

Feedback Form

Proposed revisions to the Accreditation Standards for Australian Law Courses

ABOUT YOU

Name/organisation:

UNSW Law & Justice

YOUR FEEDBACK

Consultation Question 1: Do you support the drafting of the proposed revisions set out in the Draft Revised Standards? We are interested in the reasons for your view and suggestions for improved drafting.

Please provide your feedback below:

1.1	Online delivery of law courses Refer to Draft Revised Standards: • New clause 4.1 (The delivery of the law course) • Ancillary adjustments to clause 4.6 (Teaching of the law course and active learning) for synchronous online learning • Clause 2.1 adjusted and new definitions for “online”, “delivery mode”, “in-person” and “synchronous online learning” • Clause 2.1 deletion of the “face-to-face” definition • It would be helpful to include a definition of <i>asynchronous learning</i>, which refers to a learning model where students engage with course materials, complete assignments, and participate in discussions at their own pace, without real-time interaction with instructors or peers. • The definition of ‘online’ should replace the final sentence (‘An example is synchronous online learning.’) with ‘Online learning may be synchronous or asynchronous’.
1.2	Teaching hours, active learning and student engagement Refer to Draft Revised Standards: • Revisions to clauses 4.5 (Content of the law course) and 4.6 (Teaching the law course) • Clause 2.1 new definitions for “delivery mode” and “teaching method”, as well as for “active learning” and “direct interaction” • At the third bullet point in 4.6, the Admitting Authority is to consider “the number of hours provided for active learning and/or direct interaction in a prescribed area of knowledge”. While both the hours provided for active learning and direct interaction are appropriately considered, the current draft suggests the two things are interchangeable due to being somehow equivalent. This is not the case, as elaborated in the following point.

	- At 4.6(b)(iii) is stated the requirement that “the design of the law course and its program of instruction provides for at least 18 hours of either or both of (A) active learning and (B) instruction and learning involving direct interaction between teacher and student”. This is confusing and unclear. The two either/or requirements do not cover the same pedagogical ground and it is difficult to see why they are interchangeable. For example, a law school could fulfil this requirement by having 18 hours of direct interaction between teacher and student (most obviously through the delivery of a traditional lecture), but which is NOT active learning within the definition given of that term and so escaping the need for active learning altogether. This seems contrary to the intention behind the proposed amendments. - Further, in the text at the conclusion of 4.6(b)(iii), it is said that: “A law school will need to provide evidence of the extent to which the design of the law course and its program of instruction provides for active learning and/or direct interaction in each prescribed area of knowledge and statutory interpretation”. This would benefit from clarification for the reason given in the preceding paragraph. - Essentially, direct interaction (as defined in the document) may be considered a component of active learning, but it need not be. The distinction between the two terms and whether they are intended to be cumulative or overlapping- should be made clearer.
1.3	Invigilated assessments Refer to Draft Revised Standards: - Revisions to clause 4.7 (Assessing understanding and competence), - Clause 2.1 new definitions for “assessment method” and “invigilation” - The definition of "assessment method" added to 2.1 is limited to summative assessment. This should be made explicit to exclude formative assessment methods used in law courses. - The definition might be improved by: grouping related items for clarity (e.g. list all oral assessments together and all written assessments together); use consistent phrasing (e.g. "oral assessments such as vivas" rather than just "vivas"); and consider clarifying that multiple assessment methods may be used to align with different course learning outcomes. - The definition of invigilation is lengthy, vague, and may be too broad. The phrase "whether in-person, online, by technological or other means" might be shortened to "in-person, online, or through technology". - It is worth considering the benefit of including a statement promoting use of more diverse assessment methods in law programs.
1.4	Intensives and block learning models

	Refer to Draft Revised Standards: Revisions to clause 4.3 (The duration of the law course)
1.5	Other minor revisions Refer to Draft Revised Standards: - Clause 2.1 new definitions for “law course” and “unit” and accompanying revisions - Updates to the definition of “prescribed areas of knowledge” at clause 2.1 and elsewhere to include statutory interpretation - To ensure greater consistency and avoid confusion with “units of credit”, it would be helpful to retain use of the term “subject” instead of “unit”.

Consultation Question 2: Do you agree with the proposed transitional period for the final Revised Standards? If not, why not?

Please provide your feedback below:

2	Transitional period We support the proposed transition period.
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Consultation Question 3: Do you have any other comments in relation to this work that you would like to provide to the Committees?

Please provide your feedback below:

3	Other comments Thank you for considering our feedback during the first round of consultation to enhance the proposed changes.
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