

VU

Learning and Teaching Quality and Standards

Framework

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1. Introduction

Victoria University is committed to ensuring that it systematically undertakes quality assurance and quality improvement strategies in relation to course delivery and the student learning experience. For this purpose, the University has engaged with processes to outline key quality measures that are used to judge success and continuous improvement while monitoring the learning and teaching instruments and indicators that are used to carry out quality assurance.

The VU Learning and Teaching Quality and Standards Framework is an overarching structure that initially drew on the AUQA commended framework implemented at the University of Western Sydney, as well as the work of a National Senior Teaching Fellowship. It reflects the result of national and international benchmarking and standards approaches to institutional-wide quality assurance in learning and teaching. These approaches are also reflected in the indicators for course and student experience against which the performance of the university is measured externally by ASQA and TEQSA.

The University adapted these approaches to the VU context to streamline and enhance quality and standards activities across the University. The outcome is a fit-for-purpose framework that provides an effective, clear and practical mechanism for underpinning a variety of quality assurance activities. The Framework is cognisant of our diverse student body, reflective of the VU Block Model, and is designed to empower the University's academic, teaching, professional, sessional and casual staff to identify, articulate and embed good practice in learning and teaching. Further, it aligns with current learning and teaching policy directions and settings, and is supported by a series of policies, procedures, guidelines and instruments, such as those in place for Annual and Comprehensive Course Monitoring and External Referencing and Benchmarking.

This Framework should be viewed as a guiding tool for assuring quality and standards in learning and teaching at VU, broadly applicable to higher, vocational and further education and partnered delivery.

The purpose of the Framework is to ensure that the University's courses undergo continual improvement, review and monitoring to meet state and national minimum standards, aligned with the requirements of the HESF and Standards for RTO's, and those of professional accrediting bodies, and to ensure a rewarding outcome for our diverse student body.

2. The Framework

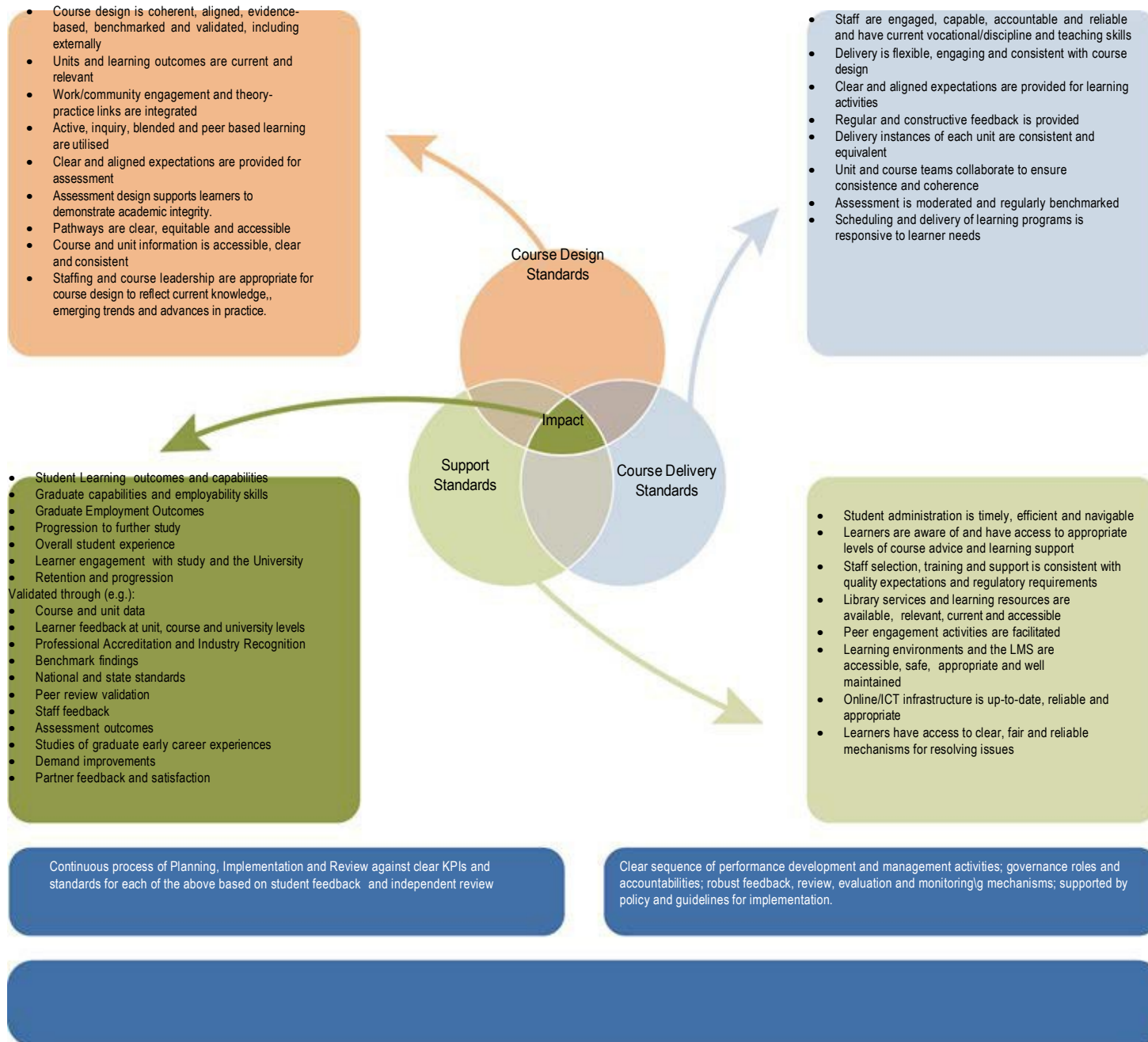
The Framework is underpinned by a set of standards that guide quality assurance and quality enhancement and enable the University to meet and exceed state and national threshold standards for teaching, learning and staff and student support. The advantage of this approach is that it empowers staff to make judgements about the quality of course design and delivery utilizing the Framework. A further advantage is the alignment of the Framework with external instruments, including in HE, the Student Experience Survey and in VE, The National Student Outcomes Survey

The key tenets of the Framework can be seen in Figure 1. This depicts a framework that operates at multiple levels. It outlines *what* is to be given priority and is made up of four interdependent components, including:

1. Course design standards
2. Support (student and teacher) standards
3. Course delivery standards
4. Evidence of Impact of standards on quality and outcomes.

The Course Design, Support and Course Delivery components provide an indication of the minimum (or threshold) levels and expectations (minimum standards) of quality learning and teaching activity. The final component – Impact – focuses on ways in which standards outlined in each of these three components impact on student outcomes as learners and graduates, along with the sources of data to evaluate, monitor and manage the University's performance. 'Impact' also provides a broad view of mechanisms by which to gauge the overall effectiveness of the Framework and its effectiveness in embedding quality and standards in learning and teaching at VU.

Figure 1
The VU Learning and Teaching Quality and Standards Framework



The components and sub-components of the Framework operate as part of an overall system directed toward the achievement of desired impact and based on evidence from a range of data sources. Together, these mechanisms form a holistic picture of the environment in which the design, delivery and ongoing tracking and improvement of VU student learning, support and outcomes can occur as part of an overall system. By taking this view of the components of learning, teaching and support for students and staff, the multiple influences on student experience can be seen as part of the larger system, interdependencies managed and risks identified. In short, these components of the overall system provide the basis for the University to ensure that design, delivery, support mechanisms and outcomes are evidence-based, relevant, aligned and mutually supportive.

INFOVU provides an authoritative source for quantitative indicators utilized to provide an evidence base for the Framework. The Dashboards available through INFOVU are aligned with each component and sub-component of the Framework. They are also aligned with the VU Block Model, with the Unit Health Dashboard providing immediate access to a range of indicators prior to, during and post unit delivery in each Block. INFO VU also provides ready access to the external measures of the university's performance against the standards, based on student feedback through the Student Experience Survey in HE and the National Student Outcomes Survey in VE.

Importantly, the thresholds in this Framework should be envisaged as a base level of activity upon which innovations and creative approaches to teaching and learning can be built, that exceed the standards and result in positive outcomes in terms of learning, teaching and graduate outcomes.

3. Quality review

The attainment of the standards outlined in the Framework are monitored by review processes that are both formal and informal.

Informally, the Framework provides educators and course teams with a tool to regularly and independently undertake quality reviews, while guiding evaluation against an agreed set of high level concepts that are state and nationally benchmarked and validated. Formally, regular course monitoring and analysis of quality and standards will support educators and course teams to carry out extensive reviews at course level. These formal course review processes align with the evidence-based approach inherent in the Framework and ensure that:

- Data reporting is fit-for-purpose and streamlined and targeted to College and staff needs
- Processes are sufficiently flexible to ensure that staff can highlight areas of strong performance and engage in conversations about potential improvement areas
- Achievement and accountability are clear and supported by both review and reporting processes.

4. Implications for policy and procedures

The introduction of a coherent Quality and Standards Framework provided an opportunity to review the ways in which Learning and Teaching is understood and quality assured across the University. Effective quality frameworks involve consistent application and language across domains. Each domain of the Framework is supported by a suite of policies and procedures, along with accountabilities that clarify roles and responsibilities in implementing the Framework

The Framework aligns with the intent of existing policy, course approvals, review processes/criteria and data collection, analysis and reporting, with changes having been made to achieve alignment. It is expected that the overarching framework will continue to provide a good fit for all sectors (vocational, further and higher education), with maintenance to ensure currency of terminology and alignment with university and sector expectations. As far as possible, policy will be university wide. However, procedures may differ for vocational education as a consequence of varying regulatory requirements.

Appendix A Standards and Impact

Course Design Standards

- Course design is coherent, aligned, evidence-based, benchmarked and validated, including externally
- Units and learning outcomes are current and relevant
- Work/community engagement and theory-practice links are integrated
- Active, inquiry, blended and peer based learning are utilised
- Clear and aligned expectations are provided for assessment
- Assessment design supports students to demonstrate academic integrity
- Pathways are clear, equitable and accessible
- Course and unit information is accessible, clear and consistent
- Staffing and course leadership are appropriate for course design to reflect current knowledge, emerging trends and advances in practice

Course Delivery Standards

- Staff are engaged, capable, accountable and reliable and have current vocational/discipline and teaching skills
- Delivery is flexible, engaging and consistent with course design
- Clear and aligned expectations are provided for learning activities
- Regular and constructive feedback is provided
- Delivery instances of each unit are consistent and equivalent
- Unit and course teams collaborate to ensure consistence and coherence
- Assessment is moderated and regularly benchmarked
- Scheduling and delivery of learning programs is responsive to student needs

Support Standards

- Student administration is timely, efficient and navigable
- Students are aware of and have access to appropriate levels of course advice and learning support
- Staff selection, training and support is consistent with quality expectations and regulatory requirements
- Library services and learning resources are available, relevant, current and accessible
- Peer engagement activities are facilitated
- Learning environments and the LMS are accessible, safe, appropriate and well maintained
- Online/ICT infrastructure is up-to-date, reliable and appropriate
- Students have access to clear, fair and reliable mechanisms for resolving issues

Impact

- Student Learning outcomes and capabilities
- Graduate capabilities and employability skills
- Progression to further study
- Overall student experience
- Student engagement with study and the University
- Retention and progression

Validated through (e.g.):

- Course and unit data
- Student feedback at unit, course and university levels
- Professional Accreditation and Industry Recognition Benchmark findings
- National and state standards
- Peer review validation
- Staff feedback
- Assessment outcomes
- Studies of graduate early career experiences
- Demand improvements
- Partner feedback and satisfaction