



Comment
Transparency of Higher Education Admissions Processes Draft Implementation Plan
Submission prepared by Career Industry Council of Australia
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About Us

CICA's vision as the national peak body for the career industry is to enhance transitions and productivity by advocating the individual, social and economic benefits of quality career development for all Australians.

Our mission is to:

- Advocate the value of career development for all Australians
- Promote career and skill development across the life-span
- Develop an evidence base to inform policy and best practice
- Enhance strategic relationships both within Australia and Internationally
- Promote quality frameworks to all stakeholders and professional standards for career development practitioners
- Influence government, industry, education and community sectors to embed career development in workforce development and curricula
- Enhance collegiality within the career industry to achieve agreed goals.

CICA has as its core business working to increase quality assurance for the career industry and its stakeholders around Professional Standards, Quality Benchmarking, Practitioner Registration, Research and Practice and Higher Education Course Endorsement.

CICA is the key point of contact in Australia for policy makers and other stakeholders with interests in career development.

Introduction

The Career Industry Council of Australia (CICA) welcomes the opportunity to provide comment and contribute to the consultation on the draft implementation plan improving transparency of higher education admissions.

In preparing this submission, CICA consulted and sought the views and opinions of its member associations (Appendix A).

Consultation questions

Is the proposed approach likely to be effective in increasing transparency and public understanding of how contemporary admissions to higher education work?

The changes being proposed are likely to improve the level of transparency being provided. We would advocate a national approach being taken with consistent terminology and data being provided so that individuals can make well informed decisions about further study.

We would also seek Universities to be more transparent with their pre - requisites / recommendations. For example: A University indicates that a pre-requisite for a number of courses is Application Maths but then makes students pick up a Maths Methods unit in their first year in order to continue the course.

Increased transparency of University specific schemes also need to be ensured. This would include information regarding access to University diversity groups and support and special entry requirements for such groups e.g. in some Universities elite athletes are classified as a special equity group

A balance in the volume of information also needs to be taken into account. There is a danger that so much information is provided that students, parents and the general public who are unfamiliar with tertiary admissions become overwhelmed.

How achievable are the proposed implementation timelines, including commitments to deliver a 'best endeavours' version of the proposed information sets to inform students applying to enter study in the 2018 academic year?

The implementation plan does not seem achievable in the timeframes provided given that agreements need to be reached etc. Students traditionally receive information on tertiary admission around mid-year and the preparation of some information could already be in-train.

There is also no provision in the implementation timeline to seek feedback on the new information. It may be better to work towards having everything in place ready for applicants seeking admission in 2018 for 2019.

Year 12 students and other intending applicants may already be considering their options on the basis of the information they have. Year 12s experience enough stress in the final year of school without imposing this change on them.

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

If there was difficulty in achieving this, a possible 'watered down' phased in approach for 2017 could be produced, giving the 2017 cohort an opportunity to access and use the data.

Do you have any comments on the proposed four broad groupings to describe the basis of admission for applicants to higher education?

- a. Recent secondary education
- b. Previous higher education study
- c. Previous vocational education and training (VET) study
- d. Work and life experience

These four broad groupings have essentially always existed. Appropriate procedures need to be maintained where they already exist or put in place to assess these qualifications and to ensure comparability across qualifications of the groupings.

Despite the four broad groupings, Appendices C and D only present three groupings in the Student Profile section of the information set. Appendix C also presents a fifth grouping 5 in the admission requirements i.e., Domestic applicants with overseas qualifications

Do you agree that the proposed approach to Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR) thresholds is reasonable (i.e. replacing the use of the terms “cut-off” and “clearly in” with functional terms describing the lowest ATAR made an offer in the relevant period?). What issues or difficulties, if any, might this raise?

There is agreement for this proposal and that some sort of common terminology across higher education institutes is needed.

Replacing the varying terms such as ‘cut-offs’ with functional terms would assist the public in understanding the data.

The development of a glossary of terms related to any public data would also assist.

Having a single term to simply identify the lowest ATAR that was accepted to enrol in a course would be helpful.

It could be useful for applicants applying in more than one state; however, the functional terms are very wordy.

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?

While the intention of the information sets is comparability across institutions, it seems that there are some provisos that could work against comparability e.g. in Appendix C institutions: “may choose to include additional textual content and adapt the overall presentation to distinguish and reflect their mission, course offerings and approach to information provision”; “The style and specifics of information presented could vary depending on the nature and size of institution concerned”; “this information set specification should be used as a guide to the types and minimum required content that must be included. The style and specifics of information presented could vary depending on whether the information covers a single course or several related courses”

Appendix C – Draft whole-of-institution admissions information set

- Student Profile (within the table) – could the primary basis of admission be associated with a student’s identification with a special equity group.
- Admission requirements – reference is made to providing information about any admission options specifically for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander applicants. We would hope Universities could also provide easy to read information regarding admission options for other special equity groups e.g. Elite Athletes.
- Student and Campus Services – consideration to be given to including Elite Athlete support services as reference can be made to the support that the EAFU contact provides.

Does the proposed approach set out in the draft implementation plan adequately inform prospective students about admission options or pathways that do not use ATAR? If not, how might this information be improved?

It could be useful for applicants for the information to specify the type of documents that can be accessed on their behalf by the TAC or TISC and the documents they need to provide.

Any other feedback you wish to provide on the draft implementation plan and the commitments it outlines is very welcome.

Retention rate of students from particular schools would be useful.

Include parents/guardians and career advisers as key user groups – not just students in discussions around a new National Admissions information platform.

Knowing the percentage of students that enrol in a course along with the number who graduate from course could be useful when making a decision.

Appendix B – Grouping Applicants. Mentions that individuals will approach the system identifying themselves by their previous education experience – consideration should also be given to students identifying themselves within a special equity group.

English competency is a vague term used in the Admissions process. Students have been known to be enrolled in courses without appearing to pass English in Year 12.

A percentage of students who met the requirement through a STAT process or other testing would be useful.

There needs to be an easier way to apply to interstate universities - one portal for all universities nationwide would be good.

This process is a great opportunity to encourage Universities to raise the profile of their special equity groups. In particular, elite athletes who are supported by one of our Member Associations.

Many universities have recently changed their websites and it is much harder to find information, especially working out fees. Most school students give up and come and ask their school career advisor to find the information. The suggestion is that it needs to be simplified and be presented in an obvious way as to where to find this information.

CICA Member Associations

Australian Institute of Sport - Personal Excellence (AISPE)

Career Educators Association of Northern Territory (CEANT)

Career Education Association of Victoria (CEAV)

Career Education of Association of Western Australia (CEAWA)

Career Development Association of Australia (CDAA)

Careers Advisers Association of New South Wales & Australian Capital Territory (CAANSW/ACT)

National Association of Graduate Career Advisory Services (NAGCAS)

Queensland Association of Student Advisors (QASA)

Queensland Guidance and Counselling Association (QGCA)

Rehabilitation Counselling Association of Australasia (RCAA)