Good Practice Guidelines for the Development of Students’ Academic and Professional Communication Skills at the University of Sydney

The original document: *Good Practice Principles for the Development of Students Academic and Professional Communication Skills at the University of Sydney* was developed in 2012 by the English Language Working Party chaired by Learning Centre Head, Helen Drury, at the request of the International Student Programs Committee (ISPC). The document was presented to and approved by the ISPC at the meeting dated 15 April 2013. The Principles document underwent some changes as it progressed through to Academic Board and the document has subsequently been endorsed as **Good Practice Guidelines for the Development of Students’ Academic and Professional Communication Skills at the University of Sydney**.

The Guidelines document provides a timely update to the University’s current policy *Written and Oral Communication Skills of Students* passed by Academic Board in September 1994 and positions the university to respond to a number of current higher education initiatives and drivers which directly address the communication capacity of all university students.

**What are the Good Practice Guidelines?**

These are a set of guidelines to inform policy and practice related to:

1. **Entry level**: The mechanisms in place to provide reasonable assurance that all students have sufficient communication capacity to engage effectively with their academic programs at entry level.
2. **In course development**: The mechanisms in place to develop the academic and professional communication of all students across degree programs.
3. **Graduate outcomes**: The mechanisms in place to ensure that all students graduate with sufficient levels of communication competence to engage effectively in their chosen career or future study.

**Why do we need the Good Practice Guidelines?**

The guidelines have been developed within a national higher education context that focuses on communication proficiency for all students. English language proficiency is part of this broader communication focus.

Reference is made to communication in:

- Higher Education Standards Panel draft standards documents
- TEQSA Quality Assurance of English language Proficiency
- Discipline standards and professional accreditation
- The Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF)

The AQF specifications for a doctoral degree, for example, include:

- communication skills to explain and critique theoretical propositions, methodologies and conclusions.
- communication skills to present cogently a complex investigation of originality or original research for external examination against international standards and to communicate results to peers and the community.

