



TEQSA initial provider registrations policy

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish a set of principles to inform decision-making in relation to initial provider registrations, and to establish clear expectations for applicants and for TEQSA case managers. The principles established in this policy are intended to mitigate the inherent risk—due to the uncertainty associated with the absence of a track record in higher education—of new provider registrations.

Scope

This policy is concerned with the initial registration of new providers. It is not concerned with new registrations that take place due to a change of legal entity for an existing provider.

Principles

1. There are a number of inherent risks associated with applicants for initial registration. These include:
 - a. the absence of a track record associated with higher education delivery leading to the applicant's own higher education awards
 - b. the limited capacity to demonstrate the application of a provider's internal governance and quality assurance mechanisms in the context of higher education delivery
 - c. relative uncertainty about a provider's financial and student enrolment projections in light of the lack of previous history of higher education delivery and the competitive nature of Australian higher education
 - d. once registered, the time required to obtain data which presents a clear picture of the provider's capacity to provide the requisite standard of higher education.
2. In some cases, applicants place a heavy emphasis on external consultants to prepare aspects of an initial registration application, raising further risks associated with the capacity of the provider's own staff or governing bodies to deal with fundamental aspects of higher education delivery on a continuing basis.
3. To reflect these risks, TEQSA's decisions about such applications will specifically consider a number of additional assurance mechanisms. These will commonly include:
 - a. registration of the provider for a period of less than the maximum seven years. For example, TEQSA may decide to register a provider for a period of five years, with the capacity to extend the registration for a further two years where

- provider reporting and TEQSA provider visits suggest that the risks are being appropriately managed.
- b. additional targeted collections of information beyond the annual TEQSA data collections, including:
 - i. data in relation to student performance, staffing and financial matters, with a particular emphasis on timely quantitative data relevant to TEQSA's Risk Assessment Framework
 - ii. minutes and agenda papers for the provider's corporate and academic governing bodies—the material would be expected to cover matters including performance against the strategic plan, benchmarking activities, risk management, workforce planning and management, and monitoring and analysis of student outcomes.
 - c. the imposition of conditions on registration to restrict or oversee delivery which involves particular risks, such as the delivery of higher education offshore or the provision of higher education using multiple modes of delivery.
4. Where a new provider does not submit information according to the timetable specified in a TEQSA request, or where information raises further concerns, TEQSA will consider additional assurance action.
 5. TEQSA will usually undertake a provider visit or meet with a provider within 12 to 18 months from commencement of operations, with subsequent visits or meetings at least annually for the first three years of a provider's operation. These visits and meetings will also assist in relationship development.

Contact

Any enquiries about TEQSA's approach to initial provider registrations can be directed to: enquiries@teqsa.gov.au