

**From:** Sandra J Welsman  
**Sent:** Sunday, 31 May 2009 3:48 PM  
**To:** Antony Stella; Executive Director  
**Subject:** Academic Achievement Standards paper - comments

Thanks for sending the Academic Achievement Standards discussion paper around for comment. I wonder how many inputs you will get.

I read it all through, interesting and even entertaining in parts, if it were not all so serious.

In David's covering note, he refers to the 'proposed work' and in reading I looked for a program of next stages. Is this the set of five points on pp10-11, or these point plus others? I wonder if a diagram could assist focus on the steps being proposed and an indicative timescale, neither short not long?

The document interestingly uses the terms 'achievement' and 'performance' throughout, with the word competence once. Vocational systems use 'competency' and 'skills', as did the Higher Education Review documents quite often. All four words involve various levels of knowledge and understanding.

It is a worry, in my view, that a system such as the convoluted VET competencies could emerge.

Even while one can see the 'need' in VET that system designers and consultative processes were trying to fulfil, the outcome might be described as horrendous, with each tranche of extra work on it making the key documents ('model of documentation') bigger and bigger. Some of packages are now over 1000 pages, without any teaching content, and they still wouldn't ensure equivalent achievement standards even at base level. I am conscious of this because over the last 15 months I have worked my way through a TAA 40104 Cert IV Training & Assessment, albeit gold-plated, so I could understand in depth the system and to asset my work at education interfaces!

In reading the Standards paper, I keep thinking a deal of this ground must be covered by professional association gatekeepers - at least in theory.

Could there be advantages - including assisting stakeholders to focus on the exercise - in starting with crafting a workable standards process for basic bachelor degrees, say BSc, BA, BCom (sans accounting) where the profession get little involved, and then testing the system on a wider range of disciplines and variants?

Examples mentioning the BSc, BA, BCom could be used in papers to assist focus? It could also assist in keeping the emerging process tight rather than building something to cover all contingencies to start with. Once a core is developed it, expansions might be contained by requiring strong evidenced reasons.

with regards, Sandra

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**Dr Sandra J Welsman, Principal *Frontiers Insight* PL**

**| 0411100048 | 02 67750178**

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