



Guidance note

Admissions (coursework)



Version 2.0 (4 May 2022)

Providers should note that guidance notes are intended to provide guidance only. The definitive instruments for regulatory purposes remain the TEQSA Act and the Higher Education Standards Framework as amended from time to time.

1. What does admissions (coursework) encompass?

The *Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021* (HES Framework) sets out the admissions standards for all registered higher education providers. The *National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018* (National Code) includes admissions standards where higher education providers offer courses of study to overseas students.

Admissions policies, requirements and procedures (the admissions framework) should ensure students:

- have the academic preparation and English language proficiency to participate in their intended study
- are admitted with no known limitations that would impede their progression and completion (except those who may require reasonable adjustments to complete their course)
- are not disadvantaged in achieving the expected learning outcomes for their course of study where credit through recognition of prior learning has been granted.

An effective admissions framework requires [transparency](#), is applied consistently and fairly, and accommodates student diversity and contributes to creating equivalent opportunities for academic success.

Once students are admitted, regular monitoring and analysis of student performance is critical in reviewing and improving the admissions framework. Providers must be able to demonstrate that governance oversight and the management of the admissions framework, and the corresponding monitoring and review arrangements are effective.



2. What TEQSA will look for

The HES Framework requires TEQSA to consider the following aspects of a provider's admissions framework:

Part A: Standards for HE Providers	Key considerations
1.1.1: Admissions policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear documentation and consistent application of the admissions framework.
1.1.2: Admissions procedures	
1.2.1: Credit and recognition of prior learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear documentation and consistent granting of credit or recognition of prior learning • Granting of credit or recognition of prior learning is consistent with the Australian Qualifications Framework pathways policy, does not disadvantage a student, and maintains the integrity of the course.
1.3.5, 2.2.3, 5.3.4 and 5.3.7: Student monitoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student monitoring informs and contributes to the admissions framework.
2.2.1 and 2.2.2: Student diversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student diversity is accommodated and considered in the admissions framework.
5.4.2: Third party arrangements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Third party arrangements are included in the admissions framework.
6.1 and 6.3: Governance and Accountability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corporate and academic governance provide effective oversight of the admissions framework.
7.2: Information for prospective students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Admissions information is readily available to prospective students.

The HES Framework requires admissions policies, procedures and requirements to be clearly documented. Further, requirements for implementing an admissions framework include:

- the admissions framework must be applied fairly and consistently. Decisions on admitting students must not be arbitrary, nor should such decisions result in potential students being disadvantaged because of personal characteristics that are not related to the academic preparation and English language proficiency required to be eligible for admission (noting the need to accommodate student diversity and equity, as detailed below)
- the admissions framework takes into account, accommodates and considers student diversity including the under-representation and disadvantage experienced by identified groups. The admissions framework should be designed to ensure admitted students have no known limitations that would be expected to impede their progression and completion, and creates equivalent opportunities for academic success regardless of students' backgrounds
- accurate and current admissions information is made available to prospective students in a timely manner to enable an informed decision about educational offerings and experiences. Further information regarding admissions information and transparency can be found in [Good Practice Note: Making higher education admissions transparent for prospective students](#)



- reviews of and improvements to the admissions framework are informed by regular monitoring of students' performance, including but not limited to, the performance of student cohorts and identified groups and regular external referencing of students' performance. Further information about monitoring and reviewing student performance can be found in [Guidance Note: Monitoring and analysis of student performance](#)
- corporate and academic governance arrangements provide effective oversight of the approval, implementation, and the monitoring and review of the admissions framework. This includes oversight of the admissions framework for courses of study delivered wholly or in part by a [third party](#).

TEQSA will also consider, with reference to the National Code, a provider's ability to demonstrate:

- appropriate coverage in the admissions framework of English language proficiency, educational qualifications, and work experience
- appropriate documentation and recording of recognition of prior learning, and the integrity of prior learning assessments in the admission framework.

3. Common issues

TEQSA has identified a range of common issues which are indicative of potential deficiencies in a provider's admissions framework. These include, but are not limited to:

- admissions decisions made without sufficient documentation of English language proficiency, work experience or the basis for granting credit for recognition of prior learning. This includes inadequate record-keeping in relation to exemptions or waivers, especially waivers granted against English language proficiency requirements (see TEQSA's [communiqué](#) covering English language waivers for more information) (Standard 1.1.1)
- poorly specified or a lack of arrangements to identify student subgroups and cohorts which limits the capacity of a provider to ensure students are admitted with no known limitations, and creates difficulties in monitoring and reviewing the efficacy of the admissions framework by student subgroups and cohorts
- limited use of student performance monitoring to inform reviews of and improvements to a provider's admission framework
- inadequately specified governance arrangements including lack of clear delegations for admissions decisions, especially in relation to decisions to grant exemptions or waivers, and insufficient monitoring of delegated decision making
- a lack of systematic reporting on the monitoring and review of the admissions framework to relevant governing bodies causing ineffective oversight of a provider's admissions framework
- insufficient oversight of the application of a provider's admissions framework in third party arrangements.

When providers systematically admit students via poor admissions practices, students may struggle or fail to succeed in their studies as a result, and, more broadly, the integrity and reputation of Australia's higher education sector may be undermined.



There are also risks to the students themselves. If an admissions framework is inadequate, a provider's student support services may be overwhelmed by demand for support from students who do not have the academic preparedness or English language proficiency needed to participate effectively in their course of study.

In contrast, a robust admissions framework, and its consistent and equitable application, contributes to safeguarding the quality and reputation of Australian higher education and the quality of the student experience.

TEQSA welcomes the diversity of educational delivery across the sector and acknowledges that its Guidance Notes may not encompass all of the circumstances seen in the sector. TEQSA also recognises that the requirements of the HES Framework can be met in different ways according to the circumstances of the provider. Provided the requirements of the HES Framework are met, TEQSA will not prescribe how they are met. If in doubt, please consult your TEQSA case manager.

Version #	Date	Key changes
1.0	8 February 2021	Made available as beta version for consultation.
2.0	4 May 2022	Major revision.