

Development of a National Diploma Supplement

Centre for Higher Education Management & Policy
School of Business, Economics and Public Policy
University of New England
Armidale NSW 2351

September 27, 2007

Project Directors:

Professor Richard James
Centre for the Study of Higher
Education (CSHE)
University of Melbourne
r.james@unimelb.edu.au

Professor Lynn Meek
Centre for Higher Education
Management & Policy (CHEMP)
University of New England
vmeek@une.edu.au

Project Manager:

Professor Grant Harman
Centre for Higher Education
Management & Policy (CHEMP)
University of New England
gharman@une.edu.au

Project Consortium:

Australian National University
Charles Sturt University
Edith Cowan University
Griffith University
Queensland University of
Technology
Swinburne University of
Technology
University of Canberra
University of Melbourne
University of New England
University of New South Wales
University of Newcastle
University of South Australia
University of Sydney
Victoria University

Executive Officer:

Dr Jeannet van der Lee
Centre for Higher Education
Management & Policy (CHEMP)
University of New England
Armidale NSW 2351
Ph: 02 6773 2091
jvander@une.edu.au

www.une.edu.au/pdal/research/chemp/projects/dipsup

Dear Vice Chancellor,

Consultation on Proposed Australian Higher Education Graduation Statement

I am writing to seek comments from your University on the attached proposal for an Australian Higher Education Graduation Statement that has been developed for a DEST-commissioned project.

The current proposal is for an award-specific document, issued to graduates on completion of their higher education qualification, which provides details of the particular award and the graduate's achievements toward that award. Importantly, the document also includes a description of the Australian higher education system and a statement about the nature of the awarding institution.

The principal purpose of the Graduation Statement is to provide graduates with a concise yet comprehensive description of their particular qualification, in a form that is clearly authenticated by the awarding institution and that will become recognised, both nationally and internationally. It is Australia's interpretation of a 'diploma supplement', and includes elements of the European Diploma Supplement.

The proposal has been developed by the project team on behalf of a consortium of 14 Australian universities led by the University of New England, the University of Melbourne and the Australian National University. On 10 January 2007, Minister Julie Bishop announced that the consortium had been commissioned to 'develop a single agreed template for an Australian Diploma Supplement'. Under the Lisbon Convention ratified by Australia in 2002, Australia has an international obligation to promote the widespread use of some form of diploma supplement by Australian tertiary institutions.

In developing the proposal, the project team has been informed by consultation with Australian higher education institutions and other stakeholders, including professional associations and employers. National workshops were held in May and August, involving delegates from more than thirty universities, and from these discussions emerged many of the features of the current proposal. European practice, particularly developments in the UK, have also been taken into consideration.

We particularly seek comment on the following matters:

1. The potential benefits of an Australian Higher Education Graduation Statement for graduates from your institution (including both domestic graduates seeking professional work or further study abroad, and international students);
2. The proposed guiding principles, format and content specifications for the Graduation Statement;
3. The specific core and optional elements within each section.
4. Whether the 'Programme details' section should include only successfully completed units for the particular award, or all units attempted toward that award (including units that received a fail grade); and
5. Whether the Graduation Statement should include information on accreditation and professional recognition for all relevant courses, or for only those courses where the degree confers on the holder rights to practice within particular government jurisdictions.

While introduction of a Graduation Statement will be an important innovation for Australia, it is important to emphasise that the document will build on existing data-systems and information held by higher education institutions. The technical issues associated with drawing together information from typically disparate information systems are recognised. Therefore the project is commissioning a range of institutions to provide detailed modelling of implementation, including cost estimates. This information will be an important element of the project's report to DEST regarding implementation possibilities.

As we need to finalise our advice to DEST by late 2007, we ask that, if possible, you provide comment by Friday 2 November 2007. Should you have any queries, please feel free to contact me by email (gharman@une.edu.au) or telephone 02 67 733217. Electronic copies of the proposal are available from Jeannet van der Lee in the UNE Centre for Higher Education Management and Policy (jvander@une.edu.au).

Yours sincerely,



Grant Harman
Project Manager