



UNIVERSITIES
AUSTRALIA

DISCOVER LEARN LEAD

Chief Executive Officer:
Dr Glenn Withers AO

Our Ref: G-04-023

22 December 2011

Senator the Hon Chris Evans
Minister for Tertiary Education, Skills, Science and Research
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600
senator.evans@aph.gov.au

Dear Senator Evans

Higher Education Qualification Standards

Universities Australia wishes to congratulate you and your officers on the effective and fast progress of the Qualification Standards from first draft to final version, and for the welcome given to the higher education sector's input. It is our belief that the collaboration between Government and Universities Australia in this matter has led to a generally workable and robust set of standards which will be accepted by the sector.

There is one issue on which we have some remaining concern, and we would be grateful if this could be considered as part of the anticipated review of the Qualification Standards to occur within a twelve month period.

The issue concerns Standard 1.1: *'The 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. ... This also applies to any higher education award leading to an AQF qualification type that may subsequently be included in the AQF.'*

As noted in the feedback from your Department to Universities Australia, the phrase 'award leading to a qualification' is intended to capture awards that contribute to a full qualification but which are nonetheless only a part of it, for example, a Professional Certificate that contributes to but that is less than a Graduate Certificate (for example, it may be the first 50% of the Graduate Certificate). Our concern is that it is not reasonable to expect the 'part' award to meet all of the levels criteria and qualification type descriptors of the 'full' award, since most awards are constructed so that their learning outcomes are the result of the entire program of study, and the 'part' award will achieve some but not all of the learning outcomes of the 'full award'. With the current formulation of the Standard TEQSA will be in the unreasonable position of having to assess 'part' awards against these 'full' award requirements.

Universities Australia looks forward to working with the Standards Panel on this issue in 2012, and with yourself and your officers on the remaining undrafted Research and Information Standards in due course.

One Geils Court
Deakin ACT 2600

GPO Box 1142
Canberra ACT 2601
AUSTRALIA

Ph: +61 (0)2 6285 8104
Fax: +61 (0)2 6285 8101
Mobile: +61 (0)416 249 350

glenn.withers@universitiesaustralia.edu.au
www.universitiesaustralia.edu.au

Yours sincerely

Dr Glenn Withers AO
Chief Executive Officer