

**Learning and Teaching Academic Standards**  
**Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities**  
**Draft *History* Standards Statement**  
**Consultation Paper**

**July 2010**

## Table of Contents

	Page
Preface	2
1 Introduction	3
Overview and background	
Value of standards	
ASSH in the LTAS Project	
2 Development Process	4
History and Geography as demonstration disciplines	
3 History Standards Statement	6
Nature and extent of History	
Graduate careers	
Threshold Learning Outcomes	
4 Commenting on the History Standards Statement	8
Appendices	9
Appendix A Discipline Reference Group – Terms of Reference	
Appendix B AQF Descriptors (July 2010)	
Appendix C Glossary	
Appendix D List of abbreviations	

Professor Iain Hay  
Discipline Scholar  
Australian Learning and Teaching Council

Jill Rashleigh  
Project Officer  
Australian Learning and Teaching Council

<http://www.altc.edu.au/standards>

## Preface

I am pleased to invite you to comment on the draft of the proposed History Standards Statement that has been prepared as part of the ALTC's Learning and Teaching Academic Standards Project.

A small Reference Group comprising discipline-nominated representatives has drawn from international practice and local expertise to produce the draft History Standards Statement. Now this consultation paper is intended to offer an opportunity for key stakeholders and the discipline community more broadly to provide their input. This is in keeping with key ambitions of the Project to work within academic traditions of collegiality, peer scrutiny, discipline pre-eminence, and academic autonomy.

The ALTC would be very pleased to receive your comments to assist it with finalising its advice to DEEWR on learning and teaching standards. I encourage you to respond to this consultation paper and to attend one of the presentations being held during August and September.

Dr Carol Nicoll  
Chief Executive Officer  
Australian Learning and Teaching Council

## 1. Introduction

### Overview and Background

The Australian Government is developing a new Higher Education Quality and Regulatory Framework as part of its Education Revolution. Among other things, the Government is establishing the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) to regulate the sector against agreed standards for higher education. Five elements to the regulatory framework are likely:

Provider standards	Qualification standards	Learning and teaching standards	Research standards	Information standards
National protocols and ESOS Act	Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF)	Threshold learning outcomes	Excellence in Research in Australia (ERA)	For the market and regulators

In developing learning and teaching standards, the Government has made clear it is committed to the active involvement of the academic community. To that end, the Department of Employment, Education and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) has commissioned the Australian Learning and Teaching Council (ALTC) to manage the Learning and Teaching Academic Standards (LTAS) Project. The approach is designed to ensure that discipline communities define and take responsibility for implementing academic standards within the academic traditions of collegiality, peer review, pre-eminence of disciplines and academic autonomy.

The LTAS Project involves the definition of threshold (core/minimum) learning outcomes for disciplines or programs of study in higher education. The Project also includes the development of a repository of evidence-based resources to inform the new regulatory authority and to support institutional development of standards-related processes. More information about the Project is available at <http://www.altc.edu.au/standards>.

### Value of standards

As the Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA) noted in a 2009 discussion paper<sup>1</sup>:

“Higher education’s strategic importance to Australia’s economic and social prosperity makes it imperative that our institutions have robust strategies for demonstrating students’ academic achievement. Domestic and international expansion demands more transparent and relevant measures. To enhance equity and excellence, institutions need to demonstrate that their graduates have the capabilities that are required for successful engagement in today’s complex world.”

The LTAS Project will support these ends by setting out expectations about threshold standards for degrees in a range of subject areas. These standards will describe what gives a discipline its coherence and identity, and define the skills, knowledge and other attributes that can be expected of a graduate in that discipline. They will be the formal articulation of what academics and faculties are already striving to achieve as a minimum requirement for their graduates. As such, the standards will also be of interest to prospective students and employers seeking information about the nature and standards of awards in a subject area.

<sup>1</sup> AUQA. 2009, *Setting and Monitoring Academic Standards for Australian Higher Education*, Discussion paper, p.4, Available: <http://www.auqa.edu.au/qualityenhancement/academicstandards/>

The LTAS Project will **NOT** establish a national curriculum. Individual institutions will be free to set learning outcomes over and above national minimum outcomes and increase the number of learning outcomes they expect. They will also be free to determine the processes by which threshold learning outcomes are achieved, including curriculum, learning resources, learning activities and formative and summative assessment methods. It is expected however that the standards will offer a useful resource to assist those involved in program design, delivery and review.

### **ASSH in the LTAS Project**

The Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities (ASSH) aspects of the LTAS Project are led by the ALTC Discipline Scholar, Professor Iain Hay, and his Project Officer, Jill Rashleigh (both based at Flinders University). They have been working consultatively with academics, students, employers and other stakeholders over 2010 to identify the threshold (or core/minimum) learning outcomes for the bachelor level degree (as defined in the draft Australian Qualifications Framework [AQF]) with a major in History or Geography. Demonstrated achievement of these threshold learning outcomes is expected to be one aspect (among others) of TEQSA's evaluation of Australian universities. The specific ways in which TEQSA will monitor standards will be negotiated separately.

## **2. Development Process**

### **History and Geography as demonstration disciplines**

The Australasian Council of Deans of Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities (DASSH) recommended History and Geography as demonstration disciplines for this project. That recommendation was supported at a national forum held in Melbourne in February 2010 and was subsequently accepted by peak discipline bodies – the Australian Historical Association (AHA) and the Institute of Australian Geographers (IAG) – following discussion with the Discipline Scholar.

In consultation with DASSH, AHA and IAG, Discipline Reference Groups (see below) were established in March and the first meetings held that month. Each Reference Group identified a lead writer to draft the initial threshold learning outcomes. These documents were circulated, reviewed and redrafted ahead of the second meeting in May. A newsletter setting out progress was sent to stakeholders in May; two others are scheduled for circulation in August and October. Refined versions of the draft standards statements were prepared following the May Reference Group meetings and were presented to discipline communities at panel sessions during AHA and IAG conferences in July as well as to meetings of the Heads of History and Heads of Geography programs.<sup>2</sup>

From July to September, formal responses to the draft standards statements are being sought from all stakeholders. This document and your responses to it are a key part of the process. Feedback is also being supported by presentations in most capital cities about the standards development process. Revisions to the draft standards will be made in light of discipline community advice and the final versions of the standards document will be presented to DASSH, AHA and IAG for formal endorsement towards the end of the year. Once the standards statements have been agreed by discipline communities they will be available to DEEWR and TEQSA for quality assurance purposes.

---

<sup>2</sup> The Geography Draft Standards Statement is available for consultation on the ALTC website at: <http://www.altc.edu.au/standards/disciplines/ASSH>

MEMBERS	HISTORY	GEOGRAPHY
Chair and Discipline Scholar	Professor Iain Hay (Flinders)	Professor Iain Hay (Flinders)
President or nominee; peak discipline body	Professor Marnie Hughes-Warrington (Monash)	Professor Lesley Head (Wollongong)
DASSH Nominee	Associate Professor Deborah Gare (UND – Fremantle)	Dr Stephen Legg (Monash)
Discipline Expert	Professor Stuart Macintyre (Melbourne)	Dr Robyn Bartel (UNE)
Discipline Expert	Associate Professor Sean Brawley (UNSW)	Professor Kevin Dunn (UWS)
Discipline Expert	Associate Professor Adrian Jones (La Trobe)	Professor Nigel Tapper (Monash)
Recent graduate	Ms Louise Douglas (National Museum)	Mr Brad Ruting (Productivity Commission)
Discipline Expert - jurisdiction outside Australia	Professor Alan Booth (Nottingham)	Dr Lorraine Craig (Imperial College, London)
Relevant employer representative	Ms Helen Withnell (Australian War Memorial)	Dr Donna Ferretti (Donna Ferretti & Associates)

By the end of 2010, and as a result of this demonstration project involving History and Geography, other disciplines within the Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities will have available to them examples of carefully considered standards and the process by which they were devised. These should offer some guidance to other disciplines as they commence the process of defining standards. The Discipline Scholar has already been in communication with representatives from other fields including Demography/Population Studies, Food Studies, Sociology, and Theology to discuss approaches to developing standards. A peer-reviewed repository of best practice is also being compiled at the Australian Learning and Teaching Council website.

In drafting the threshold learning outcome statements, reference was made to the UK QAA (Quality Assurance Agency) benchmark statements, the European Tuning descriptors, the Dublin descriptors and the AQF Framework. Consideration was also given to documents describing the Australian national schools curricula for History and Geography to ensure appropriate engagement and continuity between school and university expectations. The threshold learning outcomes represent the minimum learning outcomes expected of a graduate in the discipline at Bachelor level (Level 7 in the AQF Framework – See Appendix B).

Several appendices are included with this document. Appendix A sets out Discipline Reference Group Terms of Reference. Appendices B and C contain useful reference points for developing and interpreting the threshold learning outcomes. These are respectively extracts from the draft Australian Qualifications Framework (as at 20 July 2010) and glossary. Appendix D is a list of abbreviations used in this document.

### 3. History Standards Statement

The History Standards Statement is structured as follows. The nature and extent of the discipline is described in the first section. There follows a short summary of the kinds of careers a Bachelor level student graduating with a major in History might be equipped for and might be expected to enter. The final section sets out a detailed description of the threshold (core/minimum) skills, knowledge and capabilities of a Bachelor degree graduate with a major in History. It is important to note that Discipline Scholars and Reference Groups were directed by ALTC to produce no more than 6-8 threshold learning outcomes for any discipline. It is also crucial to interpret the threshold learning outcomes in light of the description of the nature and extent of the discipline.

#### Nature and extent of History

History is the study of the past and its meaning for the present. Historians reconstruct the past using evidence from a wide range of sources, including documents, visual records, oral histories and material artefacts. Utilising a range of methodologies, they examine past cultural, social and political events and interpret their cause, significance and long-term impact. History is used to enrich our understanding of the world by considering the changes and continuities in societies from the earliest times to the present era. A knowledge of history is the foundation of all that we make as humans.

#### Graduate careers

Degree-level study in history develops the ability of students to assess evidence and events of the past, and to place them into a broad cultural, economic, political, social and temporal context. The study of History further equips students with the ability to ask relevant questions, critically analyse problems and evidence, consider different perspectives and values, formulate well developed arguments, and practice effective communication. The study of History will therefore be of value in further study or research, while the skills acquired will prove highly relevant to a wide variety of careers that include, but are not limited to:

- Archives management and support
- Community history
- Consulting (historical)
- Cultural heritage
- Education
- Foreign affairs
- Heritage research
- Information services
- Librarianship
- Media
- Museum management and support
- Native title research
- Public policy formulation and analysis
- Public service
- Publishing
- Records management
- Social mobilisation
- Social services
- Speechwriting
- Tourism

### Threshold Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of a Bachelor degree with a major in **History**, graduates will be able to:

1. Demonstrate knowledge of one or more periods of the past.
2. Identify, analyse, contextualise, and synthesise a wide variety of primary and secondary materials.
3. Identify, analyse, contextualise, synthesise and reflect critically upon historical scholarship.
4. Formulate historical problems and propose and review means for their resolution in a timely fashion.
5. Construct and support an argument in oral and written form, according to the methodological and ethical conventions of the discipline.
6. Demonstrate knowledge of the varieties of approaches to understanding, constructing and interpreting the past.
7. Demonstrate understanding of how historical phenomena – and historians – inform the present.
8. Identify, and reflect critically upon, capabilities developed in the study of history.



## 4. Commenting on the History Standards Statement

Stakeholders are invited to provide written comments on the History Standards Statement.

Guiding, though not limiting, questions to consider are:

1. Does the History Standards Statement offer a complete and accurate representation of the nature and extent of the discipline and of graduate careers?
2. Are the threshold learning outcomes set at an appropriate level to be understood as *minimum* expectations for a Bachelor graduate?
3. Can each of the eight draft threshold learning outcomes (TLOs) be measured and demonstrated to an external evaluator such as TEQSA?
4. Other than quality assurance, to what constructive ends can you see the History standards being put?
5. In what ways would you like to see the History Standards Statement used to evaluate undergraduate History programs?
6. How often, how, and by what organisation would you like to see the History Standards Statement reviewed?

The ALTC Discipline Scholar for the Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities will offer presentations on the LTAS Project in most capital cities during August and September. All stakeholders are invited to attend one of these presentations. Full details of presentation times and venues will be made available at: <http://www.altc.edu.au/standards/disciplines/ASSH>

Written responses to the History Standards Statement are required by close of business on **30 September 2010**.

Responses can be sent by:

Email to [LTAS@flinders.edu.au](mailto:LTAS@flinders.edu.au)

Post to:

Professor Iain Hay  
ALTC Discipline Scholar  
c/- Geography, Population and Environmental Management  
School of the Environment  
Flinders University  
GPO Box 2100  
Adelaide  
SA 5001

Written responses will be published on the ALTC website, including author/organisation details. **If you do not want your response made public, please include this request in your response.**

## Appendix A      Discipline Reference Group – Terms of Reference

The Reference Groups will support the implementation of the Learning and Teaching Academic Standards Project as defined in the project plan for each discipline group. Discipline Reference Groups will be convened by the Discipline Scholars.

The Discipline Reference Groups will have the following Terms of Reference:

- to provide advice to the Discipline Scholar on the direction and implementation of the Learning and Teaching Academic Standards Project
- to draft and/or review drafts of project-related material, including statements of threshold learning outcomes
- to facilitate and support engagement with key discipline group stakeholders.

### Membership

- The Discipline Reference Group will be chaired by the relevant Discipline Scholar
- Each Reference Group will have members nominated by the discipline community.
- Members will be appointed for the duration of the project, which is until December 2010.
- The structure of the Discipline Reference Group is:
  - *Chair*: Discipline Scholar.
  - President of the discipline's principal national body (or their nominee).
  - One member drawn from either the Council of Deans of Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities (DASSH) or DASSH's Network of Associate Deans (Academic).
  - Three discipline experts (covering various parts of higher education sector such as Innovative Research Universities and Group of Eight. Discipline experts should also have some demonstrated interest in learning and teaching.)
  - One discipline expert with substantial experience in learning-and-teaching standards setting in a jurisdiction other than Australia (e.g. UK QAA).
  - One relevant employer representative.
  - One recent graduate/postgraduate from the discipline working outside the tertiary sector.

If possible, the committee should include at least one Fellow of an appropriate Australian learned academy (e.g. Australian Academy of Humanities, Australian Academy of Science, Australian Social Sciences Academy). To the extent that it is practicable, there should be some geographical spread of Reference Group membership across the country.

### Meetings

Each Discipline Reference Group will meet regularly (approximately every six weeks) for approximately one to two hours per meeting; however the Chair may call extra meetings to discuss specific matters or may call on individuals for informal advice and support.

Most meetings will be conducted by teleconference; however face-to-face meetings at ALTC offices (Sydney) may be required on two occasions throughout the year. Other communication will be undertaken using email or teleconferencing.

The Chair may invite other person/s to attend any meeting or meetings as required, to assist with the achievement of the reference group's role and responsibilities.

Meetings will be organised by the Discipline Scholar or their project officer.

For face-to-face meetings attended by members of the Discipline Reference Group, the cost of travel, accommodation and meals will be provided on request.

## Appendix B AQP Descriptors (July 2010)

### AQP level 7 (Bachelors) criteria

<b>LEVEL</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>LEVEL SUMMARY</b>  Graduates at this level have...	Broad and coherent knowledge and skills for professional work and for further learning
<b>LEVEL CRITERIA</b>	
<b>LEARNING OUTCOMES</b>  <b>KNOWLEDGE</b>	Broad and coherent theoretical and technical knowledge in one or more fields of study or practice
<b>LEARNING OUTCOMES</b>  <b>SKILLS to demonstrate</b>	Well developed cognitive, technical and communication skills to select and apply methods and technologies to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>analyse and evaluate information to complete a range of activities</li> <li>analyse, generate and transmit solutions to unpredictable and sometimes complex problems</li> <li>transfer knowledge, skills and ideas to others</li> </ul>
<b>LEARNING OUTCOMES</b>  <b>KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS are applied to demonstrate...</b>	Autonomy, well developed judgement and responsibility: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>in contexts that require self-directed work and learning</li> <li>within broad parameters to provide specialist advice and functions</li> </ul>

### AQP qualification type descriptors (Bachelors)

<b>QUALIFICATION TYPE</b>	<b>Bachelor Degree</b>
<b>LEVEL</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>PURPOSE</b>  This qualification type is designed...	To qualify individuals who apply a broad and coherent body of knowledge in a range of contexts to enter professional work and/or as a pathway for further learning
<b>KNOWLEDGE</b>  Graduates of this qualification type will have...	A broad and coherent body of knowledge, with depth in the underlying principles and concepts of one or more disciplines as a basis for independent lifelong learning
<b>SKILLS</b>  Graduates of this qualification type will have...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cognitive skills to critically review, analyse, consolidate and synthesise knowledge.</li> <li>Cognitive and technical skills to demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of knowledge with depth in some areas.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cognitive and creative skills to exercise critical thinking and judgement in identifying and solving problems with intellectual independence</li> <li>• Communication skills to present a coherent and independent systematic exposition of knowledge and ideas.</li> </ul>
<b>APPLICATION OF KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS</b>  <b>Graduates will be able to...</b>	Apply knowledge and skills: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• using judgement and initiative in professional practice and/or scholarship</li> <li>• to adapt knowledge and skills in diverse contexts</li> <li>• to take responsibility and accountability for own learning and professional practice and collaboration with others within broad parameters</li> </ul>
<b>NOTIONAL DURATION OF STUDENT LEARNING</b>	3-4 years

**Source:** *Strengthening the AQF: A Framework for Australia's Qualifications* (Consultation Paper), July 2010.

## Appendix C

## Glossary

Autonomy	Ability to apply knowledge and/or skills with appropriate degrees of independence for the level of the qualification
Basic	Basic knowledge/skills include those that form a starting point or basis for development of learning or work
Broad	Broad knowledge/skills include those that cover a general, wide-range of area learning or work
Cognitive skills	Include the mental skills that are used in the process of acquiring knowledge; these skills include reasoning, perception and intuition. They are defined by the skill dimension (e.g., interpret, analyse, transform)
Coherent	Knowledge and/or skills including those that are logically ordered, sound and/or integrated
Complex	Activities and/or contexts refer to competing ideas or perspectives and/or information that is voluminous, ambiguous and/or incomplete
Comprehensive	Knowledge and/or skills covering a complete area or field of work or learning.
Creative skills	Skills that lead to innovative, imaginative and artistic outputs
Defined	Activities and/or contexts refer to definite or clear activities or contexts within distinct boundaries
Field	Refers to the main focus of work activities and/or a learning program
Generic skills	Skills not specific to work in a particular occupation or industry but are important for work, education and life in general. Known also as employability skills or general capabilities or transferable skills these skills have application in study, work and life contexts
Integrated	Combines two or more kinds of knowledge and concepts (eg. technical and theoretical)
Learning outcomes	The set of knowledge, skills and/or competencies a person has acquired and is able to demonstrate after completion of a learning process. In the AQF these are expressed in terms of knowledge, skills and application
Levels	An indication of the relative complexity and/or depth of achievement and the autonomy required to demonstrate that achievement
Mastery	Demonstrates comprehensive knowledge and understanding of their field of work or learning
Responsibility	Refers to the degree of accountability in applying knowledge and/or skills in work and/or learning contexts for the level of qualification
Routine	A straightforward or regular course of procedure with distinct boundaries that can be applied to a task or interactions
Skills	Refer to what a graduate can do. They can be described in terms of kinds and complexity. Skills include cognitive skills, technical skills, creative skills and generic skills
Specialised	Knowledge and/or skills refers to the depth and specificity
Standards	Benchmarks or expectations of learning that have been established with stakeholders and include all factors that influence the consistency and relevance of qualifications
Systematic	Knowledge and/or skills are those that are coherent and well-ordered
Task	The use of accounting knowledge and technical accounting skills as part of the process to arrive at a decision or conclusion
Technical skills	Operational skills necessary to perform certain work and learning activities
Threshold	Minimum standard of achievement or attainment

**Adapted from:** *Strengthening the AQF: A Framework for Australia's Qualifications* (Consultation Paper), July 2010.

**Appendix D**                      **List of abbreviations**

AHA	Australian Historical Association
ALTC	Australian Learning and Teaching Council
AQF	Australian Qualifications Framework
ASSH	Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities
AUQA	Australian Universities Quality Agency
DASSH	Australasian Council of Deans of Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities
DEEWR	Department of Employment, Education and Workplace Relations
DRG	Discipline Reference Group
DS	Discipline Scholar
ESOS	Education Services for Overseas Students
GIS	Geographical Information Systems
IAG	Institute of Australian Geographers
LTAS	Learning and Teaching Academic Standards
TEQSA	Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (Australia)
TLO	Threshold Learning Outcome
QAA	Quality Assurance Agency (UK)

*Consult final HIST.doc*