

Open the Door to University Colleges

Currently 90% of Australian HE student enrolments are in research-intensive public universities. Australia has overlooked the teaching-intensive options successfully driving efficiency and building capacity in other nations.

COPHE has advocated changes to the Provider Category Standards that would make 'University College' a meaningful description for institutions in the COPHE constituency that teach and achieve quality outcomes for students at university level, but do focus on particular disciplines without seeking the breadth of a public university.

The current protocols restrict 'University College' to the status of a 'proto-university'. However, the term has begun to be appropriated, at least in the public mind, as a pathway to university or a polytechnic. There is a need to broaden the discussion.

Members of COPHE would be eligible for university college status if they were in many other jurisdictions including in the United Kingdom or Canada. The size of the student population is not an issue, nor is there a requirement to be offering research degrees. Similarly, the breadth of courses does not matter; what does matter is the quality and the depth in these courses.

Clarifying 'University College' is good for:

Students:

- Recognises that a higher education degree is the same qualification wherever it is studied because it is protected by the Australian Qualification Framework and accreditation established by the same regulator: the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency.
- Widens the range and diversity while maintaining quality.
- Provides a level playing field for students at non-universities

The Government:

- Costs nothing
- Introduces a level of competition and accountability for universities
- Will facilitate expansion of the international student sector
- Clarifies the current under-utilised provider category
- Provides a mechanism for extending student support to increase participation

Universities:

- Would help to stimulate the "innovation, specialisation and diversity" that Universities Australia recognises the sector needs
- Protects the status of research-intensive institutions

Private Higher Education Providers:

- Clearly distinguishes them from vocational providers, and secondary colleges