

OVERVIEW: CRITERIA 3. TEACHING AND LEARNING THAT ENGAGE WITH ADVANCED KNOWLEDGE AND INQUIRY

Objective, framework, resources and rationale

PART B of the Higher Education Standards Framework (2015) details the four standards or criteria which must be met for a provider to be defined by the regulator TEQSA as a “Higher Education Provider”. Specifically, the overview here is provided to refer briefly to the detailed compliance material provided elsewhere in Acknowledge Education’s application for renewal of Registration as a HEP. The requisite clause of the Standards denotes that:

“The higher education provider delivers teaching and learning that engage with advanced knowledge and inquiry.”

Meeting Criteria B1.1.3 - Teaching

As a Higher Education Provider, that is currently registered, that remains in good standing and that has the expectation of continuing to deliver Higher Education courses to students, we deliver teaching and learning that engages with knowledge and inquiry. This is summarily provided by first, the provision within our teaching of lecturers that are knowledgeable, have required high levels of qualification and who have specificity in their field of study. Oversight of this is provided by Academic leadership that has a strategic engagement in the pursuit by our institution of knowledge and inquiry and that cover the Broad Fields of Study within which we teach. Academic Leadership at Acknowledge has a current low (Green) risk indicator within TEQSA’s risk indication report (2017). This is broadly indicative that we have sufficient Academic Leaders and that they are able to meet our institutional needs in engaging with advanced knowledge and inquiry.

At the lower level of lecturers and their direct interface with students, our respective policies facilitate proper levels of engagement. As extracted from our overview submission regarding teaching:

In order to meet Standards 3.2.3 and 3.2.4, Acknowledge has specific policies as the basis for both the selection of faculty and the ongoing development of the skills and knowledge of faculty, those are:

POLICY HE - Professional development

POLICY HE - Professional experience equivalence

Acknowledge’s rule is to employ only lecturers who meet a standard plus one qualification. We do however maintain a policy for Professional Experience Equivalence, should the need arise in specialist units within our courses. We assess lecturers for this qualification level at the point of employment and periodically review all faculty for qualification level – most recently in 2017.

Our policy on Professional Development includes a vital and pertinent provision of funds for lecturers to undertake professional development, allowing them to expand their skills and knowledge in either their relevant field or in the area of education. Areas in which this funding can be distributed include further study such as towards post-graduate degrees [towards meeting Standard 3.2.1b].

Acknowledge Education will over the course of 2018 increase the opportunities and the impetus for current and future faculty to engage in Scholarly Activities. Current draft policy will (presuming Board approval) be ratified and in place by March 2018. This policy emphasises and subsidises the establishment of a complete framework for Scholarship at Acknowledge. While the policy has been proposed to elevate the proficiency of our faculty, this will also have particular relevance to Standards 3.2.3a and 3.2.3b. Acknowledge understands that as we expand in size and increase the total number of faculty that alongside that, we must put in place practises that support scholarship [towards meeting Standard 3.2.3a].

Acknowledge Education asserts that we meet Criteria B1.1.3, with reference to the delivery of teaching that engages with advanced knowledge and inquiry.

Meeting Criteria B1.1.3 - Learning

Learning at Acknowledge is defined by our Learning Objectives and these are enshrined systematically in each unit of

each course that we teach. These Learning Objectives, and our graduate attributes are set by AE's governing bodies and it is the intent that students would only complete a qualification after having met the standards set by those objectives. Policy maintains the importance of the delivery of these attributes – and to make it most explicit, the attributes guide students to advance their knowledge and inquiry.

At an overarching level for instance, it is noted by AE that assessment is delivered to:

“Provide an indication of whether students are acquiring the Graduate Attributes that have been formed by the Board of Directors as those expected for each graduate of Acknowledge Education;”

And also:

“Acknowledge Education’s Board of Directors has established a set of Graduate Attributes that each graduate of the college is to have attained upon completion of their course. Assessment of students is the key quality assurance process of ensuring that students obtain these attributes.

The Graduate Attributes provide a framework and direction for the design of all courses at Acknowledge Education and subsequently provide the principles for the development of Course Learning Objectives are established. The Course Learning Objectives are then used as the principles for the development of Unit Learning Objectives of each Unit within a course.

It is at the Unit level that appropriate assessments need to be established, but always cognisant that assessment must represent and reflect the Unit Learning Objectives, the Course Learning Objectives and Graduate Attributes.

Assessment tasks must be mapped across the units and the courses and be aligned with the learning outcomes of both the unit and the course. Each assessment task must measure the level of achievement in one or more of the Learning Outcomes.”

[refer here for both extracts above to *POLICY and PROCEDURE HE - Student Assessment - 1.3.1 C.1*]

Of detailed relevance here are the particular Acknowledge Education Graduate Attributes:

1. Hold a body of knowledge relevant to their field of study, that includes an understanding of theories, practices, and the scope of their discipline;

And under one bridging category:

Academic – thirst for knowledge and learning

9. Be able to identify the need for data, information and knowledge to solve problems in familiar and unfamiliar contexts using appropriate media, tools and methodologies and be able to critically evaluate the information in terms of its validity, accuracy, currency against one’s own values.
10. Be independent learners and thinkers with responsibility to acquire and evaluate new knowledge with the confidence to be analytical, creative and critical;
11. Be able to understand, define, analyse, evaluate, investigate problems and make informed recommendations and decisions.

While there is of course diminutive detail down to which the exercise of the attributes is taken, including but not limited to: assessments; teaching; feedback; thinking levels; learning and assessment methodologies etc, it is these attributes and their correlation to the requirements of the Criteria that establishes our compliance at the highest order level – and subsequently, the filtering into the broader matrix of our education systems and practice.

Acknowledge Education asserts that we meet Criteria B1.1.3, with reference to learning that engages with advanced knowledge and inquiry.