
TAFE & HE

Similarities and Differences

partnerships, hybrids, silos?

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Our National Need

- Clever Heads
- Skilled Hands



Purpose

- **VET:** “education and training for work. It exists to develop and recognise the competencies or skills of learners”

(Australian National Training Authority (ANTA))

- **HE:** the pursuit, preservation and transmission of knowledge

(Varieties of Learning: The Interface Between HE and Vocational Education and Training, Paper Prepared for the Government Review HE at the Crossroads, 2003)



TAFE & HE

Differences:

- mission
- student profiles
- curriculum
- funding
- stakeholders
- accountabilities
- industrial conditions



Focus

- **TAFE:** Focused on “local” industry skill needs
- **HE:** Local engagement seen in the context of national / international scholarship



Some Common Issues for TAFE & HE

- **Impact of:** global change, technological change, knowledge economy
- **Lifelong Learning:** learning needs across sectors
- **Socio-economic issues:** haves, have-nots



TAFE & HE

- Distinct but complementary



Different Cultures

- Boyer's 4 Scholarships:
 - Application
 - Integration
 - Teaching
 - Discovery

- But TAFE colleagues not comfortable with “scholarship”

- “Scholars” : No “Thinkers” : Yes



Valuing TAFE

- Key role in post-compulsory spectrum
- Not to be all things to all people (Schofield)
- Potential adjustment re:
 - Global connectedness
 - Generic skills (self-reliance – not just “trades”)



Cousins : Rich & Poor?

- UB (in legislation) is TAFE & HE
- But still called TAFE & “University”



Some Sacred Cows

- **TAFE:** values useful (utilitarian) learning (vocational applied)
- **HE:** values knowledge for its own sake (the life of the mind)



NOW

➤ AN EXAMINATION

(it is the season!)



Which is Vocational / Applied?

- Dentistry
- Carpentry
- Veterinary Science
- Medicine
- Writing about History
- Web Design



Growth

- **TAFE:** 77% growth in student numbers (1991 – 2001)
- **HE:** 35% growth in student numbers (1991 – 2001)

Varieties of Learning (page 5)



Funding of TAFE & HE

Both:

- Under-funded
- Diminishing, and shifting to students



Government Funding

- **TAFE:** \$3.5 billion (2001, excluding student fees)
- **HE:** \$6 billion (2000, including HECS fees 28%)

Varieties of Learning (page 5)



Non-government Funding

- **TAFE:** \$732 million (including \$171 million from student fees and charges)
- **HE:** \$3.3 billion



Student Fees

- **TAFE (Vic):** Max fee of \$650 for a fulltime program – \$50 for concession cards holders (in 2004)
- **HE:** HECS fee \$3,854 to \$8,355 p.a. max (in 2005 in accordance with proposed Nelson Reforms)

Our Universities Backing Australia's Future (page 22)



Government Policy & Accountability

- **TAFE:** State (primarily)
- **HE:** Commonwealth (overwhelmingly)



Providers

- **TAFE:** 87 registered public providers
1,322 locations
4,432 registered private providers
- **HE:** 39 Universities
156 campuses
80 private providers



Entry

- **TAFE:** Entry at appropriate AQF levels
- **HE:** Access to under-graduate courses to students who meet specified educational standards



Students

- **TAFE:** 1.76 million
46% are 30 years & over
- **HE:** 0.73 million
26% are 30 years & over



Students

- **TAFE:** 10% full time; 35% rural / remote
- **HE:** 64% full time; 19% rural / isolated



Prior Qualifications

- **TAFE:** In 2001, 83,900 students had degree or post-graduate diploma as their highest prior qualification (nearly doubled since 1995)
- **HE:** In 2001, 15,300 commencing under-graduate students admitted on basis of their TAFE studies (3.9% in 1993, 7% in 2001)



Pathways / Credit Arrangements

- **TAFE:** Recognises prior learning (formal mechanisms)
- **HE:** Some AVCC guidelines; but frequently ad hoc



Socio-Economic Status

➤ **TAFE:** 26% low SES

➤ **HE:** 14% low SES



Research

- **TAFE:** Almost no research
- **HE:** Defining characteristic



Course Structure

- **TAFE:** Courses comprise many modules / units (of short duration)
- **HE:** Courses comprise few units (of long duration)



Overseas Students

➤ **TAFE:** 1.2%

➤ **HE:** 15%



Assessment

- **TAFE:** Assessment focuses on demonstrating competence – usually ungraded
- **HE:** Assessment focuses on theoretical / practical overview – graded



Governance / Management

- **TAFE** Management / system focussed, centrally referenced / Ministerial direction
- **HE:** Collegial, devolved, self-referenced, autonomy (University Council)



Quality Improvement

- **TAFE:** Quality improvement systems / standards through AQTF and ISO 9001
- **HE:** Internal quality systems, self-assessment and audit regime by AUQA



QUALIFICATIONS

➤ TAFE & HE

both

- certificates
- diplomas
- associate degrees
- degrees



TO THE FUTURE FOR TAFE & HE

- Recognise & celebrate:
 - similarities & differences
 - distinct & complementary
- Because of national need for clever heads and skilled hands

