Development a National Diploma
Supplement: Project Commissioned by DEST

Proposal for an Australian Higher Education Graduation Statement

Grant Harman
CHEMP University of New England
Armidale NSW 2351 Australia
Email: gharman@une.edu.au
Aims of Presentation

- Explain the objectives of the Diploma Supplement Project funded by DEST (now DEEWR).
- Summarise the work undertaken and the outcomes.
- Strong similarities between e-portfolio and Graduation Statement - both important initiatives to provide students with enhanced documentation on learning experiences and achievements, and contribute to easier transitions between higher education and employment.
- Overall message our message is that the proposed Australian Higher Education Graduation Statement has strong support nationally from all major stakeholders and promises to make important contributions assisting graduates to move to employment and/or further study.
The Project

- 10 January 2007 Minister Julie Bishop announced that consortium of universities been commissioned to develop an agreed template for an Australian Diploma Supplement and make recommendations on a suitable name and implementation strategies.
- Consortium consists of 14 universities led by UNE, ANU and the University of Melbourne.
- Diploma Supplement’s specific objectives are to enhance student and professional mobility and make qualifications more portable by providing descriptions of nature, level, context and status of studies that were completed, as well as information about the education system to which the qualifications belongs.
- Project is a mixture of research studies, documentation analysis, workshops, consultation and persuasion.
European/International Background

- In 45 European countries, universities are introducing the Diploma Supplement as part of the Bologna Process of higher education reform.
- Under the Lisbon Convention, in 2002 Australia agreed to promote use of the Diploma Supplement.
- The objectives of the Diploma Supplement are to enhance student and professional mobility and make qualifications more portable by providing descriptions of nature, level, context and status of studies completed, as well as information about the education system to which the qualifications belongs.
- In order to enhance its international competitiveness and not fall behind, Australia keen to be aligned with the Bologna Process and have in place an equivalent to the Diploma Supplement.
Work and Consultation Program

- Review European Diploma Supplement developments.
- Review the outputs from 2002 and 2005 DEST funded studies.
- Survey what documentation universities currently provide to graduates.
- Recommend on name, format and content for a Diploma Supplement.
- Scope requirements for a searchable and secure national system to house Diploma Supplement data.
- Undertake cost estimate studies for implementation.
- Recommend a national implementation strategy.
- Develop a glossary of key terms.
- Consult widely and run major workshops for HE institutions.
Guiding Principles

- Graduation Statement will be issued free of charge to all higher education graduates.
- Graduation Statements will provide authenticated information on the nature, level, context and status of studies completed as well as information about education system.
- Graduation statements will be issued for each separate award but will accommodate combined and jointly badged degrees.
- Graduation Statements will not be issued retrospectively.
- Graduation Statements conform to national specifications.
- Information will be factual rather than evaluative and free from value judgements and equivalence statements.
Guiding Principles (cont)

Graduation Statements will follow broadly European Diploma Supplement specifications, but the name has been changed and the number of information categories reduced from 7 to 5.

The Graduation Statement will provide information on:
- the graduate;
- details of the course of study completed;
- information on the awarding institution;
- details on the student’s academic record and special achievements; and
- a description of Australian higher education.

Optional elements allow institutions to report information that may be characteristic of the institution’s mission and awards, or relate to the special achievements of graduates.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>E-portfolio</strong></th>
<th><strong>Graduation Statement</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Information pertaining to broad range academic and non-academic achievements</td>
<td>Information re a single award conferred on an individual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintenance is an individual responsibility</td>
<td>Compilation and verification responsibility of university</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authenticated &amp; unauthenticated information</td>
<td>Only authenticated information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continually evolving</td>
<td>Static, snapshot at one point in time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-portfolio information may later be authenticated for inclusion in GS</td>
<td>Once issued GS might be included in e-portfolio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not a secure document</td>
<td>Secure document</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Consultation with Stakeholders

Required to consult with stakeholders particularly about:

2. Guiding principles, format and specifications.
3. Idea of ‘core’ and ‘optional’ items;
4. Whether the academic record should include only successfully completed units for the particular award, or all units.
5. Whether the Graduation Statement should include information on accreditation and professional recognition for all relevant courses.
Consultation

- Strong support from all stakeholders for introduction of Graduation Statement.
- Particularly enthusiastic support from universities.
- Fail grades.
- Alternative models suggested by seven universities.
- Views of other stakeholders - employers, professional associations, students, other countries.
Value of Graduation Statement

- The Graduation Statement has the potential to be particularly important to enhance the standing of Australian higher education, and facilitate student and graduate mobility for domestic students who wish to study or work abroad, and for international students returning home or seeking work elsewhere.

- Hopefully also will have value for domestic employers and graduates in transition to employment.

- Many universities see the Graduation Statement as being particularly important to enhance the standing of Australian qualifications and strengthen their competitive advantage in recruiting international students.