

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

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

**Outcome 3 - Higher Education**

**DEEWR Question No.** EW0512\_11

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

**Question**

**TEQSA - OUTCOMES AND STANDARDS-BASED ARRANGEMENTS**

“better information relating to outcomes and standards-based arrangements” i. Is it to be the role for TEQSA to insist on compliance of all higher education providers with the same standards? ii. Does the Government intend to adopt standardised tests for addressing the learning outcomes of higher education students or graduates? iii. Does the Government intend to have a common curriculum in higher education as is happening in primary and secondary schooling?

**Answer**

The need for clear and strong standards for the higher education sector was one of the issues raised consistently during the *Review of Australian Higher Education* and in subsequent consultations with the sector. Standards will also support the new student centred, demand driven system and provide assurance that quality higher education services are being delivered in an environment of increasing participation.

The introduction of a higher education standards-based quality regulatory framework under the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) will ensure that all higher education providers meet a set of minimum standards. This is central to ensuring that the entry gateway to the higher education sector is sufficiently high and provides a solid basis of performance from which all providers can build excellence and diversity.

Draft Performance Funding Guidelines were released in late October 2010 for sector consultation. The draft guidelines propose that as a condition of eligibility for Reward Funding, all universities will be required to participate in and agree performance targets for the Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA) as an indicator of the quality of learning outcomes. The CLA will measure the value added generic skills of undergraduate students. The instrument will be developed in 2011 in consultation with the sector and will be implemented in 2012.

In developing a standards-based framework, the Australian Government is not seeking to standardise or impose curriculum or course design. The new quality and regulatory framework will ensure students receive a high quality education that meets or exceeds threshold standards. It provides a solid basis of minimum performance on which all providers can build and diversify. Academic freedom of inquiry will not be compromised.