



Universities and their Students: Principles for the Provision of Education by Australian Universities

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Preamble

- 1 The provision of education, whether in Australia or offshore, by Australian universities brings with it the ethical commitment that quality education be provided and that value be given for the investment made by students.
- 2 These Principles set out the responsibilities and expectations universities and students can have legitimately and fairly of each other to ensure a high quality learning environment that supports the diverse range of students within the context of the constraints imposed by limitations in funding.
- 3 The Principles enable universities within the framework of their legislated autonomy to regulate their own activities through formulating their own statements for internal use.
- 4 The Principles set out requirements that apply to all students and courses. They are supported by specific codes and guidelines concerning:
 - A guidelines for maintaining and monitoring academic quality and standards in teaching and learning;
 - B guidelines for maintaining and monitoring academic quality and standards in research higher degrees; and
 - C code of practice in the provision of education to international students.
- 5 Members of the AVCC are committed fully to the educational, legal, ethical and financial provisions of the Principles. The associated guidelines in Sections A and B provide advice on good practice, with the aim of assisting universities to fulfill their responsibilities in these areas.
- 6 The Principles and related codes and guidelines replace previous AVCC publications:
 - Universities and their students: expectations and responsibilities (1999);
 - Code of practice for maintaining and monitoring quality and standards in higher degrees (1998);
 - Code of ethical practice in the provision of education to international students by Australian universities (1998), which includes:
 - guidelines for universities providing courses to international students and
 - guidelines for fee refunds for international students;
 - Guidelines on postgraduate fee courses for Australian students (1997).
 - Guidelines for quality assurance in university course development and review (1992);
 - Guidelines for effective university teaching (1993); and
 - Fourth year honours programs – guidelines for good practice (1995);

Universities and their Students: Principles for the Provision of Education by Australian Universities

University Responsibilities: Student Expectations

- 1 Universities should have clear, consistent, rational and understandable policies and practices underpinning the provision of all courses, regardless of the base on which those courses are funded or delivered.

Course Development and approval

- 2 Universities should ensure that all courses are developed and approved to fulfil university missions and objectives for student learning. They should have mechanisms to approve and review existing courses on a regular basis.
- 3 Universities should have policies and procedures to ensure that courses are relevant and of high quality. To achieve this, they should:
 - 3.1 monitor courses to ensure their quality and integrity;
 - 3.2 ensure that there is an appropriate level of academic staff resources such that good staff-student interaction is supported;
 - 3.3 monitor staff performance;
 - 3.4 monitor student services to ensure that they are maintained at appropriate levels;
 - 3.5 ensure that the needs of students are met in relation to physical resources, learning resources and support, and fair assessment practices;
 - 3.6 ensure comparable assessment practices for all students; and
 - 3.7 ensure students have access to adequate supervision, course advice and facilities through the relevant academic department.

Admission arrangements

- 4 Universities should select students by fair and open procedures with published criteria outlining access for all levels of candidacy. The principles upon which selection decisions are made should be stated clearly and adhered to by the university.

- 5 Selection criteria for students should maintain the university's academic standards and maximise the likelihood of success.
- 6 Students enrolled in a particular course normally can expect to complete that award course as described in official university publications, providing they make satisfactory progress. Where changes to courses are made during the normal period of candidacy, these should minimise any disadvantage to students.

Teaching and learning

- 7 Universities should provide suitable learning experiences and opportunities such that students will be stimulated to reach their highest levels of intellectual attainment. This learning environment should take account of the different characteristics of students and their varying cultural and educational backgrounds including those of Indigenous Australian students.
- 8 The teaching and learning environment should be a positive and co-operative one where students have reasonable access to staff to discuss issues and problems and can expect fair, critical and helpful assessment and feedback on their academic work in a timely manner.
- 9 Universities should provide opportunities for students to participate in the functioning of the university at various levels and to provide feedback on the teaching and learning environment.
- 10 In maintaining a partnership arrangement with another institution, the university should ensure that the academic and academic support services offered under the arrangement are of comparable quality to those offered by the university.
- 11 Universities should ensure that their quality control mechanisms apply to all courses.

Support for study and student life

- 12 Universities should:
 - 12.1 address the reasonable needs of all students regardless of gender, ethnicity, age, disability, background or mode of study;
 - 12.2 provide an environment for students which is free from harassment and discrimination; and
 - 12.3 provide harmonious work and study environments in which concerns and complaints are addressed and resolved as quickly as possible.
- 13 Universities should encourage the development of a network of support for all students.

- 14 Universities should support Student Representative Organisations, as the university deems appropriate, within the legislative framework applying to the university and its administration.

Assessment

- 15 Academic performance in accordance with the requirements of the course is the only criterion to be considered in assessing any student's eventual success or otherwise in the course.
- 16 Universities should provide for appropriate dissemination of final assessment results to students within a reasonable time of the completion of units.
- 17 Universities should provide to students a clear statement on the nature and unacceptability of academic dishonesty, including cheating, plagiarism and fabrication or falsification of data, and on individual rights and responsibilities regarding the proper use of copyright material.

Appeals and grievances

- 18 Universities should produce a clearly outlined appeal mechanism, to provide students with an opportunity to review and to question formally their results.
- 19 Student grievances that relate to academic standing and progress should be dealt with quickly and satisfactorily through a clear set of procedures provided by the university.
- 20 Universities should ensure that their appeals procedures apply to all courses.

Information

- 21 Australian higher education should be promoted and marketed accurately and honestly in terms of its quality, its standing and its availability. Qualitative and subjective judgments about other universities should be avoided and no false or misleading comparisons should be drawn with any other provider.
- 22 Potential students should have reasonable access to current and accurate information about available university courses, application and entry procedures, credit transfer policies and fees and charges (including guidelines on fee refunds) prior to the enrolment period.
- 23 Universities should indicate clearly any undergraduate components in postgraduate courses.
- 24 Information in appropriate accessible formats about each unit or subject should be made available to students within a reasonable time of the beginning of the unit or subject.

- 25 At all times students can expect the relevant university to hold confidential all personal information, use it internally in ways that are consistent with university privacy policies and release it outside the university only with the consent and knowledge of the student or when legally required to do so. Personal information is information or an opinion that can be used to identify a person.
- 26 Universities should have clearly enunciated policies with respect to:
- 26.1 total course fees and fee increases;
 - 26.2 methods of payment;
 - 26.3 cancellation and fees refunds
- for their courses and should provide such information in promotion and marketing material.
- 27 Universities should provide to students a clear statement on the sanctions likely to follow misconduct.

Student Responsibilities: University Expectations

- 28 Students are responsible for making themselves aware of all university rules and regulations pertaining to their rights and responsibilities as students.
- 29 Students are responsible for being aware of all information relevant to their courses and to raise any questions or concerns with the appropriate staff member in a timely manner.
- 30 Students have a responsibility to participate actively and positively in the teaching and learning environment. It is expected that students maintain steady progress and comply with the requirements of the relevant course.
- 31 Students have a responsibility to produce honest work. Cheating, plagiarism, fabrication or falsification of data, are not acceptable and represent academic misconduct. Students also are expected to be aware of, and comply with, their individual rights and responsibilities regarding the proper use of copyright material.
- 32 Students have a responsibility to monitor their own progress within the teaching and learning environment and the academic program and to seek assistance where needed from academic staff and academic support services.
- 33 Students have a responsibility to participate in the functioning of the university and to provide feedback on the teaching and learning environment. Student participation is important as students represent a key constituency within the university and can provide useful perspectives on its operations.

- 34 Students are expected to act at all times in a way that respects the rights and privileges of others and shows commitment to the ideals of a university with special reference to excellence in performance and freedom of expression. Students have a responsibility to be aware of and understand cultures other than their own, and to be sensitive and tolerant to these cultural diversities.
- 35 Students have a responsibility to use information technology and other equipment made available to them for purposes relevant to their courses only.

A. GUIDELINES FOR MAINTAINING AND MONITORING ACADEMIC QUALITY AND STANDARDS IN TEACHING AND LEARNING

Definitions

In these Guidelines, unless the contrary intention appears:

- 1 A unit is the basic component of a course that is normally completed over a period of one semester. Subject or course also means unit.
- 2 A program is the program of study necessary to qualify for an award of the university. A program is generally defined by discipline. Program also means course.
- 3 An award is a university qualification gained by a student from the completion of all the requirements of a course. An award is generally classified by level, such as. Diploma, Bachelor, Master or Doctoral degree.
- 4 A discipline is a field of knowledge, scholarship or study specified by a related group of courses, area of research or profession.
- 5 A Department is an academic unit of the Faculty. A Department is usually comprised of one or more disciplines. Department also means School.
- 6 A Faculty is an academic unit of the university comprising a number of Departments. Faculty also means Division or College.

Premises

The provisions of the guidelines apply in common to:

- 7 all coursework leading to an award provided by, or certified by, universities regardless of the level of the award or source of funding;
- 8 all modes and sites of delivery;
- 9 the contributions made by third party providers to programs certified by the university;
- 10 relevant aspects of relationships with professional, industry, government and other bodies that have a significant impact on teaching and learning; and

- 11 These provisions take precedence over any statements relating to the general nature of teaching and learning in Section B, Guidelines for Maintaining and Monitoring Academic Quality and Standards in Research Higher Degrees.

Support for, and Responsibilities of, Students

Support for Students

- 12 Universities should provide a learning environment appropriate to the reasonable needs and levels of the students (undergraduate, honours, postgraduate), according to the characteristics of their students.
- 13 Each university should provide the means by which students can understand their rights and responsibilities as students at the university.
- 14 Universities should describe the desired outcomes of the programs and awards in which students are enrolled.
- 15 Universities should
 - 15.1 address the reasonable needs of all students for their learning, development and their wider university experience, taking into account, only where relevant, their background or characteristics.
 - 15.2 provide an environment for students that is safe and free from harassment and discrimination.
 - 15.3 provide an environment where concerns and complaints are addressed and resolved as soon and as effectively as possible.
- 16 Universities should provide accurate advice pre-admission and on enrolment on matters such as study options, program structure, recognition of prior learning, credit transfer and other procedures which assist a smooth pathway into the chosen level of academic study.
- 17 Universities should provide introductory information to enable them to be oriented to their courses of study, the university and its services.
- 18 Universities should provide students with clear, consistent, fair, easily accessed and understandable policies and practices relevant to their course of study and student experience.
- 19 Universities should assist students to select and use appropriate learning technologies and knowledge management systems.
- 20 The learning environment should ensure that students have reasonable access to teaching staff, and that they receive timely and constructive feedback on their work.

- 21 Universities should provide support services for students at key transition points between education sectors or levels.
- 22 Universities should make appropriate provision for student services for all students, including:
 - 35.1 personal and study advice;
 - 35.2 enrolment orientation and program commencement assistance;
 - 35.3 academic assistance, including program advice, study skills and information technology;
 - 35.4 advice on progress during the study program;
 - 35.5 language support for international students; and
 - 35.6 reasonable support for students with specific needs such as students with disabilities, including the provision of course materials in suitable formats.
- 23 Universities should assist students to identify their learning outcomes and employment options, and assist with career counselling.
- 24 Universities should provide appropriate opportunities for students to contribute to the improvement of both the learning environment and the university generally by being involved in the operation of the university at various levels.
- 25 Universities should make provision for students to provide feedback on their learning environment.

Responsibilities of Students:

- 26 Learning is the outcome of a collaborative partnership between teachers and students. Over time students should take increasing responsibility for their own learning.
- 27 Students should respect the rights and views of others.
- 28 Students should familiarise themselves with the rules and regulations pertaining to their rights and responsibilities as a student at the university, and the expectations for the unit(s), program(s) and award(s) for which they are enrolled.
- 29 The responsibilities of students include:
 - 29.1 ensuring that their enrolment details are correct;
 - 29.2 understanding the requirements including assessment for each unit of their study;

- 29.3 understanding the importance of academic honesty and complying with policies relating to cheating, plagiarism and fabrication or falsification of data;
- 29.4 observing individual rights and responsibilities regarding the proper use of copyright material; and
- 29.5 advising as early as possible of particular requirements for support.

Teaching and Support for Teaching

- 30 Good teaching promotes good learning. The nature of, and support for, the environment in which the learning occurs is crucial to the achievement of good learning outcomes. Universities should make the achievement of good learning outcomes a matter of highest priority by implementing effective means to support, develop and evaluate teaching and individual teachers.
- 31 The university, faculties, departments and all staff share the responsibility for the standard of teaching and the quality of the learning environment.
- 32 University staff collectively are responsible for ensuring that the design, development, management, teaching and assessment of their programs and units facilitate effective learning by their students.
- 33 Each university should have a coherent set of policies and practices which demonstrates that it values the education of its students and the contributions that staff make to the enhancement of student learning and should ensure that staff and students are aware of these policies and practices.
- 34 Each university should:
 - 34.1 establish an environment that values and supports teaching and learning, and promotes scholarly enquiry and reflection;
 - 34.2 provide opportunities, incentives and support for staff to develop knowledge and skills in their disciplines and in teaching and learning;
 - 34.3 acknowledge the value of teaching by developing policies and practices that encourage the recruitment of individuals with a demonstrated teaching commitment and the promotion of staff for teaching excellence.
- 35 Through their teaching universities should provide students with opportunities to realise their learning potential and to prepare themselves for lifelong learning.
- 36 Staff involved in teaching should:
 - 36.1 acquire and develop knowledge and understanding of a range of teaching and assessment methods and of the principles which underlie student learning;

- 36.2 exhibit a commitment to scholarly values, be in touch with current research and scholarship and to contribute to their disciplines, and integrate into their teaching the knowledge and understanding which they and others create;
- 36.3 exhibit a commitment to lifelong learning, to professional growth through critical reflection and self-evaluation, and to ethical and accountable professional practice;
- 36.4 foster in their students the development of a respect for their disciplines and for learning generally, the need for personal progress towards competence, and the obligation to contribute to society;
- 36.5 teach their units in such a way that all students, regardless of their background or irrelevant characteristics, have equal opportunities to learn and to demonstrate that learning, in accordance with the aims of the unit; and
- 36.6 encourage their students to take control of their learning, develop their skills and confidence and extend their abilities.

Assessment

- 37 Universities should make explicit to students and assessors, the criteria for assessment in all units and programs. Assessment should be such that an evaluation of the student's performance in meeting specified objectives is provided.
- 38 Universities should make available to all students details of requirements for all unit assessments at the beginning of the study period for the unit.
- 39 In setting assessment strategies, universities should ensure that assessment tasks are related to the desired learning outcomes and, to the extent that it is consistent with these, recognise different learning styles.
- 40 Universities should ensure that academic performance in accordance with the requirements of the unit or program is the key determinant of a student's success or failure. Where a unit or program is offered on different sites or via different modes of delivery, the standards for assessment outcomes should be equivalent.
- 41 Universities should ensure that appropriate academic standards are based on actual achievement.
- 42 Universities should take steps to ensure that consistent, comparable grading standards are applied across various units in each academic program, and so far as possible, across programs.
- 43 The roles of examiners and boards of examiners should be delineated clearly and communicated.

- 44 Teaching staff should provide regular and systematic feedback to students on all elements of their performances.
- 45 The assessment process should be such that students are provided with the reasons why a particular mark or grade is given, and in the case of a project or thesis, these reasons should be provided in a written report.
- 46 Universities should provide for appropriate dissemination of final assessment results to students within a reasonable time of the completion of units.
- 47 Universities should ensure that there are clear and effective policies and mechanisms for the appeal or review of grades, in circumstances where an appeal or review is appropriate.

Management and Review of Teaching and Learning

- 48 Universities should state their commitment to the status of teaching through their strategic mission statements and objectives that express the university's educational ethos and how this might be realised. Mission statements should also show the interrelationships between teaching, research and community service.
- 49 As a part of planning, universities should monitor their student outcomes through such performance indicators as graduate attributes, graduate capabilities, student progress, outcomes for equity groups, student satisfaction and employability.
- 50 The senior academic committee (Board or Senate) should have a significant and clearly defined role in academic planning, policy-making and maintaining standards for teaching and learning.
- 51 Universities should ensure that the infrastructure they have in place is appropriate for an effective learning environment and university experience for all students, regardless of their modes of study and their particular program requirements.
- 52 Universities should have policies, procedures and management practices which ensure the high quality of curriculum delivery and teaching. To achieve this, they should:
 - 52.1 systematically monitor and review programs to ensure their quality and integrity;
 - 52.2 provide appropriate levels of staff development, recognising changes, for example in pedagogy, in learning technologies, student needs and legislative requirements;
 - 52.3 monitor staff performance and take action as appropriate;
 - 52.4 monitor student services to ensure that they are maintained at appropriate levels;

- 52.5 ensure appropriate assessment practices for all students;
 - 52.6 ensure students have access to adequate supervision, program and unit advice and facilities through the relevant academic department;
 - 52.7 reward good teaching; and
 - 52.8 ensure that achievements in teaching figure prominently in appointment, tenure and promotion procedures.
- 53 Universities should undertake effective risk management for all aspects of teaching and learning and observe the duty of care for students, both in the learning and wider university environment.
- 54 Information on all aspects of teaching and learning should be well documented and accessible as appropriate to all staff and students.

Program Introduction and Changes

- 55 Universities should have formal decision making and approval processes for approving the introduction, modification and discontinuation of all units, programs and awards that are offered by the university in its own right, or in association with other providers and partners.
- 56 The decision pathways for approvals and any associated delegations should be set out clearly, together with the roles played in the approval process by individual academic staff, relevant academic and administrative office holders and committees, including any roles played by the senior academic and governance bodies.
- 57 The decision making processes should allow for adequate consultation with internal and external stakeholders, including employers, the professions and industry.
- 58 The decision making and approval processes for new programs and program changes should be such that consideration is given to a range of factors, including:
- 58.1 the nature of the program change, or key attributes of a proposed new program, including level, structure, curriculum, modes and sites of delivery;
 - 58.2 demonstration of the manner in which the proposed change supports the university's mission, objectives and academic profile and the basis on which the program performance in this respect should be assessed during the life of the program;
 - 58.3 the relationship to, and impact on other programs;

- 58.4 the need for the change in an existing program, or demand for the new program in terms of the expected size and nature of the prospective market taking into account prospects for employment;
 - 58.5 the capacity of the university and associated providers or partners to offer the program taking account of available resources, notably staffing, budgets, learning, information and IT resources, accommodation and other support services for students and academic staff;
 - 58.6 the means to manage and assure quality of teaching and learning in the program with reference firstly to the established policies, processes, standards and quality assurance systems of the university and secondly, to those provided by relevant external bodies such as professional associations; and
 - 58.7 any special issues associated with the program, including variations or exceptions to standard policy and practice (for example, delivery in a language other than English).
- 59 Formal agreements with third parties in Australia or overseas should not pre-empt the completion of the formal unit and program approval processes of the university.

Review of Teaching and Learning

- 60 Units and programs should be subject to regular review and improvement to ensure that the university continues to fulfil its mission and objectives, taking into account:
- 60.1 all factors included in the original approval to introduce or change the unit or program;
 - 60.2 input from students about their course work, teachers and learning environment;
 - 60.3 input from other internal and external stakeholders, as appropriate, including academic peers, industry, graduates, alumni, professional associations and employers; and
 - 60.4 the performance of the unit or program based on standard university qualitative and quantitative indicators, trend data and information related to any exceptional features.

B. GUIDELINES FOR MAINTAINING AND MONITORING ACADEMIC QUALITY AND STANDARDS IN HIGHER DEGREES

Definitions

Masters by research

- 1 The minimum research component of a Masters by Research is two thirds.
- 2 Masters by Research degrees generally have the objective of training students in research methodology and techniques and in their critical evaluation, appropriate to their field of study, and in the application of such methodology by conducting a specified program of research under appropriate supervision. In addition, such degrees require training in analysing the literature and debate in the substantive area of the thesis topic at an advanced level.
- 3 Examiners of a Masters degree should satisfy themselves that the student: has a thorough understanding of the relevant techniques in the field demonstrated both by their application and a thorough review of the literature; has managed to demonstrate competence in the chosen field through judicious selection and application of methods to yield fruitful results; has the capacity to evaluate these results critically; and has the capacity to present well written work.

PhD degrees

- 4 The minimum research component of a PhD is two thirds.
- 5 PhD degrees provide training and education with the objective of producing graduates with the capacity to conduct research independently at a high level of originality and quality. The student ought to be capable by the end of his/her candidature of conceiving, designing and carrying to completion a research program without supervision. The PhD candidate should uncover new knowledge either by the discovery of new facts, the formulation of theories or the innovative re-interpretation of known data and established ideas.
- 6 Examiners should expect a thesis to be well written and to reveal an independence of thought and approach, a deep knowledge of the field of study and to have made a significant original contribution to knowledge consistent with 3-4 years of supervised research training.

Professional Doctorates

- 7 The Professional Doctorate is specific to a discipline, aimed primarily at practitioners in the field. The program of study would be expected to include advanced coursework, project activity and a research component. [cross ref. 63 and 64]
- 8 Examiners should expect a thesis to make a distinct contribution to the improvement of professional practice or policy.

Responsibilities

- 9 Research training at a university involves the active participation of both staff and students. The responsibility to ensure that it is conducted in the most efficient and effective manner is shared by all parties: the university, its academic units and staff, and the students, all have obligations to each other. These should be clearly set out in documentation given to the student at the time of admission.
- 10 The documentation should include: a copy of the information to be given to the student by the academic unit, the policy on student progression and reports, the regulations governing the appropriate degree, library rules, grievance procedures, the policy relating to intellectual property as it affects students, information relating to students rights and obligations, the guidelines for supervisors.

Responsibilities of the university

- 11 The university has the responsibility to establish a policy framework within which academic unit-specific policies can be developed. The university is responsible for general policies related to:
 - 11.1 clearly specified entry standards which apply with due regard to discipline, and which are set to ensure that enrolling students are likely to have the capacity to succeed given adequate commitment;
 - 11.2 access to physical facilities and resources (including library resources and support) which, while possibly varying between different parts of the university, should be made clear to students at the outset;
 - 11.3 ethics clearance procedures concerning matters such as informed consent, deception and debriefing;
 - 11.4 the status of intellectual property arising from the work of students as part of their studies;
 - 11.5 minimum reporting requirements;

- 11.6 procedures by which either the student or the supervisor may make representations as appropriate should significant difficulties arise (grievance procedures, appeals);
- 11.7 explicit procedures relating to all aspects of the examination process, including clear guidelines outlining the university's expectations for the particular degree; and
- 11.8 in the case of students whose research is conducted in collaboration with other entities such as Cooperative Research Centres or industrial partners, any specific variations in the status of intellectual property or other rules relating to the candidacy should be clearly explained in writing.

Responsibility of the academic unit(s) (e.g. Department)

- 12 The academic unit(s) should ensure:
 - 12.1 the student meets the requirements set down by the university for admission to candidature;
 - 12.2 the proposed research project is appropriate for the degree;
 - 12.3 the unit is appropriate for the research to be undertaken, and has the space, facilities and resources the work may need;
 - 12.4 high quality supervision can be provided and maintained throughout the research period;
 - 12.5 appropriate opportunities are provided, by way of seminars and the like, for students to develop their skills at presenting their work as well as facilitating their integration into a cohesive group;
 - 12.6 appropriate opportunities are provided for students to interact with and develop profitable intellectual relationships with one another;
 - 12.7 all new candidates are provided with a statement which sets out the procedures by which students may make representations to the Head of the unit or other designated officer if they believe that their work is not proceeding satisfactorily for reasons outside their control;
 - 12.8 an appropriate procedure is established for dealing with unresolved conflicts between supervisor(s) and students, in line with institutional policy; and
 - 12.9 each candidate has written guidelines concerning ethical and safety procedures appropriate to the discipline.

Responsibilities of Supervisors

- 13 Supervisors have responsibilities which include:
 - 13.1 providing appropriate academic support throughout the candidature to enable the candidate to achieve the highest standard of research of which s/he is capable;
 - 13.2 suggesting ways that the candidate can make the most effective use of time. This should involve discussing the nature of research with the student and the standard expected for particular degrees, the choice of the research topic, the planning of the research program, and the availability of library resources in the field and bibliographical and technical assistance;
 - 13.3 maintaining close and regular contact with the student and establishing at the beginning the basis on which contact will be made. This will facilitate the supervisor's role in advising the student on the pace of progress, and ensuring that a reasonable timetable is set to permit the degree to be completed in the appropriate time;
 - 13.4 requiring work from the student on a pre-arranged and agreed schedule so that their progress can be assessed at regular intervals;
 - 13.5 monitoring carefully the performance of the student relative to the standard required for the degree, and ensuring that inadequate progress or work below the standard generally expected is brought to the student's attention. The supervisor should help with developing solutions to problems as they are identified;
 - 13.6 using the regular reporting procedures established by the university as the minimum means by which any difficulties and problems discussed with the student during the year are noted along with the action taken or advice given. If the problem is not resolved, the Head of the academic unit, in the first instance should be involved; and the Head and the relevant university committee should be notified in writing of continuing problems between reporting periods;
 - 13.7 comment on the content and the drafts of the work and, at the time of submission, certify that it is properly presented, conforms to the Regulations and is therefore, prima facie, worthy of examination;
 - 13.8 advise the relevant university committee of the names and credentials of suitable examiners;
 - 13.9 fulfilling other university-specific obligations regarding supervision; and
 - 13.10 providing career advice and assistance as appropriate.

Responsibilities of the Candidate

- 14 The responsibilities of the candidate include:
 - 14.1 diligently and intelligently proceeding with the research as agreed between the candidate and the supervisor;
 - 14.2 becoming familiar with, and abiding by, the university's regulations governing the degree;
 - 14.3 discussing with the supervisor the type of help considered most useful, and keeping to an agreed schedule of meetings which will ensure regular contact;
 - 14.4 taking the initiative in raising problems or difficulties and sharing responsibility for seeking solutions;
 - 14.5 maintaining the progress of the work in accordance with the stages agreed with the supervisor, including in particular the presentation of any required written material in sufficient time to allow for comments and discussions before proceeding to the next stage;
 - 14.6 discuss the progress towards, and impediments to, maintaining the agreed timetable with the supervisor at regular intervals;
 - 14.7 providing a formal progress report to the appropriate committee, through the supervisor, at periods specified by the university;
 - 14.8 adopting at all times, safe working practices relevant to the field of research and adhering to the ethical practices appropriate to the discipline and the university; and
 - 14.9 accepting the responsibility for producing the final copies of the thesis, its content, and ensuring that it is in accord with the relevant requirements, including the standard of presentation.

Admission

- 15 Criteria for admission to a degree program should include not only academic qualifications and, where appropriate, professional experience but also the feasibility of the proposed course of study in the department, the availability of supervision, adequate infrastructure and other resources, and where candidates are in employment, the capacity to meet the time and other requirements of candidature.
- 16 The university should avoid mis-matches between students and supervisors. Emphasis should be placed, therefore, on investigating students' interests and background and their match with resources and available expertise, preferably in advance. Student enquiries should be responded to in a timely manner.

- 17 Where there is doubt about the candidate's academic preparedness for the proposed degree, they should first be admitted to probationary candidature lasting no more than 12 months. Universities may, in the case of doctoral degrees, require admission initially into a masters program. In cases where probationary enrolment strikes problems, the university should provide clear paths for conversion of enrolment to an appropriate alternative academic program.

Co-Supervision

- 18 Supervisors should ensure that research students have accurate information in appropriate time about any planned, long period of leave (or retirement) during the candidature and the arrangements made to provide for supervision during absences.
- 19 Co-supervisors (and multiple supervisors, where applicable to the discipline) should be appointed at the outset of the program, particularly if any lengthy absences of the principal supervisor are planned or if expertise additional to that provided by the supervisor(s) is required. This could be a staff member from the same university, from another institution or from industry.
- 20 Any co-supervisor should be involved as soon as practicable in the development of the candidate's research plan and should maintain a level of communication with the candidate and the supervisor to allow adequate supervision whenever necessary.
- 21 If a co-supervisor(s) is appointed, the place of primary responsibility must be clear. The principal supervisor, carries the responsibility of co-ordinating communication between the supervisors and the student.
- 22 In some cases, e.g. where the topic is multi-disciplinary or staff are inexperienced, an advisory committee could be formed to advise the student and any possible advantages of team supervision could also be explored. Whatever supervisory arrangement, however, the place of primary responsibility must be made clear.
- 23 Staff with proven and current research records and experience in supervision should normally be preferred for sole supervision of a candidate, and then only if absences and the like can be adequately covered. Less experienced members of staff should be co-supervisors in the first instance and supported by appropriate mentoring and/or training.

The Topic

- 24 The thesis topic should be defined before admission. If circumstances prevent this from happening, the topic should be specified no later than three months into the candidature; [cross ref. 64.3]
- 25 Provision should be made for changes to the title at the time of drafting the final version of the thesis to reflect accurately the research.

Reports

- 26 Written reports from the student and the supervisor are the means by which the university assesses whether the candidature should continue and are an important and formal means by which any problems concerning the candidature can be identified. They also serve to keep the appropriate officers of the university informed. They should be prepared at least annually.
- 27 Supervisors and candidates should be advised that, in the eventuality of dispute during the course of candidature, written reports will be of prime importance; and therefore these reports must be frank appraisals by both the supervisor and the student of the student's progress. .
- 28 Report forms should be circulated to students in time to allow the supervisor and the Head of the academic unit to view and comment on the report prior to re-enrolment for the following year.
- 29 Reports should be monitored by a university committee with responsibility for postgraduate teaching and research.
- 30 Each Faculty and/or academic unit should establish particular requirements tailored to their disciplines; the university policy should include the need for the reports to be seen by the student after the supervisor and the Head have added their comments to the report. Openness at this stage could obviate problems later.
- 31 The policy relating to student reports should make clear what happens to the reports, and how they may be used.

Grievance Procedures

- 32 Universities should have established grievance procedures for dealing with problems arising from a candidature that permit the student access to the most appropriate person (e.g. a Head of unit, Dean, a Chair of a Postgraduate Studies or Higher Degrees Committee or a Deputy/Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research)), or an university committee charged with the overall responsibility for postgraduate students.
- 33 The grievance procedures should be designed to permit the investigation of problems arising during the candidature, and assist in formulating acceptable solutions.

Examination

- 34 To ensure the maintenance of quality and standards, higher degrees by research students should have at least two examiners of whom at least one is external to the university.

- 35 Because of the special nature of research degrees, where the students could have uniquely expert understanding of the field, they will also have a special relationship with their examiners. The students are **not** examined only to establish the extent of their understanding of a body of existing knowledge. They are examined by individuals who must judge their approach to research, their construction of hypotheses, their arguments and their analyses and who will be their peers if the degree is awarded. The selection of examiners is therefore of critical importance.
- 36 Steps should be taken to ensure that examiners are free from bias, in relation to the student or the supervisor; this could be assessed by a general discussion of possible examiners with the student and any co-supervisors although care must be taken not to jeopardise the integrity and independence of the examination process.
- 37 Examiners should normally still be active in research/scholarship thus ensuring that their knowledge of the field is current.
- 38 They should have empathy with the theoretical framework used by the student.
- 39 They should be made familiar with the requirements of the university and the essential parts of the Regulations governing the particular research degree.
- 40 Possible examiners and their credentials should be submitted to the relevant university committee by the supervisor or Head of department (who will normally have consulted with the student to guard against bias and other problems) and appointed by the University.
- 41 The university should have procedures developed to guard against inordinate delays in the examination process. Universities should require that examiners undertake to complete the examination of the thesis within, for example, three months of receipt. Examiners should be required to provide a statement of agreement to examine within a stated period of time.
- 42 The university may need to ensure that examiners are aware of any Commercial-in-Confidence work incorporated into the thesis.
- 43 The university should have a clear set of procedures for dealing with conflicting judgement by examiners.

Appeals

- 44 The complex and special role of examiners of research degrees indicates that universities should establish procedures that give a student, in certain circumstances, the right of appeal against the examination process and/or evaluation of their candidature. Appeals should be permitted on procedural grounds only: appeals by candidates simply rejecting the assessment of the merit of their work should not be permitted. Nor should the procedures permit an appeal on grounds of complaint about the inadequacy of supervisory or other arrangements

during the period of study; the grievance procedures should be used at the appropriate time.

- 45 Procedures and machinery for implementing appeals should be established on a permanent not ad hoc basis. Each university should develop procedures and ensure that each student is fully aware of the university practices.
- 46 The grounds for appeal against a decision not to award a postgraduate research degree or not to allow re-submission, could include:
 - 46.1 procedural irregularities in the conduct of the examination;
 - 46.2 critical circumstances affecting the student's performance of which the examiners were not aware; and
 - 46.3 documentable evidence of prejudice or of bias on the part of one or more of the examiners.
- 47 In general, the candidate would need to make a case to the relevant Dean, Deputy/Pro-Vice-Chancellor or equivalent who is required to decide whether a case exists, prima facie, and take action as specified in the procedures.
- 48 The possible outcomes of an appeal, ranging from rejection to permission to re-submit the thesis, should be made clear to the student. Where an appeal is upheld, any required additional work by the student in the nature of amendments or revision should be clearly specified.

Intellectual Property

- 49 It is important that the candidates be made aware of the university's policy relating to intellectual property before embarking on the research. The policy should be made available to the candidate at the time of enrolment.
- 50 Each university should have a policy on the ownership of intellectual property particularly any generated by students in the course of their work (study) within the university. Any understandings that are written must be consistent with this policy.
- 51 If a candidate is to be involved in work which could result in the generation of intellectual property and/or is funded by a contractual arrangement, the candidate should be fully informed by the supervisor, in writing, of any particular conditions or contracts which could either restrict disclosure or affect the extent to which communication with colleagues is possible during the course of the work and on its completion. For example, students working in Cooperative Research Centres or funded by Australian Postgraduate Awards (Industry) or industry scholarships need to be clearly informed at the beginning of their candidature about the arrangements concerning intellectual property that may conflict with, or override, the university's policy in this area.

- 52 If the candidate agrees to take part in such a project, a written agreement on the conditions of disclosure and related matters, should be concluded over the signatures of the candidate, principal supervisor(s) and Head of the unit(s) concerned. The university should advise the candidate that s/he may seek independent legal council before signing any agreement relating to ownership of intellectual property.
- 53 Any company involved in such a project should be clearly informed of the university policy regarding student involvement. The university should ensure that the research program is not unreasonably influenced by commercial or industrial factors.
- 54 Any delay in publication, e.g. while patentability is investigated and patent specifications are drawn up and lodged, should be as limited as possible. The normal maximum delay in publication is 12 months.
- 55 The policy should require that the candidate, the supervisor and the Head must meet and produce a written understanding should patentable intellectual property be generated unexpectedly and hence in the absence of an initial agreement.
- 56 The policy should be sensitive to the legal consequences of publication of "intellectual property" in theses, which may vary between the States and Territories.
- 57 The policy should be clear on access to theses and any confidentiality requirements of the examination process, including provision for confidentiality agreements with examiners should that be deemed necessary.
- 58 A university should only consider restricted access to theses when a case is made and only agreed to in compelling circumstances. Such circumstances could include commercial confidences, but not simply the denial of access by other scholars to what purports, after all, to be an advance in knowledge. When granted, restricted access should be for a limited time, and as short a period as possible.
- 59 Agreement should be reached between the student and supervisor concerning authorship of publications and acknowledgement of contributions during and after the candidature. There should be open and mutual recognition of the candidate's and supervisor's contribution on all published work arising from the project.
- 60 No policy should be developed which prevents candidates from meeting all the requirements of the higher degree regulations.

Moral Rights

- 61 Academic endeavour is centred on the generation, exploration and expansion of new and original ideas. The intellectual work undertaken by higher degree students is the foundation of their future careers. Supervisors and universities have a key

responsibility to assist students in publishing their work both during the course of candidature and immediately following submission of their theses.

- 62 Joint publication is one significant way in which a supervisor can assist a student in these terms. However, care needs to be taken, in the context of what is a power imbalance between supervisor and student, to ensure supervisors do not usurp credit for a student's work. To ensure that this does not happen and that possibilities of misunderstanding are minimised, supervisors and students should negotiate the basis for acknowledgement of joint authorship, particularly the order in which authorship is listed, in the early stages of a student's candidature, and preferably before the research is conducted. Supervisors should respect the ethical guidelines that might be laid down by the profession associated with their discipline in this regard.

Professional Doctorates

- 63 The objectives of a doctoral degree in a specified professional field are:
- 63.1 to provide postgraduate opportunities in professional fields for students whose background and experience are appropriate to pursue leadership in the professions;
 - 63.2 to provide extended and advanced training in professional fields where projects and investigations are more applied in nature and more obviously oriented to professional practice; and
 - 63.3 to enhance relationships between the higher education sector and the professions.
- 64 Professional Doctorates differ from PhDs in at least the following respects:
- 64.1 the professional doctorate is **not** designed as is the PhD to equip candidates to be researchers. Rather it is specific to a discipline, aimed primarily at practitioners in the field;
 - 64.2 the nature of professional doctorates makes them especially amenable to supervision by a larger number of persons. Moreover, the focus of professional doctorates is compatible with supervision being provided in part from the relevant professional area. Where teams of supervisors are used, the inclusion of an associate supervisor who is a practitioner in the relevant professional area is desirable;
 - 64.3 the process of defining a thesis topic as outlined under 24 above is not necessarily relevant to professional doctorates; and
 - 64.4 panels of experts may be used to examine a professional doctorate thesis.

C. Practice in the Provision of Education to International Students by Australian Universities

Definitions

- 1 In this Code, unless the contrary intention appears:
 - 1.1 **agent** means a person *or organisation that* represents or acts on behalf of a university in the recruitment of overseas students
 - 1.2 **international student** means a person who *is* enrolled at the university but who is not a domestic student. The student may be studying in Australia or in another country
 - 1.3 **partner** means a person or an entity with whom a university has an agreement, including franchising and other partnership arrangements, for the delivery of education services. The terms partner/partnership are used as generic descriptors regardless of the legal arrangements agreed to by the parties. The partner may be in Australia or in another country.

The Code

- 2 The provision of education services to international students by Australian universities should be undertaken in ways that are consistent with the maintenance of academic standards in Australian universities, and the safeguarding of the interests of international students. Academic performance is the only criterion to be considered in assessing any student's eventual success or otherwise in their course.
- 3 Australian higher education should be promoted and marketed accurately and honestly in terms of its quality, its standing and its availability.
- 4 Each university should have a clearly enunciated policy with respect to the promotion, marketing and delivery of its education services while preserving necessary confidentiality in respect of commercial-in-confidence information.
- 5 Universities should acknowledge the need for good practice to ensure fairness in the promotion and marketing of educational services overseas with regard to:
 - 5.1 inter-university relations;
 - 5.2 the interests of both domestic and international students;
 - 5.3 the perceived quality of Australian education; and

- 5.4 the cultural and educational relationships between Australia and other countries.
- 6 Consistent with the requirements of the Australian Trade Practices Act, differences between Australian universities should be portrayed in a comprehensive, comprehensible and accurate way so as to project a cooperative marketing image. Qualitative and subjective judgments about other universities should be avoided and, in all circumstances, no false or misleading comparisons be drawn with any other provider.
 - 7 Universities should accept that, given the financial and cultural consequences of academic failure, special care is required to ensure that only those international students who have reasonable chances of success are enrolled. Selection criteria for international students should be such as to maintain the university's academic standards and to maximise the academic success of international students.
 - 8 Australian universities should recognise their on-going responsibilities for the education and welfare of international students and take appropriate account of the potential cultural and linguistic difficulties that international students may encounter. Universities should ensure that the academic programs, support services and learning environment offered to international students will encourage them to have a positive attitude about Australian education.
 - 9 Universities should ensure that the academic facilities for international students offered on all their campuses are, as far as possible, of a standard comparable to those offered on their main campus. This requirement applies whether the campus is intra-state, interstate or overseas.
 - 10 Universities should ensure they have a suitable focal point for all enquiries and ensure both the effective implementation of the university's international student program and the provision of all necessary support services.
 - 11 Universities should provide to prospective international students accurate and comprehensive information on the university, admission requirements and procedures, the courses available, tuition and, where appropriate, living costs, living conditions, accommodation and other services. Advertisements and promotional literature should not include misleading or ambiguous statements about the nature of the course, or about the cost of the award offered.
 - 12 Staff members representing Australian universities at recruitment promotions or similar events overseas, or delivering programs to international students should be carefully selected and be:
 - 12.1 sympathetic and clear communicators with a thorough knowledge of their own university's courses and procedures and of the Australian education system generally;

- 12.2 sensitive to the culture and customs of the country they are visiting, and/or the students they are teaching, and aware of its historical and political background and educational systems; and
- 12.3 knowledgeable, experienced and competent in the administration of student policy and in face-to-face dealings with students.
- 13 In selecting a partner, universities should ensure that they take appropriate steps to establish the business and educational credentials of the partner. The partner should also, as far as possible, have facilities of a similar standard comparable to that of the university.
- 14 In maintaining a partnership arrangement, universities should ensure that the quality of the academic and academic support services offered under the arrangement are comparable to that offered by the university.
- 15 In the event of the termination of a partnership, universities will ensure that all commitments made to the international students enrolled under the terms of the partnership will be met.
- 16 For the purposes of the application of this Code, the agents and partners of Australian universities are regarded in the same way as the universities themselves.

Guidelines for the provision of education to international students

- 1 The following Guidelines, to be read in conjunction with the Principles and Code of Practice in the Provision of Education to International Students by Australian Universities, outline recommended procedures for Australian universities offering courses to international students in Australia or other countries. The Code and Guidelines, which are good practice statements, apply in the provision of services to students face-to-face but also, as appropriate, in the provision of services offered in distance education or electronic mode. They apply equally to universities, their agents and their partners.
- 2 The Guidelines are consistent with the provisions of the ESOS Act and its complementary National Code. There are penalties for breaches of the Act and National Code.
- 3 Universities should use the Guidelines as a checklist to ensure that their practices are consistent with the AVCC Code of Practice.

Promotion and marketing

- 4 Universities should ensure that Australian Diplomatic Missions and relevant government education agencies overseas are fully cognisant of their involvement in promoting, marketing and delivery of education to international students and that such involvement meets all official in-country rules and regulations.
- 5 Universities should ensure that their promotions and advertisements, including those involving third parties, truthfully and accurately describe the education services, including the nature of courses, facilities and opportunities available to international students. Statements about the merits of courses offered by other universities, or about the universities themselves, should be fair and not misleading or malicious.
- 6 Promotional and recruitment visits by university representatives should be well planned and coordinated.
- 7 Universities should ensure that:
 - 7.1 Where appropriate adequate notice is given to Australian Diplomatic Missions and, educational authorities in-country together with consultation as necessary;
 - 7.2 accommodation is appropriate for promotional events;
 - 7.3 university representatives undertaking visits abroad are familiar with educational systems and membership requirements of professional bodies in Australia and the country concerned and other facts relevant to the services being offered; and

7.4 adequate and relevant information materials are prepared for distribution.

Recruitment Agents

- 8 Universities should be aware of the provisions in the ESOS Act and National Code in respect of agents, including persons purporting to represent universities. Universities are deemed to have a contract, or deemed to be represented by an agent, if they enrol a student proposed by that agent. Under the Act and National Code universities are liable for the actions of their recruitment agents.
- 9 Before entering into contractual arrangements with recruitment agents, universities should make every reasonable effort to ensure their complete satisfaction that the agents are competent, well informed, reputable and will act at all times in the best interests of applicants and the university.
- 10 In developing contracts with recruitment agents, universities should include a termination clause that enables termination if agents repeatedly breach the Code of Practice.
- 11 Universities should ensure that their agents understand that the Code of Practice applies to them.
- 12 Agreements with recruitment agents involving fees paid by universities and by potential students or clients should be carefully and closely scrutinised.
- 13 Universities should maintain regular contact with their recruitment agents and provide appropriate monitoring and support to enable their agents to represent them fairly and effectively.
- 14 Universities should ensure that any promotions and advertisements carried out by recruitment agents on their behalf are truthful and do not include misleading or malicious comment.
- 15 Universities should monitor and review student satisfaction with their recruitment agents.
- 16 The appropriate Australian Diplomatic Mission should be advised in the event of any misrepresentation by recruitment agents.
- 17 Universities should ensure that their relationships with recruitment agents comply with all laws and regulations of the country in which they are operating.

Admission

- 18 Universities should have standards and procedures to ensure international students have every chance of success and are capable of benefiting from the course.

- 19 Universities should publish the selection criteria for admission of international students, including specific criteria for particular courses, and where possible recognition of prior learning, credit transfer and articulation arrangements..
- 20 Universities should be satisfied that candidates selected for admission are suitably qualified academically.
- 21 Where relevant to the language of tuition candidates for admission should be competent in English. Universities should have clear, well-established guidelines on their English, or other, language requirements and include details of such requirements in all publicity and promotional materials.
- 22 Universities should facilitate swift responses to enquiries and applications and ensure that all necessary documentation is sent at the earliest possible time.
- 23 Before admitting international students to postgraduate research degree programs, universities should clarify the proposed research area with the student and provide a firm written undertaking to provide appropriate supervision and facilities for the duration of the project and make appropriate arrangements for access to ancillary support (laboratory, computing and library facilities). The nature of supervision and facilities should be communicated to the student in the offer of candidature.

Pre-arrival information for international students studying in Australia

- 24 Prior to departure for Australia, universities should provide international students with easily understood, up-to-date, accurate and professionally presented information covering such issues as:
 - 24.1 the exact location of the campus at which they will be studying, the facilities there and the relationship of that campus to the main campus of the university
 - 24.2 names and telephone numbers of relevant staff to contact in the event of problems on arrival in Australia;
 - 24.3 cost of living;
 - 24.4 accommodation;
 - 24.5 clothing and food;
 - 24.6 payment of fees;
 - 24.7 travel arrangements from point of arrival in Australia to the university;
 - 24.8 information to meet specific needs, e.g. legal, medical, dental, and social security;
 - 24.9 work prospects and casual employment; and

24.10 contact names for further information.

Arrival and orientation for international students studying in Australia

- 25 In order to ensure that international students are able to settle in quickly and effectively with minimal problems, universities should:
- 25.1 where appropriate, arrange for the students to be met on arrival;
 - 25.2 provide suitable orientation programs which will seek to reinforce material already provided in written form; and
 - 25.3 where necessary, make appropriate arrangements for temporary accommodation for the students.

Information for students

- 26 Universities should provide to students before the commencement of their course, accurate information covering the following issues, in so far as they are relevant:
- 26.1 Academic matters
 - the university's educational goals, and current activities;
 - course summaries for the degrees, diplomas and certificates offered, and length of courses and the nomenclature to appear on the testamurs
 - universities should highlight any distinguishing features of programs of the same nomenclature offered at different campuses of the university, including articulation to further study;
 - registration and/or accreditation status of courses by professional associations and other relevant associated bodies;
 - methods of study and assessment;
 - admission requirements, prerequisites, application and acceptance procedures;
 - credit transfer;
 - English language requirements where necessary; and
 - relevant dates, including academic terms or semesters, registration and dates for withdrawal without financial penalty.

26.2 Living arrangements

- geographic location and climate;
- accommodation options;
- living costs; and
- social customs and mores.

26.3 Legal requirements and entitlements

- conditions of entry and stay in Australia;
- employment regulations; and
- mandatory health-care insurance and health-care arrangements.

26.4 Fees and refunds

- cost of courses and other compulsory charges;
- method of payment;
- policy on increases to fees;
- procedures for dealing with exceptional cases related to the payment or refund of fees; and
- procedures for cancellation of enrolment and obtaining refund of fees together with details of financial and academic penalties which may result from cancellation.

26.5 Services

- support services available; and
- grievance procedures available.

Code and Guidelines

- 27 At the time of enrolment universities should ensure that students have access to a copy of this Code and Guidelines.

University Infrastructure

- 28 Depending on its nature, size and the extent of its involvement with international students, each university should identify appropriate contact officers and appropriate units to be responsible for all matters relating to the implementation of the university's international student program. Such matters may include:

- 28.1 enquires relating to international student programs;
 - 28.2 the efficient administration of admission procedures;
 - 28.3 arrival, accommodation and orientation arrangements for new students;
 - 28.4 the organisation of appropriate English language and academic bridging programs;
 - 28.5 the ongoing social, cultural and other welfare needs;
 - 28.6 liaison with local groups for international student welfare;
 - 28.7 the monitoring of international student satisfaction and monitoring and review of the performance and graduation rates of international students; and
 - 28.8 post-course advice to international students to assist in any necessary re-adjustments prior to their return to their home country, including appropriate 'aftercare'.
- 29 Universities should ensure that the physical infrastructure they have in place is appropriate to provide education and support services of the highest quality to international students.
- 30 Universities should ensure that they have appropriate and equally vigorous quality assurance mechanisms in place for education services whether they are delivered on the main campus, intra-state, interstate or overseas.

Student Support

- 31 Universities should encourage a supportive environment.
- 32 Universities should ensure that international students not only gain an understanding of their discipline and associated studies in an Australian context but also, where possible, be given the opportunity to relate these studies to their home environment.
- 33 Universities should develop appropriate mechanisms to monitor the academic progress of international students and ensure appropriate student appeal mechanisms are in place.
- 34 Universities should develop appropriate support services, including counselling services, for international students at all campuses. These services should:
- 34.1 promote the successful adjustment by international students to life and study at an Australian university, within Australia or overseas;

- 34.2 assist students to resolve problems which could impede successful completion of their study programs; and
- 34.3 endeavour to ensure that students obtain a positive image of Australia and its educational opportunities.
- 35 Support services should include:
- 35.1 adequate provision of
- advice (including advice on personal budgeting, accommodation, medical insurance and the availability of health-care services);
 - orientation and course commencement assistance;
 - additional assistance with English language where necessary; and
 - additional assistance with study skills, including assistance in developing computer literacy;
- 35.2 adequate promotion of
- on-campus international student networks and organisations to assist new arrivals; and
 - local community involvement to provide social support;
- 35.3 the development of resource directories to meet specific needs, e.g. accommodation, medical, dental and legal.

Staff support

- 36 To enable staff to carry out effectively the tasks for which they are allocated responsibility, universities should make every effort to:
- 36.1 ensure that all staff involved with international students and other clients are competent to deal with the students' special circumstances;
- 36.2 develop training programs, including cross-cultural programs, appropriate to the different levels of involvement and responsibility among staff;
- 36.3 ensure, through the relevant academic department, that for higher degree research students, adequate supervision and facilities will be available for the duration of candidature;
- 36.4 ensure that all academic staff delivering courses to international students are appropriately qualified and competent to deliver those courses;

- 36.5 ensure that staff are well prepared for overseas assignments and visits;
- 36.6 provide appropriate grievance procedures for staff and students on international matters; and
- 36.7 ensure that all staff involved with international students are aware of their responsibilities under the relevant Australian laws and relevant laws of countries where the university is providing education services.

Onshore students returning home

- 37 It should not be assumed that all international students returning home can do so without any difficulty and therefore universities should:
 - 37.1 be sensitive to the circumstances the student will encounter upon return;
 - 37.2 provide advice and assistance where possible on re-orientation; and
 - 37.3 encourage the 'alumni association' concept and maintain an 'after-care' program.

Partners

- 38 Universities should be aware of the provisions of the ESOS Act and National Code in respect of partnership arrangements. Under the Act and National Code universities are liable for the actions of partners operating in Australia.
- 39 Whenever or wherever universities are involved in a partnership arrangement for the delivery of educational services to international students the universities should ensure that these services of the partner are of the same standard as offered by the university itself.
- 40 To achieve this outcome universities should:
 - 40.1 conduct due diligence on the potential partner[s];
 - 40.2 take all feasible steps to ensure that the potential partner can meet the fit and proper requirements as set down in Section 9 of the ESOS Act and in the National Code;
 - 40.3 ensure that the facilities of the potential partner[s] are, as far as possible, of a similar standard to those offered by the university at its main campus;
 - 40.4 require the partner[s] to be subject to the same academic quality assurance processes as the university itself and monitor these processes throughout the period of the partnership; and

40.5 in the event of the termination of a partnership arrangement universities should ensure that all affected students are offered the same or a similar course to enable them to complete their studies. As far as possible the course should be offered in the same or a nearby location

Guidelines for Fees Refunds: International Students

- 1 The Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee (AVCC) has adopted the following guidelines in respect of fees refunds for international students. These guidelines are to apply to all international students irrespective of who pays the fees.

Total refunds

- 2 In the event that an offer of a place is withdrawn or the university is unable to provide the course, all tuition fees paid are fully refundable, unless the offer was made on the basis of incorrect or incomplete information being supplied by the applicant/student in which case the university reserves the right to retain up to 10 per cent of the fee as well as any cost incurred by the university's agent in recruiting the student.
- 3 A student who fails to meet degree/diploma progression rules and who is thus not permitted to re-enrol will be eligible for a refund of fees if paid in advance of notification of exclusion.
- 4 A notice of withdrawal due to exceptional circumstances (see 3.1 below) may be accepted as grounds for a total refund of tuition fees paid.

Partial refunds

- 5 (Note: The guidelines for partial refunds apply equally to commencing students and continuing students.)
- 6 Where a student, after accepting an offer of a place, gives a minimum of four weeks written notice before the commencement of the semester of an inability to undertake the course, all tuition fees paid are refundable less an administrative fee of up to 10 per cent and any agent's fee that may have been incurred .
- 7 Where a student gives less than four weeks written notice before the commencement of the semester of an inability to undertake the course, all tuition fees paid are refundable less 50 per cent (including an administrative fee of up to 10 per cent).
- 8 Where a student withdraws from a course within the first four teaching weeks of a semester, all tuition fees paid are refundable less 50 per cent (including an administrative fee of up to 10 per cent).

Grounds for refunds

- 9 A notice of withdrawal due to exceptional circumstances may be accepted as grounds for either a total or partial refund of fees, subject to the provision of

acceptable documentary evidence in support of the application for a refund. Exceptional circumstances may include:

- inability to obtain a student visa;
- illness or disability;
- death of the student or a close family member (parent, sibling, spouse or child); or
- political, civil or natural event that prevents full payment of fees.

No refunds

- 10 A student who withdraws from a course for whatever reason after four teaching weeks shall not be eligible for a refund.
- 11 A student whose visa is cancelled shall not be eligible for a refund.

Fees refunds related to international students who obtain permanent resident status in Australia

- 12 An international student who is granted permanent resident status in Australia will be given the option of paying the Higher Education Contribution Scheme (HECS) levy, subject to place availability, or full fees applying to domestic students. Permanent resident status is recognised from the date stamped on the student's passport, not the date on which the application for status is made.
- 13 If the student has already paid the tuition fees applying to international students for the semester, a total refund of these fees will be payable to the student less any agent fee applying to the university if, in the first year of enrolment, the student has:
 - obtained permanent resident status by the census date for that semester; and
 - satisfied section 41 of the Higher Education Funding Act 1988, that is, has completed a HECS Payment Options Form at enrolment and by the census date, or
 - has made arrangements with the university to pay fees as a domestic student.
- 14 If the student obtains permanent resident status after the census date in a semester, the student will be classified as an international student for the remainder of that semester. The student will be liable to pay the tuition fees applying to international students for that semester. From the following semester, the student will be

classified as a permanent resident and will be liable to pay either the HECS contribution in accordance with the HECS Guidelines or full fees applying to domestic students.

Agreements between universities and international students regarding fee charging and refunds

- 15 Universities should ensure that there is a written agreement between the university and each international student to accept the university's stated fee charging and refunds policy.

Payment of refunds

- 16 Where there is a written agreement between the university and the international student regarding the university's fees refunds policy, the terms of that agreement will apply to the payment of refunds. However, the university must pay any refund within 4 weeks of receiving a written claim from the student.
- 17 Where there is no such written agreement between the university and the international student, payment of refunds should be made as follows:
 - where the university defaults, within two weeks after the date of withdrawal of the offer of a place or notification that the university is unable to provide the course; and
 - where the student defaults, within four weeks after receiving a written claim from the student.
- 18 Clause 17 is consistent with the requirements of the Educational Services for Overseas Students Act 2000.
- 19 Refunds should be reimbursed in the same currency as the fees were originally paid and will be made in the student's home country except in exceptional circumstances.

Appeals process related to fees refunds

- 20 Universities should ensure that there is a clearly defined appeals process related to the refund of fees, whereby the university's decisions regarding fees refunds can be appealed if the student believes that the university has not honoured its stated fees refunds policy or not all of the relevant information has been taken into account.

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