Proposed
HIGHER EDUCATION
STANDARDS FRAMEWORK

Consultation Draft
April 2014
6 Governance

6.1 Corporate Governance

1. There is a formally constituted governing body that is accountable for and capable of governance oversight of all of the higher education provider’s operations, including accountability for the award of higher education qualifications, for continuing to meet the requirements of the Higher Education Standards Framework and for the provider’s representation of itself.

2. The governing body monitors the performance of the higher education provider and assures itself that the provider is operating effectively, including assurance that:
   a. the governing body and the entity comply with the requirements of the legislation under which the provider is established or incorporated, any other legislative requirements and the entity’s constitution or equivalent
   b. the provider’s future directions in higher education have been determined, performance targets have been established, progress against targets is monitored and action is taken to correct underperformance
   c. the business model will maintain and sustain the quality of higher education that is offered
   d. the financial position of the entity is monitored and understood, effective financial safeguards and controls are operating, financial statements are audited independently by a qualified auditor against Australian accounting and auditing standards and continuing financial viability is a reasonable expectation
   e. mechanisms for competent academic governance of higher education provision and other academic activities have been implemented, are effective and operate according to an institutional academic governance policy framework
   f. educational policies and practices support participation by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and are sensitive to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge and culture
   g. risks to higher education operations have been identified and material risks are being managed and mitigated effectively
   h. qualifications are awarded legitimately through delegated authority
   i. there are safeguards to mitigate disadvantage to students who are unable to progress in a course of study due to unexpected changes to the higher education provider’s operations
   j. the occurrence and nature of complaints, allegations of misconduct, breaches of academic integrity and critical incidents are monitored and action is taken to address underlying causes, and
   k. lapses in compliance with the Higher Education Standards Framework are identified and monitored and corrective action is taken.

3. The governing body takes steps to create an organisational culture where freedom of intellectual enquiry is upheld and protected, students and staff are treated equitably, the wellbeing of students and staff is fostered, informed decision making by students is supported and students have opportunities to participate in the deliberative and decision making processes of the higher education provider.

4. In carrying out its work the governing body attends to governance processes diligently including:

35 Standard 6.1.3 does not require, nor does it preclude, student membership of the governing body or other governance structures of the higher education provider.
a. obtaining and using such information and advice, including independent advice and academic advice, as is necessary for informed and competent decision making

b. maintaining a true record of the business of the governing body, and

c. undertaking or overseeing periodic\(^{36}\) reviews and improvement of the effectiveness of the governing body and academic governance processes and ensuring that the findings of such reviews are considered by a competent body or officer(s) and agreed actions are implemented.

**Reference Points**

i. *ASX Corporate Governance Principles (2010)*\(^{37}\).

### 6.2 Academic Governance

1. Processes and structures are established and responsibilities are assigned to provide governance of academic policies, to maintain academic oversight of the quality of teaching, learning, research\(^{38}\) and research training\(^{39}\) and to provide academically-informed advice to the corporate governing body on academic matters.

2. Academic oversight assures the quality of teaching, learning, research and research training by:

   a. monitoring the implementation of academic policies
   
   b. confirming that delegations of academic responsibility are observed
   
   c. approving and accrediting\(^{40}\), or advising on approving and accrediting, courses of study and their associated qualifications
   
   d. maintaining oversight of academic integrity
   
   e. evaluating the quality and effectiveness of educational innovations or proposals for innovations
   
   f. evaluating the monitoring, review and improvement of academic activities, and
   
   g. reporting to the corporate governing body on the quality of teaching, learning, research and research training.

3. Students have opportunities to participate in academic governance.

\(^{36}\) ‘periodic’ means at least every seven years.

\(^{37}\) As amended from time to time.

\(^{38}\) Where research is undertaken by the higher education provider.

\(^{39}\) Where research and research training are undertaken by the higher education provider.

\(^{40}\) ‘accrediting’ applies if the higher education provider has authority to self-accredit courses of study.