Educational Quality Framework

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THE LA TROBE EDUCATIONAL QUALITY FRAMEWORK

1. Overview

The La Trobe Educational Quality Framework (the Framework) provides the overarching structure for educational quality assurance and enhancement across the University. It sets out the University's academic assurance principles and the cyclical processes used to achieve quality objectives. It enables the University to develop quality assurance and enhancement strategies that meet its statutory and regulatory obligations, including those under the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011, the Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000, the Australian Qualifications Framework, the Higher Education Standards Framework 2021, and the La Trobe University Act 2009. It also supports the University's ongoing strategic priorities for maintaining and improving the quality of its educational offerings.

Scope

The Framework applies to all academic and administrative areas of the University involved in delivering or supporting learning and teaching, research training, and student management and support. It aligns with and is operationalised through the University's broader suite of policies, procedures, guidelines, and instruments related to learning and teaching, research, and student experience at the University.

Approach

- The University adopts a threshold-based approach to quality in course design and delivery, the learning environment, and the student experience, guided by the Quality Assurance Indicators (QAI) outlined in the Framework.

- Quality assurance is evidence-based, with performance demonstrated through trend data, external referencing, and feedback from students, peers, and professional bodies.

- Quality evaluation supports staff to undertake continuous and periodic improvement to enhance the student experience and learning outcomes.

- Staff capability in educational quality management is supported through professional development, promotion pathways, and relevant policy frameworks.

- Quality assurance processes identify and promote opportunities to support equity and inclusion across the diverse student body, contributing to continuous improvement in learning and teaching, research training, and student support.

- Continuous improvement is sustained through a coherent system of University governance that sets, monitors, and evaluates performance against informed thresholds

2. The Educational Quality Cycle

The Framework provides the overarching structure for assuring educational practice through systematic monitoring and review, consistent with regulatory requirements, including the Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards 2021). It establishes an assurance foundation across four domains that represent the University's core educational activities:

  a. design for learning
  b. participation and support
  c. the learning environment
  d. teaching and delivery

These domains encompass all major educational activities within governance and management responsibilities. Monitoring and review of thresholds are embedded within each domain.

La Trobe takes a cyclical approach to continuous improvement with six stages: Plan–Implement–Demonstrate–Review–Evaluate–Improve (PIDREI). This cycle underpins all educational activities and guides enhancement processes led by academic and professional staff under the oversight of governance forums. The associated Governance Map is the annual plan for this activity through reporting.

Plan

High-quality practice in learning and teaching, the learning environment, and the student experience is established through clear policies and procedures that ensure offerings meet required standards and legislative obligations. Governance bodies set expected quality thresholds for key assurance indicators through scheduled monitoring and review.

Implement and Demonstrate

Planned activities are implemented by staff across schools, departments, and program areas, including coordination and administrative teams. Evidence of controls, decision-making, and alignment with the Framework is required. The University demonstrates implementation through systematic data collection, monitoring, and reporting by relevant functional areas.

Review and Evaluate

Council maintains oversight of standards, quality, and ongoing improvement. Boards and committees evaluate performance using key assurance indicators mapped to audit and review processes outlined in the Framework. Monitoring and external referencing inform risk mitigation and guide improvements in course design, teaching, supervision, and student support. Evaluation draws on input from students, academic experts, industry, community, and government where appropriate.

Improve

Outcomes of quality assurance activities are reported and monitored through established governance and management processes by those with operational and managerial control. Council and its delegated boards and committees maintain oversight of improvement actions, their implementation and outcomes. Improvement actions may include recommendations on operations or revisions to policies and procedures.

3. Responsibilities

- Accountable staff in schools and divisions will apply the principles and requirements of the Framework through ongoing and periodic quality assurance practices within their areas of responsibility, both through centrally coordinated systems and in school-based processes.

- Divisional and School leaders will identify quality assurance requirements arising from annual and interim monitoring processes, will include accountabilities, and will report on improvements through local and institutional governance.

- Academic Board oversees the implementation of the framework through its governance bodies and will monitor academic standards across all domains, consistent with terms of reference and the annual committee work schedules.

- Quality and Standards will provide academic and professional staff with guidance and support on quality assurance processes, including evidence-based approaches to enhancement, to ensure effective implementation of the Framework.

4. Quality Assurance Indicators

The Quality Assurance Indicators (QAI) are statements of quality thresholds for all HESF related activities at La Trobe. The indicators are organised by areas of activity within each Domain. In each reporting cycle (annual), the evaluation of performance against thresholds using relevant data is undertaken. Performance indicators evidential to achievement of quality are drawn from La Trobe systems and processes and are analysed to produce meaningful benchmarks and insights in reports. Outcomes of these evaluations are considered by University leadership and governance committees, which determine necessary improvements to policies or processes.

A. Design for Learning

La Trobe has established and maintains rigorous learning design practices that ensure students enter, participate in, and progress through their studies in ways that support achievement of learning outcomes and uphold academic integrity. Assuring learning design requires a systematic approach that spans the full student lifecycle, from admission and transition to curriculum design, assessment, and ongoing monitoring of student progress. Effective assurance ensures courses remain aligned with regulatory obligations, professional accreditation requirements, and contemporary disciplinary expectations.

The strong learning design assurance system incorporates clear entry standards, coherent curriculum structures, valid assessment design, and robust monitoring processes. Collectively, these elements support student achievement, course integrity, and continuous improvement in learning and teaching.

The Quality Assurance Indicators are:

A.1 Entering University

1.1 Admission and pathways requirements are clearly and accurately represented.
1.2 Entry requirements are designed to support student achievement and course integrity.
1.3 Recognition of prior learning is consistent and fair.
1.4 Advanced standing credit is monitored to inform future decisions.
1.5 Credit decisions are made in accordance with the AQF.

A.2 Transition Strategies

2.1 Orientation and transition design is tailored for cohorts specific to the university.
2.2 Early assessment is formative to support subsequent learning and success.
2.3 Course design and learning activities meet the needs of First Nations peoples.

A.3 Course Design

3.1 Academic qualifications are accredited and AQF appropriate.
3.2 Professional accreditation is met and maintained by course design and review.
3.3 Courses include emerging concepts, recent scholarship and generic knowledge and skills.
3.4 Course design is informed by external comparators.

3.5 Research degrees are the appropriate level, proportion and type for the research study.
3.6 Learning design embeds constructive alignment to achieve learning outcomes.

A.4 Assessment for Learning

4.1 Assessment is designed for progressive learning across each subject and the course.
4.2 Calibration of assessment methods is undertaken in subjects at each level of a course.
4.3 Assessments are validated and moderated in subjects to support progression.

A.5 Monitoring Progress

5.1 Entry requirements and student preparedness are monitored by course and cohort.
5.2 Early progress in learning is monitored and supported in areas of need.
5.3 Courses undertake a comprehensive, evidence-based review process at regular intervals.
5.4 Interim reviews inform approaches to teaching, supervision, support and participation.

B. Participation and Support

This aspect of educational quality focuses on how institutions create inclusive, supportive, and responsive environments that uphold student wellbeing, academic progression, and regulatory obligations. Assuring participation and support, La Trobe has established coherent, evidence-based systems that enable all students to engage meaningfully with their studies, transition effectively into university life, access the support they need.

A robust assurance approach integrates orientation, transition support, equity strategies, targeted interventions, accessible services, and systematic use of student feedback. Together, these mechanisms ensure that participation in learning is enabled for all students, regardless of background, study mode, or cohort characteristics.

The Quality Assurance Indicators are:

B.1 Orientation to Learning

1.1 Students are admitted when prepared for their course, including in English language.
1.2 Supervised induction into research training is role specific and appropriate.
1.3 International students are fully supported in adjustments to study and living.
1.4 Transition strategies create an equitable learning experience within cohorts and locations.
1.5 Early assessment provides formative feedback on progress and identifies learning support needs.

B.2 Equity and Diversity

2.1 Students at risk are identified and provided, both academic and pastoral support.
2.2 Educational design and practices meet the needs of First Nations peoples.
2.3 Specific strategies are developed, implemented, and monitored for cohorts.
2.4 Evidence-based quality assurance occurs for improvement in diversity and equity.

B.3 Access and Support

3.1 Accurate and timely advice is available across all services that students use.

3.2 Learning support services are accessible for diverse course locations and modes.

3.3 Guidance for students on academic and research misconduct is available.

3.4 Student feedback on their educational experiences informs improvements.

C. The Learning Environment

Assuring the learning environment involves creating, maintaining, and continuously improving the physical, digital, and scholarly conditions in which learning and research take place. A high-quality learning environment is one that is safe, inclusive, well-resourced, accessible, and conducive to both academic engagement and student wellbeing. Assuring quality in this domain requires systematic oversight of facilities, technology, integrity frameworks, and the interactions that support scholarly activity. The indicators reflect the University's responsibility to provide environments, both physical and online, which enable students to learn effectively, progress successfully, and participate equitably in academic life.

The Quality Assurance Indicators are:

C.1 Safety and Security

1.1 The university provides a safe and secure environment for educational activities.

1.2 External placements and third-party providers are fit for purpose and quality assured.

1.3 Educational and research facilities meet the needs of students who use them.

1.4 Academic and research integrity is promoted, and risks are actively monitored.

1.5 The quality and safety of the online educational environment is monitored.

C.2 The Learning Environment

2.1 Academic and scholarly interaction, online and in person, is supported.

2.2 The Learning Management System offers a high quality, accessible learning platform.

2.3 Grievance processes are assured for access, diversity, timeliness, safety, and fairness.

2.4 Learning resources are relevant, current and accessible for learning needs.

D. Teaching and Delivery

Assuring teaching and delivery requires universities to maintain high standards in the planning, resourcing, and execution of teaching activities, ensuring that students receive high-quality learning experiences across all modes and levels of study. This domain focuses on the capability of teaching staff, the sufficiency of academic support structures, and the continuous improvement of teaching practice through evidence and feedback.

Effective assurance in teaching and delivery ensures that educational activities are led by qualified staff, supported by adequate resources, delivered in environments conducive to learning, and refined through reflective practice and scholarly engagement.

The Quality Assurance Indicators are:

D.1 The Learning Environment

1.1 Course delivery is planned with adequate staffing, student support and academic services.
1.2 Supervision and resources required for research training are available.
1.3 Teaching staff have appropriate and relevant qualifications to lead academic learning.
1.4 Teaching staff are available to students for consultation about their learning.

D.2 Teaching Quality

2.1 Staff lead intellectual inquiry suited to the nature and level of expected learning outcomes.
2.2 Staff have current research or practice advancement.
2.3 Teaching demonstrates contemporary principles of academic teaching and learning.
2.4 Teaching staff review quality performance data including student feedback to improve teaching.