Guidelines for the Presentation of the Australian Higher Education Graduation Statement

May 2010
INTRODUCTION

The Australian Higher Education Graduation Statement (AHEGS) is the Australian equivalent of the European Diploma Supplement. It takes the form of a document provided to graduates by the awarding institution.

An AHEGS is issued in addition to other documentation, such as testamurs and academic transcripts. Its purpose is to describe a higher education qualification in an easily understandable way, providing greater transparency by including descriptions of the nature, level, context and status of the studies undertaken as well as information about the education system to which the qualification belongs.

The AHEGS was strongly supported by Australian universities and other stakeholders to assist students seeking employment or further studies both in Australia and abroad. It has the potential to make Australian awards better understood internationally and thus enhance the international mobility of graduates and Australia’s competitiveness in the international higher education export market.

BACKGROUND

In 2007, the Australian Government announced that a consortium of universities had been commissioned to develop a single agreed template for an Australian version of the European Diploma Supplement. The successful consortium was led by Professor Richard James, Director of the Centre for the Study of Higher Education (CSHE) at the University of Melbourne, and Professor Lynn Meek, Director of the Centre for Higher Education Management and Policy at the University of New England. The final report, Proposal for an Australian Higher Education Graduation Statement was released in mid 2008.

Key recommendations from the report were that an Australian Diploma Supplement be named the Australian Higher Education Graduation Statement, that the Statement should be provided without cost to all higher education graduates and that implementation in Australian universities should be on a voluntary basis commencing as soon as practicable in 2008.

GENERAL INFORMATION

It is recommended that these guidelines be read in conjunction with the report Proposal for an Australian Higher Education Graduation Statement which is available at: http://www.deewr.gov.au/HigherEducation/Programs/Quality/QualityAssurance/Pages/GraduationStatement.aspx . Page 10-11 of the report outline the Guiding Principles for the AHEGS which should be followed in the development of your AHEGS.

While each issuing higher education provider is expected to follow these guidelines and provide specified information under the five sections, the layout in each case will be determined according to institutional practice, with institutions making their own decisions with respect to optional elements (and the information included in optional elements). It is expected that each university will follow its own style in presenting information and including information from academic transcripts.
CONTACT DETAILS

For all queries regarding the Australian Higher Education Graduation Statement please contact:

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LAYOUT AND DETAILS

The AHEGS consists of five sections, with the first four including a number of elements. Details to be provided in these sections are outlined below. It is a requirement that the five sections of the AHEGS be presented in the following order:

- Section 1 – the graduate
- Section 2 – the award
- Section 3 – awarding institution
- Section 4 – graduate’s academic achievements
- Section 5 – description of the Australian higher education system

FIRST PAGE DETAILS

The following information should appear on the front page of the AHEGS.

Compulsory items:

1. The AHEGS Logo

   The AHEGS logo must be included on the AHEGS.

   Notes:
   - The logo should appear on the first page in the top right hand corner.  
   - The width should be exactly 45mm and the background transparent.  
   - The logo must contain the ™ symbol.  
   - As the logo is in the process of being trademarked, it is a legal requirement that institutions be licensed to use it. Please contact DEEW to obtain a licence deed (AHEGS@deewr.gov.au).  
   - For a copy of the AHEGS logo, please send in your request via the AHEGS inbox (AHEGS@deewr.gov.au).  
   - When the AHEGS logo is registered as a trademark, a logo with the ® symbol will need to be used. This document will be updated when the AHEGS logo is registered as a trademark.
2. Statement on the Australian Higher Education Graduation Statement
The following statement must be included, verbatim, on the AHEGS.

The Australian Higher Education Graduation Statement is provided by Australian higher education institutions to graduating students on completion of the requirements for a particular higher education award. It provides a description of the nature, level, context and status of studies that were pursued by the individual named. Its purpose is to assist in both national and international recognition of Australian qualifications and to promote international mobility and professional recognition of graduates.

Notes:
• Exact placement of this paragraph is at the institution’s discretion but it must appear on the first page.

3. Certification
The AHEGS must include certification containing the following information:
- Date:
- Signature:
- Capacity:

Notes:
• Certification should appear on the first page of the AHEGS

4. Institutional Logo
Your institutional logo should appear on the first page of the AHEGS.

Notes:
• In the case of jointly badged degrees, institutions may choose to include both/all institutions’ logos.
• Exact placement of the logo is at the discretion of the university

SECTION ONE – THE GRADUATE
Section one shows basic details of the student.

Compulsory Items:
- Family name
- Given name(s)
- Student Number

Optional Items:
- Date of birth

Notes:
• Date of birth can be with or without verification based on citing birth certificate.
SECTION TWO – THE AWARD

Section two shows details of the award. The focus is on the award, as named, and not on the specific academic pathway or achievements of the individual graduate.

Compulsory Items:

1. **Name of the Award**
   Name the award and the field or fields of specialisation, if appropriate.

2. **Detail**
   Summary details of the award (including admission requirements, normal duration of study and language of instruction). This may be provided by a generic statement or with reference to a website. For example:
   
   The Bachelor of Arts is an undergraduate degree consisting of 24 units, taught in English, which normally takes three years of full-time study or part-time equivalent. The program structure requires successful completion of two arts majors of seven units each and elective courses.
   
   The Graduate Diploma (Languages) is a specialist postgraduate degree consisting of eight units which normally takes three years of study and is available on a part-time basis only. The program structure requires the successful completion of one language unit in each of two semesters in the first and second years followed by the successful completion of two units in each of two semesters in the third year.
   
   The Master of Pharmacy is a specialist postgraduate degree, open to students who are suitable, successful graduates of human biology or biomedical sciences. Student must have successfully completed subjects of human biology, chemistry, biochemistry, microbiology and, anatomy and physiology. The program consists of two-years of full-time. Once a pre-registration year is completed within Australia, and local board exams are passed, the graduates are licensed to practise as Registered Pharmacists in Australia.

**Notes:**
- Institutions may choose the level of detail they wish to provide for this section.
- It is acceptable not to go into details of majors / specialisations in this section.
- Admission requirements should be relevant to the time of entry to the course, if possible.
- If the language of instruction for the program of study overall was not English, details should be provided.

Optional Items:

**Features**
Institutions may include a brief description of distinguishing features of the course, such as professional placements, industry-based learning or overseas study.

If work integrated learning is a key part of the award it is advisable that details are provided in this section.
Pathway to further study
Institutions may include summary details on further or advanced higher education awards for which this award typically serves as preparation. Links to webpages for detailed or additional information may be included.

Course Accreditation
Institutions may include a statement regarding relevant external accreditation of the course, including details of the accrediting association or agency and the date of most recent accreditation. If the degree confers on the holder rights to practice within particular jurisdictions relevant information should be provided.

SECTION THREE – AWARDING INSTITUTION
Section three shows details of the awarding institution. The text in this section will be the same for all graduates from the particular institution, with some exceptions (e.g. jointly-badged awards; Open Universities Australia Awards).

Compulsory Items

1. Awarding Institution
Include a brief description (preferably one or two sentences) of the institution including type (public/private), date of founding and legislation of establishment. Private higher education institutions should provide information on their inclusion in the AQF Register of Recognised Educational Institutions and on course and institutional accreditation arrangements.

Notes:
- Links can be provided to institutional websites for additional information.
- Where the course is a jointly-badged award with another institution, or is delivered by another institution (including overseas institutions) details of the arrangement should be provided.
- If the course was completed by Open Universities Australia details of the arrangement should be provided in this section.

SECTION FOUR – GRADUATE’S ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENTS
Section Four shows details of the graduate’s academic achievements. This section is therefore unique to individual graduates.

Compulsory Items

1. Course Details
This section should contain relevant information pertaining to units of study undertaken toward this award, whether or not these were successfully completed. Included should be the unit name, institutional unit code, credit point value and grade.

Notes:
- All units of study contributing to the award should be included.
- Details of credit or advanced standing given for previous study or study at other institutions should be provided.
- Fail grades must be included.
- For research higher degrees, the thesis title and a 100-word abstract should be included.
2. **Key to grading**
Provide details of the institutional system for grading units and, where appropriate, for grading the award. Explanations of the award of honours grades or honours awards should be included as appropriate.

**Notes:**
- If appropriate, details may be provided of examination processes for research higher degrees. Names of examiners should not be included.
- For higher degree research awards with no coursework component at all, only the thesis title and abstract are required.
- If a Grade Point Average (GPA) is included in the AHEGS, details should be provided, explaining how the GPA was calculated.

**Optional items**

**Additional course details**
Specific details of particular course related achievements of the graduate may be included, such as: workplace learning; institutional organised study abroad or independent overseas study credited to the award; major practicum or professional training placements; and assessed competencies or graduate employability skills.

**Special achievements, recognition and prizes**
Academically related individual achievements may be included, such as: prizes; university or faculty medals; special distinctions; and university funded or outside funded scholarships based on academic merit. Only information that can be authenticated by the institution should be included. Ideally, achievements shown should relate directly to the award.

**SECTION FIVE – DESCRIPTION OF THE AUSTRALIAN HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM**
This section is compulsory and the content is provided by the Australian Government. All information must be reported in its entirety, without amendments.

**Description of the Australian Higher Education System**

**Introduction**
The Australian higher education system consists of independent, self-governing public and private universities and higher education institutions that award higher education qualifications. All higher education providers must be listed on the Australian Qualifications Framework Register of Recognised Education Institutions and Authorised Accreditation Authorities in Australia. This register is developed under instructions from Commonwealth, State and Territory Education and Training Ministers (See: [http://www.aqf.edu.au/](http://www.aqf.edu.au/)).
Qualifications
The Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) is a single national and comprehensive system of qualifications offered by higher education, vocational education and training, and secondary schools. The AQF comprises a set of national qualifications (ie awards), titles and qualification descriptors (See accompanying diagram). The AQF specifies the main criteria for defining qualifications based on the general characteristics of learning outcomes at each qualification level. The main qualifications awarded by higher education institutions are bachelors, masters and doctoral degrees, and graduate certificates and graduate diplomas. Research higher degrees at masters and doctoral level are normally assessed by external examiners. The higher education qualifications descriptors are periodically reviewed against best national and international practice. Guidelines for each qualification title are published in the Australian Qualifications Framework Implementation Handbook (http://www.aqf.edu.au/).

Admission
Requirements for admission to particular programmes are set by individual universities and colleges that generally provide a range of routes for entry and admit those students considered to have potential to successfully complete programmes of study. Admission of school leavers to undergraduate programmes typically is on the basis of the level of achievement in Year 12 secondary education, although some institutions and programmes also use interviews, portfolios or demonstrated interest or aptitude. Most institutions also provide alternative entry provisions via bridging or foundation programs for mature age students or other special provisions. Admission to post-graduate programmes is generally based on the level of achievement in previous higher education studies; in most cases, admission to PhD programmes is based on high achievement in a research masters degree or in a bachelors degree with first class honours or second class honours division A.

Quality
Australia has an international reputation for high quality education that is built on best practice in accreditation, quality recognition, quality assurance, and student consumer protection. All higher education institutions must be accredited by State and Territory Governments in accordance with strict criteria detailed in the National Protocols for Higher Education Approval Processes. These Protocols are nationally agreed principles that ensure consistent criteria and standards across Australia in such matters as the recognition of new universities, the operation of overseas higher education institutions in Australia, and the accreditation of higher education courses offered by institutions other than universities (See: http://www.deewr.gov.au).

All institutions receiving Australian Government financial support must meet quality and accountability requirements that are set out in the Higher Education Support Act 2003. The Australian Government also uses a range of tools to measure and monitor the quality of outcomes, while the interests of international students are protected by the Education Service for Overseas Students Act 2000 and its National Code, providing tuition and financial assurance and a consistent approach to institution registration.

Australian Universities are autonomous bodies that are responsible for managing quality through internal accreditation processes and commitment to codes of practice. Universities and other higher education providers are required by legislation to have in place appropriate quality assurance processes. These processes are periodically audited by the Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA).
AUQA is Australia’s principal national quality agency for higher education. It is an independent body that undertakes quality audits of higher education institutions and accreditation authorities (See: [http://www.auqa.edu.au](http://www.auqa.edu.au)). AUQA publicly reports on performance and outcomes, assists in quality enhancement and advises on quality assurance.

**Australian Qualifications Framework**

![Australian Qualifications Framework](image)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Schools Sector Qualifications</th>
<th>Vocational Education and Training Sector Qualifications</th>
<th>Higher Education Sector Qualifications</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Senior Secondary Certificate of Education (SSCE)</td>
<td>Vocational Graduate Diploma</td>
<td>Doctoral Degree</td>
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<tr>
<td>Certificate IV</td>
<td>Vocational Graduate Certificate</td>
<td>Masters Degree</td>
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<tr>
<td>Certificate III</td>
<td>Advanced Diploma</td>
<td>Graduate Diploma</td>
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<td>Certificate II</td>
<td>Diploma</td>
<td>Graduate Certificate</td>
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<td>Certificate I</td>
<td></td>
<td>Bachelor Degree</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Associate Degree, Advanced Diploma</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Diploma</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Notes:**
- The above text, table and AQF logo should be included in full on your AHEGS.
- The full text has been approved by DEEWR and the AQF Advisory Board Secretariat.
- Section 5 of the AHEGS is likely to change with the establishment of the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency and after the completion of the Strengthening the AQF project. This should be taken into consideration if printing stock.
ISSUES TO NOTE

Web links
Web links can be used on the AHEGS at the institution’s discretion. If using web links, it is recommended that they are at a basic level (e.g. www.uniX.edu.au) to prevent outdated links. It is not compulsory, but you may find it useful to create an AHEGS dedicated page on your institution's website to communicate more easily with students and employers.

Webpages
Several Australian universities are already issuing the AHEGS. Examples of these are available at:

- Australian National University
- Australian Catholic University

Paper for the AHEGS
There is no requirement to use secure paper for the AHEGS but many universities are choosing to use the same paper as the testamur/academic transcript which may include watermarks, holograms etc.

Jointly badged degrees
Jointly badged degrees are those that involve more than one institution, where the partner institution may be domestic or overseas. Regardless of the nature of the arrangement, the AHEGS should acknowledge that the degree was delivered by two (or more) institutions.

If the partnership is with an overseas institution, the Australian institution will be the only provider issuing an AHEGS.

If the partnership is with a domestic institution, the institutions may either agree on which one will provide the AHEGS or they may both provide AHEGS, as long as the arrangement is acknowledged on the AHEGS.

Nested Degrees
For nested degrees, such as where students first complete a Graduate Certificate, followed by a Graduate Diploma and/or followed by a Masters, institutions should follow the same practices that they use for issuing awards. For example, if an institution grants a testamur at each stage, it should issue an AHEGS at each stage but if the institution only grants the award at the end of the studies, it should issue an AHEGS at that point only.

Double/combined Degrees
A double degree is an award where a student receives two separate awards, i.e. two testamurs. A separate AHEGS should be provided for each qualification.

For example: Bachelor of Business/Bachelor of Arts in International Studies

A combined degree is an award for which a student receives a single testamur. Only one AHEGS should be provided for a combined degree.

For example: Bachelor of Arts/Asian Studies
Reissuing of an AHEGS
Ideally, a reissued AHEGS should be provided in identical form to the original version. If this is not possible due to out of date stock paper, it is acceptable to reproduce the AHEGS on different paper, but the information contained in the AHEGS should remain as originally issued.

Institutions must provide one copy of the AHEGS free of charge but may charge for the reissuing if it is standard procedure to do so for testamurs and academic transcripts.

Storage of the AHEGS
DEEWR has no policy on the storage of the AHEGS and institutions should select a method of storage to suit available resources.

Other frequently asked questions
Based on two rounds national implementation workshops (March 2009, March 2010), an extended list of FAQs was prepared. This and other information is available from the AHEGS website, http://www.deewr.gov.au/HigherEducation/Programs/Quality/QualityAssurance/Pages/GraduationStatement.aspx.