



Terms of reference - Independent Expert: Australian National University

1. TEQSA is undertaking a compliance assessment under section 59 of the [Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011](#) (TEQSA Act) of The Australian National University (ANU). The assessment focusses on ANU's compliance with its obligations under Domain 6 of the [Higher Education Standards Framework \(Threshold Standards\) 2021](#) (Threshold Standards). TEQSA sent a notice of compliance assessment to ANU on 30 June 2025 setting out TEQSA's concerns (Attachment A).
2. To inform TEQSA's compliance assessment and its regulatory options, TEQSA requires the Independent Expert to provide an opinion on whether ANU's corporate governance, leadership and culture is operating effectively, with particular reference to whether:
 - a. actual or potential conflicts of interest are identified and appropriately managed, and whether this is tested and challenged (where appropriate);
 - b. the development of plans, priorities and responses (including those focussed on financial sustainability) is informed by an appropriate breadth of perspective and oversight, including internal consultation, external advice, and consideration and discussion of that internal consultation/advice by Council;
 - c. relevant risks associated with the implementation of plans/priorities/change are appropriately identified, discussed and addressed at Council and among ANU leadership;
 - d. in cases where concerns about ANU's corporate governance, its leadership, or its culture do arise, there are effective mechanisms to raise and respond to those concerns, including through complaints and grievance processes.
3. In undertaking this review, the Independent Expert's activities will include, but are not limited to:
 - a. undertaking targeted consultations and interviews with ANU staff, students, and current and former Council members;
 - b. conducting interviews with ANU senior executives and governance officeholders;
 - c. reviewing Council papers, meeting minutes, and decision records;
 - d. examining financial statements, reporting frameworks, and audit materials;
 - e. analysing organisational culture, leadership practices, and staff wellbeing issues;
 - f. considering relevant legal, compliance, and policy documentation;
 - g. identifying systemic or root causes of governance concerns; and,
 - h. advising TEQSA on implications for higher education governance more broadly.
4. In forming their opinion on the matters set out in 2. above, the Independent Expert will produce a written report for TEQSA. The report will set out the independent Expert's findings, analysis and recommendations, and will include:
 - a. the Independent Expert's assessment of the matters set out at point 2

- b. recommendations for ANU to address any identified risks
- c. the evidence relied upon by the Independent Expert in forming their views and recommendations.