Australian Government

Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency

Application guide for self-accrediting authority

Version 4.0

Effective from 12 November 2025

TEQSA

Contents

Background

This guide reflects TEQSA's current process for all registered higher education providers to follow when applying for self-accrediting authority.

A provider can submit an application for self-accrediting authority under Section 41 of the *Tertiary Educations Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011* or to expand its existing scope of self-accrediting authority at any time.

We are undertaking a review of our regulatory risk framework that will inform the evolution of TEQSA's regulatory approach. This will ensure regulatory efforts are aligned with the most critical risks that require regulatory intervention, allowing TEQSA to most effectively prioritise our resources and regulatory activities. We will engage in wider consultation with the sector about a revised regulatory risk and quality assurance framework in 2025.

The best way to stay informed about consultation opportunities and updates about our approach to regulatory risk is to sign up to our monthly TEQSA e-News update.

This guide will be updated as we further align our regulatory processes and operations to a revised regulatory risk framework.

Overview

Stage 1

Prepare your application

This guide contains the evidence requirements for self-accrediting authority. Providers are encouraged to review the resources published guides and guidance notes in preparing their application.

Stage 2

Submit your application

The application must be in the approved form and accompanied by the required evidence and the relevant application fee.

Stage 3

Application is assessed by TEQSA

TEQSA's assessment team assesses the application and documents their findings. This stage may involve TEQSA making additional requests for information.

Stage 4

Findings and recommendations

The assessment team makes recommendations to the TEQSA Commission. Where TEQSA is not satisfied that a provider meets all requirements of the Threshold Standards, draft findings will be sent to the applicant for response.

Stage 5

Application is decided by the TEQSA Commission

TEQSA notifies the applicant of the outcome.

Stage 6

Decision is published on the National Register

Application process

Stage 1 Prepare your application

In preparing your application, TEQSA highly recommends that you closely review the requirements of the *Tertiary Educations Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011* (TEQSA Act) and the *Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021* (Threshold Standards) to understand your obligations. Your application should demonstrate how you meet, and will continue to meet, each of these obligations.

Evidence requirements

Applications for self-accrediting authority should include the following evidence:

- a written submission (*self-assurance report*) of up to 10 pages demonstrating how the governing body assures itself that it meets Standards 5.1, 5.3, 6.1, 6.2, 6.3 and Criteria B2 of the Threshold Standards

- an index listing any supporting evidence referenced throughout the self-assurance report (*index*)

- a document setting out the scope of self-accrediting authority being applied for, clearly detailing the AQF level/s for each field of education that self-accrediting authority is being sought (*scope*)

- the most recent independent reviews of the effectiveness of the governing body and its academic governance processes (including planned and completed actions arising from these reviews) (*governance reviews*)

- evidence of comprehensive course reviews and improvement activities for the courses of study in the fields of education/s in which self-accrediting authority is being sought (including evidence that any actions arising have been developed and implemented) (*course review and improvement evidence*)

- evidence of risk identification, management, and mitigation, including a risk register, and any relevant plans, policies, procedures, and frameworks (*risk management*)

- any additional evidence requirements as set out in the section below (*additional evidence requirements*).

Further details about self-assurance reports, governance reviews, scholarship and course design, approval and monitoring are set out in the pages that follow.

Additional evidence requirements

For providers seeking self-accrediting authority for courses that:

- are delivered in a **Language other than English (LOTE)** the self-assurance report should include detail of how the governing body is assured that students have equitable access to

academic and student learning support, all policies and procedures, and course materials in the language other than English. The LOTE template is available for download in the application form, and must also be completed for applicable courses

- are delivered in a **Country other than Australia** the self-assurance report should include details of how the governing body is assured that its overseas delivery meets the applicable Threshold Standards, including evidence demonstrating monitoring, review and improvement activities

- are delivered by a **Third Party or Partner Arrangement** the self-assurance report should include details of how governing body is assured that its third party or partner arrangements comply with the Threshold Standards, including evidence of agreements detailing the roles and responsibilities, performance monitoring and student support arrangements between the provider and partner (Standard 5.4)

- include **Work Integrated Learning** including detail of how the governing body is oversighting placement activities, and evidence of placement agreements, quality assurance of placement providers, locations and supervision, pre-placement preparation materials for students, and academic and student support for students while on placement (Standard 5.4)

- have a **Major Postgraduate Research Component** (Masters (Extended), Masters (Research) and PhD) evidence should be provided demonstrating that the research, research training and research integrity requirements of the Threshold Standards are met, including evidence of how the provider has established and fosters its research environment and scholarly activity.

Providers seeking to apply for **unlimited self-accrediting authority**, in addition to the evidence and additional evidence requirements outlined above, applications should include:

- evidence of how the governing body is assured that it is prepared to meet the challenges of designing and delivering courses of study in fields of education and/or at AQF levels where it might have limited or no existing expertise

- corporate and academic strategic plans, academic workforce plans and evidence of mature research and scholarship environments

- a table consisting of at least three (2 digit) fields of education, detailing the cycle of course review and improvement activities for each course listed within the fields of education. TEQSA will use this list to identify a sample of courses and request evidence of the course review and improvement cycle for a defined period and/or number of cycles demonstrating mature and advanced.

Concurrent renewal of registration and self-accrediting authority application evidence requirements

Applications for concurrent renewal of registration and self-accrediting authority, should include the following evidence:

- a written submission (*self-assurance report*) of up to 15 pages demonstrating how the governing body assures itself that it meets Standards 5.1, 5.3, 6.1, 6.2, 6.3 and Criteria B2 of the Threshold Standards

- an index listing any supporting evidence referenced throughout the self-assurance report (*index*)

- a document setting out the scope of self-accrediting authority being applied for, clearly detailing the AQF level/s for each field of education that self-accrediting authority is being sought (*scope*)

- the most recent independent reviews of the effectiveness of the governing body and its academic governance processes (including planned and completed actions arising from these reviews) (*governance reviews*)
- evidence of comprehensive course reviews and improvement activities for the courses of study in the fields of education/s in which self-accrediting authority is being sought (including evidence that any actions arising have been developed and implemented) (*course review and improvement evidence*)
- evidence of risk identification, management, and mitigation, including a risk register, and any relevant plans, policies, procedures, and frameworks (*risk management*)
- any additional evidence requirements as set out in the section above (*additional evidence requirements*).

Any provider with a high risk to financial position, as determined by TEQSA's most recent Provider Risk Assessment, should submit the following evidence:

- financial projections, statements, and supporting evidence demonstrating financial viability and sustainability (*financial evidence*).

Further information on financial evidence requirements for renewal of registration is available in the [renewal of registration application guide](#).

Remember if you are intending to submit a concurrent renewal of registration and self-accrediting authority application, renewal of registration applications are due **at least 180 days** before registration is due to end.

Self-assurance reports

The self-assurance report for a self-accrediting authority application should consist of no more than 10 pages (15 pages for concurrent renewal of registration and self-accrediting authority application), and address the requirements set out below.

Meritorious applications will demonstrate that cyclical course review and improvement activities are effective features systematically embedded in the provider's operations across all courses of study (not just for those courses within the scope of the self-accrediting authority application).

The self-assurance report should:

- describe reporting and review activities and outputs that are part of regular, internal governance and quality assurance cycles for the provider, including the boards' systems for delegating authority and for reviewing those delegations
- demonstrate how the provider is operating effectively and sustainably (as set out in Standard 6.2.1)
- show the provider's corporate governing body is sufficiently well-informed to identify and address material risks to its viability, sustainability and educational offerings (Standard 6.1.3–6.1.4)
- describe the provider's institutional framework and processes for academic governance (Standard 6.3) and provide evidence of how its peak body assures itself of the effectiveness of its processes for course approval (Standard 5.1.2) and its ongoing monitoring, review and improvement activities that ensure the quality of education being delivered (Standard 5.3.7)
- synthesise and refer to supporting evidence that demonstrates the claims put forward.

The self-assurance report focuses on the function of a provider's governing bodies, noting their fundamental importance to the provider's operations, including their accountability for the quality of education delivered, their compliance with the Threshold Standards and other legislative requirements.

The report should demonstrate the effectiveness of a provider's self-assurance processes as an integral part of their day-to-day operations. In preparing the report, providers should consider the key sector-wide issues that pose significant institutional risk. We appreciate the nature of risk and the institutional responses to manage risk may vary for each provider, according to the context in which it is operating.

We encourage all providers to review the [key considerations for providers preparing an application for self-accrediting authority](#).

Scope of self-accrediting authority

This document should clearly define the scope of self-accrediting authority that is being applied for. It should list the AQF level/s for each field of education that self-accrediting authority is being sought. For example:

- AQF level 5, 6 and 7 – broad field of education 08 Management and Commerce

- AQF level 9 (Coursework, Extended, and Research) – broad field of education 08 Management and Commerce

- AQF level 8 and 9 (Coursework only) – narrow field of education 0603 Nursing

If you are applying for self-accrediting authority at the broad (2 digit) field of education, do not list the narrow (4 digit) or detailed (6 digit) fields education or courses within this field of education. Similarly, if you are applying for self-accrediting authority at the narrow (4 digit) field of education, do not list the detailed (6 digit) fields of education or courses within this field of education. If you list this information, TEQSA will consider the application at the lowest specified level.

For providers seeking self-accrediting authority at AQF level 9, you must specify whether the application is for Masters (Coursework) only, or whether it also includes Masters (Extended) and/or Masters (Research).

Governance reviews

The Threshold Standards require all providers to undertake periodic independent reviews of the effectiveness of both the governing body and its academic governance processes. The scope of the governance review should include the extent to which the governing bodies fulfil the range of responsibilities outlined in Standards 6.1.3, 6.2, 6.3 of the Threshold Standards.

> TEQSA encourages providers undertaking governance reviews to view them primarily as an opportunity to have an independent person or persons of significant expertise evaluate the effectiveness of their own governance and mechanisms for self-assurance, and to support the continuous improvement of their organisation.

A review of this nature will provide much better institutional value than a review that is commissioned and conducted for more narrow purposes, such as to produce a report to be submitted with a TEQSA application.

An external review of governance is an important exercise in testing both the operation of governance mechanisms and the consideration of previous perspectives that may have been sought by a provider. In this regard, TEQSA expects careful reflection on the scope of the reviews and the qualifications and experience of those undertaking the reviews. We particularly emphasise the value of seeking diverse perspectives from a range of external reviewers.

We encourage providers to consider TEQSA's guidance to providers about engaging an independent expert to undertake a review.

A review of this nature should also be able to validate evidence presented in the self-assurance report, including that pertaining to the provider's ability to assure itself that risks to higher education have been identified, and material risks are being managed and mitigated effectively.

> **Planning reviews to occur well in advance of the self-accrediting authority application will enable you to provide evidence demonstrating the implementation of actions and improvements in response to the review.**

TEQSA expects the evidence submitted with the self-accrediting authority application will also include the provider's consideration and response to the findings and recommendations of the reviews. This typically takes the form of a detailed action plan that sets out actions, timeframes and accountabilities.

In considering governance reviews, we look for the following characteristics:

- **reviewers:**
  - > have an independent perspective
  - > are competent to undertake the review including having relevant qualifications, experience and expertise.
- **reports:**
  - > make findings against the governance standards (Domains 5 and 6) of the Threshold Standards
  - > are based on sufficient scope and quality of evidence
  - > take an evaluative approach, addressing strengths, opportunities for improvement and key risks
  - > where practicable, provide an opinion on the provider's improvement plans, capacity and progress.
- **action plans:**
  - > respond to recommendations made by the review
  - > include a timeline for implementation, with clear accountabilities
  - > include mechanisms for monitoring the progress and effectiveness of any actions taken.

Comprehensive course reviews

Criteria B2.4a of the Threshold Standards requires that a provider has completed at least one cycle of review and improvement in relation to the courses of study in which self-accrediting authority is sought. TEQSA's position is that, for the purposes of meeting criteria B2.4a, the 'cycle of review and improvement' includes a comprehensive course review of the nature contemplated by Standard 5.3.

As such, TEQSA requires evidence demonstrating the effective implementation of policies and procedures for the development, approval, quality assurance, and review and improvement of courses of study. Providers should submit examples of relevant reports and actions associated with their course development and review cycles.

For the courses of study within the scope of the self-accrediting authority application being made, TEQSA will request evidence of comprehensive reviews showing the implementation of course review processes, including, but not limited to, the following:

- Evidence of a systematic approach to the collection and use of data to monitor performance and support continuous improvement. The analysis of course of study performance should include:

  > consideration of benchmarks across at least 3 cohorts of graduates for student progress: student outcomes, student satisfaction and student support

  > overall student performance and outcomes by specific cohorts identified by the provider to be at risk

  > other stakeholder feedback (e.g. industry or professional accrediting bodies)

  > benchmarking activities (e.g. end-of-semester unit evaluations, external referencing and/or external reviews)

  > other evidence of the effectiveness of the course, including academic staff scholarly activity.

- Evidence of course amendments and improvements aligned to the most recent course of study review findings, including:

  > the consideration of course of study review reports by academic governance committees (e.g. faculty committees, academic board and relevant course and curriculum sub-committees)

  > the implementation of outcomes and improvement strategies.

Stage 2 Submit your application

Submitting your application

Section 41 of the TEQSA Act requires that an application for self-accrediting authority is to be made in the approved form, accompanied by any information, documents and assistance that TEQSA requests, and be accompanied by the relevant fee.

The self-accrediting authority application form will be made available in the provider portal upon the provider's request. Please visit our website for more information about accessing and submitting an application using the TEQSA provider portal.

TEQSA expects that most of the evidence you are referencing will be existing documents that have been produced and used for internal purposes. We encourage providers to use URLs and hyperlinks where possible for information that we can easily download from your website. We ask that you do not use URLs or hyperlinks for any internal systems, for example, SharePoint or other document management solutions.

Please use the naming conventions described in TEQSA's guide on naming conventions for evidence.

When your application is ready, submit it to TEQSA via the provider portal. Be sure to include:

- all required information and evidence
- a signed declaration.

Providing false or misleading information in an application is a serious offence under the TEQSA Act.

Payment of assessment fees

After you submit your application, an invoice will be generated in the provider portal. TEQSA does not have an online payment facility.

The application fee for a provider category change is set out on TEQSA's website. Please note, if TEQSA identifies significant risks that have not been adequately addressed in a provider's application, TEQSA may elect to commence a compliance assessment. In line with TEQSA's Cost Recovery Implementation Statement, this would be at a cost to the provider and reflects the additional work effort required by TEQSA.

Your application is considered valid when you have used the approved application form and paid the application fee specified on the invoice. TEQSA will only commence assessing your application after it has been submitted and the fee has been paid.

Application fees do not attract GST. TEQSA's ABN is 50 658 250 012.

Stage 3   Application is assessed by TEQSA

Applications for self-accrediting authority are considered under Part 3, Division 5 of the TEQSA Act. TEQSA may authorise a provider to self-accredit its courses if we are satisfied that the provider meets the relevant requirements of the Threshold Standards.

Enquiries and requests for further information

TEQSA assesses whether the application and supporting evidence submitted meets the relevant requirements of the Threshold Standards. We may request further information as questions arise. For example, you may be asked to provide evidence from your index, address apparent gaps in your evidence, or clarify aspects of your evidence, or explain how certain policies and procedures are implemented in practice. TEQSA will ask you to respond to requests for information online, through a request created in the provider portal which is referenced as an 'REQ'.

TEQSA has specialist contact teams across the agency that are best placed to assist you in a timely and efficient manner when you have a specific enquiry about one of our functions. For enquiries relating to self-accrediting authority applications, please contact us at: reregistration.enquiries@teqsa.gov.au.

For other assistance, please access our key contacts at TEQSA webpage to help direct your enquiry to the most appropriate TEQSA team contacts.

Site visits

TEQSA may visit one or more of your delivery sites or headquarters if required. We may conduct these virtually or in-person. At this visit, TEQSA may, for example, inspect facilities, equipment and resources, or clarify how relevant procedures, policies and operations are implemented through interviews with key personnel.

Site visits are another way of collecting evidence, and we will use observations and discussions held during a site visit in our assessment and decision-making to supplement or validate your written evidence. At the provider visit, TEQSA may interview various groups including students, staff, and members of corporate and academic boards.

Assessment timeframes

TEQSA's assessment timeframes are subject to a range of factors that can affect the time taken to make our assessments, including:

- the regulatory history of an existing provider, including the outcomes of previous assessments relevant to the application
- the strength and relevance of evidence presented by the applicant
- the risk of non-compliance with the Threshold Standards and the ability of the provider to demonstrate it has mitigated those risks
- the time taken by the provider to respond effectively to requests for information
- the level of resourcing available to TEQSA.

Stage 4   Findings and recommendations

If TEQSA's assessment team is satisfied that a provider meets the criteria for self-accrediting authority, it will recommend that TEQSA's Commission authorise self-accrediting authority.

In cases where the assessment team has concerns about an applicant's ability to meet the Threshold Standards and/or the criteria for self-accrediting authority, these will be set out in a Statement of Concerns to the provider who will be afforded the opportunity to respond and provide additional supporting evidence.

> **TEQSA's approach to this stage of the process will vary according to the nature of the issues identified.**

The assessment team will then review any information provided by the applicant and any other relevant entities before presenting the application to the TEQSA Commission.

Stage 5 Application is decided by the TEQSA Commission

The TEQSA Commission considers the recommendations taking into account the 3 basic principles for regulation set out in Part 2 of the TEQSA Act. These are regulatory necessity, reflecting risk, and proportionate regulation.

The TEQSA Commission may decide to:

- authorise a provider to self-accredit per the scope of self-accrediting authority applied for
- authorise a narrower scope of self-accrediting authority and/or impose conditions on the registration of the provider
- reject the application for self-accrediting authority.

When considering whether to authorise self-accrediting authority or to reject the application, the TEQSA Commission will consider any representations made by the applicant in response to the proposed decision.

Notifying you of the decision

TEQSA will send you a Notice of Decision within 30 calendar days of making a decision to authorise or reject your application for self-accrediting authority.

In some cases, we may also request further information and/or may notify you of areas that may be explored further in future regulatory processes. TEQSA may also make observations or recommendations about areas for improvement to support quality enhancement.

If your application has not been authorised, or if conditions have been imposed on your registration, the Notice of Decision will be accompanied by a statement of reasons.

Our obligations with respect to notifying providers of our decisions about self-accrediting authority are set out in s42 of the TEQSA Act.

Review of decisions

Certain decisions made by TEQSA are reviewable. Please refer to our website for more information about reviews of TEQSA decisions.

Stage 6 — Decision is published on the National Register

Public report

TEQSA normally publishes reports of all decisions about provider registration and course accreditation to facilitate transparency of our processes, regulatory decisions and the reasons for those decisions.

A public report contains the name of the applicant to which the decision relates, the decision that has been made and the main reasons for the decision, and the legislative provision(s) which were the subject of the findings that informed the decision. This report is published on the National Register after TEQSA has notified the provider of a decision.

Refer to TEQSA's policy about public statements on TEQSA's regulatory decisions and processes for more information on our approach.

Updating the National Register

Where an application for self-accrediting authority has been authorised, the relevant entry on the National Register will be updated. Where conditions are imposed on the registration of a provider, details of those conditions will also be published.

Confidentiality and accuracy of information

TEQSA has statutory obligations in relation to confidentiality however, we operate within a public accountability framework. Where a higher education provider considers that its information should be treated as confidential by TEQSA, the provider should contact us before providing the information. For more information, see our approach to confidential information.

Document information

Version #	Date	Key changes
1.0	October 2014	
2.0	1 May 2015	
3.0	18 April 2017	Updated for the HESF 2015 and made available as beta version for consultation.
3.1	3 May 2017	Updated to clarify Standards required and related evidence for Tables 2, 4 and 5.
3.2	24 August 2017	Update to approach for assigning of the online application form in Stage 1.
3.3	18 March 2019	Updates to improve usability (e.g. numbering in Tables 2–5) and to clarify evidence requirements for applications made concurrent with an application for re-registration and also for extension of scope.
3.4	22 September 2022	Major update to reflect HESF 2021 and revised regulatory approach.
4.0	12 November 2025	Major update to reflect revised regulatory approach.

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