

12 May 2017

Professor Kerri-Lee Krause (PhD)
Chair, Admissions Transparency IWG
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Dear Professor Krause

Re: Consultation on admissions transparency implementation plan

Open Universities Australia (OUA) welcomes the opportunity to provide submissions on the draft Admissions transparency implementation plan released by the Implementation Working Group. We note that the key aim of the consultation is to standardise the information on admission requirements and to design and implement a national admissions information platform which would help students with comparable information to make an informed decision.

Grouping of applicants

In this context, we would like to comment that with regard to OUA's unique status within the Australian higher education environment the question posed in Question 4 of the consultation paper is very relevant. We support the idea of grouping the applicants based on their previous educational attainments, however the current grouping does not take into consideration students who are accessing higher education through OUA.

OUA is owned by seven leading Australian universities. In addition to the shareholder universities several other academic institutions participate as program and unit providers. All the higher education units and qualifications offered through OUA are designed, taught, assessed and accredited by the universities that offer them. The Individual higher education units are designed for online delivery and, to provide a rich, independent learning experience. A small number of units (e.g. Bioscience units from RMIT University) include attendance at laboratory or other practical classes organised for short bursts of time to fit around students' working lives.

OUA provides open access higher education in which any Australian whatever their age or educational background can enrol in a wide range of entry level higher education units, and then, if successful, progress to complete an entire qualification with units accessed through OUA or directly with universities. Successful completion of two or more undergraduate units offered through OUA makes the student eligible to apply for a Commonwealth Supported Place(CSP). This is OUA's unique model in which the hurdles on the pathway to a higher education qualification are provided by the units themselves rather than a series of academic prerequisites.

OUA is the only non-provider covered by the Higher Education Support Act (HESA), 2003 which regulates the higher education sector.

In the current grouping (as provided in Appendix B of the Consultation) Group b refers to university and non-university higher education providers only. While OUA plays a significant part of Australia's higher education environment, it is not a higher education provider or a university itself. As a result, OUA students who access open access units do not fall within the listed four categories.

Therefore, OUA submits that the Group b category should be extended to include students who have completed units through OUA as open access students.

National admissions information platform

In respect of the national admission information platform we thank you for considering OUA as a key stakeholder to contribute on options to develop and deliver the platform. We look forward to participating as a stakeholder in the development of the new national admission information platform. OUA can share insights based on our experience with students undertaking units of study offered by the various higher education providers under the open access model of OUA using the existing OUA information platform.

OUA information platform consists of:

1. **The OUA website** – which has the most up-to-date information about units and programs of study to assist OUA staff, OUA students and providers. The website also provides online resources and support in accessing information about preparing for study and selecting units or programs and serves as a reliable reference source. The website is updated regularly during the year. Full descriptions of all OUA units, and any qualification available for students entirely through OUA studies, are published on the website.
2. **An Online Provider portal** - This is the gateway to OUA operational processes for providers. The Online Provider Portal currently provides access to the following:
 - a. OUA Contact details;
 - b. Provider Enrolment Summaries;
 - c. Exam Services;
 - d. Offer schedules;
 - e. The Annual Unit Survey Schedule; and
 - f. Online program and units Expression of Interest (EOI).
3. **Online catalogue management system** - this provides the Course and Unit information including pricing, term availability and pre-requisites if any, for the:
 - a. OUA Web-site; and
 - b. Online Provider Portal.
4. **OUA Web Services** - a secure server exchange setup, used for automated exchange of data related to enrolment, change and admission processes between systems.

Thank you for the opportunity to make this submission. For additional information, please contact Priya Malhotra (priya.malhotra@open.edu.au) on 03 8628 5226.

Yours sincerely,



Paul Wappett
Chief Executive Officer