



Title Name
Position
Organisation
Address (email or postal)

Dear Title Family-Name,

Ensuring student and staff safety and wellbeing in Australia's universities

With the new academic year commencing and universities preparing to welcome thousands of new and returning students, it is important to consider what is needed to ensure the safety, inclusion and wellbeing of students and staff, across Australia's higher education teaching and learning, and research environments.

As students return to campus, they do so in an environment marked by heightened debate and strong expression around issues of race, religion, geopolitics and freedom of speech. This context requires deliberate, visible leadership from universities.

We are writing to provide a clear reminder of your responsibilities to ensure that all students are safe, supported and able to participate fully in university life.

Many students may not have attended campus or participated in online learning since the antisemitic attack in Bondi Beach, in December last year. That attack and tragic loss of life may compound the sense that many Jewish students already held, of feeling unsafe, marginalised or targeted on campus.

We are asking vice chancellors to assess the adequacy of current arrangements to ensure students feel safe and supported on campus, including in classrooms, research spaces and online learning environments. It is an important time to make sure your policies and expectations about racism and acceptable conduct are clear and up to date. It is also important that student supports are available and timely, and that complaints processes are accessible and sensitive to the issues and trauma that students and staff may have experienced.

When expectations for acceptable conduct are not met, including with respect to racism, academic freedom and freedom of speech, it is important that policies are applied consistently and fairly. This also means intervening early where conduct risks undermining safety or inclusion.

Places of learning and research occupy a unique place in public life. The community is watching closely. The commencement of a new academic teaching period presents an opportunity to demonstrate that higher education institutions can balance academic freedom and academic standards with their fundamental obligation to keep students safe and to actively promote inclusive teaching and learning environments. This teaching period and beyond is an opportunity to rebuild trust where it has been strained.

TEQSA expects providers to be considering the issues identified above as part of their self-assurance processes at the beginning of the academic year.

Kind regards,

Prof Kerri-Lee Krause
Chief Commissioner

Dr Mary Russell
CEO

Wednesday 4 February 2026