



Title Name
Position
Organisation
Address (email or postal)

Dear Title Family-Name,

Ensuring student safety and wellbeing in higher education

With the academic year commencing and providers preparing to welcome thousands of new and returning students, we want to reiterate the importance of ensuring safety and wellbeing in Australian higher education.

As you know, last year we witnessed a disturbing increase in incidents of antisemitism, islamophobia and racism more broadly within the Australian community. Despite the current ceasefire in the Middle East, we continue to see heightened tensions and violence. Australia's higher education sector is not immune to these tensions.

TEQSA wants to remind providers of their obligations under the [Higher Education Standards Framework \(Threshold Standards\) 2021](#) to uphold student and staff safety.

At a minimum, we expect that providers are closely watching developments, both nationally and within their own communities, and ensuring that they have appropriate arrangements in place to respond to any sudden escalation of protests or outbreaks of violence. This includes, but is not limited to, reviewing settings and permissions for events that may escalate tensions, ensuring appropriate security arrangements, maintaining effective critical incident management structures and continuing to engage with law enforcement.

TEQSA also expects that providers will ensure new and returning students are informed about codes of conduct, support services and any other relevant institutional policies or procedures, including misconduct policies and penalties for engaging in or displaying racist behaviour (such as antisemitism and islamophobia).

Consideration should be given to the needs of at-risk students and staff (including Jewish people, Muslim people and people from Palestinian backgrounds) to ensure they have a safe learning and working environment. Institutions should also consider how governing bodies are kept informed about the adequacy and effectiveness of institutional policies, as well as whether those policies are being appropriately enforced.

We strongly recommend providers consider the points raised in our [Interim sector update: Regulatory expectations of providers](#) to assure safety and wellbeing on campus in relation to student protests, including:

- institutional policies and processes
- academic support and adjustment
- ensuring a safe campus, including teaching and learning spaces
- ensuring complaint and support mechanisms are accessible
- taking appropriate action in response to misconduct
- upholding freedom of speech and academic freedom.

Consultation for new TEQSA guidance

As you would be aware, TEQSA has been engaging with student groups, providers, the Special Envoy to Combat Antisemitism in Australia, the Special Envoy to Combat Islamophobia in Australia, the Race Discrimination Commissioner, the National Student Ombudsman and the CEO of Universities Australia to inform the development of new guidance.

TEQSA will open consultation with the sector for 2 new pieces of guidance on 26 February 2025. These new guidance materials relate to student grievance and complaint processes and outside actors on campus. Following this consultation, TEQSA will aim to have this new guidance in place by April 2025.

TEQSA will continue to update and develop guidance during the year, as other projects such as the Australian Human Rights Commission's study into racism in universities concludes.

Kind regards,

Ms Adrienne Nieuwenhuis
Acting Chief Commissioner
12 February 2025

Dr Mary Russell
CEO