

OPEN UNIVERSITIES
AUSTRALIA

Quality Assurance Framework: Recognising Excellence



August 2020



Open Universities Australia's Quality Assurance Framework

Protecting the reputation of participating university partners by supporting their commitment to quality is paramount.

Open Universities Australia (OUA) works with Australian Universities. The programs offered by OUA's University partners are self-accredited, as authorised by The Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA), Australia's independent national quality assurance and regulatory agency for higher education.

As outlined by TEQSA:

Providers who self-accredit their courses of study are accountable for:

- interpreting the requirements of the Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2015, and
- judging whether the HES Framework will be appropriately applied and met throughout the development, approval, delivery and discontinuance of a course of study.

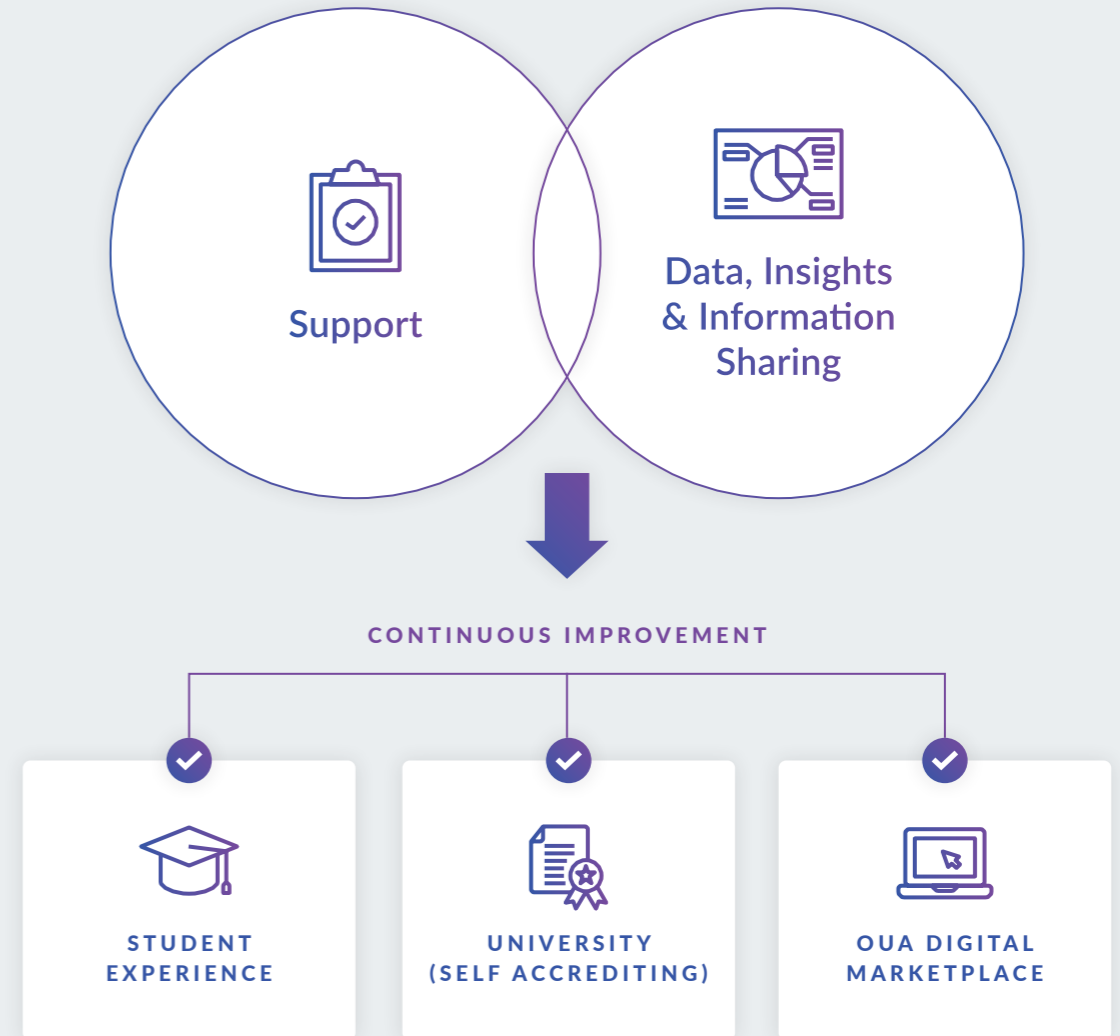
University Providers who self-accredit their courses are also responsible for ensuring that compliance across all the HES Framework is sustained throughout their higher education operations.

Despite not being a University, OUA also has obligations as defined under the Higher Education Support Act (HESA 2003) and FEE-HELP Guidelines that we are required to comply with. In addition to meeting our regulatory obligations, OUA seeks to complement each of the university's own established quality assurance frameworks and ensure the overall value of OUA's digital marketplace is optimised for all users.

OUA encourages the development and continuous improvement of online offerings via an evidence based approach, with OUA sharing information and insights to aid decision making and collaborative efforts.



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Key Elements of the OUA Quality Assurance Framework



Support

OUA is supporting universities own quality assurance frameworks through:

- **Academic Programme Committee (FEE-HELP guidelines requirement):** meets throughout the year and comprises senior representatives from universities and OUA
- **Annual Provider Portfolio reviews:** presentations are open to all academic and relevant professional staff to reflect on the performance of programs
- **Portfolio Management Committee:** new degree or subject applications, amendments and requests to rest or retire are considered fortnightly



Data, Insights and Information Sharing

To support universities in their own commitment to continuous improvement, OUA facilitates the sharing of data and benchmarking through various channels including:

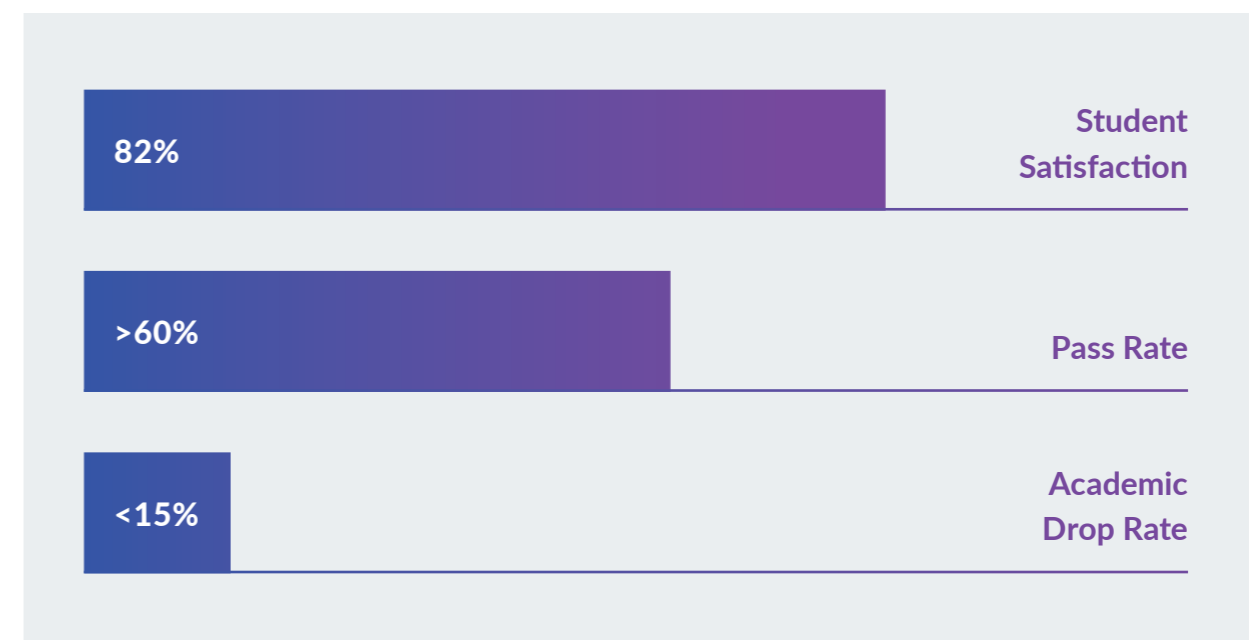
- Student satisfaction surveys, drop rates and pass rates completed at the end of each period
- Provider dashboards with access to real time data such as enrolments, KPIs, student demographics
- Recognising and monitoring key performance metrics
- Annual Market Opportunities Overview
- Benchmarking across the OUA marketplace
- Regular meetings with Academic Partnership Managers (APM)

Monitoring Student Response and Outcomes

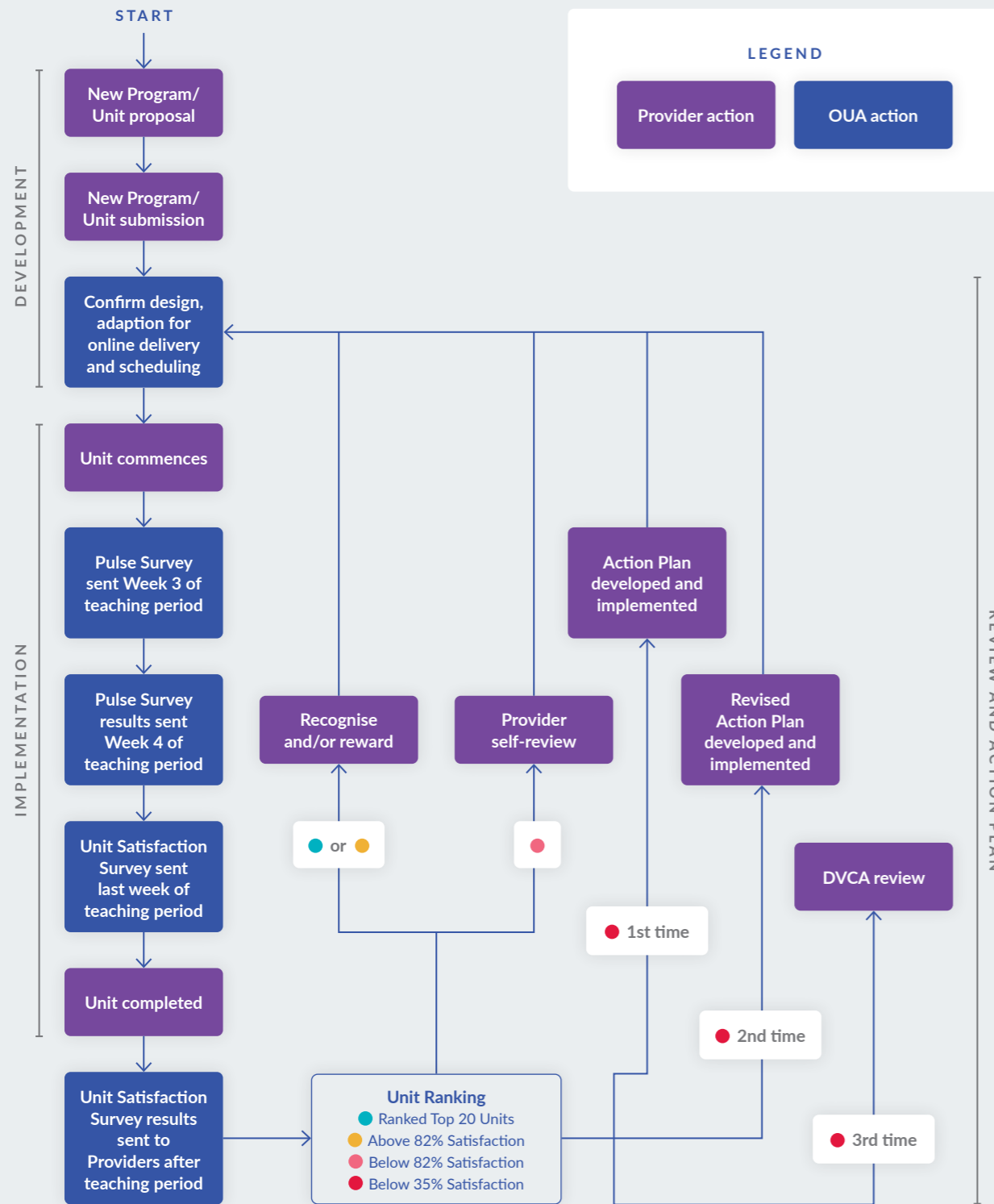
OUA quality indicators are aligned with the QILT national average and reflect our commitment to protecting the reputation of participating universities.

OUA recognises the importance of having an ongoing dialogue with Providers in terms of quality. To help with benchmarking, OUA collects performance data at two key intervals throughout the teaching period. A pulse survey at the beginning and unit performance data at the end of each teaching period. An overview of the survey process follows on page 6 overleaf. OUA shares anonymised data comparing a Provider's student satisfaction data against the other Providers in the portfolio. Longitudinal studies offer insights into continuous improvement efforts and strategies.

Data is measured against the agreed quality indicators of student satisfaction, pass rate and academic drop rate. If student satisfaction with a unit drops below 35% then an action plan to arrest declining quality is requested by OUA.



Overview of the Survey Process



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Recognising excellence and addressing units which are at risk underpins OUA's Quality Assurance Framework.



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Sampling Overview and Performance Outcomes

With more than 2,000 units of study on offer across our portfolio, OUA has established priorities that enable data to be collected in a timely and effective manner. Performance data is collected every student period for all units.



At Risk

Units that fail to meet the minimum 35% student satisfaction threshold are deemed to be at risk. This threshold seeks to balance university workload with recognition of the critical risk, and any potential impact to the reputation of OUA and partner universities.

OUA requires a formal written Action Plan, outlining the remedial action to be implemented, for any at risk unit. Units below 35% are re-surveyed in the subsequent teaching period but consideration is given to the academic calendar when assessing the results and determining the appropriate course of action.



Excellence

OUA understands that the effective engagement and teaching of students studying online requires a different set of skills and approach to traditional on-campus teaching. With universities offering more and more of their courses online, the skills needed to effectively engage students in an online learning environment are becoming increasingly important.

OUA has introduced a new initiative to recognise staff who demonstrate excellence in the engagement of students studying online. Following the completion and collation of data for every teaching period, high levels of achievement are recognised through formal Letters of Recognition.

This program hopes to:

- acknowledge and highlight levels of excellence being achieved,
- encourage and support the engagement of students studying online, and
- complement university processes for recognising excellence in online teaching.

To date more than over 200 staff have been recognised.

**TO EXPLORE
NEW PROGRAM
OPPORTUNITIES**

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**TO EXPLORE NEW
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