

DASSH response to the Higher Education Standards Panel's Consultation on the Transparency of Higher Education Admissions Processes

The Australasian Council of Deans of Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities (DASSH) welcomes this opportunity to contribute to the Higher Education Standards Panel's Consultation on the Transparency of Higher Education Admissions Processes.

Higher education admissions processes are directly relevant to DASSH. The Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities disciplines account for approximately 65% of all Australian higher education enrolments.¹ In 2015, commencements from the Society and Culture and Creative Arts fields accounted for 29.5% of total commencements from Tertiary Admission Centres and 36.1% of direct offers from universities.²

The principle which informs DASSH's submission is our commitment to multiple pathways for admission to universities, recognising both the value to individuals, communities and the nation of access to higher education and the variety of prior educational, employment, family and other circumstances that cannot be appropriately dealt with through a single admission pathway.

DASSH:

- welcomes the Panel's emphasis on a student-centred approach to transparency;
- supports improved clarity of information about university admissions policies including admissions policies designed to support equity in access to education; that improved clarity should encompass the full diversity of pathways to higher education including ATARs, alternative entry options, and admissions based on combinations of entry options (for example, portfolio plus ATAR);
- recommends that to enable prospective students and their families to make meaningful comparisons among universities in this country, Australian universities should adopt a set of consistent descriptions of criteria for entry;
- emphasises the importance of autonomy for universities, with each university retaining the right to determine and change its range and type of admissions pathways as well as the specific entry requirements for each of its programs/courses (subject to the relevant Higher Education Standards);

¹ Department of Education and Training. Higher Education Statistics Data Cube (uCube).

² Department of Education and Training (2015). *Undergraduate Applications and Offers, February 2015 report*. Available at

https://docs.education.gov.au/system/files/doc/other/undergraduate_applications_and_offers_february_2015_0.pdf [Accessed 24/05/2016].

- endorses the provision of clear information about admissions processes through existing mechanisms, thereby minimising increases in compliance costs and streamlining access to information for prospective students.

Professor Susan Dodds

President

Australasian Council of Deans of Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities (DASSH)

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About DASSH

The Australasian Council of Deans of Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities (DASSH) is the authoritative agency on research, teaching and learning for the Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities (DASSH) in Australian and New Zealand universities.

DASSH supports those within these institutions who have responsibility for the governance and management of research and teaching and learning in their universities. DASSH also supports those who aspire to these positions through a Network of Associate Deans (Learning and Teaching) and a Network of Associate Deans (Research).