher education provider has realistic and achievable plans to meet all the criteria for an "Australian University" Category within five years of its approval to use the title "Australian University College".
- 3.2 The higher education provider self-accredits and delivers undergraduate and postgraduate courses of study that meet the Qualification Standards across a range of broad fields of study (including Masters Degrees (Coursework) in at least three broad fields of study and Masters Degrees (Research) and Doctoral Degrees (Research) in at least one of the broad fields of study it offers).
- 3.3 The higher education provider undertakes research that leads to the creation of new knowledge and original creative endeavour at least in those broad fields of study in which Masters Degrees (Research) and Doctoral Degrees (Research) are offered.
- 3.4 The higher education provider demonstrates the commitment of teachers, researchers, course designers and assessors to the systematic advancement and dissemination of knowledge.
- 3.5 The higher education provider demonstrates sustained scholarship that informs teaching and learning in all fields in which courses of study are offered.
- 3.6 The higher education provider identifies and implements good practices in student teaching and learning, including those that have the potential for wider dissemination nationally.
- 3.7 The higher education provider offers an extensive range of student services, including student academic and learning support, and extensive resources for student learning in all disciplines offered.

- 3.8 The higher education provider demonstrates engagement with its local and regional communities and demonstrates a commitment to social responsibility in its activities.
- 3.9 The higher education provider has systematic, well developed internal processes for quality assurance and the maintenance of academic standards and academic integrity.
- 3.10 The higher education provider's application for registration has the support of the relevant Commonwealth, State or Territory government.

Section 4 "Australian University of Specialisation" Category

The higher education provider offers an Australian higher education award

- 4.1 The higher education provider self-accredits and delivers undergraduate and postgraduate courses of study that meet the Qualification Standards in one or two broad fields of study only (including Masters Degrees (Research) and Doctoral Degrees (Research) in these one or two broad fields of study it offers).
- 4.2 The higher education provider has been authorised for at least the last five years to self-accredit at least 85% of its total courses of study in one or two broad fields of study only, including Masters Degrees (Research) and Doctoral Degrees (Research) in these broad field/s of study.
- 4.3 The higher education provider undertakes research that leads to the creation of new knowledge and original creative endeavour at least in those broad fields of study in which Masters Degrees (Research) and Doctoral Degrees (Research) are offered.
- 4.4 The higher education provider demonstrates the commitment of teachers, researchers, course designers and assessors to the systematic advancement of knowledge.
- 4.5 The higher education provider demonstrates sustained scholarship that informs teaching and learning in all fields in which courses of study are offered.
- 4.6 The higher education provider identifies and implements good practices in student teaching and learning, including those that have the potential for wider dissemination nationally.
- 4.7 The higher education provider offers an extensive range of student services, including student academic and learning support, and extensive resources for student learning in all disciplines offered.
- 4.8 The higher education provider demonstrates engagement with its local and regional communities and demonstrates a commitment to social responsibility in its activities.

- 4.9 The higher education provider has systematic, mature internal processes for quality assurance and the maintenance of academic standards and academic integrity.
- 4.10 The higher education provider's application for registration has the support of the relevant Commonwealth, State or Territory government.

Section 5 "Overseas University" Category

The higher education provider offers an overseas higher education award

- 5.1 The higher education provider is recognised as a university by its home country registration or accreditation authority or equivalent governmental authority, the standing and standards of which are acceptable to TEQSA.

AND

- 5.2 The higher education provider meets criteria equivalent to those for the "Australian University" Category.

Section 6 "Overseas University of Specialisation" Category

The higher education provider offers an overseas higher education award

- 6.1 The higher education provider is recognised as a university by its home country registration or accreditation authority or equivalent governmental authority, the standing and standards of which are acceptable to TEQSA.

AND

- 6.2 The higher education provider meets criteria equivalent to those for the "Australian University of Specialisation" Category.

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.

Criteria for authorising ‘self-accrediting authority’

- 1 Each higher education provider that is registered in the “Australian University” provider category and meets the requirements under section 45(1) of the *Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011* is 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.
- 2 For a higher education provider that is approved by TEQSA for registration in the “Australian University College” provider category, TEQSA will authorise the higher education provider to self-accredit all courses of study.
- 3 For a higher education provider that is approved by TEQSA for registration in the “Australian University of Specialisation” provider category, TEQSA may authorise the higher education provider to self-accredit all courses of study in its one or two broad fields of study only.
- 4 For a higher education provider that is approved by TEQSA for registration in the “Higher Education Provider”, “Overseas University” and “Overseas University of Specialisation” provider category, TEQSA may authorise the higher education provider to self-accredit a course of study or courses of study, at one or more higher education award levels, and in one or more broad fields of study or discipline areas, if the following criteria are met:
 - 4.1 The higher education provider has no issues or conditions outstanding from its most recent registration and course accreditations by TEQSA or a recognised registration or accreditation authority, no substantiated serious complaints, and no history of significant compliance problems in any other assessments, audits or reviews of its higher education operations conducted by TEQSA or external professional bodies or government agencies.
 - 4.2 The higher education provider has highly effective academic governance processes and a robust internal capability to monitor and improve its higher education courses of study.
 - 4.3 The higher education provider demonstrates sustained scholarship in respect of the course(s) of study, which informs teaching and learning for the course(s) of study.
 - 4.4 The higher education provider has a history of successful operation of the course(s) of study including systematic, mature internal processes for course quality assurance and the maintenance of academic standards and academic integrity.
 - 4.5 At least three cohorts of students in Australia have graduated from the course(s) of study, and there is substantial evidence of successful graduate outcomes from the course(s) of study.

- 4.6 If applicable, the higher education provider has achieved and maintained appropriate professional accreditation of the course(s) of study.

Chapter 4 QUALIFICATION STANDARDS

Summary Statement to Qualification Standards

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

These standards apply to the accreditation of all new awards and the reaccreditation of all current higher education awards. As a result, implementation of the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) will be complete by 1 January 2015.

1. Higher education awards delivered meet the appropriate criteria

- 1.1 The higher education provider ensures that awards which may lead to a qualification located at levels 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 or 10 of the AQF meet the corresponding specifications (including the levels criteria and qualification type descriptors) described in the AQF (<http://www.aqf.edu.au>).
- 1.2 The higher education provider ensures that non-AQF qualifications and awards which may not lead to a qualification located at levels 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 or 10 of the AQF meet the criteria defined under Section 1.2 of this document for the delivery of these awards.

2. Certification documentation issued is accurate and protects against fraudulent use

The higher education provider ensures that it issues appropriate certification documentation and maintains processes to authenticate awards and protect against fraudulent use.

3. Articulation, recognition of prior learning and credit arrangements meet the appropriate criteria

The higher education provider ensures that it maintains processes to provide for the recognition of prior learning, credit transfer and articulation of awards. These processes are designed to maximise the credit students may gain for learning already undertaken, subject to preserving the integrity of learning outcomes and/or discipline requirements of the award to which it applies.

Section 1 Higher education awards delivered meet the appropriate criteria

1.1 The higher education provider ensures that awards which may lead to a qualification located at levels 5,6,7,8,9 or 10 of the Australian Qualifications Framework meet the corresponding specifications (including the levels criteria and qualification type descriptors) described in the AQF (<http://www.aqf.edu.au>). This also applies to any higher education award leading to an AQF qualification type that may subsequently be included in the AQF.

1.1.2 The award is titled using nomenclature consistent with the AQF Qualifications Issuance Policy (<http://www.aqf.edu.au>).

1.1.2.1 In issuing an award of type AQF Masters Degree (Extended), the higher education provider is permitted to use the title:

- 'Juris Doctor' for a Masters Degree (Extended) for legal practice
- 'Doctor of...' for a Masters Degree (Extended) for: medical practice; physiotherapy; dentistry; optometry and veterinary practice.

1.1.2.2 The higher education provider does not identify or refer to a Masters Degree (Extended) as a Doctoral Degree in any written, oral or electronic information provided to students in relevant certification documentation or any institutional promotional materials.

1.2 The higher education provider ensures that non-AQF qualifications and awards which may not lead to a qualification located at levels 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 or 10 of the meet the criteria as defined below:

1.2.1 The higher education provider demonstrates an industry, professional, community or student need for the award.

1.2.2 The higher education provider demonstrates a sound educational rationale for the award.

1.2.3 The higher education provider facilitates comparability with AQF qualifications by describing the award using the AQF taxonomy of learning outcomes (knowledge, skills, application of knowledge and skills and generic learning outcomes).

1.2.4 The higher education provider ensures the award is titled appropriately and does not use nomenclature which is already used for an award leading to an AQF qualification.

Section 2 Certification documentation issued is accurate and protects against fraudulent use

The higher education provider ensures that it issues appropriate certification documentation and maintains processes to authenticate awards and protect against fraudulent use.

- 2.1 The higher education provider issues graduates who complete a higher education award:
- a testamur, and,
 - a record of results,
- and may also issue an Australian Higher Education Graduation Statement (Graduation Statement).
- 2.1.1 Where the award leads to an AQF qualification under Section 1.1, the higher education provider ensures that it identifies the award as an award recognised by the AQF on the testamur by either:
- the words, '*The award is recognised within the Australian Qualifications Framework*', or
 - the AQF logo, as authorised by the AQF Council.
- 2.1.2 Where the award leads to a non-AQF qualification under Section 1.2, the higher education provider may identify that the award has been accredited under the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency on the testamur, Graduation Statement, statement of attainment or record of results.
- 2.1.2.1 Providers issuing certification documentation for awards that are not AQF qualifications ensure that these awards cannot be mistaken for an AQF qualification.
- 2.1.2.2 Certification documentation for an award that is not an AQF qualification does not include the use of the words or the AQF logo as prescribed in Section 2.1.1.
- 2.1.2.3 The higher education provider does not refer to an award that is not an AQF qualification as a qualification recognised under the AQF in any written, oral or electronic information.
- 2.2 The higher education provider identifies whether any part of the award has been delivered and/or assessed in a language other than English on the testamur, the graduation statement and record of results.¹
- 2.3 The testamur, Graduation Statement, statement of attainment and record of results will contain sufficient information to authenticate the document for the purposes of preventing fraudulent use.
- 2.3.1 Information included on the testamur correctly identifies:
- the higher education provider;

¹ This does not include the use of another language to develop proficiency in that language.

- the graduate receiving the award;
- the award by its full title;
- the date of issue;
- the person/s authorised to issue the award; and,
- the authenticity of the documents in a form to reduce fraud such as the higher education provider's seal, corporate identifier and/or unique watermark.

2.3.2 Information included on the Graduation Statement is consistent with the *Guidelines for the Presentation of the Australian Higher Education Graduation Statement* (<http://deewr.gov.au/>).

2.4 The higher education provider ensures that students have access to a statement of attainment or record of results for students who complete one or more awards which may lead to an AQF qualification located at levels 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 or 10 of the AQF.

2.4.1 The statement of attainment or record of results identifies the student, the accredited units by their full title, the period of study in which each unit was completed and the date issued.

2.4.2 The higher education provider ensures that the statement of attainment or record of results is in a form which cannot be mistaken for a testamur or graduation statement for a completed higher education award.

2.4.3 The higher education provider ensures that if it issues a statement of attainment, it is identified with the words, '*A statement of attainment is issued when an individual has completed one or more accredited units*'.

2.4.4 The higher education provider identifies in any statement of attainment or record of results whether any accredited units have been delivered and/or assessed in a language other than English on the statement of attainment.²

2.5 The higher education provider maintains appropriate mechanisms to prevent fraudulent reproduction of certification documentation and statement of attainment documentation.

2.6 The higher education provider permits the replacement of certification documentation and statement of attainment documentation and maintains processes to authenticate and verify replacement documentation.

Section 3 Articulation, recognition of prior learning and credit arrangements meet the appropriate criteria

The higher education provider ensures that it maintains processes to provide for the recognition of prior learning, credit transfer and articulation of awards. These processes are designed to maximise the credit students may gain for learning already undertaken,

² This does not include the use of another language to develop proficiency in that language.

subject to preserving the integrity of learning outcomes and/or discipline requirements of the award to which it applies.

- 3.1 The higher education provider has clear, accessible and transparent policies and processes to provide award pathways and credit arrangements for students.
- 3.2 The higher education provider can demonstrate that its decision to give credit into or towards an award is information based, equitable, transparent, timely and academically defensible.
- 3.3 The higher education provider can give credit in the form of block, specified or unspecified credit.
- 3.4 The higher education provider ensures that where it formalises credit agreements with other providers for any award, it maximises the credit available to eligible students for both entry into and credit towards the award, subject to preserving the integrity of learning outcomes and/or discipline requirements of the award to which credit applies.
- 3.5 In determining credit towards awards, the higher education provider ensures it takes into account the comparability and equivalence of the learning outcomes, volume of learning, program of study including content, and learning and assessment approaches.
- 3.6 The higher education provider ensures it maintains publicly available registers of their formalised agreements and common credit transfer articulation arrangements.