

**Proposal
for an
Australian
Higher
Education
Graduation
Statement**

**Final Report to the
Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations
Development of a National Diploma Supplement Project
02 May 2008**

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Executive Summary & List of Recommendations

Introduction

This Final Report provides an account of the program of work undertaken by the *Development of a National Diploma Supplement Project* and sets out specific recommendations.

On 10 January 2007, a Consortium of universities was commissioned to develop a single agreed template for an Australian Diploma Supplement. The Consortium represented 14 universities led by the University of New England, University of Melbourne, and Australian National University. The objectives of the project were to develop an agreed template for an Australian Diploma Supplement (by whatever name it might be known) and to make recommendations on detailed implementation and management strategies.

The key recommendation from the Project is for the introduction of an *Australian Higher Education Graduation Statement* that will be the Australian equivalent of the Diploma Supplement currently being provided to graduates by higher education institutions in some 45 European nations. The Graduation Statement will take the form of documentation provided to graduates by awarding institutions in addition to the degree or diploma certificate or testamur. Its purpose will be to make qualifications more portable and their value more transparent by providing descriptions of the nature, level, context and status of the studies that were pursued and completed by graduates, as well as information about the education system to which the qualification belongs.

The Australian Higher Education Graduation Statement is strongly supported by Australian universities and other stakeholders who consider that its introduction will assist both domestic and international graduates from Australian higher education institutions seeking employment or further study opportunities

abroad. It will also assist graduates seeking further study or employment in Australia. Graduation Statements have the potential to make Australian awards better understood internationally, thus enhancing the international mobility of Australian graduates and Australia's competitiveness in the international higher education export market. Further still, the Graduation Statement will mark an important innovation in the higher education systems of the Asia Pacific region.

Work on the Project commenced in January 2007 and in September 2007 a Progress Report was presented as required to DEST. The Progress Report included:

- Recommendations for introduction of an Australian Higher Education Graduation Statement, with guiding principles and preliminary examples being provided.
- Advisory information for administrators and a glossary of key terms.
- Recommendations as a result of scoping of system requirements for a searchable and secure national system for housing diploma supplement data, and on options for institutions to provide key stakeholders with verification of awards and transcript data.
- A discussion of privacy issues and recommendations.

This Final Report follows a period of widespread consultation with universities, other higher education providers and other stakeholders. Particularly valuable were the written submissions provided by universities. The Final Report includes the following chapters:

- Detailed recommendations for an Australian Higher Education Graduation Statement, including guiding principles and examples of Graduation Statements for different degrees;

- A report of consultations with universities and other higher education providers;
- A report on consultations with other stakeholders and the International Reference Group;
- The results of cost estimates studies for implementation at the institutional level and discussion of management information system issues;
- Recommendations on national implementation; and
- Discussion of other recent studies relevant to the Project topic.

Model for an Australian Higher Education Graduation Statement

Chapter 2 is a key element of the report and has the potential to be used as a 'stand-alone' document in the implementation process.

It is recommended that the Australian Diploma Supplement should be known as the *Australian Higher Education Graduation Statement* and that it will be issued to all higher education graduates in addition to the degree or diploma testamur. The aim is to make Australian higher education qualifications more portable and their value more transparent. Graduation Statements will provide information on the nature, level, context and status of the studies that were pursued and completed by graduates, as well as information about the education system to which the qualification belongs. It will be provided without charge to all graduates from higher education courses recognised within the Australian Qualification Framework.

The focus of the Graduation Statement is on a particular award conferred on an individual graduate. It provides information on the nature of the award that has been conferred, the graduate's academic achievements within that award, and the nature of the awarding institution and the Australian higher education system at the time of graduation. A single Graduation Statement can accommodate both combined degrees and 'jointly badged' degrees. The Graduation Statement is compiled to summarise information that is factual and relevant at that time. It is date-stamped to indicate the date of issue.

Graduation Statements will be issued for each separate award that is achieved. Students who complete a number of awards will therefore receive a number of Statements, each pertaining to a particular award conferred. Graduation Statements differ in content and purpose from academic transcripts. Academic transcripts

may be issued at various times to students and graduates, whereas Graduation Statements are awarded only at course completion. In addition, while the academic transcript is a progressive record of all studies undertaken at an institution, the Graduation Statement records only studies undertaken for a particular award.

The Graduation Statement consists of five sections plus certification, comprising both core and optional elements. To ensure national consistency, the five sections are to be presented in a uniform sequence by all higher education institutions. The optional elements allow institutions to report information (such as workplace learning) that may be characteristic of their overall mission, objectives and awards, and the special achievements of individual graduates.

The content of each Graduation Statement section and element should conform to agreed national specifications. All information presented should be factual rather than evaluative and should be free from any value judgements or equivalence statements but may include information about professional recognition and registration where appropriate.

Awarding institutions are responsible for compiling, issuing and archiving Graduation Statements, and for the authentication of all information presented. Particular elements of the Graduation Statement may require differing processes for institutional verification. Institutions will determine the verification procedures appropriate to their systems and purposes. Graduation Statements will not be issued retrospectively to graduates who graduated prior to the official date of implementation.

Detailed specifications are provided for each section of the Graduation Statement. With regard to information on the academic achievements, all units attempted for the award should be listed (including units with a fail grade) together with the grades achieved. Examples of Graduation Statements for a number of different degrees are provided.

Consultation with Universities and Other Higher Education Institutions

In late September 2007, a Proposal for an Australian Higher Education Graduation Statement, modified in light of discussions at the national workshop held on 16 August 2007, was mailed to each University and those institutions listed as Table B higher education providers. Covering letters addressed to executive heads sought official institutional responses. The letter

particularly sought comment on the following issues:

- The potential benefits of an Australian Higher Education Graduation Statement, especially for domestic graduates seeking professional work or further study abroad, and international students;
- The proposed guiding principles, format and content specifications for the Graduation Statement;
- The idea of 'core' and 'optional' items;
- Whether the academic record within the Graduation Statement should include only successfully completed units for the particular award, or all units (including those that received a fail grade); and
- 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.

Written responses were received from 33 institutions (31 public universities and 2 Table B providers). The clear message conveyed in these responses is that there is strong support for introduction of an Australian version of the Diploma Supplement and use of the name 'Australian Higher Education Graduation Statement' rather than 'Diploma Supplement'. Further, many universities not only stated their support for the Graduation Statement but also indicated enthusiasm for the project and provided highly supportive comments on its potential value, particularly for higher education institutions, graduates and employers.

Apart from consideration of the alternative approaches that a minority of universities favoured with regard to reporting on academic achievement, the main comments related to the five topic areas identified for comment. Apart from strong support for the Graduation Statement already mentioned, there was strong support for the suggested guiding principles, the recommendations on format and content, and for the proposal for 'core' and 'optional' elements. Opinion on the inclusion of fail/withdrawn grades generated considerable discussion within project meetings and workshops. However, on balance, the responses were in favour of all units pursued for an award including fail grades to be included on the record of academic achievements and for there to be a consistent national policy on this issue. Of the 33 university responses, 8 institutions did not comment or indicated that either practice would be acceptable. Of those that indicated a clear preference, 15 institutions were in favour

of including fail/withdrawn grades while 10 institutions were against.

Overall, there was majority support for inclusion of information on accreditation and professional recognition of courses as optional elements, although there were some surprising variations in opinion. Some institutions were strongly in favour of inclusion of this information which they considered likely to be of considerable interest to employers while others were concerned about particular administrative difficulties or difficulties to ensure accuracy of the information presented.

Consultation with Other Stakeholders and the International Reference Group

Useful responses were received as a result of consultations with major employers, employers associations, professional associations, students and the international reference group. While the level of response from each of these groups was relatively low despite the use of follow-up efforts, overall responses were strongly positive. All see the Australian Higher Education Graduation Statement as having considerable value and most respondents were supportive of use of the name 'Graduation Statement' rather than the European term 'Diploma Supplement'.

Based on responses to the Proposal and interviews with key personnel, it is clear that major employers and professional associations are supportive of the notion of a Graduation Statement. In particular, they would find most useful information on additional program details and special achievements, recognition and prizes. They also would be assisted by having information presented in a uniform pattern across all Australian universities in order to facilitate comparison of applicants.

With regard to academic records to be included in Graduation Statements, employers and professional associations were generally of the view that complete academic records should be included, and not simply units that were successfully completed. Major employers of graduates face considerable problems in selecting applicants for a limited number of positions from large groups of applications. For example, the Commonwealth Treasury takes 60 to 65 graduates per year but receives 800 applications while AusAID receives 750 applications for 20 places and the Reserve Bank receives 650 applications for 40 places. Moreover, organisations such as the Treasury insist on assessing full academic records in order to calculate a grade point average for each applicant.

The National Union of Students is generally supportive of introduction of the Graduation Statement, although the degree of support will depend on final decisions about what information will be included in the Statement. Detailed comments were made on two issues. First, with regard to the issue of inclusion of fail/withdrawn grades, the Union expressed a preference for elimination of fail/withdrawn grades on the grounds that inclusion of fail grades *'could mean that a graduate is tarred forever in the labour market with the record of withdrawals or fails that have no context (for example major medical, compassionate or financial circumstances)'*. On the issue of the use of websites for detailed information on course rules, concern was expressed that over time many websites change and that this problem could be overcome by universities committing themselves to archiving material so that *'an employer in 2028 can look up what the course when the student graduated in 2008'*.

Focus groups and individual interviews with undergraduate and postgraduate students, domestic students and international students, were conducted in four universities. Overall, students expressed strong support for the introduction of the Graduation Statement and for the recommended format and content. While postgraduate students were generally supportive of the Graduation Statement a number suggested that its value might be greater for undergraduates than postgraduates.

Written replies were received from three members of the International Reference Group. All were supportive of the proposal. Mr Greg Wade (Policy Adviser Universities UK) commented positively on use of the name Graduation Statement and advised that the Burgess Committee in the UK had first recommended the name 'Diploma Supplement and Transcript' but in its latest report was recommending use of the name of 'Higher Education Achievement Report'. He also reported that the Burgess Committee had debated whether or not to include fail grades and that in the end decided on inclusion of fail/withdrawn grades.

Professor Robert Burgess (Vice-Chancellor of the University of Leicester and Chair of the 'Burgess Group') commented on four issues. First, he responded positively on the suggested name of 'Graduation Statement' and on the guiding principles and specifications for content. However, he expressed concern about the proposal that each university was expected to follow its own style in presenting academic achievement information on the Graduation Statement, commenting that this could make

the job more difficult for employers who wish to use Graduation Statements to compare different applicants. Second, while Professor Burgess reported that the UK had decided to use core and optional elements, he was concerned that because of technical or information difficulties some institutions may neglect inclusion of optional elements. Third, Professor Burgess commented on the issue of inclusion of fail/withdrawn grades and reported that this issue had received considerable discussion in the UK. Fourth, Professor Burgess reported that inclusion of accreditation and professional recognition information was most important if the Graduation Statement is to provide a complete set of information.

Professor Ulrich Killat (Hamburg University of Technology) provided a useful and positive report. First, with regard to the name 'Graduation Statement' he had no concern about use of the term 'graduation' rather than 'diploma' but expressed preference for the use of the word 'supplement' rather than 'statement'. He also commented that since unsuccessful studies do not contribute to the graduation they need not be addressed.

Estimates of Institutional Implementation Costs and Management Information System Issues

A methodology to undertake a study of likely costs of implementation at the institutional level was developed in discussion with a number of directors of university student administration units and other senior university officers. It was agreed that three different types of information should be sought from universities participating in the project.

1. Specifications of the key information that universities would require in order to prepare Graduation Statements and the likely source or location of that information within the university;
2. Estimates of implementation costs for 'core' and 'optional' elements with separate columns for administrative tasks, cost items, estimations of costs, and comments. This item would seek further breakdowns under the following categories:
 - New or upgraded software and integration of different IT systems;
 - Programming expenses in order to access data already held in the University on other systems or in other formats;
 - Administrative time in preparing information for the various core and optional elements of the Graduation Statement (including time taken in

transcribing paper records into electronic records);

- Additional costs in preparing and printing individual Graduation Statements (including possible employment of project officers);
 - Staff training;
 - Archiving of Graduation Statements; and
 - Other expenses.
3. Estimates of annual operational expenses for 'core' and 'optional' elements of the Graduation Statement, with breakdowns for the following sub-items:
- Administrative costs of producing and archiving Graduation Statement information;
 - Additional costs of parchment or security paper over and above provision of an academic transcript to each graduate;
 - Costs in printing and presentation of Graduation Statements; and
 - Possible enhancement costs to take account of the evolving nature of the Graduation Statement.

Twelve universities were invited to participate in the sub-project. Eight provided a response, with the information provided by six universities being judged to be suitable for analysis.

Institutional responses demonstrated the nature of management and systems issues facing universities in implementation of Graduation Statements. Most universities will require software system upgrades to handle data storage and extraction requirements and produce the Graduation Statement according to the recommended specifications. A coordinated approach is recommended in terms of discussions between the different university groups and their software suppliers.

While universities already hold considerable amounts of data relevant for production of Graduation Statements on their information systems, other data will need to be secured from other systems or generated manually from hard copy. Significant challenges will be faced particularly in generating information on program details, additional program characteristics, and special student achievements. Manual administrative effort will be required to handle information currently not held on computer systems. New data collection and management procedures may be required to establish and maintain new sources of data for the ongoing production of Graduation Statements. The use of polymer for the documentation and additional security measures will also add to costs. A submission

from the University of New South Wales was judged to be particularly interesting in that this university is already implementing its UNSW Supplementary Transcript.

Individual institutional cost estimates for implementation vary from a low of \$60,000 to a high of \$215,024, with an average of \$139,504. However, after careful consideration the Project Team considers that a reasonable estimate of additional costs per institution to be \$150,000.

Recommendations on National Implementation

The scholarly literature on public policy studies points to the considerable difficulties that can emerge in national policy implementation of new initiatives by largely autonomous higher education institutions within federal systems of government. At the same time, this literature points to various factors that can assist successful implementation, including clarity of the policy objectives, clear specifications of proposed outcomes, prior consultation with key stakeholders, clear communication of the policy rationale and details to implementing organizations and their key personnel, and monitoring to ensure compliance and to enable unexpected or unintended issues to be promptly addressed. Some degree of flexibility to take account of local conditions within implementing institutions and the use of appropriate incentives are always helpful, while in many situations voluntary rather than mandatory implementation tends to work more effectively.

In view of the highly positive responses received as a result of consultation with higher education institutions and other stakeholders, it should not be difficult to achieve widespread support for the introduction of the Graduation Statement from all domestic stakeholders, including students and student associations, professional associations and employers. In the implementation phase, it will be important to build on this existing strong base of support. At the same time, it will be necessary for implementers both nationally and within institutions to develop strategies to ensure that the objectives of the Australian Higher Education Graduation Statement are clearly understood, especially by graduates and all relevant staff members within higher education institutions. It will also be important that it be widely recognised that the Graduation Statement is the local equivalent to the Diploma Supplement that is becoming increasingly important in facilitating graduate mobility in European nations. Once the first Graduation Statements are issued, national publicity will be important

to ensure that employers and professional associations will know to expect that Australian graduates will soon be presenting Graduation Statements in applications for employment and professional recognition.

It is recommended that implementation should be on a voluntary basis and spread over a three year period commencing as soon as practicable in 2008 in order to provide sufficient time for upgrades to student and course administration information management systems, linking different information systems more effectively within universities in order to produce relevant student information and carry out various administrative work, particularly the development of statements about course requirements and special characteristics of courses and transcribing material manually from paper files.

Responsibility for the coordination of implementation and the monitoring of progress should be shared between DEEWR and Universities Australia, although responsibility for updating the Description of the Australian Higher Education System should be a shared responsibility between DEEWR and the Australian Qualifications Framework Secretariat. Universities should be periodically invited to propose modifications to DEEWR.

In terms of implementation within universities, it will be necessary to plan for the following tasks to be undertaken and successfully completed:

- Planning a detailed national implementation strategy;
- Liaison with major student system providers and 'user groups' concerning system upgrades and programming needs;
- Development of detailed documentation on implementation for distribution to and within universities;
- Arranging implementation workshops in key states to be attended by university representatives to be followed by facilitator visits to a number of key individual universities;
- Distribution of copies of special newsletters to be published at intervals in Years 1, 2 and 3 of the implementation cycle, reporting on progress and good practice, and discussing particular issues of concern;
- Arranging for media publicity about the objectives and international value of the Australian Higher Education Graduation Statements;
- Monitoring progress at intervals over the three-year implementation period to identify any particular problems and to ensure a high level of overall compliance with the model specification with regard to format and content;

- Following the implementation period, regular monitoring and, as necessary, revisions of specifications in order to ensure that Graduation Statements continue to meet the needs of stakeholders, including international universities, employers and professional associations.

With regard to higher education providers other than universities, coordination of implementation should be handled jointly by DEEWR in combination with the Council for Private Higher Education and the Australian Council for Private Education and Training with a somewhat similar process being followed to that for universities. However, it may be useful to delay implementation by other higher education institutions by some 12 months in order to ensure that the model is successfully introduced within the university sector.

On the basis of the survey of estimated implementation costs and various comments in written submissions, it is clear that all higher education institutions will incur substantial additional expense in implementing the Australian Higher Education Graduation Statement. Such expense relates particularly to upgrades and new functionalities for student and course information management systems, additional programming activities, administrative costs in preparing new information such as course descriptions and special characteristics of courses, and costs involved in manually transferring information currently held on paper files.

On the basis of the cost estimates studies, the Project Team has concluded that the average cost per institution for implementation is likely to be \$150,000. For this reason it is recommended that the Government consider the possibility of providing lump sum payments of \$100,000 to each public university that formally agrees to complete implementation of the Graduation Statement over a three year period to assist with additional costs that will be incurred.

Other Recent Studies Relevant to the Project Topic

Two recent reports that are relevant to the Project are the Final Report of the UK Burgess Group and a major report on graduate employability skills prepared by Precision Consultancy for the Business, Industry and Higher Education Collaboration Council. Brief summaries of both documents are provided and their relevance for the project is assessed.

The Final Report of the Burgess Committee is of interest because it provides recommendations to relevant UK authorities concerning further implementation of the European Diploma Supplement in the UK and its links with work on

academic transcripts and review of the system of classifying honours bachelors degrees. The Burgess Group specifically recommends introduction of a Higher Education Achievement Report (HEAR) that will be similar to the Graduation Statement recommended by this project. Four separate elements will be merged as seamlessly as possible into the HEAR: the Diploma Supplement; the current transcript information; sector-agreed additional information that will form, with the first two elements, the new core of the HEAR; and any additional information that institutions wish to add.

The report on graduate employability skills was prepared by Precision Consultancy as part of a research study commissioned by the Business, Industry and Higher Education Collaboration Council with funding provided by the Commonwealth Government. The project was managed by the Australian Industry Group. It was undertaken to investigate: (a) how universities currently develop and integrate employability skills into their programs of study; (b) how universities teach employability skills; (c) how universities currently assess students' employability skills; and (d) how graduate employability skills might be assessed and reported upon. The work involved extensive consultation with a range of different stakeholders including representatives of universities, business and industry.

Consultations with industry reinforced the idea that the skills defined in the *2001 Employability Skills Framework* are still seen by employers as being highly relevant to their needs. Broadly speaking, it was concluded that industry representatives are satisfied with the technical discipline-specific skills of graduates, but for some students there is a perception that employability skills are underdeveloped.

Employability skills can be effectively assessed where the specific skill and its application are described in course materials and learning objectives, and where it is clearly identified within the context of a given discipline. Workplace supervisors are in unique positions to assess and provide feedback on skills. Existing generic tools such as the Graduate Skills Assessment (GSA) and the Employability Skills Profiler (SP) are not favoured by universities in their current form. Ultimately, however, it is argued that it is the employer who must take primary responsibility for assessment of a graduate's employability skills.

List of Recommendations

As a result of the discussions, consultations and research studies undertaken, the Project Team recommends as follows:

Recommendation 1

That an Australian Higher Education Graduation Statement be introduced and issued free-of-charge to all graduating students in Australia for higher education courses recognised within the Australian Qualifications Framework.

Recommendation 2

That the preferred model of the Australian Higher Education Graduation Statement outlined in this report be accepted. Specifically, that the Graduation Statement will:

- (a) provide information on the nature, level, context and status of the studies that were pursued and completed by graduates, as well as information about the education system to which the qualification belongs.
- (b) report on a particular award conferred on an individual graduate, providing information on the nature of the award that has been conferred, the graduate's academic achievements within that award, and the nature of the awarding institution and the Australian higher education system at the time of graduation.
- (c) consist of five sections plus certification, comprising both 'core' and 'optional' elements. To ensure national consistency, the five sections are to be presented in a uniform sequence by all higher education institutions. The optional elements will allow institutions to report information (such as workplace learning) that may be characteristic of their overall mission, objectives and awards, and the special achievements of individual graduates.
- (d) conform to agreed national specifications with all content presented being factual and free from any value judgements or equivalence statements.

Recommendation 3

That consideration should be given to seeking additional financial support to assist universities with implementation costs. Total funding of \$3.7million would provide grants of \$100,000 to each of the 37 public universities to assist with implementation. Funding to universities should be provided as lump sum payments. The funding should be made available to universities that undertake to commence implementation in 2008 and to complete it within a three-year period.

Recommendation 4

That arrangements with regard to national implementation and ongoing monitoring should be as follows:

- (a) Implementation should be on a voluntary basis commencing as soon as practicable in 2008.
- (b) Responsibility for the national coordination and planning of implementation in universities should be jointly shared by DEEWR and Universities Australia, with responsibility for updating the Description of the Australian Higher Education System being jointly shared by DEEWR and the Australian Qualifications Framework Secretariat. Universities should be periodically invited to propose other changes to DEEWR.
- (c) Implementation by other higher education providers might be undertaken in 2009, assisted by the experience gained by universities in 2008. Implementation should rest with DEEWR in combination with the Council for Private Higher Education and the Australian Council for Private Education and Training.

Recommendation 5

That comments on the final report of the Burgess Committee in the UK and the Australian report of Precision Consultancy on graduate employability skills be noted and that efforts be made to monitor further developments both in Australia and overseas of work related to the assessment and reporting of student progress in university study and on the assessment of graduate employability skills.

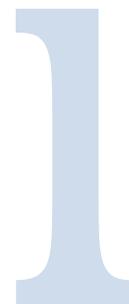
Recommendation 6

The Project Team has concluded that at this stage a searchable and secure database to house and maintain Australian Higher Education Graduation Statement data is not feasible. Discussions should be held with QualSearch about the possibility of it gaining a full national coverage of universities and adding functionalities to provide access to copies of Australian Higher Education Graduation Statement information by graduates, universities, employers and other stakeholders.

Recommendation 7

That, while the terms of reference did not include reference to vocational and training awards, consideration should be given to whether a single model might serve both higher education and VET awards. An appropriate title in this case would be Australian Graduation Statement.

Introduction



This document provides the final report on the DEST funded project *Development of a National Diploma Supplement* for the Australian Higher Education Sector.

On 10 January 2007, a Consortium of universities was commissioned to develop a single agreed template for an Australian Diploma Supplement. The Consortium represented 14 universities led by the University of New England, University of Melbourne, and Australian National University. Other members are as follows:

- University of New South Wales
- University of Sydney
- Griffith University
- University of Newcastle
- Queensland University of Technology
- University of South Australia
- University of Canberra
- Edith Cowan University
- Victoria University
- Charles Sturt University
- Swinburne University of Technology

The project was commissioned in response to feedback from a DEST discussion paper, *The Bologna Process and Australia: Next Steps*. The Bologna Process is part of a European initiative aiming to establish a single European Higher Education Area by 2010, focusing on curriculum and quality assurance. A key outcome is the Diploma Supplement that is currently being issued to graduates by higher education institutions in large numbers of European countries.

The key recommendation from this Project is for the introduction of an Australian Higher Education Graduation Statement that will be the Australian equivalent of the Diploma Supplement currently being provided to graduates by higher institutions in some 45

European nations. The Graduation Statement will take the form of documentation provided to graduates by awarding institutions in addition to the degree or diploma certificate or testamur. Its purpose will be to make qualifications more portable and their value more transparent by providing descriptions of the nature, level, context and status of the studies that were pursued and completed by graduates, as well as information about the education system to which the qualification belongs.

The Graduation Statement is strongly supported by Australian universities and other stakeholders who consider that its introduction will assist both domestic and international graduates from Australian higher education institutions seeking employment or further study opportunities abroad as well as graduates seeking further study or employment in Australia. Graduation Statements have the potential to make Australian awards better understood internationally, thus enhancing the international mobility of Australian graduates and Australia's competitiveness in the international higher education export market. Further, the Graduation Statement will mark an important innovation in the higher education systems of the Asia-Pacific region.

Project Objectives

The aim of this project was to develop an agreed template for an Australian version of the European Diploma Supplement and to make recommendations on detailed implementation and management strategies. It was envisaged that such a 'Diploma Supplement' would take the form of documentation issued to graduates by awarding institutions in addition to the degree or diploma certificate or testamur. Its purpose would be to make qualifications more

portable and their value more transparent by providing descriptions of the nature, level, context and status of the studies that were pursued and completed by graduates, as well as information about the education system to which the qualification belongs. The project was seen as building on the outcomes of pilot projects funded by DEST in 2002 and 2005.

Progress Report

Under the terms of the contract between DEST and the University of New England on behalf of the Consortium, a Progress Report was required to be submitted by 6 August 2007. However, the submission date was extended to early September 2007.

The contract specified key activities to be undertaken by the Project Team over the period of the project. At a minimum, the contract required that the Progress Report provide information on progress with regards to specified activities and to also provide information detailing expenditure for the reporting period. Table 1.1 summarises the required activities and expected outcomes as set out in Table 4 of the contract schedule. For each item, the table also shows the activities actually undertaken and the outcomes achieved.

A copy of the Progress Report is appended as Volume 2 of this Final Report.

**Table 1.1: Summary of Required Activities and Outcomes, and Actual Accomplishments:
Period from Project Establishment to Submission of Progress Report**

21 December 2006 – 31 March 2007

<p>Preliminary background work consulting with DEST, assembling readily available material.</p>	<p>Project commenced in early January 2007. Initial meeting of Professors James, Meek and Harman with DEST officials on 19 January 2007. Task of assembling readily available material commenced.</p>
<p>Project Steering Committee to be established.</p>	<p>A Project Steering Committee was established in consultation with DEST. This Committee, chaired by Professor Nick Saunders (Vice Chancellor of the University of Newcastle), held its first meeting on 15 February 2007. Further meetings have been held on 2 April 2007, 7 June 2007 and 17 August 2007.</p>
<p>Project Advisory Committee formed with representation of consortium members.</p>	<p>Teleconference meeting of Consortium representatives held on 22 February 2007 and face-to-face meeting on 29 June 2007 in Melbourne. A teleconference consultation was held on 19 February with technical experts from Consortium member universities.</p>
<p>Detailed project work plan, timetable and milestones agreed by Project Steering Committee, subject to final approval in writing by DEST.</p>	<p>Project workplan with timetable and milestones developed and endorsed by Steering Committee on 15 February 2007 and submitted to DEST.</p>
<p>Project team will undertake the work programme, with specialists sought to undertake a detailed cost analysis of introducing a diploma supplement.</p>	<p>Main project work commenced in February 2007 in accordance with the workplan. Decision made to delay detailed cost analysis until agreement is reached on the format of Diploma Supplement and information to be included. A Project website was established and a Project Prospectus was developed, with copies being circulated to all Table A and Table B higher education providers as well as to major associations and other stakeholders.</p>
<p>Work program to include review of European Developments with regard to the Diploma Supplement, review of outputs from the 2002 and 2005 DEST funded projects and consultation with DEST employees and with institutions involved in projects, and collection and analysis of documentation provided by universities to graduates.</p>	<p>Work commenced on designing a survey of universities with regard to documentation provided to graduates and questionnaire distributed in May 2007. On 6 February 2007, teleconference with key researchers involved in the 2002 and 2005 DEST Diploma Supplement Pilot Studies.</p>
<p>Meetings of Project Directors with DEST employees and selected technical experts to discuss technical work that needs to be undertaken with regard to: (a) scoping of system requirements for a searchable and secure national system for housing diploma supplement data; and (b) undertaking a cost analysis for introducing an Australian Diploma Supplement.</p>	<p>Discussions were held on 12 April 2007 with senior DEST staff about a searchable national database for Diploma Supplement information.</p>

First workshop with all universities and Table B higher education providers (on or by 31 March 2007).

A major workshop was held in Melbourne at the Airport Hilton Hotel on 3 May 2007 for consultation with the sector on the Diploma Supplement proposal. Over 80 participants attended, drawn from universities and Table B institutions, DEST and other agencies. A decision was taken to postpone the workshop in order to give more time for detailed planning and workshop preparation. Key personnel from Consortium member universities took major roles at the workshop including providing presentations, chairing breakout groups and summarising discussions. Following the workshop, summaries of discussions and copies of powerpoints were provided to all participants and the Steering Committee.

Initial discussions with project consortium members about collection of data via the secretariats of the various groupings such as the Group of Eight universities.

The project team decided to approach universities directly for information on documentation provided to graduates rather than work through university groupings. This approach has worked well and clearly the time taken in design of the questionnaire has paid off. A follow up is being undertaken of universities who have not responded to date.

1 April 2007 to 30 June 2007

Scoping system requirements for DEST requirements for a national roll including cost estimates and preliminary work on a searchable and secure national system for housing diploma supplement data.

Work undertaken exploring alternatives to national database for access by stakeholders to Diploma Supplement information. This included discussions with the CEO of QualSearch and various universities, and a literature search.

Workshops held to consult on draft recommendations with consortium members, other higher education providers, employers, professional associations and student representatives.

Consultative workshops with universities on draft proposals were held on 29 June 2007 for Consortium representatives and on 16 August 2007 for representatives of all universities. On 15 August 2007 a separate consultation was held with education officials from the embassies of China, Japan and Korea. Discussions were held with various professional peak organizations including Professions Australia, Graduate Careers Australia and the Australian Association of Graduate Employers. A member of the Project Team participated in a panel discussion at a Professions Australia Accreditation Forum held in Melbourne on 29 May 2007.

Preliminary individual consultations were held with employers, recruiting agencies and professional associations in Melbourne in early May 2007 and in Canberra and Sydney in July-August 2007.

1-31 July 2007

<p>Preparation of progress report for DEST with approval by Project Steering Committee and Project Advisory Committee. Progress report must include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommendations on a single agreed format and content for an Australian Diploma Supplement for higher education providers to make available to each graduate. This should include explanatory information to help administrators and students and a glossary of key terms; 	<p>The report includes recommendations for introduction of an Australian Higher Education Graduation Statement, with guiding principles and examples being provided. This report also includes advisory information for administrators and a glossary of key terms.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Results of scoping of system requirements for a searchable and secure national system for housing diploma supplement data; 	<p>Recommendations included in Progress Report on options for providing key stakeholders with verification of awards and transcript data.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A detailed cost analysis of introducing an Australian Diploma Supplement; 	<p>Analysis of costs will be undertaken after submission of the Progress Report on the basis of decisions to be taken by the Project Team and the Steering Committee on the agreed format of the Australian Higher Education Graduate Statement and what information is to be included.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A discussion of privacy issues and how such issues might be best addressed; 	<p>Privacy issues have been explored and information is provided in this Progress Report.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommendations about possible name changes from Australian Diploma Supplement to another title that may more closely reflect the Australian context; 	<p>This report recommends that a Diploma Supplement should be known as the Australian Higher Education Graduation Statement.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detailed recommendations on how the introduction of an Australian Diploma Supplement would meet the needs of international processes and at the same time involve minimum additional workload for universities and provide some flexibility for universities to provide additional information should they wish to do so; 	<p>Detailed recommendations have still to be developed on this issue. Such recommendations will be dependent on decisions taken about what information will be included in the Australian Higher Education Graduation Statement.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommendations for national implementation; and 	<p>The Progress Report includes examples for translating guiding principles and specifications for information to be included on Graduation Statements into examples for various university degrees at bachelors, bachelors with honours, research masters and PhD levels. Preliminary recommendations are made on national implementation mechanisms.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A financial report detailing expenditure of the Grant as required under Clause 3.2 of these Conditions of Grant. 	<p>Financial reports are provided in this report.</p>

It will be noted that by September 2007 almost all of the specified activities had been carried out and the key outcomes have been achieved. However, as indicated in Table 1.1, there were some minor variations in the Project plan. In particular,

- A decision was made to delay undertaking a detailed cost analysis until key decisions were made on the format of the Diploma Supplement and what the information is to be included;
- Individual discussions were held with senior managers in major companies, recruiting agencies and professional associations, rather than running workshops for employers and other stakeholders;
- While recommendations were made on translating the guiding principles and specifications for information to be included in Graduation Statements into examples, only brief preliminary recommendations were made on national implementation mechanisms.

Final Report

Under the terms of the contract, a Final Report was required to be submitted by 8 November 2007. However, the submission date was extended to early 2008.

Table 1.2 summarises the required activities and expected outcomes as set out in Table 4 of the contract schedule for completion and reporting in the Final Report. For each item, the table also shows the activities actually undertaken and the outcomes achieved.

Table 1.2: Summary of Required Activities and Outcomes, and Actual Accomplishments: Period from Progress Report until Submission of the Final Report

1 August 2007 to 30 September 2007

Consultation with all higher education providers through regional workshops led by Directors and Research Team. In these consultations, consortium members will play a major role.

Major consultations with higher education providers were held at a workshop in Melbourne on 16 August 2007. Following submission of the Progress Report, a revised proposal was circulated to all universities and Table A and Table B providers, seeking comment and responses particularly with regard to the following issues:

1. The potential benefits of an Australian Higher Education Graduation Statement, especially for 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 idea of 'core' and 'optional' items;
4. Whether the academic record within the Graduation Statement should include only successfully completed units for the particular award, or all units (including those 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

One member of the Project Team met with the national Deputy Vice-Chancellors (Academic) Group on 28 November 2007 in Canberra.

Consultation documentation was sent to Universities Australia, the Group of Eight (Go8), the Australian Technology Network of Universities (ATN), and the Innovative Research Universities Australia (IRU). Documentation seeking comment was also sent to the two associations representing private higher education-the Council for Private Higher Education and the Australian Council for Private Education and Training.

Separate consultations with employers, professional associations and other stakeholders including student representatives, and Australian Education International-National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition officials. Alternatively, some of this consultation may be combined with regional workshops.

Consultations were conducted by forwarding documentation seeking responses from a number of major employers, professional associations and student associations. Focus groups of students were conducted on three university campuses. A member of the Project Team provided an optional workshop on the Graduation Statement at the annual conference in Sydney of the Australian Association of Graduate Employers Ltd (AAGE).

Feedback from International Reference Group on Diploma Supplement Model.

Detailed documentation was forwarded to the international reference group and this was followed in November 2007 by emailed reminder messages.

1 October 2007 to 31 January 2008

Preparation of a final report for DEST and approval by Project Steering Committee and Project Advisory Committee.

Final report must include:

- information as per the interim report as outlined above including and informed by the outcomes of consultations with institutions, employers and professional bodies;
- recommendations for national implementation; and
- a financial report detailing expenditure of the Grant as required under Clause 3.3 of these Conditions of Grant

The Final Report includes as required reports of consultations with universities, other higher education providers and other stakeholders. In total, written responses were received from 30 of the 37 public universities.

The proposal was considered by a meeting of Consortium Members 24 January 2008. As a result minor amendments were made.

The Final Report includes recommendations for national implementation, results from the cost estimate studies, discussion of two other recent reports relevant to the project topic, and a financial report detailing expenditure under Clause 3.3 of the Conditions of Grant.

An executive summary and list of recommendations are provided at the beginning of the report before this Introduction. The recommendations arise from both this Final Report and the Progress Report. Other chapters are provided in the Final Report setting out:

- detailed recommendations for an Australian Higher Education Graduation Statement, including guiding principles and examples of Graduation Statements for different degrees;
- a report of consultations with universities and other higher education providers;
- a report on consultations with other stakeholders and the international reference group;
- the results of the cost estimates studies for implementation at the institutional level and discussion of management information system issues;
- recommendations on national implementation;
- discussion of other recent studies relevant to the Project topic; and
- a financial report.

At the suggestion of the sponsor, a copy of the Progress Report is appended to this report as Volume 2.

Chapter 2, which contains detailed recommendations for the Australian Higher Education Graduation Statement, is a key element of the Final Report and at the implementation stage has the potential to be used as a 'stand-alone' document, providing an explanation of the aims, purposes and guiding principles for the Graduation Statement and providing examples of Graduation Statements for both undergraduate and postgraduate degrees. Despite debate during the project on whether or not fail/withdrawn grades should be included in section 4 of the Graduation Statement on the academic achievements of graduates, the Project Team has followed the clear majority view of the sector and so recommends that all units attempted for an award should be included, whether or not pass or fail/withdrawn grades were the outcome.

While the Project Team is recommending a single model for the Graduation Statement with some degree of flexibility in implementation being desirable, it should be noted that two variations are favoured by a minority of universities. The first of these supported in written submission from five universities is for institutions to issue graduates with both Graduation Statements and academic transcripts, but with

information on the academic achievements of individual graduates being recorded only on the academic transcripts. With this approach, it would be essential that Graduation Statements refer readers to academic transcripts for information on academic achievements.

The key arguments advanced in support of this approach are that, unlike many European countries, Australian universities have a well-established tradition with academic transcripts and a number of universities wish to continue to provide academic transcripts to graduates and enhance the information they contain. Other arguments are that substantial cost savings would be achieved by not having to reproduce on Graduation Statements information from transcripts on academic achievement and with academic achievement information being found only on a single document there would be less possibility of confusion by employers and possible variations between two different sets of documentation.

A second alternative similarly suggests that both Graduation Statements and academic transcripts should be provided by institutions to all graduates, with the academic transcript providing a full academic record but the Graduation Statement merely providing a list of units successfully completed for the particular award but without any grades or marks being provided. Similarly in this case a note on the Graduation Statement would refer readers to the academic transcript for detailed information on studies undertaken.

Overall, however, the Project Team considers that there is strong majority support for the common model that is recommended in this report. It has concluded that it is desirable for the Graduation Statement to provide as much information as possible without the need to reference other documents.

Model for an Australian Higher Education Graduation Statement



The Need for an Australian Higher Education Graduation Statement

The Australian Higher Education Graduation Statement will align the Australian higher education sector with international trends in providing enhanced documentation to graduates to improve the transparency and portability of qualifications, and to facilitate international mobility. In doing so, it will assist both domestic and international graduates from Australian higher education providers seeking employment or further study opportunities abroad as well as enhancing the information available to Australian employers and professional associations. Graduation Statements have the potential to make Australian awards better understood internationally, thus enhancing the international mobility of Australian graduates for further study or employment, and Australian competitiveness in the international education export market.

Australian higher education has much to gain, both domestically and in terms of its international education objectives, by taking steps in parallel with the Bologna Process. Within the Asia-Pacific region, increased interest is being shown in Bologna, with countries such as China, Japan and Korea closely monitoring developments. Addressing key issues raised by Bologna will place Australia and our partners in this region at the forefront of future education developments.

The Graduation Statement will be important for the international recognition of Australian higher education. It will be a distinctively Australian document that promotes the quality of the Australian higher education system and the academic achievements of graduates from Australian higher education institutions.

Why use the Title 'Australian Higher Education Graduation Statement'?

The term 'Australian Higher Education Graduation Statement' has been chosen to identify the documentation as being Australian in origin and to denote a formal statement of academic achievement that is supplied to higher education graduates upon their graduation with a particular award.

The European term 'Diploma Supplement' is problematic in the Australian context. With the first word, the problem is that, while 'diploma' in the European context means an academic award, in Australia it refers to a particular type of award. The word 'supplement' also carries problems in that it conveys the idea that the documentation is an 'add-on' or of lesser importance than the testamur.

While most European universities and nations appear to be using the name 'Diploma Supplement', as recommended by European authorities, there has been more experimentation with names in the UK. Since Australia is outside the European Higher Education Area and since the UK has already varied the original European title, it is desirable to adopt a distinctive Australian title that overcomes difficulties with the words 'diploma' and 'supplement'.

Guiding Principles for the Australian Higher Education Graduation Statement

The principles below define the Graduation Statement that it is recommended all Australian higher education institutions should provide to graduating students on completion of the requirements for higher education awards.

Purpose

1. The Graduation Statement is a distinctively Australian document for presenting information regarding an award conferred on a graduate. It should be provided without charge to all graduates from higher education courses recognised within the Australian Qualifications Framework.
2. The purpose of the Graduation Statement is to provide details to assist graduates, employers, and education and training institutions both in Australia and internationally in understanding and recognising the nature and level of academic achievement in completion of an award. The Graduation Statement provides information to inform judgements for purposes that might include access to another academic programme, employment, or the right to practice a profession. It is not intended to provide comprehensive information for each of these purposes and in certain instances additional information might need to be sought.
3. The focus of the Graduation Statement is on a particular award conferred on an individual graduate. It is a statement of the nature of the award that has been conferred, the graduate's academic achievements within that award, and the nature of the awarding institution and the Australian higher education system at the time of graduation. A single Graduation Statement can accommodate both combined degrees and 'jointly badged' degrees.
4. The Graduation Statement is compiled to summarise information that is factual and relevant at that time. It is date-stamped to indicate the date of issue.

Relationship to other Documentation

5. A Graduation Statement is issued for each separate award that is achieved. Students who complete a number of awards will therefore receive a number of Statements, each pertaining to a particular award conferred.
6. The Graduation Statement is issued in addition to the award 'certificate' or 'testamur' and in addition to academic transcripts. For

certain purposes, the Graduation Statement may need to be read in conjunction with an academic transcript (which may refer to more than one qualification completed at the same institution), but in most cases it is intended to provide adequate information to satisfy the needs of employers, professional associations and other higher education institutions.

7. The Graduation Statement differs in content and purpose from academic transcripts. Academic transcripts may be issued at various times to students and graduates, whereas the Graduation Statement is awarded only at course completion. In addition, while the academic transcript is a progressive record of all studies undertaken at an institution, the Graduation Statement records only studies undertaken for a particular award.
8. The Graduation Statement also differs in content and purpose from e-portfolios. E-portfolios are maintained by students and may incorporate a broad range of authenticated and unauthenticated information, whereas the Graduation Statement is an institutional responsibility and contains only authenticated information.

Content and Style

9. The Graduation Statement consists of five sections plus certification, comprising both core and optional elements. To ensure national consistency, the five sections are to be presented in a uniform sequence by all higher education institutions. The optional elements allow institutions to report information (such as workplace learning) that may be characteristic of their overall mission, objectives and awards, and the special achievements of individual graduates.
10. The content of each Graduation Statement should conform to agreed national specifications. All information presented should be factual and should be free from any value judgements or equivalence statements but may include information about professional recognition and registration where appropriate. The document seeks to provide sufficient information to assist users in making judgements but avoids inclusion of detail that could cause confusion. Where appropriate, reference is made to other information sources that could be consulted, especially university, college and/or government websites.
11. Issuing institutions will design the layout of their Graduation Statements to suit their particular style requirements, which may

include institutional logos and other style elements.

12. All Graduation Statements issued by Australian higher education institutions will use the name Australian Higher Education Graduation Statement and provide an agreed statement explaining the purpose of the Graduation Statement.
13. The following statement on the purpose of the Graduation Statement is recommended:
The Australian Higher Education Graduation Statement is provided by Australian higher education institutions to graduating students on completion of the requirements for a particular higher education award. It provides a description of the nature, level, context and status of the studies that were pursued by the individual named. Its purpose is to assist in both national and international recognition of Australian qualifications and to promote international mobility and professional recognition of graduates.

Issuing and Authentication

14. Awarding institutions are responsible for compiling, issuing and archiving Graduation Statements, and for the authentication of all information presented.
15. Particular elements of the Graduation Statement may require differing processes for institutional verification. Institutions will determine the verification procedures appropriate to their systems and purposes.
16. The Graduation Statement will be issued in hard copy and, when feasible, also in electronic format in order to maximise the utility to graduates. Appropriate techniques should be used to make formats secure and institutions should take appropriate action to minimise the possibility of forgery and misrepresentation. Recognising the lower security levels of electronic documents, the hard-copy format should be treated as the primary document. Institutions will be responsible for providing a verification mechanism for stakeholders who seek to verify the authenticity of a Graduation Statement.
17. It is not anticipated that Graduation Statements will be issued retrospectively to graduates who graduated prior to institutional implementation.

Sections Included in the Australian Higher Education Graduation Statement

The Graduation Statement consists of five sections, with the first four having a number of elements. Details to be provided in these sections are summarised below. Items that are optional for institutions or particular awards are italicised.

1. The Graduate

Family name:

Given name(s):

Student number:

Date of birth: (with or without verification based on citing birth certificate)

2. The Award

Name of Award: Name of the award and the field or fields of specialisation, if appropriate.

Detail: Summary details of the award (including admission requirements, normal duration of study and language of instruction) but this may be best provided by a 'generic sentence' and reference to a University website. For research higher degrees, brief reference should be made to external examination arrangements.

Features: *Brief description of distinguishing features of the course, such as professional placements, industry-based learning, or overseas study.*

Pathway to further study: *Summary details on further or advanced higher education awards for which this award typically serves as preparation. Link to URL for detailed or additional information.*

Course accreditation: *Statement regarding relevant external accreditation of the course, including details of the accrediting association or agency and date of most recent accreditation. If the degree confers on the holder rights to practice within particular jurisdictions, relevant information should be provided. Link to URL for additional information.*

3. Awarding Institution

Brief (preferably a one or two sentence) description of the institution, including type (public/private), date of founding and legislation of establishment. Private higher education institutions should provide information on their inclusion in the AQF Register of Recognised Educational Institutions, and on course and institutional accreditation arrangements. Links can be provided to institutional websites for additional information. Where the course is a 'jointly-badged' award with another institution, or is delivered by another institution, brief details of arrangements should be provided.

4. Graduate's Academic Achievements

Course details: Relevant information pertaining to units of study undertaken toward this award, whether or not these were successfully completed. Included are the unit name, institutional unit code, credit point value, grade and, where appropriate, Grade Point Average. Details of the credit or advanced standing given for previous study or study at other institutions where possible should be provided. For research higher degrees, the thesis title and a 100-word abstract should be included.

Key to grading: Provide details of institutional system for grading units and, where appropriate, for grading the award. Explanations of the award of honours grades or honours awards as appropriate should be included. If appropriate details may be provided of examination processes for research higher degrees.

Additional course details: *Specific details of particular course related achievements of the graduate, which may include: workplace learning; institutional organised study abroad or independent overseas study credited to the award; major practicum or professional training placements; and assessed competencies or graduate employability skills.*

Special achievements, recognition and prizes: *Academically related individual achievements such as prizes, university or faculty medals, special distinctions, and university funded or outside funded scholarships based on academic merit. Only information that can be authenticated by the institution should be included. Each university will define what will constitute 'academically related individual achievements.'*

5. Description of the Australian Higher Education System

Brief description of the Australian higher education system as approved by Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations and the AQF Advisory Board Secretariat.

What Documentation Should Be Provided to Students?

It is recommended that a Graduation Statement be provided to all graduates from all higher education courses at graduation, or close to the time of graduation. The Graduation Statement does not replace the testamur or degree certificate, nor academic transcripts that may continue to be made available at different stages during a student's course. Tables 2.1 and 2.2 below compare and contrast the Graduation Statement with academic transcripts and e-portfolios respectively.

It is recognised that academic transcripts are not uniform across the higher education sector, varying in content and format, and in timing and frequency of issue. Table 2.1 summarises typical points of difference between Graduation Statements and academic transcripts.

Table 2.1: Relationship between Academic Transcript and the Proposed Graduation Statement

Academic Transcript	Graduation Statement
Emphasis on providing information on student course and unit enrolment, and academic achievement.	Emphasis on providing information to prospective employers or institutions to which graduates may be seeking to enrol.
Can be issued at any time, including at intervals during the course or prior to graduation.	Issued on completion of a course.
A progressive record of all studies (units, subjects and courses) undertaken at an institution, whether complete or incomplete.	A record of the studies undertaken that entitled the graduate to the particular award to which the Graduation Statement pertains.
Continually evolving while a student is studying with a particular institution.	Static, a snapshot of information compiled at a particular point in time (i.e. upon an award being conferred or requirements being met).
Information on the nature and context of the course being undertaken or completed is typically limited.	Detailed information on the nature and context of the course completed.
Information on the national system and awards framework is typically very limited or non-existent.	Information included on the national system of higher education and the awards framework.
Information typically limited to units/subjects undertaken and the grades, marks and GPAs.	Information includes units of study and grades/GPAs and may also include additional details of graduate's course related academic achievements.
Secure document.	Secure document.

There is a growing consideration of e-portfolios in Australian higher education. Table 2.2 contrasts the nature of e-portfolios and the Graduation Statement.

Table 2.2: Relationship between e-Portfolios and the Proposed Graduation Statement

e-portfolio	Graduation Statement
Information pertaining to a broad range of activities and achievements, including academic and non-academic achievements.	Information pertaining to a single award conferred on an individual.
Maintenance is an individual responsibility (possibly with institutional guidance + framework).	Compilation, verification and authentication is the responsibility of the award granting institution.
Contains authenticated and unauthenticated information.	Contains only authenticated information.
Continually evolving.	Static, a snapshot of information compiled at a particular point in time (i.e. upon an award requirements being met).
Certain information stored in an e-portfolio might be later authenticated by institutions for inclusion in a Graduation Statement.	Once issued a Graduation Statement might be included in a student's e-portfolio.
Not a secure document.	Secure document.

Examples of Graduation Statements

The examples of Graduation Statements that follow have been based on the guiding principles and the specification of what information is to be included, as set out in the guidelines. The examples are for two bachelors degrees, and for a bachelors degree with honours, a masters degree by research, and a PhD degree.

While each issuing university and higher education provider is expected to follow the guidelines and provide specified information under the five sections, the layout in each case will be determined according to institutional practice, with institutions making their own decisions with respect to optional elements. In the examples that follow the academic records are presented in the style used by one particular Australian university simply for illustrative purposes. However, it is expected that each university will follow its own style in presenting information and including information from academic transcripts. The description of the Australian higher education system used in the examples has been approved by the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations and the AQF Advisory Board Secretariat.

EXAMPLE 1: Example of a Graduation Statement for a Bachelor of Business degree, including failing grades

EXAMPLE 2: Example of a Graduation Statement for a Bachelor of Arts degree

EXAMPLE 3: Example of a Graduation Statement for a Bachelor of Arts with honours degree

EXAMPLE 4: Example of a Graduation Statement for a Master of Arts by Research

EXAMPLE 5: Example of a Graduation Statement for a PhD degree



University of Eastern Australia

1. the graduate

Family Name: Allen
Given Name(s): Henry
Student Number: 123456789

2. the award

Name of award:

Bachelor of Business, with specialisation in accounting

Detail:

This bachelors degree, taught in English, normally takes three years of full-time study or the equivalent part-time study. Admission requirements and course rules are available on the University's on-line Prospectus at www.easternaustralia.edu.au/prospectus

Features:

In year three of the course, opportunity is provided for a period of full-time supervised workplace training.

Pathway to further study:

Graduates with bachelors degrees have access to range of different graduate certificates and graduate diplomas and, in some fields, to masters degrees. For further details, see the University's on-line Prospectus at www.easternaustralia.edu.au/prospectus

Course accreditation:

This course is accredited by CPA Australia and graduates are eligible to apply for Associate Membership.

3. awarding institution

The University of Eastern Australia is a comprehensive public university established in 1973 under legislation passed by the Parliament of the state of New South Wales. For additional information, see the University's on-line Prospectus at www.easternaustralia.edu.au/prospectus

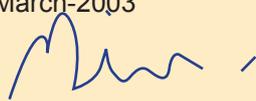
australian higher education

graduationstatement

The Australian Higher Education Graduation Statement is provided by Australian higher education institutions to graduating students on completion of the requirements for a particular higher education award. It provides a description of the nature, level, context and status of studies that were pursued by the individual named. Its purpose is to assist in both national and international recognition of Australian qualifications and to promote international mobility and professional recognition of graduates.

certification

Date: 03-March-2003

Signature: 

Capacity: Registrar

4. graduate's academic achievements

Course details:

		Status	Date
BACHELOR OF BUSINESS		AWARDED	03 MARCH 2003
Accounting			
		Mark	Grade
UNDERGRADUATE - BACHELOR OF BUSINESS			
<i>2000 Semester 1</i>			
BA02441	Personal Financial Planning	60	CREDIT
BA03306	Auditing	45	FAIL
BA03307	Corporate Finance	55	PASS
BA03309	Advanced Financial Accounting	63	CREDIT
<i>2000 Semester 2</i>			
BA03312	Advanced Management Accounting	40	NOT COMPLETED/FAIL
BA03316	The Practising Accountant and Technology	55	PASS
BA03317	Managerial Accounting Technology	63	CREDIT
BBB3100	Business Integrated Learning	58	PASS
<i>2001 Semester 1</i>			
BB02300	Commercial Law	64	CREDIT
BA01101	Financial Accounting	61	CREDIT
BA02203	Corporate Accounting	58	PASS
BA02204	Management Accounting	55	PASS
BA03306	Auditing	55	PASS
<i>2001 Semester 2</i>			
BA02208	Computerised Accounting Information Systems	63	CREDIT
BH01171	Introduction to Marketing	58	PASS
BL02205	Corporate Law	68	CREDIT
BL02206	Taxation Law and Practice	58	PASS
BA03312	Advanced Management Accounting	53	PASSED AT SUPPLEMENTARY EXAMINATION
<i>2002 Semester 1</i>			
BA01101	Accounting for Decision Making	65	CREDIT
BA01107	Accounting Information Systems	63	CREDIT
BC01102	Information Systems for Business	59	PASS
BEO1103	Microeconomic Principles	72	DISTINCTION
<i>2002 Semester 2</i>			
BE01104	Macroeconomic Principles	74	DISTINCTION
BE01106	Business Statistics	66	CREDIT
BE01115	Business Law	68	CREDIT
BM01102	Management and Organisational Behaviour	59	PASS

Key to grading:

The final pass grades for individual units within the course are as follows:

- High Distinction (80-100)
- Distinction (70-79)
- Credit (60-69)
- Pass (50-59)
- Passed at Supplementary Examination (50)

The final fail grades for individual units within this course are as follows:

- Fail (0-49)
- Not Completed/Fail (Did not complete all prescribed requirements)
- Withdrawn/Fail (Failure after specified date and before end of semester)

Additional course details:

From 3 January 2002 to 13 February 2002 completed period of full-time supervised workplace training with Smith and Brown Accounting, 123 Elizabeth Street, Melbourne.

5. description of the **australian higher education system**

Introduction

The Australian higher education system consists of independent, self-governing public and private universities and higher education institutions that award higher education qualifications. All higher education providers must be listed on the Australian Qualifications Framework Register of Recognised Education Institutions and Authorised Accreditation Authorities in Australia. This register is developed under instructions from Commonwealth, State and Territory Education and Training Ministers (See: <http://www.aqf.edu.au/register.htm>).

Qualifications

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Quality

Australia has an international reputation for high quality education that is built on best practice in accreditation, quality recognition, quality assurance, and student consumer protection. All higher education institutions must be accredited by State and Territory Governments in accordance with strict criteria detailed in the National Protocols for Higher Education Approval Processes. These Protocols are nationally agreed principles that ensure consistent criteria and standards across Australia in such matters as the recognition of new universities, the operation of overseas higher education institutions in Australia, and the accreditation of higher education courses offered by institutions other than universities (See: <http://www.dest.gov.au/highereducation>).

All institutions receiving Australian Government financial support must meet quality and accountability requirements that are set out in the Higher Education Support Act 2003. The Australian Government also uses a range of tools to measure and monitor the quality of outcomes, while the interests of international students are protected by the Education Service for Overseas Students Act 2000 and its National Code, providing tuition and financial assurance and a consistent approach to institution registration.

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Australian Qualifications Framework

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Senior Secondary Certificate of Education (SSCE)	Vocational Graduate Diploma Vocational Graduate Certificate Advanced Diploma Diploma Certificate IV Certificate III Certificate II Certificate I	Doctoral Degree Masters Degree Graduate Diploma Graduate Certificate Bachelor Degree Associate Degree, Advanced Diploma Diploma

EXAMPLE 2

UEA

University of Eastern Australia

1. the graduate

Family Name: Simpson
Given Name(s): Elizabeth
Student Number: 123456789

2. the award

Name of award:

Bachelor of Arts, with specialisation in sociology and political science

Detail:

This bachelors degree, taught in English, normally takes three years of full-time study or the equivalent part-time study. Admission requirements and course rules are available on the University's on-line Prospectus at www.easternaustralia.edu.au/prospectus

Pathway to further study:

Graduates with bachelors degrees have access to range of different graduate certificates and graduate diplomas and, in some fields, to masters degrees. For further details, see the University's on-line Prospectus at www.easternaustralia.edu.au/prospectus

3. awarding institution

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australian higher education

graduationstatement

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certification

Date: 03-March-2003

Signature:



Capacity: Registrar

4. graduate's academic achievements

Course details:

		Status	Date
BACHELOR OF ARTS		AWARDED	03 MARCH 2003
Sociology			
Political Science			
		Mark	Grade
UNDERGRADUATE - BACHELOR OF ARTS			
<i>2000 Semester 1</i>			
ANTH 1002	Introduction to Anthropology	69	CREDIT
MATH1001	Introduction to Mathematics	55	PASS
POL1001	Introduction to Political Studies	63	CREDIT
SOCY1003	The Study of Societies	57	PASS
<i>2000 Semester 2</i>			
ANTH1005	Understanding Human Diversity	69	CREDIT
POL1005	The Australian Political System	73	DISTINCTION
SOCY1004	Contemporary Society	68	CREDIT
SOCY1005	Introduction to Social Psychology	77	DISTINCTION
<i>2001 Semester 1</i>			
POL1007	Comparative Politics	78	DISTINCTION
SOCY2040	Classical Sociology Theory	68	CREDIT
SOCY2044	Gender and Sociology	89	HIGH DISTINCTION
SOCY3066	Law and Social Control	77	DISTINCTION
<i>2001 Semester 2</i>			
POL1008	International Relations	75	DISTINCTION
SOCY2043	Quantitative Research Methods	67	CREDIT
SOCY2033	Sociology of Illness and Health	76	DISTINCTION
SOCY 3015	Difference and Ethnicity	68	CREDIT
<i>2002 Semester 1</i>			
GEND 2021	Trauma, Memory and Culture	76	DISTINCTION
POL1005	Asian Politics and Culture	68	CREDIT
SOCY2034	Australian Society and Change	77	DISTINCTION
SOCY3014	Modern Sociological Theory	77	DISTINCTION
<i>2002 Semester 2</i>			
GEND2023	Introduction to Feminist Theory	76	DISTINCTION
POL1005	The American Political System	68	CREDIT
SOCY2008	Sociology of Disaster	75	DISTINCTION
SOCY2031	Sociology of the Third World	68	CREDIT

Key to grading:

The final pass grades for individual units within the course are as follows:

High Distinction (80-100)

Distinction (70-79)

Credit (60-69)

Pass (50-59)

Passed at Supplementary Examination (50)

The final fail grades for individual units within this course are as follows:

Fail (0-49)

Not Completed/Fail (Did not complete all prescribed requirements)

Withdrawn/Fail (Failure after specified date and before end of semester)

Additional course details:*Overseas Study*

Spent semester 2, 2002 on a study abroad program at Lock Haven University, Pennsylvania, United States, during which time the following units of study were successfully completed:

POL.LH2003 World Politics

SOC.LH2008 Research Methodology

SOC.LH2020 Sociological Deviance

SOC.LH 3008 Sociology; Special Study Topic

Special achievements, recognition and prizes:

Awarded University of Eastern Australia undergraduate scholarship for three years, based on academic achievement in secondary education.

Awarded the Greer Medal for the most outstanding academic achievement in a second year subject in 2001 (Faculty of Arts).

5. description of the **australian higher education system**

Introduction

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Quality

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Australian Qualifications Framework

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Senior Secondary Certificate of Education (SSCE)	Vocational Graduate Diploma Vocational Graduate Certificate Advanced Diploma Diploma Certificate IV Certificate III Certificate II Certificate I	Doctoral Degree Masters Degree Graduate Diploma Graduate Certificate Bachelor Degree Associate Degree, Advanced Diploma Diploma

EXAMPLE 3



University of Eastern Australia

1. the graduate

Family Name: Brown
Given Name(s): Janice
Student Number: 123456789

2. the award

Name of award:

Bachelor of Arts with Honours, with specialisation in Gender Studies and Sociology

Detail:

This qualification, taught in English, is available to students enrolled for the Bachelor of Arts degree who perform at exceptional levels in the first three years of study. The qualification normally takes four years of full-time study or equivalent part-time study and includes substantial research training components including a research project. Details on admission requirements and course rules is available in the University's on-line Prospectus at www.easternaustralia.edu.au/prospectus

Pathway to further study:

Graduates with bachelors degrees with first class honours or second class honours division IIA are eligible for direct admission into relevant masters and doctoral programs. For further details see the University's on-line Prospectus at www.easternaustralia.edu.au/prospectus

3. awarding institution

The University of Eastern Australia is a comprehensive public university established in 1973 under legislation passed by the Parliament of the state of New South Wales. For additional information, see the University's on-line Prospectus at www.easternaustralia.edu.au/prospectus

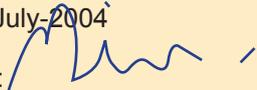
australian higher education

graduationstatement

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certification

Date: 29-July-2004

Signature: 

Capacity: Registrar

4. graduate's academic achievements

Course details:

		Status	Date
BACHELOR OF ARTS WITH SECOND CLASS HONOURS, DIVISION A		AWARDED	29 JULY 2004
Gender Studies			
Sociology			
		Mark	Grade
UNDERGRADUATE - BACHELOR OF ARTS			
<i>2003 Semester 1</i>			
ANTH 1002	Introduction to Anthropology	69	Credit
DRAM1005	Drama and Acting	65	Credit
POL1001	Introduction to Political Studies	73	Distinction
SOCY1003	The Study of Societies	76	Distinction
<i>2003 Semester 2</i>			
ANTH1005	Understanding Human Diversity	69	Credit
POL1005	The Australian Political System	73	Distinction
SOCY1004	Contemporary Society	68	Credit
SOCY1005	Introduction to Social Psychology	77	Distinction
<i>2004 Semester 1</i>			
POL1007	Comparative Politics	78	Distinction
SOCY2040	Classical Sociology Theory	68	Credit
SOCY2044	Gender and Sociology	84	High Distinction
SOCY3066	Law and Social Control	77	Distinction
<i>2004 Semester 2</i>			
POL1008	International Relations	75	Distinction
SOCY2043	Quantitative Research Methods	67	Credit
SOCY2033	Sociology of Illness and Health	76	Distinction
SOCY 3015	Difference and Ethnicity	68	Credit
<i>2005 Semester 1</i>			
GEND 2021	Trauma, Memory and Culture	76	Distinction
POL1005	Asian Politics and Culture	68	Credit
SOCY2034	Australian Society and Change	77	Distinction
SOCY3014	Modern Sociological Theory	77	Distinction
<i>2005 Semester 2</i>			
GEND2023	Introduction to Feminist Theory	76	Distinction
POL1005	The American Political System	68	Credit
SOCY2008	Sociology of Disaster	75	Distinction
SOCY2031	Sociology of the Third World	68	Credit
<i>2006 Semester 1</i>			
SOCY4005	Sociology IV Honours	CONTINUING COURSE	
<i>2006 Semester 2</i>			
SOCY4005	Sociology IV Honours	72	Second Class Honours Div A

Key to grading:

Bachelors degrees with honours are graded overall as follows:

- First Class Honours (80-100)
- Second Class Honours Division A (70-79)
- Second Class Honours Division B (60-69)
- Third Class Honours (50-59)

The final pass grades for individual units within the course are as follows:

- High Distinction (80-100)
- Distinction (70-79)
- Credit (60-69)
- Pass (50-59)
- Passed at Supplementary Examination (50)

The final fail grades for individual units within this course are as follows:

- Fail (0-49)
- Not Completed/Fail (Did not complete all prescribed requirements)
- Withdrawn/Fail (Failure after specified date and before end of semester)

Additional course details:

The final honours year included a small-scale, supervised research project, comprising 25% of total workload for the year.

Special achievements, recognition and prizes:

Awarded University of Eastern Australia undergraduate scholarship for four years, based on academic achievement in secondary education.

5. description of the **australian higher education system**

Introduction

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Admission

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Quality

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University of Eastern Australia

1. the graduate

Family Name: Smith
Given Name(s): Richard
Student Number: 123456789

2. the award

Name of award:

Master of Arts by Research, Archaeology and Anthropology

Detail:

Admission is open to graduates with a relevant honours bachelors degree with first class honours or second class honours, division A, or an equivalent qualification. The course normally takes two years of full-time study or an equivalent period of part-time study and is taught in English. The award is made principally on the basis of a research thesis or dissertation that is independently examined, normally by two examiners, one of whom is external to the University. Details on admission requirements and course rules is available in the University's on-line Prospectus at www.easternaustralia.edu.au/prospectus

Pathway to further study:

Graduates with research masters degrees with first class honours or second class honours division IIA are eligible for direct admission into relevant doctoral programs. For further information, see the University's on-line Prospectus at www.easternaustralia.edu.au/prospectus

3. awarding institution

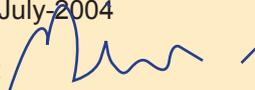
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certification

Date: 05-July-2004

Signature: 

Capacity: Registrar

4. graduate's academic achievements

Course details:

	Status	Date
MASTER OF ARTS WITH FIRST CLASS HONOURS Archaeology Anthropology	AWARDED	05 JULY 2004

	Grade
MASTER OF ARTS GRADUATE PROGRAM	
<i>2000 Semester 1</i>	
RESF8015 Master full-time research course in Archaeology and Anthropolgy, Faculty of Arts	RESEARCH CONTINUING
<i>2000 Semester 2</i>	
RESF8015 Master full-time research course in Archeology and Anthropolgy, Faculty of Arts	RESEARCH CONTINUING
<i>2001 Semester 1</i>	
RESF8015 Master full-time research course in Archaeology and Anthropolgy, Faculty of Arts	RESEARCH CONTINUING
<i>2001 Semester 2</i>	
RESF8015 Master full-time research course in Archaeology and Anthropolgy, Faculty of Arts	RESEARCH CONTINUING
<i>2002 Semester 1</i>	
RESF8015 Master full-time research course in Archaeology and Anthropolgy, Faculty of Arts	COURSE REQUIREMENTS SATISFIED

THESIS TITLE	Technical Analysis of Archaeological Agricultural Implements from Papua New Guinea
ABSTRACT	Through archaeological excavations and analysis using carbon dating, this study identified and dated agricultural implements from used in previous eras on the island of New Britain. The excavations were part of a larger project undertaken by the Archaeology Department of the University of Eastern Australia, with funding from the Australian Research Council. Tools were classified employing the functional typology developed by Harvey and Smith and were subject to carbon data techniques. The study found that the inhabitants of the region three or four hundred years ago used far more sophisticated tools that had been assumed. Particularly important was the use of iron and copper tools.

Key to grading:

Masters degrees with honours are graded overall as follows:

- First Class Honours (80-100)
- Second Class Honours Division A (70-79)
- Second Class Honours Division B (60-69)
- Third Class Honours (50-59)

Additional course details:

The Master of Arts course includes a compulsory unit on research methodology and research ethics, and satisfactory completion of a major thesis that is externally examined.

Overseas Study

The student undertook fieldwork in Papua New Guinea for one semester in 2002, with funding from research program supported by the Australian Research Council.

Special achievements, recognition and prizes:

Awarded University of Eastern Australia postgraduate scholarship for two years, based on academic achievement in the bachelor of honours degree.

Awarded University Medal at graduation.

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UEA

University of Eastern Australia

1. the graduate

Family Name: Roberts
Given Name(s): Brian
Student Number: 123456789

2. the award

Name of award:

Doctor of Philosophy, with specialisation in
Political Science

Detail:

Admission to this course is available to students holding a masters degree by research or a bachelors degree with first class honours or second class honours division A, or equivalent in a relevant discipline. The course normally takes three years of full-time study or an equivalent period of part-time study and consists mainly of a supervised research project and completion of a thesis, written in English. This award is made principally on the basis of a research thesis or dissertation that is independently assessed, normally by examiners external to the University. Details on admission requirements and course rules are available in the University's on-line Prospectus at www.easternaustralia.edu.au/prospectus

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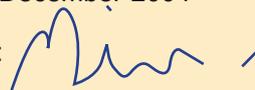
australian higher education

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certification

Date: 14-December-2004

Signature: 

Capacity: Registrar

4. graduate's academic achievements

Course details:

	Status	Date
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY Political Science	AWARDED	14 DECEMBER 2004

	Mark	Grade
RESEARCH 9015 DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY, FACULTY OF ARTS <i>2001 Semester 1</i>		
POL6005 Political Analysis and Research Methodology	89	High Distinction
POL8000 PhD - Research Course in Political Science, Faculty of Arts		RESEARCH CONTINUING
<i>2001 Semester 2</i>		
POL8000 PhD - Research Course in Political Science, Faculty of Arts		RESEARCH CONTINUING
<i>2002 Semester 1</i>		
POL8000 PhD - Research Course in Political Science, Faculty of Arts		RESEARCH CONTINUING
<i>2002 Semester 2</i>		
POL8000 PhD - Research Course in Political Science, Faculty of Arts		RESEARCH CONTINUING
<i>2003 Semester 1</i>		
POL8000 PhD - Research Course in Political Science, Faculty of Arts		RESEARCH CONTINUING
<i>2003 Semester 2</i>		
POL8000 PhD - Research Course in Political Science, Faculty of Arts		RESEARCH CONTINUING
<i>2004 Semester 1</i>		
POL8000 PhD - Research Course in Political Science, Faculty of Arts		COURSE REQUIREMENTS SATISFIED
THESIS TITLE	The role of farm lobbies in Australian politics: A study of the National Farmers' Federation	
ABSTRACT	This study explored the lobbying and representational role of the National Farmers' Federation in both national and state politics in Australia. Using the theories of Eckstein and Beer the study analysed the political resources, political goals and political ideology of the organisation. Key political resources were found to be a strongly committed leadership cadre, significant financial resources and skilful staff leadership. However, despite strong attempts to work effectively with both sides of politics the organisation finds it difficult to shake off its traditional non-Labor orientation.	

Key to grading:

There is no grading system for this degree. Individual units of study are graded as follows:

High Distinction (80-100)

Distinction (70-79)

Credit (60-69)

Pass (50-59)

Passed at Supplementary Examination (50)

The final fail grades for individual units within this course are as follows:

Fail (0-49)

Not Completed/Fail (Did not complete all prescribed requirements)

Withdrawn/Fail (Failure after specified date and before end of semester)

Special achievements, recognition and prizes:

Awarded national scholarship (Australian Postgraduate Award) 2001-2004.

Part-time tutor in Political Science in Semester 2 of 2003 for a first year unit on Australian Political Institutions and Behaviour.

5. description of the **australian higher education system**

Introduction

The Australian higher education system consists of independent, self-governing public and private universities and higher education institutions that award higher education qualifications. All higher education providers must be listed on the Australian Qualifications Framework Register of Recognised Education Institutions and Authorised Accreditation Authorities in Australia. This register is developed under instructions from Commonwealth, State and Territory Education and Training Ministers (See: <http://www.aqf.edu.au/register.htm>).

Qualifications

The Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) is a single national and comprehensive system of qualifications offered by higher education, vocational education and training, and secondary schools. The AQF comprises a set of national qualifications (ie awards), titles and qualification descriptors (See accompanying diagram). The AQF specifies the main criteria for defining qualifications based on the general characteristics of learning outcomes at each qualification level. The main qualifications awarded by higher education institutions are bachelors, masters and doctoral degrees, and graduate certificates and graduate diplomas. Research higher degrees at masters and doctoral level are normally assessed by external examiners. The higher education qualifications descriptors are periodically reviewed against best national and international practice. Guidelines for each qualification title are published in the Australian Qualifications Framework Implementation Handbook (<http://www.aqf.edu.au/implem.htm>).

Admission

Requirements for admission to particular programmes are set by individual universities and colleges that generally provide a range of routes for entry and admit those students considered to have potential to successfully complete programmes of study. Admission of school leavers to undergraduate programmes typically is on the basis of the level of achievement in Year 12 secondary education, although some institutions and programmes also use interviews, portfolios or demonstrated interest or aptitude. Most institutions also provide alternative entry provisions via bridging or foundation programs for mature age students or other special provisions. Admission to post-graduate programmes is generally based on the level of achievement in previous higher education studies; in most cases, admission to PhD; programmes is based on high achievement in a research masters degree or in a bachelors degree with first class honours or second class honours division A.

Quality

Australia has an international reputation for high quality education that is built on best practice in accreditation, quality recognition, quality assurance, and student consumer protection. All higher education institutions must be accredited by State and Territory Governments in accordance with strict criteria detailed in the National Protocols for Higher Education Approval Processes. These Protocols are nationally agreed principles that ensure consistent criteria and standards across Australia in such matters as the recognition of new universities, the operation of overseas higher education institutions in Australia, and the accreditation of higher education courses offered by institutions other than universities (See: <http://www.dest.gov.au/highereducation>).

All institutions receiving Australian Government financial support must meet quality and accountability requirements that are set out in the Higher Education Support Act 2003. The Australian Government also uses a range of tools to measure and monitor the quality of outcomes, while the interests of international students are protected by the Education Service for Overseas Students Act 2000 and its National Code, providing tuition and financial assurance and a consistent approach to institution registration.

Australian Universities are autonomous bodies that are responsible for managing quality through internal accreditation processes and commitment to codes of practice. Universities and other higher education providers are required by legislation to have in place appropriate quality assurance processes. These processes are periodically audited by the Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA).

AUQA is Australia's principal national quality agency for higher education. It is an independent body that undertakes quality audits of higher education institutions and accreditation authorities (See: <http://www.auqa.edu.au>). AUQA publicly reports on performance and outcomes, assists in quality enhancement and advises on quality assurance.

Australian Qualifications Framework

Schools Sector Qualifications	Vocational Education and Training Sector Qualifications	Higher Education Sector Qualifications
Senior Secondary Certificate of Education (SSCE)	Vocational Graduate Diploma Vocational Graduate Certificate Advanced Diploma Diploma Certificate IV Certificate III Certificate II Certificate I	Doctoral Degree Masters Degree Graduate Diploma Graduate Certificate Bachelor Degree Associate Degree, Advanced Diploma Diploma

Consultation with Universities and Other Higher Education Providers

3

Introduction

This chapter provides a summary of responses from universities and other higher education providers with regard to the Proposal for an Australian Higher Education Graduation Statement. In late September 2007, a copy of the Proposal, modified in light of discussions at the national workshop held on 16 August 2007, was mailed to each University and those institutions listed as Table B higher education providers. Covering letters addressed to executive heads sought official institutional responses. The letter particularly sought comment on the following issues:

1. The potential benefits of an Australian Higher Education Graduation Statement, especially for 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 idea of 'core' and 'optional' items;
4. Whether the academic record within the Graduation Statement should include only successfully completed units for the particular award, or all units (including those 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.

Written responses were received from 33 institutions, (31 public universities plus 2 Table B providers).

The clear message was that with one exception all universities supported the introduction of an Australian version of the Diploma Supplement and there was strong support for the name 'Graduation Statement' rather than 'Diploma Supplement'. Further, many universities not only stated their support for the Graduation Statement but also indicated enthusiasm for the project and provided highly supportive comments on its potential value particularly for higher education institutions, graduates and employers. This suggests that, with an appropriate implementation strategy, adoption of the Australian Higher Education Graduation Statement by the Australian higher education system over a three year time span is not likely to be difficult.

In this report, University responses will be summarised on the basis of comments provided on the five key issues. However, first suggestions for alternative approaches will be outlined since this has bearing on responses on some of the five issues. At the end of the chapter, other issues covered in responses will be mentioned.

Suggested Alternative Approaches

Two alternatives to the Proposal were suggested in the responses provided to the Project Team. Both deserve mention.

Alternative A

First, five universities put forward in some detail an alternative that suggested that institutions should provide all graduates with both a Graduation Statement and academic transcript and that all information on the academic achievements of individual students should be set out only on the academic transcript. With this approach, the Graduation Statement would carry a note that readers should see the academic transcript for information on academic achievements.

The proposers were the University of New South Wales, the University of Sydney, the University of Western Australia, and Bond University. In addition, the University of Canberra noted that the Graduation Statement was not intended to replace the academic transcript and that the Graduation Statement included information from the transcript leading it to suggest that this was unnecessary duplication.

The suggestions of the University of New South Wales for greater flexibility with the Graduation Statement model sprang from its current efforts in implementing what it calls a Supplementary Transcript. Its submission explained as follows:

UNSW is currently implementing a Supplementary Transcript which will be available to students from April 2008 onwards, and which will not be restricted to academic-program related achievements. The Supplementary Transcript will include achievements and activities which are UNSW related and which can be verified by the University, such as contribution to the University community through volunteering as a Student Ambassador and serving as President of the UNSW student organization. UNSW does not support the statement in principle 4 that the Graduation Statement will be compiled upon the student becoming eligible for conferral of their degree. UNSW envisages that students will request their Graduation Statement prior to graduating. Students begin seeking employment a considerable time before completing their studies and the information, particularly optional information, included on the Graduation Statement would be extremely beneficial to an employer...

With regard to principle 5, the UNSW Supplementary Transcript will be similar to an academic transcript in that it will be a progressive record of all verifiable UNSW-related achievements from a student's time at the University. We do not plan to produce separate Supplementary Transcripts for each individual award a student studies towards or completes.

In addition we do not support the repetition of what is recorded on a transcript being repeated on the Graduation Statement.

The University of Queensland proposal was similar except that it suggested that Graduation Statements should be course specific rather than student specific. The UQ Vice-Chancellor wrote as follows:

In particular, I am of the strong view that the Graduation Statement should not require the repetition of information that is already included on a degree certificate and academic record, which are the official legal documents issued by the University regarding a student's enrolment and conferral of an award. For this reason, UQ

does not support creation of a 'filtered' academic record containing a subset of studies undertaken at the University, to form part of the Graduation Statement for a particular award. Our clear preference is that the Graduation Statement should be a document that assists the reader to understand and interpret the existing official records issued to a student rather than creating a new layer of certification that presents an incomplete picture of the student's academic work.

Elsewhere, the University of Queensland submission suggested specifically that the Graduation Statement should be '*a generic statement that is not personalised for an individual student and it is used to interpret the official academic record ... and could be made available on the University's website for downloading by both graduates and third parties. Hard copy could also be made available at the point of graduation.*' The detailed University of Western Australia submission made similar suggestions, emphasising its wish to retain and enhance the academic transcript. It pointed to important Australian differences to European practices, commenting as follows:

The Diploma Supplement has evolved in this way most likely because traditionally European universities did not provide an official transcript of results to their students. Thus it was sensible to include this section in the diploma supplement. In Australia, however, universities have for many years provided academic transcripts to their students. These documents differ from institution to institution but all contain the same core data. There has been no suggestion that there is any fault with any of these academic transcripts.

It would be better to develop a GS that includes information that is supplementary and explanatory to the academic transcript and that includes only the following sections:

- The award
- Awarding institution
- Description of the Australian higher education system.

This would leave institutions free to develop their academic transcripts as they wish but would require them to provide a context for these transcripts. It would also alleviate some of the problems around the differing practices in institutions ...

The University of Sydney put forward a similar view, pointing to the possible risks of two different records of student achievement being available and with employers and other universities perusing only one of them. Thus, the Sydney view was as follows:

The University of Sydney would be more supportive of a 'minimalist' approach to the proposal by expanding our current academic transcript,

which already contains some of the suggested 'new' information i.e., prizes and scholarships and reference to overseas exchange programmes. We would prefer production on our own stationery, with inclusion of a nationally agreed logo or the like. This would contribute to the acceptance and successful utilisation of the document, as well as reducing implementation costs. The argument about whether to include only successfully completed units of study on the new document would also be obviated by this approach. Should the consensus be for a separate document, we would wish it to contain a statement to the effect that the Graduate's Achievements should be read in conjunction with the Academic Transcript.

Bond University took a somewhat similar approach arguing for program details for individual student achievement to be recorded only on the transcript:

At the moment program details and the University's grading system are embedded in our official academic record. We do not think it desirable or helpful to reproduce this material again in the Statement. The Statement should complement the transcript and not replicate it... Even our awards and prizes are printed on the current Bond academic transcript, including notations such as 'First in Class'. In the interests of ease of transition to a Statement we would strongly favour section 4 of the Statement being limited to the additional program details.'

Alternative B

A second alternative supported by two universities was for the Graduation Statement simply to provide a summary list of units that contributed to the award without any information on marks or grades, and for a note to refer the reader to the academic transcript. James Cook University explained this alternative as follows:

JCU does not believe grades should be included but only the name of subjects successfully completed and relating to the degree conferred. JCU believes this because it feels that the Graduation Statement should show prospective employers the attributes the graduate has acquired rather than their personal pathway in getting there.

An almost identical approach was suggested by Curtin University:

In our view, the Statement should list only those units (or courses depending on the information system) that have contributed to the award being described. There should be a very clear and direct statement to indicate that the Academic Transcript contains the student history and the complete chronological sequence of learning. RPL should be mentioned if it has contributed to the award being described. The Statement should not need

to list grades or to list those subjects for which a Fail or a DNC or DNA has been applied. All of this information is available on the Academic Transcript. Curtin does not support placing an abridged form of the student academic history into the Statement.

Potential Benefits of an Australian Higher Education Graduation Statement

Almost all responses were strongly in favour of the Graduation Statement and saw major value particularly for domestic students going abroad for study or employment, and for international students graduating from Australian higher education institutions and going home or to other countries for employment. For example, the University of New South Wales saw the Graduation Statement '*as an important innovation which will facilitate the transparency and portability of the qualifications of Australian graduates and allow our graduates to better compete in a global market*', while the University of Sydney called the Graduation Statement '*a constructive initiative, which has the potential to assist many of our graduates who compete more effectively for employment opportunities in the globalised economy*'.

RMIT University saw particular value in that it '*is a global university and is well known in many parts of the world. However, our graduates would benefit from such a statement to facilitate the portability of their RMIT awards beyond the places where our reputation is not visible*'. However, RMIT commented that as a dual sector university it would prefer to be issuing similar documents to both university and TAFE students. James Cook similarly emphasised the value of the Graduation Statement for international students returning to their home country who '*would benefit from a globally consistent and accepted system...*' The University of New England saw potential benefits for both international and domestic students.

The University of Melbourne commented that it had '*been interested in this development from the outset, and overall is supportive of the introduction of a nationally consistent Graduation Statement that provides value to our graduates, wherever they may be working and studying throughout the world, and to the users of the statement*'. The University of Western Australia commented that the Graduation Statement '*will be of significant value to our students, particularly those that go overseas for work or to undertake further study*'. The University of Adelaide saw the proposal having '*merit in that it serves a need that is not currently being met by existing transcripts*

and testamurs' while the University of South Australia was particularly enthusiastic about the value of the Graduation Statement for its large cohort of transnational students, 'providing an authoritative document about their qualification, the University and the Australian higher education system for use in an international context'.

Bond University saw particular value of the Graduation Statement for a private university whose role and courses are not always well understood overseas, commenting as follows:

In the past, it has often been necessary to write to institutions, particularly in North America, who know little of Bond, and who have considerable suspicions of any program structure and duration that does not mirror their own arrangements. While the situation has improved, a document which explains the Australian system, the place of the university in the Australian system and how programs are structured and run, must be of benefit'.

On the other hand, while the University of Tasmania saw considerable potential benefits including greater consistency in presentation and therefore recognition both by employers and higher education institutions overseas for Australian qualifications and comparability with the European Diploma Supplement and therefore ready applicability within Europe, it correctly pointed out that the Graduation Statement does not provide for portability of learning between institutions. Thus it recommended adoption of European style credit transfer system.

Swinburne University of Technology saw multiple benefits including facilitating recognition of qualifications for international study or work experience, assisting Swinburne graduates to participate in European Consortium of Innovative Universities or other European summer school activities and enable the University to 'demonstrate to potential employers the components of the program within the Swinburne Professional Learning Model that includes work integrated learning, career skills development, industry/community projects and problem based learning scenarios'.

On the other hand, a couple of responses quite rightly observed that the Graduation Statement may provide less help to local employers and those graduates seeking local employment than to graduates who go overseas.

Guiding Principles, Format and Content Specifications

Overall, there was strong support for the guiding principles as set out in the proposal and other specifications with regard to the name 'Australian Higher Education Graduation Statement', the format and the content. A

number of responses took up issues about including records of student's academic achievements on both Graduation Statements and Transcripts and alternative approaches, which has been already discussed. Others wrote detailed comments about the issue of inclusion or non inclusion of fail/withdrawn grades on the Graduation Statement, which will be reported upon in a further section of this Chapter.

Of other comments that were offered, most were supportive of suggested specifications or made positive suggestions, some of which have been included in the revised model. The following is a selection of supportive comments or comments making positive suggestions from a number of different universities:

- *There is likely to be increasing interest in and pressure to set out details of Graduate Attributes and 'Employability Skills' (such as those currently recommended by the Business, Industry and Higher Education Collaboration Council).*
- *The recent Graduate Employability Skills report ... makes a recommendation to explicitly include employability skills in the forthcoming Australian Diploma Supplement. The University of South Australia does not agree with this recommendation. The University's position on this recommendation is that only academic courses studied throughout the duration of the program should be included on the transcript.*
- *The use Public/Private University is not consistent with government nomenclature. We suggest that the Graduation Statement in the first instance be written in English with the possibility of making available a second copy in a foreign language, for which the institution may charge a fee. Should the Graduation Statement also include credit approved by the Academic Board?*
- *There needs to be clarity around the nature of Honours and the level of Honours awarded, since this varies in the higher education system in Australia and could cause confusion.*
- *The Graduation Statement should also include information on pathways that lead to enrolment in awards, such as TAFE articulation.*
- *Clear advice should be given to institutions regard the record that should be produced for students who have taken non-traditional pathways to their awards – for example, those students who have gained academic credit from VET or other university study but did not take out university awards for that prior study.*
- *There is uncertainty about whether the Statement is to be issued to completing students or graduating students. These terms are used interchangeably but are quite different and have different administrative implications.*
- *To reduce the costs, it would make sense for the standard information (such as information*

about the Australian higher education system and the institutional information) to be able to be pre-printed on the reverse of the Statement.

- A personalised Graduation Statement that we intended to replicate part of the academic record would need to be printed on secure paper similar to that used for academic transcripts. However, it would need to be readily distinguishable from the academic transcript or students could fraudulently present it as being their full academic record.
- The UQ is of the view that there should be a basic template agreed but each institution should have the flexibility to produce a statement that is in keeping with their respective needs.
- The Learning and Teaching Performance Fund has ensured that graduate attributes are defining features of university studies in Australia. Accordingly, these should feature in the Graduation Statement as transferable skills and qualities. The inclusion of graduate attributes will also accord with the Government's initiatives in graduate destinations and employability.
- Program details appear to be an exact repeat of academic transcripts and this duplication is not necessary. However, there is a need to include additional details not available on a transcript, for example information relating to work placement and international exchange programs, detail on program admission and duration, language of instruction, etc.
- There will be particular issues around producing a Graduation Statement for a jointly-badged award; for example, whilst information about the sector may be the same and need only appear once, information about all the institutions involved will have to be included which could lead to a problem in relation to consistency in how one institution describes another.
- Consideration will need to be given to ensuring that Statements adequately describe the courses undertaken towards double degrees offered by institutions.
- The inclusion of extra curricula activities is considered to be onerous on universities.
- The format is designed to be sufficiently prescriptive to be recognisable as Australian but needs to preserve some flexibility for individual institution distinctiveness. Formatting of the programme details part of the Graduation Statement should be flexible for institutions to structure – for example, an alternative display may be grouping units by major specialisation rather than a strict chronology of study.
- The inclusion of GPA for the award, calculated on nationally consistent basis, would be favourably viewed by international students and could be useful for Australian students seeking entry to overseas institutions for further study.

'Core' and 'Optional' Items

Strong support was provided for both the proposal of core and optional elements and the particular information suggested for each category. The University of Western Sydney emphasised the importance of some of the optional elements which have the potential to enable institutions to highlight differences, particularly in relation to enrichment programs such as study abroad, work placements, scholarships etc. The University of Melbourne commented that it was increasingly interested in ensuring that its programs meet international accreditation requirements, although it may become 'quite voluminous' to record these.

At the same time, a number of responses noted that particular information items are not currently recorded by many universities or, if recorded, are not readily available for inclusion on the Graduation Statement. For example, while the University of New South Wales strongly supported inclusion of information such as work placements and international exchanges, commenting that such information currently is not included on its transcripts.

The University of Adelaide raised timing issues with regard to inclusion of some information. It commented as follows:

Timing is an issue that needs to be considered. The principles of the process indicate that universities should be producing the Graduation Statement at or near graduation. This would be an issue for the University of Adelaide. In addition, the University would have a problem including prizes, as this information is often not finalised until the New Year.

A number of institutions commented on the suggestions of using website links. While in general this proposal was supported, it was pointed out that there are sometimes problems when webpages are changed and so mechanisms would be necessary to ensure that enquirers were linked to historically correct websites.

With regard to reporting on prizes and special awards, a number of institutions suggested that it would be useful if information was included to assist readers to understand the nature, level and significance of special awards such as University Medals.

Whether Graduation Statements Should Include Fail/Withdrawn Grades

This issue has been contentious, provoking considerable discussion at both the May 2007 meeting of the Consortium and at the August 2007 national workshop. However, the written institutional responses expressed an overall preference for all units pursued for an award including fail/withdrawn grades to be included on the record of academic achievements on the Graduation Statement and for there to be a consistent national policy on this issue. Of the 33 responses, 8 institutions did not comment or indicated that either practice would be acceptable. Of those that indicated a clear preference, 15 institutions were in favour of including fail/withdrawn grades while 10 institutions were against.

Many of those who were in favour of not including fail/withdrawn grades did not explain the reasons for their preference, although a number favoured the Graduation Statement explicitly indicating that only successfully completed units of study were included. For example, Charles Sturt University indicated as follows:

CSU would be happy for program details section to include only successfully completed units for the award. It suggests, however, that the AHEGS should make explicit mention of the existence of the Academic Transcript setting out the full record of subjects attempted. The AHEGS should be explicit that it only sets out successfully completed units that count towards the degree and that it does not show fail grades.

Others suggested that fail/withdrawn grades could be eliminated since a full academic record would or should be available on the transcript. James Cook University and Curtin University argued that grades should not be included but only the names of units successfully completed. While the University of New England recommended that Graduation Statements should specifically indicate that the holder *should also be able to provide a transcript which would provide a complete record of all units undertaken at the institution whether or not they relate to this award and whether or not they were successfully undertaken...*

All responses that favoured inclusion of fail/withdrawn grades gave reasons for this preference, some writing at length. Swinburne University of Technology for example commented as follows:

This issue has been discussed at Swinburne's Academic Board, and we are strongly of the opinion that this GS would only have credibility

with prospective employers of our students if it includes Fail, Not Completed/Fail, and Withdrawn/Fail (after the specified date only). We believe that it is inevitable that employers will pay more attention to this than to Transcripts in the future, as the GS will actually contain more useful information, and be seen as an official document.

The University of Queensland commented as follows:

UQ is strongly opposed to the creation of a 'filtered' academic record of any type. However, if the sector proceeds down what we consider to be a misguided path and does not allow such documents to be produced, it would be deceptive at best to omit failed studies from the record of a student's academic work towards a particular award.

The University of South Australia also similarly strongly supported inclusion of fail grades:

By publishing pass grades only, it could be argued that we are misrepresenting the reputation and quality for the system. Graduates may be accepted into employment positions, or undertake further study overseas based on a Graduation Statement which falsely inflates their academic abilities because the record of fail has been omitted. Similarly, by omitting fails, there may be significant gaps in the record which will require explanation, which again may unduly impact on the understanding and reputation of the qualification, the awarding institution and the system.

Inclusion of Information on Accreditation and Professional Recognition

Overall there was majority support for this as an optional element, although there were some surprising variations. Institutions that supported inclusion considered that information on accreditation of courses and professional recognition is likely to be of value to employers and professional associations and thus urged the inclusion of as much relevant information as possible. Swinburne University of Technology favoured not only local but international accreditation information commenting as follows:

Given the mix of professional programs offered by Swinburne and that we operate campuses both in Malaysia and programs in a number of countries, we would need to be able to include both national and international accreditations. As examples, this would include Engineers Australia (possibly including a Washington Accord reference), CPA, CSA, APS, Board of Engineers Malaysia, and potentially international accreditations such as AACSB and EQUIS.

While strongly in favour of inclusion of accreditation and professional recognition, other institutions pointed to possible difficulties. Southern Cross University, for example, explained that a complicating factor is that accreditation in some professional areas such as accounting depends on the particular sequence of units undertaken, thus requiring careful checking of transcripts to ensure that accreditation requirements have been met. While supporting limited accreditation and professional recognition information, James Cook University was concerned about costs and the possibility of error. Others such as the University of Western Sydney supported inclusion of accreditation information but not information on rights to practice. Still others such as the University of Ballarat were concerned with the need for accuracy and thus preferred for the Graduation Statement simply to provide reference to relevant websites. The University of South Australia sensibly suggested that accreditation information needs to be date verified.

Other Issues

A number of other important issues were raised in responses. The issue of cost was raised by a number of universities. Many pointed to the likely substantial costs that would be incurred in producing authenticated hardcopy documentation and the establishment and maintenance of institutional verification procedures. RMIT University commented as follows:

The system development required to produce such as Statement will be significant. At RMIT a similar project to produce a transcript from our PeopleSoft student system cost \$240,000 and took a full twelve months to complete.

The RMIT transcript is printed on polymer to increase the security of the document. It would be necessary to use polymer for the Statement to ensure comparable security. RMIT spent around \$250,000 for the design and production of transcript stock. Given that the Statement is a substantially longer document, the cost would be proportionately greater. In addition, there will be costs of production and postage.

The Australian Catholic University expressed concern about the considerable costs involved, especially in relation to information systems and to ensure authenticity. It commented:

It is of the view that financial assistance from the Department of Education, Science and Training and a realistic timeline will be crucial for the successful implementation of the initiative.

The University of Adelaide tied cost to systems development issues. The introduction of the

Graduation Statement, it argued, will require significant systems effort and expense. This would mean that an impending upgrade of the University's student system would result in any functional development being wasted effort and would have to be redone.

Second, a related issue was the need to enhance the capabilities of existing university student information systems and the costs involved. The University of Ballarat commented that further investigation is needed as to whether existing information systems are able to produce the specified Graduation Statements and the degree of system reconfiguration that may be necessary. The University of Southern Queensland commented as follows:

The discussion paper has raised the major problems that would be encountered by universities using the PeopleSoft Student System, which does not have the functionality to produce a Graduation Statement similar to the examples provided. In order for these universities to produce something similar, significant reconfiguration would be required. If this proposal is adopted across the Australian higher education sector, the universities currently using PeopleSoft should be supported in the development of this functionality to avoid expensive and time-consuming duplication necessitated by in-house developments.

The University of Canberra drew attention to amount of manual effort in addition to system upgrading. It explained as follows:

We appreciate that the intention is to build on existing data-systems and information held by higher education systems. However, whilst most information can be systematised, manual input will be needed for each student for the program details section. This is a considerable amount of work needed to review each student's academic history and write the necessary information and, in our view, would require an additional full-time person. Is there any way of addressing what will be an additional and considerable workload for our student administrative areas?

Flinders University drew attention to the need for systems upgrades and argued for the Graduation Statement to be considered in the wider context of major upgrades to meet other needs. It also specified possible system enhancement needs which could include the following:

- *software changes that may be required to handle the data and extraction requirements of the Graduation Statement;*
- *data collection and management procedures that may be required to establish and maintain new sources of data at both course/award and student levels;*
- *system and procedural changes that may*

be required to manage historical changes to and consistently represent course definitions, student transfers between courses, representation of internal credit arrangements etc.; and

- *quality assurance processes required to ensure consistency of presentation.*

The University of Western Sydney response commented as follows:

The Statement requires the collation of information from a range of different systems in a common format. The institutional response required for this collation is significant and it is estimated that the number of students who may directly benefit is small as the principle target group are those students who intend to work or study overseas. On a sector wide basis it may be more efficient for students who wish to work or study overseas to apply for production of an individualised Statement which conforms to common requirements.

Third, a few universities raised issues of authentication of the Graduation Statement. The University of Adelaide, for example, commented as follows:

The processes and standards for ensuring the Statement is authenticated is an issue that the University feels should be addressed in greater depth. For example, the need to time stamp the document seems to indicate that universities will be required to keep an electronic copy of the Graduation Statement. The University does not currently have the capability of ensuring that there is the requisite level of security to make the information publicly available. The risk around forgery and misrepresentation is similar to that of the academic transcript. The security around the transcript currently lies mainly in the paper used and the level of access provided to the information online, that is, is not publicly available.

Fourth, a small number of universities raised the issue of voluntary versus mandated implementation. The University of Queensland Vice Chancellor commented as follows:

We are also concerned ... that there will be mandated compliance with the issue of the Graduation Statement in a highly prescribed form. The issuing of academic records and associated documentation should be at the discretion of each institution and, while there is merit in having some consistency in the information that is provided in these Graduation Statements, it seems overly bureaucratic and interventionist to have this regulated and monitored by a national reference group.

Consultation with Other Stakeholders and the International Reference Group

4

This chapter reports on consultations with major employers, employers associations, professional associations, students and the International Reference Group. While the level of response from each of these groups was relatively low despite the use of follow-up efforts, overall responses were strongly positive. All see the Australian Higher Education Graduation Statement as having considerable value and most respondents were supportive of use of the name 'Graduation Statement' rather than the European term 'Diploma Supplement'.

Major Employers, Employers Associations and Professional Associations

The Proposal for an Australian Higher Education Graduation Statement was mailed to all 32 persons interviewed in May and June-July 2007 and to the following peak associations: Graduate Careers Australia, Professions Australia and the Australian Association of Graduate Employers Ltd. Both the Graduate Careers Australia and Professions Australia kindly mailed copies of the proposal to all member organisations while the Australian Association of Graduate Employers Ltd invited a member of the Project Team to run a workshop at their Annual Conference held in Sydney from 12 to 14 November 2007. Of the conference attendance of well over 300 persons, some 40 persons attended the workshop conducted by Grant Harman on 13 November jointly with a member of the Australian e-portfolio (AeP) project team for the project being funded by the Carrick Institute. The response to the Graduation Statement was strongly positive, with participants seeing particular value in providing domestic employers and professional associations with enhanced information on graduates. On the other hand, there was division of opinion on the issue of inclusion of fail/withdrawn grades in the record of academic achievements on the Graduation Statement.

The majority view supported most strongly by those involved in graduate recruitment was for the inclusion of fail/withdrawn grades whereas career counsellors favoured elimination of fail/withdrawn grades with the aim of presenting student academic achievements in the best possible light.

While the numbers of written responses from employers and professional associations were relatively few, all were highly positive. For example, the Human Resource Institute commended the Project Team on the progress achieved and indicated strong support for the Graduation Statement. The Graduate Coordinator at the Commonwealth Treasury gave strong support indicating that the Graduation Statement would be particularly valuable for graduates seeking work or further study overseas. Similarly the CEO of Graduate Careers Australia provided a short but encouraging response.

Brief but positive responses were also received from Universities Australia and the Council of Deans and Directors of Graduate Schools (DDOGS). DDOGS suggested an elaboration of wording in Graduation Statements for masters and PhD students and recommended against semester by semester listing of enrolments for research students and that only achievements that can be verified by the particular university should be listed.

In a number of cases follow up telephone calls were made to key personnel in major firms, government departments, recruiting agencies and professional associations interviewed in May 2007 and in each case those interviewed expressed strong support for the Graduation Statement. In summary, the various consultations combined with major employers, professional associations and recruiting agencies generated the following comments:

1. Interviewees clearly saw considerable value in the proposed Graduation Statement, especially in terms of new graduates and graduates in the early stages of their careers. In particular, they would find most useful information on additional program details and special achievements, recognition and prizes. They also would find it helpful to have information being presented in some uniform pattern across all Australian universities in order to facilitate comparison of applicants.
2. With regard to academic records to be included in Graduation Statements, all employers and recruiting agencies and most professional associations were strongly of the view that complete academic records should be included, and not simply units that were successfully completed. Major employers of graduates face considerable problems in selecting applicants for a limited number of positions from large groups of applications. For example, the Commonwealth Treasury takes 60 to 65 graduates per year but receives 800 applications while AusAID receives 750 applications for 20 places and the Reserve Bank receives 650 applications for 40 places. Moreover, organisations such as the Treasury insist on assessing full transcripts in order to calculate a grade point average for each applicant. Should the proposed Graduation Statement include only successfully completed units, for its graduate program the Treasury would demand that applicants submit full and unedited academic transcripts. AusAID would find it most useful if Graduation Statements could report on assessed language skills of graduates.
3. Employers are particularly interested in the inclusion of employment relevant additional information, and see this as being much more valuable than detail on course admission requirements and course structure. This has obvious implications for the proposal that Graduation Statements should include brief summary statements about admission and course requirements accompanied by reference to university websites.
4. Employers would particularly welcome additional information, such as on workplace learning, study abroad and overseas (and local) professional practice or training periods. They are most interested in verifiable data on employment skills, workplace competencies, team skills, business acumen and 'cultural fit', but they tend to be sceptical of the value of the inclusion of course aims, graduate attributes and details of the course structure. They support inclusion of information on the professional accreditation of courses but, with the rapid growth of professional accreditation in para-professional fields, there are problems for any university to have on file complete, accurate and detailed information on all courses that have been accredited and what accreditation will do in terms of qualifying graduates for professional registration and membership of the relevant professional association. A number suggested that inclusion of a GPA by all universities would be most helpful (some already have this).
5. Professional associations are most insistent that the Graduation Statement should include information on the professional accreditation of courses and on courses that lead to professional recognition, membership of professional associations and the right to practice in the case of government regulated professions. This insistence appears to be particularly related to the needs of Australian graduates in seeking professional employment outside Australia, as well as the ambitions of many professional associations. A number of professional associations are somewhat disappointed that the Graduation Statement is unlikely to provide additional assistance with professional accreditation of university courses.
6. A number of interviewees have already had experience in assessing applications from graduates with European Diploma Supplements and they favour Australian universities following a European Diploma Supplement model, or at least reporting identical key information. Two or three suggested that a common format across Australian higher education and the VET sector would be useful.
7. Most managers from major employers and recruiting agencies consider that Graduation Statements should be relatively short (no more than 3-4 pages) and emphasised that even with initial employment university qualifications constitute only one limited set of information. Large firms such as PriceWaterhouseCoopers (which in Melbourne alone recruit about 140 graduates per year) take account of school and university records, but also consider any previous employment experience. In addition, all applicants for positions with PriceWaterhouseCoopers take various mathematical and aptitude tests, have behavioural interviews, participate in group exercises including role-plays and 'in-trays', and conclude their selection processes with individual hour-long interviews with a senior partner.
8. With the current low unemployment rate and high demand for professional labour, especially in fields such as accounting and engineering, all applications from qualified graduates are taken seriously.

PriceWaterhouseCoopers reported that in practice, accounting and law graduates with a credit average or above usually progress to other stages in the selection process.

9. There are already a number of firms that will check university qualifications and secure police reports on applicants for professional employment. These include Australian Background Checking and Verify. Police reports are generally sought for senior financial management jobs, especially by recruiting companies. A small number of those interviewed were aware of the services offered by QualSearch and offered positive comments on the value.
10. In fields such as accounting, many young Australian graduates go overseas for a couple of years, initially on secondment from firms such as PriceWaterhouseCoopers. In such cases, they retain their permanent positions in a particular Australian office of the firm. Should they wish permanent employment in an overseas office of the firm, they need to make a formal application.
11. Firms that recruit overseas graduates claim they have most trouble in assessing the qualifications of graduates from China, the Indian sub-continent and Middle East countries.

Students Associations and Individual Students

The Proposal for an Australian Higher Education Graduation Statement was also mailed to the National Union of Students and to the National Liaison Committee for International Students. A helpful reply was received from the National President of the National Union of Students. The National Union is generally supportive of introduction of the Graduation Statement, although the degree of support will depend on final decisions about what information will be included in the Statement. Detailed comments were made on two issues. First, with regard to the issue of inclusion of fail/withdrawn grades, the Union expressed a preference for elimination of these on the grounds that their inclusion *'could mean that a graduate is tarred forever in the labour market with the record of withdrawals or fails that have no context (for example major medical, compassionate or financial circumstances)'*. On the issue of the use of websites for detailed information on course rules, concern was expressed that over time many websites change and that this problem could be overcome by universities committing themselves to archiving material so that *'an employer in 2028 can look up what the course when the student graduated in 2008'*.

Focus groups and individual interviews with

undergraduate and postgraduate, domestic and international students were conducted in three universities. Overall students expressed strong support for the introduction of the Graduation Statement and for the recommended format and content. On the issue of inclusion of fail/withdrawn grades there were sharp differences of opinion with some favouring inclusion while others considered that only successfully completed units should be included. Generally students with fail/withdrawn grades on their academic records or those who see the possibility of receiving fail/withdrawn grades were more inclined than others to favour elimination of fail/withdrawn grades while those with strong academic records were more likely to take the view that inclusion of fail grades could disadvantage them. International students were strongly supportive, believing that international students studying in Australian universities would benefit considerably when returning to their home countries or looking for professional work elsewhere. On the other hand, international students differed somewhat on the issue of fail/withdrawn grades often reflecting academic practice of universities in their home countries. While postgraduate students were generally supportive of the Graduation Statement a number suggested that its value might be greater for undergraduates than postgraduates.

One major problem in seeking comment from undergraduates is that many have had no experience of completing a higher education course and so are unaware of what documentation is usually provided to graduates. In addition most are largely unaware of the employment recruitment processes used by large firms and government agencies, and specifically what documentation is provided.

Apart from these consultations a number of universities including Consortium members have consulted widely with students about the information that desirably should be provided to students at course completion. For example, at the University of New South Wales the introduction of the expanded transcript has been based on wide consultation with students. Again at Victoria University feedback on the proposed Graduation Statement was obtained through a consultative process within the University and specifically via the Student Experience Committee. This management advisory committee involves faculty and service representatives as well as student representatives. Victoria University reported that the consensus on this committee was that members saw the Graduation Statement as being valuable and complementary to other initiatives underway within Victoria University and the broader student experience.

International Reference Group

Copies of the Proposal for an Australian Higher Education Graduation Statement with covering letters were mailed to the following members of the International Reference Group in late September 2007:

Dr Stephen Adam - University of Westminster

Mr Greg Wade - Universities UK

Professor Robert Burgess - Chair Consultation Committee on Diploma Supplements and Transcripts

Professor David Dill - The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Prof. Dr. Ulrich Killat - Hamburg University of Technology

Professor Frans Van Vught - Member of the Group of Social Policy Analysis of the European Commission and Member of the Executive Board of the European University Association

Associate Professor Futao Huang - Hiroshima University

Follow-up emails were sent in November 2007. Three replies were received as follows:

1. Mr Greg Wade commented positively on use of the name Graduation Statement and advised that the Burgess Committee in the UK had first recommended the name 'Diploma Supplement and Transcript' but in its latest report was recommending use of the name of 'Higher Education Achievement Report'. He also reported that the Burgess Committee had debated whether or not to include fail grades and that in the end decided on inclusion of fail grades.
2. Professor Robert Burgess replied with a helpful email commenting on four issues. First, Professor Burgess responded positively on the suggested name of 'Graduation Statement' and on the guiding principles and specifications for content. However, he expressed concern about the proposal that each university was expected to follow its own style in presenting academic achievement information on the Graduation Statement, commenting that this could make the job more difficult for employers who wish to use Graduation Statements. Second, while Professor Burgess reported that the UK had decided to use core and optional elements, he was concerned that because of technical or information difficulties some institutions may neglect inclusion of optional elements. Third, Professor Burgess commented on the issue of inclusion of fail/withdrawn grades and reported that this issue had received considerable discussion in the UK. Fourth, Professor Burgess reported that

inclusion of accreditation and professional recognition information was most important if the Graduation Statement is to provide a complete set of information.

3. Professor Ulrich Killat provided a most useful email report. First, with regard to the name 'Graduation Statement' he had no concern about use of the term 'graduation' rather than 'diploma' but raised the issue of use of the word 'statement' instead of 'supplement'. He commented as follows:
Our view is: the successful graduation is stated by the 'certificate'; the 'diploma supplement' gives additional information for persons not familiar with the institution, its programs and its grading scheme. As a consequence the graduates' achievements are placed in the certificate and not in the supplement.

Second, Professor Killat commented that since unsuccessful studies do not contribute to the graduation they need not be addressed. Third, Professor Killat recommended that information on accreditation should be provided if available.

Estimates of Institutional Implementation Costs & Issues with Regard to Student Information Systems



Introduction

Under terms of the contract, the Project Team is required to scope system requirements for national implementation, including making cost estimates of institutional implementation and carrying out preliminary work exploring the feasibility and desirability of establishing a searchable and secure national system for housing diploma supplement data. Elsewhere the contract specified that the Team would provide a detailed cost analysis for introducing an Australian 'Diploma Supplement'.

This chapter provides estimates of costs likely to be incurred by universities in implementing the Australian Higher Education Graduation Statement. It explains the procedure followed in developing an appropriate methodology to derive cost estimates and the steps taken in data collection from a number of universities. This is followed by an analysis of the data collected and conclusions about likely costs and implications in terms of student information systems. The cost studies made no attempt to estimate costs for DEEWR or for other organisations that might undertake national roles in implementation, although it will be important for adequate financial support to be available to meet such costs.

These cost studies were undertaken by the Project Team on the assumption that contact with major software suppliers was outside the project brief. However, with the approval of DEEWR, in February 2008 informal discussions were held with senior executives of the three major suppliers of student information management software to universities, as well as with a small number of Directors of university student administration offices. A report on these discussions and their implications is included as an addendum.

In the Progress Report, possibilities for developing a searchable and secure system to house Graduation Statement data were discussed. In view of current alternatives available and the likely considerable financial costs that would be incurred, plus technical and political difficulties in developing a new secure and searchable database to hold information on Graduation Statements, it was recommended that DEEWR should not proceed at this time with further exploration of this option. Instead, the Project Team recommended that discussions possibly should be held with QualSearch about the possibilities of it gaining a full national coverage of universities and adding functionalities in order to provide access to copies of Graduation Statement information by graduates, universities, employers and other stakeholders. To be effective, QualSearch needs to include all Australian universities as members and, in the longer term, all major higher education providers.

Methodology for Cost Estimates

The methodology for the cost estimate studies was developed in discussion with a number of Directors of university student administration units and other senior university officers. It was agreed that, instead of hiring experts with specialist cost estimation skills, a preferable alternative would be to develop a pro-forma that could be completed by senior staff in a number of universities, hoping to achieve representation of the diversity in student management information systems. This decision was based on the assumption that estimates of the likely implementation costs at the institutional level were preferable, rather than any serious attempts to specify precise costs, and that such estimates would be best undertaken by senior university staff with responsibilities for various aspects of student administration, including responsibilities for the management of student information systems.

In discussions with university representatives, it was decided that the project should seek three different types of information:

1. Specifications for the key information that universities would require in order to prepare Graduation Statements and the likely source or location of that information;
2. Estimates of implementation costs for 'core' and 'optional' elements broken down to separate items for administrative tasks, cost items, estimations of costs, and comments. This would seek further breakdowns under the following categories:
 - New or upgraded software and integration of different IT systems;
 - Programming expenses in order to access data already held in the University on other systems or in other formats;
 - Administrative time in preparing information for the various 'core' and 'optional' elements (including time taken in transcribing paper records into electronic records);
 - Additional costs in preparing and printing individual Graduation Statements (including possible employment of project officers);
 - Staff training;
 - Archiving of Graduation Statements; and
 - Other expenses.
3. Estimates of annual operational expenses for 'core' and 'optional' elements, with breakdowns for the following sub-items:
 - Administrative costs of producing and archiving Graduation Statement information;
 - Additional costs of parchment or security paper over and above provision of an academic transcript to each graduate;
 - Costs in printing and presentation of Graduation Statements; and
 - Possible enhancement costs to take account of the evolving nature of the Graduation Statement.

Data Collection

Twelve universities were selected to participate in the project based mainly on membership of the Consortium and interest in the project as demonstrated by participation in workshops and provision of advice on particular aspects of the project. Covering letters were sent to each university with an official invitation to participate. Copies of the Australian Higher Education Graduation Statement examples used in the consultative process were included, while the letter also provided other information on the Project and the requirements under the terms of the contract. The letter explained the type of information sought under the three

major headings and included an electronic copy of the proforma for data collection. It also clearly explained that what was sought were cost estimates rather than detailed assessments of actual costs, since the aim of the project is to estimate the possible scale of costs likely to be incurred by universities.

In completing proformas, it was requested that estimates be made on the following basis:

- (a) Despite the identification of 'core' and 'optional' elements in the proposal, estimates should be based on an assumption that institutions will choose to supply information under all headings regardless of whether they intend to use them (i.e. both 'core' and 'optional' elements);
- (b) Information drawn from academic transcripts will include both pass and fail grades;
- (c) Costings should be based on provision of hard copy Graduation Statements only; and
- (d) Costings should assume that Graduation Statements will include information drawn from academic transcripts for the particular award and so for most students there will be no need also to provide a stand-alone academic transcript. However, universities will continue to provide a separate testamur.

In the end, cost estimates were received from eight universities, with those from the following six judged as being suitable for analysis:

- Queensland University of Technology
- University of New South Wales
- University of Newcastle
- University of South Australia
- University of Technology Sydney
- Victoria University

These six universities use a variety of different student information systems. Queensland University of Technology uses Callista SMS, the University of New South Wales and the University of South Australia use PeopleSoft, the University of Newcastle uses Oracle Campus Solutions, the University of Technology Sydney uses Student 1, and Victoria University uses in-house developed systems, VUSIS (Victoria University Student Information System) and CAMS (Course Accreditation Management System). However, Queensland University of Technology is in the process of moving to Student 1.

While the number of universities that responded to the invitation was somewhat disappointing, it should be recognised that in a number of cases staff found the task of completing the proforma far more difficult than expected. However, the six responses provide sufficient cases on which reasonable conclusions can be based.

Data on Specifications of Key Information to Prepare Graduation Statements and Sources

Data provided on the key information that universities will require to prepare Graduation Statements and the likely sources of that information within universities indicates the variety of administrative and system issues likely to be faced in implementation. Responses are summarised below under the headings of the five main sections of the Graduation Statement. However, it should be noted that the University of New South Wales saw no major technical problems in implementation apart from substantial additional costs since it is already implementing the UNSW Supplementary Transcript.

1. The Graduate

For all six universities this information is readily available on student information systems.

2. The Award

Responses varied considerably for this item. Three universities reported that the required information on the name of the graduate and detail about awards, pathways to further study and accreditation arrangements was readily available on existing systems. The University of New South Wales reported that the information is available on the UNSW Online Handbook while Victoria University reported that the information is available on VUSIS/CAMS. Queensland University of Technology reported that the name of awards is available on Callista SMS while other detail is available from Studyfinder, although in this case Studyfinder may require additional fields to be added, or modification of existing fields.

The University of South Australia reported that program detail is available from PIM (Program Information System). However, information on pathways to further study is not available and will need to be generated and stored in PIM. Information on course accreditation is currently in PIM but will be also available on their student system when it is upgraded from 2009.

The University of Technology Sydney reported that information on the names of graduates and course details is available from Student 1, but that generic statements on pathways to further study would need to be compiled. While course accreditation records are held by Faculties, none of this information is currently on information systems.

The University of Newcastle reported that most of the required information is readily available

on the NUStar Student System (PeopleSoft) and the internally developed PTS system which stores curriculum information at program level. However, modification of the PTS system will be required in order to store information on course accreditation and pathways to further study. Some small enhancements to PTS may be required to supply additional data elements.

3. Awarding Institution

Responses from all six universities suggested that there would be no major difficulties in generating a general descriptive statement about the institution, and providing details on jointly badged degrees and courses offered with partner institutions. However, it appears that information on jointly badged degrees and courses offered with partner institutions is currently not readily available on systems.

The University of New South Wales envisaged use of the UNSW Online Handbook interwoven with the content management system, while Queensland University of Technology has in mind a general descriptive statement that would be hard coded with the production program, assuming that the production process for the Graduation Statement would be a report using a similar production process to that for academic transcripts.

Victoria University envisages that the general description and information on jointly badged degrees would be official statements approved by the PVC Students in conjunction with marketing, while information on courses offered by partner institutions would be drawn from CAMS.

The University of South Australia noted that while the required information is not currently available within their systems, such information could be readily generated, with the general description of the institution being included in the Graduation Statement template while other information would be included in PIM. Degrees taught with partners will need to be flagged on the student system and a field for this created within PIM.

The University of Technology Sydney envisages development of a generic descriptive statement to be hard coded into the Graduation Statement, while the implementation project would need to identify jointly badged degrees and courses taught with partner institutions.

The University of Newcastle envisages that Graduation Statements would be produced using a merge mail style utility that is available within PeopleSoft. Information common to all Graduation Statements will be entered into the template (Rich Text Format file) from which Statements will be generated.

4. Graduate's Achievements

Most of the responses provided useful details of how information on student achievement would be generated and inserted on Graduation Statements. Details of particular interest for three institutions are shown below in tabular form in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1: Summary of Responses from Three Universities with regard to Information on Graduate's Achievements for inclusion in the Graduation Statement

	Newcastle	UNISA	UTS
Program Details	<p>NUStar Graduation record has information on the award conferred and course details as used by the academic transcript. Credit details can be obtained from the Course Credit record in NUStar and/or the Transcript text lines that presently summarise credit granted. Some system enhancements will be required as currently there is no direct link between courses a student studies and the program stream in which they have majored. A future enhancement could be to streamline/automate this process using Academic Advisement.</p>	<p>Information is available from the Student System and Transcript information. For research students, thesis title is already included and there is a field called stored in our Student System that could provide information for the 100-word abstract.</p>	<p>Considerable information on program details is already available in Student 1 including general academic history and thesis title. Information on abstract may already be available from the Graduate School.</p>
Grading Scheme	<p>This information will be included in the template. The University has a common grading system for coursework study. A different template for each Academic Career would be used to cater for differences in Career level.</p>	<p>The grading scheme is currently printed on the reverse side of transcripts. This information could readily be also printed on Graduation Statements.</p>	<p>Grading system already provided on transcripts and this can be reproduced on Graduation Statements. The grading system has changed over time and so will need a full page to reproduce this in full.</p>
Additional Program Details	<p>Information available from Official Transcript text lines. Some enhancements to the Graduation record may be required to link the transcript text associated with a particular award for the purpose of the Graduation Statement.</p>	<p>Additional program details are currently not collected by any system. However there is an area on the Student System where free text can be recorded for inclusion on the current transcript. Special efforts would be needed to collect information on key institutional program characteristics including student based workplace learning, institutional organised study abroad, independent study overseas, major practicum or professional training placements, and assessed competencies.</p>	<p>Necessary to review current recording of workplace learning experiences and international experience to include more detail and record on Student 1. Project will be necessary to establish method for assessment of competencies and workplace capabilities and to record these in a suitable format.</p>
Special Achievements, Recognition & Prizes	<p>Information available from Official Transcript text lines.</p>	<p>Information on special achievements and prizes is already in the Student System.</p>	<p>University medals and some prizes are currently on Student 1 but a review will be necessary in order to ensure that this listing is comprehensive.</p>

5. Description of the Higher Education System

No difficulties will be experienced in reproducing the agreed descriptive statement.

Institutional Comments on Cost Estimates

Helpful comments provided by each of the six institutions drew attention to the considerable difficulties in making cost estimates for the implementation of the Australian Higher Education Graduation Statement despite the considerable explanatory information provided to participating universities. Although the estimates were made by experienced staff with in-depth knowledge of the management systems in use in the area of student administration, it is clear that staff found difficulty in envisaging the numerous tasks likely to be involved and what costs would likely be incurred, especially in terms of system upgrades, programming, administrative tasks and additional costs in terms of specialist staff time. The task of estimating the costs of system upgrades and adaptation is made more difficult as it is by no means clear to what extent major suppliers may enhance capacities for generating Graduation Statements as part of upgrades and how costs incurred might be shared across various software families. A further difficulty is that most sets of estimates were generated by senior specialist staff in student administration units, and it is not known what integration there is between student administration and course information.

In a letter accompanying the submission from the University of Technology Sydney, the Director of Student Administration explained as follows:

In completing the pro-forma, it was necessary to make a number of local assumptions, in addition to those that you proposed in your instructions. In practice, the first phase would employ a project officer to assess options and design a solution. However, we feel that this return provides a general indication of the likely costs of implementation that would result from this analysis phase.

We have developed our costings on the basis that:

- *UTS would use our existing student system, Student 1, as the primary source of student level and course level information, and this system would be well equipped to handle basic student and course data results.*
- *In addition to data items currently held in Student 1, we would need to manage data items which:*
 - *Are held in other systems and would need to be moved to Student 1 for ease of use and greater accuracy (eg course duration, admission requirements);*

- Exist in sufficient detail, and require a project to capture and store additional information (eg notes on international experience and industry experience);

- Are held in a format which does not facilitate publication, and may require a system enhancement (eg language of instruction and partner institutions);

- Are not held in a central location and would need a major data collation and evaluation exercise (eg external accreditation records); and

- Do not exist as we do not have a process in place to capture the information and is likely that we would be starting from scratch at the academic policy level (eg assessed competencies and workplace capabilities);

- *UTS would assign discrete fields for each individual data item, rather than producing paragraphs addressing multiple issues. This is in keeping with our 'single source data' policy, which aims at ensuring data integrity across all publications. For example, course duration would exist as a single field, and be pulled into the graduation statement as well as any other documents and other publications.*
- *The estimate is based on setting up base level information for the most recent version of current active courses. Cost may be higher if it was necessary to construct data for phasing out course versions (ie older versions where students are yet to complete).*

One of the most interesting returns with regard to detailed explanations for cost estimates was the return submitted by the University of New South Wales for implementation costs as opposed to on-going annual costs. Details are provided in Table 5.2. These estimates are particularly valuable as the University of New South Wales is already implementing the UNSW Supplementary Transcript based on September 2007 documentation produced by this project. Further, it is important to note that the University of New South Wales explanatory information for implementation tasks was by far the most detailed of the six universities while the total for estimated implementation costs was also the largest of any the six universities.

It will be noted that the three largest estimated expense items for the University of New South Wales in rank order were as follows: (1) additional costs in preparing and printing individual Graduation Statements (including the possible employment of project officer) \$95,000; (2) administrative time in preparing information for 'core' and 'optional' elements of the Graduation Statement \$50,000, and (3) new or upgraded software and integration of different systems \$49,000.

Table 5.2 Cost Estimates by the University of New South Wales for Implementation of the Australian Higher Education Graduation Statement

Tasks	Cost Items	Costs	Explanatory Comments / Methodology
New or upgraded software and integration of different systems	Immediate development for Phase 1 information systems requirements, identification, analysis and solution design.	\$3,780	Short-term development costs based on cost estimate for Phase 1 development for UNSW Supplementary Transcript (Note: UNSW Supplementary Transcript currently under development in conformity with September 2007 Draft 'Australian Higher Education Graduation Statement' section 4 elements 'Additional Program Details' and 'Special Achievements, Recognition and Prizes').
	Project Solution Architect	\$26,220	Based on salary of \$87,400, FTE 30%.
	Online Handbook and myUNSW development and enhancement.	\$10,000	Website analysis and development based on best estimate from existing application management annual systems support costs.
	Software/hardware.	\$9,000	Based on best estimate from existing application management annual systems support costs.
Programming to access data already held in the University central administration on other systems, or in other formats	Reconfiguration of NewSouth Student system.	\$1,890	Short-term development costs based on cost estimate for Phase 1 development for UNSW Supplementary Transcript.
Administrative time in preparing information for core and optional elements of the Graduation Statement (including time taken in transcribing paper records into electronic records)	Website updating and testing.	\$50,000	Based on existing application management annual systems support costs and development work which has commenced for the UNSW Supplementary Transcript Project.
	School, Faculty and central Student Services administrative data collection, preparation and reporting.		
Additional costs in preparing and printing individual Graduation Statements (including possible employment of project officer)	Initial artwork costs	\$12,000	Based on previous actual costs related to design of existing academic transcript.
	Preparing, printing and re-runs (salary costs)	\$13,067	Based on Project Assistant (cross-functional) salary of \$52,268, FTE 25%.
	Paper and printing costs	\$20,000	Based on 10,000 graduating students per year, each Graduation Statement being 2 sheets @ \$1.00 per sheet.
	Co-ordination of student services and systems; policy analysis and development; budget management and management reporting; liaison with stakeholders (Project Officer and senior management governance).	\$50,000	Based on analysis and development work which has commenced for the UNSW Supplementary Transcript Project.

Tasks	Cost Items	Costs	Explanatory Comments / Methodology
Staff training	User education, training, support and business process establishment for UNSW Staff (Academic and General).	\$6,000	Daily rate standardised at \$300 per day. Number of days based on supporting 100 UNSW academic / general staff in 2007 (@ 5 per day).
Archiving of Graduation Statement data	Data archiving, logistics and reporting, business analysis support and testing across services suite.	\$13,067	Based on Project Assistant (cross-functional) salary of \$52,268, FTE 25%.
Other			
Total		\$215,024	

In Chapter 3, some information with regard to cost estimates and student system management issues was included in university submissions. Not surprisingly, the issue of likely implementation and operating costs was raised by a number of universities. Many pointed specifically to likely substantial costs that would be incurred in producing authenticated hardcopy documentation, and the establishment and maintenance of institutional verification procedures.

With regard to costs and systems issues, RMIT University commented as follows:

The system development required to produce such a Statement will be significant. At RMIT a similar project to produce a transcript from our PeopleSoft student system cost \$240,000 and took a full twelve months to complete.

The RMIT transcript is printed on polymer to increase the security of the document. It would be necessary to use polymer for the Statement to ensure comparable security. RMIT spent around \$250,000 for the design and production of transcript stock. Given that the Statement is a substantially longer document, the cost would be proportionately greater. In addition, there will be costs of production and postage.

The Australian Catholic University expressed concern about the considerable likely additional costs involved in implementation of the Graduation Statement, especially in relation to information systems and measures to ensure document authenticity. It commented:

It is of the view that financial assistance from the Department of Education, Science and Training and a realistic timeline will be crucial for the successful implementation of the initiative.

The University of Adelaide tied costs to expenses likely to be incurred in systems upgrades. The introduction of the Graduation Statement, it argued, will require a significant systems effort and expense. This would mean that an impending upgrade of the University's student

system could result in functional developments being wasted effort and so would have to be redone.

A related issue was the need to enhance the capabilities of existing university student IT systems and the costs involved. The University of Ballarat commented that further investigation is needed as to whether existing information systems are able to produce the specified Graduation Statements and the degree of system reconfiguration that may be necessary. The University of Southern Queensland commented as follows:

The discussion paper has raised the major problems that would be encountered by universities using the PeopleSoft Student System, which does not have the functionality to produce a Graduation Statement similar to the examples provided. In order for these universities to produce something similar, significant reconfiguration would be required. If this proposal is adopted across the Australian higher education sector, the universities currently using PeopleSoft should be supported in the development of this functionality to avoid expensive and time-consuming duplication necessitated by in-house developments.

The University of Canberra drew attention to the amount of manual effort that would be required in addition to system upgrading. It explained as follows:

We appreciate that the intention is to build on existing data-systems and information held by higher education systems. However, whilst most information can be systematised, manual input will be needed for each student for the program details section. This is a considerable amount of work needed to review each student's academic history and write the necessary information and, in our view, would require an additional full-time person. Is there any way of addressing what will be an additional and considerable workload for our student administrative areas?

Flinders University drew attention to the need for systems upgrades for the Graduation Statement to be considered in the wider context of major upgrades to meet other needs. It also specified possible system enhancement needs which could include the following:

- *software changes that may be required to handle the data and extraction requirements of the Graduation Statement;*
- *data collection and management procedures that may be required to establish and maintain new sources of data at both course/award and student levels;*
- *system and procedural changes that may be required to manage historical changes to and consistently represent course definitions, student transfers between courses, representation of internal credit arrangements etc.; and*
- *quality assurance processes required to ensure consistency of presentation.*

The University of Western Sydney response commented as follows:

The Statement requires the collation of information from a range of different systems in a common format. The institutional response required for this collation is significant and it is estimated that the number of students who may directly benefit is small as the principle target group are those students who intend to work or study overseas. On a sector wide basis it may be more efficient for students who wish to work or study overseas to apply for production of an individualised Statement which conforms to common requirements.

In summary the main points made by universities in their submissions with regard to likely costs and management systems issues were as follows:

1. Most universities will require significant management information system upgrades to handle data and extraction requirements and produce the Graduation Statement according to the recommended specifications.
2. A coordinated approach is desirable in terms of discussions with major software suppliers and families using particular software systems.
3. Considerable manual administrative effort will be needed to handle information that currently is not held by systems.
4. New data collection and management procedures may be required to establish and maintain new sources of data for the ongoing production of Graduation Statements.
5. The use of polymer for the documentation and additional security measures will add to costs.

Data on Cost Estimates

As already noted, institutions were asked to make separate estimates of start-up implementation costs and annual operating costs. In this discussion the two separate sets of estimates will be treated separately.

(a) Start-up Implementation Costs

Table 5.3 provides a summary of estimates of implementation costs for the six universities for both core and optional elements as required by the instructions provided. Total cost estimates vary from a low of \$60,000 at the University of South Australia to a high of \$215,000 at the University of New South Wales,

Table 5.3: Summary of Estimates of Implementation Costs for Core and Optional Elements

Costs	QUT	UNSW	N'castle	UNISA	UTS	VU
New or upgraded software and integration of different systems	\$120,000	\$49,000	\$93,000	\$20,000	\$100,000	\$30,000
Programming to access data already held in the University on other systems, or in other formats		\$1,890	\$43,000	\$11,000	\$35,000	\$10,000
Administrative time in preparing information for core and optional elements of the Graduation Statement (including time taken in transcribing paper records into electronic records)	\$30,000	\$50,000	\$7,000	\$20,000	\$45,000	\$10,000
Additional costs in preparing and printing individual Graduation Statements (including possible employment of project officer)	\$40,000	\$95,067			\$10,000	\$30,000
Staff training		\$6,000			\$5,000	\$5,000
Archiving of Graduation Statement data		\$13,067			\$10,000	\$10,000
Other costs			\$40,000	\$9,000		
Total	\$179,000	\$215,024	\$183,000	\$60,000	\$205,000	\$95,000

For individual cost items, there was also considerable variation in estimates. For example, estimated costs of new or upgraded software and integration of different systems varied between \$20,000 at UNISA to \$100,000 at UTS. Averages for particular items across the six institutions are as follows:

New or upgraded software and integration of different systems:	\$68,666
Programming to access data already held in the University on other systems or in other formats:	\$19,648
Administrative time in preparing information for core and optional elements of the Graduation Statement (including time taken in transcribing paper records into electronic records):	\$27,833
Additional costs in preparing and printing individual Graduation Statements (including possible employment of project officer):	\$34,766
Staff training:	\$ 4,750
Archiving of Graduation Statement data:	\$10,022
Other costs:	\$24,500

It is not clear whether all sets of estimates included an allowance for contingency items. According to the submission of the University of Technology Sydney, an allowance of 20 per cent for contingency items should be provided in all costing involving management information systems. Assuming that the estimates from the University of Newcastle and University of South Australia intended the amounts listed under the category 'other' as being meant for contingency costs, providing an allowance for contingency costs for the other four universities would vary the range of cost estimates totals from a low of \$60,000 to a high of \$258,000, with the average total cost being \$179,304.

In drawing conclusions it appears that four main options are available:

- Average costs across the six institutions, (\$156,170);
- Average costs with a 20% allowance for contingencies (\$179,304);
- University of New South Wales estimates on the basis that this university is likely to be better informed than others since it is already implementing its UNSW Supplementary Transcript (\$215,024); or
- Discount the totals by 10% on the assumption that the estimates were generally prepared by well-informed officers but ones likely to have responsibility for implementation and so a clear interest in protecting their universities (\$140,553).

On balance, the judgement of the Project Team is that a conservative estimate of costs per institution is about \$150,000. The Project Team considers that while many modifications of administrative processes and systems upgrades result in cost over-runs, it is reasonable to assume that many of the estimates by university

personnel already included some 'padding of costs'. For this reason an estimate of \$150,000 for institutional implementation costs seems reasonable.

(b) On-going Annual Operational Costs

Institutions also were asked to make estimates of likely additional operational costs and a summary of data is presented in Table 5.4. Total estimates vary from \$16,000 for UNISA to \$165,000 for VU, with the average across the six institutions being \$77,500. The largest average costs items were in rank order: additional costs of parchment or security paper (\$35,100), costs of printing and presentation or mailing Graduation Statements (\$21,250), administrative costs of producing and archiving Graduation Statement information (\$20,500) and possible enhancement costs to take account of the evolving nature of the Graduation Statement (\$11,800).

In view of the difficulties encountered in making estimates of start-up implementation costs estimates of annual operating costs should be treated with even greater caution.

Table 5.4: Summary of Estimates of Annual Operational Costs for Core and Operational Elements

Costs	QUT	UNSW	N'castle	UNISA	UTS	VU
Administrative costs of producing and archiving Graduation Statement information	\$10,000	\$30,000	\$10,000		\$2,500	\$50,000
Additional costs of parchment or security paper over and above provision of transcripts supplied to each graduand	\$30,000	\$20,000	\$50,000		\$2,500	\$100,000
Costs of printing and presentation, or mailing of Graduation Statements	\$40,000		\$25,000		\$10,000	\$10,000
Possible enhancement costs to take account of the evolving nature of the Graduation Statement	\$15,000	\$10,000	\$14,000		\$15,000	\$5,000
Total	\$95,000[#]	\$60,000	\$99,000	\$16,000	\$30,000	\$165,000

plus system enhancement costs

Conclusions

Under the terms of the contract the Project Team is required to make estimates of the likely costs for implementation at institutional levels of the Australian Higher Education Graduation Statement. The Project Team decided to proceed by developing a methodology and proforma to collect estimates from specialist staff in a number of universities. The proforma sought (a) specification of the key information required and its possible location within universities, (b) estimates of implementation costs for core and optional elements of the Graduation Statement, and (c) estimates of annual operational costs.

Approaches were made to 12 universities and in the end suitable data for analysis was secured from six. These universities are representative cases of users of four major commercially supplied information systems and one institution that uses locally developed systems.

Data supplied on the key information required and its sources within universities demonstrates the complexity of the management and systems issues facing universities. Ideally a project officer or project team will need to be appointed to carefully assess precisely what data is held, its location and format, and to plan an overall strategy for implementation within the institution.

Most universities will require significant management information system upgrades to handle data storage and extraction requirements and produce the Graduation Statement according to the recommended specifications. A coordinated approach is desirable in terms of discussions with major software suppliers and families using particular software systems.

While considerable amounts of data are already on systems, other data will need to be secured from student administration systems or generated manually from hard copy. Major challenges will be faced in generating information on program details, additional program characteristics, and prizes and special achievements. New data collection and management procedures may be required to establish and maintain new sources of data for the ongoing production of Graduation Statements. The use of polymer for the documentation and additional security measures will add to costs. The submission from the University of New South Wales is particularly interesting in that this university is already implementing its UNSW Supplementary Transcript.

Reliable cost estimates are not easy to develop. Any estimates must be based on less than perfect information and universities and their officers have a vested interest to protect themselves in case of unexpected cost items. However, the Project Team considers that a reasonable estimate of additional institutional costs to implement the Graduation Statement to be in the vicinity of \$150,000.

Estimates of ongoing operational costs vary from \$16,000 pa to \$165,000 pa with an average of \$75,000 pa. However, it should be noted that while implementation estimates are difficult estimates of ongoing annual expenses likely to be incurred are even more difficult.

ADDENDUM

In February 2008, informal telephone discussions concerning university student administration software issues were held with six Directors of University student administration departments and with senior executives in three major software companies that provide student software to Australian universities: Oracle Asia Pacific (supplier of PeopleSoft), Technology One (supplier of Student 1), and Callista (supplier of Callista SMS).

Summary of Discussions with Directors of University Student Administration Departments

1. Currently three main suppliers provide student software to Australian universities: Oracle Asia Pacific (provider of PeopleSoft), Technology One (supplier of Student 1) and Callista (supplier of Callista SMS). Oracle Asia is a major American company that recently bought out PeopleSoft, creator of the PeopleSoft system. Technology One was established based on development work at Curtin University, while Callista came from initiatives at Deakin University. PeopleSoft tends to have a strong American focus while the other two are obviously Australian focussed. Two universities (Australian Catholic University and Charles Sturt University) still use software supplied by the American company, Banner, that a decade ago had a number of Australian university clients. Banner no longer supplies upgrades for Australia and so these two university users must handle upgrades themselves.
2. Three universities have stand-alone self-developed systems. The number in this category is rapidly declining with institutions such as the University of Melbourne having recently moved from their own software system to adopting Student 1.
3. The current arrangements with student software systems followed the failure of the CASMAC project led by the AVCC to develop a software system for all Australian universities.
4. Student administration software systems are upgraded on a regular basis, with major upgrades occurring about every three to five years but with numerous upgrade enhancements each year.
5. All major suppliers have user committees that meet on a regular basis to plan and agree on priorities for upgrade work for the coming year. Suppliers appear to budget annually for a specific quantity of upgrade work and upgrades that fit within budgets do not incur additional payments by universities. Work schedules for upgrades

are frequently locked in a year ahead but mandatory requirements from DEEWR are given a top priority, even if the period of notice is limited.

6. Contracts between suppliers and universities for software appear to vary with enrolments, with larger universities usually paying higher contract fees than smaller universities. Universities appear to incur major expenditure of \$10 million to \$15 million (or more) to install new systems but once installed it appears that annual fees are often less than \$0.5 million.
7. Some suppliers provide a 'vanilla' software product that meets basic requirements but allows universities themselves to add functionalities to meet their own requirements. As a result, some student administration departments have on their staff three or four business analysts to handle such upgrades. In some other cases, software firms do not allow any local changes.
8. Introduction of the HEIMS system was far more complicated and expensive than the Graduation Statement is likely to be, especially as HEIMS required data at subject and unit of study levels. DEST provided one-off grants of \$250,000 to each university but a number of universities estimate the implementation of HEIMS cost in excess of \$1 million.

Discussions with Software Suppliers

1. All major suppliers take the view that software upgrades to cater for Graduation Statements will not be particularly difficult and should present few major problems. The task is far simpler than the 2005 upgrades required for implementation of HEIMS. The Graduation Statement is simply another form of individual student 'report' similar to the academic transcripts. A decision to supply both paper and electronic copies of the Graduation Statement would make software requirements more difficult. However, because of the concern of universities about security issues with electronic documents, the Project Team is not recommending use of electronic copies in the initial phase of implementation.
2. Each of the major suppliers indicated that, if the Graduation Statement is a mandatory requirement, the necessary software upgrades will be handled promptly and given a high priority in planned upgrade work schedules. Suppliers do not expect to levy any additional charges on universities.
3. If implementation is voluntary, the software suppliers were more careful in their replies. With voluntary implementation, decisions on

the necessary software upgrades would be taken in consultation with user committees. However, the impression of the Project Team is that, provided user committees gave the Graduation Statement a high priority in terms of upgrade schedules, provided there is a high level of agreement among users on the upgrade specifications, and provided that Graduation Statement work does not exceed budgeted annual upgrade allowances, suppliers will give the Graduation Statement a high priority. Further, most likely there will be no additional charges on universities, although if particular universities require additional functionalities this is likely to incur additional charges.

4. Software upgrades should provide for both 'core' and 'optional' elements of the Graduation Statement, even though some universities may decide initially not to include information under all optional sections.
5. With regard to the necessary time span for implementation, the common view of software suppliers was that three years would be more than adequate.

Implications

On the basis of the above discussions, it appears likely that either with voluntary or mandatory implementation universities that are clients of the three major suppliers will not be required to meet the costs of software upgrades to enable them to introduce the Australian Higher Education Graduation Statement. This led the Project Team to reduce its original estimate, as conveyed informally to DEEWR, of additional institutional implementation costs to \$150,000 as indicated earlier in this chapter.

APPENDIX

Institutional Returns on Cost Estimates Studies of Institutional Implementation

The following are returns for these universities:

Queensland University of Technology
University of Newcastle
University of New South Wales
University of South Australia
University of Technology Sydney
Victoria University

QUEENSLAND UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY

Student Data System(s): Callista SMS (current, proprietary), Research Master (proprietary), custom systems

Person Responsible for Completion of Form: Bruce McCallum

Position and Address: Associate Director, Business Services, Student Business Services, Victoria Park Road Kelvin Grove 4059

Email: b.mccallum@qut.edu.au

Telephone: 07 3138 3169

A. Sources of Key Information for Graduation Statements

Sections of Graduation Statement	Sources of information	Comments
The Graduate Family name: Given name: Student identification number: Date of birth:	All from Callista SMS	None
The Award Name: Detail: Pathways to further study: Course accreditation:	Name from Callista SMS, other detail from Studyfinder	Studyfinder may require additional fields, modification to fields, or modification of data in existing fields
Awarding Institution General statement: Details on jointly-badged degrees: Details on courses offered with partner institution:	General statement would be hard coded in the production program Other details are rare and would be dealt with through a manual intervention process	Assumes that the production process would be a "report", similar to the production program that currently produces academic transcripts
Graduate's Achievements Programme details: Grading scheme: Additional programme details: Special achievements, recognition and prizes:	Transcript-type details from Callista SMS Grading schema would be hard-coded in the production program Thesis and abstract details would come from Research Master Additional program details is new central data and would require creation of a data store Prizes etc would come from Callista SMS	
Description of the Australian Higher Education System	Official statement approved by DEST and AQF secretariat will be provided to institutions.	Hard code in production program

B. Estimates of Implementation Costs for 'Core' and 'Optional' Elements

Tasks	Cost Items	Costs	Explanatory Comments/Methodology
New or upgraded software and integration of different systems	Studyfinder/Academic database modifications	\$20K	Callista SMS will be a legacy system for QUT in 2009. Difficult to estimate costs for our new platform Student One (Technology One vendor)
	SMS	\$100K	
Programming to access data already held in the University on other systems, or in other formats	Business Analyst 4 weeks @HEW8	\$5K	includes testing etc
	Programmer 2 weeks @1.2K per day	\$12K	
Administrative time in preparing information for core and optional elements of the Graduation Statement (including time taken in transcribing paper records into electronic records)	Estimated 27 weeks @HEW6	\$35K	9,000 graduates pa, with student-specific details to be recorded
Additional costs in preparing and printing individual Graduation Statements (including possible employment of project officer)	Project Officer 3 weeks HEW8	\$4K	
Staff training	Preparation and Delivery 2 weeks @HEW6	\$3K	
Archiving of Graduation Statement data			Included in annual costs
Other			
Total		\$179K	

C. Estimates Of Annual Operational Costs For 'Core' And 'Optional' Elements

Tasks	Cost Items	Costs	Explanatory Comments/Methodology
Administrative costs of producing and archiving Graduation Statement information	8 person weeks at HEW4	\$10K	Would produce individual electronic documents which would be printed for issue, and filing as individual documents in our electronic student files, the latter task currently not automated.
Additional costs of parchment or security paper over and above provision of transcript to each graduand	Polymer substrate artwork/setup	\$12K	Based upon an order of 100,000 sheets
	Security paper stock	\$18K	
Costs in printing and presentation to or mailing of Graduation Statements	Printing (ex paper)	\$4.5K	9,000 graduates, 45% don't attend ceremonies HEW4 salary, multiple ceremonies, collation with parchment documents, mailing prep Includes international courier costs, assumes separate mailing
	In person distribution and preparation (30 person days)	\$5K	
	Mailing registered receipt	\$30K	
	Envelopes etc	\$0.5K	
Possible enhancement costs to take account of the evolving nature of the Graduation Statement	Programming	\$15K	\$12K per day
Total		\$95K	

UNIVERSITY OF NEWCASTLE

Student Data System(s): Oracle Campus Solutions (Internal name "NUSTAR")

Person Responsible for Completion of Form: Gail White

Position and Address: Academic Registrar

Email: gail.white@newcastle.edu.au

Telephone: 02 49215313

A. Sources of Key Information for Graduation Statements

Sections of Graduation Statement	Sources of information	Comments
<p>The Graduate</p> <p>Family name:</p> <p>Given name:</p> <p>Student identification number:</p> <p>Date of birth:</p>	<p>NUSTAR Personal Information Record</p>	<p>Information is readily available within the Nustar Student system (PeopleSoft)</p>
<p>The Award</p> <p>Name:</p> <p>Detail:</p> <p>Pathways to further study:</p> <p>Course accreditation:</p>	<p>Program information held in NUSTAR , linked to the Program Tracking System (PTS) where further detail required.</p> <p>May use NUSTAR "Program Web Links" table to identify URL for detailed information.</p> <p>Some small enhancements to PTS may be required to supply some additional data elements?</p>	<p>Basic Program Information is readily available within the Nustar Student system (PeopleSoft)</p> <p>PTS is an internally developed system to develop and store curriculum information at the Program level. For detailed information on a program, PTS would be the source of this data</p> <p>Completion of a Program leads to conferring an associated Award. PTS does support a historical data, it is date based and the appropriate program details revision will need to be determined from the year the student commences (admit term) and matched against the relevant program revisions date.</p> <p>Modifications to PTS will be required to store the extra information (course accreditation is stored as free text as well as specifics (national, international, state etc), pathways will need to be added to PTS, unless the additional information field is used for this purpose)</p>
<p>Awarding Institution</p> <p>General statement:</p> <p>Details on jointly-badged degrees:</p>	<p>Template</p> <p>PTS (Some enhancement may be required)</p>	<p>Graduation statements will be produced using a mail-merge style utility that is available within PeopleSoft (XML publisher).</p> <p>Information common to all statements, and background static text will be entered into the template (Rich text Format file) from which statements are generated.</p>
<p>Details on courses offered with partner institution:</p>	<p>PTS (Some enhancement may be required)</p>	<p>PTS will need to be enhanced to add the ability to record jointly-badged degrees and partner institution details.</p>

<p>Graduate's Achievements</p> <p>Programme details:</p> <p>Grading scheme:</p> <p>Additional programme details:</p> <p>Special achievements, recognition and prizes:</p>	<p>NUSTAR Graduation record to show Award conferred.</p> <p>NUSTAR Course details as used by current Academic Transcript.</p> <p>RHD sub-system in NUSTAR for Thesis title and Abstract.</p> <p>Credit details can be obtained from Course Credit record in NUSTAR and/or Transcript text lines that presently summarise credit granted.</p> <p>Template</p> <p>Official Transcript Text lines</p> <p>Official Transcript Text lines</p>	<p>Some enhancements to the Graduation record may be required to link the courses associated with a particular award for the purpose of the Graduation Statement.</p> <p>NOTE: There is no direct link between courses a student studies in for a program and the program stream they have majored in.</p> <p>A future enhancement could be to streamline/automate this process using Academic Advisement (outside scope of this project).</p> <p>The University has a common grading scheme for Coursework study. A different template for each Academic Career would be used to cater for differences at the Career level.</p> <p>Some enhancements to the Graduation record may be required to link the transcript text associated with a particular award for the purpose of the Graduation Statement</p>
<p>Description of the Australian Higher Education System</p>	<p>Official statement approved by DEST and AQF secretariat will be provided to institutions.</p>	<p>Stored in Template. Note that an effective dated historical record of templates is retained within NUSTAR.</p>

B. Estimates of Implementation Costs for 'Core' and 'Optional' Elements

Tasks	Cost Items	Costs	Explanatory Comments/Methodology
New or upgraded software and integration of different systems	Business Analyst	\$20,000	Assume BA/SA with knowledge of higher education processes and software development methodology, but does not have to be PeopleSoft functional expert-Student Systems will supply functional knowledge as required.
	PeopleSoft Developer	\$7,000	Ideally have selection grid to nominate applicable courses/transcript lines that are applicable to the award. May also require enhancements to graduate audit reports.
	PeopleSoft Developer	\$7,000	Gather data as per existing transcript production process, but also included additional data as required for graduation statement. Creation of XML data source definition as input to XML publisher.
	PeopleSoft Developer	\$21,000	Assume 1 template per Career (undergraduate, postgraduate course work, research higher degree). Time is required to link dynamic elements to XML data source, as well as format layout, graphic elements etc. Run control and/or online request process to execute data collation process, run merge and generate statement(s) as output documents, and send to printer.
	PeopleSoft Developer	\$14,000	Use BA/SA to create test scripts and executive tests. PeopleSoft Developer time
	Business Analyst	\$10,000 \$14,000	
	Total	\$93,000	
Programming to access data already held in the University on other systems, or in other formats	Enterprise Applications Developer	\$12,000	Technical design and build
		\$7,000	Development of People Tools code to read Web Service that supplies data upon subsequent request
		\$12,000	Enterprise Applications/PeopleSoft Developer time
		\$12,000	Enterprise Applications/PeopleSoft Developer
	Total	\$43,000	
Archiving of Graduation Statement data		\$7,000	XML data for each graduation statement will be stored on the student record, along with generation data. Templates are effective dated so the statement can be re-generated at any time without the need for an additional archive. Effective dated snapshots of award information used to create Graduation Statements will be required with NUSTAR. Ongoing IT operations costs for storage capacity
	Total	\$7,000	

Other		\$20,000	Time to initiate and close project, as well as two days per week during course of the project for reporting progress, vendor management etc.
	Total	\$10,000	Use BA/SA
		\$10,000	Use BA/SA
		\$40,000	
Total		\$183,000	

C. Estimates of Annual Operational Costs for 'Core' and 'Optional' Elements

Tasks	Cost Items	Costs	Explanatory Comments/Methodology
Administrative costs of producing and archiving Graduation Statement information	May be additional hardware cost	\$10,000	
Additional costs of parchment or security paper over and above provision of transcript to each graduand	Approx 5000 graduates per year @ \$10 per graduate	\$50,000	
Costs in printing and presentation to or mailing of Graduation Statements	5000 graduates at \$5 mailing cost	\$25,000	
Possible enhancement costs to take account of the evolving nature of the Graduation Statement	Assume 5 days analyst time 5 days developer time each year at \$1400 per day	\$14,000	
Total		\$99,000	

THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW SOUTH WALES

Student Data System(s): Newsouth Student (Peoplesoft)

Person Responsible for Completion of Form: Michelle Hannan

Position and Address: Project Officer, Supplementary Transcript Project, Student Systems and Business Solutions, The University of New South Wales, SYDNEY NSW 2052

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Telephone: 02 9385 8515

A. Sources of Key Information for Graduation Statements

Sections of Graduation Statement	Sources of information	Comments
The Graduate Family name: Given name: Student identification number: Date of birth:	NewSouth Student – student administration system (Oracle/PeopleSoft HE 7.6)	Existing centralised student administration system.
The Award Name: Detail: Pathways to further study: Course accreditation:	UNSW Online Handbook	Interwoven content management system (www.handbook.unsw.edu.au).
Awarding Institution General statement: Details on jointly-badged degrees: Details on courses offered with partner institution:	UNSW Online Handbook	Linked to UNSW Corporate website (www.unsw.edu.au).
Graduate's Achievements Programme details: Grading scheme: Additional programme details: Special achievements, recognition and prizes:	NewSouth Student Reverse of existing academic transcript Schools, Faculties, UNSW International Exchange Program and International Relations Schools, Faculties, University Business Units and Student Organisations	Information drawn from existing academic transcript information, including fail grades. Information drawn from existing academic transcript information. Business processes currently under development to support UNSW Supplementary Transcript. Business processes currently under development to support UNSW Supplementary Transcript.
Description of the Australian Higher Education System	Official statement approved by DEST and AQF secretariat will be provided to institutions.	

B. Estimates of Implementation Costs for 'Core' and 'Optional' Elements

Tasks	Cost Items	Costs	Explanatory Comments/Methodology
New or upgraded software and integration of different systems	Immediate development for Phase 1 information systems requirements, identification, analysis and solution design.	\$3,780	Short-term development costs based on cost estimate for Phase 1 development for UNSW Supplementary Transcript (Note: UNSW Supplementary Transcript currently under development in conformity with September 2007 Draft 'Australian Higher Education Graduation Statement' section 4 elements 'Additional Program Details' and 'Special Achievements, Recognition and Prizes').
	Project Solution Architect	\$26,220	Based on salary of \$87,400, FTE 30%.
	Online Handbook and myUNSW development and enhancement.	\$10,000	Website analysis and development based on best estimate from existing application management annual systems support costs.
	Software/hardware.	\$9,000	Based on best estimate from existing application management annual systems support costs.
Programming to access data already held in the University on other systems, or in other formats	Reconfiguration of NewSouth Student central administration system.	\$1,890	Short-term development costs based on cost estimate for Phase 1 development for UNSW Supplementary Transcript.
Administrative time in preparing information for core and optional elements of the Graduation Statement (including time taken in transcribing paper records into electronic records)	Website updating and testing.	\$50,000	Based on existing application management annual systems support costs and development work which has commenced for the UNSW Supplementary Transcript Project.
	School, Faculty and central Student Services administrative data collection, preparation and reporting.		
Additional costs in preparing and printing individual Graduation Statements (including possible employment of project officer)	Initial artwork costs	\$12,000	Based on previous actual costs related to design of existing academic transcript.
	Preparing, printing and re-runs (salary costs)	\$13,067	Based on Project Assistant (cross-functional) salary of \$52,268, FTE 25%.
	Paper and printing costs	\$20,000	Based on 10,000 graduating students per year, each Graduation Statement being 2 sheets @ \$1.00 per sheet.
	Co-ordination of student services and systems; policy analysis and development; budget management and management reporting; liaison with stakeholders (Project Officer and senior management governance).	\$50,000	Based on analysis and development work which has commenced for the UNSW Supplementary Transcript Project.
Staff training	User education, training, support and business process establishment for UNSW Staff (Academic and General).	\$6,000	Daily rate standardised at \$300 per day. Number of days based on supporting 100 UNSW academic / general staff in 2007 (@ 5 per day).
Archiving of Graduation Statement data	Data archiving, logistics and reporting, business analysis support and testing across services suite.	\$13,067	Based on Project Assistant (cross-functional) salary of \$52,268, FTE 25%.
Other			
Total		\$215,024	

C. Estimates of Annual Operational Costs for 'Core' and 'Optional' Elements

Tasks	Cost Items	Costs per annum	Explanatory Comments/Methodology
Administrative costs of producing and archiving Graduation Statement information	Data collection, recording, reporting, collation and verification in Schools, Faculties and centrally.	\$30,000	Daily rate standardised at \$300 per day. Number of days based on end-to-end servicing of 10,000 graduand records (@ 100 per day).
Additional costs of parchment or security paper over and above provision of transcript to each graduand	Security paper and printing.	\$20,000	Based on an additional 2 sheets per graduate @ \$1.00 per sheet, 10,000 graduating students per year.
Costs in printing and presentation to or mailing of Graduation Statements			Absorbed into existing Graduations processes and budgets.
Possible enhancement costs to take account of the evolving nature of the Graduation Statement	Technical enhancement and unit testing	\$10,000	Based on best estimate from existing application management annual systems support costs.
Total		\$60,000	

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Student Data System(s): Peoplesoft Ver 7.6 upgrading to Ver 9.0 expected release Oct 2008

Person Responsible for Completion of Form: Graeme Poole

Position and Address: Coordinator, Graduations and Student Reporting, Student and Academic Services, Level 2 101 Currie Street, Adelaide 5000

Email: Graeme.poole@unisa.edu.au

Telephone: 08 8302 2743

A. Sources of Key Information for Graduation Statements

Sections of Graduation Statement	Sources of information	Comments
The Graduate Family name: Given name: Student identification number: Date of birth:	Student System and Transcript Student System and Transcript Student System and Transcript Student System	All these elements are available direct from our student system and all (ex DOB) are already on our current transcript. It was deliberate decision NOT to include date of birth on our transcript because of discrimination legislation, and partly confidentiality information (given that date of birth is used in generation of our student access passwords)
The Award Name: Detail: Pathways to further study: Course accreditation:	Student System and Transcript PIM – Program information system Not available - will need to provide area to store in PIM and start collecting Currently in PIM – but will also be in Student System from 2009 when we upgrade Student System	We have a separate system called PIM which stores a lot of our program type information. Some of it (course accreditation) will be in our new student system. We are creating 3 new fields, start and end dates, and organisation giving accreditation which will be attached to program data.
Awarding Institution General statement: Details on jointly-badged degrees: Details on courses offered with partner institution:	Not currently available, we would have to include in the Graduation Statement template Not currently available – would maybe include it in PIM Not currently available – would maybe include it in PIM	Developed when designing template. Will need to provide field in PIM and start collecting; only know there is a partner in a degree (flag on student system) and not specific details. Parchments manually produced. Will need to provide field in PIM and start collecting
Graduate's Achievements Programme details: Grading scheme:	Student System and Transcript Is currently pre-printed on the back of our transcript stationery, we would include a similar manner in the template for any Graduate Statement. Not currently collected: two elements: - Program based – key institutional or program characteristics	All program details are kept in our student system and are currently provided on our existing transcript. For research students – thesis title is also already included on our transcript; we also have a field called stored in our student system which could provide information for the 100-word extract. Would be developed onto template for the Graduate statement
Additional programme details: Special achievements, recognition and prizes;	Student based – workplace learning; institutional organised student abroad; independent overseas study; major practicum or professional training placements; assessed competencies Included on current transcript (from student system)	We have an area in our Student System where free text can be recorded for inclusion on our current transcripts. We would need to implement a process across the University to use this area. Already available in our system
Description of the Australian Higher Education System	Official statement approved by DEST and AQF secretariat will be provided to institutions.	

B. Estimates of Implementation Costs for 'Core' and 'Optional' Elements

Tasks	Cost Items	Costs	Explanatory Comments/Methodology
New or upgraded software and integration of different systems	To investigate, prepare functional specifications, develop and implement. Consult, communicate, document, train and rollout. Estimate: Minimum 3 months business analyst time @ HEO6 level	\$20,000	We would need to add extra fields to adequately cater for some of the information. This would involve customisation of systems, integration and process development and training (both in PIM and Student System). A new report (template for Graduation Statement) will need to be developed that pulls together the appropriate information from at least two systems. Modifications to our datawarehouse would be required, which is the source for preparation of such a report as data will be combined from at least 2 systems Documentation, communication and training of new processes required to collect data not previously collected.
Programming in order to access data already held in the University on other systems, or in other formats	1 – 1.5 month technical development time @ HEO 7 level	\$11,000	Would be incorporated in developing the new template for the Graduation system. Consultation with all Divisions, development of statements, drafts of templates and data statements
Administrative time in preparing information for the various core and optional elements of the Graduation Statement (including time taken in transcribing paper records into electronic records)	Estimate minimum 3 months Business Analyst @ HEO 6	\$20,000	
Additional costs in preparing and printing individual Graduation Statements (including possible employment of project officer)	Negligible – anticipate that once set up it would be generated the same way as we currently generate our transcripts		
Staff training	Included in above		
Archiving of Graduation Statement data.	Would need to investigate – but may be a pdf file attached to the student record – included in above estimates		
Other\	Contingencies	\$9,000	
Total		\$60,000	

C. Estimates of Annual Operational Costs for 'Core' And 'Optional' Elements

Tasks	Cost Items	Costs	Explanatory Comments/Methodology
Administrative costs of producing and archiving Graduation Statement information	If electronic storage as above – not significant.		
Additional costs of parchment or security paper over and above provision of transcript to each graduand	Costs of stationery, our current transcripts stocks costs around 40 cents per page, and we need to order 100,000 at a time to keep the cost low. Need to decide whether we use the same security type paper for these statements.		
Costs in printing and presentation to or mailing of Graduation Statements	Assuming we do use same paper stock main increase will be in the number of pages used		
Possible enhancement costs to take account of the evolving nature of the Graduation Statement			
Total	Estimated ONGOING COSTS Increased stationery costs based on 2 pages x 2 copies per student, 10,000 per annum @ 40cents per page	\$16,000 pa	

UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY, SYDNEY

Student Data System(s): Student 1 (Known as CASS at UTS)

Person Responsible for Completion of Form: Linda Aitkin

Position and Address: Student Systems Business Analyst, Student Administration Unit

Email: linda.aitkin@uts.edu.au

Telephone: 02 9514 7929

A. Sources of Key Information for Graduation Statements

Sections of Graduation Statement	Sources of information	Comments
The Graduate		
Family name:	Student 1	Exists in Student 1
Given name:	Student 1	Exists in Student 1
Student identification number:	Student 1	Exists in Student 1
Date of birth:	Student 1	Exists in Student 1
The Award	Student 1	Exists
Name:	Admission Requirements: Course Information System	Exists in CIS – may move to Student 1
Detail:	Normal Duration of Study: Course Information System Language of Instruction: Student 1	Exists in CIS – may move to Student 1 Exists in Student 1 UTS would keep each of these items in separate fields for use in multiple documents. We would be unlikely to produce award specific sentences merging information of this nature.
Pathways to further study:	Generic statements to be compiled	Policy project to determine wording. Possible web project to establish website with detailed information
Course accreditation:	Compilation of External Accreditation records held by Faculties	Not held on systems. Policy project to compile external course accreditation information. Systems project to implement capture of course accreditation information.
Awarding Institution	Generic statement to be developed and hard-coded into Graduation Statement	To be developed. (May need to be updated over time)
General statement:		
Details on jointly-badged degrees:	Project required to review sources of information on jointly badged degrees and partner institutions.	Possible changes to business process or enhancement?
Details on courses offered with partner institution:	As above	
Graduate's Achievements		
Programme details:	General academic history: Student 1	Exists in Student 1
	Thesis Title: Student 1	Exists in Student 1

Grading scheme:	100 word abstract of thesis: Not held in this form	Review information on thesis abstract which is held by University Graduate School.
Additional programme details:	Replicate information printed on back of existing transcript Workplace learning, Institutional Organised Study Abroad, Major practicum and professional training placements: limited information in Student 1 only Independent Overseas Study credited to the award: not recorded except as exemptions Assessed competencies or workplace capabilities: not recorded.	Grading scheme has changed over time – requires a full page to reproduce in full Policy project required to review recording of workplace learning experiences to include more detail and systems project to implement Policy project required to review recording of international experience in form of in-country study, exchange and independent overseas study and systems project to implement.
Special achievements, recognition and prizes:	Prizes: Student 1 (Comments) Uni Medal: Student 1 (SSPK Award level)	Academic project to establish method of assessing competencies and workplace capabilities and systems project to record. Currently on academic transcript. Need to review whether this is comprehensive.
Description of the Australian Higher Education System	Official statement approved by DEST and AQF secretariat will be provided to institutions.	

B. Estimates of Implementation Costs for 'Core' and 'Optional' Elements

Tasks	Cost Items	Costs	Explanatory Comments/Methodology
New or upgraded software and integration of different systems	Purchase and Implement Student 1 Rewards Module if required for scholarships and prizes Implement Study Package Text Implement Student Study Package User Fields Enhancement to record partner institutions and language of instruction in better format.	\$100,000	Assumes Graduation Statement will be a report produced from Student 1. However some additional modules would be required, and enhancements may be required
Programming to access data already held in the University on other systems, or in other formats	Transfer fields in Course Information System to Student 1	\$35,000	Some data held in course information system (Admission requirements, Duration of Study) needs to be migrated back to Student 1 to improve data integrity over time
Administrative time in preparing information for core and optional elements of the Graduation Statement (including time taken in transcribing paper records into electronic records)	Review information held on Admission Requirements Review information on Duration of Study Review information on Language of Instruction Review recording of workplace learning experiences to include more detail and systems project to implement Review recording of international experience in form of in-country study, exchange and independent overseas study and systems project to implement. Academic project to establish method of assessing competencies and workplace capabilities and systems project to record.	\$45,000	
Additional costs in preparing and printing individual Graduation Statements (including possible employment of project officer)	Project officer to assess options and design solution, coordinate implementation.	\$10,000	
Staff training	Student Records Staff Graduation Staff Student Centres General	\$5000	
Archiving of Graduation Statement data		\$10,000	
Other			
Total		\$205,000	

C. Estimates of Annual Operational Costs for 'Core' and 'Optional' Elements

Tasks	Cost Items	Costs	Explanatory Comments/Methodology
Administrate costs of producing and archiving Graduation Statement information	Produce graduation statements for each ceremony Archive statements	\$2,500	
Additional costs of parchment or security paper over and above provision of transcript to each graduand	Paper	\$2,500	
Costs in printing and presentation to or mailing of Graduation Statements		\$10,000	
Possible enhancement costs to take account of the evolving nature of the Graduation Statement		\$15,000	
Total		\$30,000	

VICTORIA UNIVERSITY

Student Data System(s): VUSIS (Victoria University Student Information System)
CAMS (Course Accreditation Management System)

Person Responsible for Completion of Form: Stephen Weller

Position and Address: Pro Vice-Chancellor Students

Email: Stephen.weller@vu.edu.au

Telephone: 03 9919 5460

A. Sources of Key Information for Graduation Statements

Sections of Graduation Statement	Sources of information	Comments
The Graduate Family name: Given name: Student identification number: Date of birth:	All from VUSIS	Exists in Student 1 Exists in Student 1 Exists in Student 1 Exists in Student 1
The Award Name: Detail: Pathways to further study: Course accreditation:	VUSIS/CAMS CAMS CAMS CAMS	
Awarding Institution General statement: Details on jointly-badged degrees: Details on courses offered with partner institution:	Official Statement approved by PVS Students in conjunction with marketing Official statement approved by PVC Students in conjunction with Marketing/CAMS CAMS	
Graduate's Achievements Programme details: Grading scheme: Additional programme details: Special achievements, recognition and prizes:	VUSIS VUSIS CAMS VUSIS	
Description of the Australian Higher Education System	Official statement approved by DEST and AQF secretariat will be provided to institutions.	

B. Estimates of Implementation Costs for 'Core' and 'Optional' Elements

Tasks	Cost Items	Costs	Explanatory Comments/Methodology
New or upgraded software and integration of different systems	Systems programming	\$30,000	
Programming to access data already held in the University on other systems, or in other formats		\$10,000	
Administrative time in preparing information for core and optional elements of the Graduation Statement (including time taken in transcribing paper records into electronic records)	Business Analyst	\$10,000	
Additional costs in preparing and printing individual Graduation Statements (including possible employment of project officer)	Likely dedicated fractional project manager	\$30,000	
Staff training		\$5,000	
Archiving of Graduation Statement data		\$10,000	
Other			
Total		\$95,000	

C. Estimates of Annual Operational Costs for 'Core' And 'Optional' Elements

Tasks	Cost Items	Costs	Explanatory Comments/Methodology
Administrative costs of producing and archiving Graduation Statement information	Produce graduation statements for each ceremony Archive statements	\$50,000	
Additional costs of parchment or security paper over and above provision of transcript to each graduand	Replacement paper supplies	\$100,000	
Costs in printing and presentation to or mailing of Graduation Statements	Inclusion of graduations	\$10,000	
Possible enhancement costs to take account of the evolving nature of the Graduation Statement	Ongoing annual assessment	\$5,000	
Total		\$165,000	

Recommendations on National Implementation

6

Introduction

This chapter considers a number of policy and administrative issues with regard to national implementation of the Australian Higher Education Graduation Statement. It also makes recommendations relating to both institutional and national implementation.

The scholarly literature on public policy studies points to the considerable difficulties that can emerge in national policy implementation of new initiatives by largely autonomous higher education institutions within federal systems of government. At the same time, this literature points to various factors that can assist successful implementation, including clarity of the policy objectives, clear specifications of proposed outcomes, prior consultation with key stakeholders, clear communication of the policy rationale and details to implementing organisations and their key personnel, and monitoring to ensure compliance and to enable unexpected or unintended issues to be promptly addressed. Some degree of flexibility to take account of local conditions within implementing institutions and the use of appropriate incentives are always helpful, while in many situations voluntary rather than mandatory implementation tends to work more effectively.

Should the recommendation that the Australian higher education system introduce Australian Higher Education Graduation Statements for all graduates along the lines recommended be accepted, a key administrative challenge will be to achieve: a) widespread acceptance of the policy objectives and details, not only by higher education institutions but also by all key stakeholders, and (b) successful national introduction of Graduation Statements by higher education institutions over a specified time period. There is also the challenge to ensure compliance but within some degree of flexibility.

In outlining a recommended implementation strategy, the following topics will be discussed: achievement of widespread support by all stakeholders; suggested time-period for implementation; voluntary or mandatory implementation; key implementation and monitoring agencies; and the possibility of financial support to assist institutions with the considerable additional costs.

Achieving Support of Stakeholders

In view of the highly positive responses received as a result of the consultation with higher education institutions and other stakeholders, it should not be difficult to achieve widespread support for the introduction of the Graduation Statement from all domestic stakeholders, including students and student associations, professional associations and employers. Earlier chapters in this report and in the Progress Report have outlined the consultation process undertaken by the Project Team and the detailed responses from higher education institutions and other stakeholders.

Overall, different groups of stakeholders are strongly supportive of the Graduation Statement initiative and see its potential especially in assisting Australian graduates seeking employment or further study opportunities overseas, and international students returning to their home countries or seeking other work or study opportunities. In addition, domestic employers and professional associations see value in the Graduation Statement, particularly as it will present identical information on each individual graduate and their awards using a uniform pattern of major headings. Domestic employers and professional associations see considerable value in the proposed additional information on courses and graduates that will be authenticated by universities. The Project Team was particularly impressed with the strong

support for Graduation Statements provided in the written responses by universities. It was also greatly encouraged by the strong institutional participation in workshops and other consultative meetings organised for higher education institutions.

In the implementation phase, it will be important to build on this existing strong base of support. At the same time, it will be necessary for implementers both nationally and within institutions to develop strategies to ensure that the objectives of Australian Higher Education Graduation Statements are clearly understood, especially by graduates and all relevant staff members within higher education institutions. It will also be important that it be widely recognised that the Graduation Statement is the local equivalent to the Diploma Supplement that is becoming increasingly important in facilitating graduate mobility in European nations. Once the first Graduation Statements are issued, national publicity will be important to ensure that employers and professional associations will know to expect that Australian graduates will soon be presenting Graduation Statements in applications for employment and professional recognition.

Presumably international recognition will come more slowly. However, possibly both DEEWR and universities can play influential roles in ensuring that relevant international bodies as well as employers and professional associations in other countries are aware of this important Australian initiative. There may be considerable potential to build on the Brisbane communiqué of 2006 involving Ministers of Education from various Asian and Pacific nations.

Suggested Implementation Period

The Project Team suggests implementation over a three-year period, commencing as soon as practicable in 2008. Financial support from DEEWR should be provided to universities that undertake to commence implementation in 2008 and complete it within three years. A three year period is desirable in order to give institutions time to upgrade student and course administration information management systems, link different information systems more effectively within universities in order to produce relevant student information and carry out various administrative work, particularly the development of statements about course requirements and special characteristics of courses and transcribing material manually from paper files. In some cases, upgrading of systems to cope with the requirements of Graduation Statements may need to fit within

existing schedules for system upgrades. While some institutions may have the capacity and enthusiasm to fully implement Graduation Statements within 12 months, others may need a full three years. Some institutions may prefer to plan gradual implementation on a faculty-by-faculty basis, but here there is a danger that students in faculties without Graduation Statements may feel disadvantaged.

One possible desirable strategy would be to attempt to ensure that a small number of 'pace-setter' universities introduce Graduation Statements within the first 12 months and then for their achievements to be publicised widely in the media. Examples of successful implementation plus positive publicity are likely to act as strong levers to encourage other institutions to speed up the implementation process. This is likely to be a powerful mechanism to achieve the desired innovation in what is a highly competitive international student market.

Voluntary or Mandatory

The Project Team strongly recommends voluntary rather than mandatory implementation. Voluntary rather than mandatory compliance works well within the higher education sector wherever possible because of strong traditions of institutional autonomy and the desirability of administrative independence. However, in the case of the Graduation Statement, the Project Team believes that in view of the high degree of support and enthusiasm for the Graduation Statement suggests that the use of a voluntary approach is preferable.

In its submission to the Project Team, the University of Queensland commented as follows:

We are also concerned ... that there will be mandated compliance with the issue of the Graduation Statement in a highly prescribed form. The issuing of academic records and associated documentation should be at the discretion of each institution and, while there is merit in having some consistency in the information that is provided in these Graduation Statements, it seems overly bureaucratic and interventionist to have this regulated and monitored by a national reference group.

While no other university commented specifically on this issue, it seems likely that the sentiments expressed by the University of Queensland would be shared by many universities to varying extents.

Key Implementation and Monitoring Agencies

With respect to all universities including the private universities, the Project Team recommends that the main responsibility for implementation and monitoring progress should be shared between DEEWR and Universities Australia, although responsibility for updating the Description of the Australian Higher Education System should be a shared responsibility between DEEWR and the Australian Qualifications Framework Secretariat. No doubt in making any revisions to the description it will be desirable for consultations with the higher education sector as a whole to occur, especially as universities may have received relevant feedback from overseas universities, employers and professional associations, or overseas branch campuses.

With regard to the idea of shared DEEWR and Universities Australia joint responsibility for implementation, it appears highly desirable for DEEWR to have ongoing involvement in implementation in view of its leadership over a number of years with regard to matters related to the Bologna Process. Involvement of Universities Australia is highly desirable in view that it represents 38 universities and has expressed the wish to take increased leadership roles in major policy initiatives on behalf of the sector. Further, through its various structures, Universities Australia has suitable mechanisms to facilitate further consultation and for setting up appropriate monitoring mechanisms.

In terms of implementation within universities, it will be necessary to plan for the following tasks to be undertaken and successfully completed:

- Planning a detailed national implementation strategy and arranging for further dialogue with universities about details of implementation and any unresolved issues about the format and content of the Australian Higher Education Graduation Statement;
- Liaison with major student system providers and 'families' concerning system upgrades and programming needs;
- Development of detailed documentation on implementation for distribution to and within universities;
- Arranging implementation workshops in key states to be attended by university representatives to be followed by facilitator visits to a number of key individual universities;
- Distribution of copies of special newsletters to be published at intervals in Years 1, 2 and 3 of the implementation cycle, reporting on

progress and good practice, and discussing particular issues of concern;

- Arranging for media publicity about the objectives and international value of the Australian Higher Education Graduation Statements;
- Monitoring progress at intervals over the three-year implementation period to identify any particular problems and to ensure a high level of overall compliance with the model specification with regard to format and content;
- Following the implementation period, regular monitoring and, as necessary, revisions of specifications in order to ensure that Graduation Statements continue to meet the needs of stakeholders, including international universities, employers and professional associations, and is achieving good practice internationally will be important.

In implementation it will be necessary to balance in a sensitive manner the need for a high level of overall compliance with the model specifications with regard to format and content against the desirability of a measure of flexibility to meet the special needs and preferences of individual universities. Further discussion would be desirable about the relationship of Graduation Statement and academic transcripts and the wishes of some universities to adopt a variation in how academic achievement information for individual students is recorded.

With regard to other higher education providers, the Project Team recommends that implementation be handled jointly by DEEWR in combination with the Council for Private Higher Education and the Australian Council for Private Education and Training with a somewhat similar process being followed to that for universities. However, it may be useful to delay implementation by other higher education providers by some 12 months in order to ensure that the model is successfully introduced within the university sector.

Financial Support

On the basis of the survey of estimated implementation costs and various comments in written submissions, it is clear that all higher education institutions will incur substantial additional expense to implement the Australian Higher Education Graduation Statement. Such expense relates particularly to upgrades and new functionalities for student and course information management systems, additional programming activities, administrative costs in preparing new information such as on course descriptions and special characteristics

of courses, and costs involved in manually transferring information currently held on paper files.

In many cases the size of the task is considerable because of the large numbers of separate degree programs offered by institutions, the growing popularity of combined degrees, and increases in the number of jointly badged degrees and degrees offered by partner institutions. Additional costs will be incurred with the use of polymer instead of paper and adoption of new security and data integrity measures that many universities wish to move to as part of security upgrades. In summary, to successfully implement the Graduation Statement will involve all universities in substantial costs and without assistance implementation may well be slower and less satisfactory. In terms of Australia's international education outreach alone there are strong reasons why Commonwealth financial support is highly desirable. While the project has not investigated likely costs for other higher education providers, it appears clear that somewhat similar costs will be incurred although some costs may vary with institutional size and complexity.

Chapter 5 reported on the cost estimates provided by six universities and also pointed to the difficulties involved in making reliable cost estimates. However, the Project Team consider that a reasonable estimate is that each university will incur costs of approximately \$150,000 to implement the Australian Higher Education Graduation Statement. For this reason, it is recommended that funding be sought to provide each of the 37 public universities with a grant of \$100,000 to subsidise their cost of implementation.

Other Recent Studies Relevant to the Project Topic

7

Two recent reports that are relevant to the Project are the final report of the UK Burgess Group and a major report on graduate employability skills prepared by Precision Consultancy for the Business, Industry and Higher Education Collaboration Council. This chapter provides brief summaries of both documents and assesses their relevance. In light of this, recommendations are put forward with regard to future action by the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations.

Final Report of the Burgess Group

In October 2007, the third and final report of the so-called 'Burgess Group' on the UK honours degree system of classification was published. The formal title of the Burgess Group is the Measuring and Recording Student Achievement Steering Group that was appointed in 2005 by Universities UK and the Committee of Principals of Higher Education Colleges (now known as the Higher Education Guild). The first Burgess Report from the Measuring and Recording Student Achievement Scoping Group made a strong case for reviewing the current classification of honours degrees, which it considered as being no longer fit for purpose. As a result, a Measuring and Recording Student Achievement Steering Group was established in February 2005 to consider, develop and consult on practical proposals for the implementation of the Scoping Group's recommendations. Over the past two years, the Steering Group has undertaken extensive consultation and detailed consideration of the issues, the results of which are now presented to the higher education sector for consideration.

The focus of this report is on the UK honours bachelors degree classification system that measures a student's performance in UK higher

education undergraduate honours degree programs. All UK universities currently use the same classification nomenclature, which is universally applied to honours degrees with some exceptions such as medical degrees. There are potentially a maximum of six points on the grading scale. Above the Fail grade, institutions can award a First, Upper Second, Lower Second and Third Class degrees. Institutions may also award a Pass grade, which does not carry the grade of honours. The system has been in use for some 200 years having been introduced first at the University of Oxford (Universities UK & HE Guild 2007, p. 14).

The Case for Change

The report argues that the case for change has become stronger with the convergence of a number of factors, including the increasing emphasis on widening participation rates and employability skills, the transformation of the higher education student experience changes in the labour market, student perception of what constitutes a 'worthwhile degree' and institutional practice. In particular, the report argues that a summative assessment system

which gives the appearance of signing off a person's education with a simple numerical indicator is at odds with lifelong learning. It encourages students and employers to focus on one final outcome and perceived 'end point', rather than opening them to the concept of a range of different types of achievement, which are each part of their degree (Universities UK & HE Guild 2007, p 7).

According to the Burgess Group, what is needed for student grading systems to do justice to a wider range of student experience is provision for wider recognition of achievements. It considers that the current system is unable to adequately capture achievement in some areas of interest to students and employers.

The Burgess Group is particularly critical of the focus on the two top degree classes (i.e., First Class Honours and Second Class Honours Division A) that reinforces the impression that a Lower Second or a Third Class degree is not an adequate level of achievement for employment. As a result the Burgess Group concluded that 'many employers could be missing out on the skills and experience of potential recruits because these graduates had not attained a First/Upper Second' (Universities UK & HE Guild 2007, p 22). Significantly, as a result of employer and student pressure, there has been a steady increase in the proportion of UK graduates graduating with a First or Upper Second. By 2005-2006, almost 60 per cent of UK graduates received such awards.

The Steering Committee also took the view that institutional methods for calculating the degree classification could be clearer in order to help students understand what they are being awarded and what is being recognised by the institution. A further complication is that currently there are major variations between institutions and, within institutions, between different fields of study and faculties.

In the end, the Steering Group accepted the need to continue with a summative assessment but saw the need for this to be balanced by the provision of other information. It commented as follows:

The Group believes that periodic summative assessment has its place within the overall package of assessment tools available to academic staff when assessing the components of a learning programme on a ongoing basis, but that this needs to be balanced with more learning centred assessment practices... (Universities UK & HE Guild 2007, p 28).

Options for Change

The Burgess Group took the view that replacing the current system would mean a major upheaval for the sector and other stakeholders. Various options were canvassed widely but there was not consensus on any, with respondents tending to suggest changes within the current system rather than radical changes.

While many other countries use some form of summative judgement on student achievement, none of these seemed suitable as a replacement for the honours bachelor system of degree classification. Options considered included: the grade point average, and longer performance scales and shorter performance scales (as used in Sweden).

The report concluded that the main problem with the honours bachelor system of classifications related to the summative judgment in the honours classification. It reported that ideally 'the summative judgement should be replaced with a more sophisticated approach that better represents the outcomes of student learning and encouraged personal development and understanding in the context of lifelong learning' (Universities UK & HE Guild 2007, p 9). It thus argued as follows:

The Group believed there is a need for greater emphasis on the additional information currently contained in the European Diploma Supplement and academic transcript. If these were combined, and incorporated in a more broadly conceived and more detailed version of the transcript, they could form the basis for a better approach. By academic transcript we mean an authoritative and official record of a learner's programme of study, the grades they have achieved and the credit they have received (Universities UK & HE Guild 2007, p 9).

Proposals

The Steering Group thus recommended that by the academic year 2010/11, following a period of detailed development, a Higher Education Achievement Report (HEAR) should be the central vehicle for recording all university-level higher education student achievement in all UK higher education institutions. The HEAR will be a single document, based on and developed from the current academic transcript, and its incorporation in the European Diploma Supplement. It will contain a wider range of information than current academic transcripts and will capture more fully the strengths and weaknesses of the student's performance. It will also contain information about academic credit, which will link directly to the national credit framework for the part of the UK in which the award is made. Core content will be common to all institutions, which will be free to add additional information as they see fit.

The HEAR will contain only information that the institution is prepared to verify. Further work should be undertaken on how to measure and record skills and achievements gained through non-formal learning but this, along with other student-generated/driven information, should be part of Personal Development Planning which is similar to the current Australian notion of an e-portfolio.

In the short-term, the Steering Group took the view that the HEAR should contain the current summative judgement of honours grades but it anticipated that alternatives might be developed.

Four elements of information will be merged as seamlessly as possible into the HEAR:

- The Diploma Supplement;
- Current transcript information;
- Sector-agreed additional information that will form, with the first two elements, the new core of the HEAR; and
- Any additional information that institutions wish to add.

Somewhat surprisingly, instead of moving relatively quickly to the new HEAR the Burgess Group recommended there will be a period of some three to four years of development work and further studies and debate about the various processes of assessment. While implementation of the HEAR may commence relatively soon, retaining the current honours degree classification, it is hoped that 'ultimately, the honours degree classification will be rendered obsolete by better information contained in the HEAR' (Universities UK & HE Guild 2007, p 36).

While the Burgess Group expects that the HEAR will contain considerable additional information that institutions may wish to add, relatively few clues are given of what this information might be.

Graduate Employability Skills

Precision Consultancy prepared this report on graduate employability skills as part of a research study commissioned by the Business, Industry and Higher Education Collaboration Council with funding provided by the Commonwealth Government. The project was managed by the Australian Industry Group.

The consultancy was undertaken to investigate:

- (a) how universities currently develop and integrate employability skills into their programs of study;
- (b) how universities teach employability skills;
- (c) how universities currently assess students' employability skills; and
- (d) how graduate employability skills might be assessed and reported upon.

The work was completed between March and June 2007 and involved extensive consultation with a range of different stakeholders including representatives of universities, business and industry.

Employability Skills and Graduate Attributes

The report observes that higher education plays key roles in developing human capital as part of local, national and international economies. The *Employability Skills Framework* outlined in

the 2002 DEST report *Employability skills for the future* provides a useful starting point for the project. This report identified eight skills:

- Communication skills that contribute to productive and harmonious relations between employees and customers;
- Teamwork skills that contribute to productive working relationships and outcomes;
- Problem solving skills that contribute to productive outcomes;
- Self-management skills that contribute to employee satisfaction and growth;
- Planning and organising skills that contribute to long-term and short-term strategic planning;
- Technology skills that contribute to effective execution of tasks;
- Life-long learning skills that contribute to ongoing improvement and expansion in employee and company operations and outcomes; and
- Initiative and enterprise skills that contribute to innovative outcomes.

The report comments that, on the basis of a literature review, employability skills are best learned and applied within the context of specific disciplines. The discipline-specific approach emphasises the importance of mapping these skills within the curriculum and stresses the importance of universities and employers working together to appropriately define these skills. However, the report points out that there is little if any evidence-based research that isolates each variable and judges the comparative effectiveness of different strategies.

Graduate attributes are viewed as the qualities, skills and understandings that a university community agrees its students should develop during their time with the university. The idea of graduate attributes developed out of the West Review of 1998 and since then all Australian universities have been required to develop policy statements that specify their graduate attributes as part of funding and reporting arrangements. Universities have begun to address employability skills through the formal articulation of graduate attributes and the integration of these into the curriculum. An analysis of graduate attributes from a significant number of universities shows that employability skills as outlined in the *Employability Skills Framework* may reasonably be seen as a subset of graduate attributes. Curriculum mapping is one of the ways to achieve this, through identifying where particular skills are covered in the curriculum.

Report Findings

The report explains that consultations with industry reinforced the that the skills defined in the 2001 *Employability Skills Framework* are still seen by employers as being highly relevant to their needs. Broadly speaking, it was concluded that industry representatives are satisfied with the technical discipline-specific skills of graduates, but for some students there is a perception that employability skills are underdeveloped. The report explained that some employers believe that universities are providing students with a strong knowledge base but without the ability to intelligently apply that knowledge in the work setting.

Examples are provided of different approaches currently been taken by different universities to identify employability skills, making it clear that universities take many different approaches. These primarily sit within the context of graduate attributes determined at the university level and then identified at faculty, discipline, qualification and subject level. In addition to the part that universities play, students themselves are developing a range of employability skills through different activities including part-time work, volunteer work, fieldwork, and industry placements.

The report explains that employability skills can be effectively assessed where the specific skill and its application are described in course materials and learning objectives, and where it is clearly identified within the context of a given discipline. Workplace supervisors are in unique positions to assess and provide feedback on skills.

Existing generic tools such as the Graduate Skills Assessment (GSA) and the Employability Skills Profiler (SP) are not favoured by universities in their current form. Ultimately, however, it is argued that it is the employer who must take primary responsibility for assessment of a graduate's employability skills.

Reporting on employability skills is a complex issue. Those employers interviewed as part of the project did not favour simple generic statements about each of the eight employability skills. The provision of information about the course and its design together with descriptions of the discipline or qualification related employment skills had more support.

Students need to take responsibility for reviewing and assessing their own skills and here e-portfolio is of importance. E-portfolios were seen by business and industry to be a practical method for graduates to explain and provide examples of their employability skills.

In Europe, the Diploma Supplement is becoming increasingly important with both students and other stakeholders recognising its value in describing qualifications in a way that is clear to potential employers and other higher education institutions. With regard to this project, the report commented as follows:

Although most of the information required to be on the Diploma Supplement is standard there is a section where details of employability skills associated with the given qualification could be readily and meaningfully included. In terms of a reporting format that could be almost universal across Australian universities, the Australian Diploma Supplement presents new opportunity to articulate the employability skills of graduates of a program (Precision Consultancy 2007, p 4).

Recommendations

The consultants recommended an integrated approach for the future that emphasises improved processes for identifying, developing, assessing and reporting on graduate employability skills. Specific recommendations were as follows:

- To establish an Employability Strategy Fund;
- To explicitly identify employability skills in all university curricula;
- To improve and increase access to Work Integrated Learning (WIL); and
- To enhance teaching and assessment employability skills.

Relevance of these Reports to this Project

Clearly both reports are relevant to this proposal for an Australian Higher Education Graduation Statement. The Burgess Group are recommending introduction of an Higher Education Achievement Report (HEAR) that will incorporate the current European Diploma Supplement, academic transcript information, sector agreed additional information and any additional information that institutions wish to add. This means that the UK HEAR will closely resemble the Australian Higher Education Graduation Statement. However, it will be important for Australia to follow ongoing discussions in the UK, particularly with regard to assessment and recording achievement as over the next three or four years the Burgess Group are recommending discussions and further studies.

With regard to graduate employability skills, considerable work needs to be carried out as recommended by the consultancy report

especially as there appears to be no consensus on how graduate employability skills should be assessed and reported upon. However, the Project Team have included the possibility of institutions reporting in the Graduation Statement on assessed graduate employability skills.

References

Universities UK and Higher Education Guild (2007) *Beyond the honours degree classification: Burgess Group Final Report*, London.

Precision Consultancy (2007) *Graduate Employability Skills: Prepared for the Business, Industry and Higher Education Collaboration Council August 2007*. Melbourne.