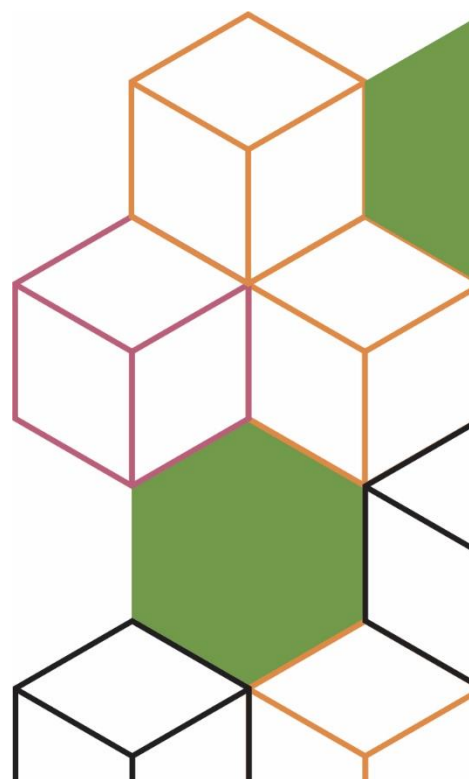


July
2023

Graduate Student
Association

**Consultation for
TEQSA guidance notes
on diversity and
equity, student
grievances and
complaints, and
wellbeing and safety**



About GSA

The University of Melbourne Graduate Student Association (GSA) is the independent representative organisation for all graduate coursework and research students at the University of Melbourne. We are led by 8 GSA Board members and 10 Representative Council members who are all elected University of Melbourne graduate students. On behalf of over 36,000 constituents, we represent graduate student interests to the University and wider community, provide student engagement events, activities, and information to the graduate student community, and support 150 affiliated graduate student groups.

GSA's vision is for inclusive, empowered graduate student communities that achieve meaningful and holistic university experiences. Our objectives are to achieve and support representation, academic support, transition to work, engaged and healthy communities, and organisational sustainability.

Introduction

GSA welcomes the opportunity to provide feedback about the TEQSA diversity and equity, student grievances and complaints, and wellbeing and safety guidance notes. We encourage the continued involvement of students and representative bodies in shaping TEQSA guidance notes to ensure that they meet the needs of students.

Overall, the information provided in these guidance notes was found to be relevant and thorough. Further suggestions are outlined according to the specific guidance notes in question.

Guidance note: Diversity and Equity

Among the 'identified cohorts of students that may be specifically monitored', we suggest including students with caring responsibilities, including student parents.

Regarding the Key Considerations for **Standard 1.3 Orientation and Progress**, we support instructing HE providers to ensure that 'students have equitable opportunities for progression and completion of their course of study' regardless

of educational background, entry pathway, or mode and place of study. We also encourage HE providers to consider the unique barriers to course progression and completion faced by students from the identified cohorts on pg. 1 of the guidance note.

Regarding the Key Considerations for **Standard 2.1.3 Facilities and Infrastructure**, we suggest advising HE providers to ensure their facilities and infrastructure are accessible to those with disabilities.

Regarding the Key Considerations for **Standard 2.2.1-3 Diversity and Equity**, we suggest instructing HE providers to provide information about what steps a student can take if they identify breaches of diversity and equity policies.

Regarding the Key Considerations for **Standard 3.3.3-4 Learning Resources and Educational Support**, we suggest advising HE providers to provide English support resources for students. Particularly important are resources for academic language and conversational/spoken English in Australia as this is specialised knowledge more likely to be unfamiliar to students.

Regarding the Key Considerations for **Standard 5.3 Monitoring, Review and Improvement**, we suggest encouraging HE providers to publish the information gained from review and improvement processes, so learnings can be shared with the sector.

Regarding the Key Considerations for **Standard 7.2 Information for Prospective and Current Students**, we suggest encouraging HE providers to provide information for prospective and current students in a plain language format.

Guidance note: Student Grievances and Complaints

Regarding the Key Considerations for **Standard 7.3.3c Information Management**, we suggest adding further guidance reiterating the importance of handling information related to grievances appropriately. This can include developing procedures to share information related to the grievance with the affected parties.

HE providers should also be advised to ensure all information related to the grievance resolution process is handled confidentially and securely.

Regarding the Key Considerations for **Standard 2.4 Student Grievances and Complaints**, we suggest instructing HE providers to investigate where conflicts of interest may arise in their grievance processes and ensure that any actual and perceived conflicts are appropriately managed. HE providers should also ensure that students are informed of the support mechanisms available to them throughout the grievance resolution process.

Regarding the Key Considerations for **Standards 7.2.2d,f and 7.3.1 Information for Prospective and Current Students**, we suggest advising HE providers to inform students (particularly international students) that lodging a complaint, etc. will not result in impacts on grades or termination of enrolment or visa status.

Guidance note: Student Wellbeing and Safety

Regarding the Key Considerations for **Standard 1.1.1 Admission**, we suggest amending to “admittance of students who are capable to progress and complete their course of study, **with access to appropriate supports**”.

Regarding the Key Considerations for **Standard 5.2 Academic and Research Integrity**, we suggest advising HE providers to monitor the impacts of technological advancements on academic and research integrity and to develop good practices in response to these changes.