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Issues Paper No. 4

# Analysis of Australian tourism, hospitality and events undergraduate education programs

2012

*A paper prepared for the project Building a stronger future: balancing professional and liberal ideals in undergraduate tourism and hospitality education*

## Project team and paper authors

Michele Day  
Southern Cross University

Maree Walo  
Southern Cross University

Paul Weeks  
The Hotel School Sydney

Dianne Dredge (*Project Leader*)  
Southern Cross University (*Lead Institution*)

Pierre Benckendorff  
The University of Queensland

Michael J. Gross  
University of South Australia

Paul A. Whitelaw  
Victoria University

[<tourismhospitalityeducation.info>](http://tourismhospitalityeducation.info)



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Requests and inquiries concerning these rights should be addressed to:  
Office for Learning and Teaching  
Department of Industry, Innovation, Science, Research and Tertiary Education

GPO Box 9880,  
Location code N255EL10  
Sydney NSW 2001

<[learningandteaching@deewr.gov.au](mailto:learningandteaching@deewr.gov.au)>

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# Executive summary

## Overview

Australia has had a range of well-established and internationally recognised tourism, hospitality and events (TH&E) degrees for over 20 years. However, there has been little debate or clarity over what constitutes an undergraduate tourism or hospitality degree, or exactly what such degrees should deliver. The aim of this project was to map the Australian TH&E undergraduate curricula paying particular attention to the balance between professional/vocational education and liberal education. Its purpose was to clarify what constitutes TH&E education in the higher education environment. Whilst the project team recognises the close relationships that some undergraduate programs have with leisure, sports, social science, environment, these programs were not included within the scope of this project.

The project was founded on respect for the diversity of TH&E degree offerings and the independence and autonomy of higher education institutions. It was underpinned by a commitment to establishing collaborative dialogue between industry, higher education providers and the academic community about the future of TH&E education and practice. We therefore seek not to prescribe a TH&E curriculum, but to map the Australian undergraduate curriculum space and to identify strengths and weaknesses and future opportunities. In this way, this project responds to the growing need for a collective vision by setting the groundwork for a collaborative and shared vision as a precursor to the future development of academic standards in the field.

The project used a multi-method data collection framework including a desktop audit of 62 undergraduate TH&E management programs offered at 28 institutions across Australia; 665 student surveys collected at 18 institutions; 128 educators surveys; 13 semi-structured interviews with individuals in higher education management positions; and 71 industry surveys. Despite strong support from the Tourism and Transport Forum (TTF), and the variety of engagement strategies adopted by the study team, industry stakeholders were difficult to engage. Industry is currently under pressure which may explain the low response rate. However, this only underscores the importance of building strong collaborative dialogue and shared understandings of the potential benefits of greater alignment between industry and higher education.

Four Issues Papers were produced from this project

- Issues Paper No. 1 – **Key issues in tourism, hospitality and events curriculum design and development** examined the literature paying particular attention to the balance between liberal and vocational education, and presented a conceptual curriculum space that was subsequently used to frame data collection and analysis.
- Issues Paper No. 2 – **Influences on Australian tourism, hospitality and events education** examined global and local influences on TH&E education and set out implications and opportunities for future curriculum development.
- Issues Paper No. 3 – **A stakeholder approach to curriculum development in tourism, hospitality and events education** articulates the stakeholder approach adopted for this analysis and reports on the data collected from stakeholders with respect to perceived importance and performance of liberal and vocational elements of the undergraduate TH&E curriculum space.
- Issues Paper No. 4 – **Analysis of Australian tourism, hospitality and events undergraduate education programs** reports on an analysis of 62 undergraduate TH&E management programs currently offered at 28 institutions, mapping these programs to better understand the characteristics of Australian TH&E education.

These Issues Papers and the Final Report, along with other information about the project are available at <http://www.tourismhospitalityeducation.info> and [www.olt.gov.au](http://www.olt.gov.au).

## Issues Paper No. 4 summary of findings

This Issues Paper sought to analyse the Australian TH&E undergraduate curriculum based upon a desktop analysis of higher education providers. The methodology, explained in detail in Information Sheet No. 3, involved assessing the content of degree level TH&E programs and looking at this data from the perspectives of the conceptual curriculum space (see Issues Paper No. 1) and institutional clusters (see Issues Paper No.2). In all, there were 28 universities offering TH&E undergraduate degree programs; there were 62 separate named degrees with tourism, hospitality and/or events in the title, with the number increasing to 84 with the inclusion of separate majors.

The analysis revealed the following key findings:

- TH&E undergraduate degree programs are predominately presented as specialisations within business and/or management studies offered by a faculty of business or commerce.
- There is a strong focus on business-oriented subjects (approximately 40 per cent of the average program) that tend to function as generic, foundation units offered in the very early stages of the program. TH&E subjects tend to be offered later in the program structure, particularly in cluster 1 (sandstone) and 2 (new universities est. 1950-1976) institutions.
- TH&E subjects comprise an average of 45 per cent of all TH&E program content. Analysis of institutional clusters revealed that cluster 3 (post-1976) institutions had the highest level of TH&E specific content, i.e. slightly over 50 per cent on average.
- Cluster 4 institutions (new universities and private providers) had the lowest proportion of specific TH&E content (slightly less than 30 per cent) and the highest proportion of business and commerce content (almost 60 per cent).
- Despite universities' professed claims about developing research skills, there were few instances of dedicated research units on offer across all institutional clusters<sup>1</sup>.
- Similarly, despite the claims of offering work integrated learning (WIL) opportunities in order to produce work ready graduates, there were few instances of compulsory industry or internship or work based learning and WIL models and requirements were varied.
- Overall, events make up the second most common subject area (by number of subjects) followed by sustainable tourism/responsible tourism, which is consistent with increased market demand observed over the last 10 years.
- Events is an important subject area for Cluster 3 (post-1976) institutions in particular, making up the second largest group of subjects by volume in these institutions. This finding reflects the situation that events programs have developed predominantly within these institutions over the last 10 years. In contrast, events subjects do not appear important as a subject area in cluster 4 (TAFE and new providers) institutions.

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<sup>1</sup> This finding raises the question of whether research skills are embedded or integrated into other subjects and are therefore less visible in the curriculum. Nevertheless, ensuring research skills are delivered within the curriculum is important.

## Reflections on the conceptual curriculum space

The conceptual curriculum space previously developed (Figure 1) was tested by overlaying it on the subject data, which were analysed and coded in accordance with the capabilities/knowledge 4x4 grid (Figure 2). Whilst not a perfect fit, the location and shape of the curriculum maps generated for the entire data set, and for each of the institutional clusters, broadly aligned to the conceptual curriculum space. The 'curriculum maps' generated thus convey a number of key findings:

- Overall, the TH&E curriculum focussed its capabilities/knowledge in the 2, 2, 2, 3 and 3.3 cells in Figure 2. These cells represent approximate mid-point areas between capabilities and knowledge in the curriculum space.
- The map and grid for the cluster 1 (sandstone universities) was skewed towards knowledge and pushed out towards practical wisdom, as would be expected.
- The maps for the clusters 1 (new universities 1950-1976) and 2 (post-1976 institutions) were also consistent with expectations; they had a lower, less ambitious profile, were located closer toward the lower knowledge levels and, interestingly were larger in scope than the first cluster. This larger scope may reflect the multitude of pressures on the curriculum due to a lack of clarity of mission compared to the older more established sandstone universities.
- The maps for cluster 4, the private providers, were somewhat confounding. The emphasis on skills and capabilities is consistent and expected. However, the strong focus on higher order knowledge, at the expense of simple concepts was unexpected. Anecdotally, in an effort to mount programs quickly, some of these new providers have outsourced the writing of units to university educators (understandably given this is where a concentration of expertise lies). As a result there has been a blurring of curriculum content and teaching and learning values. Whilst this finding warrants further investigation, it also highlights the need for clearly articulated philosophical and values-based positioning of programs so that educational products (i.e. in this case an undergraduate degree) are distinguishable in the context of increased competition.

In sum, these findings suggest that there is; validity in the proposed curriculum map, a clear relationship between the type of institution and the location, size and orientation of its curriculum map, and that analysis such as this can shed light on the state of TH&E education in Australia.

## Key conclusions

This report details a comprehensive investigation into undergraduate TH&E education in Australia. The research found that the curriculum can be conceptualised and operationalised in a two-dimensional space comprising knowledge as the x axis and capabilities as the y-axis.

This approach has produced curriculum maps for the three types of universities in Australia that are conceptually sound, operationalisable and have face validity. The data for the TAFE and private provider sector (cluster 4) are incomplete and thus worthy of further investigation.

The location of TH&E courses as specialisations or majors in general business programs, located in faculties of business is axiomatic of the strong business orientation of these programs. The curriculum mapping also suggests that whilst the TH&E programs have considerable scope to pursue high levels in both knowledge and capabilities, overall there appears to be a reasonable balance of knowledge and capabilities in the curriculum.

## Limitations and further research

The data collection covered programs predominantly offered by universities. As identified by Breakey and Craig-Smith (2008) in their review of tourism and hospitality programs, the most significant change over the period of their study (1997-2007) was the movement of private providers and TAFE institutions into this area of higher education. Therefore, future consideration should be given to broadening this work to include education providers other than universities. In the context of the Higher Education Standards Framework being developed by the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA), developing some clarity around these issues is very timely.

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# Chapter 1 Introduction

## Background

The question of what constitutes a tourism and hospitality degree has received considerable attention in other countries (e.g. Botterill and Tribe 2000; Weiermair and Bieger 2005). There have also been significant debates over issues such as core knowledge requirements and accreditation (e.g. Holloway 1995; Wang and Ryan 2007). In Australia, despite having a range of well-established and internationally recognised degrees for over 20 years, there has been little debate or clarity over what constitutes a tourism or hospitality degree, or exactly what such degrees should deliver (Wang and Ryan 2007).

This paper reports findings of a review of Australian tourism and hospitality education conducted as part of an Australian Learning and Teaching Council (ALTC) Research Grant. The project entitled “Building a Stronger Future: Balancing Professional and Liberal Education Ideals in Tourism and Hospitality Education”, aims to map the tourism, hospitality and events (TH&E) undergraduate education curricula including core knowledge requirements and the pathways that students can take within the curriculum space (e.g. from professional/vocational education to liberal education) in order to clarify what constitutes TH&E education in the higher education environment. For the purposes of this project, ‘curriculum space’ is used to denote the full range of knowledge, skills, values and attitudes that shape Australian TH&E education.

The structure of this Issues Paper is organised in the following way: First, the paper briefly discusses the background literature and reports on other studies that have sought to analyse TH&E curricula. Second, the paper briefly outlines the approach taken in this desktop research, with a more detailed description contained in the appendix. Third, the paper discusses the results and highlights important observations with respect to current and future curricula development.

The analysis takes as a starting point the conceptual model of the curriculum space outlined in Issues Paper No. 1. It also uses the university clusters outlined in Issues Paper No 2. Readers are referred to these papers as background to the current paper.

# Chapter 2 Literature Review

## Background

An analysis of recent literature examining the tourism and hospitality curricula reveals that curriculum content is still strongly influenced by a perceived need to develop vocational skills (Ring, Dickinger & Wober 2009; Fidgeon 2010). However, at the same time, considerable gaps have been identified between what is provided by higher education institutions and the stated needs of industry in terms of what they look for in tourism and hospitality graduates (Zehreh & Mossenlechner 2009; Wang, Ayres & Huyton 2010). Although attempts to include more liberal aspects and philosophical underpinnings in curricula have been observed (Scotland 2006; Breakey & Craig-Smith 2007; Fidgeon 2010), Ring et al. (2009) noted that Tribe's (2002a) reflective liberal and reflective action ideals were rarely included.

Concerns have been expressed that current curricula, with their vocational emphasis, do not adequately prepare graduates for future employment. Ring et al. (2009) note that an over-emphasis on a vocational curriculum presents the world as given and endorses the dominant business ideology whereas curricula should be designed to enable graduates to operate in changing environments and to focus on developing 'generic' skills (Zehreh & Mossenlechner 2009). Ring et al. (2009) also noted an absence in curricula of issues related to sustainability and issues related to the future of tourism.

Although many studies have attempted content analyses of tourism or hospitality programs, or particular aspects of programs such as food and beverage content (Robinson, Breakey & Craig-Smith 2010), none have been as ambitious as the present study in the scope of programs being analysed: tourism, hospitality, events, hotel management and leisure. While the sheer diversity of the data might appear daunting at first glance, the Australian study of tourism programs conducted by Wang, Ayres and Huyton (2010) provided inspiration, with their identification of 34 subject themes that were further devolved into 7 broad categories:

- accounting/finance/economics
- business management
- marketing
- tourism theory
- tourism management
- employment skills study
- research skills study

Table 1 provides a summary of literature examining tourism and hospitality curricula. Key observations and trends observed in the literature are discussed below.

Table 1: Summary of literature examining content of tourism and hospitality programs

Author/s	Year	Aim	Findings	Location of Study
Airey & Johnson	1999	To update existing surveys of tourism degree courses in UK	Modular structure of degrees with vocational focus. Lack of agreement on content of degrees.	UK
Reigel & Dallas	1999	To produce a guide to tourism and hospitality college programs	5 approaches to tourism and hospitality programs: tourism, food systems and home economics, craft and skill, business administration, and combined approach.	USA
Tribe	2002	To create a model to underpin the design of tourism and hospitality curricula	Tourism and hospitality should include both vocation and liberal components. Identified 4 key quadrants of curriculum for philosophic practitioners: vocational action, vocational reflection, liberal action and liberal reflection.	UK
Scotland	2006	To identify a model for tourism and hospitality education	As well as identifying influences from a number of models, also notes the influence of experiential learning in hospitality programs with trend towards establishing philosophical underpinnings.	
Breakey & Craig-Smith	2007	To trace evolution of hospitality programs in Australia with particular reference to UQ.	Move from emphasis on practical hospitality skills to broader service management and introduction of programs incorporating tourism and hospitality studies.	Australia
Ring, Dickinger & Wober	2009	To examine expectations of industry and academics of content of tourism degrees. Content analysis of 64 programs in 8 countries	Programs have vocational orientation and provide management skills and knowledge. Neglect of issues related to sustainability or issues related to future of tourism. Programs did not reflect Tribe's reflective liberal and reflective action quadrants.	Australia, Austria, Hong Kong, Ireland, Netherlands, New Zealand, UK, USA
Zehreh & Mossenlechner	2009	To identify key competencies for tourism graduates from a European perspective	Identified a considerable gap between what is offered by educational institutions and industry needs. Call for tourism curricula to combine discipline-specific, practical and technical knowledge with broader generic, employability and 'soft' skills.	Europe
Fidgeon	2010	To provide a strategic overview of issues and concerns for tourism curriculum planners and program leaders	Some attempts to include liberal aspects, but curricula still dominated by vocational aims. In preparation for employment in changing markets students also need liberal skills such as critical reflection and analysis and development of transferable skills.	UK
Wang, Ayres & Huyton	2010	To outline needs and expectations of tourism industry in terms of curricula and extent to which programs meet these needs	Discrepancies between academic and industry views as to value of tourism programs. Recommended that curricula should concentrate on negotiation skills, written communication, problem-solving and decision-making skills, management skills and other generic attributes.	Australia

## Key trends and challenges from the literature

### Growing focus on graduate attributes

A growing call for higher education providers to articulate graduate attributes was observed within the literature. The main drivers behind this trend were (1) government and industry concerns about future workforce skills and future shortages and, flowing from this, the need to develop employment skills in graduates; and (2) attempts by higher education providers to distinguish themselves in an increasingly competitive and market-driven environment. In the early 2000s in Australia, the federal government mandated that all universities build a list of graduate attributes (Wang, Ayres, & Huyton, 2010). Despite the attention given to graduate attributes the higher education sector has produced 'little convincing evidence of authentic curriculum integration or of impact on student learning' (Barrie, Hughes and Smith. 2009, p. 6). As a result, these demands have now escalated under the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) to require a more comprehensive approach whereby such claims also now need to be measured.

While there is little definitional consistency about what a graduate attributes statement should contain, Barrie et al. (2009) described them as 'an orientating statement of educational outcomes used to inform curriculum design and the provision of learning experiences at a university' (p.1). Graduate attributes are more broadly defined as employability skills, transferable skills or generic skills, with Freeman et al. (2008) listing generic graduate skills as communication, teamwork, ability to use technology, emotional intelligence, management and resolving conflict, self-monitoring.

Barrie et al.'s report (2009) explored why universities have been unable to achieve 'the sort of systemic changes to student learning experiences required to achieve their stated aims of fostering graduate attributes' (p.1). It found a number of interacting elements affecting curriculum renewal that affected the achievement of graduate attributes. These included:

- conflicting conceptions of the nature of graduate attributes.
- conflicting interests by various stakeholders.
- different methods of implementations by institutions.
- different methods of quality assurance by institutions (2009, pp.1-2).

According to Barrie et al. (2009), the development of graduate attributes is underpinned by the use of pedagogies such as work-integrated learning, which will be discussed later in this Paper.

### Sustainability in TH&E curriculum

The 1980s saw the rise of the term *sustainable development*. Despite that the imperative of living sustainably within the world's non-renewable resource limitations had been identified much earlier, this period marks an 'attempt to manage destinations in a more responsible manner' (Chapman 2007). Not surprisingly, sustainable tourism quickly became embedded in tourism curricula, although questions have been raised as to the effectiveness of approaches that lack an exploration of ethics and connections to tourism practices (Jamal, 2004). Nevertheless, the importance of sustainability in tourism is self-evident: economic activities such as tourism have a range of direct and indirect consequences on natural ecosystems, socio-cultural systems and political relations (Eder and Kousis 2001, p. 101). The developing world, where tourism has been labelled a form of 'new imperialism' (Mowforth and Munt 1998), has exhibited a particularly complex set of management challenges. On one hand, tourism has been identified as a tool for achieving the Millennium Development Goals (UNWTO, 2010), and on the other, it has been criticised for its role in reinforcing economic dependencies, exploitation of labour and in the decline of local cultures and community systems. In an increasingly

globalised tourism business environment, the need for responsible tourism professionals with a range of world-making skills is recognised by peak industry groups, such as the World Tourism and Travel Council (WTTC, 2002).

It has been claimed that tourism academics have 'been ahead of the industry in emphasising the social and environmental impact of tourism and the need for sustainable development' (Morgan-Davie 2004, p. 97). However, over the last 10 years the growth in industry education programs and awards suggests that industry is now well aware of the issues and is striving to address environmental, cultural, social and economic impacts in innovative ways (Bergin-Seers and Mair, 2008; <http://www.responsibletravel.com/awards/>). These developments suggest growing demand for tourism professionals versed in responsible and ethical tourism practices, and marks a shift from the traditional vocational origins of many tourism business programs towards a greater awareness of sustainable tourism (Busby and Fiedel 2001; Churchward and Riley 2002). However, despite this growing awareness there has been little attention to the development of an integrated and holistic approach to the philosophical and pedagogical dimensions of sustainable tourism, a task that is made more difficult by the range of contexts, applications and problems that tourism professionals may encounter.

To illustrate this point at the operational level, Rundle-Thiele, & Wymer (2010) examined the extent to which marketing degrees in Australia and New Zealand universities include ethics, social responsibility and sustainability in their curriculum (components one would image to be covered in the delivery of sustainable tourism education). While 78 per cent of the universities investigated offered at least one stand-alone ethics, social responsibility or sustainability subject, they were rarely 'required' or core subjects. The authors concluded that there is considerable room for improvement in undergraduate marketing programs in Australia and New Zealand in the provision of subjects that promote ethics, social responsibility and sustainability. The said study takes a reductionist approach and makes the questionable assumption that ethics, social responsibility and sustainability are not taught unless clearly indicated in the subject's title, objectives or outline<sup>2</sup>. Drawing from these observations, the challenge for TH&E education in the future is that whilst sustainability issues will become increasingly important, the delivery of sustainable tourism education and learning experiences in an already crowded curriculum space must be achieved through integrated and holistic approaches and not isolated from other curriculum components. In other words, issues of sustainability sit alongside the moral, ethical and world-making dimensions of tourism (to name a few), and all these values will need to be deeply embedded within the curriculum but not necessarily delivered via single subjects (Tribe, 2002b; Hollinshead, 2009; Jamal, 2004).

## Internationalisation

When discussing business education in Australia, Freeman et al. (Freeman, Hancock, Simpson, & Sykes, 2008) identified the internationalisation of the curriculum as a major challenge for universities and business schools. According to Baum and Devine (2008), in order to operate in a global environment, employees will be required to possess cultural awareness, tolerance and capacity for cross-cultural communication. They stated that cultural awareness is the 'key' to a successful global work environment as employees deal with a 'variety of diversity issues and intercultural challenges' (Baum and Devine 2008, p. 2). They also claimed that incorporating cultural diversity in curricula is an 'opportunity to add value to the education process through the creation of more dynamic learning outcomes' (p. 5).

Devine et al. (2008; cited in Baum and Devine 2008) provided a range of recommendations for TH&E education. They suggested that schools should think about offering cultural diversity

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<sup>2</sup> The present authors' position is that ethics, social responsibility and sustainability are constituent parts of a broader 'values platform' that underpins a program or course of study. It is inappropriate to measure the delivery of sustainable tourism principles and practices simply in terms of the subjects with 'ethics', 'sustainability' or 'social responsibility' in their title, learning objectives and outline.

within their programs, as academics believed it has not been appropriately integrated into curriculum. According to their study, TH&E educators also believed that cultural diversity education may have an impact on students' long-term career development. They felt integrating cultural diversity was necessary to consider in light of the vast increase in international workers in the hospitality/tourism industry and the competitiveness of operating in a global environment (Devine, Hearn et al. 2008 cited in Baum and Devine 2008)

Clifford (2009), in an analysis of internationalisation in Australian higher education, adopted a somewhat cynical view of internationalisation, stating that most efforts to internationalise curriculum refer to inducting international students into the expectations of Western teaching method, classroom behaviour and assessment practices. He favoured a broader conception that sees internationalising the curriculum as preparing students for living and working in a multi-cultural world. Drawing from the above, the challenges for the internationalisation of TH&E curriculum are closely aligned with the development of the world-making skills and capacities of graduates.

### Work-integrated learning

Historically, industry practitioners have been critical of the time required for graduates to adapt to the workplace as a result of a theory-driven curriculum (Whitston 1998). A significant number of academics see work-integrated learning (WIL) as an important way for students to gain practical experience working within industry. In 2009, a major report (Smith, Brooks, Lichtenberg, McIlveen, 2009) examined the role of WIL and career development learning in the Australian tertiary context. It cited a report prepared for the Business Industry Higher Education Collaboration Council (Precision Consultancy 2007) which positioned WIL as a vehicle for the development of graduate attributes and employability skills and serving as means to achieve career development learning. Education bodies have highlighted the importance of WIL in the sector (Patrick, Peach et al. 2008; Universities Australia 2008), while Weisz and Smith (2005; cited in Smith, Brooks et al. 2009) summarised a range of WIL benefits for students. These included the academic benefits of enhanced thinking, motivation to learn, problem solving skills, ability to apply theory to practice, academic grades, as well as personal benefits of increased self-esteem and confidence, and improvements in communication, interpersonal and professional skills (Weisz and Smith 2005; cited in Smith, Brooks et al. 2009). A natural result of these academic and personal improvements is the positive effect WIL has on students' careers, as described by Dressler and Keeling (2004).

Some studies have identified limitations of WIL. A Hong Kong-based study by Tse (2010) showed a discrepancy between student perceptions of, and satisfaction with, internships. Nine main themes were identified, particularly the importance of a strong working relationship with colleagues; the importance of a perception of personal growth by the student; and the need for students to acquire practical skills during the internship program. Tse recommended academic institutions pay closer attention to student perceptions of and experiences in internships in order to improve the quality of placements. However, Tse still recognised the value of internships in helping students develop practical skills and acquire supervisory and managerial skills through observation and practice.

### Values, ethics and reflexivity

Permeating the above discussion, there are growing calls for attention to the values underpinning TH&E education. The Tourism Education Futures Institute (TEFI) (2009), a consortium of TH&E educators committed a values-based approach argues that:

A central task is to educate tourism graduates to satisfy the demands of the market place as productive employees for a fast changing world. The tourism industry expects its workforce to be well trained, and society might expect a contribution from universities in terms of enhanced economic performance. But any deep consideration of the term society generates other inescapable questions about what kind of tourism is to be developed (p.7).

Table 2 sets out TEFI’s five values-based principles and characteristics that tourism graduates should embody so they can become responsible leaders, stewards and world-making professionals:

Table 2: TEFI Values-based approach to TH&E education

Stewardship	Sustainability, responsibility, service to the community
Knowledge	Critical thinking, innovation, creativity, networking
Professionalism	Leadership, practicality, services, relevance, timeliness, reflexivity, teamwork, pro-activity
Ethics	Honesty, transparency, authenticity, authentic self
Mutuality	Diversity, inclusion, equity, humility, collaboration

These TEFI values have already provided a basis for the design of courses and programs in a number of countries and provide promise for the development of professional identity and purpose. However, broad global adoption remains a challenge. These values, interpreted and given meaning within the context of specific programs and institutional contexts can provide the opportunity for the development of an overarching philosophical stance for TH&E education (the need for which was discussed in Issues Paper No. 2). Such an overarching and consistent philosophical stance across a whole program, or even a number of programs within an institution, facilitates the development of a curriculum that prepares graduates to become members of a strong, united TH&E professional body.

Whilst the consideration of ethics is embedded within the values-based approach to TH&E education advocated by TEFI, ethics and reflexive practice have been singled out by a number of educators as being a key future challenge (Hollinshead, 2009; Jamal & Menzel, 2009; Jamal, Taillon, & Dredge, 2011; Tribe, 2002b). Jamal, Taillon and Dredge (2011) argue for learning experiences that engage students in real life conundrums and decision-making exercises that stretch and challenge ethical boundaries and pre-existing values while Hollinshead (1999, 2004) argues that the capacity to critically think, reflect and engage in reflexive practice are intimately tied to stewardship, world-making and good ethical action.



# Chapter 3 Approach

## Appreciation of the task

The objective of this analysis was to identify, analyse and map the TH&E undergraduate curricula space by way of a desktop study of Australian programs. It is intended to complement the analysis of stakeholder perspectives about the curriculum space, the results of which are contained in Issues Paper No 3. Due to time and resource limitations, and the increasingly blurred boundaries between higher education and further education (e.g. demonstrated by the emergence of degree granting Technical and Further Education (TAFEs), private colleges, hotel schools, etc.), pragmatic boundaries had to be drawn around the study. For the purposes of this project, it was decided that undergraduate degrees offered by universities were the prime focus of analysis, but that degree granting colleges, TAFEs and hotel schools would also be included where possible. The difficulty of engaging with many of the providers in this latter group meant that the data is less comprehensive, but it nevertheless provides useful insights into a cross-section of the participating institutions.

## Data gathering

For the initial identification stage, a list of all Australian universities was compiled using Universities Australia's web site ([www.universitiesaustralia.edu.au](http://www.universitiesaustralia.edu.au)). Each university's web site was searched using key words (such as 'tourism', 'hospitality') for the presence of any tourism and hospitality undergraduate programs.

To identify other non-university providers of TH&E degrees in Australia a search was conducted of the website of the Australian Council for Private Education and Training and web search were also conducted using the same terms used to identify university programs.

Between November 2010 and February 2011 all relevant web pages were printed to create a permanent data source and for later perusal. This was done both for ease of accessing information as well as providing an accurate reference point in time. As universities tend to change and update their course offerings frequently, there could have been instances where university web pages were removed and/or changed thus negatively impacting the research if the researchers had to return to the web site at a later date.

Once tourism and/or hospitality and/or events degrees were identified, detailed information was collected concerning program structure, goals and objectives and subject outlines.

## Data coding

Quite often subjects are given creative names, and not always is the name of the subject an accurate reflection of the subject's content. For this reason it was necessary to examine the content of units to get a better understanding of subject content, objectives, and level of skill/knowledge delivery. In this process, individual subjects were entered into a classification spreadsheet which identified where these subjects sat in the program structure, curriculum content areas and program rules (where relevant). Initially, the 34 subject themes adopted by Wang, Ayres and Huyton (2010) were used.

During the data collection process however, the classifications were amended, adding themes to include business, commerce, work integrated learning and research subjects. Table 3 below provides a list of the subject groupings used for the analysis. Additional information was also gathered from other areas of each university's web site, such as pathways into the degree program from other institutions (Technical and Further Education - (TAFE), private providers), fees associated with the course, whole-of-university foundation subjects, and student entry

scores. Other issues thought pertinent by the research team were added in a comments section, such as double degree options and exit qualifications.

Table 3: Subject group coding

<b>Tourism/Hospitality/Events Subjects</b>	<b>Business / commerce subjects</b>
1. Aboriginal Studies	31. Communications
2. Accommodation/rooms division management	32. Economics
3. Club / Gaming / Casino	33. Entrepreneurship
4. Convention management	34. Ethics; Social / Corp Responsibility
5. Ecotourism / environmental issues	35. Finance/accounting/revenue
6. Events management	36. Human Resource Mgt
7. Facilities / property development	37. International Mgt/Business
8. Food & Beverage mgmt	38. Law
9. Food studies	39. Management
10. Gastronomy/food tech	40. Marketing/Sales/Public relations
11. Hospitality marketing	41. Other
12. International tourism global issues	42. Services/quality Mgt/customer experience
13. Introduction to T & H Management	43. Strategic Mgt
14. Introduction to T&H Studies	44. Sustainability
15. Other [similar to:]	45. Technology/Information Systems
16. Risk / crisis mgmt	<b>Research components</b>
17. Social / cultural / psychological aspects	46. Research Methods
18. Special Interest Tourism	47. Statistics unit
19. Sustainability of tourism/responsible tourism	48. Capstone / research project
20. T & H Service marketing / management	<b>Other subjects</b>
21. T & H Strategic Management	49. Leisure
22. Tour Guiding/interpretation	50. Sport Mgt
23. Tourism / hospitality economics	51. Wellbeing/wellness
24. Tourism / Hospitality information systems	52. Health related
25. Tourism Planning	53. Languages
26. Tourism policy	<b>Work Integrated Learning (WIL) Components</b>
27. Tourism/destination marketing	54. Professional Development / work ready
28. Transport	55. Internship/Practicum
29. Visitor/tourist behaviour	
30. Wine tourism	

The reason for classifying a program’s individual subjects into these broader groups was to reduce the volume of the data wherever possible and to ‘standardise’ the data for the purposes of analysis. So, for example, any subject that was a first year or broad introductory tourism subject was classified as ‘Introduction to Tourism and Hospitality Studies’. Against each subject grouping entry was recorded the frequency of that subject group in the degree program and whether the subject was a core or elective component of the program. In all, a total of 1242 individual subjects were identified and categorised into the 55 groups as identified in Table 3.

## Conceptualising and operationalising the curriculum space

Having identified the 55 groups of subjects, it was necessary to classify them where they fit within the framework of the conceptual model of the curriculum space developed earlier and described in Issues Paper No. 1. The curriculum space is presented in Figure 1 below.

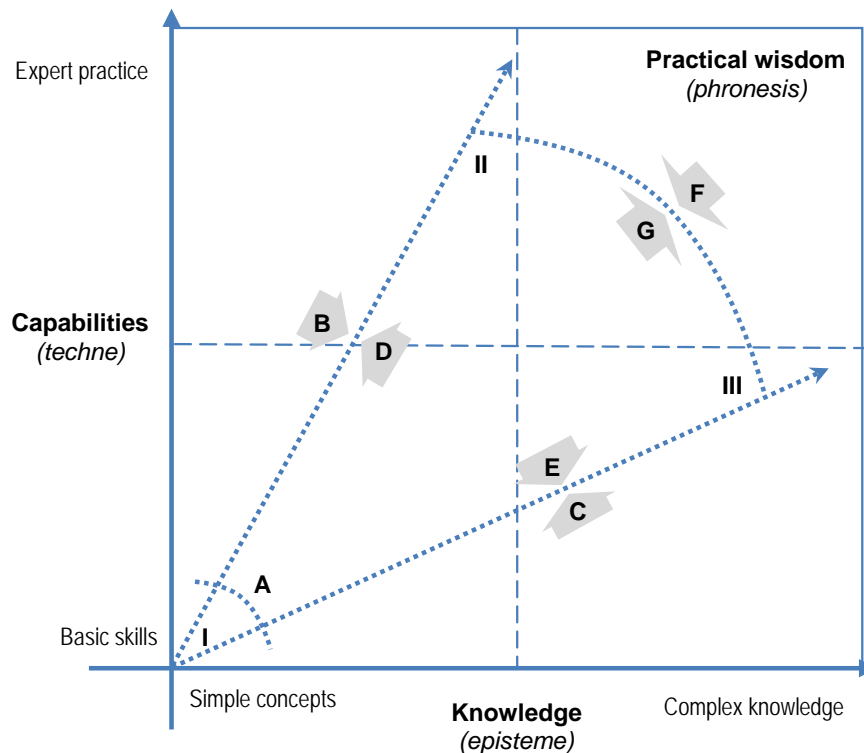


Figure 1: Conceptualised curriculum space

The key elements of this conceptualisation are that it permits an educational institution to; map its curriculum space in a manner that highlights the “trade off” between capabilities and knowledge; establish the minimum standards of incoming students, emphasise the potential of its graduates and identify the pressures that seek to expand or compress the totality of the curriculum. As such, this conceptualisation can be readily acknowledged as being politically conscious and overtly managerialist because of its strong focus on external pressures and context.

A sharper consideration of the curriculum and the teaching of students can be achieved by overlaying a grid onto the curriculum space which provides a more graduated perspective on the balance between the two dimensions of knowledge and capabilities. This is presented in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Classification matrix for subject groupings

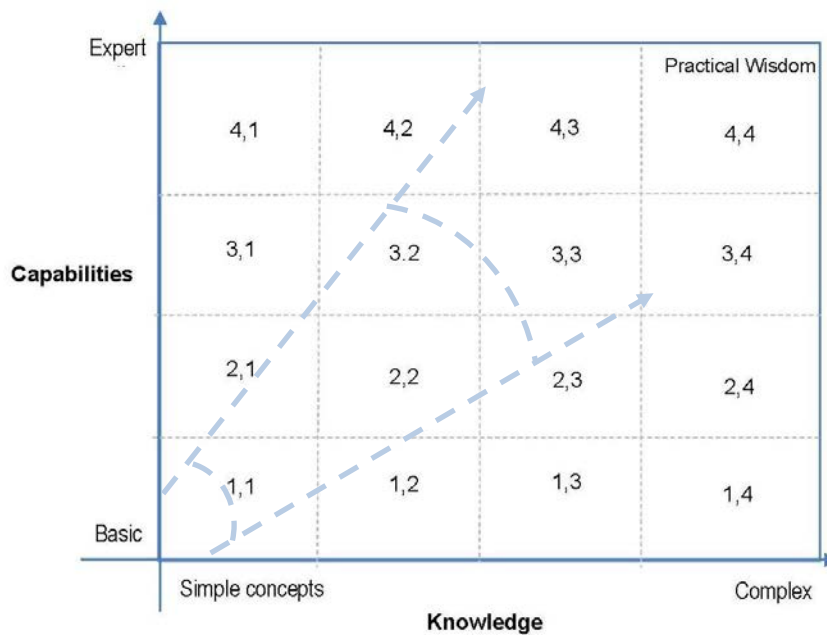
Expert	4,1	4,2	4,3	Practical Wisdom 4,4
3,1	3,2	3,3	3,4	
2,1	2,2	2,3	2,4	
Basic	1,1	1,2	1,3	1,4
	Simple concepts			Complex

**Knowledge**

Whilst a more detailed discussion about this technique is contained in the Information Sheet No 3: Methodology (<http://www.tourismhospitalityeducation.info>), the reader can readily see that this grid provides a method by which the content of a curriculum can be operationalised as a cell reference in the two dimensional space.

The analysis of the data in this report focuses on understanding the depth and breadth of the TH&E curriculum space, particularly in relation to the balance between liberal/social science education and skill/capabilities development. In this context, the constituent units of study (or modules or subjects) from a degree program can be located in the appropriate cells based upon the balance of knowledge and skills in the unit. There should then be common reflection of conceptualised curriculum space proposed in Figure 1 as an outward expanding cone and the density of occupation of the cells in Figure 2 by the constituent units of the degree program as seen in Figure 3 on the next page.

Figure 3: Curriculum space and unit of study classification cells



In this situation, the curriculum of the degree program would be dominated by units of study or subjects located in the 2,2, 3,3, 3,2 and to a less extent, the 2,3 cells.

## Classifying educational institutions

The reason for examining the curriculum space in each cluster of universities is that, and as discussed in Issues Paper No. 2, the historical development of higher education providers reflect not only shifts in higher education policy, but also the aims, objectives and positioning of universities within the Australian higher education landscape. In effect, the location of the curriculum space and previously conceptualised and operationalised, and presented in Figure 3 above, is likely to be a function of the history, philosophy, resources and aspirations of an educational institution. It is therefore logical that the different clusters would exhibit different curriculum characteristics.

The educational institutions were divided into four clusters: sandstone Universities (which were established during the colonial period), new universities (1950-1970), post-1976 universities, and TAFE and private providers.

## Challenges

The researchers found that it was not possible to commence an analysis of the subjects or programs making up the curricula space without first understanding the structure of the programs themselves. Another challenge related to difficulty of attempting to categorise individual subject units into broader social science/liberal education and vocational education. Simply looking at subject names or stated objectives and learning outcomes does not always provide sufficient information to make a determination on how a subject should be classified.

As a result, the data collection phase often involved a circuitous journey through different universities' websites and a crystallisation process that went well beyond 'bean counting' and 'cut and paste' counting of programs and subjects.

An additional, but incomplete, list of difficulties encountered during the data collection process included:

- Navigating websites and finding data
- Interpreting very complex degree structures
- Classifying generic subjects. For example, should a subject such as Tourism and Hospitality Law be classified as a general business subject or a tourism and/or hospitality management subject?
- Assessing content based on unit names and the need to search deeper
- Definitions: "programs", "courses", "units", "subjects", "credit points", "points", "foundation", "core", "major", "minor"; "elective"; "options" are all terms that are interpreted differently at different institutions

The findings, and particularly the challenges identified in undertaking this analysis, also suggest that it is very important to look beyond program names and structures and course names, outlines and unit content as the only method of data collection and analysis. Important information about course content and the balance between liberal, social science education and vocational skill development is often not immediately evident from this data. This type of analysis can describe the current context (which is very dynamic) and identify trends, but there is a need to also collect information from those making decisions about program structure, curricula and subject content.

# Chapter 4 Results

## Overview of programs

A list of the providers and programs analysed are included in the Appendix. There were 62 separate named degrees (i.e. with tourism, hospitality and/or events in the title of the degree) being offered by these universities with this number increasing to 84 with the inclusion of separate, specific tourism, hospitality or events majors within broader degree programs.

## Range of award titles

The vast majority of programs were located within a broader, business or commerce program which was reflected in the course titles, with the overwhelmingly majority titled as a Bachelor of Business. Bachelor of Management appeared the next preferred title, either as the stem (Bachelor of Management) or in the title (Bachelor of Tourism Management). There were very few instances of a simple bachelor's degree such as Bachelor of Tourism, and no Bachelor of Hospitality or Bachelor of Events.

## Faculties/schools

Consistent with previous analysis conducted by Breakey, Craig-Smith and colleagues (Breakey & Craig-Smith, 2007; Craig-Smith, Davidson, & French, 1994), the majority of programs were offered within business faculties and schools. The combination of host faculty or school and title are somewhat axiomatic in that a business faculty will offer a Bachelors of Business, as opposed to a Bachelors of Arts. However, such awareness helps explain the very strong emphasis on the commercial/business/management elements of the curriculum in those courses housed in business faculties.

## Subjects in the TH&E curricula

### Balance of TH&E subjects

Reflecting the situation where the majority of TH&E programs are offered from within business/commerce faculties, it was found that undergraduate degree programs contain a balance between generic business subjects and field specific subjects in TH&E as evidenced in Figure 4 on the following page.

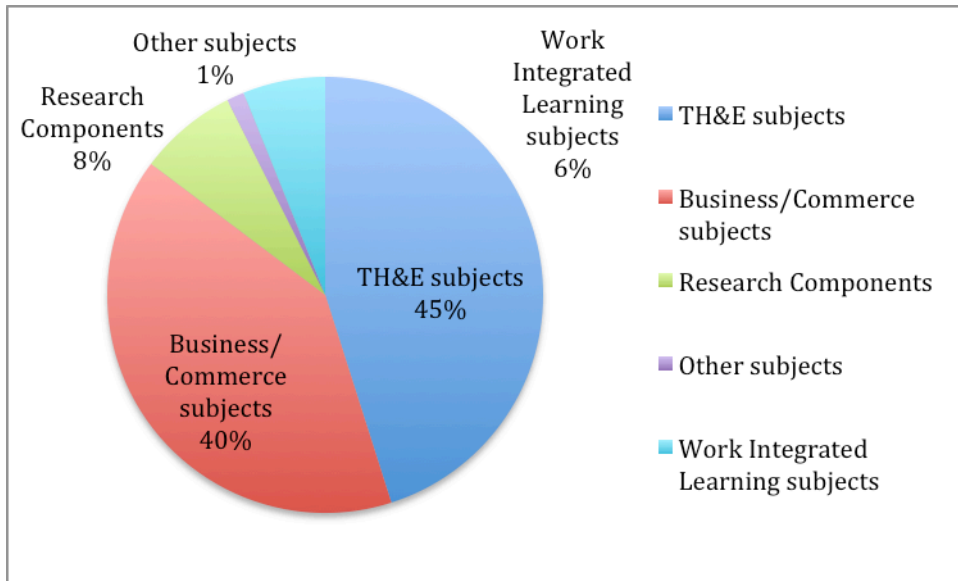


Figure 4: Distribution of units of study by major theme across the curriculum

As discussed in Issues paper No. 2, higher education institutions were classified into four clusters. Whilst this clustering was broadly based on age and the developmental history of the institution, each cluster also exhibits a homogenous suite of characteristics such as size, quality, breadth of curriculum and research profile. Examining the breakdown in the balance of subjects across the different clusters of higher education providers reveals a variation in the proportion of subjects, with cluster 3 education providers (post-1976 universities) offering slightly higher proportion of field specific subjects in TH&E (51 per cent) and slightly less generic business subjects (32 per cent).

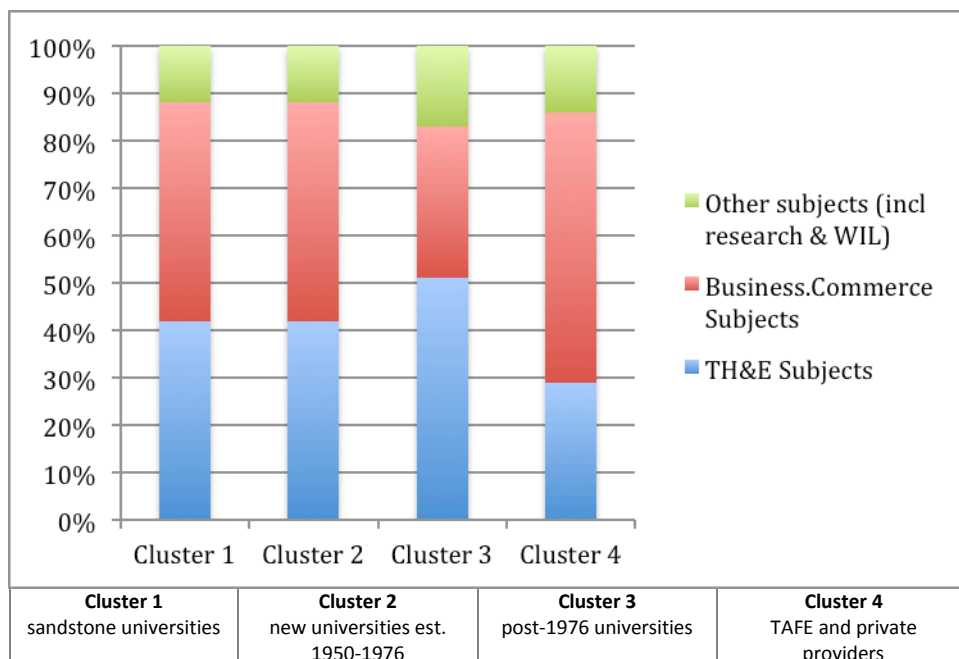


Figure 5: Distribution of units of study by major theme by educational cluster



## Most common TH&E subject groups by total volume

If the volume of subject offerings in a particular category is taken as a proxy of what the core curricula in TH&E might comprise, then the most common subjects are presented in Table 4 below. This Table suggests that the focus of the 'core' within the broader curricula space is in the areas annotated as 2,2 and 2,3 (1,2 is present but to a lesser extent) on the capabilities/knowledge grid shown in Figure 3. This observation will be further discussed below.

The most commonly offered TH&E subjects are shown in Table 4. Of particular note is the presence of the events subject group, ranked second in terms of volume, which Breakey and Craig-Smith (2007) have noted as a high growth area in the curriculum space. This finding is in contrast to observations from the academic surveys associated with this project that found only 5 per cent of educators responding to the survey consider events management to be their foundation field of study (see Issues Paper No. 3). This may be representative of a rapid recent growth of events programs and courses, as evidenced by the second place ranking of Events management in Table 4.

The presence of 'sustainability of tourism/responsible tourism' as the third most voluminous category of subjects contrasts with the literature, which suggests there is room for improvement in the incorporation of sustainability concerns into the curriculum. However, it is difficult to gauge the delivery of the pedagogies of sustainability within the subjects analysed because assessment, mode of teaching and learning experience all influence the depth of coverage.

Table 4: Top 10 TH&E subject groups by volume

Rank	Tourism, Hospitality & Events Subjects	Total No. Subjects	Capabilities/ Knowledge classification
1	Introduction to T&H Studies	48	2,1
2	Events management	39	3,2
3	Sustainability of tourism/responsible tourism	36	3,2
4	Introduction to T & H Management	35	2,1
5	T & H Service marketing / management	33	2,2
6	Tourism Planning	28	3,2
7	Hospitality marketing	23	3,2
8	Tourism / hospitality economics	22	3,2
9	Food & Beverage mgmt	19	2,2
10	International/global tourism	19	2,2

## Top TH&E subject groups by clusters of education providers

A closer examination of the top five subject areas, by volume, shown in Table 5 below, indicates that across the three university dominated clusters (i.e. clusters 1, 2 and 3), the top subjects by volume are similar.

Table 5: Most common 5 subject groups by volume for each cluster of providers

<b>Cluster 1</b>	<b>Cluster 2</b>	<b>Cluster 3</b>	<b>Cluster 4</b>
Sandstone universities	New universities est. 1950-1976	Post-1976 universities	TAFE and new providers
International tourism global issues	Tourism/destination marketing	Introduction to T&H Studies	Introduction to T & H Management
Introduction to T&H Studies	Introduction to T & H Management	Events management	T & H Strategic Management
Sustainability of tourism/responsible tourism	Introduction to T&H Studies	T & H Service marketing / management	Tourism / hospitality economics
Events management	Sustainability of tourism/responsible tourism	Sustainability of tourism/responsible tourism	Sustainability of tourism/responsible tourism
Hospitality marketing	Events management	Hospitality marketing	Tourism Planning

Further analysing the differences between clusters of education providers, it was noted that tourism transport and travel does not appear to be offered widely. That said, there could be particular themes on transport embedded in subjects such as Introduction to tourism, and only a fine grain analysis of the weekly syllabus would reveal this.

### Most Common Business/Commerce subject groups by total volume

An analysis of business/commerce subjects offered as part of TH&E degrees is shown in Table 6 below. Finance/accounting/revenue management was the most commonly offered subject area (by volume of subjects) following by marketing/sales/public relations.

Table 6: Top 10 business/commerce subject groups by volume

<b>Rank</b>	<b>Tourism, Hospitality &amp; Events Subjects</b>	<b>Total No. Units</b>	<b>Capabilities/ Knowledge classification</b>
1	Finance/accounting/revenue	66	2,3
2	Marketing/Sales/Public relations	62	2,2
3	Management	48	1,2
4	Technology/Information Systems	47	3,2
5	Law	43	2,3
6	Communications	34	2,2
7	Strategic Mgt	34	3,4
8	Economics	33	2,3
9	Human Resource Mgt	22	2,3
10	Services/quality Mgt/customer exp.	19	2,3

## Research subject groups by total volume

The analysis generally revealed lower levels of offering in research related subjects. Of note, education providers in cluster 3 had the highest offerings of research related subjects, which may well reflect increased efforts to build research cultures within these institutions.

Again, without analysing the fine grain of the syllabus, it may well be that providers in other clusters have sought to integrate research components within the syllabus of other subjects, such that students receive this grounding but not in a stand alone subject offering. Certainly, engaging in research methods and approaches would be located in the high capabilities/high knowledge area of the conceptual curriculum space, approximating the practical wisdom required of graduates to operate in the professional world. Further investigation of how research components are treated within the curriculum space would be useful.

## Work integrated learning subject groups

Despite growing interest in, and discussion about, the value of work integrated learning, the number of stand alone subjects was relatively small. Work Integrated Learning offerings were minimal within Clusters 1 and 2, and were more common in Cluster 3 education providers. This may be explained in that Cluster 1 and 2 are more 'traditional' university environments that tend not to see these types of programs as consistent with the institution's core values. Perhaps, because they have well developed pathways programs from TAFEs and colleges, education providers in Cluster 3, tended to offer the largest number of work integrated learning subjects.

## The TH&E curricula space

When subject groups were plotted on the capabilities/knowledge grid, the focus on skills and knowledge development becomes apparent. Figure 6 below shows a mapping of the subject grouping by volume on the capabilities/knowledge grid. This shows the focus in the curricula space hovers around the 2,2 and 3,2 quadrants.

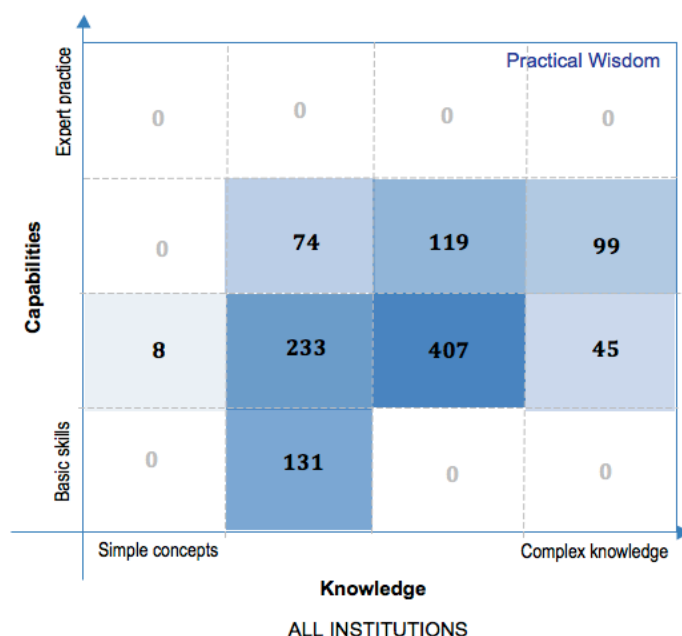


Figure 6: Number of subjects offered in each cell (all education providers)

This analysis can be extended for each of the four education institution clusters (see below).

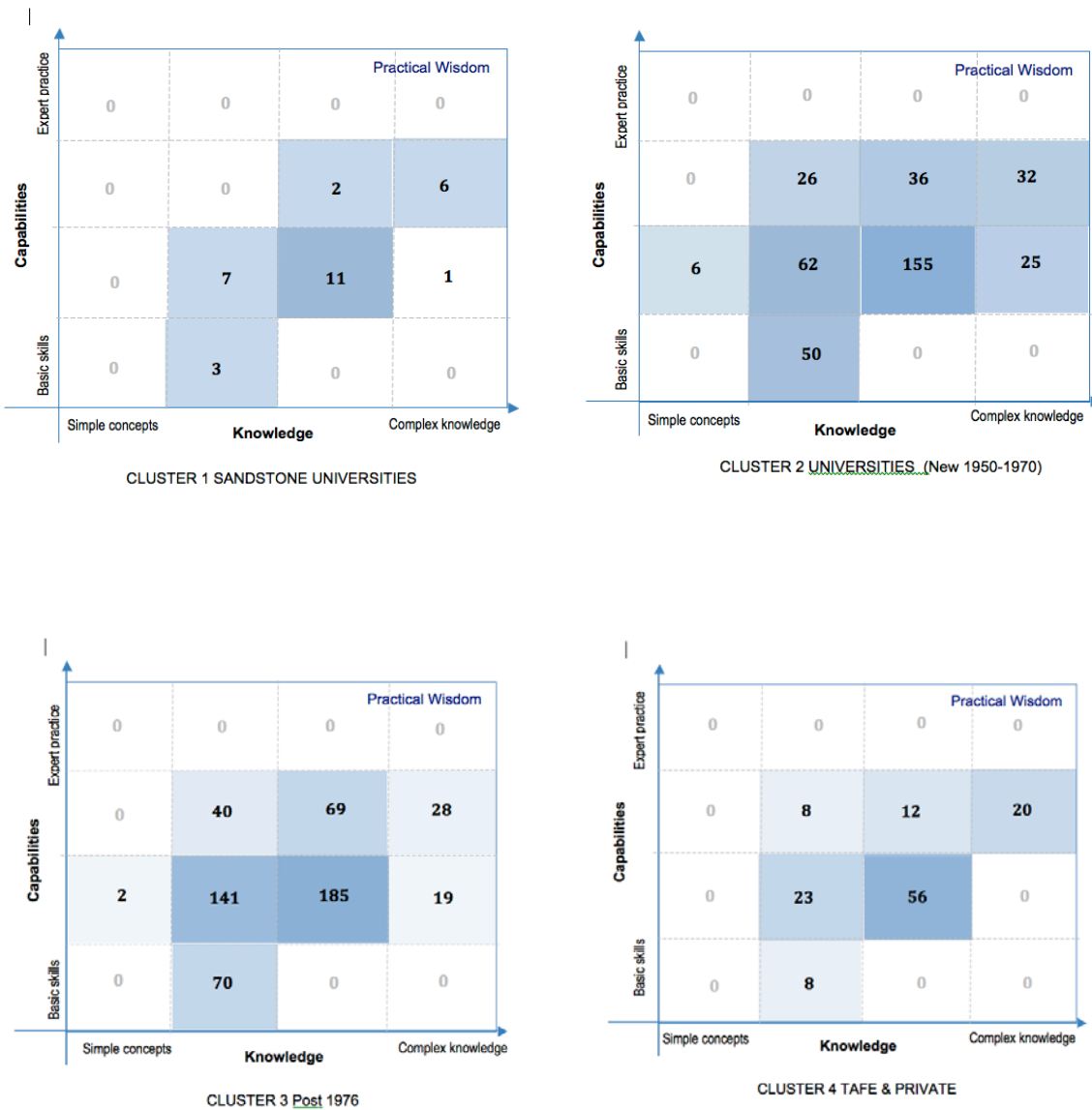


Figure 7: Number of subjects offered in each cell by education cluster

However, because the number of institutions represented in each cluster varies considerably, it is necessary to recast the numbers in each cell as a percentage of the total number of units offered in that cluster. This is done in Figure 8 on the following page.

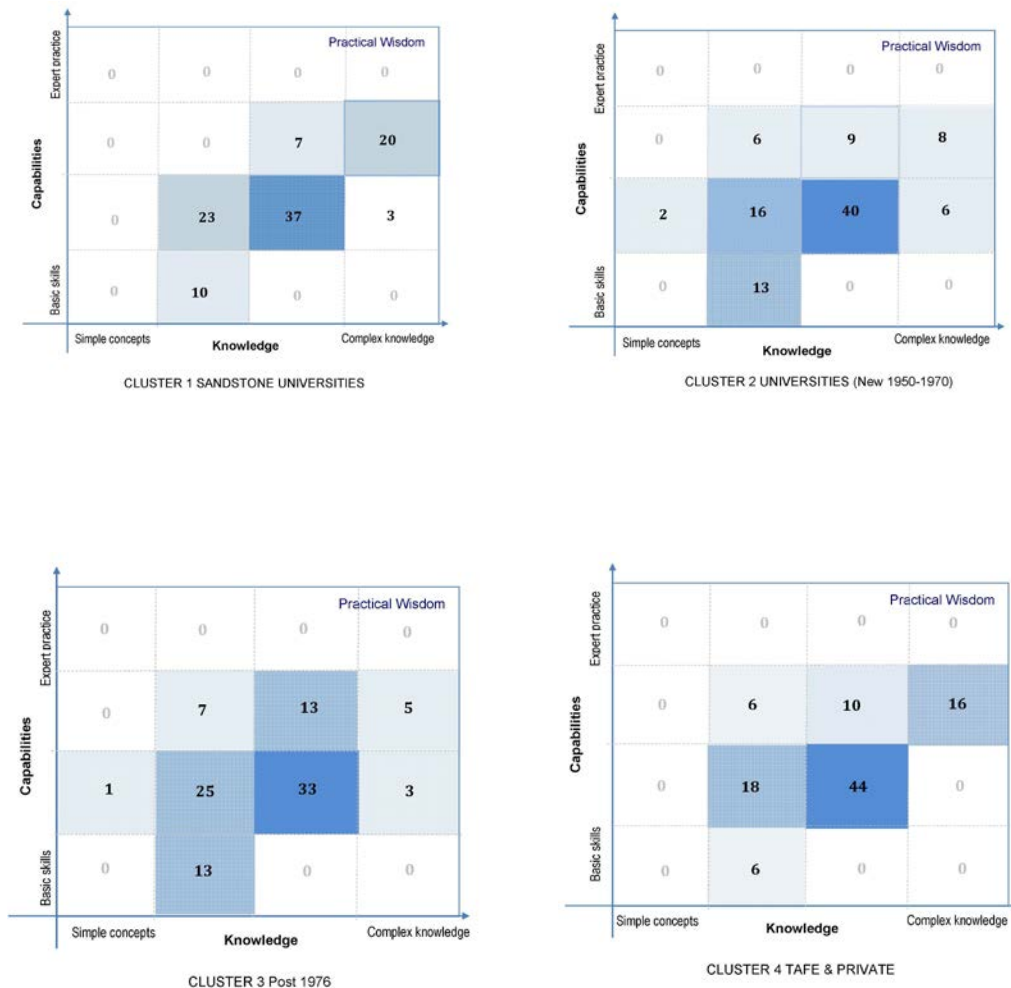


Figure 8: Distribution of subjects offered in each cell by education cluster

These results might be best described as a “mixed bag” with some items clearly confounding. The patterns for the universities are internally consistent and externally appropriate given our knowledge of the constituent universities in these three clusters. However, the results for cluster 4, especially in comparison to clusters 2 and 3 are problematic. Cluster 4 presents as having a profile more in keeping with that of cluster 1. This is a confounding result and warrants further investigation.

Finally, these results can be used to inform the mapping of the curriculum space, as seen in Figure 9 on the following page.

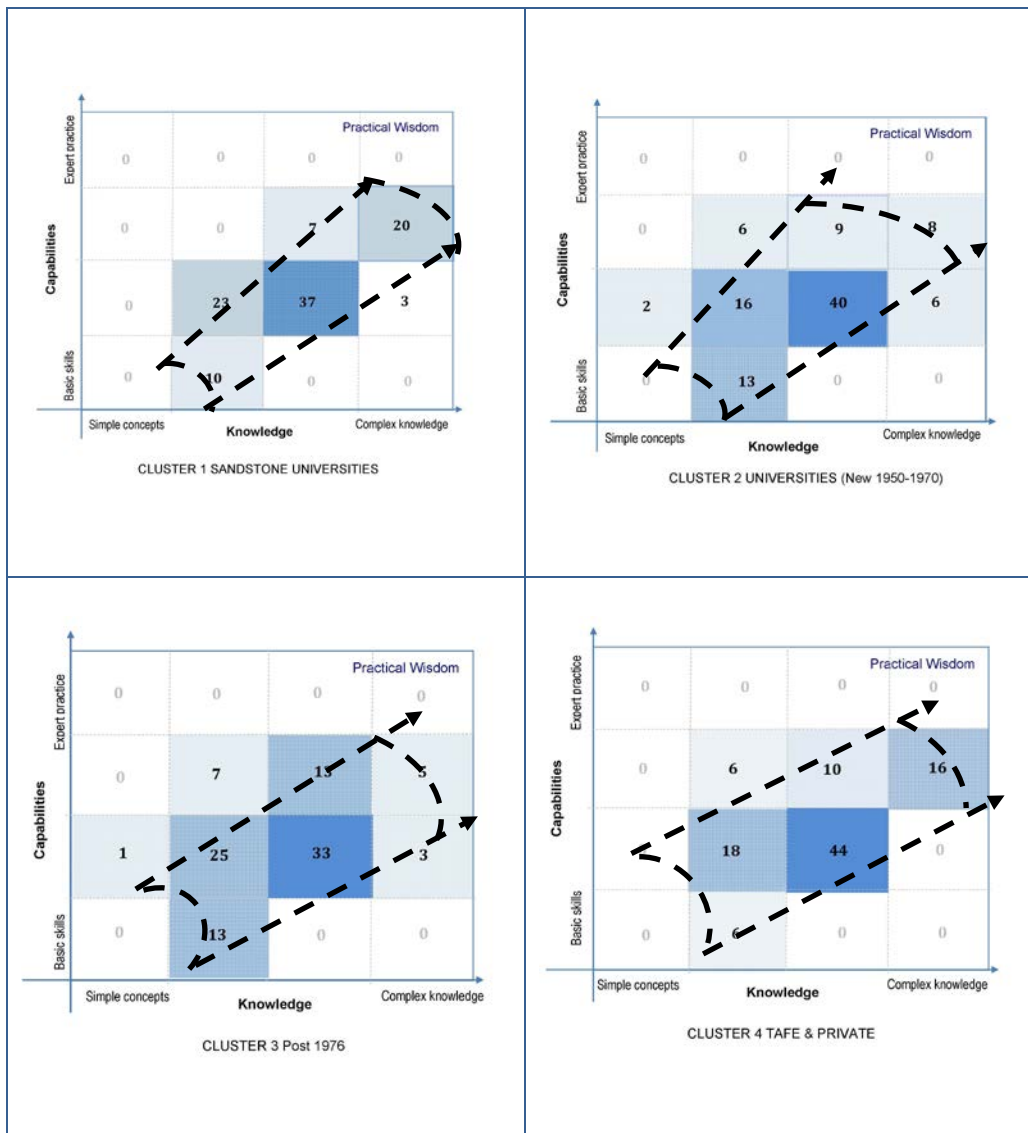


Figure 9: Distribution of subjects and curriculum map by education cluster

Whilst the exact shape and size of the curriculum overlays can be debated, the above figures provide some insight into the relationship between the curriculum space and the syllabus cells. However, it is important to remember that the curriculum space is a dynamic concept that considers the impact of a suite of competing pressures whereas the syllabus cells map the state of the curriculum at a given point in time.

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## Appendix A: Providers and programs

UNIVERSITY/STATE	PROGRAM
<b>New South Wales</b>	
University of Newcastle	Bachelor of Business/Bachelor of Social Science
University of New South Wales	Bachelor of Commerce (Services Marketing – Tourism and Hospitality)
University of Technology, Sydney	Bachelor of Business Bachelor of Management in Tourism Bachelor of Management in Tourism and Hospitality Bachelor of Management in Events and Leisure
University of Western Sydney	Bachelor of Tourism Management Bachelor of Social Science (Heritage and Tourism) Bachelor of Business and Commerce (Hospitality Management)
Macquarie University / International College of Management Sydney	Bachelor of Event Management Bachelor of Hospitality Management Bachelor of International Tourism
Charles Sturt University	Bachelor of Applied Science (Adventure Ecotourism) Bachelor of Business (Tourism Management) <i>Being phased out</i>
Southern Cross University	Bachelor of Business in Tourism Management Bachelor of Business in Hotel and Resort Management Bachelor of Business in Convention and Event Management Bachelor of Business in International Tourism Management Bachelor of Sport Tourism Management Bachelor of Environmental Tourism Management Bachelor of Business in Hotel Management
University of Wollongong	Bachelor of Business Administration (Event Management) Bachelor of Business Administration (Hospitality Management) Bachelor of Business Administration (Tourism Management)
<b>Queensland</b>	
James Cook University	Bachelor of Business (Hospitality Management major) Bachelor of Business (Sports and Events major) Bachelor of Business (Tourism Management major)
Bond University	Bachelor of Tourism Management Bachelor of International Hotel and Resort Management
CQ University	Bachelor of Hospitality Management
Griffith University	Bachelor of Business (Tourism and Hospitality Management) Bachelor of Business (Event Management) Bachelor of Business (Hotel Management) Bachelor of Business (International Tourism and Hotel Management) Bachelor of Business (Sustainable Tourism Management) Bachelor of Business (Tourism Management) <i>Being phased out</i>
University of the Sunshine Coast	Bachelor of Business (Tourism, Leisure & Events Management)
University of Southern Queensland	Bachelor of Business (Tourism Management)
The University of Queensland	Bachelor of International Hotel and Tourism Management (Event Management major) Bachelor of International Hotel and Tourism Management (Tourism Management major) Bachelor of International Hotel and Tourism Management (Hotel Management major)

<b>South Australia</b>	
Flinders University	Bachelor of International Tourism (Cultural Tourism major) Bachelor of International Tourism (Nature Based Tourism major) Bachelor of International Tourism (Festival & Event Design major)
University of South Australia/ Le Cordon Bleu Australia	Bachelor of Tourism and Event Management Bachelor of Business (International Restaurant Management) Bachelor of Business (International Hotel Management)
<b>Tasmania</b>	
University of Tasmania	Bachelor of Tourism Bachelor of Business Administration (Tourism Management) Bachelor of Business Administration (Hospitality Management)
<b>ACT</b>	
Australian Catholic University	Bachelor of Commerce (Hospitality Management major) Bachelor of Commerce (Tourism Management major)
University of Canberra	Bachelor of Tourism Management
<b>Victoria</b>	
Deakin University	Bachelor of Management (Tourism)
La Trobe University	Bachelor of Business (Tourism and Hospitality) Bachelor of Business (Event Management/Marketing) Bachelor of Business (Event Management) from 2011 Bachelor of Business (Event Management/Tourism Management) Bachelor of Business (Tourism Management) Bachelor of Business (Tourism Management/Marketing)
Monash	Bachelor of Business and Commerce (Tourism) Bachelor of Business and Commerce (Tourism) Bachelor of Business and Commerce (Sports Promotion & Events Management)
University of Ballarat	Bachelor of Business (Tourism) Bachelor of Management (Tourism) Bachelor of Hospitality (Management)
Victoria University	Bachelor of Business (Tourism Management) Bachelor of Business (Hospitality Management) Bachelor of Business (International Hospitality Management) Bachelor of Business (Hospitality/Tourism Management) Bachelor of Business (Event Management) Bachelor of Business (Culinary Management)
Swinburne University	Bachelor of Business (Tourism Management) Bachelor of Business (Tourism and Hospitality Management) plus Adv. Dip. Hospitality
Box Hill Institute of TAFE	Associate Degree in Hospitality Management Bachelor of Hospitality Management
<b>Western Australia</b>	
Curtin University	Bachelor of Commerce (Tourism & Event Major Extended)
Edith Cowan University	Bachelor of Business (Tourism major) Bachelor of Business (Hospitality major) Assoc Deg Hospitality and Tourism Management Bachelor of Hospitality and Tourism Management Bachelor Hospitality Management Bachelor Tourism Management
Murdoch University	Bachelor of Tourism Bachelor of Tourism in Hospitality and Tourism Management Bachelor of Commerce in Hospitality and Tourism Management