

Submission to the Foundation Program Standards consultation

Institution

Griffith University

Name

Professor Sarah Todd

Position

Vice President (Global)

Sector of delivery (e.g. Higher Education, VET)

Higher Education

1. What are your overall comments on the paper, including the possible amendments?

We are confident that the existing English language entry criteria for Foundation Programs, which include higher entry requirements for Foundation Program as a pathway to degrees with higher English language requirements, are appropriate. An analysis of students who have progressed from the Griffith College Foundation Program to Griffith University during the the past five years indicates that over 90% of them achieve a GPA of at least 4 (on a 7 point scale) in their degree studies across a range of programs, with almost 20% achieving a GPA of 5 or higher. The percentage of students who completed the Foundation Program who are achieving a GPA of 4 or above is higher than the general proportion of undergraduate students achieving this. In addition, degree programs with higher than standard entry requirements utilise a GPA hurdle for progression from Foundation to degree, requiring a higher than average standard of performance across the Foundation Program, not just English.

2. Is the minimum age requirement of 17 years of age to commence a Foundation Program, or 16 years of age with prior approval by TEQSA, appropriate?

We support retaining the minimum age requirement of 17 years of age to commence a Foundation Program, or 16 years of age with prior approval by TEQSA, but agree that it is appropriate to introduce an additional Standard on the care and safety of overseas students under 18, consistent with the ELICOS Standards.

3. Is there a need for 'extended' Foundation Programs? If so, how should the Standards apply to them?

The existing packaging of ELICOS and Foundation Programs meets our requirements and enables flexibility in relation to the varying needs of individual students in relation to the length of ELICOS study required to meet Foundation Program English language entry requirements

4. Should the Foundation Program Standards also regulate courses under 26 weeks? If not, should providers be able to register these courses on CRICOS as 'non-award'?

There are several areas in which it is proposed to bring the Foundation Program Standards in line with the ELICOS Standards. The ELICOS Standards apply regardless of course duration and in the interests of ensuring a level playing field it would be advisable to make the Foundation Program Standards applicable to all Foundation courses.

5. Should online learning be a part of Foundation Programs?

i. If so, how should this be specified?

ii. What limits should be in place (such as course percentage or hours per week)?

iii. How would consideration be given to the younger cohorts in Foundation Programs?

COVID has taught us that flexibility in delivery methods is required to ensure continuity of learning for students, and Foundation Programs should adequately prepare students to engage in the learning activities of their university program which are likely to include blended delivery of at least some components.

Assuming student visa requirements continue to require on-campus attendance for the whole or the majority of the program, a reasonable limit for online learning would be 20% of the weekly course hours. For Under 18s, there could be a requirement for online learning to be supervised or monitored.

6. Is the distinction between streamlined and general programs required?

Should there be specified key learning areas, or more flexibility to deliver units designed to meet student needs/pathway course needs, with only the English language component as compulsory?

For transparency, the distinction between generalist and streamed programs should remain. While streamed programs enable students to focus on building discipline-specific knowledge in preparation for their degree programs, there is an argument for specifying the inclusion of key enquiry areas covered in Year 12 in all Foundation programs to provide the greatest flexibility for students to select a different degree pathway if desired.