



Application Guide for Registration in any University Category

- New providers
- Registered Higher Education Providers

Version 1.5

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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 providers will need to follow when applying to the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) to be registered in one of the following categories:

- Australian University
- Australian University College
- Australian University of Specialisation
- Overseas University, and
- Overseas University of Specialisation.

This guide covers:

1. applications from providers not yet registered under any category (new providers), and
2. applications for change of category from registered Higher Education Providers (existing providers) to one of the above categories.

Section B: Guidance on Standards

Timing and category selection

Applying for one of the university categories is a major step in the life of any provider. Existing providers need to have significant infrastructure and capability in place to meet the various requirements. All applicants for the Australian University College Category need to have realistic and achievable plans to build their infrastructure and capability further, along with the resources to make these a reality, in order to meet the requirements for scope and research capability discussed below.

Before applying, applicants are advised to carefully consider their current status in relation to the Criteria for Classification of Higher Education Provider Categories in Part B1 of the *Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2015* (HES Framework) and, particularly:

- the timing of their application, and
- the requirements for each category.

New providers

Applications from new providers are considered under section 18(1) of the TEQSA Act¹.

For applications for initial registration in a University category, please also refer to the application guide for initial registration as a higher education provider, available on the TEQSA website.

Each item of evidence only needs to be submitted once. Broad evidence requirements are outlined in Section B of the application guides.

Existing providers

A path of development is open to registered (existing) higher education providers with a consistent track record of meeting the Standards in the HES Framework without conditions imposed. This path could pass through a number of stages (including a period with self-accrediting authority [SAA]) before the provider attains university status. Applications from existing Higher Education Providers to change their category of registration are considered under Part 3, Division 4 of the TEQSA Act. Where an application for change of provider category is submitted concurrently with an application for renewal of registration, both

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

application forms must be completed but each item of evidence only needs to be submitted once.

In the first stage of its operation, a higher education provider should aim to accumulate a track record of successful course accreditations, course monitoring and course reviews. The length of this track record is discussed in the Application Guide for Self-Accrediting Authority, available from the TEQSA website. In summary, TEQSA would expect to see the provider successfully develop, monitor and review a range of courses over at least one accreditation cycle before applying for SAA, which might be either 'limited' (confined to specific fields or levels) or 'unlimited' (applying to all current and future courses in any field or level).

A provider, once it has been granted self-accrediting authority, might reasonably aspire to achieve registration in a university category in at least five years. While the HES Framework allows TEQSA to grant both SAA and registration in the Australian University College Category concurrently, TEQSA would normally expect an existing provider to demonstrate its ability to implement SAA before applying for a university category. This would contribute to meeting the requirement for systematic, well-developed internal processes for quality assurance, and the maintenance of academic standards and academic integrity, as this relates to course approval.

Applicants would be well advised to consider applying for the Australian University College Category as the first step towards the Australian University Category, which requires a wider scope of delivery (with SAA) in higher degrees by research (see next section). Applicants should also bear in mind that at the time of application for Australian University Category, a provider needs to have been authorised for at least the previous five years to self-accredit at least 85% of its total courses of study, including higher degrees by research. If a provider were to add new courses during these five years that were not self-accredited, this might affect its ability to achieve the percentage required over the five years.

TEQSA advises higher education providers to undertake a rigorous self-assessment against the relevant criteria and Standards (especially the research requirements as discussed below) before undertaking applications for a University Category.

If the self-assessment were to be externally reviewed by an individual with experience in senior university management and higher education quality assurance, this would reduce the risk of making an application prematurely, leading to rejection.

In particular, applicants should ascertain the gap between their current capability and infrastructure and what is needed to bridge the gap, and estimate the amount and type of investment needed to build the required level of capability and infrastructure. A credible Business Plan will be necessary to provide TEQSA with assurance that any additional investment can be sustained, in order to meet the requirements for scope and research capability discussed below.

Overseas applicants should inquire as to whether the standing and status of the registration or accreditation authority in their home country is acceptable to TEQSA. In considering this, TEQSA will evaluate the extent to which the processes and standards used by the relevant accrediting authority are equivalent to those used by TEQSA. TEQSA will also have regard to the Australian Government's Country Education Profiles, and the relevant entry on the applicant.

Existing providers would normally apply for change of category concurrently with an application for renewal of registration, but it is also possible to apply separately. Please consult your case manager about this.

Relationship between criteria

The relevant criteria for the Australian University Category are as follows. The criteria for the other university categories are variations on these, and some commentary follows on the variations.

Australian University

The higher education provider offers an Australian higher education qualification

- B1.2.1 The higher education provider self-accredits and delivers undergraduate and postgraduate courses of study that meet the Higher Education Standards Framework across a range of broad fields of study (including Masters Degrees [Research] and Doctoral Degrees [Research] in at least three of the broad fields of study it offers).
- B1.2.2 The higher education provider has been authorised for at least the last five years to self-accredit at least 85% of its total courses of study, including Masters Degrees (Research) and Doctoral Degrees (Research) in at least three of the broad fields of study.
- B1.2.3 The higher education provider undertakes research that leads to the creation of new knowledge and original creative endeavour at least in those broad fields of study in which Masters Degrees (Research) and Doctoral Degrees (Research) are offered.
- B1.2.4 The higher education provider demonstrates the commitment of teachers, researchers, course designers and assessors to the systematic advancement and dissemination of knowledge.
- B1.2.5 The higher education provider demonstrates sustained scholarship that informs teaching and learning in all fields in which courses of study are offered.
- B1.2.6 The higher education provider identifies and implements good practices in student teaching and learning, including those that have the potential for wider dissemination nationally.
- B1.2.7 The higher education provider offers an extensive range of student services, including student academic and learning support, and extensive resources for student learning in all disciplines offered.
- B1.2.8 The higher education provider demonstrates engagement with its local and regional communities and demonstrates a commitment to social responsibility in its activities.
- B1.2.9 The higher education provider has systematic, mature internal processes for quality assurance and the maintenance of academic standards and academic integrity.

B1.2.10 The higher education provider's application for registration has the support of the relevant Commonwealth, State or Territory government.

Variations from the Australian University Category criteria in other categories

Australian University College

- Criteria B1.3.4-10 in the Australian University College Category are virtually identical to criteria B1.2.4-10 in the Australian University Category.
- There is an additional criterion (1.3.1) which reads: 'The higher education provider has realistic and achievable plans to meet all the criteria for an "Australian University" Category within five years of its approval to use the title "Australian University College".'
- In contrast to the Australian University category, there is no requirement for every applicant for the Australian University College Category to have been authorised for at least five years *prior* to the application to self-accredit at least 85% of its courses of study. However entry into a "university" category such as the Australian University College category is a significant step in a provider's development and TEQSA expects that it would generally follow a period in which the provider shows a strong record in governance and quality assurance, including self-accrediting authority (as discussed above).
- At the time of registration in the Australian University College Category, the provider must already have or concurrently be granted the authority to self-accredit undergraduate and postgraduate courses of study (by coursework) that meet the HES Framework across three broad fields of study.
 - However, the requirement to self-accredit and deliver Higher Degrees by Research (research masters and doctoral degrees) is for only one broad field of study (as compared to three broad fields for the Australian University Category).
 - Please also note however the discussion below about scope of delivery.

Australian University of Specialisation

- The criteria for the Australian University of Specialisation Category are the same as those for an Australian University except that the range of fields of study required is narrower.
 - The requirement for prior authorisation to self-accredit courses of study extends to only one or two broad fields of study (B1.4.2).

- The requirement to undertake research that leads to the creation of new knowledge and original creative endeavour extends to only one or two broad fields of study (B1.4.3).

Overseas University

- The criteria for the Overseas University Category are that:
 - 'The higher education provider is recognised as a university by its home country registration or accreditation authority or equivalent governmental authority, the standing and standards of which are acceptable to TEQSA', and
 - the applicant must meet criteria 'equivalent to' those for an Australian University.
- TEQSA will assess the applicant against the criteria for the Australian University Category, taking into account any variations in the University's internal framework of policies and procedures, as well as available evidence brought about by different regulatory requirements in its home jurisdiction.

Overseas University of Specialisation

- The requirements for the Overseas University of Specialisation Category are that:
 - there is an additional criterion (B1.6.1): 'The higher education provider is recognised as a university by its home country registration or accreditation authority or equivalent governmental authority, the standing and standards of which are acceptable to TEQSA', and
 - the applicant must meet criteria 'equivalent to' those for Australian University of Specialisation.
- TEQSA will assess the applicant against the criteria for the Australian University of Specialisation Category, taking into account any variations in the University's internal framework of policies and procedures, as well as available evidence brought about by different regulatory requirements in its home jurisdiction.

Guidance on particular criteria

Planning

Providers applying for the Australian University College Category must provide a 'realistic and achievable' Business Plan to meet all of the Australian University Category criteria within the next five years, as required by criterion B1.3.1.

This Business Plan should include projections of the numbers of academic staff members and research leaders needed to meet the requirements for undertaking research in the Australian University Category criteria within the next five years.

The Business Plan should detail the sources of funding that will be used to make the required investments in additional staffing and infrastructure, including research support, facilities, information resources and equipment. Additional teaching and research appointments could be funded from sources including capital reserves and revenue arising from credible increases in student numbers. Market research should be undertaken to justify projected increases in student numbers if these exceed the trend of the previous five years. This is particularly important if a high degree of reliance is being placed on future fee revenue to fund growing research capability and any other developments required to position the organisation to meet the requirements for Australian University within five years.

TEQSA will consider concurrent applications for SAA and registration in the Australian University College Category from new applicants. TEQSA understands that 'greenfields' developments may commence with limited infrastructure in place at the time of application, however significant capability and resources must be available to build the organisation after approval.

Consequently, the applicant will need to demonstrate that a comprehensive framework of plans, policies and procedures is in place to meet all relevant criteria, including detailed Strategic and Business Plans that demonstrate how the applicant will deploy resources to meet the criteria, which will require significant access to capital. The Business Plan will detail the sources of funds for the required investments in staffing and infrastructure, including research support, facilities, information resources and equipment, and will include a timeline for the phased development of the new university. Applicants will also need to demonstrate how they will meet the scholarship and research requirements in the SAA criteria and Australian University College Category criteria.

In addition, TEQSA understands that a new provider will not be in a position to implement all its plans and become operational immediately on the date of a decision by TEQSA to grant registration in a university category, and that significant lead time is required to establish a new university. TEQSA will take this into consideration, and may impose conditions or seek undertakings to ensure that the phases of development specified in the Business Plan are met.

Scope of delivery

Different category criteria require a different scope of delivery of broad fields for:

- undergraduate courses
- postgraduate courses, and
- higher degrees by research.

The criteria do not specify the number of courses that need to be offered within any broad field.

TEQSA considers that the more contemporary term 'field of education' is synonymous with the term 'field of study' used in the category criteria.

All of the university categories require the delivery of self-accredited undergraduate and postgraduate courses and higher degrees by research (both masters and doctoral degrees) in one or more broad fields of study. These requirements are complicated by the way they interact with the 'Criteria for seeking authority for self-accreditation of courses of study' (the SAA criteria), which are in Section B2 of the HES Framework.

In the first instance, the Australian University College Category requires providers to self-accredit and deliver undergraduate courses across 'a range' of broad fields of study, including postgraduate (coursework) courses in three broad fields of study and higher degrees by research in at least one broad field.

However, a consequence of the requirement to have realistic and achievable plans to meet the Australian University criteria within five years is that an Australian University College would, on this basis, need to be positioned from the outset to meet criterion B1.2.2 for the Australian University Category. This criterion requires applicants to have been authorised for at least five years to self-accredit at least 85% of its total courses of study including higher degrees by research in at least three broad fields.

The SAA criteria provide TEQSA the ability to grant unlimited SAA (i.e. for any current or future course or field) at the time of changing the category in which a provider is registered to University College, and this will be considered on a case by case basis with reference to Section B2.3 of the HES Framework.

In summary, applicants for the University College Category must be able to demonstrate to TEQSA the capability to offer and self-accredit higher degrees by research in at least three broad fields of study, and to self-accredit at least 85% of its total courses of study. Applicants will only be considered for unlimited SAA if they are able to demonstrate that they have the capability to offer and self-accredit courses in any field or level including new fields or levels, and the capability to meet all the SAA criteria in Section B1 and Section B2 of the HES Framework.

In classifying courses within fields of education, TEQSA will rely on the current version of the Australian Bureau of Statistics' Australian Standard Classification of Education² (ASCED).

² <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats>

Could a University of Specialisation change to one of the broader university categories?

Yes, but this is a complex matter that would require a high level of consideration and discussion on a case by case basis. Please contact TEQSA's Chief Executive Officer to discuss this at the earliest stage possible.

Academic governance and quality assurance

Applicants for any university category are required to demonstrate that they have systematic, well developed internal processes for quality assurance and the maintenance of academic standards and academic integrity. The SAA criteria require applicants to demonstrate that they meet the requirements of Standard 5.3, which covers monitoring and improvement, and Standard 6.3, which covers academic governance.

TEQSA regards oversight by academic governance bodies to be an integral part of systematic, well developed processes for academic quality assurance. TEQSA will therefore require evidence that this oversight is being exercised effectively and reliably, in all applications for a university category from existing providers.

Extensive guidance on TEQSA's approach to applications for SAA are contained in the Application Guide for Self-Accrediting Authority, available from the TEQSA website.

Reference may also be made to the guidance notes on academic governance and academic quality assurance, also available from the TEQSA website.

Research and scholarship

The university category requirements include requirements for undertaking 'sustained' scholarship and also for research.

Criterion B1.1.4 for the Higher Education Provider Category requires the academic staff of all providers to be 'active in scholarship that informs their teaching, and active in research when engaged in research student supervision'. This is a base requirement for all categories.

TEQSA has outlined its understanding of 'scholarship' in a guidance note available on the TEQSA website. Scholarship includes a wide set of activities, and research is a sub-set of those activities. Applicants should take note that many professional development activities do not constitute scholarship.

The university category criteria go further than the Higher Education Provider criteria in requiring the provider to undertake 'sustained' scholarship, as well as research. TEQSA will require the provider to submit a detailed table of both its scholarly and research publications over the last five years, showing the field of study, the names of journals, and whether each publication is classified as research or scholarship.

Research is the most distinctive requirement for the university categories. Whereas other requirements differ only by degree from requirements in the Higher Education Provider Category, there is no requirement for research in that category.

TEQSA defines research as: 'academic activities of a higher education provider that contribute to new knowledge through original investigation'.

The required scope for universities to undertake research varies in accordance with the scope required for the delivery of masters and doctoral degrees by research. In considering the scope requirements relating to research, TEQSA will refer to the Australian Bureau of Statistics' Australian and New Zealand Standard Research Classification (ANZSRC).

In establishing whether outputs in the table of publications meet the definition of research, TEQSA will have regard to evidence of peer review. Papers and books that meet the eligibility criteria of the latest Excellence in Research for Australia (ERA) submission guidelines evidently meet TEQSA's definition of research. Applicants will need to make out a case for inclusion of other publications.

TEQSA will in the first instance ascertain whether an applicant is undertaking research (as defined above) in the number of broad fields of study required for the relevant category.

TEQSA will also assess whether the research outputs submitted by the applicant demonstrate that it is providing a supervisory and study environment of research activities for higher degree by research students, as required by Standard 4.2.2. TEQSA will also assess the framework of policies and procedures and support for research training as required by Standard 4.2.1, and will seek expert opinion on the evidence provided for this. These are baseline requirements for providers registered in any category, which are discussed in a Guidance Note on Research and Research Training available from the TEQSA website.

In assessing evidence put forward by an applicant for a university category regarding its research capability and outputs, TEQSA will employ two key strategies:

- one or more external experts with high-level expertise in research and research management will be engaged to assess whether the applicant is currently making a significant contribution to knowledge in the relevant broad field or fields, and
- TEQSA will undertake a quantitative analysis and benchmark the volume of research activity in each field against comparable universities, using relevant data as external reference points.

In making a decision, TEQSA will further consider whether approving the application will protect the reputation of Australian universities, in the light of whether the quality and quantity of research being undertaken meets the expectations of the national and international academic community for an Australian university. In assessing the quality of research, TEQSA will have regard to the assessment model used by the Australian Research Council for the most current Excellence in Research for Australia evaluation, including for the quality of research outputs.

Teaching and learning practices

TEQSA will seek evidence that the provider actively promotes good practices in teaching and learning (including research training). This could include:

- internal and external professional development activities
- support for teachers and course designers
- financial support for teaching and learning enhancement initiatives, and
- programs of recognition of good teaching.

In considering whether the applicant meets the requirement for commitment to the systematic advancement of knowledge, TEQSA will have regard to:

- the evidence provided about the provider's research and the creation of new knowledge
- its level of scholarly activities and knowledge transfer into the community, and
- its development and dissemination of good practices in teaching and learning.

Student services and resources

Providers in any of the university categories would be expected to provide an extensive range of support services (irrespective of a student's location or mode of study), such as:

- academic skills
- language support
- counselling
- orientation
- library, learning and information resources
- student progress support
- careers and employment, and
- health and wellbeing.

These services need to be available to support both coursework and research students. Any services provided through outsourcing should be fully accessible and available. Some services, including library, learning and information resources, are not suitable for provision solely through third parties.

Engagement and social responsibility

In the case of a 'greenfields' applicant, TEQSA will assess its plans to develop community engagement if approval is granted.

In the case of an existing provider, TEQSA will seek evidence of the applicant's track record of engagement with local, regional and professional communities, and evidence of implementation of its plans, including for successful community engagement projects, over the previous five years.

Government support

Before TEQSA makes the decision to approve an application for a university category, TEQSA must consult the relevant state or territory minister and the Commonwealth Minister and afford them the opportunity to make recommendations as to whether the application for registration in the provider category is appropriate. TEQSA must have regard to any advice or recommendations given by each of those ministers in making its decision. .

There is no requirement for the provider to seek its own letter of government support.

Section C: Overview of application process

Process overview

<p>Stage 1 — At least six months prior to submission, contact TEQSA to clarify application evidence requirements and the scope of assessment with your TEQSA case manager</p>	<p>Applicant and TEQSA</p>	
<p>Stage 2 —TEQSA notifies the applicant of the detailed evidence requirements for the planned application (based on the Confirmed Evidence Table)</p>	<p>TEQSA</p>	
<p>Stage 3 — Submit your application to TEQSA in the approved form, with the required evidence as confirmed by TEQSA and the application fee(s)</p>	<p>Applicant</p>	
<p>Stage 4 — Assessment by TEQSA TEQSA staff assess the application and document their findings</p>	<p>TEQSA</p>	
<p>Stage 5 —If applicable, TEQSA sends draft findings to the applicant for comment (only in the case of an adverse outcome).</p>	<p>TEQSA</p>	
<p>Stage 6 – If TEQSA intends to approve an application, TEQSA briefs the relevant Commonwealth, State and Territory government minister(s). Relevant comments will be taken into account by the TEQSA Commission in arriving at its decision. TEQSA may also choose to consult with the relevant ministers in the case of an adverse outcome.</p>	<p>TEQSA</p>	
<p>Stage 7 — Decision is made. TEQSA notifies the applicant of the outcome of the assessment</p>	<p>TEQSA</p>	
<p>Stage 8 — TEQSA updates the National Register where an application for change of category has been successful</p>	<p>TEQSA</p>	

Stage 1: Clarify application requirements

1.1 Pre-submission liaison with your case manager

It is important to contact TEQSA at least six months before starting to prepare an application for a university category.

Your case manager will:

- help you to plan the timeframe for your application, aligning any concurrent applications
- discuss the scope of evidence you are required to submit with your applications, advising you of the most useful specific information and documentation to submit in your particular case
- clarify if TEQSA already holds some of the required information from your organisation and check if it is still current and relevant
- ensure that TEQSA can access your intranet to retrieve information, when necessary, and
- discuss ways to streamline the process where possible.

Stage 2: Letter of confirmation from TEQSA

After the discussion clarifying the application requirements, your case manager will provide you with advice in writing and confirm the specific evidence requirements based on the Provider Category criteria. This will take the form of the Confirmed Evidence Table for University Category Change. This advice will include agreed timeframes for submission and any aspects of the process that can be specifically tailored.

Indicative evidence requirements for applications are set out in the table in Appendix A.

2.1 Evidence requirements

All applications from existing providers should include evidence drawn from the categories outlined below. The list of evidence is indicative. Additional evidence may be required, particularly in the case of concurrent applications for SAA and the Australian University College Category.

The pre-submission discussions with your case manager will identify the specific evidence needed for your application.

Stage 3: Submit application to TEQSA

3.1 Submitting your application

Section 38 of the TEQSA Act states that an application for change of provider category must be made:

- a. in the approved form
- b. accompanied by any information, documents and assistance that TEQSA requests, and
- c. accompanied by the relevant fee.

The same requirements also apply to applications for initial registration in a University or any other category. When you are ready to start submitting your applications, your case manager will arrange access to the provider portal and provide login and password details. The provider portal makes it easy for you to develop your applications, 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 via the portal.

In your applications, you are encouraged to use URLs and hyperlinks where possible for information that TEQSA can easily download from your website. If you are 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.

You will be able to use documents saved to the portal again in future TEQSA applications, where they are still current.

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

- your required information and evidence
- the completed Confirmed Evidence Table, 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)
- 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 fees.

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.

3.2 Payment of assessment fees

In order for assessment of application(s) to commence, you must pay your assessment fee(s) when you receive an invoice from TEQSA. Assessment fees are not refundable in the event that an applicant withdraws the application.

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

TEQSA's ABN is 50 658 250 012.

Stage 4: Assessment Process

4.1 Assessment

The TEQSA case manager will conduct an assessment of the application(s) to ascertain whether the evidence submitted confirms that the applicant meets the relevant criteria and Standards.

4.2 Request 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.

4.3 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 expert 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.

4.4 Provider visits

TEQSA may visit one or more of your delivery sites or headquarters if required (for proposed providers, this will be proposed delivery sites or headquarters). 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 5: 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 that the TEQSA Commission: (a) reject your application, or (b) approve your application but impose conditions, 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.

The Provider Category criteria also require that applications for university categories have the support of the relevant Commonwealth, State or Territory government. TEQSA will brief the relevant minister(s) of its findings at this point and seek a written response from them. There is no requirement for the provider to seek its own letter of government support.

Stage 6: 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 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, as well as any responses from the relevant Commonwealth, State or Territory minister(s).

6.1 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 registration arising from an application for a university category. 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 course accreditation or renewal of accreditation, the notice of decision will be accompanied by a statement of reasons.

6.2 Review of decisions

Processes are in place to review certain decisions made by TEQSA. More information about reviews of decisions is at: <https://www.teqsa.gov.au/review-teqsa-decisions>

Stage 7: TEQSA updates the National Register

7.1 Public report

TEQSA normally publishes the reports of 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 on a draft version provided to you.

TEQSA's policy on public reports is available at: <https://www.teqsa.gov.au/providers/resources/policy-public-reporting-regulatory-decisions>.

7.2 Updating the National Register

In the case of existing providers, where a change of category has been approved, the relevant entry in the National Register will be updated. When an application from a new provider is approved, a new entry will be made in the National Register in the approved category.

TEQSA will not update the National Register in the event that an application for a university category has been rejected.

Updates to the National Register are published at least monthly and can be viewed at <https://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 processes and decisions in relation to applications for registration in a university category.

Assessment timeframes

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

- the level of resourcing available to TEQSA
- 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.

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: <https://www.teqsa.gov.au/latest-news/publications/information-sheet-teqsas-approach-confidential-information>.

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

Version #	Date	Key changes
1.0	28 July 2016	Replace previous separate registration guides on University categories and update for the HESF 2015.
1.1	1 March 2017	Updated guidance on scope of assessment, references to the Confirmed Evidence Table and submission requirements, and editorial alignment with other guides.
1.2	5 December 2017	Modifications to guidance on research requirements.
1.3	20 June 2018	Editorial amendment to page 14.
1.4	6 December 2019	Editorial amendment to page 23, section 7.1 of this guide to align with TEQSA's practice of publishing decisions and reasons for a decision regarding an application to change to a University category on the National register.
1.5	20 July 2020	Amendments to remove the requirement for the provider to seek a letter of support from the relevant state or territory minister. TEQSA will consult with the state or territory and Commonwealth minister(s) prior to making a decision.

Appendix A

Table 1: Indicative evidence requirements

Note: EP = only for Existing Providers

CRITERIA	INDICATIVE EVIDENCE REQUIREMENTS
1. PLANNING	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Brief narrative overview and rationale for seeking university category 2. Strategic Plan showing objectives, strategies and timelines for: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2.1 establishing the University College/University in accordance with the relevant category criteria (in the case of a new provider), or 2.2 meeting requirements for the Australian University Category within five years (in the case of an applicant for the Australian University College Category) 3. Business Plan showing how funds will be accessed and resources will be deployed to support the Strategic Plan 4. Other plans as listed for the other criteria in this table.
2. SCOPE	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Brief narrative overview 2. List of all courses offered (or proposed to be offered) with ASCED fields
3. RESEARCH	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Brief narrative overview 2. Research plan (current and previous) 3. Research funding allocated by an existing provider and by external granting bodies/industry over the past five years (EP) 4. List of staff publications within the last five years (EP) using the TEQSA template for the aggregated list of scholarly and research output, noting that publications will be classed as research if they meet the specifications of the current Excellence in Research for Australia (ERA) Submission Guidelines. A case must be made out for including other publications. 5. Self-assessment (or external assessment) of the quality and quantity of research outputs 6. Policies and procedures for higher degrees by research, including codes of conduct, ethics, research integrity and ethics approval, minimum resources to support research students, ownership of Intellectual Property, examinations 7. Description of current or planned infrastructure and support for developing research (cross reference to Research Plan)

CRITERIA	INDICATIVE EVIDENCE REQUIREMENTS
	8. Latest external review report on research and/or research training, with actions arising and evidence of successful implementation (EP)
4. ADVANCEMENT & DISSEMINATION OF KNOWLEDGE	1. No additional evidence requirements for advancement of knowledge NOTE: TEQSA will refer to evidence submitted for 3, 5 and 6 2. Strategies for dissemination of knowledge, and evidence of effectiveness (EP)
5. SCHOLARSHIP	1. TEQSA will refer to the list of publications provided for 3 (above) 2. Any other evidence of scholarly activities 3. Description of current or planned strategies, infrastructure and support for developing scholarship and scholarly intellectual communities, including: 3.1 scholarship of teaching and learning, and 3.2 relevant outcomes of teaching and learning plan
6. GOOD PRACTICES IN TEACHING & LEARNING	1. Brief narrative overview 2. Teaching and learning plan and (EP – and evidence of successful implementation and outcomes) 3. Examples of staff publications and project reports in teaching and learning (EP) 4. List of staff awards (internal and external) for teaching and learning (EP) and other forms of recognition of achievements in teaching and learning 5. Strategies for disseminating good practices (EP – and evidence of effectiveness)
7. STUDENT SERVICES	1. Brief narrative overview 2. Link to student services section of provider website (EP) 3. Evidence of effectiveness, including student satisfaction with student services (EP) 4. Library and information resources plan (EP – and latest report of its implementation/effectiveness and current status of library resources for supporting research) 5. Latest external review report on student services, actions arising and evidence of successful implementation (EP)
8. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT	1. Brief narrative overview 2. Community engagement plan (current and previous) 3. Case studies of community engagement projects over past five years (EP) 4. Latest report on implementation and effectiveness of community engagement plan (EP)

CRITERIA	INDICATIVE EVIDENCE REQUIREMENTS
9. QUALITY ASSURANCE	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Brief narrative overview 2. Evidence of active oversight of quality assurance by governing body, including responsiveness to periodic reports on the quality of academic programs and regular review of academic quality risks (EP) 3. Policies and procedures relating to quality assurance and academic standards 4. Evidence of effectiveness of quality assurance framework, including reports of recent internal or external reviews and actions arising (EP) 5. Evidence of effectiveness of academic integrity processes (EP) 6. Reports of recent reviews of academic governance (EP) 7. Recent reports of academic quality benchmarking projects and actions arising (EP) 8. Latest external review reports on academic quality assurance and academic governance processes (EP) 9. Sample course proposals (including course review reports), including student performance data review (EP) 10. Evidence that academic governance processes ensure that all courses meet the relevant level classification in the Australian Qualifications Framework (EP)

NOTE:

1. The specific evidence required will be documented by TEQSA in the form of the Confirmed Evidence Table.

Appendix B

Overviews

Overviews are designed to orient TEQSA staff and external experts to the evidence being presented, how it fits together, and how it ensures that a provider will meet the requirements in one or more sections of the HES Framework. Each overview should be no more than two A4 pages long, except in the case of Domain 6 - Governance and Accountability, which can have up to two pages per section.

Each overview should be structured with the following headings:

1. **Objective:** what are these arrangements designed to achieve?
2. **Framework:** describe the framework of policies and procedures that are being put in place, pointing out the key features.
3. **Resources (if applicable):** what resources are being put in place to support achievement of the objective? Note any capital allocations and timelines of development.
4. **Rationale:** explain how the framework and the resources will ensure that the objective is achieved and the relevant Standards are met.