

Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER)

**ACEReSearch**

---

[ACER eNews Archive](#)

[ACER Archives](#)

---

4-2013

## ACER eNews Issue 04 April 2013

ACER

Follow this and additional works at: [https://research.acer.edu.au/enews\\_archive](https://research.acer.edu.au/enews_archive)



Part of the [Education Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

ACER, "ACER eNews Issue 04 April 2013" (2013).  
[https://research.acer.edu.au/enews\\_archive/2](https://research.acer.edu.au/enews_archive/2)

This Article is brought to you by the ACER Archives at ACEReSearch. It has been accepted for inclusion in ACER eNews Archive by an authorized administrator of ACEReSearch. For more information, please contact [repository@acer.edu.au](mailto:repository@acer.edu.au).

**Published April 2013**

In this issue:

- [Australian students rate their university experience positively](#)
- [Measuring the quality of early childhood education and care](#)
- [National teaching standards for Kuwait](#)
- [ACER Update](#)

## Australian students rate their university experience positively

Results from the largest survey of Australian university students ever conducted reveal that 80 per cent of students rate the quality of their educational experience as good or excellent.

More than 110 000 students completed the University Experience Survey, which was developed for the Australian Government by a consortium of organisations led by ACER and was conducted between July and October 2012. The Commonwealth Department of Industry, Innovation, Climate Change, Science, Research and Tertiary Education released the national report in late March.

Report co-author, ACER Higher Education Research Director Associate Professor Hamish Coates, said the survey provides universities with analytic information on the nature and quality of the student experience.

'The insights captured via the University Experience Survey will be instrumental in helping institutions further improve the quality of teaching and learning,' Associate Professor Coates said.

The survey is the first to investigate at a national level whether students feel adequately supported by their institutions. Eighty-three per cent of students reported there being at least some support services available at their institution, and 82 per cent reported that the available support services were helpful.

However, around half (53 per cent) of Australian students reported being offered very little or no support relevant to their circumstances. On the question of whether students received appropriate English language skill support, 27 per cent responded 'not at all' and 13 per cent responded 'very little'.

The survey was also the first to examine the impact of certain external factors on students' university experience. Nationally, 44 per cent of students reported that their living arrangements had at least some impact on their study, 51 per cent of students reported that financial circumstances affected their study and 52 per cent of students nationally reported that paid work had at least some effect on their study.

Associate Professor Coates said the survey results set a baseline for further monitoring.

'It takes about three to five years of ongoing design, formative review and development to fully contextualise a new data collection of this scale, given the stakeholders, change and consolidation required,' Associate Professor Coates said.

## **Published April 2013**

The national report includes 15 recommendations for the further development of the survey. Among these recommendations is a call for non-university higher education providers to be

included in future administrations, and the need for strategies to enhance the level of student participation in the survey.

'Foundation stones have been laid and new frontiers tested but substantial work remains to convert this fledgling survey into a truly national vehicle for improving and monitoring the student experience,' Associate Professor Coates said.

The 2012 University Experience Survey National Report is available from:

<http://www.innovation.gov.au/HigherEducation/Policy/Pages/UniversityExperienceSurvey.aspx>

Published April 2013

## Measuring the quality of early childhood education and care

An ACER evaluation of the assessment and rating process that measures day care, preschool and outside school hours care services against national quality standards has found that the process is valid and reliable.

Commissioned by the Commonwealth Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations in June 2012, the ACER evaluation concentrated on the validity and reliability of the National Quality Standard for Early Childhood Education and Care and School Age Care (NQS) assessment and rating process and the instrumentation used.

A total of 491 services were assessed by authorised officers in all states and territories as part of the evaluation, of which 224 were long day care centres, 137 were preschools, 81 were outside school hours care centres and 49 were family day care services. The services rated are not necessarily representative of the entire population.

The assessment and rating process involves authorised officers visiting each service to determine the extent to which the service meets seven quality areas of the National Quality Standard:

1. Educational program and practice
2. Children's health and safety
3. Physical environment
4. Staffing arrangements
5. Relationships with children
6. Collaborative partnerships with families and communities
7. Leadership and service management

Across all 491 services assessed, the quality area of *Educational program and practice* had the lowest percentages of services that received ratings of 'exceeding' the NQS (24 per cent) and 'meeting' the NQS (33 per cent). Consequently, *Educational program and practice* had the highest percentage of services rated as 'working towards' the NQS (43 per cent). *Staffing arrangements* had the lowest percentage of services rated as working towards the NQS (12 per cent), and *Relationships with children* had the highest percentage of services rated as exceeding the NQS (39 per cent).

Based on their quality area ratings, each service then receives an overall rating. Of the 491 services included in the evaluation, almost half (48 per cent) were rated as meeting or exceeding the NQS. Only two services – one preschool and one family day care – were rated as 'significant improvement required', representing 0.4 per cent of all services assessed and rated as part of the evaluation.

Results varied by service type. For long day care services, the proportion of services exceeding, meeting and working towards the NQS were 17 per cent, 23 per cent and 60 per cent respectively; for preschools the proportions were 50 per cent, 24 per cent and 25 per cent; for family day care services, 27 per cent, 21 per cent and 52 per cent; and for outside school hours care, 12 per cent, 15 per cent and 73 per cent.

## Published April 2013

Because of differences in the number of services assessed, the evaluation was unable to determine why there are differences between the ratings achieved by the service types. There was, however, no evidence of bias against any service type or location, nor any bias as a result of variations in the judgements of authorised officers. Overall, the evaluation found the assessment process to be valid and reliable.

Questionnaires were used to obtain comments from assessed services and authorised officers relating to the assessment and rating process. More than 80 per cent of authorised officers who responded to the survey stated that they had no difficulty collecting adequate evidence to assign a rating at any level of the process.

Regardless of the outcome, services were generally satisfied with the assessment and rating process, with 81 per cent of services responding to the online survey reporting that their experience was positive, including more than one-third of these services calling it 'very positive'.

Evaluation of the assessment and rating process under the National Quality Standard for Early Childhood Education and Care and School Age Care, by a team of ACER researchers led by Sheldon Rothman, is available from [research.acer.edu.au/early\\_childhood\\_misc/8/](http://research.acer.edu.au/early_childhood_misc/8/)

**Published April 2013**

## **National teaching standards for Kuwait**

ACER Principal Research Fellow Dr Lawrence Ingvarson has been assisting Kuwait to develop a national teaching standards framework. The project is part of a broader World Bank education technical assistance mission project to develop National Education Standards for Kuwait. The World Bank project includes the development of a national curriculum, learning standards, school environment standards and leadership standards as well as teaching standards.

The National Teaching Standards Writing Group first came together for five days in November 2012. It consists of teachers, teacher educators and members of the national teachers' association. Dr Ingvarson guided the Writing Group through the process of preparing the first draft set of standards. After leading two more writing workshops in February and March 2013, the Writing Group has completed a draft ready for consultation and validation.

The validation process will involve distribution of the draft standards to a wide range of educators at all levels of the Kuwait education system during April and May 2013, together with a set of guidelines and questions to assist discussion and evaluation of the draft framework. A national survey and focus group meeting with major stakeholders will also be part of the validation process. It is expected that a final draft of the framework will be completed in June 2013.

As part of the project, Dr Ingvarson has worked closely with members of the National Center for Education (NCED) and the Ministry of Education. Discussions have focused on key policy decisions in relation to the purposes for the standards. These include using the standards for purposes such as:

1. Accreditation of teacher education programs
2. Registration of new teachers for full entry to the profession, and
3. Advanced certification of teachers.

Dr Ingvarson has advised that each of these purposes must be based on a valid and professionally respected set of standards for good teaching if, together, they are to be effective in assuring teacher quality. Consideration is also being given to whether Kuwait should establish an independent body with legislated responsibility to carry out these functions.

Special attention was given to making sure that the standards developed by the Writing Group were assessable; that is, that they were written in such a way that they indicated what kind of evidence might be gathered to show that a teacher had met the standards. At this stage, the standards only indicate what teachers should know and be able to do. Methods for gathering evidence about a teacher's performance and methods for assessing whether that performance meets the standards will need to be established before the standards are fully developed.

The present set of teaching standards is applicable to all teachers. In later versions of the framework, the standards will be elaborated for different specialist fields of teaching in Kuwait.

Published April 2013

## ACER Update

### Last chance to register for adult language, literacy and numeracy conference

The second National Adult Language, Literacy and Numeracy Assessment Conference, addressing the theme, 'Building on evidence to improve skills', in two weeks' time will bring together evidence-based research with industry and training perspectives in order to share and discuss issues around the assessment of language, literacy and numeracy (LLN) and implications for effective vocational and workplace education and training (VET).

Speakers at the conference will include researchers, managers and coordinators with local and international expertise in LLN skills and adult learning, from industry and the VET sector, along with policy makers from industry, industry skills councils and government.

In support of the conference theme, the April edition of [Vocational Update](#) focuses on the implications of good assessment of LLN in VET.

The National Adult Language, Literacy and Numeracy Assessment Conference takes place at Ultimo College, Sydney Institute, on 9 and 10 May 2013.

Further information is available from <http://www.acer.edu.au/nallnac>

### Making a Difference: Improving outcomes for Indigenous learners

This newly-released publication highlights ACER's contributions to Indigenous education over the past decade. This contribution has included research, policy analysis, program evaluation, professional development, and the development of assessment tools and other resources. The purpose of this publication is to highlight and share some of the findings from ACER's work, in order to support the development of evidence-based pathways to success for Indigenous learners.

Download [Making a Difference: Improving outcomes for Indigenous learners](#).

### ACER Principal Research Fellow Gerry White to deliver conference keynote

ACER Principal Research Fellow Dr Gerry White will deliver a keynote address at *Forward Thinking: Emerging answers to education's big questions* presented by the Australian College of Educators in Melbourne on 21 June. Dr White's keynote will address some of the successes and failures of the past as well as some future challenges to using digital technologies and digital media in education.

The one-day national conference will tackle the important issues that require the engagement and action of educators. Other speakers are Margery Evans, CEO of AITSL; Barry McGaw, Chairman of ACARA; Ian Anderson, Director of Murrup Barak; and Lea Waters, student wellbeing expert.

[Read](#) Dr White's thoughts on the key issues and what he will cover in his conference address.

For further information about *Forward Thinking: Emerging Answers to Education's Big Questions* and to register, visit the [Australian College of Educators' website](#).

**Published April 2013**

## **Research Developments online**

ACER last year determined to replace the print edition of *Research Developments*, after 14 years, with a free, online-only magazine, coming in May. [Subscribe](#) to *Research Developments*.

## **Copyright © Australian Council for Educational Research 2015**

All rights reserved. Except under the conditions described in the Copyright Act 1968 of Australia and subsequent amendments, no part of this electronic publication may be reproduced, stored in retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying or otherwise, without written permission. Please address any requests to reproduce information to [communications@acer.edu.au](mailto:communications@acer.edu.au)

[Subscribe](#)

Australian Council for Educational Research  
Private Bag 55, Camberwell, Victoria Australia 3124  
Tel: + 61 3 9277 5555  
Fax: + 61 3 9277 5500  
Web: [www.acer.edu.au](http://www.acer.edu.au)