

**Senate Standing Committee on Education Employment and Workplace  
Relations**

**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE  
Supplementary Budget Estimates 2010-2011**

**Outcome 3 - Higher Education**

**DEEWR Question No.EW0510\_11**

**Senator Hanson-Young provided in writing.**

**Question**

**TEQSA STANDARDS-BASED ARRANGEMENTS**

The review of Australian Higher education argued that because “the standards required in universities underpin quality across the rest of the higher education system, it is imperative that the Australian community has confidence in the standards of its universities and that there is a transparent, national system in place to assure the same (sic) standards are required of all providers of higher education” (Bradley et al., 2008). i. How are standards to be defined? ii. To what extent are the standards to be the same across all providers? iii. Is it to be understood that a Bachelor’s degree in a given field is to be the same for all students in all higher education institutions? iv. How appropriate and meaningful is it to compare diverse institutions having different populations and purposes against the same standards?

**Answer**

One of the issues raised during the *Review of Australian Higher Education*(Bradley Review) and in subsequent consultations was the need for clear and strong standards that provide an appropriate gateway for new higher education providers.

It is proposed that the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA), once established, will register and evaluate the performance of higher education providers against the new Higher Education Standards Framework. The Standards Framework will be developed, in consultation with the sector, by the Higher Education Standards Panel.

The Standards panel will comprise experts who represent the broad and diverse nature of the higher education sector.

The Commonwealth Minister will make the standards on the advice of the Standards panel. It is proposed that the Higher Education Standards Framework comprise five domains:

- Provider Standards
- Qualification Standards,
- Information Standards,
- Teaching and Learning Standards, and
- Research Standards.

In developing a standards-based framework, the Government is not seeking to standardise or impose curriculum or course design. Academic freedom of inquiry will

not be compromised.

The new quality and regulatory framework will ensure students receive a high quality education that meets or exceeds threshold standards. It will provide a solid basis of minimum performance on which all providers can build and diversify.