

FOCUS ON THE LEVELS: Go8 TO AQFC

The debate about naming some postgraduate degrees raises important issues of diversity and competitiveness of Australian Higher Education. It also raises questions about governance: how governments regulate universities, and how much discretion universities have in offering what students want and being responsive to changing needs and circumstances. As such, it has major implications for all universities and for the regulator, the new Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA), as well as the Australian Qualifications Framework council (AQFC).

The AQFC has made a major contribution through its focus on learning outcomes as the basis for distinguishing among the different levels of attainment represented by various qualifications. This focus on levels of learning outcomes can help students, employers and others better understand the relative worth of a qualification however and wherever it is obtained and whatever it is called.

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But the AQF council, in its July draft 'issuance policy', has proposed a restriction on the use of internationally recognised titles for degrees, which would limit postgraduate degree titles to 'Master of (field of study)' and MPhil, and 'Doctor of (field of study) and PhD. All other titles, including many that are longstanding and funded by the Government, are no longer to be allowed. And Australian universities may be forbidden from offering internationally recognised awards in the future.

This has significant implications for several degrees with internationally recognised titles including the Juris Doctor, and Doctors of Medicine, Veterinary Medicine, Optometry, Dental Surgery and Physiotherapy. Curiously, it also means the end of degree titles such as LittD, DPhil, DSc, LLM. What's the point?

The Go8 supports a 'modernisation' of the AQF with a view to clarifying the learning outcomes expected for qualifications at different levels. The AQF is an important external reference but it has never been, nor should it become, a prescriptive regulatory tool. The role of the AQF is to describe what Australian institutions offer; not to control them. The AQF levels provide a basis for 'comparability' of qualifications, however titled.

This is an edited extract of an opinion piece by the Go8's executive director which appeared in the Australian's Higher Education Section on 28 July 2010. The full article is available at www.go8.edu.au/government-a-business/go8-policy-a-analysis/2010/218-go8-opinion-piece-focus-on-the-levels

The Go8's full submission to the AQF Council about its consultation paper "Strengthening the AQF" will be available mid August.

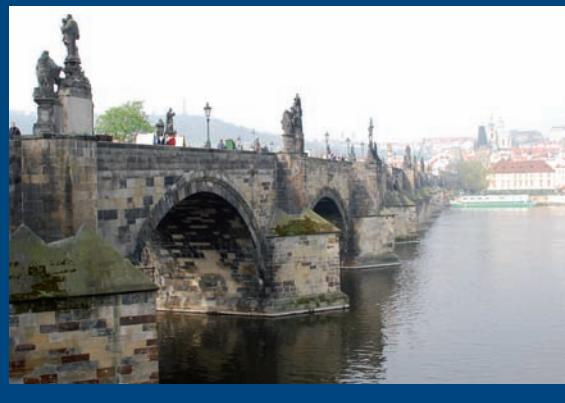
Go8 EUROPEAN FELLOWSHIPS: CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

Applications for the Go8 European Fellowships will be called in mid August. The Fellowships are open to early career researchers from Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Croatia.

Each fellow receives benefits worth \$20,000 to travel to Australia in 2011 and work at a Go8 university for up to six months.

Further information available: www.go8.edu.au/university-staff/programs-a-fellowships/63-go8-european-fellowships

Applications open on 16 August and close on 22 October 2010.



Go8 VIDEO CONFERENCING FACILITY

In an effort to reduce its carbon footprint, the Go8 secretariat has recently invested in excellent video conferencing facilities.

Go8 committees which meet regularly in various cities around the country are encouraged to make use of video conferencing where appropriate.

Contact the Go8 office on 02 6239 5488 or executive.director@go8.edu.au for details.

NEW ABS DATA ON R&D

New data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics have revealed that government expenditure on Research and Development measured in “person years of effort” has decreased by 7.5% in the past decade. By the same measure, university expenditure on R&D increased by 35% to \$6,717 million.

The data also reveal a change in focus in the higher education sector from basic research to applied research. A decade ago, applied research made up 35% of R&D. Today it is 41%. Pure basic research has decreased from 34% to 29% of R&D expenditure by universities.

In addition more than half of government expenditure is now devoted to applied research.



The largest amounts of government expenditure on R&D in 2008–09 were in the fields of: Engineering \$611m (18%); Agricultural and Veterinary Sciences \$545m (16%); Medical and Health Sciences \$452m (13%).

Private non-profit organisations spent \$744 million on R&D in 2008–09. Of this, Medical and Health sciences expenditure accounted for \$559 million (75%).

For more details see recent ABS publications 8109.0 and 8111.0.

Go8 CONFERENCE DISCOUNTS

Student Housing Summit | 7–8 September 2010, Melbourne

Tackling issues of growth, supply and demand across the student housing sector.

Staff of Go8 universities are eligible for a 10% discount on the registration fee.

www.informa.com.au/studenthousing

Social Inclusion in Education Conference | 13–14 September 2010, Sydney

Staff of Go8 universities are eligible for a 10% discount on the registration fee.

Email executive.director@go8.edu.au for the relevant registration form.

www.informa.com.au/conferences/education/the-2nd-annual-social-inclusion-in-education

UPCOMING EVENTS

- Go8 Equity Directors meet in Canberra on 6 August
- Go8 General Counsel meet in Brisbane on 13 August
- Go8 Directors of Facilities meet in Canberra on 13 August
- Go8 Directors of Human Resources meet in Perth on 13 August
- Go8 International Directors meet in Brisbane on 20 August
- Go8 Research Office Directors meet in Brisbane on 9–10 September
- Go8 Deans of Graduate Studies meet in Brisbane on 13 September
- Go8/Council of Graduate Studies Strategic Leaders Global Summit in Brisbane on 13–15 September
- Go8 Directors of Advancement meet in Canberra on 20 September
- Go8 Vice-Chancellors meet in Canberra on 23 September

MEET Go8 UNIVERSITIES IN EUROPE

Staff of all Go8 member universities will attend the 22nd European Association for International Education (EAIE) conference in Nantes from 15–18 September 2010.

The Go8 booth at the EAIE exhibition offers a great place for staff and students from partner universities from all over the world to meet. A roster at the booth helps visitors to know when staff from each Go8 university will be present.



ABOUT THIS NEWSLETTER

The *Go8 Update* is published online to keep the Go8 network of committees and staff at Go8 universities informed about the organisation's activities.

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