# Standards not standardisation: Retaining distinctiveness in an outcomes-based environment

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# Definitions

**Learning outcome**

**Learner knows, understands and can do….. independently, on demand and in a range of contexts (Sadler, 2013)**

**Learning standard**

**"a definite level of excellence or attainment….. so established by authority, custom, or consensus" (Sadler, 2013)**

**Aka *threshold learning outcome (TLO)***

# Extracts from Act (2011)

Diversity in Australia's higher education system, both within and between higher education providers, is important to meet diverse and changing student, employer and community expectations

1.1 The course of study meets the Qualification Standards

1.2 Robust internal processes for design and approval of the course of study which *take account of external standards* and requirements, e.g. *published discipline standards,* professional accreditation, input from relevant external stakeholders, and comparable standards at other higher education providers

5.5 Academic standards intended to be achieved by students and the outcomes actually achieved by students in the course of study are benchmarked against similar accredited courses of study
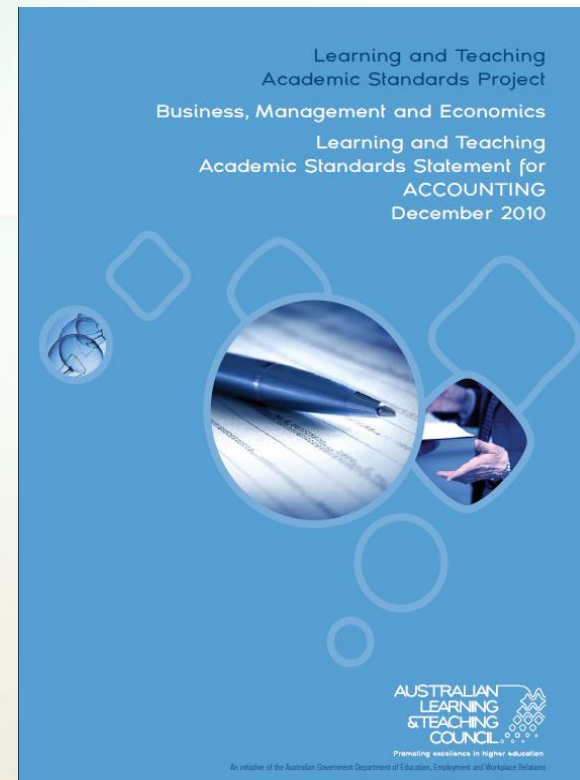
# Diversity & innovation acknowledged

# Accounting case: Setting discipline standards

- Collaboratively developed 2010
  - 3 cycles of consultation
  - 2,100 participants nationally
    - 38 Australian universities
    - 21 private/other HEI
    - 20 professional/peak bodies
  - Standards agreed (level & & 9)
    1. Knowledge
    2. Application
    3. Judgement
    4. Communications & teamwork
    5. Self-management



Learning and Teaching Academic Standards Project
Business, Management and Economics
Learning and Teaching Academic Standards Statement for ACCOUNTING
December 2010

AUSTRALIAN LEARNING &TEACHING COUNCIL
Promoting excellence in higher education
An initiative of the Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations

# Accounting: applying discipline standards

| Provider A | Provider B | Provider C | Provider D |
|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| TLO 1 | TLO 1 | TLO 1 | TLO 1 + International |
| TLO 2 | TLO 2 | TLO 2 | TLO 2 + International |
| TLO 3 | TLO 3 | TLO 3 | TLO 3 + International |
| TLO 4 | TLO 4 | TLO 4 | TLO 4 International |
| TLO 5 | TLO 5 | TLO 5 | TLO 5 + International |
| Quantitative | Professional | Small business | |
| Public sector | | Regional | |
| Blended learning | Online distance learning | Problem-based learning | Team-based learning |

# Accounting: Assessing discipline standards

## *Achievement Matters* project aims

1. Obtain external peer-reviewed evidence of accounting learning outcomes in all types of higher education providers, benchmarked against the learning standards.

   **17 HEPs**

2. A model process for assessing learning outcomes against standards (that is sustainable, reliable and efficient), satisfying external quality assurance needs and motivating continuous improvement.

3. Professional development of academics about assessment.

4. Enhanced understandings in the external environment of our model for assessing achievement of learning standards

# Example - Assessment Task

- Requirements
  - In the mass media, climate change is often discussed in the form of global warming. However, some would argue that climate change is not just about global warming
  - Prepare and deliver a two minute presentation that persuades the audience to your point of view

- Grading
  - 20% task in BBus mountaintop capstone unit
  - Criteria: relevant content, appropriate structure & engaging style
  - Aligned to THE Collaboration TLO: "Graduates will be able to work together with THE stakeholders to acquire and convey knowledge and ideas effectively and achieve shared goals"

- Does Student 1 meet the THE Collaboration TLO?
  - NB. do not download *PollEverywhere* app

# Findings

- Greater use of capstones
- Improved assessment
  - ↑ student self management eg. [www.writersdiet.com](http://www.writersdiet.com)
  - ↑ individual not group achievement
  - ↑ authentic not pure academic tasks
  - ↑ attention to TLO
  - ↑ alignment to program not unit learning outcomes
  - ↑ close-the-loop accountability
  - ↑ mission focus
  - ↑ innovation
- HEP diversity acknowledged

Thank you.

Questions?