

12/05/2017

Secretariat | Admissions Transparency IWG

C50MA7

GPO Box 9880

Canberra ACT 2601

Dear Professor Krause,

The Australian Technology Network of Universities (ATN) would like to thank you for allowing us the opportunity to comment on the Admissions Transparency Implementation Working Group's draft Implementation Plan.

The ATN is a national collaborative group of five major universities including Queensland University of Technology, University of Technology Sydney, RMIT University, University of South Australia and Curtin University. ATN Universities are all young, innovative, and have genuine linkages to industry as an inherent part of both our teaching and research.

The ATN is supporting of the overarching aims of the Implementation Plan, noting the benefits that meeting the objectives will have for admissions transparency. Broadly, we believe the proposed approach will be effective in increasing transparency and public understanding of contemporary admission to higher education. The adoption of standardised terminology and presentation of admission information will benefit applicants and will facilitate less complicated application decision making processes, especially where an applicant is applying to multiple institutions.

The four broad groupings to describe the admission for applicants to higher education is supported by the ATN. The groupings are appropriate, and the allocation between them is easily understood from an institutional perspective. However, we see value in some user testing to ensure that the groupings are meaningful to prospective students. In addition, however the use of the word "previous" does imply that an institution would not assess current studies as a basis for admission, regardless of the definitions provided in the data definitions. As such, the ATN suggests that the word previous be removed from the grouping descriptors to ensure there is no misunderstanding for either the "previous higher education study" or "previous vocational education and training (VET) study" categories.

In broad terms, the ATN agrees that the proposed approach to Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR) thresholds is reasonable and that the proposed approach would adequately inform prospect students about admission options or pathways that do not use ATAR. Again, we would see value in some testing to ensure that this information is targeted appropriately to users.

While the ATN is welcomes the proposed approaches, as noted above, the ATN does have

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concern for the proposed implementation timelines. The ATN believe that the timelines proposed will result in a rushed outcome that will run counter to the aims of increasing comprehensive and readily comparable information for applicants.

Universities are currently undertaking recruitment and marketing activities for prospective 2018 students, with recruitment events, and information sessions scheduled from as early as late May 2017. An attempt to replace materials at this stage of recruitment is as unachievable as it is realistic. Further, introducing a new set of materials later in the year for 2018 students, will only lead to increased confusion on behalf of the applicant, despite the proposed “best endeavours” version of information sets. The burden the proposed timelines on institutions, to produce a “best endeavours” version of information sets, would be large and the result, across the sector, could result in inconsistent information sets. This would ultimately be to the detriment of prospective student and decrease admissions transparency.

Delaying the implementation for the 2019 will result in universities taking a considered, careful, planned and meticulous approach to implementing the proposed plans allowing for greater outcomes. Such an approach will ensure consistency across the higher education sector and allow institutions adequate time to incorporate the changes into their recruitment process for 2019, increasing the likelihood of meeting the admirable aims of the implementation plan. As a result, students, parents, teachers and career advisors will have wider accessibility to admission information, improving their ability to compare institutions and ensuring an easier higher education admission process.

Please do not hesitate to contact the ATN Directorate on (02) 5105 6740 or via e-mail at renee.hindmarsh@atn.edu.au to discuss any elements of the submission further.

Yours sincerely,



Renee Hindmarsh

ATN Executive Director

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