



# TEQSA Guidance Note: Workforce Planning

## Overview

This Guidance Note explains how TEQSA addresses the requirements in the Threshold Standards that relate to workforce planning. Both Registration Standards (5.1, 5.2) and Course Accreditation Standards (2.1, 4.1) require providers to have sufficient, appropriately qualified academic leaders and staff to achieve their higher education outcomes, in short: a staff profile appropriate to their scale and objectives.

Other Guidance Notes provide some complementary guidance on the staff profile itself, especially the Guidance Notes on:

- Academic leadership
- Staff qualifications and professional equivalency (forthcoming).

In order to achieve the desired staff profile, providers need to have in place:

1. a planning process that will support building the profile appropriate to the provider's mission and strategic directions; and
2. an appropriate plan or other documentation resulting from that planning process
3. implement staff recruitment and appointment strategies.

## Points of Guidance

### What is workforce planning in higher education?

Workforce planning is a term used to describe the planning process undertaken to ensure an organisation has the right people, with the right skills, in the right positions at the right time. Workforce planning is most important at the time of establishing a new course, new discipline stream, or when a provider is commencing operations as a higher education provider. For existing providers, periodic workforce planning will focus on ensuring that the staff profile is developed and sustained, and adapted to changing circumstances and emerging opportunities.

### Desirable features of a workforce planning process

Some of the features of a workforce planning process that TEQSA will look for include:

- ▶ Systematic assessment of expected staff profile (numbers, levels, skills and experience, fields) needed to meet a provider's higher education objectives and achieve expected student learning outcomes, and of gaps compared to current staffing
- ▶ Consideration of both external factors (such as availability of skills, competition, changes in government policy) and internal factors (such as the age of the workforce, budget, current and proposed higher education courses of study, fields of education and research areas)
- ▶ Formulation of strategies and objectives into a plan
- ▶ Alignment of the plan with the organizational strategic plan and budgets

- ▶ A consultative and deliberative approval process that ensures the plan is considered and authorized by the appropriate managers and governance bodies
- ▶ Implementation of the Plan through effective policies and procedures e.g. for staff selection and appointments
- ▶ A cyclical process of periodic revision to ensure that the plan remains adapted to future needs.

## Desirable features of a Workforce Plan

TEQSA recognises that approaches to workforce planning are likely to vary over the diverse range and scale of higher education providers. Smaller providers may include their workforce plan as a component within the organisational strategic plan. New providers will need to show how they will scale their academic workforce up progressively as student numbers are projected to increase.

A fully developed workforce plan will typically include:

- ▶ *Outline of the strategic context*
  - Including the provider's overall strategic objectives
- ▶ *Analysis of the current and future staff profile*
  - Especially qualifications and experience of staff at all levels and in the various fields of education currently taught and planned
- ▶ *Identification of gaps between current and future staff profile*
- ▶ *Identification of strategies and/or initiatives to fill the gaps and build the profile, such as:*
  - Recruit new staff members
  - Develop and promote existing staff members
  - Manage the performance of underperforming staff members.
- ▶ *Designation of managers responsible for carrying out the strategies*
- ▶ *Identification of performance indicators that will assist in determining whether the objectives are being met.*

Of these, the most important elements to be codified in a plan are identification of strategies/initiatives to achieve human resources objectives, and how the achievement of these objectives will be assessed or measured. TEQSA would expect all providers to have incorporated these into a plan (whether a stand-alone workforce or human resources plan or a section of the organizational strategic plan).

Once a plan has been finalized, it then needs to be implemented, and periodically the provider needs to monitor whether the objectives of the plan are being achieved.

## References

Coates, H., et al, 2009, *The attractiveness of the Australian academic profession: A comparative analysis*, ACER Research Briefing, retrieved 5 June 2014 available from: [http://research.acer.edu.au/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1010&context=higher\\_education](http://research.acer.edu.au/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1010&context=higher_education)

Hugo, G. and Morriss, A., 2010, *Investigating the Ageing Academic Workforce: Stocktake*, report commissioned by Universities Australia from The National Centre for Social Applications of Geographic Information Systems, retrieved 5 June 2014 from: <https://www.universitiesaustralia.edu.au/news/commissioned-studies/Academic-Workforce#.U5Am1mV-1I>

KPMG's 10 Steps to Strategic Workforce Planning: <http://www.kpmg.com/global/en/services/advisory/management-consulting/people-change/pages/strategic-workforce-planning.aspx>

Standards Australia, *HB 299-2008 Workforce Planning*, available from: [infostore.saiglobal.com](http://infostore.saiglobal.com)

Southwell, D., 2012, *Good Practice Report: Revitalising the academic workforce*, commissioned by the ALTC, retrieved 5 June 2014 from: <http://www.olt.gov.au/resource-revitalising-academic-workforce-2012>

Workforce planning guide, Australian Public Service Commission, available from: <http://www.apsc.gov.au/publications-and-media/current-publications/workforce-planning-guide>

## TEQSA Contact

For further information about or discussion of *workforce planning* please contact your case manager in the first instance.