

# DEVELOPING DISCIPLINE STANDARDS FOR A FOUNDATION UNIT IN CHEMISTRY

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## ABSTRACT

Students commencing tertiary studies in science-based degrees often lack the necessary background knowledge in the core sciences. This gap in a student's preparedness for tertiary study can be addressed through foundation units. These foundation units are provided to help students, who have recently completed their secondary studies or are returning from an extended break from study, to make a successful transition to tertiary studies. Ensuring that appropriate discipline standards are met in these units is, therefore, of vital importance. National Curriculum Standards at HSC level have been defined for Chemistry. At the other end of the continuum to tertiary qualifications, the Threshold Learning Outcomes (TLOs) for Science graduates have been developed as part of the Learning and Teaching Academic Standards project (ALTC, 2011). This paper reports on the first stage of a discipline standards project at one Australian regional university, which has very diverse cohorts of students that include distance education, mature age, low SES and special entry students. The first stage aims to identify and embed discipline standards as they relate to the preparatory level of a Chemistry foundation unit, linking them to the National Curriculum Standards and the Graduate TLOs in Chemistry.

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