

Good compliance is good business

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For reasons unknown, many find the term ‘compliance’ either off-putting or unnecessarily tedious. Not so. Fundamental to success is knowing the rules and regulations within any endeavour and higher education is no exception. As an independent higher education provider – attracting quality staff and students nationally and from all over the world – the need to be compliant and have in place the necessary measures and processes to ensure adherence is essential.

The analogy I often used is the ‘giraffe’ (in the zoo) and the ‘yellow line’ (on the station platform) – best not to ‘stick out too much’ and ‘stay within the lines’ – so to speak -

The Yellow Line and the Giraffe - <https://www.ubss.edu.au/article/the-yellow-line-and-the-giraffe-a-cautionary-tale-of-compliance/>

Threshold Standards

Australian Higher Education is governed and directed by way of the **Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021**. As the name would suggest there are standards that must be met – even better, exceeded – but nevertheless, they form the basis of best practice in both corporate and academic behaviour within the Sector.

The value of understanding and adhering to the standards was discussed in a recent blog –

It is a matter of standards - <https://www.ubss.edu.au/article/it-is-a-matter-of-standards/>

Corporate Governance

Corporate Governance provides the necessary framework to ensure that a provider understands the corporate requirements of operating within the Sector and at the same time has a clear, articulated structure that ensures compliance.

Corporate Governance relates to specific standards including 6.1 (Corporate governance), 6.2 (Corporate monitoring and accountability), 7.1 (Representation of the entity) and 7.3 (Information management). The framework in place needs to ensure these standards are met and are comprehensive – 33 components at present – and that each is addressed and accounted for. Equally important is the process of regularly (frequently) reporting against the framework to senior management and stakeholders.

Academic Governance

Academic Governance in turn explores the essential elements of good (preferably excellent) learning and teaching. Again, an understanding of what is required and how this can be achieved is essential. Academic performance is fundamental to the success of any provider – business schools are no exception.

Academic Governance relates to specific standards including 5.1 (Internal approval), 5.2 (Policies), 5.3 (Periodic reviews), 5.4 (WIL and supervision), 6.3 (Processes and structures), 6.3.1 (Academic oversight), 6.3.2 (Quality of teaching and learning), 7.2 (Accurate and timely information for students), and 7.3.3 (Information systems). There are elements of overlap with corporate issues – but the academic governance elements need to be clear and evident.

Regular Audit and Providing Evidence

The importance of conducting regular audits, updating documentation and maintaining awareness across an institution – in relation to compliance and quality commitment – cannot be overstated.

My own institution is active in the process and regularly communicates with all staff and stakeholders about what processes are in place and how the standards, corporate governance and academic governance are managed and adhered to.

For further insight into the challenges facing Higher Education in the next few years see -The Big Five Challenges - <https://www.ubss.edu.au/article/the-big-five-higher-ed-challenges/>

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