

Submission to TEQSA’s Consultation; “Revised Guidance Note: Research and Research Training”

Introduction

Independent Higher Education Australia (IHEA) represents the majority of Australia’s registered and accredited independent higher education, including all of Australia’s independent universities. Our members have campuses across Australia.

IHEA members educate students in a range of disciplines including Law, Engineering, Agricultural Science, Architecture, Business, Accounting, Tourism and Hospitality, Education, Health Sciences, Theology, Creative Arts, Information Technology and Social Sciences.

IHEA members operate with both for-profit and not-for-profit business models, and educate domestic and international students in undergraduate and postgraduate programs. The Australian independent higher education sector comprises more than 170,000 students and approximately 150 institutions. All IHEA’s members are accredited by TEQSA to deliver courses across the full AQF range.

IHEA members are active in the Research and Research Training area and they deliver education programs at AQF Level 9 and 10.

The following briefly addresses feedback / concerns raised by IHEA members regarding the *revised Guidance Note: Research and Research Training*.

Response to Consultation

- We note there is no reference to Fields of Research, only to Fields of Education. Will TEQSA provide additional guidance to universities about how to map the FOR codes from the ERA process, for example, to BFOEs? Institutions will need advice about this ahead of ERA 23. It’s good to see that other sections are being considered (i.e., not just sections 4.1 and 4.2) in relation to research and research training – this reflects a more inclusive view of research and research training that recognises the pedagogy of supervision.
- The dot points under 4.1 (research) and 4.2 (research training) are still very much written from a top-down approach, with little recognition and few options for co-design or contribution from the research candidates themselves. The actions described are written from the point of view of those “in charge” at the university. We would like to see some options for gathering input from the candidates (giving the candidates some agency in their own research training).
- We note that the Guidance Note still remains separate from the TEQSA Act and the Higher Education Standards Framework. It would be beneficial to aim for greater integration where possible.
- Under the section titled “1. What does research and research training encompass?”, it is helpful to note that similar language is used here as the language used in the HES Framework and, to some degree, the language used in Levels 9 and 10 of the AQF.
- Tone – the general tone of the language contained in the guidance notes is quite punitive rather than being conducive to constructive options (especially the dot points on pp. 3-5 under the “Research training” subheading).

- In the following two dot points below about engagement in research, we were surprised *not* to see a third dot point – that focuses on collaborative research *across* institutions:
Engagement in research can be considered:
 - *At the level of individual activity (e.g. part of an individual’s personal research or professional practice), or*
 - *Across a provider (e.g. policy frameworks, resource allocation, institutional expectations, staff development).*
- In section 5.4 Delivery with Other Parties, third (thrid) is not spelled correctly.
- Many universities now refer to “research candidates” instead of “research students”. Could this modernised language be included in these guidance notes?
- We propose that a final section be included: “4.3: Supervision training [or professional learning]”. Supervision training is not emphasised enough in the other sections of the Framework or the guidance notes. Supervision training is closely connected to research and research training, since the supervisors are often the people who communicate this “training” (education, professional learning) to their candidates.

Contact

For further information please contact:

Mr Scott Clayton
Operations Manager
Independent Higher Education Australia
Email: scott.clayton@ihea.edu.au
Phone: 0412 978 742