



# Policy on Core Plus model for regulatory assessments

## Purpose and scope

This policy explains TEQSA's approach to pre-submission scoping for the selection of Standards under the *Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021* (HES Framework) and the evidence requirements to support the application. It applies to assessments of applications submitted by registered providers for renewal of provider registration, course accreditation, and renewal of course accreditation. It does not apply to applications from prospective providers for initial registration (refer to TEQSA's [Initial provider registrations policy](#)) or course-related applications submitted as part of an initial registration application.

## Principles

### General

1. TEQSA's approach to regulatory assessments of provider registration and courses of study is tailored to the circumstances of the provider and risks identified by TEQSA.
2. For registered providers, TEQSA's starting point is that:
  - a. every provider is committed to ensuring that it meets the requirements of the HES Framework, including having appropriate governance in place to comply with, and satisfy itself that it complies with the HES Framework;
  - b. providers will implement effective self-assurance processes as an integral part of their ordinary day-to-day operations.
3. Given this starting point, and in light of the basic principles for regulation (in Part 2 of the *Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011*) TEQSA applies a Core Plus model to the assessment of applications submitted by registered providers. This focuses TEQSA's assessment on the provider's compliance with a set of core Standards, relating principally to governance, internal quality assurance, student performance and student experience.
4. In some circumstances, TEQSA may decide to extend the scope of its assessment to include one or more additional Standards beyond the core.

## Core Standards

1. The core Standards for each type of application are set out in **Table 1**.
2. For **renewal of registration**, TEQSA has selected the core Standards on the basis that:
  - a. as a registered provider, TEQSA has already undertaken a comprehensive assessment of the provider against the HES Framework, as well as annual risk assessments, and in some cases compliance monitoring, during the period of registration; and
  - b. substantial confidence in the provider's continued compliance with the HES Framework, including its corporate and academic governance and internal quality assurance processes, can be reached through assessing the extent the provider has demonstrated its compliance with the selected core Standards.
3. For **new course accreditation for existing providers**, TEQSA has selected the core Standards on the basis that:
  - a. the provider is established and TEQSA has already undertaken a comprehensive assessment the provider's governance arrangements and internal quality assurance processes; and
  - b. the focus is on ensuring that the content and learning activities of the new course are consistent with the level of study and expected learning outcomes.
4. For **renewal of course accreditation**, TEQSA has selected the core Standards the basis that:
  - a. TEQSA has already undertaken a comprehensive assessment of the accredited course against the relevant standard in the HES Framework; and
  - b. the focus at this stage of the assessment cycle for the course is on ensuring that the provider's monitoring, review and improvement processes have been effective, including the extent and robustness of independent review by a subject matter expert, and the nature of the provider's response to expert findings and recommendations i.e. consideration of the review report and, where appropriate, action taken.

## Evidence

1. Under the Core Plus model, all applicants are required to submit sufficient evidence in their application to demonstrate compliance with the core Standards.
2. The core Standards are outcomes-focused. An applicant is responsible for demonstrating in its application how it complies with the core Standards in the context of its operations.
3. If TEQSA has extended the scope of the assessment beyond the core Standards, the applicant will be required to submit specific, targeted evidence in its application to demonstrate compliance with the selected additional Standards.
4. For accreditation and renewal of accreditation of courses of study, TEQSA encourages providers to submit their own comprehensive review of its course/s by one or more [independent subject matter experts](#), along with evidence of the provider's response to expert findings and recommendations. This may remove the need for TEQSA to commission its own expert report. However, it remains open to

TEQSA to obtain its own expert appraisal should it hold concerns about the scope or nature of the provider's review, the quality of advice obtained, or the independence of that advice (actual or perceived).

## Core Plus

1. TEQSA may decide to extend the scope of its assessment to include additional Standards based on a range of factors, including such considerations as:
  - a. **Findings from compliance monitoring** – for example information from reported concerns and complaints, and reports from other government agencies and professional accreditation bodies.
  - b. **Regulatory history** – previous regulatory outcomes, including material risks identified by TEQSA in relation to governance or internal quality assurance.
  - c. **Findings of the annual Risk Assessment** – where TEQSA considers the findings indicate material risks to compliance with the Standards.
  - d. **Other factors** specific to the type of assessment as set out in the [application guides](#).
2. Other factors, such as material change notifications, may reduce the need to extend the scope of an assessment beyond the core Standards, if TEQSA has confidence that the provider is addressing the concerns and monitoring the outcomes.
3. The [application guides](#), available on TEQSA's website explain the application process, including the pre-submission scoping where TEQSA will advise the provider about the scope of the assessment and guidance on evidence requirements.

Table 1. Core Standards

Relevant Standards from the HES Framework	Renewal of Provider Registration	New Course Accreditation – existing providers	Renewal of course Accreditation
<b>1. Student Participation and Attainment</b>			
1.1 Admission (1.1.1 only)		✓	
1.4 Learning Outcomes and Assessment (1.4.1-4 for all providers and 1.4.5-7 only if applicable)		✓	
1.5 Qualifications and Certification (1.5.3 only)		✓	
<b>3. Teaching</b>			
3.1 Course Design		✓	
3.2 Staffing (3.2.1-3 and 3.2.5 for all providers and 3.2.4 only if applicable)		✓	
<b>4. Research and Research Training</b>			
4.2 Research Training (4.2.2-5 only)		✓	
<b>5. Institutional Quality Assurance</b>			
5.1 Course Approval and Accreditation	✓ (5.1.2 only)	✓ (5.1.2-3 only)	✓ (5.1.3 only)
5.2 Academic and Research Integrity	✓		
5.3 Monitoring, Review and Improvement	✓ (5.3.7 only)		✓ (5.3.1-4 only)
5.4 Delivery with Other Parties (if applicable)		✓	
<b>6. Governance and Accountability</b>			
6.1 Corporate Governance (6.1.3-4 only)	✓		
6.2 Corporate Monitoring and Accountability	✓		
6.3 Academic Governance	✓		

## Document information

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