

Learning and Teaching  
Academic Standards Project

MASTERS DEGREES IN  
EDUCATION

Learning and Teaching  
Academic Standards Statement  
September 2011



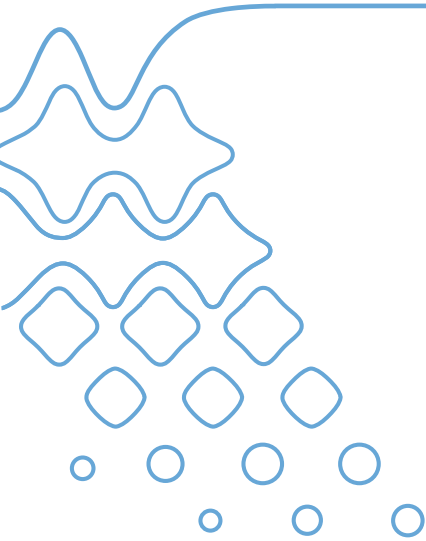
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# MASTERS DEGREES IN EDUCATION

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Learning and Teaching Academic Standards (LTAS) project in education has produced six threshold learning outcomes (TLOs) for masters level degrees in education. These TLOs cover the degrees of Master of Education (both coursework and research), Master of Teaching and other specialist masters degrees in education offered by Australian Higher Education Providers (HEPs) that meet the Australian Qualification Framework (AQF) specifications for Level 9 qualifications. These TLOs are intended to be read against the background statement 'Nature and extent of education'.

The TLOs for education at masters level cover the areas of: knowledge; skills; application of knowledge and skills; communication, collaboration and leadership; research and professional learning; ethical and responsible professional practice. The TLOs are accompanied by explanatory notes which offer guidance on interpretation. They are also referenced against Australian and international benchmarks.

The project was instigated and supported by the Australian Council of Deans of Education (ACDE). A Discipline Scholar, Dr Greg Heath, was appointed in April 2011 to conduct a process of consultation and research involving the education discipline community across Australia.

The consultation process involved three principal elements. Firstly, a formal consultation process involving a Discipline Reference Group (DRG) and a smaller Expert Advisory Group (EAG) were formed. The DRG met twice during the project and the EAG met weekly by teleconference.

Secondly, the Discipline Scholar conducted consultative forums in the five mainland capital cities, with a representative of University of Tasmania attending the Melbourne forum. These forums were attended by deans, associate deans and other key academic staff from Education schools and faculties and professional learning centres in universities; early childhood education departments; members of professional associations; a school principal; representatives of national and state teacher registration authorities and postgraduate students.

Thirdly, a short survey and invitation for written comment was sent to university staff involved with masters degree coordination and to individuals in professional associations and teacher registration

authorities. A total of 41 respondents completed the survey. The Discipline Scholar also sought responses from associate deans or masters degree coordinators in regional universities who were unable to attend the forums by telephone and email.

The TLOs were endorsed by the DRG and the Board of the ACDE in August 2011.

The Discipline Scholar and EAG project team would like to acknowledge the strong support and cooperation of the education discipline community for this project. They would, especially, like to thank the organisations and individuals who put such time and effort into organising and attending the forums and providing such informed and incisive comment against tight timelines. A special acknowledgement is due to the staff at the Faculty of Education of La Trobe University for their extensive support and encouragement for the project.

### **Project Leaders**

**Discipline Scholar:** Dr Greg Heath

**Project Officers:** Ms Rhonda Jewell and Ms Melissa Minchinton

# 1. Learning and Teaching Academic Standards Project Background

The Australian Government is developing a new Higher Education Quality and Regulatory Framework, which includes the establishment of the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA).

TEQSA will be a national body for regulation and quality assurance of tertiary education against agreed standards. In developing the standards, the Australian Government is committed to the active involvement of the academic community. The Australian Government has commissioned the Australian Learning and Teaching Council (ALTC) to scope aspects of the Learning and Teaching Academic Standards component of the framework. The approach was designed to ensure that discipline communities would define and take responsibility for implementing academic standards within the academic traditions of collegiality, peer review, pre-eminence of disciplines and academic autonomy.

In 2010-2011, both directly through a specific contract and indirectly through base funding of the ALTC, the Australian Government funded a demonstration project to define minimum discipline-based learning outcomes as part of the development of Learning and Teaching Academic Standards.

The project took as its starting point the award level descriptors defined in the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF). Threshold learning outcomes (TLOs) were defined in terms of minimum discipline knowledge, discipline specific-skills and professional capabilities including attitudes and professional values that are expected of a graduate from a specified level of program in a specified discipline area. The process took account of and involved the participation of professional bodies, accreditation bodies, employers and graduates as well as academic institutions and teachers. These representatives of the discipline communities were encouraged to take responsibility for the project and the outcomes within broad common parameters. Some disciplines extended the brief to begin consideration of the implications of implementing standards at institutional level.

## 1.1 Discipline areas encompassed in the demonstration project

Broad discipline areas were defined according to Australian definitions of Field of Education from the Australian Standard Classification of Education. They correspond to the most common broad structural arrangements of faculties or aggregates of departments within Australian universities.

Ten broad discipline groups participated in 2010–11:

- architecture
- arts, social sciences and humanities
- building and construction
- business, management and economics
- creative and performing arts
- education
- engineering and ICT
- health, medicine and veterinary science
- law
- science.

Discipline Scholars were appointed to lead each discipline area. The key deliverable for each Discipline Scholar was the production of a document of minimum learning outcomes for a specified discipline at an agreed AQF level or levels. This booklet represents the outcomes for the discipline of education.

## 2. Education in the Learning and Teaching Academic Standards Project

### 2.1 Scope

This statement of threshold learning outcomes is intended to cover programs of study that lead to the award of a masters degree in the field of education defined as Level 9 in the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF).

There are three major types of masters degrees in education offered by 37 Australian universities and by eight private non-university higher education providers (HEPs). They are designated as Master of Education, Master of Teaching and master of an education specialisation such as Master of Higher Education. Most frequently offered is the Master of Education degree, with more than 140 offered across all HEPs. Generally these degrees do not qualify graduates for initial teacher registration and are undertaken by those seeking to specialise and/or upgrade their existing qualifications. The Master of Education can be undertaken by coursework or research.

The Master of Teaching degree is offered by most of the 36 university schools or faculties of education in Australia and by one private HEP. The degree is undertaken as a pathway to qualifying for initial teacher registration.

This statement applies to those masters degrees offered in the broad field of education by registered HEPs. These include Master of Education (Coursework), Master of Education (Research), Master of Teaching and other masters degrees in specialised fields of education, such as Master of Religious Education or Master of Art and Design Education. Many coursework degrees contain a significant element of independent study or research. Master of Teaching degrees are normally of two years (full-time) duration in order to meet the Australian Institute for School Leadership (AITSL) requirement of a minimum of two years discipline and professional study in education. They will also contain a practicum component of supervised teaching experience as required by state teacher registration authorities.

The statement does not cover other levels of qualification, e.g. bachelors degrees, or postgraduate diplomas.

The threshold learning outcomes (TLOs) set out in these standards represent the minimum learning outcomes expected of a graduate with a masters level degree in the field of education. They are not intended to be teacher registration standards, nor as standards for registration in any professional specialisation. Where these masters degrees qualify graduates for professional registration as a teacher or for other professional occupations in education, they should be read in conjunction with the relevant standards established by AITSL or other relevant national accreditation or registration standards.

The threshold learning outcomes are intended to be advisory to HEPs who will set their own standards for admission, attainment and completion of any masters degrees in education.

### 2.2 Rationale

In 2010 the Australian Council of Deans of Education (ACDE) recommended that the education discipline be included in the ALTC Learning and Teaching Academic Standards (LTAS) project. The recommendation was that participation be limited to courses at the Masters level (AQF Level 9).

The reasons for the ACDE to restrict the project to the masters level were related to the development of the National Professional Standards for Teachers by the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL). The ACDE took the view that these initial teacher registration standards entail statements of learning outcomes. Specifically, the AITSL standards require teachers to demonstrate professional knowledge, professional practice and professional engagement. Thus, the standards specify what it is that teachers will be expected to know, what they will be able to do and what professional standards they will demonstrate. Whilst these standards are important for teachers entering the profession with a bachelors degree, there was a distinct gap in the identification of learning outcome standards at the masters level.

ACDE also took the view that it was important to focus on the broad discipline of education that engages with its own bodies of theory, knowledge and practice, rather than simply with teacher education, or a similar range of discipline specialisations. For this purpose, masters level courses in education were seen as a better fit, in that they tended to focus on greater depth of theory and practice in education.

This project has been referenced against national and international benchmarks, specifically, the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF), the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) benchmark statements, the UK Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) benchmark statements and Tuning-Europe, the latter having explicit standards for education at masters level.

## 2.3 Consultation and development process

The project commenced officially on 1 April 2011 with the appointment of a Discipline Scholar. The project has been subject to time constraint due largely to the closure of the ALTC – necessitating completion by the end of August.

The consultation and development process was guided by a national Expert Advisory Group (EAG) and a more inclusive national Discipline Reference Group (DRG), both established in early May 2011. The DRG included representatives from peak Australian education organisations and government authorities, together with senior educators (see Appendix 1). The DRG included representation from Australian Council of Deans of Education (ACDE), Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL), Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR), Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT), Australian Association for Research in Education (AARE), Australian Vocational Research and Training Research Association (AVETRA), a representative of the Council of Private Higher Education (COPHE) and members of Australian university faculties and schools of education.

The EAG met weekly by teleconference and the DRG held two face-to-face meetings, the first in early June and the final meeting in early August.

The Discipline Scholar conducted consultative forums in Perth, Brisbane, Sydney, Adelaide and Melbourne to provide nationwide opportunities for advice and rigorous contributions from a wide cross-section of the profession. The forums were attended by representatives from metropolitan and regional universities, members of professional associations including the Australian College of Educators (ACE) and national and state teacher registrations authorities, including Western Australian Teachers Registration Board and VIT.

The Discipline Scholar also contacted a representative selection of staff members involved with masters courses in education at regional universities who were unable to attend the forums to seek comment and responses to draft threshold learning outcome statements.

The consultative process was advanced by the formation in June of the Network of Associate Deans of Learning and Teaching in the Discipline of Education (NADLATE). The facilitation of the formation of this group has been supported and funded by the ALTC. This group has provided a rich and well-informed resource for the project.

### Survey

A short survey was constructed and distributed to masters course coordinators, professional associations and government agencies. A total of 41 responses were received. The survey invited respondents to comment on, and indicate their level of support for, the draft threshold learning outcome statements. The responses largely endorsed the draft statements, with over 90 per cent of respondents indicating agreement or strong agreement with the statements.

The respondents also indicated, with approximately 80 per cent agreeing, that there was room for further development of the achievement of learning outcomes in the existing masters courses. One respondent expressed the view that; “These threshold learning outcomes are integral to the development and/or implementation of any masters programme in Australia”. Some respondents expressed the need for caution that the TLOs should not become mandatory, but none expressed a negative view of the process or draft TLOs.

Due to the time constraints imposed on the process it was not possible to conduct international consultations nor invite international participation on the DRG. Some other LTAS projects with timeframes of 12 to 18 months were able to do this.

# 3. Learning and Teaching Academic Standards Statement for Education

The Learning and Teaching Academic Standards Statement for Education is structured as follows.

- Section 3.1: The nature and extent of the education discipline.
  - Section 3.2: Detailed description of the threshold (core/minimum) learning outcomes that can be expected of a graduate with a master of education degree.
- Six threshold learning outcomes were specified to ensure that the threshold learning outcomes (TLOs) were neither too generic nor too specific and prescriptive of content. Efforts have been made to ensure minimal overlap across the TLOs and, as far as possible, that each is defined independently. It is expected that graduates will demonstrate a broad and coherent assimilation of the TLOs.

## 3.1 Nature and extent of the education discipline

To be educated is not to have arrived at a destination; it is to travel with a different view.

R S Peters<sup>1</sup>

Education as a discipline is essentially involved with the study of learning and teaching. It centres on the generation, acquisition, social construction and interchange of knowledge in all its theoretical and practical detail and complexity.

The discipline of education is one of the founding disciplines of thought. It has a long history and tradition reaching deep into ancient scholarship. Education was discussed as a discrete field of knowledge and practice by Plato, Aristotle and Epicurus. It was a central topic of Roman scholarship and debate and has noble origins in Judaic, Islamic, Confucian and Indigenous traditions.

Today, in a competitive and globalised world where knowledge and advanced skills are increasingly valued, education has taken on a new level of importance. It has become central to personal, social, cultural and economic success and has become a high policy priority for governments. Educated citizens are the foundation of strong, inclusive and democratic societies.

The field of education represents the largest professional group in Australia. The education and training industry is the fourth largest in Australia. Employing 829,800 educators, it constitutes 7.6 per cent of the total workforce (DEEWR 2010). According to the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations over the last 10 years, employment in education and training rose by 205,300 (or 32.9 per cent), which represents an average annual growth rate of 2.9 per cent.<sup>2</sup> The training and education industry has been one of Australia's fastest growing export sectors, contributing \$18.6 billion in export income to the Australian economy in 2009.<sup>3</sup> The contribution of the education discipline is critical to this success.

There are currently approximately 45,000 EFT students enrolled in education degrees in Australian universities (ACDE 2010).

1. Peters, R. S., (1965) *Education as Initiation*, in Archambault, R., *Philosophical Analysis and Education*, p. 110, New York, Humanities Press.

2. *Employment Outlook for Education and Training* February 2010, DEEWR source: <http://www.skillsinfo.gov.au/NR/rdonlyres/5FCC8F9F-19E0-4AFA-9EA3-0C99B73ED0AB/0/OutlookEducationandTraining.pdf>

3. Australian Education International, May 2010, *Research Snapshot: Export Income to Australia from Education Services in 2009, Australia*.



## The nature of the discipline

Education is a discrete discipline with its own traditions, bodies of knowledge, methodologies and communities of scholarship and practice. It is embedded in the family of disciplines that centres on political, philosophical, social, ethical, historical, cultural, psychological, and religious studies. However, education is also a multi-disciplinary endeavour with links to all other disciplines as they necessarily involve the processes of learning and engagement with their own bodies of knowledge and forms of practice.

## The preparation of professional practitioners in education

The core discipline of education is founded on study and research in the theory and practice of learning, pedagogy, curriculum, and learning environments, as well as studies of the history, philosophy, sociology, psychology and politics of education.

The profession of education, based on the practice of the discipline, is concerned with the development of knowledge in the discipline and preparation of professionals for a range of education settings and specialisations.

It has become common practice, as it is with the European Tuning Project, to divide the field of education between the domains of 'Education Sciences or Studies' and 'Teacher Education'. This division is commonly made within the discipline and is understandable given the scale of the enterprise of teacher education, but this conceptualisation can be misleading in that teacher education is but one of many specialisations that finds their foundations in the core discipline of education.

Education is constituted by an extensive range of specialisations; which include the education of teachers and other professionals for:

- early childhood education
- primary education
- middle years education
- secondary education.

It also includes the distinct fields of teacher professional learning for:

- vocational education and adult education
- workplace education and training
- higher education
- a range of professional development and lifelong learning specialisations, typified by leadership and management education.

There is a further long list of education specialisations which includes, but is not limited to, languages education, special education, Indigenous education, religious education, cultural and arts education, physical and outdoor education, environmental education, and counselling and outreach education.

The key concepts that define the domain of professional education are:

- curriculum (essential knowledge, skills and capabilities)
- pedagogy (approaches to learning and teaching, assessment, learning technologies)
- learning environments (schools, early childhood settings, international settings, VET and Higher Education, workplaces and virtual learning environments)
- skills development (cognitive, analytical and critical, practical, vocational, agency and leadership skills)
- communication (verbal, written, visual, cross-cultural and use of communication technologies)
- personal and social development and transformation (education for ethical, emotional and spiritual maturity and reflective judgement).

## The significance of the discipline

The discipline of education plays a new, critical and central role in a knowledge-based society. The key to economic success is increasingly to be found in a highly educated and sophisticated and increasingly globalised workforce. Similarly, the key to societal success is well-informed, active and empowered citizenry. As a result, many governments worldwide have been prepared to increase financial investment in, and the commitment of policy and resources, to the development of education at all levels.

The discipline of education is of major constitutive economic, social and political importance. It does more than any other field of academic endeavour to shape, maintain and transform the qualities of a community and to empower its members.

The discipline of education facilitates pedagogical processes that develop capacities for reasoning, understanding and imagining the world; the capabilities for purposive action and interaction; and the wisdom to reflectively, critically and accountably judge the consequences of such action on the part of self and others.

Finally, the discipline of education intrinsically values the development of personal autonomy and fulfilment that make for a rich order of being that ultimately makes life meaningful and worthwhile.

## 3.2 Threshold learning outcomes for education

The following threshold learning outcomes are to be read in the context of application to the discipline of education at a masters level.

### TL01: Knowledge

Graduates possess an in-depth understanding of the field of education as it relates to their area of study, and where applicable, in specialist courses, an advanced understanding of at least one specialist area within the field of education.

Graduates demonstrate that they have achieved comprehensive knowledge of an area, or areas, of education. Their knowledge is evidenced by engagement with current topics and issues in an area or specialisation. They also demonstrate knowledge of the scope of the discipline incorporating a global perspective, and from the focus of their area of study, its points of intersection with related discipline fields. Graduates have, according to their area of study, knowledge and understanding of Indigenous education, including the history and cultural development of the Indigenous peoples of Australia.

Graduates demonstrate knowledge of current research findings and methods in, or related to, their area of specialisation.

### TL02: Skills

Graduates have achieved advanced cognitive, creative, analytical, critical and practice skills consistent with advanced knowledge and/or higher-level professional practice in an area of education.

Graduates demonstrate a high level of practical competence in the cognitive, creative, analytical, critical and practical skills that are essential to their selected field of study or professional practice in education and, where relevant, a mastery of the particular skills required for an area of specialisation. They also have the skills to interpret, apply and/or conduct research.

### TL03: Application – Exercise of Knowledge and Skills

Graduates have achieved an advanced capacity to synthesise theoretical understanding and practical skills to effectively plan, analyse, present and implement complex activities in their chosen area of study or specialisation.

Graduates demonstrate the capability to work at a high level in the application of theory and practice to complex problem solving, current debates and/or professional settings. They will also lead innovation

and change in their area of study or professional specialisation and employ a range of advanced interpersonal, leadership and professional skills, as appropriate, to that area of study or specialisation.

Graduates also demonstrate, particularly in their area of specialisation, the application of current research findings and methods to an area of theory or practice.

#### TL04: Communication, Collaboration and Leadership

Graduates have the advanced speaking, reading, writing, listening, interpretative and advocacy skills to equip them for leadership in their field of specialisation.

Graduates demonstrate an advanced knowledge and understanding of the discourses, debates and issues in education that relate to their field of study and/or specialisation. They communicate complex educational ideas to diverse social and cultural groups, particularly in their area of specialisation.

Graduates have the communication skills to work collaboratively with others in education or related fields. They also advance the interests of individuals (particularly those who experience disadvantage) and communities in the promotion of knowledge, skills and professional values.

#### TL05: Research and Professional Learning

Graduates have a highly developed capacity for independent, autonomous, self-directed learning. They will interpret and pursue further learning priorities for continuing professional development including engagement with local and global issues.

Graduates demonstrate achievement of the advanced intellectual and practical skills needed to identify, investigate and explain issues in local and global education theory or practice that require structured and systematic research. They demonstrate the ability to understand, interpret, initiate and execute an inquiry-based project in a learning environment or for further study. They also apply research outcomes within their field of practice or study.

#### TL06: Ethical and Responsible Professional Practice

Graduates have an advanced understanding of the values and ethical principles that underpin the broad field of education. They conduct their practice in complex settings in an ethical, collaborative, professional and accountable manner while valuing social and environmental sustainability. They also engage, from an educational perspective, with broader community issues of ethical conduct, equity and social justice. This is evidenced in the capacity for decision-making which focuses on learners in international and local contexts, and addresses wider community issues in an equitable and socially-just way.

Graduates recognise and reflect upon sensitive and complex issues – acting constructively in collaboration with others – to improve the learning outcomes for members of disadvantaged, diverse social and cultural groups and Indigenous communities. They demonstrate a high level of critical self-knowledge as a foundation for personal autonomy and professional judgement, in their study or professional practice in education. They make a positive contribution, particularly in their area of specialisation, to the development of the education profession.

# 4. Notes on Threshold Learning Outcomes for Education

## 4.1 General comments

The TLOs were first drafted by the Discipline Scholar in consultation with the Expert Advisory Group (EAG) and academic colleagues, taking account of the numerous learning outcomes statements to be found in existing masters in education degrees offered by Australian and international higher education providers. The draft TLOs were then considered by consultative groups who endorsed the broad approach, whilst offering a wide range of constructive suggestions for refinement and improvement. There was support from those involved in consultation for limiting the number of TLOs to no more than six. It was agreed that this was an appropriate number to cover the range of categories of learning outcomes that educators seek to achieve in course design.

- Knowledge
- Skills
- Application of Knowledge and Skills
- Communication, Collaboration and Leadership
- Research and Professional Learning
- Ethical Professional Practice.

Under each of these categories the more detailed statement sets out what it is that graduates are expected to know, and be able to do, as a result of their learning. Also, a statement of how they will be able to demonstrate that they have acquired that knowledge or capability is included.

The TLOs have been formulated, in part, against the background of the revised Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) published in March 2011. The AQF specifies generic learning outcome descriptors for masters degrees at Level 9. The AQF descriptors fall under the dimensions of Knowledge, Skills and the Application of Knowledge and Skills and generally address learning outcomes in terms of depth, breadth and complexity.

The TLOs for masters degrees in education specified here are intended to map across the generic AQF specifications and to also extend and further articulate them. This consideration has taken on a new importance with the establishment of the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) from July 2011. TEQSA sets out five standards that all Higher Education Providers (HEPs), both self-accrediting and non-self-accrediting, are expected to meet. The AQF forms the basis for the second of these standards, the 'Qualification Standard', which is a mandatory, or 'threshold' standard. TEQSA also expects HEPs to meet certain minimum performance levels under Standard Four of the Teaching and Learning Standard. The current detailed statements of TLOs are intended to inform the TEQSA establishment process in setting this standard.

The TLOs were also drafted with reference to Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) documents, particularly the *National Professional Standards for Teachers*, published in February 2011. Whilst the statement of TLOs relates to the discipline of education and not to teacher registration, it is important that there be a resonance between the learning outcomes required for professional practice and those that reflect the core discipline. This is particularly the case where the TLOs cover the Master of Teaching degree.

The TLOs were also drafted with reference to certain international benchmark standards. The two standards of most relevance were the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) benchmark statement, UK and the European Tuning project. The QAA offers generic learning outcome descriptors at the masters level, whilst Tuning-Europe offers both masters level generic descriptors and discipline

specific education learning outcome descriptors. The Tuning descriptors serve:

as a platform for developing reference points at subject area level. These are relevant for making programmes of studies comparable, compatible and transparent. Reference points are expressed in terms of learning outcomes and competences. Learning outcomes are statements of what a learner is expected to know, understand and be able to demonstrate after completion of a learning experience.<sup>4</sup>

Some of these descriptors have been used in the commentary notes on the TLOs.

## 4.2 Commentary

The threshold learning outcomes are to be read in conjunction with the ‘Nature and extent of education’ statement.

### TLO1: Knowledge

Graduates have an in-depth understanding of the field of education as it relates to their area of study and where applicable, in specialist courses, an advanced understanding of at least one specialist area in the field of education.

By referring to “area of study or specialisation”, this TLO aims to capture the diversity, range and specificity of knowledge covered in the range of masters degrees. It recognises that some master of education degrees will be undertaken with the aim of achieving a broad and general knowledge of issues or topics in education, whilst at the other end of the spectrum some degrees such as the Master of Education (Special Needs Education) will involve highly specialised professionally focused knowledge.

The TLO also covers the AQF descriptors for *knowledge*.

The QAA descriptors at Masters (Level 7 UK) require students to demonstrate:

a systematic understanding of knowledge, and a critical awareness of current problems and/or new insights, much of which is at, or informed by, the forefront of their academic discipline, field of study or area of professional practice (p.20).

Tuning descriptors for Second Cycle (Masters) courses specify for knowledge that graduates have at advanced level “the capacity to understand and manipulate ideas and thoughts” (p.111).

### TLO2: Skills

Graduates have achieved advanced cognitive, creative, analytical, critical and practice skills consistent with advanced knowledge and/or higher-level professional practice in an area of education.

This TLO recognises that masters graduates will acquire a wide diversity of advanced skills in the course of their theoretical or applied study. It recognises that in the case of masters degrees by research, this might include either advanced skills in analysis or critique or advanced skills in data collection and data analysis. It also recognises that some masters degrees will be undertaken in the area of vocational education and training.

The TLO also covers the AQF descriptors for *skills*.

QAA descriptors indicate “a comprehensive understanding of techniques applicable to their own research or advanced scholarship” (p.20).

Tuning descriptors in the second cycle often describe this competence in more professional terms, and may be more closely associated with activities to be performed in the workplace such as collecting information from diverse sources and writing a report on a complex issue (p.97).

### TL03: Application – Exercise of Knowledge and Skills

Graduates have achieved an advanced capacity to synthesise theoretical understanding and practice skills to effectively plan, analyse, present and implement complex activities in their chosen area of study or specialisation.

This TLO recognises that all masters graduates will be expected to have the capability to synthesise knowledge and skills for the planning or implementation of complex activities such as strategic planning or advanced problem solving. The area of application of the learning outcome might be either in a broad theoretical or professional field or in a more focussed specialisation.

The TLO also covers the AQF descriptors for *the application of knowledge and skills*.

QAA descriptors state that:

originality in the application of knowledge, together with a practical understanding of how established techniques of research and enquiry are used to create and interpret knowledge in the discipline (pp.20–21).

*Tuning – Dublin Descriptors* describes this as:

can apply their knowledge and understanding, and problem solving abilities in new or unfamiliar environments within broader (or multidisciplinary) contexts related to their field of study (p.3).

### TL04: Communication, Collaboration and Leadership

Graduates have the advanced speaking, reading, writing, listening, interpretative and advocacy skills to equip them for leadership in their field of specialisation.

This TLO intentionally takes a strategic view of communication as a learning outcome. At masters level, graduates should have not just superior communication skills, but should also have the competence to use those skills for the achievement of desired outcomes in a professional setting. That setting could be in the communication of complex ideas, research findings or policies, or the professional education settings requiring the demonstration of leadership. Graduates will also normally have the skills to communicate and interact with diverse social and cultural groups across a range of age and educational attainment levels.

The AQF includes communication as one of the skills required of graduates.

The QAA does not specify outcomes under this heading.

*Tuning – Dublin Descriptors* for second cycle specifies:

can communicate their conclusions, and the knowledge and rationale underpinning these, to specialist and non-specialist audiences clearly and unambiguously (p.3).

### TL05: Research and Professional Learning

Graduates have a highly developed capacity for independent, autonomous, self-directed learning. They will interpret and pursue further learning priorities for continuing professional development including engagement with local and global issues.

Most masters degrees in education offered in Australia and internationally specify an advanced capability for further autonomous or self-directed learning as a priority learning outcome. This capability is clearly important for masters by research graduates who often plan to undertake further advanced research at the doctoral level. The capability is regarded as equally important for graduates entering into professional practice and who are expected to keep abreast of current developments to provide leadership in their professional workplace or area of specialisation.

The Business Council of Australia in the 2010 statement, *Higher Education: Lifting the Quality of Teaching and Learning*, also prioritises this outcome and notes the importance of “the preparedness of the people who lead and work in the business to engage in continual learning...” (p.2).

John Dewey went so far as to claim that, “the object and reward for learning is the continued capacity for growth.”<sup>5</sup>

QAA descriptors state in *Master’s Degree Characteristics March 2010* that graduates will:

demonstrate self-direction and originality in tackling and solving problems, and act autonomously in planning and implementing tasks at a professional or equivalent level and continue to advance their knowledge and understanding, and to develop new skills to a high level (p.16).

And *Tuning – Dublin Descriptors* specify:

have the learning skills that allow them to continue to study in a manner that may be largely self-directed or autonomous (p.3).

## TLO6: Ethical and Responsible Professional Practice

Graduates have an advanced understanding of the values and ethical principles that underlie the broad field of education. They conduct their practice in complex settings in an ethical, collaborative, professional and accountable manner, valuing social and environmental sustainability. They also engage, from an educational perspective, with broader community issues of ethical conduct, equity and social justice. This is evidenced in decision making which focuses on learners in an international and local context, and addresses wider community issues in an equitable and socially-just way.

This is a complex but critical learning outcome. Philosophers and theorists of education from Plato to Rousseau and Dewey point to the implicit moral purpose behind the education process. Frequently they go so far as to claim that a learning process that does not aim to produce ethically good outcomes for the individual and the community falls short of the definition of education.

The aims of individual and community advancement are reflected in the outcome statements of most Australian and international masters degrees. It is clearly expected that graduates will have an advanced capacity to recognise and manage complex and often contested ethical issues.

It is important in this TLO that masters graduates be able to demonstrate an advanced quality, and not just a greater quantity, of learning.

QAA notes as an outcome at Level 7 *Master’s Degree Characteristics March 2010*; “the exercise of initiative and personal responsibility” (Appendix 2A, p.16).

*Tuning – Reference Points for the Design and Delivery of Degree Programmes in Education*; expects graduates of second cycle education degrees to have the “ability to reflect on values appropriate to education activities” (p.40).

## Appendix 1: Discipline Reference Group

The Discipline Reference Group (DRG) will support the development and implementation of the Learning and Teaching Academic Standards (LTAS) project as defined in the project plan for each discipline group. The DRG will be convened by the Discipline Scholars. The DRG for Education will work closely with the Australian Council of Deans of Education (ACDE) in the development and implementation of the project.

The DRG will have the following terms of reference:

- to provide advice to the Discipline Scholar on the development and implementation of the LTAS project
- to draft and/or review drafts of project-related material, including statements of threshold learning outcomes
- to facilitate and support engagement with key discipline group stakeholders.

The DRG will meet as required during the project.

The DRG will be supported by a smaller Expert Advisory Group (EAG), drawn from the DRG membership. The EAG will act as a steering group for the project and provide direct advice and support to the Discipline Scholar on a regular basis.

### Membership

#### Discipline Reference Group

Dr Claire Atkinson	Director, Quality Unit Higher Education Group Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR)
Dr Peter Beamish	Dean, Faculty of Education and Science, Avondale College (Representing Council of Private Higher Education (COPHE))
Professor Denise Chalmers	University of Western Australia. President, Council of Australian Directors for Academic Development (CADAD)
Professor Brenda Cherednichenko (Chair)	Executive Dean, Faculty of Education and Arts Edith Cowan University
Professor Bob Conway	Dean of Education, Flinders University
Ms Ros Cornish	CEO, Lady Gowrie Tasmania (Representing the Early Childhood Sector)
Dr Gregory Heath	Discipline Scholar, Faculty of Education, La Trobe University
Professor Lyn Henderson-Yates	Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Broome Campus, Notre Dame University
Associate Professor Helen Huntly	Dean, School of Education, Central Queensland University
Ms Helen Kenneally	Executive Officer, Australian Council of Deans of Education (ACDE)
Professor Lorraine Ling	Executive Dean, Faculty of Education, La Trobe University
Mr Edmund Misson	General Manager, Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL)
Ms Ruth Newton	Manager, Accreditation, Victorian Institute of Teaching



Associate Professor Michele Simons	University of South Australia (representing Professor Christine Halse President, Australian Association for Research in Education (AARE))
Professor Erica Smith	Program Coordinator VET, University of Ballarat (Representing the Vocational Education Sector)
Ms Rhonda Jewell	Joint Executive Officer to the Project, La Trobe University
Ms Melissa Minchinton	Joint Executive Officer to the Project, La Trobe University
Expert Advisory Group	
Professor Brenda Cherednichenko	Executive Dean, Faculty of Education and Arts, Edith Cowan University
Dr Gregory Heath	Discipline Scholar, Faculty of Education, La Trobe University
Associate Professor Helen Huntly	Dean, School of Education, Central Queensland University
Ms Rhonda Jewell	Joint Executive Officer to the Project, La Trobe University
Ms Helen Kenneally	Executive Officer, Australian Council of Deans of Education
Professor Lorraine Ling	Executive Dean, Faculty of Education, La Trobe University

## Appendix 2: Relationship of Australian standards to significant benchmarks

In drafting the Australian threshold learning outcome statements, reference was made to relevant national and international benchmark statements. These included the United Kingdom's Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) benchmark statements, Tuning-Europe descriptors, *Dublin descriptors* (2004) and the revised Australian Qualification Framework (AQF).

Consideration was also given to the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) National Professional Standards for Teachers and the AITSL National Professional Standard for Principals.

TLO	QAA	Tuning–Europe: Second Cycle	AQF	AITSL
<b>TLO1 Knowledge</b>	an in-depth knowledge and understanding of the discipline informed by current scholarship and research, including a critical awareness of current issues and developments in the subject	Development of knowledge and understanding in their chosen area of professional specialisation in a major educational field	[know] a body of knowledge that includes the understanding of recent developments in a discipline and/or area of professional practice	<b>Professional Knowledge: Standard 1.</b> [Teachers] know students and how they learn.  <b>Principals</b> have a current knowledge and understanding of research into teaching, learning and child development and how to apply such research to the needs of the students in the school
<b>TLO2 Skills</b>	the ability to apply research to professional situations, both practical and theoretical	Research skills; leadership skills; communication skills; development of advanced cognitive skills associated with knowledge development and creation	cognitive, technical and creative skills to generate and evaluate complex ideas and concepts at an abstract level	<b>Standard 2. [Teachers]</b> Know the content and how to teach it
<b>TLO3 Application</b>	solve problems in creative and innovative ways; make decisions in challenging situations	Ability to adapt practices to specific educational contexts	cognitive, technical and creative skills to investigate, analyse and synthesise complex information, problems, concepts and theories and to apply established theories to different bodies of knowledge or practice	<b>Standard 3. [Teachers]</b> Plan and implement effective teaching and learning.  <b>Principals</b> apply knowledge and understanding of leadership and management concepts and practice to deliver with others effective strategic leadership and operational management

TLO	QAA	Tuning–Europe: Second Cycle	AQF	AITSL
<b>TL04 Communication</b>	communicate effectively, with colleagues and a wider audience, in a variety of media	communication skills, including ability to communicate in advanced professional registers; Competence in collaborative problem solving of educational issues in a variety of contexts	communication and technical research skills to justify and interpret theoretical propositions, methodologies, conclusions and professional decisions to specialist and non-specialist audiences	<b>Standard 5. [Teachers]</b> Assess, provide feedback and report on student learning  <b>Principals</b> can communicate, negotiate, collaborate and advocate effectively and relate well to all the school's community
<b>TL05 Professional Learning</b>	continue to learn independently and to develop professionally, including the ability to pursue further research where appropriate	ability to use research appropriate to discipline to inform their practices	Graduates of a Masters Degree (Coursework) will demonstrate the application of knowledge and skills: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• with creativity and initiative to new situations in professional practice and/or for further learning</li> <li>• with high level personal autonomy and accountability</li> <li>• to plan and execute a substantial research-based project, capstone experience and/or piece of scholarship</li> </ul>	<b>Standard 6. [Teachers]</b> Engage in professional learning.  <b>Principals</b> Set personal targets and take responsibility for their own development
<b>TL06 Ethical Practice</b>	use initiative and take responsibility	Ability to reflect on values appropriate to educational activities	a high level personal autonomy and accountability	<b>Standard 4 [Teachers]</b> Create and maintain supportive and safe learning environments  <b>Standard 7. [Teachers]</b> Engage professionally with colleagues, parents/carers and the community  <b>Principals</b> behave with integrity underpinned by moral purpose. They model values and ethical perspectives in relation to their own and the school's practice and organisation. They promote democratic values including active citizenship and inclusion

## Appendix 3: Employment Statistics in the Field of Education – Detail

The Education and Training industry is the fourth largest in Australia employing 829,800 people which constitutes 7.6 per cent of the total workforce. According to the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) within the last 10 years, employment in education and training rose by 205,300 (or 32.9 per cent), which represents an average annual growth rate of 2.9 per cent.<sup>6</sup> The training and education industry has been one of Australia's fastest growing export sectors contributing \$18.6 billion in export income to the Australian economy in 2009.<sup>7</sup>

DEEWR (2010) figures show that the education and training industry has the second largest share of female workers of any industry – 69.1 per cent, with a full-time workforce share of 63.5 per cent.

In 2009, the largest employing occupations in education and training were secondary school teachers (137,600), followed by primary school teachers (130,700), education aides (63,400) and university lecturers and tutors (39,200) (ABS 2009).

Across Australia, according to the National Education Directory 2010, there are 9,831 schools, including all primary and secondary schools encompassing government, catholic and independent schools. They employed a total of 349,091 FTE workers and of those, 251,421 FTE were teachers (ABS 2010).

Within the early childhood education and care (ECEC) sector it is estimated that 139,187 staff are employed, with 48.8 per cent of that figure engaged in long day care services and the majority of the ECEC workforce (94.4 per cent) is female.<sup>8</sup>

The current listing for the Vocational Education and Training (VET) sector shows that there are 5,001 Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) across Australia of which 58 are public sector TAFE institutes that employ approximately 73,400 (FTE) staff.<sup>9</sup>

In 2010, the Australian Higher Education sector employed 110,351 FTE staff (DEEWR 2010), with 71,531 staff working in a teaching and/or research capacity in 2009.

The Australian Council of Deans of Education (2008–10) report that there are approximately 45,000 EFT education students currently enrolled in Australian Universities and these students are taught by 2,838 (full-time and fractional full-time, FTE) academic staff.

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6. *Employment Outlook for Education and Training, February 2010*, DEEWR source: <http://www.skillsinfo.gov.au/NR/rdonlyres/5FCC8F9F-19E0-4AFA-9EA3-0C99B73ED0AB/0/OutlookEducationandTraining.pdf>

7. *Australian Education International, May 2010, Research Snapshot: Export Income to Australia from Education Services in 2009, Australia*

8. DEEWR, 'National ECEC Workforce Census 2010' source: [http://www.deewr.gov.au/Earlychildhood/Documents/National\\_ECEC\\_Workforce\\_CensusReport.pdf](http://www.deewr.gov.au/Earlychildhood/Documents/National_ECEC_Workforce_CensusReport.pdf)

9. *TAFE Directors Australia, response to respond to Skills Australia's discussion paper, Creating a future direction for Australian vocational education and training.*

## Appendix 4: Abbreviations

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
AARE	Australian Association for Research in Education
ACDE	Australian Council of Deans of Education
ACE	Australian College of Educators
AITSL	Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership
ALTC	Australian Learning and Teaching Council
AQF	Australian Qualifications Framework
DEEWR	Department of Employment, Education and Workplace Relations
DRG	Discipline Reference Group
DS	Discipline Scholar
EAG	Expert Advisory Group
ECEC	early childhood education and care
EFT	Effective full-time
ERA	Excellence in Research for Australia
FTE	Full-time equivalent
HEP	Higher Education Provider
LTAS	Learning and Teaching Academic Standards
NADLATE	Network of Associate Deans of Learning and Teaching in Education
QAA	Quality Assurance Agency (UK)
RTO	Registered Training Organisation
TEQSA	Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (Australia)
TLO	threshold learning outcome

## Appendix 5: References

- Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL), *National Professional Standards for Principals*. Available: <[www.aitsl.edu.au/national-professional-standard-for-principals.html](http://www.aitsl.edu.au/national-professional-standard-for-principals.html)>
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**Author:**

Dr Gregory Heath

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Australian Learning and Teaching Council

PO Box 2375, Strawberry Hills NSW 2012, Australia

Telephone: 02 8667 8500

Facsimile: 02 8667 8515

[www.altc.edu.au](http://www.altc.edu.au)

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