
Request for Feedback — Improving the transparency of higher education admissions: Implementation plan - Consultation Draft

OVERVIEW

Notre Dame welcomes and supports the proposal for increased clarity & transparency in admissions processes. Common basic information and terminology across the sector should improve clarity and make information more accessible, comparable and understandable for future students. The sector must ensure that students are not overwhelmed by large and complicated datasets but are given simple details on not only the various entry pathways to courses and the proportion of students usually admitted in each pathway but also the indicative entry requirements for those pathways.

FEEDBACK QUESTIONS

2. How achievable are the proposed implementation timelines, including commitments to deliver a ‘best endeavours’ version ... to inform students applying to enter study in the 2018 academic year?

We understand and appreciate that the current implementation timeline has been proposed in order to assist students seeking to enter Higher Education in 2018. However, in order to provide students with the most considered, detailed, appropriate and accurate information we think that timelines and commitments should be centred on the 2019 Academic year.

The proposed ‘best endeavours’ approach may see providers at a variety of points of implementation and therefore runs the risk of reducing clarity in the short term. There are particular issues for direct entry institutions such as Notre Dame and these are discussed below. In addition, it may be preferable for institutional implementation to follow (not precede) the Government Commitments, i.e. the TEQSA Guidance and the proposed national admission platform. This may enable institutions to take account of Government requirements and frame information accordingly.

A more realistic timeframe would, we consider, allow details and concerns to be addressed during 2017 which would ultimately be better for students applying for the 2019 academic year.

3. If there would be difficulty in delivering the commitments proposed, what could be changed to make them achievable?

There would be difficulty in delivering the commitments proposed. These are discussed in (2) above and (6) below. Notre Dame is of the firm view that in order to fully address all issues, and provide a clear, consistent and meaningful resource for future students, the delivery times must change.

6. Do the proposed “information sets” meet the need identified by the Higher Education Standards Panel for comparability of the information available from different providers about the requirements to be admitted to study at each institution and each course that they deliver?

The information sets provided in Appendix C and Appendix D are predicated largely on information flowing from Tertiary Admissions Centres. For direct entry institutions, or those with differing admission systems (such as Notre Dame) there would be difficulties in delivering some of the proposed information.

We have undertaken preliminary review of both information sets. In order to properly capture admissions information relevant to some courses at Notre Dame, an additional option should be added to Part 2, Appendix D, under “Other Admission Options.” This would be “Pathway 6 – Non-ATAR Academic Achievement/Extra Curricular Activities.” While more detailed consideration will need to be given to the Information Sets (hence the timing proposed above) this would at least enable the clear provision of information in circumstances where an ATAR is not the sole entry option.

We consider that the four broad categories for the ‘basis of admission’ appear to cover the majority of circumstances. The validity of reporting raw ATAR minimum, maximum & percentile cut-offs for school leavers if ATAR was used in the offer decision (group A or B), where the sample size is small, i.e. majority of school leaver offers are not provided on the basis of ATAR (group C), requires further discussion.