Australian Government
Australian Skills Quality Authority

Australian Government
Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency

Advice note to dual sector providers on maturing corporate and academic governance

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ASQA

TEQSA

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Introduction

Dual sector providers are those which are regulated by both the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) and the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA).

ASQA regulates Registered Training Organisation's (RTOs) who deliver in the vocational education and training (VET) sector. TEQSA regulates higher education providers who operate in the higher education sector.

In June 2024, ASQA and TEQSA were tasked with developing a strategy to reduce regulatory burden for dual sector providers, as part of the tertiary harmonisation measure following the *Australian Universities Accord Final Report*.

In September 2025, ASQA and TEQSA published the *Dual Sector Regulatory Strategy* (the Strategy), identifying 3 key opportunities to reduce regulatory burden while supporting quality. These opportunities are:

1. Better facilitate information sharing and collaboration in key areas.
2. Where practical, optimise the alignment of evidence requirements for similar assessments while maintaining regulatory effectiveness.
3. Support dual sector providers to mature corporate and academic governance.

Opportunity 3 is detailed in the Strategy as follows:

> Providers are expected to demonstrate their maturity via outcomes of their corporate and academic governance systems and structures, as part of application-based assessments, cyclic reporting and requests for information.
>
> Where a provider's governance is less mature, their understanding and implementation of key self-assurance and risk management practices may be lacking. These providers will have difficulty reliably and consistently evidencing compliance in applications, complicating their preparation, and unnecessarily prolonging assessment processing by the regulator where more information is needed.
>
> Improving corporate and academic governance maturity could reduce this burden.
>
> Where ASQA and TEQSA communicate or interact with, or publish guidance for providers, there is an opportunity to better support providers to uplift their governance capabilities. This would help individual providers operate at a higher level, more effectively meet regulatory requirements, and access streamlined application processes, and would help mature the higher education and the VET sectors as a whole.

The purpose of this advice note is to help enact opportunity 3 by offering dual sector providers descriptions and examples of maturity in corporate governance and academic governance, representative of working towards best practice.

Legislative frameworks

Dual sector providers must comply with a range of legislation.

Key pieces of legislation relating to ASQA

- Standards for NVR Registered Training Organisations:
  - > *Outcome Standards for NVR Registered Training Organisations*. These are standards to ensure nationally consistent, quality outcomes for students and employers.
  - > *Compliance Standards for NVR Registered Training Organisations and Fit and Proper Person Requirements*. These are requirements which all RTOs must comply with, comprised of administrative, binary or process-oriented requirements.
  - > Credential Policy. This is an enforceable policy which outlines the credentials required for people delivering training and assessment and undertaking validation of assessment.
- *Financial Viability Assessment Requirements 2021*. This relates to training organisations' ability to meet financial viability requirements.
- *Data Provision Requirements 2020*. This sets out the requirement for providers to supply ASQA with data upon request, and to submit quality indicator data annually.
- Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF). This is the national policy for regulated qualifications in Australian education and training.

Key pieces of legislation relating to TEQSA

- *Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011* (TEQSA Act). The TEQSA Act established TEQSA and the regulatory framework for the higher education sector. It provides a standards-based quality framework with principles relating to regulatory necessity, risk and proportionality.
- *Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021*. These are the minimum requirements that a provider must meet and maintain to be registered to deliver higher education courses of study.

Key pieces of legislation relating to both ASQA and TEQSA

Providers delivering VET training and assessment and higher education courses to overseas students must be registered on the Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students (CRICOS) and comply with the Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) Framework. The ESOS Framework comprises the:

- *Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000* (ESOS Act)
- *Education Services for Overseas Students Regulations 2019* (ESOS Regulations)
- *National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018* (National Code)
- *ELICOS Standards 2018*
- *Education Services for Overseas Students (Foundation Program Standards) Instrument 2021*.

Other relevant legislation includes:

- *Corporations Act 2001*
- *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013*
- *Privacy Act 1988*
- *Fair Work Act 2009*
- Work health and safety legislation (Commonwealth, state and territory based)
- Anti-discrimination legislation (Commonwealth, state and territory based).

Dual sector providers may also be required to comply with other legislation and industry frameworks.

The 2025 Standards for RTOs and the Threshold Standards

Both the 2025 Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs), regulated by ASQA, and the Threshold Standards, regulated by TEQSA, contain standards relating to governance.

As a dual sector provider meeting one regulator's expectations does not negate the requirements of the other, noting differences in regulatory approaches across VET and higher education. A challenge for dual sector providers is that while alignment exists it is not absolute.[1]

Standards for RTOs 2025 (ASQA)	Threshold Standards (TEQSA)
Quality Area 4: Governance (Standards 4.1 to 4.4)	**Domain 3: Teaching** (Standard 3.2) **Domain 5: Institutional Quality Assurance** (Standard 5.3) **Domain 6: Governance and Accountability** (Standards 6.1 to 6.12) [2]

1. The content of the standards provided in this table represents a selective summary of those standards for comparison purposes and is not intended to be a guide on their interpretation. Interpretation of the standards should be made by reference to the original instrument as made.
2. These represent revised standards introduced by the *Higher Education Standards Framework Amendment (Threshold Standards) Instrument 2026*. See the instrument for rules in relation to timing of their application to different categories of providers.

Standards for RTOs 2025 (ASQA)	Threshold Standards (TEQSA)
Standard 4.1 Integrity and Accountability requires governing persons to be fit and proper, suitable, diligent, informed and to lead a culture of integrity, fairness and transparency.	**Standard 6.1 Governing Body and Corporate Governance** requires that there be a formally established governing body with independent members, which acts diligently, effectively and with integrity to maintain an equitable institutional environment, attend to governance functions, and be accountable, whose members are fit and proper persons. **Standard 6.6 Diversity of Perspectives: Governing body composition** requires that the governing body collectively has the skills, knowledge, capabilities, experience, independence of mind and diversity of perspectives to perform its role. **Standard 6.9.2 Trustworthy: lawful, ethical and responsible** requires that the provider develop and maintain an institutional culture that enables lawful, ethical and responsible operations consistent with its values and purpose.
Standard 4.2 Roles and Responsibilities requires staff and third parties to understand their roles, responsibilities and regulatory obligations.	**Standard 6.5 Accountability: Governance structures and accountabilities** requires that the governing body actively oversees and is accountable for strategy, performance, risk management, culture and compliance, and that roles and responsibilities of the governing body, academic body or equivalent and senior management are clearly delineated, understood and respected.
Standard 4.3 Risk management requires risks to students, staff and the organisation to be identified and managed.	**Standard 6.2 Corporate Monitoring, Assurance and Controls** requires that risks to higher education operations be identified, risk appetite and risk management strategy be defined, and material risks be effectively managed and mitigated. **Standard 6.11 Sustainable: Risk management** requires the governing body to proactively and effectively oversee risks to the achievement of the provider's purpose and objectives.

Standards for RTOs 2025 (ASQA)	Threshold Standards (TEQSA)
Standard 4.4 Continuous improvement requires systematic monitoring and evaluation to support quality delivery and continuous improvement of services.	**Standard 5.3 Monitoring, Review and Improvement (in Domain 5: Institutional Quality Assurance)** requires monitoring, review, and improvement of courses, including of teaching, delivery, research supervision, and student progress. **Standard 6.2 Corporate Monitoring, Assurance and Controls** requires monitoring of provider performance against targets, and action to correct underperformance. **Standard 6.3 Academic Governance** requires monitoring and action to improve academic quality and outcomes, and evaluation of the effectiveness of monitoring, review and improvement activities. **Standard 6.8 Transparency: Purpose, strategy and performance** requires the provider's purpose, strategic and short-term objectives to be clear and openly communicated, and that governance arrangements and performance against these objectives are transparent to stakeholders.
Not separately framed as academic governance. Expectations are distributed across **Quality Area 1: Training and Assessment** and **Quality Area 4: Governance requirements**.	**Standard 6.3 Academic Governance** specifically requires academic governance oversight of the quality of teaching, learning, research and research training. **Standard 6.7 Independence: Academic standards and freedom** requires development and maintenance of an institutional environment that upholds freedom of speech, academic freedom and academic and research standards, free from political or commercial influence, interference, or pressure.
While not framed as an aspect of governance, diversity and inclusion is considered in terms of the learning environment in **Quality Area 2: VET student support**.	**Standard 6.4 Preventing and responding to racism** requires development and maintenance of a safe and inclusive environment that prevents and responds to racism and other discriminatory conduct. **Standard 6.10 Inclusive and Responsive: Consultation and engagement** requires that the provider seek to understand the legitimate needs and expectations of students, staff and other stakeholders affected by its decisions.

Standards for RTOs 2025 (ASQA)	Threshold Standards (TEQSA)
Quality Area 3: VET workforce requires effective workforce management to ensure appropriate staffing for delivery.	**Standard 3.2 Staffing (in Domain 3: Teaching)** requires that the staffing for each course of study is sufficient to meet the educational, academic support and administrative needs of students, that academic staffing for each course provides the level and extent of academic oversight and teaching capacity needed, and that staff with responsibilities for academic oversight, teaching, and supervision are equipped for their roles. **Standard 6.12 Responsible: Workforce and remuneration** requires that Australian Universities maintain a documented, clear and sustainable workforce strategy, and that vice-chancellor remuneration is publicly available, financially responsible, and aligned with remuneration frameworks.

Further references

Hodge, S., Guthrie, H., Jones, A., & Waters, M. (2024). Curriculum across the great divide: exploring a key problem of Australian tertiary education. International Journal of Training Research, 22(1), 31-45.

Fowler, C. (2017). The Boundaries and Connections between the VET and Higher Education Sectors:" Confused, Contested and Collaborative." Occasional Paper. National Centre for Vocational Education Research Ltd. PO Box 8288, Stational Arcade, Adelaide, SA 5000, Australia.

Wheelahan, L. M. (2000). Bridging the divide: developing the institutional structures that most effectively deliver cross-sectoral education and training. NCVER Ltd.

Mende, C., Oswald-Egg, M. E., & Caves, K. (2025). Vocational education and training (VET) system governance: a systematic literature review. *Journal of Vocational Education & Training*, 77(5), 1419–1453.

Governance

Academic governance may include:

- maintaining effective oversight of teaching and training, student learning and skill acquisition, staff scholarship and professional development
- setting and monitoring benchmarks for academic quality, and interpreting and acting on academic and student/graduate outcomes
- effectively identifying, managing and mitigating risks to academic quality and integrity/ quality training and assessment
- maintaining academic/educational leadership consistent with the types and levels of education offered
- scrutinising and approving courses of study
- maintaining oversight of academic integrity.

Corporate governance may include:

- maintaining the appropriate knowledge and skills within the governing body/persons to allow complex and competent decision making, and for the governing body to fulfil its role
- ensuring the fitness and propriety of governing body members/persons
- ensuring the governing body/persons receives adequate internal advice to make informed decisions (reporting), and makes itself sufficiently informed to identify and address risks (monitoring)
- effectively identifying, managing and controlling risks to the provider's operations
- delegating authority to achieve effective management and accountability of the executive, and robust monitoring of the effectiveness of delegations to ensure they do not compromise compliance
- demonstrating how the governing body/persons knows the provider is compliant with the ESOS framework, Threshold Standards, and VET Quality framework.

Mature governance

Governance maturity can be described in different ways for different contexts. For example, TEQSA's draft Regulatory Risk Framework (RRF), whose purpose is to support consistent, contemporary, risk-based regulation of higher education providers, describes maturity in its corporate and academic governance key risk focus areas in terms of 4 differentiated levels from 'undeveloped' to 'advanced'.

The purpose of this advice note is to support continuous improvement by dual-sector providers and therefore offers more general descriptions of maturity in corporate and academic governance, representative of working towards best practice across a dual sector provider's higher education and VET operations.

Mature corporate governance

Corporate governance may be considered as maturing when it operates as a dynamic system of continuous self-assurance and proactive risk management. Self-assurance and risk management activities drive institutional improvement that builds confidence among students, staff and the community. For example:

- self-assurance and risk management is led by the governing body and reflects a culture that prioritises staff and student wellbeing, student experience and success, and where applicable, quality and integrity in research
- decisions made by the governing body are routinely informed by integrated institutional data (for example, student outcomes, financial, staffing capability, risk metrics), and the impacts of those decisions are measured and reviewed
- students, academic and professional staff are trusted partners in self-assurance and risk management
- outcomes and learnings from reviews and reflection positively shape institutional strategy and culture
- the governing body maintains strong assurance that the provider meets legislative and regulatory requirements through systematic monitoring, independent assurance mechanisms and clear accountability.

Mature academic governance

Academic governance may be considered as maturing when the provider's academic governance model of continuous improvement is recognised across all levels and parts of the institution and reflects a shared responsibility for academic quality and integrity. For example:

- academic, assessment and teaching improvements are peer reviewed and consistently operate beyond thresholds or compliance
- performance data supports the success of strategies to improve student attainment and graduate outcomes
- a comprehensive and dynamic program of academic risk management mitigates threats to award integrity that arise from cheating, collusion or plagiarism.

Academic governance encompasses governance arrangements relating to training and assessment as well as broader provider operations, consistent with the relevant higher education and RTO standards.

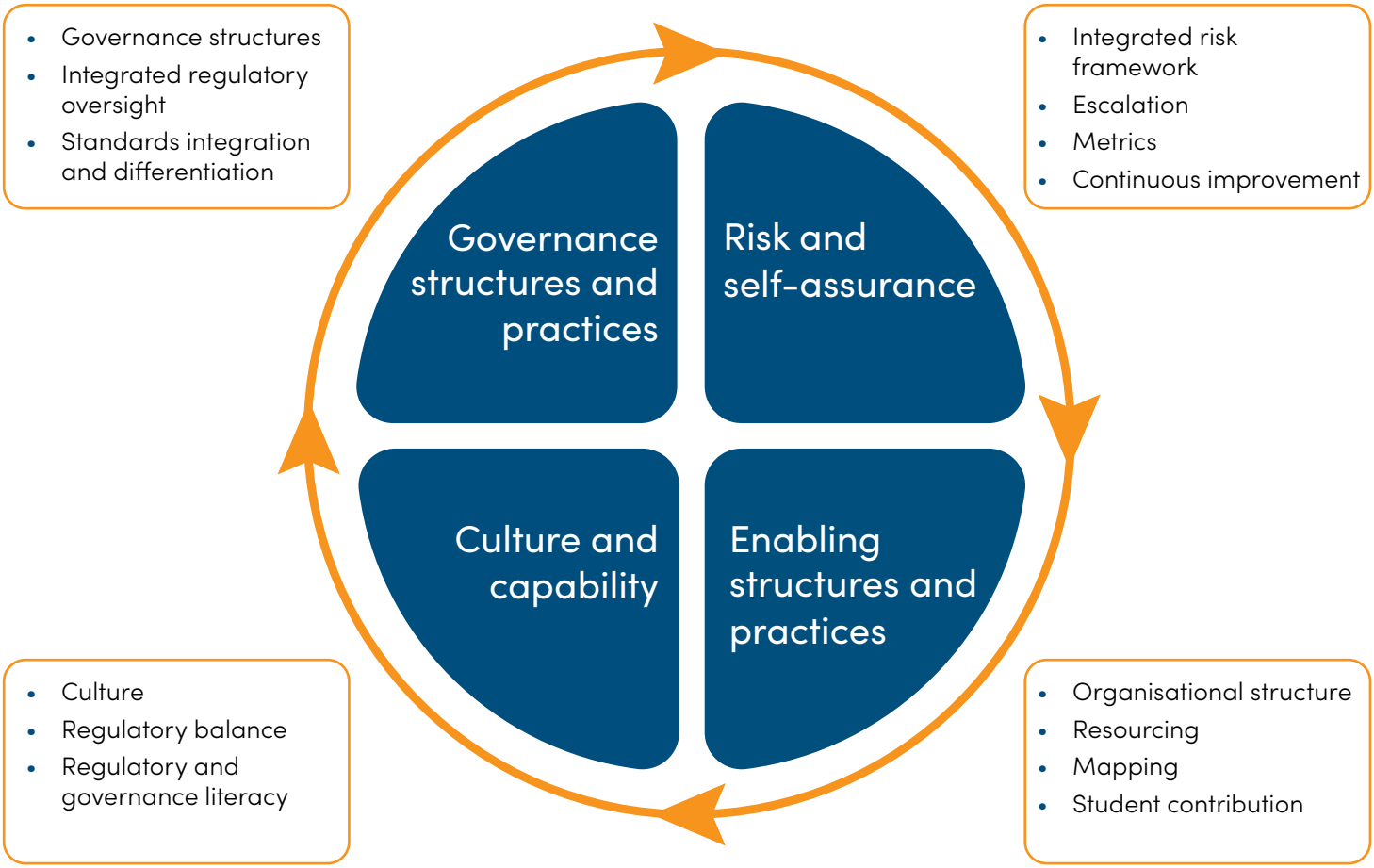
Support areas identified by dual sector providers

A thematic analysis of engagements with dual sector providers identified 4 domains which would benefit from support, with an associated 14 focus areas.

Focus areas provide guidance on progress towards provider governance maturity. Note they are distinct from the focus areas contained within TEQSA's Regulatory Risk Framework. They assume that dual sector providers have in place the necessary governance arrangements and practices to comply with the 2025 Standards for RTOs as regulated by ASQA and the Threshold Standards as regulated by TEQSA.

Note: these focus areas are not intended to cover all aspects of ASQA's and TEQSA's requirements, rather to indicate areas where providers may focus their governance attention on improving practice and developing beyond compliance with relevant standards as a dual sector provider.

Domain name	Domain descriptor	Focus areas
Governance structures and practices	Advice informing governance bodies' requirements, including key considerations in their terms of reference and membership along with ways to ensure that both higher education and VET issues receive in-depth independent scrutiny within these bodies.	Governance structures
		Integrated regulatory oversight
		Standards integration and differentiation
Risk and self-assurance	Advice regarding risk oversight across higher education and VET from a governance practice perspective, along with operational considerations in risk mitigation, monitoring and reporting within the continuous improvement lifecycle.	Integrated risk framework
		Escalation
		Metrics
		Continuous improvement
Enabling structures and practices	Advice to enable operational structures and practices needed to support effective governance oversight within dual sector providers.	Organisational structure
		Resourcing
		Mapping
		Student contribution
Culture and capability	Guidance and advice around cultural barriers to effective dual sector governance and capabilities needed to ensure appropriate engagement and scrutiny of all issues by all members of governance bodies.	Culture
		Regulatory balance
		Regulatory and governance literacy



Advice notes

Advice notes provide:

- a guiding principle
- an explanation of the area or topic requiring focus
- key challenges and risks, as identified through sector engagement
- a maturing provider description
- good practice examples, where appropriate
- links to further resources.

Glossary

Terminology in this document uses the:

- TEQSA Glossary of terms
- Department of Employment and Workplace Relations Glossary of terms.

Additional terms used:

- Delegated authority
- Vocational education and training (VET)
- Higher education
- Higher Education Academic Board (HEAB)
- Vocational Education Academic Board (VEAB)
- Terms of reference (TORs).

Advice note



Domain: Governance structures and practices

Advice informing governance body requirements and key considerations in their terms of reference and membership, and ways to ensure that both higher education and VET issues receive in-depth independent scrutiny within these bodies.

Focus areas

- Governance structures
- Integrated regulatory oversight
- Standards integration and differentiation.

Governance structures

Focus area	Governance structures
Principle	Governance arrangements are fit-for-purpose, tailored to the organisation's type, scale, risk profile and regulatory context, ensuring proportionality and effectiveness in meeting dual sector obligations.

Governance arrangements in dual sector providers must encompass both regulatory frameworks, and both corporate and academic governance.

The organisation's type, size, scale and offerings all impact upon the design and implementation of appropriate governance arrangements.

Dual sector providers vary significantly in size, scale and operating model, and in some cases academic and corporate governance functions may be combined rather than separated into distinct bodies.

Dual sector providers have a variety of governance structures to suit organisational needs.

All dual sector providers have a primary governing body, be that a board, council or other entity. This group is usually concerned with corporate governance matters. Academic governance matters are often delegated to an academic board, which may itself have specialist committees reporting to it. It is common that an audit and risk subcommittee of the corporate board is also in place.

Dual sector providers have a variety of approaches to the independence of members of governing bodies. Some providers will have independent members for the primary governing body, and staff members for academic sub-committees. The need for independence is informed by the provider risk profile, size and scale, and other factors such as capability and capacity internally and externally.

Some dual sector providers favour a model which separates governance of programs across each regulator. In practice, this means operating parallel governance committees which focus on activity according to the specific regulator. Other providers implement an integrated governance structure in which both ASQA and TEQSA regulated programs are overseen by the same committee.

Dual sector providers need to consider whether their terms of reference and membership guarantee independent scrutiny for both the VET and higher education parts of its provision. In institutions with very small VET or higher education components, it may be necessary to add additional expert external members to ensure these aspects of their work have the level of expert independent scrutiny needed.

Key risks and challenges (as identified through dual sector provider engagement)

Risk/challenge area	Description
Fit for purpose	Governance arrangements may be dominated by corporate, higher education or VET governance styles, and hence are not fit-for-purpose for a dual sector provider.
Size and scale	Smaller providers may struggle to resource and operate governance structures and processes separate to management processes.
Membership of committees	If governing body members, especially academic governance groups, are comprised only of staff employed by the provider, there is an increased risk that adequate and rigorous scrutiny may be constrained (particularly where a culture of critical peer review is not already in place).
Complexity	There is a risk in dual sector providers that the complexity of two regulatory frameworks, and siloed governance committees, may lead to such a volume of matters that the critical issues are not adequately surfaced and scrutinised.

A mature provider

As dual sector providers mature their governance structures they may:

- develop detailed and comprehensive documentation and guidance to facilitate a governance structure where roles and responsibilities required to perform governance oversight, of both higher education and VET, are not only made clear but are also consistently practised
- consciously balance academic and corporate governance activities to ensure that both are appropriately undertaken on a continuing basis. An organisation with mature governance will, depending on the organisation's nature and context, be aware of risk points where one aspect of governance can dominate (for example, financial sustainability over quality of course provision) and have monitoring strategies in place
- obtain independent review and advice on the appropriateness of governing bodies and the effectiveness of the oversight and monitoring provided against both regulatory frameworks
- undertake self-evaluation, including analysis of the type of matters considered at different levels of governance bodies, the volume and intensity of scrutiny, oversight and monitoring by governing persons, and the confidence of governing persons across both regulatory frameworks

- develop, document, socialise and regularly evaluate self-assurance models which explicitly reference governance structures and associated accountabilities
- understand and, where needed, undertake capability uplift of governing persons to ensure they are proficient and confident to scrutinise matters which fall under the "other" regulator.

Further resources

- TEQSA *Guidance note: Academic governance*
- TEQSA *Guidance note: Corporate governance*
- ASQA *Leadership and accountability practice guide* (Standards 4.1 and 4.2)

Integrated regulatory oversight

Focus area	Integrated regulatory oversight
Principle	Governance structures allow clear visibility and independent oversight to ensure adherence with both higher education and VET regulatory frameworks.

Oversight across both the higher education and VET regulatory frameworks is crucial for dual sector providers.

Governance structures, including councils and boards of directors, academic boards as well as the committees which report to them, perform a critical role. Governance structures contain explicit accountabilities for interpreting, monitoring and compliance across ASQA and TEQSA.

Governance structures are varied depending on the size, nature and context of the provider. Depending on the mix of provision, the governance structures may be organised in such a way as to meet the requirements of the dominant regulator or be skewed towards either corporate and/or academic governance.

See *Focus area: Organisational structures* and *Focus area: Governance structures*.

Key risks and challenges (as identified through dual sector provider engagement)

Risk/challenge area	Description
Mix of provision	Depending on the 'mix' of higher education and VET delivery at the provider there may be a bias by virtue of the volume of activity to one set of regulatory matters over another.
Corporate versus academic governance structures	The increased complexity of dual sector regulatory frameworks combined with other regulatory frameworks, such as industry or corporate, may create challenges in establishing effective governance structures. This is particularly evident in academic governance where greater variance across regulatory frameworks exists.
Independent expertise across higher education and VET	Where a provider has very limited offerings in higher education or VET, there can be challenges to ensuring that those on the governing bodies, with expertise in the less dominant area, have sufficient independence.

A mature provider

As dual sector providers mature their governance structures they may:

- develop and implement self-assurance models which are comprehensive, ensuring all aspects of both regulatory frameworks are well understood and comprehensively addressed
- ensure that terms of reference for governing committees specify that sufficient independent members are included with specialist expertise and experience in both VET and higher education
- map work plans of committees to both regulatory standards, to ensure coverage and clarify accountabilities and responsibilities
- understand and, where needed, undertake capability uplift of governing persons to ensure they are highly skilled and confident to scrutinise matters which fall under the regulator of the sector in which they do not specialise
- engage in independent reviewing of integrated self-assurance models and frameworks to ensure they are and remain fit-for-purpose
- strive to apply key strategies which arise in one sector across the entire operation, where appropriate (for example, the *National Higher Education Code to Prevent and Respond to Gender-based Violence* which is specifically higher education but has relevance for all students).

Further resources

- ASQA *Leadership and accountability practice guide* (Standards 4.1 and 4.2)
- ASQA *Statement of Regulatory Expectations – fit and proper person requirements and notification of material changes*

Standards integration and differentiation

Focus area	Standards integration and differentiation
Principle	Governance approaches clearly distinguish what is materially different between ASQA and TEQSA, while leveraging areas of alignment to reduce duplication and complexity.

The regulatory frameworks of ASQA and TEQSA contain areas of commonality and of difference. Policies and practices appropriately reflect sector-specific expectations (for example, academic scholarship versus credentialing requirements), ensuring integrity and compliance in both domains.

Providers experience this difference: TEQSA focuses on governance, academic quality oversight and assurance; ASQA focuses on training delivery, assessment practices and operational compliance. Hence, dual sector providers may experience differing expectations across regulators (noting also the different kinds of regulatory oversight that TEQSA provides for self-accrediting higher education providers versus non self-accrediting providers).

Many dual sector providers aim for an integrated policy framework across both regulators.

The approaches of the regulators are fundamentally different. However, both regulators apply risk-based, evidence-based and proportionate methodologies. TEQSA focuses on governance,

institutional systems and academic quality assurance, while ASQA undertakes assessment and monitoring activities that evaluate performance, focused on the demonstration of quality training and student outcomes.

Key risks and challenges (as identified through dual sector provider engagement)

Risk/challenge area	Description
Siloed approach	Over differentiation within a provider's policies and practices can lead to undesirable differences in student learning experiences and opportunities.
Efficiency	A lack of integration of higher education and VET policies can mean opportunities for efficiency may be missed.
Duplication	A lack of integration of higher education and VET policies can mean duplication and contradictions may occur.
Regulator expectations	Applying the most rigorous standard to both areas can ensure quality across the board (for example, noting that governance is explicit in TEQSA's Threshold Standards while ASQA's expectations are less explicit, there are good arguments for applying the TEQSA governance expectations across higher education and VET).

A mature provider

As dual sector providers mature their governance structures they may:

- undertake a detailed analysis to determine which areas of the regulatory frameworks of ASQA and TEQSA are common, given the provider's scale and scope, and deal with these areas in policy and practice in the same way
- determine through analysis, including risk assessment, the areas of the regulatory frameworks of ASQA and TEQSA which are materially different, given the provider's scale and scope
- develop and document a detailed and comprehensive self-assurance framework which articulates this analysis of common areas and areas of difference
- ensure all staff understand and are informed, both in policy and practice, of the specific differences in approaches required for higher education and VET students
- ensure that responsibility is allocated for reviewing the framework, when there is a change in regulatory requirements of either TEQSA or ASQA, and that this appears on the annual workplan for relevant governance bodies
- understand where the application of the more explicit Threshold Standards expectation on governance is applicable to VET operations and incorporate this into the provider's self-assurance model. Conversely, where a different approach is determined for governance of VET programs, ensure that this is comprehensively documented in the self-assurance model

- where possible and practical, integrate policies across both regulatory frameworks
- ensure staff responsible for quality and compliance reviews understand the difference in approach between each regulator and translate this into organisational practices through review feedback.

Further resources

- TEQSA *Guidance note: Academic leadership*
- ASQA's *Regulatory assessment and monitoring approach*

Domain: Risk and self-assurance



Advice regarding risk oversight across higher education and VET from a governance practice perspective, along with operational considerations in risk mitigation, monitoring and reporting within the continuous improvement life cycle.

Focus areas

- Integrated risk framework
- Escalation
- Metrics
- Continuous improvement

Integrated risk framework

Focus area	Integrated risk framework
Principle	Risk management frameworks integrate corporate and academic risks across both ASQA and TEQSA regulated activities.

An integrated risk management framework allows for a holistic view of provider risk that reflects the distinct and the overlapping requirements of both sectors and ensures that risk ratings are sufficiently harmonised.

Regulators expect that dual sector providers have effective and embedded risk management and quality assurance practices. These should focus on the range of areas covered by the regulatory frameworks of both ASQA and TEQSA.

The governing body must have clear oversight of both academic and corporate risks, including notification of identified risks and how they are managed.

Where separate governing activities occur for higher education and VET, a process must exist to bring these risks together for oversight by a higher governance body.

Key risks and challenges (as identified through dual sector provider engagement)

Risk/challenge area	Description
Inappropriate elevation of risk	In the non-dominant area (i.e. VET or higher education) material risks may not be appropriately elevated if they are 'lost' in the volume of information relating to the other larger more dominant area.
Governing person/s capability	Risks may not be understood by specialist governing persons in their non-specialist area.
Siloed capability	In large dual sector providers, risk may be handled by specialist risk officers and reported through corporate channels to an audit and risk committee of the board. This can result in a disconnect between corporate and academic risk management, or risk oversight, if those involved do not have the required sector specific understanding.

Risk/challenge area	Description
Bias	Depending on the context and makeup of the organisation, corporate risk may be prioritised over academic risk, or vice versa.

A mature provider

As dual sector providers mature their governance structures they may:

- develop and apply an integrated risk management framework which ensures the materiality of risks (academic and corporate, higher education and VET) are understood and harmonised
- ensure staff accountable for risk documentation, analysis and provision of advice to governing bodies have a detailed understanding of both regulatory frameworks
- develop policies and processes which allow for identification, evaluation and analysis of all risks, rather than as separate corporate and academic risks
- develop a culture which encourages identification and regular discussion around risk
- ensure that risk identification is part of the business-as-usual work of leadership staff
- actively maintain connection between risk frameworks and self-assurance frameworks, both in conceptualisation and application.

Further resources

- ASQA *Risk management practice guide* (Standard 4.3)

Escalation

Focus area	Escalation
Principle	Operational processes provide transparent, independent and well-understood escalation pathways to ensure regulatory issues are consistently identified and addressed across both sectors.

In dual sector providers the ability for relevant and significant matters to be escalated to governing bodies is essential.

In large-scale, often complex, entities, higher education and VET may have separate management and governance models, resulting in different escalation pathways. In smaller providers, single pathways may exist.

In complex organisations there may be several layers of governing bodies (i.e. peak governing body, education and risk sub committees, sometimes specific teaching and learning and quality committees, and faculty or discipline-level committees). See *Focus area: Governance structures.*

This multilayer approach can support or hinder escalation of significant matters, and creates a need for governing persons to be intentional in escalating matters.

Barriers to effective escalation in a dual sector provider include structural separation between sectors, cultural silos, limited capability in dual sector governance and resource constraints.

Anecdotally, providers report that when matters of non-compliance or identification of areas for improvement are found by a regulator, staff indicate they are known problems, while governance body members often indicate a lack of awareness.

Key risks and challenges (as identified through dual sector provider engagement)

Risk/challenge area	Description
Uninformed governing bodies	With unclear or blocked escalation pathways the governing bodies may be uninformed of material matters, leading to an inability to perform the duties of governing persons.
Governance seen as relevant to too few staff	If governance processes are invisible to teaching and technical support staff, these staff may not understand their responsibility in escalating issues so that they become visible to governing bodies.
Complex and layered governance groups	Where a governance model contains layers of committees there is a risk that important and material matters become lost and are not escalated to the governing group with the appropriate delegated authority.
Risk assessment	Risks may not be uniformly or consistently rated or escalated across higher education and VET. This can result in material risks being overshadowed by a large volume of other risks, and hence not given appropriate attention by governing persons.
Hurdle rather than risk management mentality	Faculty or discipline-level committees often see the committee structures above as hurdles to overcome, in accrediting new courses, and reporting as a compliance obligation. This mentality can result in an overly positive picture being described and a reluctance to share identified risks with higher committees.

A mature provider

As dual sector providers mature their governance structures they may:

- actively protect escalation pathways through organisational design and governance structures and constant monitoring
- periodically seek feedback from relevant staff on any barriers or blockages to escalation of material matters
- ensure escalation processes are formalised and documented, with defined reporting cycles on key matters
- undertake risk assessment of governance related matters in a uniform manner across higher education and VET
- use a formal review process to monitor escalation activity, ensuring that learning and improvement occur when it is found that a matter was not appropriately escalated
- guarantee that risk identification and mitigation strategies are standing items on governance paper templates at all committee levels, and that these items are provided with appropriate levels of attention
- adopt a proactive learning culture and fully engage in scenario planning when incidents are reported with other providers. See *Focus area: Regulatory and governance literacy* and *Focus area: Continuous improvement.*

Metrics

Focus area	Metrics
Principle	Data and metrics are aligned to standards, enabling consistent monitoring of performance, risk and compliance across dual sector delivery.

In dual sector providers, metrics to monitor compliance with both higher education and VET regulatory frameworks may lack cohesion.

On many occasions narrative style reports are provided to governing bodies which lack a sufficient evidence base.

The different regulatory frameworks often call for a focus on different data. For a dual sector provider this creates a large volume of indicators which are expected to be provided to governing bodies.

Rigour around the analysis of indicators, in terms of risk and importance, availability and reliability, are essential in supporting a mature governance approach.

A good practice self-assurance model for a dual sector provider will contain metrics (provision of data and monitoring of trends) which address standards for both sectors, either together or separately.

Metrics are integral to a functional risk framework and associated continuous improvement activities. Data is critical in identifying improvement opportunities, tracking progress over time and evaluating effectiveness of interventions.

Key risks and challenges (as identified through dual sector provider engagement)

Risk/challenge area	Description
Dominant providers	Providers with limited VET or higher education provision run the risk that their metrics will be developed without consideration of the key risk and compliance expectations across both sectors.
Data overload	The availability of large volumes of data creates the risk of data overload, with governing persons provided with data that does not inform or support decision making, or data organised in a way that does not make it easy to identify problematic areas.
Data literacy	Many key metrics in higher education and VET require some knowledge and understanding to interpret and understand the data. There is a risk that governing persons may not possess adequate levels of data literacy in the VET and higher education context.
Capacity	In smaller providers data collection may be manual and data analysis capability may be limited and fail to support governance activities.

A mature provider

As dual sector providers mature their governance structures they may:

- develop a comprehensive and complete set of metrics or indicators mapped to both regulatory frameworks
- undertake prioritisation of indicators to ensure that governing bodies receive information on a set of metrics which are relevant and reliable. This prioritisation process may include rating the available metrics for reliability and relevance, and risk analysis of areas of both frameworks to ascertain, in the organisation's context, which metrics require the most monitoring and oversight
- map key metrics to each governing group's work plans to ensure data relevant to the group's purpose is provided, and that each group is monitoring relevant key metrics
- provide induction and support to governing persons on data literacy in the higher education and VET context. For example, higher education data such as Quality Indicators for Learning and Teaching (QILT) and, in a VET context, completion rates, are sector specific and require some knowledge by governing persons to be fully understood and used. See *Focus area: Regulatory and governance literacy*
- support the ongoing development of staff capability to provide data, and monitor trends and risk implications
- link key metrics to risk frameworks and continuous improvement actions to ensure clarity of expectations, and to allow transparent monitoring of progress
- continue to improve governance templates which facilitate the quick identification of data suggesting under performance or non-compliance (for example, presentation using traffic light indicators)
- both governing persons and management continue to review the usefulness of data provided to governing bodies and refine as needed.

Continuous improvement

Focus area	Continuous improvement
Principle	Risk mitigation is embedded within a continuous improvement cycle, ensuring that insights from assurance activities, external reviews, internal audits and feedback are systematically actioned and monitored.

Continuous improvement is embedded in both regulatory frameworks. In the Threshold Standards (which apply in the higher education sector), it is linked to governance and supported by formal review cycles. In the VET sector, continuous improvement is explicitly embedded in the 2025 Standards for RTOs as one component of a suite of governance requirements.

Commitments to bodies of work to strengthen controls are incorporated into operational plans and risk identification, and enacting of mitigating responses are part of the formal responsibilities of key leadership roles.

Governing bodies play a key role in reviewing data, monitoring performance and driving completion of corrective actions.

An organisational culture which values continuous improvement and staff engagement in improvement activities is key. See *Focus area: Culture*.

In a dual sector provider, the cross-referencing of risks and associated continuous improvement activities across both types of delivery is critical. This allows for adequate resourcing of continuous improvement activities across both higher education and VET and across corporate and academic risk areas. See *Focus area: Resourcing*.

Key risks and challenges (as identified through dual sector provider engagement)

Risk/challenge area	Description
Segregation of continuous improvement activities	Segregation of continuous improvement activity creation, implementation and monitoring across the two regulatory frameworks may result in reduced efficiency and missed opportunities to support students.
Latent continuous improvement opportunity	If continuous improvement registers are not cross-checked, a risk may remain latent in one part of the organisation while being treated or improved in another part.
Responsibility for risk management vested in too few staff	When risk registers are seen only by senior managers and governance bodies, staff with visibility of emergent issues may not report in a way that results in updates to the risk registers viewed by governance bodies.

A mature provider

As dual sector providers mature their governance structures they may:

- implement, apply and review a continuous improvement process which allows governing persons to oversight activities across both regulators
- implement, apply and review a continuous improvement process which allows governing persons to provide oversight across both academic and corporate improvement activities
- avoid missed opportunities for improvement through the development of a process to cross-check continuous improvement activities across both types of delivery
- ensure suitable resource prioritisation is applied to continuous improvement activities across both academic and corporate improvement activities
- implement communication mechanisms so that staff across levels of the organisation have visibility of relevant parts of the risk register and opportunities to identify new risks.

Further resources

- ASQA *Continuous improvement practice guide* (Standard 4.4)

Domain: Enabling structures and practices



Advice to enable operational structures and practices needed to support effective governance oversight within dual sector providers.

Focus areas

- Organisational structure
- Resourcing
- Mapping
- Student contribution

Organisational structure

Focus area	Organisational structure
Principle	Organisational design and structure clearly define who has oversight and integrates both regulatory frameworks.

A variety of satisfactory organisational structures exist for dual sector providers. These structures arise from a range of drivers including business type, size, complexity and strategy.

When designing and adapting structures and associated accountabilities the types of regulators which the provider must comply with (ASQA and TEQSA, plus other corporate and industry regulators) must be understood in detail.

Explicit accountabilities within roles, at appropriately senior levels relating to regulatory standards, is critical to ensure governing persons can be provided with assurance and information relating to a range of regulatory matters.

The roles and responsibilities of technical experts on VET or higher education standards and compliance, and of members of bodies providing specialist oversight of one or the other, are made clear.

Key risks and challenges (as identified through dual sector provider engagement)

Risk/challenge area	Description
Single point of failure	In a dual sector provider with most of the provision in either higher education or VET the technical expert/s for the smaller provision may represent a single point of failure.
Siloed structure	Organisational structures which are siloed (i.e. each type of provision is managed and governed separately) run the risk of no oversight across both regulatory frameworks.
Confused accountabilities	In large organisations it may be unclear who has accountability for standards.

A mature provider

As dual sector providers ensure the appropriateness of organisational structures they may:

- map accountabilities across governing bodies to both the Threshold Standards and Standards for RTOs
- specify accountabilities and responsibilities for leadership and management to both the Threshold Standards and Standards for RTOs
- specify responsibilities of teaching staff and technical support staff for communicating challenges and raising identified compliance and quality issues with more senior staff and with governance bodies
- provide capability uplift and refresher updates as standards and risk profiles change. These should be provided for both governing persons and relevant staff
- continue to ensure all staff have a good understanding of standards, policies and procedures as required in their job role.

Further resources

- ASQA *Leadership and accountability practice guide* (Standards 4.1 and 4.2)

Resourcing

Focus area	Resourcing
Principle	Appropriate resourcing is allocated to governance, self-assurance and compliance functions to ensure sustained capability across both sectors.

Dual sector providers must comply with both ASQA and TEQSA regulatory frameworks. Operating under dual regulators creates an increased regulatory expectation and an associated call on resources.

This broader regulatory expectation requires resource allocation in terms of staff expertise and impacts finances.

Larger providers may create dedicated teams and governance processes for each regulatory framework.

Tension often exists between allocation of resources to governance and oversight versus operations, and this must be managed by leadership. See *Focus area: Organisational structure* and *Focus area: Governance structures*.

While specialist teams and structures ensure dedicated resources in each area, sector specific focus can also lead to duplication, reduced efficiency and siloed governance activities.

Providers must maintain awareness in both design and operations of potential 'single point of failure' employees or structures for the non-dominant area.

Key risks and challenges (as identified through dual sector provider engagement)

Risk/challenge area	Description
Single point of failure	Where a provider is dominated by one type of provision, there is a risk that the smaller type of provision is overseen by a limited number of staff, hence creating risk of a single point of failure.
Lack of adequate scrutiny	If staff resources are not sufficient to appropriately undertake governance activities there is a risk that scrutiny and monitoring will be sub-optimal.
Insufficient agility in resource allocation	Where a new quality or compliance risk emerges, there needs to be sufficient agility in resource allocations to allow additional resources to be allocated to address the emergent risk.
Fit for purpose	Resource needs for apparently equivalent activities in higher education and VET can be substantially different and so allocating based on an incomplete understanding of requirements can lead to compliance and quality risks (for example, implementing a new training package in VET can be much more resource hungry than updating a course in higher education).

A mature provider

As dual sector providers mature their governance structures they may:

- continue to monitor and review resource allocation for governance oversight of the standards across both regulators. To ensure independence this review is best undertaken by staff accountable for tasks
- provide specialist secretariat support to assist with governance activities and support governing persons (as appropriate to size and context)
- where either capability or capacity is limited within the organisation, it is desirable to secure external resources.

Further resources

- ASQA *VET workforce management practice guide* (Standard 3.1)
- TEQSA *Guidance note: Staffing*

Mapping

Focus area	Mapping
Principle	Requirements across ASQA and TEQSA, and any other relevant regulatory frameworks, are systematically mapped to identify alignment, gaps and efficiencies in compliance and assurance activities.

Dual sector providers are responsible for compliance with two regulatory frameworks.

An understanding of the intersections and specifics of each is needed to ensure governance and oversight across all aspects of both frameworks.

Mapping is a complex activity as the focus of the two frameworks are different and partial alignment of areas is often more common than full integration.

Without mapping, duplication of effort, omissions or gaps in scrutiny are likely.

Often mapping activities must reconcile differences in regulatory guidance and balance varying interpretations of frameworks. Strong self-assurance models for dual sector providers can demonstrate how and why these differences have been interpreted and reconciled.

When mapping is undertaken, opportunities for efficiency and harmonisation often become clearer, depending on the organisational context. See *Focus area: Integrated regulatory oversight.*

A significant output of mapping is policy harmonisation. Where the two regulatory frameworks are sufficiently (even though not completely) in alignment a common policy is desirable for a dual sector provider.

Mapping is not a one-time activity as standards change, regulatory interpretations evolve and organisational structures shift.

Providers with a mature governance approach recognise they have the ultimate accountability for compliance and act accordingly.

Key risks and challenges (as identified through dual sector provider engagement)

Risk/challenge area	Description
Nuance and detail missed	Some dual sector providers work on the assumption that the standards from one regulator are more rigorous than the other, in certain areas, and so align relevant policies with the requirements of the assumed more rigorous regulator. Without detailed mapping the nuance and detail in standards may be overlooked.
Student focus	There is a risk that the student as the central focus can be lost if efforts to map and harmonise regulatory frameworks are compliance focused.
Capability	If the person/s involved in mapping do not have a high-level understanding of the underpinning principles and assumptions behind both sets of standards, and the organisation's strategic context, there is a risk that mapping may result in omissions and gaps.
Efficiency	If mapping is not undertaken there is a significant risk of duplication of effort and unnecessary segregation of governance activity.

A mature provider

As dual sector providers mature their governance structures they may:

- undertake a review (internal or external) to ensure all aspects of both regulatory frameworks are comprehensively covered in both policy and practice
- on a regular basis, as appropriate to the provider context, bring higher education and VET experts together to map regulatory standards to governing bodies and senior leadership accountabilities, to ensure clarity and transparency
- have a student focus when developing and harmonising policies and procedures to ensure that pragmatic and robust harmonisation of policies in higher education and VET occurs
- develop and document self-assurance frameworks, and associated activities, which clearly articulate the organisation's rationale, where standards have been harmonised across the two regulatory frameworks. See *Focus area: Regulatory balance* and *Focus area: Differentiation.*

Student contribution

Focus area	Student contribution
Principle	Students are actively engaged in feedback and governance processes, ensuring their experiences are continuously improving across both higher education and VET contexts.

Engaging students in the governance of dual sector providers is important to ensure their perspective is heard and understood.

The student lifecycle is a unifying concept across higher education and VET, with the student experience often framed through the full lifecycle rather than through a higher education or VET lens.

Consistent student experience is a key driver for attempts to harmonise policy and associated practice and services.

Student input into policy development, and feedback on policy in practice, are key to successful governance and policy application.

Providers seek various channels and mechanisms to engage with and understand student needs and their perceptions on experiences, and translate this into governance persons' understanding and associated actions. A view widely shared among providers is that this area requires constant attention and effort, and provides significant opportunity for improvement.

Student input is part of quality self-assurance frameworks, particularly in monitoring course quality, teaching impact and the effectiveness of support services.

Data on student feedback is a key component of compliance demonstration and is used by management to satisfy governing persons that the organisation is compliant with the relevant regulatory frameworks.

Key risks and challenges (as identified through dual sector provider engagement)

Risk/challenge area	Description
Student engagement	Many students do not understand what governance is or how to engage in a governing body or committee, or feel daunted in raising issues.
Course timeframe	In courses that are of shorter duration (for example, most VET courses) it may be challenging for students to engage fully in governance committees (i.e. by the time they become familiar with the work they transition off the committee).
Information flow	Lack of information and data from students around needs, experiences and satisfaction puts governing bodies at risk of not focusing on improving the areas which are most impactful for students.

A mature provider

As dual sector providers mature their governance structures they may:

- design and implement avenues for students to engage in governance activities
- induct, support and mentor students who are engaged in governance activities
- encourage chairs to proactively seek input from students within governance body discussions
- consider that student contributions may be best positioned as a contribution to self-assurance processes (for example, course quality, teaching impact and support services) rather than directly into governance activities
- innovate and explore models to better access student feedback, including the use of technology, student focus groups, student advocates and culturally specific models
- understand that listening to students is a powerful lever in maturing governance.

Further resources

- ASQA *Diversity and inclusion practice guide*
- TEQSA *Guidance note: Diversity and equity*

Domain: Culture and capability



Guidance and advice around cultural barriers to effective dual sector governance and capabilities needed to ensure appropriate engagement and scrutiny of all issues by all members of governance bodies.

Focus areas

- Culture
- Regulatory balance
- Regulatory and governance literacy

Culture

Focus area	Culture
Principle	Cultural differences between higher education and VET are understood, fostering a cohesive organisational provider that values both scholarly and industry-informed knowledge and practice.

A dual sector provider will strategically understand the nature and value of both types of delivery (higher education and VET). This value may arise from a range of drivers including commercial opportunity, student pathways, access and equity, or industry requirements.

These include differences in professional providers, teaching expectations and attitudes to governance and scholarship.

Whether this strategic importance is transformed into culture is not a given. Governing persons and organisational leadership must actively steward this development of a culture which values both types of education. See *Focus area: Integrated regulatory oversight*.

A perception of status can exist, where higher education can be seen as more academic (or superior) and VET more hands on (or inferior). Should this perception be held by governance members its impact must be understood and mitigated.

A provider with mature governance clearly understands their role in both sectors, and the inherent value of each, embraces that diversity and governs accordingly.

Cultural differences shape and create expectations and associated behaviours within providers. Depending on the maturity of the organisation and its context, cultural resistance and differing priorities may exist.

Key risks and challenges (as identified through dual sector provider engagement)

Risk/challenge area	Description
Hierarchy of value	The risk that governing body members have a hierarchy of value depending on their history, skills and knowledge, which can lead to reduced scrutiny of perceived 'low value' programs.
Confidence	If cultural differences are not understood, and both types of delivery valued, there is a risk that scrutiny and oversight of governance matters will not be comprehensive and expansive. Scrutiny may be reduced, and engagement by governing persons passive.
Trust between governing persons and management	There is a risk that if one type of delivery is seen as 'less than' governing persons may place too high a degree of trust and delegated authority in management in this area, leading to the risk of lower scrutiny and single point of failure.

A mature provider

As dual sector providers mature their governance structures they may:

- monitor governing bodies' activities assuring that they have independent and thorough scrutiny across both regulatory frameworks, with active engagement from governing persons from various backgrounds and expertise
- reflect on the level of trust between management and governing persons. Governing bodies constantly check and are assured that the appropriate matters are being brought forward for their attention
- engage in culture checks through staff surveys and other tools to ensure that a positive culture is supporting a cohesive organisational approach across both regulatory frameworks. This may include an understanding of the differing cultural maturity levels across sections in large organisations.

Regulatory balance

Focus area	Regulatory balance
Principle	Organisational culture and inherent biases are understood, avoiding dominance of one regulatory paradigm over the other, in regulatory oversight, decision making and operational practice.

As a dual sector provider, organisations must balance fundamentally different regulatory expectations within a single system.

Where a provider is, or has been, predominantly higher education or VET, the regulatory expectations of that type of provision may create an imbalance in both approach and practice.

Where a governance body is responsible for higher education and VET matters, it is important that all members see themselves responsible for independent oversight of all matters.

Similarly, a balance must be in place for corporate and academic governance.

For dual sectors, focusing on the goal of harmonising standards internally, through aligned policies and integrated governance structures, is important to avoid the dilution or omission of key requirements of the non-dominant regulator.

Key risks and challenges (as identified through dual sector provider engagement)

Risk/challenge area	Description
Mix of provision	The risk that higher education members only focus on higher education matters, and VET members only focus on VET matters. In institutions that offer a small provision of higher education or VET, this can limit the independent scrutiny of decision making for these areas.
Bias	Organisations may have better developed policies, practices and capabilities in one regulatory framework which may mask or create blind spots for areas under the less dominant type of provision.
Harmonisation leading to omission	When harmonising across two regulatory frameworks there is a risk that aspects integral to the less dominant regulatory framework are overlooked or diluted in the harmonisation process.

A mature provider

As dual sector providers mature their governance structures they may:

- undertake a self-evaluation of biases which may exist in terms of governance structure, governing persons' capabilities, organisational structure and effort applied to oversight across all regulatory frameworks
- continue to provide opportunities for all members of governing bodies to improve capability, and provide comprehensive induction and ongoing capability development opportunities, across both regulatory frameworks. See *Focus area: Governance literacy*
- support and encourage committee chairs to monitor terms of reference, work plans and governing persons' engagement to ensure both regulatory paradigms are appropriately applied in decision making and practice
- consider and recruit additional external expert members to committees where a low volume of provision of higher education or VET limits the ability for internal members of governance bodies to provide independent oversight
- when harmonising regulatory expectations across both frameworks, such as in policy creation, ensure that the non-dominant regulatory framework expectations are not diluted
- independent providers transitioning from largely VET provision to a mix of higher education and VET often include multiple external higher education experts on the governance body responsible for their higher education provision.

Regulatory and governance literacy

Focus area	Regulatory and governance literacy
Principle	Governing persons, management and relevant staff develop and maintain contemporary knowledge of both regulatory systems, and both corporate and academic governance.

Governing persons in a dual sector provider must possess an adequate level of literacy across both regulatory frameworks, as well as across both corporate and academic governance for peak governing bodies of the provider.

This knowledge does not have to always be at a detailed level, but there needs to be an understanding of the conceptual differences between regulatory expectations of ASQA and TEQSA and the implications for governance of quality, compliance and risk.

Awareness of the inherent risks within certain processes or certain junction points is critical (for example, the risks when transition to a new version of a training package in VET courses).

Recruitment of a single specialised person with knowledge of the regulatory framework of the less dominant provision type (i.e. a VET specialist for a provider dominant in higher education but offering a small amount of VET) creates risks. These include a single point of failure, lack of challenge to that individual's understanding of the standards, and potential undue influence on decisions.

Management and officers providing reports to governing bodies must also have knowledge of the relevant regulatory frameworks to provide papers to governing bodies which adequately describe the matter under consideration, in a way which can be understood and scrutinised by governing persons from different backgrounds.

Depending on the scope and nature of the enterprise an inherent bias may exist towards corporate governance, or a particular type of academic governance (VET or higher education). See also *Focus area: Regulatory balance.*

Key risks and challenges (as identified through dual sector provider engagement)

Risk/challenge area	Description
Dual regulatory frameworks	Governing persons may not be able to adequately scrutinise matters or understand risks presented, depending on which educational sector they are experienced in.
Corporate versus academic governance	Governing persons may understand governance in a corporate sense, but be less knowledgeable in academic governance, or vice versa.
Bias	Depending on the scope and nature of the enterprise an inherent bias may exist towards corporate governance, or a particular type of academic governance (VET or higher education). Unless this bias is identified, understood and the risk mitigated a governing body can experience potential blind spots.

Risk/challenge area	Description
Governing body composition	In a complex dual sector regulatory environment, it may be challenging to find individuals with the necessary skills, knowledge and independence as indicated through a governing body skills matrix.
Regulatory change and governing persons' currency	Regulatory and sector change has occurred at a rapid pace and large scale, placing pressure on governing persons to remain current.

A mature provider

As dual sector providers ensure the literacy of governing persons they may:

- provide comprehensive induction and regular ongoing capability development for governing persons across both regulatory frameworks
- maintain detailed skills matrixes for all governing bodies and regularly identify where capability gaps need to be addressed
- provide capability uplift for staff developing papers to governing bodies to ensure matters are presented appropriately
- undertake independent or internal reviews to ensure all governing persons have the required capabilities and are fully engaged in the scrutiny of all matters
- reflect on the rigour which is applied to course approvals etc. and ensure that independent scrutiny is built into governance processes
- ensure currency of knowledge of both governing persons and key staff, through mechanisms such as reviewing the annual regulatory risk profiles of each regulator
- map corporate and academic governance activities and requirements to both improve efficiencies and identify any blind spots
- strategically identify and consider broader adoption for changes in one regulatory space (for example, gender-based violence, racism and antisemitism, which were first mentioned in the higher education space).

Good practice and further resources

- ASQA *Leadership and accountability practice guide* (Standards 4.1 and 4.2)

Good practice examples

The following examples represent current good practice at the time of publication.

Provider	Description	Domain
Australian Institute of Management (Scentia)	The Australian Institute of Management has separate but parallel governance structures for VET and higher education, including teaching and learning, course advisory, course review, and educational risk committees. The Academic Board is the peak educational committee for higher education, while the Corporate Board provides strategic oversight across both VET and higher education, including compliance and risk assurance. An overarching Audit and Risk Committee monitors risks across both sectors, supporting integrated oversight, and its strong external membership, like that of the Academic and Corporate Boards, promotes independence, rigour and objectivity. This structure strengthens governance maturity by balancing sector-specific scrutiny with institution-wide risk oversight.	Governance structures and practice Risk and self-assurance
Chisholm Institute	Chisholm Institute's multi-sector education quality framework includes comprehensive mapping across the entire entity in relation to quality. From the strategic plan, through to an education plan, business and operational plans and the self-assurance framework, to policies and procedures, linkages are understood and documented. This is supported by a sophisticated risk and associated continuous improvement register with each item or event linked to an accountable executive, and clear rules for escalation to governance committees, leadership groups and the CEO. Chisholm Institute's Student Voice group, chaired by senior leadership, facilitates input from students to governing bodies via a safe space. This removes barriers which exist to some students engaging with formal governance committees, and benefits governance maturity by ensuring the student experience is understood and incorporated into governing persons' decisions.	Governance structures and practice Enabling structures and practices

Provider	Description	Domain
Federation University	Federation University's Academic Board, which has governance oversight of their higher education and VET programs, employs mapping across both sets of standards to ensure that both are met. Federation University has a combined curriculum approval committee which covers both VET and higher education courses. This committee scrutinises course and curriculum development, academic quality and more broadly how programs fit the university's broader remit. Federation University has worked towards establishing a culture that values the integration of university learning with real world practice through both its higher education and VET programs. Actions have included consistent messaging across its vision statements, University Strategic Plan and in its student-facing course promotion material. From a capability perspective actions include specific and substantive professional development modules to ensure members of governing committees and relevant staff are upskilled and maintain currency of knowledge. This benefits governance maturity by ensuring governing persons continue to develop both academic and corporate governance literacy.	Governance structures and practices Culture and capability
RMIT	RMIT has established an Education Committee, as a subcommittee of its Academic Board. Committee members have oversight of both higher education and VET offerings, and provide advice and recommendations to Academic Boards on policies, and internal and external quality standards. RMIT proactively works to ensure all members have background knowledge and confidence to independently scrutinise matters relating to both sectors. Dedicated induction and refresher training is provided, accompanied with cyclical reports on higher education and VET quality assurance matters, and sector strategies, trends and regulatory risks. This focus on combined scrutiny across both sectors benefits governance maturity through the creation of a culture which values both VET and higher education programs.	Governance structures and practice

Provider	Description	Domain
TAFE SA	TAFE SA's Academic Governance Measures maps relevant metrics to both the Standards for RTOs and the Threshold Standards. This data is provided to governing persons through committee papers, and to other staff as relevant, in a visual, risk-informed manner. This benefits the organisation through clarity of monitoring, which supports governing persons in clear decision making and risk management. TAFE SA provides mapping of the Threshold Standards to both governing committees and organisational leadership. This benefits governance maturity by ensuring clarity of accountability and responsibility, and ensures no gaps in coverage exist.	Risk and self-assurance Enabling structures and practices

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