



TEQSA update

APRIL 2014

TEQSA Updates are for higher education and ELICOS providers and contain information about TEQSA's regulatory framework, policies and processes as well as upcoming events.

TEQSA reform agenda

TEQSA would like to thank all providers and peak bodies that submitted a response to the consultation documents on the Agency's future directions for regulatory processes and risk assessment. The considered feedback has contributed to further shaping TEQSA's ongoing regulatory approach.

Summary documents for the two consultations and copies of the submissions are available on the TEQSA website at <http://www.teqsa.gov.au/regulatory-approach/reform-and-continuous-improvement>.

The feedback received indicated strong support for the direction of TEQSA's reform agenda, and endorsement of TEQSA's introduction of a 'core assessment' for renewal of registration and reduced evidence requirements taking into account risk and provider history. There was also strong support for the reduced evidence requirements for course accreditation.

TEQSA continues to consult with peak bodies and the sector on new process guides that will accompany the streamlined regulatory processes, and will seek further feedback as the streamlined regulatory processes are implemented.

In line with TEQSA's commitment to continuous improvement, any providers with suggestions for further streamlining or improving processes, or with any questions on TEQSA's processes are encouraged to contact their Case Manager.

TEQSA launches new Risk Assessment Framework

One key outcome from the consultation process was significant remodeling of TEQSA's approach to its risk assessments of providers. After consideration of feedback and TEQSA's own experiences, TEQSA has released its revised framework.

Key improvements include a simplified design, focusing on students, staff, finance and regulatory history, a strengthened focus on international students, greater flexibility for different provider models, and improved information for providers.

The annual cycle of risk assessments under the new framework has now commenced and information about what providers can expect during this process is detailed in the Risk Assessment Framework on the TEQSA website at <http://teqsa.gov.au/regulatory-approach/risk-assessment-framework>.

⋮ Submissions to the 2013
⋮ consultations are on
⋮ www.teqsa.gov.au

Provider Information Request (PIR) update

TEQSA has completed the 2013 PIR and would like to thank providers for the timeliness of responses, as well as for the effective collaboration with TEQSA's Information Management team during the collection period. This year the team worked in close partnership with providers to check data accuracy through the Department of Education's validation system known as 'HEPCAT'. Following this process, the data is now being used in the next cycle of TEQSA risk assessments under the updated Risk Assessment Framework.

TEQSA's aim is to make the PIR collection as clear and streamlined as possible. A number of improvements, including reductions in the data required, were implemented in the 2013 PIR. For the 2014 PIR, TEQSA will continue working towards further improvements across aspects of the PIR systems and documentation, guided by feedback received from providers during the 2013 PIR. TEQSA will also build on its relationship with the Department of Education in exploring all further opportunities to streamline data reporting, while ensuring TEQSA's access to key core data necessary for risk-based regulation of the sector is retained.

Providers with any comments or feedback on the 2013 PIR can contact the Information Management team at collections@teqsa.gov.au.

ESOS framework/CRICOS national registration/bank accounts for pre-paid fees

TEQSA is participating in the sector-wide consultation being conducted by the Department of Education on proposed changes to the ESOS Act.

Working with providers and in some cases ASQA, TEQSA has nationally registered 12 CRICOS-registered providers, reducing the number of registered entities on CRICOS. National registration allows providers that operate across more than one state and/or territory jurisdiction to amalgamate their CRICOS provider codes thus reducing their reporting requirements. Providers should contact their Case Manager for more information about national registration.

The ESOS Act requires providers to ensure that at all times there is a sufficient amount in a bank account to repay all tuition fees to every overseas student or intending overseas student who has paid fees to the provider (S29).

TEQSA seeks evidence of compliance with these sections of the ESOS Act (and other sections) at the time of provider registration and renewal of registration but will shortly be examining compliance with these sections for a sample of providers outside of the usual regulatory cycle. The sample providers will be given notice in advance of TEQSA's request for evidence of compliance.

TEQSA works closely with all providers. Providers with any particular questions or matters they wish to discuss can contact their Case Manager.

New Commissioner for TEQSA

TEQSA recently welcomed Emeritus Professor Cliff Walsh as part-time Commissioner.

Professor Walsh is Emeritus Professor of Economics and a Visiting Research Fellow in the School of Economics at the University of Adelaide. He brings a wealth of regulatory and higher education expertise to the TEQSA Commission.

2014 Sector Engagement

The TEQSA Provider Briefing tentatively scheduled for 13 May 2014 will no longer take place. The Agency is currently developing a schedule for sector engagement, and information about TEQSA's engagement activities and events for 2014 will be made available on the TEQSA website at <http://www.teqsa.gov.au/news-publications/events>.

Fee determination changes – January 2014

Changes to the TEQSA Fee Determination came into effect on 1 January 2014. They include the following:

- ▶ removal of the fee for adding a course to a provider's existing CRICOS registration;
- ▶ clarification that there is no fee payable for an application for self-accrediting authority by a provider registered in the Overseas University, Australian University College, Australian University of Specialisation and Overseas University of Specialisation categories; and
- ▶ the introduction of a fee of \$1,000 for an application to TEQSA for internal review of decisions made by delegates of TEQSA.

Information about TEQSA fees is online at <http://www.teqsa.gov.au/for-providers/teqsa-fees>.

International engagement

As Australia is one of the leaders in transnational education, including transnational quality assurance, TEQSA has been invited to participate in the Erasmus Mundus 'QA in Cross Border Higher Education (QACHE) Project'. TEQSA has two representatives in the project team providing information and expertise on good practice: Commissioner Dorte Kristoffersen and Executive Director Lucy Schulz.

As the QACHE project unfolds, it will help TEQSA to benchmark its regulatory approaches with those of other countries including those in the Asia Pacific, Gulf and European regions. The discussion of good practice models allows TEQSA to reflect on its own frameworks and practices, while showcasing models of Australian good practice to an international audience.

There are important benefits for Australia if overseas quality assurance agencies understand the regulatory and quality assurance requirements supporting Australian providers' transnational education activities, given that Australian providers are delivering courses around the world.

More information about TEQSA's international work on behalf of providers is available on the TEQSA website at <http://teqsa.gov.au/about/international-engagement>.

Frequently asked questions about TEQSA and the AQF

Following discussions with individual providers and further discussion at the recent Australian Qualification Framework Council briefings, TEQSA is preparing an updated version of its Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) document about TEQSA and the AQF.

Provider portal pilot

As announced at the October 2013 provider briefing, TEQSA is developing a provider website portal to make it easier for higher education providers to engage with TEQSA. The new portal means that all applications and evidence can be submitted electronically. TEQSA has recently consulted with a group of providers regarding the features of the portal, and will commence a pilot with a group of nominated providers during April.

TEQSA will provide support for providers using the portal with instructional videos, FAQ documents and direct support for any questions or concerns.

It is important to remember that TEQSA Case Managers remain the main point of contact for a provider. Providers should continue to engage with their Case Managers before commencing any applications.



External Experts update

- ▶ The TEQSA External Experts portal is undergoing a redesign to make it more user-friendly and easier to navigate. Over the next few months, members of TEQSA's Experts Register will be provided with training and support to navigate the new portal.
- ▶ Registration for the TEQSA Experts Register is open on an ongoing basis. Applications can be sent to experts@teqsa.gov.au. TEQSA in particular encourages applications from those with expertise related to non-university higher education providers.

TEQSA conducts provider workshop on self-accrediting authority

TEQSA has a commitment to reviewing all of its regulatory processes, including self-accrediting authority and change of provider category.

A number of providers have indicated to TEQSA that their plans include applying for self-accrediting authority at a future date, whether that is authority to self-accredit all of their courses or a selection of courses.

On Friday 21 February 2014, TEQSA conducted a workshop on self-accrediting authority for providers nominated by peak bodies, peak body representatives, private providers and other stakeholders. The discussions centred on:

- ▶ the Threshold Standards criteria for authorising self-accrediting authority, including requirements around governance, quality assurance and scholarship
- ▶ the application process and scope of self-accrediting authority
- ▶ the assessment process for self-accrediting authority applications and evidence requirements.

Workshop participants said that they found the workshop productive both in terms of the content and the engagement with a wide range of providers.

TEQSA has undertaken to collect further input from providers which will help inform the revised process for assessing self-accrediting authority, publish further guidance on the TEQSA website, and conduct additional workshops for providers interested in applying for self-accrediting authority.

Ongoing provider feedback

TEQSA is always interested in receiving feedback from providers. During 2014, the Agency will survey providers about their regulatory experiences. This survey will also help TEQSA understand the time taken in completing regulatory applications.

When submitting an application online via the new TEQSA provider portal, providers will be asked to estimate the time spent on preparing and submitting the application. This information will help TEQSA assess and monitor the impact on providers of our new processes.

TEQSA in numbers:



34

renewals of registration



213

initial course accreditations

178



renewals of course accreditation

36



renewals of CRICOS registration

9



initial registrations



8000+

CRICOS regulatory activities

* Completed regulatory activities from 29/01/2012 (TEQSA's commencement) to 31/01/2014.