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Version and Release Notes

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Changes in Version 1

Version 1 is the first full release of the SOE Framework

www.onlinestandards.net/about-1/release-notes/

Archives will be available: www.onlinestandards.net/about-1/archives/

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Introduction

The Standards for Online Education (SOE) framework is specific to online learning and teaching. The standards are intended as a supplement to, not a replacement for, general teaching standards.¹ They are focused on issues of salience to online learning and teaching.

The standards can be used as (i) a guide for learning design; (ii) a tool in collegial peer review; and, (iii) a benchmarking instrument. Jointly these uses define the principles underpinning the standards. To satisfy the requirements of the first use requires the standards to be **instructional**; the second use demands an **improvement focus**; the third **simplicity and broad applicability**.

Structure

There are three foci: (i) students, (ii) staff and (iii) the organisation²:

- **Students** are supported in their online learning
- **Staff** are supported in their online teaching
- The **Organisation** supports online education

Each focus has three areas:

Students	Staff	Organisation
Curriculum	Professional Development	Leadership
Interactions	Resourcing	Infrastructure
Support	Support	Evaluation

Each area has one or more standards with three possible levels of attainment:

- **Threshold:** The minimum standard has been attained
- **Good:** The minimum standard has been significantly surpassed
- **Excellent:** The minimum standard has been significantly surpassed and there is substantial evidence of innovation, leadership, impact or other forms of excellence.

The criteria for Threshold and Good are specified for each standard. For Excellent the required innovation, leadership or impact is not specified: this is to be included by the target organisation.

One: Students

Students are supported in their online learning with a quality **curriculum** [1-4], opportunities for **interaction** with peers and staff [5&6], and appropriate **support** [7&8].

1. Curriculum materials are aligned, available and engaging

Threshold	The necessary materials are constructively aligned and available online
Good	The materials are provided using a variety of media to engage students and support diversity ³
Excellent	

2. Learning activities are aligned, available and engaging

Threshold	Constructively aligned learning activities are available online
Good	Learning activities use a variety of appropriate technologies to engage students and support diversity
Excellent	

3. Assessment tasks are aligned, available and engaging

Threshold	Constructively aligned assessment tasks are available online
Good	Assessment tasks use a variety of appropriate technologies to engage students and support diversity
Excellent	

4. Students are provided with timely, improvement focused formative feedback

Threshold	Appropriate technologies are used to provide students with formative feedback in a timely manner
Good	Feedback is provided in a variety of media to engage students and support diversity
Excellent	

5. Students are provided with opportunities to interact with peers

Threshold	There are opportunities for social interaction
Good	There are opportunities for learning-focused interaction
Excellent	

6. Students are provided with opportunities to interact with staff

Threshold	Staff are provided with opportunities to answer student queries
Good	Staff are provided with opportunities to be active participants in learning-focused interactions
Excellent	

7. Students are provided with appropriate learning support

Threshold	Appropriate, up-to-date and reliable learning guides and resources are provided online
Good	A range of appropriate, up-to-date and reliable online learning skills workshops are available
Excellent	

8. Students are supported in their use of educational technology

Threshold	Appropriate, up-to-date and reliable technological guides and resources are provided online
Good	Appropriate, timely and reliable asynchronous technological support is available
Excellent	

Two: Staff

Staff are supported in their online teaching with quality **professional development** [9], **resourcing** [10] and **technical** support [11].

9. Staff are provided with quality professional development in online education

Threshold	A range of appropriate, up-to-date and informative professional development activities are available to staff
Good	The organisation requires staff to engage in continued professional development relevant to online education
Excellent	

10. Online education is recognised in workload

Threshold	Online teaching is recognised in workload
Good	Online unit development is recognised in workload
Excellent	

11. Staff are supported in their use of educational technology

Threshold	Appropriate, up-to-date and reliable technological guides and resources are provided online
Good	Appropriate, timely and reliable asynchronous technological support is available
Excellent	

Three: Organisation

The organisation supports online education through the provision of quality **leadership** [12-13], **infrastructure** [14] and **evaluation** [15-17]

12. The organisation provides strategic leadership in online education

Threshold	The organisation has a clearly articulated strategic position on online education
Good	An appropriate member of the executive has explicit responsibility for online education
Excellent	

13. The organisation employs a systematic approach to resource allocation in online education

Threshold	There is a systematic approach to resource allocation
Good	There is systematic approach with formal criteria that are widely available
Excellent	

14. The organisation maintains and supports a quality learning platform for delivering online education

Threshold	The organisation maintains and supports an appropriate learning platform
Good	The learning platform provided is fit for purpose, scalable and reliable
Excellent	

15. The organisation has a process for evaluating and improving student satisfaction with online education

Threshold	The organisation has a systematic process for evaluating and improving student satisfaction with online education
Good	The organisation has a systematic process for improving student learning outcomes and satisfaction with online education and communicating improvements to students
Excellent	

16. The organisation has a process for evaluating and improving training and support for staff

Threshold	The organisation has a systematic process for evaluating and improving staff training and support
Good	The organisation has a systematic process for improving staff training and support and communicating improvements to staff
Excellent	

17. The organisation has a process for evaluating and improving infrastructure

Threshold	The organisation has a systematic process for evaluating and improving infrastructure
Good	The organisation has a systematic process for improving infrastructure and communicating improvements to stakeholders
Excellent	

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Notes

¹ For general standards external to the Standards for Online Education see the **Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2011**: <www.comlaw.gov.au/Series/F2012L00003>. For information on the Standards Framework see the **Higher Education Standards Panel** website: <www.hestandards.gov.au>.

² The terms “organisation” is used throughout as a catch all term to cover both organisational units (e.g. Departments and Faculties) and providers.

³ These standards do not address issues of accessibility. It is assumed all materials will be accessible *at least* to the extent required by appropriate legislation. The Australian Government has endorsed the **Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) version 2.0**: <webguide.gov.au/accessibility-usability/accessibility/>