



# Application Guide for Registered Higher Education Providers

- Renewal of registration for existing providers

*Version 2.7*

*Effective from 1 January 2017*

*This guide should be read before you submit your application through TEQSA's online portal.*

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# Section A: Background

## Purpose

This guide provides information about and explains the process registered higher education providers will need to follow when applying to the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) for renewal of registration.

Applications for renewal of registration are considered under Part 3, Division 3 of the *Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011* (TEQSA Act)<sup>1</sup>.

TEQSA may renew a provider's registration if it is satisfied that the provider continues to meet the relevant Standards in the *Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2015* (HES Framework). TEQSA will use a range of information to reach its decision, including information submitted by the provider with its application.

In determining the scope of this information, TEQSA will use the differentiated model (known as the 'core+' model), as explained in Section B of this guide. All applicants will be required to submit minimum evidence relating to a set of core Standards. The minimum evidence for each application type is outlined in general in the tables in Appendix A. Some providers will be asked to submit evidence against other selected Standards on a case-by-case basis, according to risk and regulatory track record. The specific evidence required for your individual case will be documented by TEQSA in the form of the Confirmed Evidence Table for Renewal of Registration, and sent to you.

For assistance in understanding the requirements of the HES Framework, providers should refer to the guidance on TEQSA's website in the first instance, which includes an overview of each Domain of the HES Framework and detailed guidance notes on particular topics (<http://www.teqsa.gov.au/teqsa-contextual-overview-hes-framework>).

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<sup>1</sup> The complete TEQSA Act is available from: <https://www.legislation.gov.au>

# Section B: Overview of application process

## Process overview

<b>Stage 1</b> — Clarify application and evidence requirements and the scope of assessment with your TEQSA case manager. Note: your case manager will contact you for preliminary discussions at least six months before your submission is due	<b>Applicant and TEQSA</b>	
<b>Stage 2</b> — Submit your application to TEQSA in the approved form, with the required evidence as confirmed by TEQSA (based on the Confirmed Evidence Table) and the assessment fee	<b>Applicant</b>	
<b>Stage 3</b> — Assessment by TEQSA TEQSA staff assess the application and document their findings	<b>TEQSA</b>	
<b>Stage 4</b> — TEQSA sends draft findings to the applicant for comment (only in the case of an adverse outcome). Relevant comments will be taken into account by the TEQSA Commission in arriving at its decision	<b>TEQSA</b>	
<b>Stage 5</b> — Decision is made TEQSA notifies the provider of the outcome of the assessment	<b>TEQSA</b>	
<b>Stage 6</b> — TEQSA updates the National Register in accordance with the outcomes of the assessment	<b>TEQSA</b>	

# Stage 1: Clarify application requirements

## 1.1 Pre-submission liaison with your case manager

Your case manager will contact you for preliminary discussions in order to clarify application and evidence requirements, and the scope of assessment, before you start preparing your application. This should happen at least six months before the due date of the renewal application (the 'submission' date).

In these discussions, your case manager will:

- help you to plan the timeframe for your application, aligning any other applications where practical
- discuss the scope of the assessment and evidence you are required to submit with your application, advising you of the most useful information to submit and helping you to use existing documentation wherever possible
- clarify if TEQSA already has some of the required information and check if it is still current and relevant, and
- help you to plan future application processes including timeframes, relating, for example, to a change of provider category or self-accrediting authority.

To prepare for these discussions, send the case manager a list of available reports in the categories listed in Table 1 in Appendix A below, to facilitate final selection.

After these initial discussions, TEQSA will then advise you in writing (using the Confirmed Evidence Table for Renewal of Registration) as to the scope of assessment, that is, whether the scope is the core only or if you will be assessed against an extended set of Standards, and, if so, which additional Standards (refer to Section 1.2 of this guide for a more detailed explanation).

Applications for renewal of registration should be submitted to TEQSA **at least 180 calendar days** before your current registration period is due to end. If you cannot meet this timeframe you must contact your case manager as early as possible before the 180-day period. Any shortening of the 180-day period is at TEQSA's discretion.

If you are registered with both the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) and TEQSA, your case manager will explore the feasibility of a jointly-managed regulatory process for renewing registration through TEQSA and renewing registration as an NVR Registered Training Organisation through the ASQA.

## 1.2 Core assessment scope and minimum evidence requirements

The core assessment scope for renewal of registration applications will be against the Standards listed in Table 1. As a minimum, you will be required to submit evidence related to these Standards. In your application, you are encouraged to use URLs and hyperlinks where possible for information that TEQSA can easily download from your website.

The lists of evidence in the Table are a reference for the minimum information required.

The focus of core assessments will be internal and external reviews, and reporting. Where TEQSA establishes that credible reviews and periodic internal reporting provide sufficient assurance that a provider meets the Standards, it will not be necessary to seek further evidence. TEQSA will generally seek examples of reporting and review outputs that are part of your regular governance and quality assurance cycle, rather than ones specifically commissioned for a TEQSA re-registration application.

## 1.3 Extension of assessment scope and additional evidence

### Confirmation of extension

After the pre-submission (i.e. initial) discussions, your case manager will advise you in writing if the assessment will be extended beyond the core Standards. This written advice will include the assessment scope and reasons for the extension, and will detail the specific evidence sought by TEQSA in the application (using the Confirmed Evidence Table for Renewal of Registration).

TEQSA may decide to extend the scope of your assessment at any time after the pre-submission discussions. For example, this may happen if TEQSA identifies a significant risk of non-compliance with the HES Framework as a result of:

- evidence submitted with your application, or
- new evidence as the result of a particular event.

In these instances, your case manager will advise you as soon as possible of the extended scope and additional evidence required for further assessment.

### Reasons for extension

The reasons TEQSA may extend your scope of assessment for renewal of registration include:

- if the most recent TEQSA risk assessment assigned a red (high) or orange (moderate) rating for your Risk to Students and/or Risk to Financial Position, or in exceptional circumstances, if you have been evaluated as at low risk of non-

compliance overall, but TEQSA has identified a significant trend or specific issue that requires consideration

- if a significant issue has been raised in your regulatory history in the most recent registration period; for example, an application has been rejected, you have had conditions imposed, you have been required to undergo formal reporting, or other sanctions have been applied
- recent review reports are not available relating to a core Standard, or
- you have graduated fewer than three higher education student cohorts in Australia.

In most cases, the extended scope of assessment will be related to a specific Standard or cluster of Standards. Therefore, discrete and targeted additional evidence will be required. For example, in a case where:

- a provider has a history of elevated attrition rates, it may be necessary to seek evidence beyond the core Standards, for example evidence relating to Sections 1.1 (Admission), 1.3 (Orientation and Progression) and Domain 3 (Teaching)
- delivery with other parties has been identified as a significant risk, it may be necessary to seek evidence relating to Section 5.4
- issues relating to academic standards have been identified (including for example English language proficiency of students or graduates), it may be necessary to seek evidence beyond the core Standards, for example evidence relating to Section 1.4 (Learning Outcomes) and Domain 3 (Teaching)
- a provider is undertaking research and/or delivering Higher Degrees by Research (HDRs) in one or more fields of education, it may be necessary to seek evidence that the requirements of Sections 4.1 and 4.2 are being met, for example by maintaining a supervisory and study environment of research activity or other creative endeavor, inquiry and scholarship. This may include seeking evidence that staff in the relevant fields are research-active, or
- student teachers are being placed into schools or the provider has responsibility for students under the age of 18, compliance with working with children checks may be reviewed relating to Sections 2.3 and 5.4.

***The pre-submission discussions with your case manager will help you to identify specific evidence needed for your application. Following these discussions, your case manager will advise you in writing as to the extent and nature of the standards to be assessed and the evidence requirements. This information will be provided in the form of the Confirmed Evidence Table for Renewal of Registration. The communication will also include details of agreed timeframes for the application to be submitted to TEQSA.***

## 1.4 Concurrent renewal of CRICOS registration

If you choose to renew your CRICOS registration at the same time as submitting a renewal of registration application, discuss a suitable joint process with your case manager. It may be possible to adjust the due dates for renewal applications to accommodate concurrent submission. You will need to submit evidence to allow the provisions of the *Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000* (ESOS Act) and the *National Code of Practice for Registration Authorities and Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2007* (National Code) to be assessed.

If you have self-accrediting authority and have completed a comprehensive external audit of your compliance with the ESOS Act and the National Code, you will be required to submit:

- your most recent external audit report
- a progress report, including management responses on actions to date, as well as future plans for any issues raised by the external audit report, and
- a declaration of compliance with the Standards for Registered Providers under the National Code.

Your case manager may ask for further information on an issue not fully covered in the audit report.

If you do not have self-accrediting authority, discussions with your case manager will help you to identify the specific evidence needed for your application.

Any relevant information that you have recently submitted to TEQSA and which remains current will not need to be supplied again.

TEQSA expects that internal self-assessment or self-review will form a part of your quality assurance processes, including those processes relating to CRICOS.

Your case manager will decide if a provider visit is necessary.

## Stage 2: Submit application to TEQSA

### 2.1 Submitting your application

Section 35 of the TEQSA Act states that an application for renewal of registration must: be made in the approved form, include any information, documents and assistance that TEQSA requests, and be accompanied by the relevant fee.

As mentioned above, applications must normally be submitted to TEQSA at least 180 calendar days before registration is due to end.

The approved form for applications is the form in the provider portal. The provider portal makes it easy for you to develop your application(s), allowing you to work on them progressively online and submit them to TEQSA when you have finished. You can generate a PDF version of your application at any time to see how your application is progressing. You can edit your evidence (including by deleting documents) in any section, up until your application is submitted. You can also respond to information requests online and submit any additional evidence that may be requested through the portal.

In your application, you are encouraged to use URLs and hyperlinks where possible for information that TEQSA can easily download from your website. As a registered provider it is expected that the basis for much of your evidence will be existing documentation you have already developed and used for internal purposes. Key documents that you have already submitted to TEQSA that are still current and relevant will not have to be submitted again, as the portal also acts as a document repository.

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

- your required information and evidence
- the completed Confirmed Evidence Table for Renewal of Registration, updated by you with the document titles/URL details for the specific evidence provided in the online form. Such evidence should use the naming conventions described in the guidance note on Naming Conventions for Evidence (available on TEQSA's website as well as in the online application form), and
- a signed declaration.

After you submit your application you will receive an itemised invoice as final confirmation of your application and request for payment. Note that TEQSA does not have an online payment facility.

TEQSA staff have access to the portal and can help you with any questions or administration, including maintaining the document repository. TEQSA welcomes feedback on the provider portal and will work to progressively improve it based on such feedback.

TEQSA case teams will only start to work on assessing your application after it has been submitted and TEQSA has received your application fee.

Ensure that your application includes:

- all required evidence as advised by your case manager
- clearly labelled evidence (i.e. documents and/or URL links using the naming conventions described in the guidance note on Naming Conventions for Evidence) so that TEQSA can easily locate and reference them, and
- references to relevant sections in longer documents.

You can find supporting material on the TEQSA website at: <http://www.teqsa.gov.au/teqsa-contextual-overview-hes-framework>.

## 2.2 Payment of assessment fees

You must pay your assessment fee(s) when you receive an invoice from TEQSA.

The application fees do not attract GST. A fee schedule is available at: <http://www.teqsa.gov.au/for-providers/teqsa-fees>.

TEQSA's ABN is: 50 658 250 012.

## Stage 3: Assessment process

### 3.1 Assessment

TEQSA case managers conduct assessments of applications to ascertain whether the evidence submitted confirms that the applicant meets the relevant Standards.

### 3.2 Requests for further information

In some cases, TEQSA may request further information, documents, or assistance during the substantive assessment stage as questions arise. For example, your case manager may need to clarify aspects of your evidence or documentation or how certain policies and procedures will be implemented in practice.

### 3.3 Use of experts

TEQSA may obtain input from a number of external experts to inform the analysis of specific parts of the application. The input from experts forms part of the evidence TEQSA will use in its assessment process and decision making.

Wherever TEQSA uses external experts as part of the assessment process, you will be given an opportunity to state whether you consider any of the experts would have a conflict of interest in relation to your application, and TEQSA will take this into account before deciding whether to engage the expert.

### 3.4 Provider visits

TEQSA may visit one or more of your delivery sites or headquarters if required. 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. Provider visits are another way of collecting evidence, and TEQSA will use observations and discussions held at a provider visit in its 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.

Your case manager will consult with you in advance to:

- clarify the scope of assessment to be covered during the provider visit(s)
- ensure the date, timing and length of the visit(s) are appropriate
- share a program for the visit(s) and refine it with you
- arrange appropriate logistics, including the availability of key stakeholders, such as teaching staff, students, academic managers, and external advisors for the course of study, and
- minimise the impact on your operations as much as possible, taking into account student and staff availability, exam periods and semester breaks.

## Stage 4: Findings and recommendations

At the conclusion of the assessment, an assessment report is prepared that includes recommendations to the TEQSA Commission about your application.

If the assessment report recommends the TEQSA Commission to: (a) reject your application, or (b) approve your application but impose conditions on your registration, TEQSA will send you the report for comment before the TEQSA Commission makes a decision. The report will include the reasons for the proposed decision. TEQSA may also send you any relevant evidence you might not have previously seen, such as findings from any external experts used.

## Stage 5: Commission decision

The TEQSA Commission will consider the recommendations arising from an assessment. In reaching a decision, the TEQSA Commission will take into account the three basic principles for regulation outlined in the Process notes below.

The TEQSA Commission may decide to:

- approve the application
- approve the application and impose conditions on the renewal of registration, or
- reject the application.

Where a recommendation to reject an application or impose conditions is made, the TEQSA Commission will take into account any comments you have made on the assessment report and other information provided.

## 5.1 Notifying you of the decision

TEQSA will send you a notice of decision within 30 calendar days of making a decision to grant or reject your application, which will include the details of any conditions placed on your renewal of registration. In some cases, TEQSA 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 about areas for improvement to support quality enhancement.

If your application has been rejected, or if conditions have been imposed on your renewal of registration, the notice of decision will be accompanied by a statement of reasons.

## 5.2 Review of decisions

Processes are in place to certain review decisions made by TEQSA. More information about reviews of decisions is at: [www.teqsa.gov.au/for-providers/provider-obligations/review-teqsa-decisions](http://www.teqsa.gov.au/for-providers/provider-obligations/review-teqsa-decisions).

# Stage 6: TEQSA updates the National Register

## 6.1 Public report

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

A public report contains TEQSA's decision and the reasons for the decision. This report is published on the National Register of Higher Education Providers after TEQSA has considered any feedback you may have given on a draft version provided to you.

TEQSA's policy on public reports is available at: [www.teqsa.gov.au/media-publications/policy-public-reporting-regulatory-decisions](http://www.teqsa.gov.au/media-publications/policy-public-reporting-regulatory-decisions).

## 6.2 Updating the National Register

Where an application for renewal of registration has been approved, the relevant entry in the National Register of Higher Education Providers will be updated. Where conditions are imposed on the renewal of registration of a provider, details of those conditions will also be published.

Updates to the National Register are published at least monthly and can be viewed at <http://www.teqsa.gov.au/national-register>.

## Process notes

### Case management model

TEQSA assigns particular staff members to work with each provider for all of its regulatory processes. Dialogue between providers and case managers is critical to clarify the specific evidence required (both amount and type of evidence), and to discuss provider selection of the type of documents most useful to submit with an application.

### Regulatory principles

Part 2 of the TEQSA Act requires TEQSA to comply with three basic principles of regulation, namely the principles of: regulatory necessity; reflecting risk and proportionate regulation. These principles underpin TEQSA's decisions in relation to applications for registration or course accreditation.

### Assessment timeframes

TEQSA will ordinarily advise you of the outcome of its assessment within nine months of payment of the substantive assessment fee. TEQSA will aim to complete the assessment within six months. However, this timeframe may be shorter or longer, subject to a range of factors that can impede or assist the process, such as:

- the regulatory history of an existing provider and outcomes of previous assessments directly relevant to the application
- the strength and relevance of evidence presented by the provider
- the risk of non-compliance with the HES Framework and the ability of the provider to mitigate those risks
- the time taken by the provider to respond effectively to requests for information, and
- the level of resourcing available to TEQSA.

## Confidentiality and accuracy of information

TEQSA has statutory obligations in relation to confidentiality; however, it operates 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 its TEQSA case manager before providing the information. More information about TEQSA's approach to confidential information can be found at: <http://www.teqsa.gov.au/for-providers/provider-resources>.

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

Version #	Date	Key changes
1.0		
1.1	2 June 2014	
2.0	13 April 2016	Updated for the HESF 2015 and made available as beta version for consultation.
2.1	27 September 2016	Evidence table updated and feedback from consultation incorporated.
2.2	7 October 2016	Cross reference to Part B1 of the HES Framework added to the Notes of Appendix A.
2.3	3 November 2016	Appendix A updated.
2.4	20 January 2017	Wording updated to reflect HESF 2015 now in effect, references to the Confirmed Evidence Table for Renewal of Registration added, and minor clarifications made in relation to Guidance Note on Naming Conventions for Evidence.
2.5	18 April 2017	Extension to scope (Section 1.3) updated for situations where student teachers are being placed into schools or the provider has responsibility for students under the age of 18.
2.6	3 May 2017	Standard 7.1.4 updated in Table 1 to reflect that it is only if applicable.
2.7	29 August 2018	Update to Table 1 in Appendix A; Standards 2.3.1-5 are now included in the core assessment scope, and all of the indicative evidence requirements for Domain 2 - Learning Environment have been updated accordingly.

# Appendix A

**Table 1: Renewal of registration – core assessment scope and indicative evidence requirements**

CORE STANDARDS	INDICATIVE EVIDENCE REQUIREMENTS
<p><b>LEARNING ENVIRONMENT</b> 2.3.1-5, 2.4.4, 2.4.5</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Policies, procedures and plans for the promotion of a safe environment and compliance with related legislation (including working with children if applicable)</li> <li>2. Policies, procedures and plans relating to the prevention, monitoring and reporting of sexual assault and sexual harassment</li> <li>3. Most recent review report (and actions arising from it) or other evidence on the effectiveness of student grievance and complaint processes showing current trends, including for sexual assault and sexual harassment</li> </ol>
<p><b>INSTITUTIONAL QUALITY ASSURANCE</b> 5.1.2, 5.2.1-4, 5.3.1-7</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Last twelve months of minutes from meetings of academic governing body and any sub-committee with responsibility for course approval</li> <li>2. Most recent review reports to governing body on progress against organisational targets (including teaching and learning targets and student performance) and other sample interim monitoring reports as agreed with case manager</li> <li>3. Most recent review report (and actions arising from it) or other evidence on effectiveness of academic integrity processes</li> <li>4. Most recent review report(s) (and actions arising) or other evidence of effectiveness of assessment (may include benchmarking reports) and assurance of learning</li> <li>5. Sample course accreditation proposals (including outcomes of course reviews) as agreed with case manager (providers with self-accrediting authority only)</li> </ol>
<p><b>GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Last twelve months of minutes from meetings of corporate governing body</li> </ol>

6.1.3, 6.2.1, 6.3.2	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Most recent report of independent review of the effectiveness of the governing body and academic governance processes, and actions arising</li> <li>3. Reports on the effectiveness of: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3.1 the risk management system, and</li> <li>3.2 the controls in place for major strategic risks</li> </ol> </li> </ol>
<b>REPRESENTATION, INFORMATION AND INFORMATION MANAGEMENT</b> 7.1.4 (if applicable)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Most recent review report on the performance of agents, and actions arising</li> </ol>

**NOTES:**

1. Evidence requirements are described using generic terms - naming conventions may differ between providers. Refer to the HES Framework (Domains 1-7) for the actual Standards.
2. No core Standards have been specified for three Domains: 1 Student Participation and Attainment, 3 Teaching and 4 Research and Research Training. While these Domains remain at the heart of the Standards, in a core-only assessment TEQSA will assess to what extent the applicant has demonstrated compliance with these Standards through relevant reports considered within its governance, accountability and internal quality assurance processes.
3. TEQSA will review compliance with additional Standards in Sections 7.1 and 7.2 through the information publically available on a provider's website.
4. In some circumstances, the scope of assessment may be extended to one of the Provider Category Criteria in Part B1 of the HES Framework.
5. Please provide to your case manager a list of any courses delivered through third parties (and recent review reports on these) for consideration at the pre-submission discussions.
6. All TEQSA application templates are available on the TEQSA website with the corresponding application guides.
7. The specific evidence required will be documented by TEQSA in the form of the Confirmed Evidence Table for Renewal of Registration.

## Additional information required for a renewal of registration application

In the online application form for the renewal of registration application, you will also be required to complete the:

- completed Confirmed Evidence Table for Renewal of Registration (updated with the document titles/URL details for the specific evidence provided in the online application), and
- TEQSA application declaration template.