TEQSA update

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.

New acting head for TEQSA

Professor Nick Saunders AO has joined TEQSA as full time acting Chief Commissioner and Chief Executive Officer.

Professor Saunders is former Vice-Chancellor and President of the University of Newcastle and joins current TEQSA Commissioners Mr Michael Wells (full-time Commissioner) and Emeritus Professor Cliff Walsh (part-time Commissioner).

Former Acting Chief Commissioner and CEO, Ms Dorte Kristoffersen, has taken up a senior position with the Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications.

The TEQSA Commission sits every Thursday to consider regulatory business, and single Commissioners consider course accreditations and re-accreditations on a weekly basis outside of these sessions.

▶ More information about TEQSA's governance arrangements is online at http://teqsa.gov.au/about/governance.

Regulatory streamlining update and future directions

TEQSA continues to examine ways to streamline requirements and reduce administrative burden for providers. Reforms implemented so far have allowed TEQSA to prioritise focus on initial registration applications, and to providers with identified risks and a track record of regulatory concern.

Reforms to this point have resulted in:

▶ reduced evidence requirements for low risk providers by tailoring assessment processes

▶ reduced timelines for completing course accreditation and re-accreditation assessments

▶ reduced information requests of providers.

The TEQSA online provider portal has been in operation since June and has been well received by registered providers. The portal allows secure electronic submission of applications, evidence and information requests and saves documents for multiple uses, if necessary. If your organisation does not have access to the provider portal, please contact your Case Manager.

TEQSA will continue to work with the higher education sector and key stakeholders to consolidate these positive results, and to identify and develop further opportunities for reform.

Risk assessment update

TEQSA has completed its first annual cycle of risk assessments under the revised Risk Assessment Framework (RAF) released in March. Risk assessments are used by Case Managers to inform the scope of re-registration and course accreditation processes, enabling a significantly reduced set of evidence requirements for providers with low overall risk ratings. Information about the framework is online at http://www.teqsa.gov.au/regulatory-approach/risk-assessment-framework.

Statistics Report on TEQSA Registered Higher Education Providers

In early September TEQSA released a statistics report on TEQSA registered higher education providers. The report is the first release of selected data held and analysed by TEQSA for its regulatory purposes, providing an all-encompassing view of the sector that has not previously been available.

The report provides data on providers, students, staff and finances, based on information gathered via TEQSA's Provider Information Request (PIR), the National Register of Higher Education Providers, data from the Department of Education's main national higher education collections and TEQSA's regulatory activities.

TEQSA will update the report in early 2015 and will continue to share insights from our quality assurance activities with the sector.

You can download a copy of the report at http://www.teqsa.gov.au/news-publications/statistics-report-teqsa-registered-higher-education-providers.

New guidance notes open for comment

TEQSA has published the latest in its series of guidance notes, intended to provide greater clarity for providers in the interpretation and application of selected standards. All guidance notes are open for comment for a period of three months from their publication on the TEQSA website.

The latest guidance notes open for comment address academic governance, corporate governance, nested courses and workforce planning. You can find copies of the guidance notes at http://teqsa.gov.au/news-publications/current-consultations.

TEQSA would like to thank those who have provided feedback on guidance notes so far. This feedback is being considered prior to the publication of final versions.

Meetings and consultations

Since the July TEQSA Update, TEQSA has met with Universities Australia's Quality Assurance sub-group and sector peak bodies ACPET, COPHE, and TDA. In addition to these meetings, both TEQSA and ASQA met with English Australia and ACPET as part of an ongoing regulator/ELICOS forum.

Since the July TEQSA Update, the Commission has twice met with the TEQSA Advisory Council. Engagement with the Advisory Council is constructive and positive for the Agency. The Acting Chief Commissioner has also met with the Universities Australia Deputy Vice-Chancellors International and Academic.

The TEQSA Commission has met with the Higher Education Standards Panel to discuss issues around the proposed new standards.

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Higher Education Standards Framework

A number of providers have contacted TEQSA asking about transition arrangements from the current standards to the new standards, should they be implemented by the Minister. This has been a topic of discussion between TEQSA and the Higher Education Standards Panel as both parties are keen to minimise any disruption to providers caused by any change.

TEQSA Case Managers will assist providers with applications due in the cross-over period between the old and new standards. If you have any concerns about your upcoming applications, please contact your Case Manager.

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Annual Report 2013/14 now available

TEQSA's Annual Report for 2013/14 was tabled in Parliament in October. An electronic version is available online at http://www.teqsa.gov.au/news-publications/teqsa-annual-report-2013-2014.

International update

Recent international developments within TEQSA include the signing of two Memoranda of Understanding with the China Education Association for International Exchange and the Office of Higher Education, PNG.

These memoranda allow TEQSA and counterpart agencies to share information on their respective regulatory and quality assurance standards, and map evidence requirements with the goal of promoting common evidence between the two jurisdictions.

TEQSA also hosted a week-long placement by a staff member of the Council for Private Education (Singapore). This was a valuable experience for both parties, deepening links between the two agencies.

More information about TEQSA's international engagement is on the TEQSA website at http://teqsa.gov.au/about/international-engagement.

Proposed changes to the National Register

TEQSA is seeking feedback on proposed amendments to the National Register, which would include the length of time a provider or a course is registered by TEQSA.

Where TEQSA has made a registration decision on a provider, the number of years registered will be included on the provider details. For courses TEQSA has made a decision on, the number of years accredited will be displayed on the course details.

The provider and course information TEQSA must include on the Register is outlined in the National Register Guidelines (online at http://www.comlaw.gov.au/Details/F2013L01143). This also includes details of providers whose registration has been cancelled by TEQSA.

Please email any feedback on the proposed changes to consultation@teqsa.gov.au by **Friday 12 December 2014.**

Ongoing provider feedback

TEQSA is receiving valuable information from its online feedback survey to better understand a provider's regulatory experiences with TEQSA. The information TEQSA receives from this survey helps to identify pressure points in completing regulatory applications, assists to improve processes and better focus the guidance TEQSA offers providers.

The survey is online at https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/RegulatoryFeedback. If you have any questions or suggestions about the survey, please email comms@teqsa.gov.au.

TEQSA in numbers:

(figures for 1 July 2014 to 31 October 2014)

3 initial registrations

12 renewals of registration

66 renewals of course accreditation

46 initial course accreditations

9 renewals of CRICOS registration