



# TEQSA: Implications for university operations

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1. From AUQA to TEQSA
  2. TEQSA and the Standards Panel
  3. Principles for TEQSA's regulatory function
  4. The Standards Framework
  5. The Threshold Standards
  6. Impact on University operations
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## 1. From AUQA to TEQSA

- AUQA was a quality agency responsible for auditing:
  - the quality of Australian universities,
  - those Commonwealth, State and Territory authorities responsible for accrediting universities and higher education courses offered by other providers
- TEQSA is a regulatory and quality agency for higher education:
  - Established by the TEQSA Bill 2011
  - Has now taken over quality audit responsibilities from AUQA
  - Will begin its regulatory function in January 2012
  - [State and territory Government Accreditation Authorities have ongoing regulatory authority until January 2012]
- Overarching rationale for TEQSA:
  - to assure quality in a period of significant expansion

### TEQSA

- An independent body operating at arm's length from government
- Regulatory functions include registration and re-registration, accreditation and re-accreditation, investigation, enforcement
- Responsibility is shared by Minister for Tertiary Education and Minister for Research (in line with portfolio responsibilities)
- TEQSA Commissioners are appointed by Minister for Tertiary Education in consultation with Minister for Research

### Standards Panel

- Appointed by Minister for Tertiary Education in consultation with Minister for Research
- Develop and maintain the Higher Education Standards Framework
- Standards are legislative instruments made by the relevant minister (after consultation with the other)
- Independent of TEQSA

## TEQSA

- Dr Carol Nicoll (Chief Commissioner)
- Mr Michael Beaton-Wells (full time Commissioner)
- Ms Dorte Kristoffersen (full time Commissioner)
- Mr Ian Hawke (part time Commissioner)
- Mr Eric Mayne (part time Commissioner)

## Standards Panel

- Prof Alan Robson, former VC of UWA (Chair)
- Prof Joanne Wright, DVC(Academic), Uni of SA
- Prof Richard James PVC (Participation and engagement), Uni of Melb
- Prof David Siddle, former DVC(R) at UQ
- Adrienne Nieuwenhuis, TEQSA director

TEQSA's broad approach is based on three principles:

- **Regulatory necessity**: exercise of power does not burden a regulated entity any more than is reasonably necessary
- **Reflecting risk**: exercise of power has regard to the history of the regulated entity and the risk of noncompliance with the *Threshold Standards* and relevant legislation
- **Proportionate regulation**: exercise of power is in proportion to any non-compliance or future risk of non-compliance

## 4. The Standards Framework comprises

- Provider Standards, comprising:
  - Provider Registration Standards
  - Provider Category Standards
  - Provider Course Accreditation Standards
- Qualification Standards
- Teaching and Learning Standards
- Research Standards
- Information Standards
- any other standards ...

**The  
threshold  
standards**

- **Provider Standards**
  - on the minister's desk, ready to be made (final draft yet to be seen)
- **Qualifications Standards:**
  - a second round of consultation is imminent and UA Standing Group on TEQSA has engaged with DEEWR

*DEEWR is aiming for both sets of standards to be made by the Minister by the end of November, 2011*

- **Teaching and Learning Standards:**
  - initial consultation on a discussion paper occurred in mid-2011
- **Research Standards:**
  - little yet (but ERA Mark II is underway)
- **Information Standards:**
  - little yet (but DEEWR will launch the *My University* website early next year)

1. The higher education provider is **reputable and accountable** for the higher education it offers.
2. The higher education provider has the **financial resources and financial management capacity** to sustain higher education provision consistent with the Provider Registration Standards.
3. The higher education provider shows **sound corporate and academic governance** of its higher education operations.
4. The higher education provider maintains **academic quality and integrity** in all its higher education operations.
5. The provider's higher education operations are **well-managed** and human resources are appropriate.
6. The higher education provider defines and meets its **responsibilities to students**, including the provision of information, support and equitable treatment.
7. The higher education provider ensures there are **well-maintained physical and electronic resources and infrastructure** sufficient to enable the achievement of its higher education objectives (including offshore activities).

- 4.1 The provider's objectives for its higher education learning and teaching include cultivating in students critical and independent thought and the capacity of learning throughout life.
- 4.2 The provider promotes and protects free intellectual inquiry and expression in its higher education learning, teaching, and research activities.
- 4.3 The provider protects academic integrity in higher education through effective policies and measures to:
  - ensure the integrity of student assessment
  - ensure the integrity of research and research activity
  - prevent, detect and address academic misconduct by students or staff, including cheating and plagiarism
  - ensure that academic staff are free to make public comment on issues that lie within their area of expertise
  - ensure that the awarding of multiple qualifications, including qualifications offered in conjunction with another institution, protects the integrity of the higher education qualifications offered by the provider.
- 4.4 Research carried out under the provider's auspices meets appropriate codes of conduct, safety, and ethics clearance processes, consistent with legislative or other regulatory requirements and national guidelines.
- 4.5 Where the provider has an arrangement in place with another institution for the other institution to manage or deliver some or all of a higher education course on the provider's behalf, the provider has effective mechanisms to manage and quality assure all aspects of the arrangement, including aspects related to the admission and support of students and delivery of the course to ensure student learning outcomes equivalent to those for the same course when delivered by the provider.

As part of the registration process under TEQSA, a higher education provider may apply to TEQSA for registration within a particular provider category:

## **Provider categories**

- Australian University
- Australian University College
- Australian University of Specialisation
- Higher Education Provider
- Overseas University
- Overseas University of Specialisation

- The provider self-accredits and delivers qualifications that meet the Qualification Standards across a range of broad fields of study (including Masters (Research) and Doctoral degrees in at least three broad fields of study).
- The provider has been authorised for at least the last five years to self-accredit at least 85% of its total higher education courses, including Masters (Research) and Doctoral degrees in at least three broad fields of study.
- The provider undertakes research that leads to the creation of new knowledge and original creative endeavour at least in those broad fields of study in which Masters (Research) and Doctoral degrees are offered.
- The provider demonstrates the commitment of teachers, researchers, course designers and assessors to the systematic advancement of knowledge.
- The provider demonstrates sustained scholarship that informs teaching and learning in all fields in which higher education courses are offered.
- The provider identifies and implements good practices in student learning and teaching, including those that have the potential for wider dissemination nationally.
- The provider offers an extensive range of student services, including student academic and learning support, and extensive resources for student learning in all disciplines offered.
- The provider demonstrates engagement with its local and regional communities and demonstrates a commitment to social responsibility in its activities.
- The provider has systematic, mature internal processes for quality assurance and the maintenance of academic standards and academic integrity.
- The provider demonstrates that their application for registration as a university has the support of the relevant State, Territory or Commonwealth government.

## Standards for each higher education award

- Each higher education award must meet the following six standards
  - Course design is appropriate and meets the Qualification Standards (*and hence complies with the Australian Qualifications Framework*)
  - Course resourcing and information is adequate
  - Admission criteria are appropriate
  - Teaching and learning are of high quality
  - Assessment is effective and expected student learning outcomes are achieved
  - Course monitoring, review, updating and termination are appropriately managed

Despite the proportionate and risk-based approach, universities are likely to need:

- An initial review to determine any current areas of noncompliance with the threshold standards (e.g. compliance with *Qualification Standards*)
- An explicit account of how each threshold standard is met (since we need to be in a position to demonstrate compliance to TEQSA)
- An explicit process for monitoring and recording compliance with each threshold standard
- An explicit process for responding to and recording any observed instance of non-compliance
- To respond to any requests or directives from TEQSA prompted by TEQSA's monitoring of institutional performance (whether on the basis of institutional data regularly collected by TEQSA or occasional information that is provided to TEQSA by a third party or available publically)
- To participate in whatever quality assurance process TEQSA establishes to fulfill its QA function



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