



Australian Government

Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency

TEQSA UPDATE – JULY 2012

From Dr Carol Nicoll PSM, TEQSA Chief Commissioner

It is now almost six months since the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) assumed its full regulatory responsibilities on 29 January. These have been very busy months for TEQSA and I would like to take this opportunity to bring you up to date with a number of important developments since the last update in February.

National Register of Higher Education Providers

The National Register of Higher Education Providers has information about every registered higher education provider and accredited courses for providers without self-accrediting authority. The National Register is accessible via the TEQSA website at www.teqsa.gov.au/national-register.

Transitional business from states and territories

We are making good progress with the completion of inherited business from the states and territories and have recently completed the remainder of the quality audit reports inherited from AUQA.

TEQSA inherited 65 unfinished cases; 28 related to course accreditation, registration and material change applications, and 37 cases related to CRICOS matters. Due to this considerable amount of transitioned regulatory business, it was necessary to prioritise the completion of the inherited cases. We have been in communication with affected providers about the assessment of their cases and we appreciate their cooperation in this process.

From January 29 to the end of June, TEQSA has also received 160 new regulatory applications or notifications, including 66 Material Change notifications. This includes activities relating to both the TEQSA Act and TEQSA's responsibilities under the ESOS Act.

2012 Provider Information Request

In May, TEQSA released a consultation paper to seek feedback on the proposed 2012 provider information request. Overall, respondents expressed support for the development of a more consolidated, coordinated national information collection. There was also broad agreement on the basic scope and priority of the data proposed to be collected in 2012. Items of concern being considered by TEQSA included the need to better articulate the link to the Threshold Standards, as well as the way in which sensitive data will be handled. TEQSA will communicate the next steps in this process to the sector shortly.



Expert Reference Groups

TEQSA is in the process of establishing expert reference groups in three key areas; regulatory risk, information collection, and regulation and quality assessment. Recognised experts in the three fields will be nominated by the peak bodies and TEQSA will directly invite a number of expert members.

The reference groups will be used specifically for sounding out ideas and providing expert comments to TEQSA – we will continue to canvass views and feedback from the sector through public consultations on major policy issues.

Forms and guides

Guides and forms for renewal of registration and renewal of course accreditation were published on the TEQSA website on 2 July. We encourage providers to ensure they have read the guide document before completing the application form.

We have also revised our approach to Fit and Proper Person Requirement Declarations. In future, a Fit and Proper Person Requirement Declaration for each member of the governing body appointed by the Australian Government or the relevant state or territory government will no longer be required. In addition, a Fit and Proper Person Requirement Declaration at the time of renewal of registration is not required if this has already been provided to TEQSA as part of a material change notification.

Regulatory changes under the ESOS Act

TEQSA wrote recently to all CRICOS-registered providers to advise them of two major new regulatory changes under the ESOS Act. On 1 July 2012, TEQSA assumed regulatory responsibility for Foundation Programs (except where delivered by a school), and ELICOS, where delivered by a registered higher education provider, or in an entry arrangement with a registered higher education provider. In addition TEQSA now has full registration, compliance and enforcement powers under the ESOS Act. A second letter to dual-sector providers outlined the new administrative arrangements to streamline the regulation of CRICOS-registered dual-sector providers. Further details on all of these matters will be available on the TEQSA website.

ELICOS and Foundation Programs

TEQSA is working with the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) to identify those ELICOS providers that come under the two regulators' respective regulatory responsibilities. Both regulators are working closely to develop their approaches to registration to minimise changes to current arrangements for the sector while being consistent with the legislative instrument. TEQSA will communicate directly in the near future with both ELICOS and Foundation Program providers about the regulatory arrangements.

CRICOS

TEQSA has responded to feedback from providers with self-accrediting authority and amended the information requirements for adding a course of study to CRICOS. An updated application form is available on the TEQSA website.

Qualification Standards

TEQSA has received a number of queries relating to interpretation of the requirements embedded in the Qualifications Standards and their relationship to the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF). Senior staff from TEQSA recently participated in an event on this topic organised by universities based in Queensland and we will attend a similar event in New South Wales to gain a better understanding of the particular concerns of providers. If you would like clarification on any particular issue relating to the interpretation of the Qualification Standards and their connection to the AQF please send your question to enquiries@teqsa.gov.au or your case manager.

TEQSA Provider Briefings

On 27 March, TEQSA held the first of a series of provider briefings at the Melbourne Exhibition Centre, attended by around 330 people from 141 providers. The briefing was well received and gave providers an opportunity to meet with Commissioners, senior managers, case managers and members of their teams.

The next provider briefing is scheduled for 17 August in Sydney. The briefing will provide a general overview of TEQSA and information sessions on: understanding material change; TEQSA's investigations framework; the provider information request; TEQSA's approach to the renewal of registration and course accreditation and CRICOS processes (with a particular focus on dual sector providers). TEQSA will also share some of the most frequently encountered regulatory issues since 29 January.

The letter of invitation for the Sydney provider briefing was sent on 27 June to all higher education providers. Registrations close on 6 August – if your organisation has not received an invitation, please contact your case manager.

TEQSA is committed to working closely with all providers and we encourage you to contact us if you have any particular questions or concerns you wish to discuss.

Useful Links

National Register of higher education providers:

<http://www.teqsa.gov.au/national-register>

Renewal of registration form:

<http://www.teqsa.gov.au/registration-and-re-registration#Renewalofregistration>

Renewal of accreditation form:

<http://www.teqsa.gov.au/course-accreditation#Renewalofaccreditation>

Updated application form to add a course of study on CRICOS (for providers with self-accrediting authority):

<http://www.teqsa.gov.au/sites/default/files/Application%20form%20to%20add%20a%20course%20of%20study%20on%20CRICOS%20self%20accrediting.pdf>