

Teaching Quality

2014 ACDICT Annual Council Meeting

Prof Pip Pattison
DVC (Education)



THE UNIVERSITY OF
SYDNEY

Higher education context: a quality imperative?

National

- TEQSA + HESP
- Draft Higher Education standards: focus on learning outcomes
- Fee deregulation

International

- The rapid rise of open online resources
- The slower but consistent rise in online learning
- Increasingly pervasive and more inclusive mobile connectivity
- Increasing interest in and capacity for learning analytics
- The “unbundling” of higher education
- Concerns about cost and access (government and communities)
- Concerns about funding (universities)

University complaints by students top 20,000 (BBC News, 3 June, 2014)

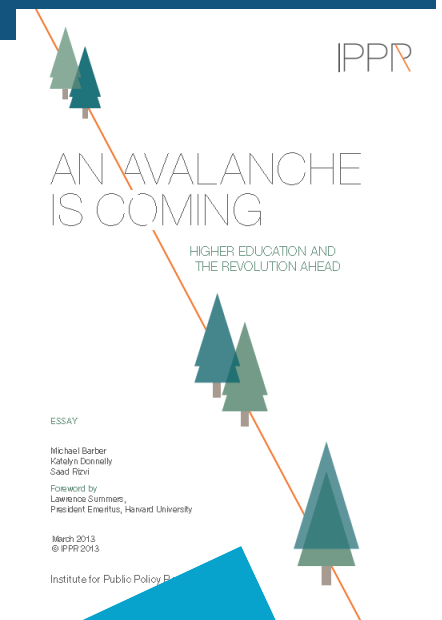
- › The amount paid out in compensation to students has also risen to more than £2m since 2010
- › More than 20,000 students complained to their universities last year, a Freedom of Information request by the BBC has shown.
- › Responses from 120 universities across the UK revealed that total academic appeals and complaints were 10% higher in 2012-13 than in 2010-11.
- › Universities Minister David Willetts welcomed the finding.
- › He said it showed that students were demanding more for the £9,000-per-year fee.





THE UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY

No shortage of advice



“The Standards for Higher Education ... represent the minimum acceptable institutional conditions, arrangements and levels of performance for the provision of higher education in or from Australia by higher education providers registered under the *TEQSA Act 2011*”

Domains

1. Student participation and attainment
2. Learning environment
3. Teaching
4. Research and research training
5. Quality assurance
6. Governance
7. Representation, information and information management

For example, domain 1 includes:

1.5 Learning Outcomes and Assessment

- The expected learning outcomes for each [course of study](#) are specified, consistent with the level and field of education of the qualification awarded and informed by national and/or international comparators.
- The specified learning outcomes for each [course of study](#) encompass discipline-related and generic outcomes, ...
- Methods of assessment are consistent with the learning outcomes being assessed, are capable of confirming that all specified learning outcomes are achieved and grades awarded reflect the level of student attainment.
- On completion of a [course of study](#), students will have demonstrated the learning outcomes specified for the [course of study](#), whether assessed at [unit](#) level, course level, or in combination.

5.3 Monitoring, Review and Improvement

- All [courses of study](#) are subject to [comprehensive reviews](#) at least every seven years, which are overseen by peak academic governance processes and include external referencing or other benchmarking activities.
- [Comprehensive reviews](#) of [courses of study](#) are informed and supported by more frequent monitoring
- Review and improvement activities include regular external referencing against comparable [courses of study](#), including by referencing:
 - the progress of student cohorts ...
 - the grading of students' achievement of learning outcomes for selected [units of study](#) ...
- Students have opportunities to provide feedback
- Staff have opportunities to review feedback
- The results of regular monitoring, [comprehensive reviews](#) and external referencing are acted on to mitigate future risks to the quality of education

Quality is not easily quantified, nor readily compared across contexts, but we often examine:

- › Progression and retention*
- › Student outcomes (grades)
- › Student satisfaction measures (e.g. UES, CEQ, internal surveys at program and unit of study level)*
- › Peer review of teaching
- › External review of assessment, external examination (e.g. peer review network, Go8 QVS)
- › Common external assessment (e.g. national examinations, AHELO)
- › Graduate employment outcomes*
- › Employer ratings

Example of an external review process: Group of Eight Quality Verification System (QVS)

An expert/peer judgment system designed to provide light-touch review of *learning outcomes, assessment tasks, assessment standards*

- demonstrate the appropriateness of the standards of learning outcomes and grades awarded *without compromising curriculum and pedagogical innovation*
 - maintain and improve academic standards
 - enable comparisons of learning outcomes in similar subjects across universities
 - promote discussion on good practice in teaching and learning
-

Review the *appropriateness and comparative quality* of:

- the specified learning outcomes
- assessment tasks
- assessment criteria

for at least two final year subjects in the selected field of education

Report on the *appropriateness of the grades awarded* to stratified random samples of student work in these subjects, drawing on the reviewer's academic judgement and the set of documents provided

Reviewer appointed by Go8 Secretariat

- Subject outline, subject guide and learning objectives
 - Information on how the learning outcomes of the subject relate to the degree program level outcomes
 - Copies of the assessment tasks (e.g. exam scripts, specific essay assignments, work-placement requirements, performance-based assessment arrangements ...)
 - Grading criteria used for each assessment task
 - Grade structure and nomenclature
-

- › For each assessment task, a randomly selected and de-identified sample of 5% of student assessment at each of the following grade levels or their equivalent: below pass, pass, credit, distinction and high distinction
 - For subjects with small enrolments, a minimum of 5 items of student work will be reviewed
 - For subjects with large enrolments, a maximum of 25 items of student work will be reviewed
 - Where appropriate, stratified samples include items of student work from all campuses including off-shore campuses
-



Number of assessments	Below pass	Pass	Credit	Distinction	High Distinction
Reviewed in total					
Agree with grade awarded					
Believe grade awarded to be unduly high					
Believe grade awarded to be unduly low					

- The learning outcomes, assessment tasks and assessment processes set for the subject I have reviewed were appropriate.
Any recommendations made are for the purposes of enhancement to the subject and its assessment.
- The learning outcomes, assessment tasks and assessment processes set for the subject I have reviewed were appropriate.
HOWEVER, there are some risks to the future quality assurance of the subject and its assessment, as outlined in my recommendations.
- There are immediate concerns or risks relating to the learning outcomes, assessment tasks and/or assessment processes set for the subject I have reviewed.
These require immediate action on behalf of the University to prevent reoccurrence in the next review.

(Adapted from the University of Cambridge's Report Coversheet for External Examiners)

2013 University Experience Survey: what do students most agree with, Australia wide?

› Quality of library resources and facilities	87
› Quality of online learning materials	84
› Quality of teaching spaces	83
› Quality of laboratory or studio equipment	82
› Quality of computing/IT resources	80
› Quality of teaching	79
› Quality of entire educational experience	79
› Quality of assigned books, notes and resources	78
› Developed knowledge of field studying	77
› Quality of teaching spaces and common areas	75

2013 University Experience Survey: what do students least agree with, Australia wide?*

- › ...
- › Interacted with students outside study requirements 46
- › Teachers commented on your work in ways that helped you to learn 49
- › Had a sense of belonging to your university 50
- › Developed spoken communication skills 51
- › Interacted with students who are very different to you 53
- › Been given opportunities to interact with local students 55
- › Participated in discussions online or face-to-face 56
- › Teachers demonstrated concern for student learning 57
- › Developed ability to solve complex problems 58
- › Felt prepared for your study 58
- › Developed ability to work effectively with others 60
- › Teachers engaged you actively in learning 60
- › Developed work-related knowledge and skills 60

- › *omitting Student Support scale

Should we listen to our students more?

Students arguably want:

- › More active learning?
- › Greater interaction with staff and each other?
- › More effective feedback on learning?
- › More opportunities for skill development, especially those valued by employers?

Opportunities?

- › Using technology to support more interactive and engaged learning, greater skills development
- › Using technology to deliver more effective feedback