



Submission

To the

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

**Higher Education Support Amendment (Extending
Fee-Help for VET Diploma and VET Advanced
Diploma Courses) Bill 2007**

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Submission

UNE Partnerships Pty Ltd

UNE Partnerships Pty Ltd (UNE Partnerships) is the education and training company of the University of New England. It is regarded as one of Australia's most progressive education solutions providers, specialising in vocational training, education, design and development. The company was established in 1986.

UNE Partnerships has 32 staff, all based in Armidale, New South Wales. Our customers include individual participants in public programs and organisations in the public and private sector. Examples of our customers include:

- Australian Association of Practice Managers
- Australian Dental Association
- St Vincents & Mater Health Sydney
- Australia Post
- Qantas
- National Australia Bank

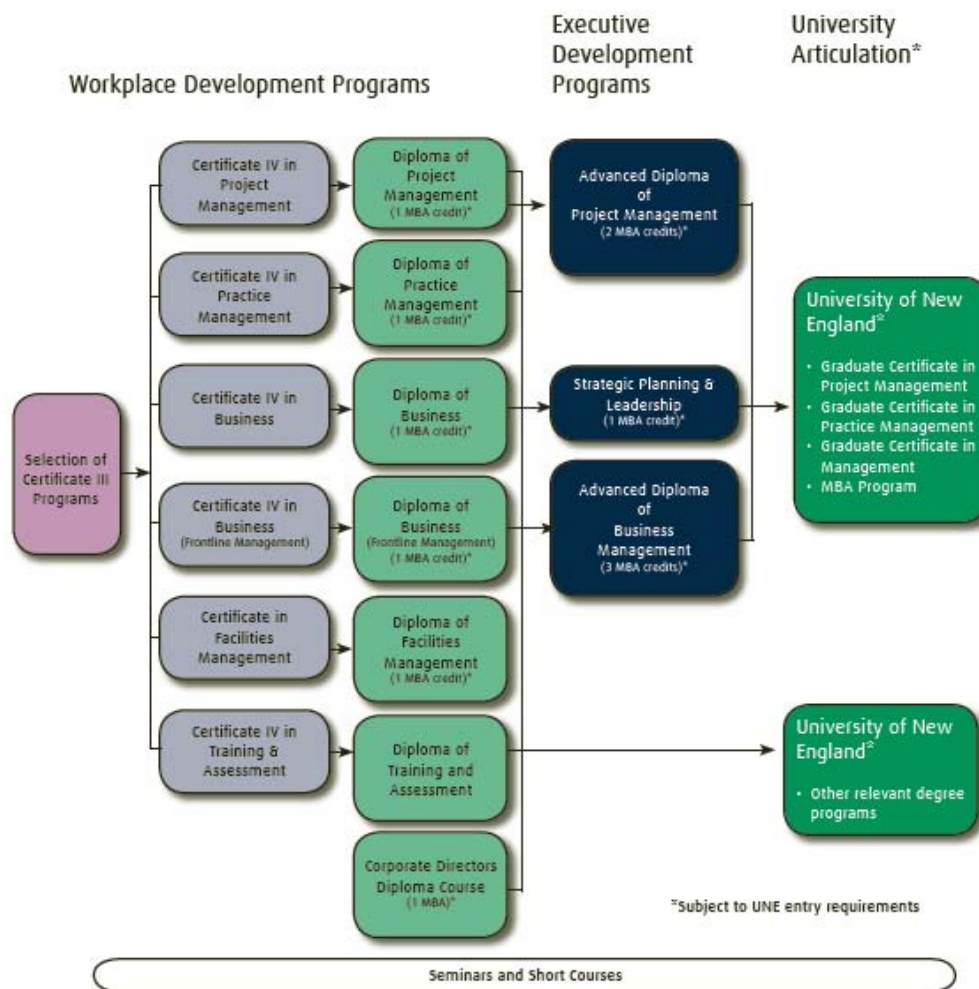
UNE Partnerships is a Registered Training Organisation (code No. 6754) and is registered with the NSW Vocational Education and Training Accreditation Board.

Currently UNE Partnerships has 27 qualifications on its scope of registration. Successful completion of a qualification provides access pathways to other awards of UNE Partnerships and to UNE.¹ The diagram over the page highlights our qualifications and pathways to UNE awards.

There a number of diploma and advanced diploma qualifications offered by UNE Partnerships, including business, practice management and project management. These three qualifications are offered to full fee paying students, with credit toward higher education awards at UNE.

¹ Subject to successful entry.

UNE Partnerships' pathways



The above diagram is an indication only of general pathways and qualifications. Please note: Advanced standing arrangements are subject to successful University entry.

Case studies-pathways

UNE Partnerships has established a number of pathways for its awards into UNE qualifications. Three case studies highlighting the pathway between vocational education and training and higher education are presented.

Australian Association of Practice Managers

UNE and UNE Partnerships has been a partner with the Australian Association of Practice Managers (AAPM) for 25 years. This partnership has been instrumental in providing opportunities for healthcare

professionals to gain accredited qualifications. In the mid 1980's UNE Partnerships developed a management course specifically for healthcare professionals. The first students graduated in 1988 and to date over 2,500 have attained a practice management qualification.

UNE Partnerships responded to the changing needs of healthcare practice management and partnered with the AAPM to develop new programs, a career path and new modes of delivery. Healthcare professionals now have qualifications from certificate III to advanced diploma level. They also can access a pathway into a UNE Graduate Certificate in Practice Management and ultimately a Master of Business Administration.

UNE Partnerships sought input from the profession and AAPM in the development and delivery of the training. This partnership continues with scholarships for students, a salary survey and benchmarking. The partnership also extends to other healthcare professional associations- Australian Medical Association, Australian Dental Association, Australian Veterinary Association. UNE Partnerships has now developed practice management programs for dental, veterinary and legal practices.

UNE Partnerships/UNE Pathway

Certificate III in Business (Medical Administration) (BSB30704)



Certificate IV in Practice Management (91113NSW)



Diploma of Practice Management (91114NSW)

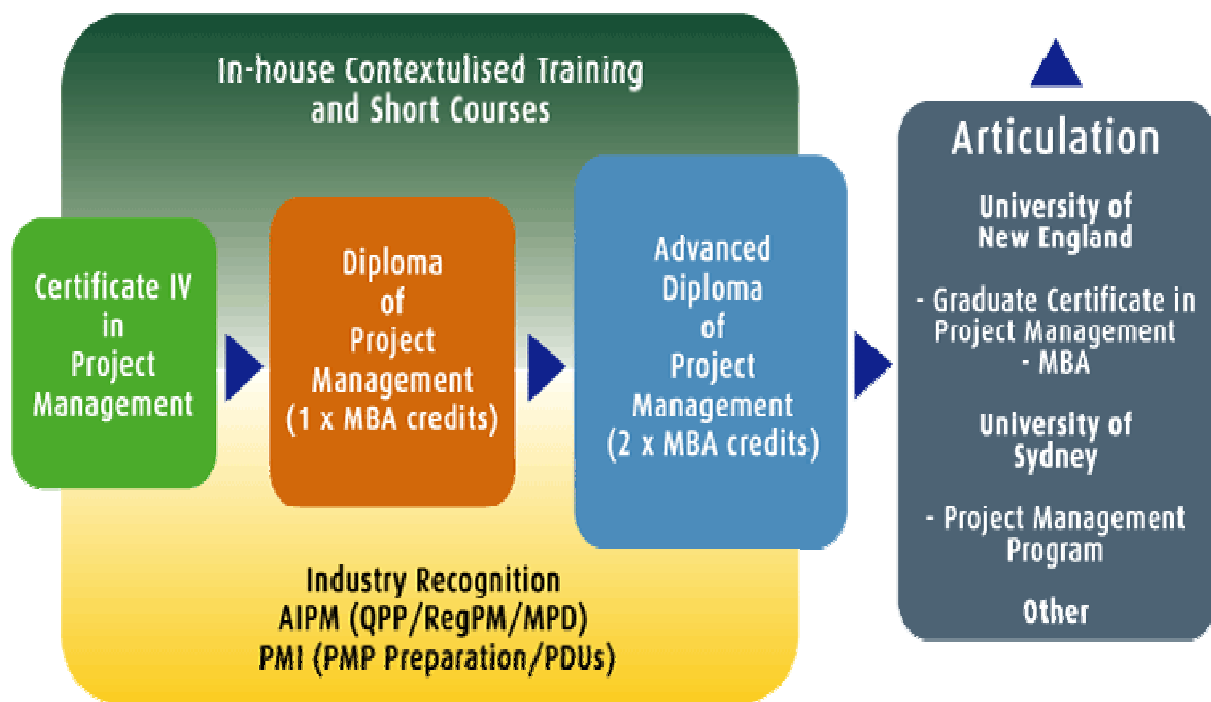


Graduate Certificate in Practice Management* (upon successful admission)

*Comprises the Strategic Planning and Leadership Program and two MBA Action Learning topics

Diploma and Advanced Diploma of Project Management

In partnership with prominent experts in competency-based training, education and assessment UNE Partnerships is recognised as one of Australia's leading presenters of nationally accredited project management programs. UNE Partnerships was one of the first organisations in the world to be recognised by both the Project Management Institute (USA) and the Australian Institute of Project Management as providing skills and knowledge vital to successful project managers. Further, we were the first to gain full national accreditation for project management studies that articulate into a broad range of management and leadership tertiary qualifications.



UNE Partnerships has a pathway through to masters' level study within the University of New England and of other universities. All participants who successfully complete UNE Partnerships' project management courses are eligible to move through these pathways.

Participants who complete accredited programs through UNE Partnerships enter an accreditation pathway into studies leading to an MBA. UNE Partnership has formal agreements with UNE, RMIT and University of Sydney, and our courses are accepted at many tertiary institutions as credit into MBA programs.

Participants who begin, for example, at Diploma level can move to the Advanced Diploma and Graduate Certificate in Project Management. Those who complete a Graduate Certificate have completed one third of the UNE MBA program.

St Vincents & Mater Health Sydney

In 2007 UNE Partnerships developed a customised leadership program incorporating a pathway between VET and higher education. The Graduate Leadership Program is designed specifically for emerging executive leaders at St Vincents & Mater Health Sydney. The program is driven by the need to consolidate the organisation's culture after amalgamation of a number of different organisations and a corresponding intense period of change. Participants have the opportunity to study a range of leadership and management themes integral to their roles as emerging managers in the organisation.

This two-year developmental program is an integrated delivery model, combining the Advanced Diploma of Business Management and units from the MBA at the University of New England. The completion of the program enables participants to achieve a Graduate Certificate in Management.

It is guided by action learning principles, and learning, knowledge and skills are assessed in terms of practical work-based projects and reflections on practice. Participants develop, in alignment to the strategic direction of the organisation, workplace based projects with other colleagues. The projects are scoped and developed to the point of assessment and implementation by the hospital Board and executive.

The choice of themes aligns to key performance indicators in staff position descriptions and personal development plans. Whilst the St Vincents & Mater Health Sydney are supporting the participants financially in the first intake, there will be a move to a user-pays model for future intakes.

Recommendations

UNE Partnerships fully supports the Australian Government's decision to extend the student loan scheme FEE-HELP to full fee paying higher level VET students, where agreed credit towards a university degree is available.

The VET system is one of the few areas in Australia's post compulsory education system where students are required to pay up-front fees without access to loan assistance.

In our experience potential students into VET qualifications reject undertaking the option of studying due to financial constraints. There is price sensitivity in deciding to undertake study in the VET sector. Potential students often ask UNE Partnerships if they can access loans to fund their course of study. There is an ineffective capital market available for students to access for funding their VET education.

Providing access to a student loan scheme will enhance access for students in gaining accredited qualifications at the VET level.

The May 2007 announcement of the Budget initiative for VET FEE-HELP is generating much interest within the VET sector. It is anticipated that universities will be receiving approaches for credit arrangements into their awards. There have been instances where private VET providers are already advertising that they are "FEE-HELP approved".

In our experience credit arrangements from VET to higher education take considerable amount of time for approval, particularly navigating the university committees and academic boards.

UNE Partnerships recommends that the Committee consider:

- Income contingent loan and collection system for VET, similar to the higher education arrangements.
- Ways to ensure that VET providers have approved credit arrangements in place with universities and are not misrepresenting these arrangements in the market place.
- Impact on the providers in administering and reporting, for compliance in FEE-HELP for VET.

Richard Doyle

Managing Director

12 July 2007