



Australian Government

Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency

# TEQSA regulator performance framework report 2017-2018

December 2018



**TEQSA**

## TEQSA REGULATOR PERFORMANCE REPORT 2017–18

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The document must be attributed as the TEQSA Regulator Performance Report 2017–18.

### Contacts

More information about the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency, including electronic versions of this report, is available at <http://www.teqsa.gov.au/news-publications/annual-reports/2018> .

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### Acknowledgements

This report reflects the efforts of many people. Special thanks go to TEQSA staff involved in contributing and coordinating material.

# CERTIFICATION BY THE TEQSA ACCOUNTABLE AUTHORITY

The Hon Dan Tehan MP  
Minister for Education  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

30 November 2018

Dear Minister,

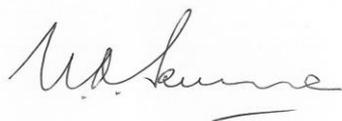
As the accountable authority of the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA), we have pleasure in presenting to you TEQSA's Regulator Performance Framework report for the year ended 30 June 2018.

TEQSA's report has been prepared in accordance with the Regulator Performance Framework (RPF) released by the Commonwealth Government in October 2014. The RPF requires the accountable authority of the entity to give a report on the RPF to the entity's responsible Minister for noting.

This report describes the progress made over the course of 2017–18 to meet the performance measures in the RPF, as self-assessed by TEQSA. The report has been reviewed and externally validated by the Higher Education Standards Panel.

In addition, we, as the accountable authority of TEQSA, have certified this report as required by the RPF. In our opinion, the *TEQSA Regulator Performance Framework Report 2017–2018* accurately reflects the performance of TEQSA, and complies with the RPF.

Yours sincerely,



Professor Nicholas Saunders, AO  
Chief Commissioner



Professor Cliff Walsh  
Commissioner



Dr Linley Martin  
Commissioner



**THE HIGHER EDUCATION STANDARDS PANEL**

Professor Nicholas Saunders  
Chief Commissioner  
Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency  
GPO Box 1672  
Melbourne VIC 3001

Dear Professor Saunders

The Higher Education Standards Panel is pleased to provide formal external validation of the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency's (TEQSA) *Regulator Performance Framework Report 2017-2018*.

The Higher Education Standards Panel reviewed this report at its meeting of 9 November 2018. The Panel agreed that the self-assessment outcomes reported by TEQSA, which were based on qualitative and quantitative data collected by TEQSA, and the results of a sector-wide survey, met the requirements of the Regulator Performance Framework.

The Higher Education Standards Panel is therefore happy to externally validate the report, prior to it being formally certified by the accountable authority and submitted to the Minister for Education for noting.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ian O'Connor'.

**The Higher Education Standards Panel**

Professor Ian O'Connor AC, Chair

On behalf of:

Professor Kerri-Lee Krause (Deputy Chair), Professor Kent Anderson, Dr Krystal Evans, The Hon Phil Honeywood, Dr Sadie Heckenberg, Ms Adrienne Nieuwenhuis, Dr Don Owers AM (members)

9 November 2018

*Opportunity through learning*

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 BACKGROUND

The Commonwealth Government released its Regulator Performance Framework (RPF) in October 2014. The RPF was developed in consultation with a range of stakeholders, and consists of six outcomes-based key performance indicators (KPIs) covering:

- reducing regulatory burden
- communications
- risk-based and proportionate approaches
- efficient and coordinated monitoring
- transparency
- continuous improvement.

Commonwealth regulators that administer, monitor or enforce regulation are required to implement the RPF.

TEQSA is required to self-assess its performance, and then obtain external validation of that self-assessment. The Higher Education Standards Panel has provided this external validation and the TEQSA accountable authority has certified the report. The report has been provided to the Minister for Education for noting.

TEQSA's RPF consists of the following six KPIs:

1. Regulation by TEQSA does not unnecessarily impede the efficient operation of higher education providers.
2. TEQSA's communication with higher education providers is clear, targeted and effective.
3. Regulatory actions undertaken by TEQSA are proportionate to the risks being managed.
4. TEQSA's compliance and monitoring approaches are streamlined and coordinated.
5. TEQSA's dealings with higher education providers are open, transparent and consistent.
6. TEQSA's regulatory framework continues to be improved in consultation with stakeholders.

These evidence metrics were published on the TEQSA website. For more information, refer to *TEQSA's Regulator Performance Framework 2015-16* (Version 1.0) available at <<http://www.teqsa.gov.au/about/corporate-plan>>.

## 1.2 BASIS OF SELF-ASSESSMENT

The RPF report is based on operational qualitative and quantitative data and the results of a sector-wide survey completed in June 2018. The sector-wide survey was based on *TEQSA's Regulator Performance Framework 2015-16* (Version 1.0) available at <<http://www.teqsa.gov.au/about/corporate-plan>>.

All of the operational data and most of survey results also appear in the *TEQSA Annual Report 2017–2018* <<https://www.teqsa.gov.au/latest-news/publications/teqsa-annual-report-2017-18>>.

## 1.2.1 OPERATIONAL DATA

Operational data considered for the RPF includes metrics relating to:

- risk ratings and outcomes of decisions
- decision-making timeframes
- feedback from direct engagement with the sector (for example from provider briefings)
- statistics on website views and document downloads for reports and support materials published by TEQSA.

All operational data can be found in the *TEQSA Annual Report 2017-18*.

## 1.2.2 ABOUT THE SURVEY

The 2018 survey consisted of:

- a provider-specific version, sent to all registered providers as well as those who had submitted initial registration applications. The survey was for completion by the principal contact and included a section for Vice-Chancellors and Chief Executive Officers (VC/CEO) to offer comments
- a brief survey for the operational head of selected peak/professional/student bodies.

The survey was sent to 235 principal contacts from higher education providers and 42 representatives from peak, professional and student bodies (PPSBs). A total of 156 principal contacts and 24 PPSBs completed the survey, representing a response rate of 66 per cent and 57 per cent respectively. A summary of the results against each of the KPIs for 2017-18 compared with 2016-17 for both groups is at Appendix A.

The objective of the survey was to obtain feedback to increase TEQSA's accountability, better understand its impact on higher education providers, and improve its performance. The use of the survey results in the publicly-reported TEQSA RPF is part of TEQSA's approach to increase its transparency and accountability. Consistent with this approach, a summary of the results of the TEQSA Stakeholder Survey 2018 will be published in conjunction with this report on the TEQSA website <<https://www.teqsa.gov.au/corporate-plan-and-performance-reporting>>.

## 1.2.3 REPORTING PERIOD

This report is for the 2017–18 financial year.

## 1.2.4 ENQUIRIES

For enquiries relating to this report, contact <[enquiries@teqsa.gov.au](mailto:enquiries@teqsa.gov.au)>.

## 2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 2017-18 self-assessment against the RPF describes how the agency has responded to feedback received from stakeholders through direct engagements and the annual survey.

The assessment highlights the continuing achievements against the RPF and the declining relevance of some of the performance indicators established in 2015. The incorporation of the six KPIs in corporate planning and the use of feedback from stakeholders have firmly aligned the agency with the intended effect of the RPF.

The assessment also reveals the change in the areas of concern to providers. In 2015, stakeholders were concerned about the time taken to publish decisions, and the timeliness referred to in the targets of KPI 2 reflects this concern. Since then, stakeholders have been primarily concerned about the time taken to make the decisions themselves as the time taken from submission to decision deteriorated in 2016-17, and then further in 2017-18. These matters have been taken into account in the *TEQSA Corporate Plan 2018-22* and are discussed in detail in TEQSA's Annual Reports of 2016-17 and 2017-18.

The assessment against each of the KPIs of the RPF demonstrated that all but one of the targets was achieved for 2017-18. In the case of KPI 1, there was a decrease in the percentage of stakeholders that rated the agency as good or excellent in relation to the target *use of a case management model for regulatory purposes allowing tailoring of processes according to circumstances of individual providers*. Comments from stakeholders indicated that the turnover in assessment staff added regulatory burden due to the loss of TEQSA corporate memory and expertise in relation to provider operations. This reduction in satisfaction first appeared in the 2017 survey and, as more providers have experienced an assessment since the reduction in TEQSA's staffing, the experience of the consequent lack of continuity has spread across providers. As stated in the *TEQSA Annual Report 2017-18* and reflected in the *TEQSA Corporate Plan 2018-22*, the additional funding and staffing from the 2018-19 Budget will greatly assist the agency to address the concerns of providers regarding staff turnover and the time taken for decision making. While recruitment and training of new staff will assist in improving the efficiency of assessment, the agency has also commenced a further review of its assessment processes.

## 2.1 RPF RESULTS AT A GLANCE

Table 1 summarises the annual results against TEQSA's RPF KPIs for 2017-18 and shows that all but one of the targets related to the RPF were achieved in 2017-18. KPI 1 was only partially achieved because the stakeholder survey results show a decrease in the percentage of respondents that rated the agency as good or excellent compared with 2016-17.

Table 1. Results of self-assessment against TEQSA's RPF KPIs for 2017-18

RPF Key Performance Indicator	2017-18 Result
1. Regulation does not unnecessarily impede the efficient operation of higher education providers	Partially achieved
2. TEQSA's communication with higher education providers is clear, targeted and effective	Achieved
3. Regulatory actions undertaken by TEQSA are proportionate to the risks being managed	Achieved
4. TEQSA's compliance and monitoring approaches are streamlined and coordinated	Achieved
5. TEQSA's dealings with higher education providers are open, transparent and consistent	Achieved
6. TEQSA's regulatory framework continues to be improved in consultation with stakeholders	Achieved

## 3. PERFORMANCE BY KPI

### KPI 1 – REGULATION BY TEQSA DOES NOT UNNECESSARILY IMPEDE THE EFFICIENT OPERATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION PROVIDERS

The following targets were used to assess performance against KPI 1:

- evidence of regular, constructive consultation with the sector
- a series of reductions in administrative burden already achieved, with further progress planned
- engagement with international agencies to contribute to development of transnational policy
- the use of a case management model for regulatory purposes allowing tailoring of processes according to circumstances of individual providers.

As in previous years, TEQSA regularly engaged with the sector at the individual provider level as well as through provider peak bodies. Additionally, as detailed in the *TEQSA Annual Report 2017-18*<sup>1</sup>, a specific roundtable consultation was undertaken with for-profit, not-for-profit and TAFE providers in response to the stakeholder survey results for 2017. Feedback from this consultation informed TEQSA's decision to review the approach to case management to enhance use of a partnership model. This objective has been incorporated in planning for 2018-22<sup>2</sup>.

Since 2016-17, the risk-differentiated Core+ methodology has been applied to the scope of all TEQSA assessments except for the assessment of initial registration applications. In 2017-18, the *TEQSA high risk provider policy* was published to further guide risk analysis and regulatory interventions. The policy establishes a set of principles that ensure greater differential treatment of providers based on their risk rating. It further demonstrates the agency's increasing focus on those providers that present the highest risk to students, and correspondingly, narrows the scope of scrutiny given to providers rated as low risk. This reduced scope is also applied through reduced evidence requirements for subsequent assessments of renewal of registration applications from low-risk providers. Also in 2017-18, the agency commenced an enhanced monitoring project to improve the way the agency uses information to quality assure and regulate higher education providers<sup>3</sup>.

TEQSA's international engagement continues to play an important role in protecting, enhancing and promoting the quality and integrity of Australia's higher education sector internationally. In 2017-18, the agency continued its involvement in quality assurance networks, including participation in the University Quality Assurance Forum and the Australia India Education Council's workshop on online education. Agency staff also participated in a pilot joint assessment aimed at determining the equivalency of the accreditation processes of Australia and Hong Kong. TEQSA also signed or renewed Memoranda of Cooperation with seven peak international bodies. Further details of this involvement can be found in the *TEQSA Annual Report 2017-18*<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> TEQSA Annual Report 2017-18 pp.44 and 47.

<sup>2</sup> TEQSA Corporate Plan 2018-22 pp.12 and 16.

<sup>3</sup> TEQSA Annual Report 2017-18 p.27.

<sup>4</sup> TEQSA Annual Report 2017-18 pp.28–29, and 41.

The average 2018 stakeholder survey results for KPI 1 overall found a decrease in the percentage of providers that rated the agency as good or excellent (56 per cent) compared with 2017 (66 per cent)<sup>5</sup>. As in past years the vast majority of providers rated case management as very important, but providers' rating of their experience of the case management approach dropped in relation to responsiveness, consideration of the needs of the provider, and TEQSA's knowledge of the provider. As also reported in last year's RPF Report, respondents commented on the turnover of case managers and the lack of case manager engagement with providers<sup>6</sup>.

### **Self-assessment – partially achieved**

Although the agency continued to develop and implement initiatives to further reduce unnecessary regulatory burden on providers during 2017-18, the continued turnover in case managers contributed to a decrease in the percentage of providers that rated the agency as good or excellent in relation to KPI 1. As reported above, this feedback has been taken into account in planning for 2018-22 and a revised case management approach is being developed and implemented that will include enhanced use of a partnership model.

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<sup>5</sup> TEQSA Stakeholder Survey 2018 pp.8-9 and 23.

<sup>6</sup> TEQSA Stakeholder Survey Report 2018 pp.18-19.

## KPI 2 – TEQSA’S COMMUNICATION WITH HIGHER EDUCATION PROVIDERS IS CLEAR, TARGETED AND EFFECTIVE

The following targets were used to assess performance against KPI 2:

- TEQSA’s decisions are provided in a timely manner, clearly articulating the reasons for decisions
- TEQSA gives all higher education providers a reasonable opportunity to address matters relevant to a decision by TEQSA before making a decision that affects the provider
- specific consultation with the sector occurs before proposed changes are made to TEQSA’s practices
- comprehensive current guidance material for regulatory policies and processes is publicly available and updated
- all general information that is required by providers is current and publicly available.

As reported in previous TEQSA RPF reports, TEQSA continued to make recommended adverse findings available to applicants before a decision was made, with the applicant being provided with the reasons for the proposed decision and allowed a reasonable opportunity to comment. The comments provided were taken into account in making the final decision. In 2017-18, this process applied to a larger proportion of re-registration decisions than in previous years as there was an increase in the proportion of renewal of registration assessments with an adverse decision compared with previous years<sup>7</sup>.

In relation to guidance material, new guidance notes were published in 2017-18 on *Credit and RPL*, *Grievance and Complaint Handling* and *Workforce Planning*. The guidance note on *Wellbeing and Safety* was also released for comment, and revised based on feedback received during the year<sup>8</sup>. The first in a new series of materials in the form of a good practice note on *Addressing Contract Cheating to Safeguard Academic Integrity* was also released in 2017-18<sup>9</sup>.

In relation to access to general information, from the launch of the new TEQSA website in November 2017 to 30 June 2018 there were over 40,000 page views of the information about TEQSA’s guidance notes<sup>10</sup>. In addition, the 2018 Stakeholder Survey found that the majority of providers rated *the clarity of application guides* (70 per cent) and *online forms* (69 per cent), *helpfulness of information about how to prepare an application* (66 per cent) and *portal information* (66 per cent), and *the clarity of the assessment scope and evidence requirements* (65 per cent) as good or excellent<sup>11</sup>. This result was lower than achieved in 2017 where the results were between 69 and 78 per cent<sup>12</sup>. With regard to guidance and support materials, between 83 and 91 per cent of stakeholders rated the *relevance, quality, usefulness, accessibility and quantity of information* as good or excellent, which is a similar result to that achieved in 2017<sup>13</sup>.

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<sup>7</sup> TEQSA Annual Report 2017-18 p.36.

<sup>8</sup> TEQSA Annual Report 2017-18 p.9.

<sup>9</sup> TEQSA Annual Report 2017-18 p.8.

<sup>10</sup> TEQSA Annual Report 2017-18 p.49.

<sup>11</sup> TEQSA Stakeholder Survey 2018 pp.16 and 23-24.

<sup>12</sup> TEQSA Stakeholder Survey 2018 pp.23-24.

<sup>13</sup> TEQSA Stakeholder Survey 2018 pp.20-21 and 24.

## Self-assessment – achieved

The agency continues to consult the sector on changes to practices and to produce guidance notes to assist providers. Guidance notes on the new TEQSA website continue to be frequently accessed, and the guidance notes appear to be highly valued.

## KPI 3 – REGULATORY ACTIONS UNDERTAKEN BY TEQSA ARE PROPORTIONATE TO THE RISKS BEING MANAGED

The following targets were used to assess performance against KPI 3:

- a comprehensive capacity for multifactorial risk analysis of all provider types
- integration of risk analysis and regulatory decision making, by use of comprehensive detailed current datasets gathered and maintained to inform risk analyses and regulatory interventions
- progressive development of the scope and application of the differentiated model (known as Core+) to further reduce burden on demonstrated low-risk providers.

In 2017-18, TEQSA reviewed and made technical changes to its Risk Assessment Framework, process, risk tools and systems to align with the *Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2015* and published the updated Risk Assessment Framework in April 2018. Cycle 5 of the annual provider risk assessments was completed in late 2017. Risk assessments for standalone English Language Intensive Courses for Overseas Students (ELICOS) and Foundation Studies providers were delayed due to the release of revised ELICOS Standards<sup>14</sup>.

As in previous years, an analysis of risk profiles of providers and the outcome of regulatory decisions on renewal of registration applications in 2017-18 demonstrated a strong relationship of risk and assessment outcomes<sup>15</sup> with 75 per cent of providers rated as moderate or high risk receiving an adverse decision and 100 per cent of providers rated as low risk receiving a positive decision<sup>16</sup>. In the case of course accreditations and renewals of accreditation, only a very small number of applications were submitted during 2017-18 by low risk providers, thereby limiting conclusions that could be drawn about the relationship between provider risk rating and regulatory outcomes for courses<sup>17</sup>.

In 2017-18, all renewal applications were assessed in accordance with the Core+ methodology, and the agency developed further guidance to support assessment staff in applying the regulatory principles of necessity, risk and proportionality. The agency also commenced planning for a review of the approach to assessment of providers previously assessed by TEQSA.

The average stakeholder survey result in relation to this KPI fell from the previous year<sup>18</sup> (from 57 per cent in 2017 to 52 per cent in 2018). Discussions with providers have revealed a need for further information about risk assessments and how they are used by TEQSA. Communication on this topic has been incorporated in planning for 2018-19.

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<sup>14</sup> TEQSA Annual Report 2017-18 p.37.

<sup>15</sup> TEQSA Annual Report 2017-18 p.38.

<sup>16</sup> An adverse decision includes conditions, rejection or less than 7-year registration.

<sup>17</sup> TEQSA Annual Report 2017-18 p.38.

<sup>18</sup> TEQSA Stakeholder Survey 2018 pp.10-11 and 23-24.

## **Self-assessment – achieved**

TEQSA has updated the Risk Assessment Framework to ensure the relevance of annual risk assessments to regulatory work. The relationship between assessment outcomes and the risk ratings demonstrate the appropriateness of the risk-based approach, with further developments planned for ELICOS and Foundation Studies providers. Further internal materials were developed during the year to clarify the application of the regulatory principles and to support a consistent approach to regulatory assessment and decision making.

## KPI 4 – TEQSA’S COMPLIANCE AND MONITORING APPROACHES ARE STREAMLINED AND COORDINATED

The following targets were used to assess performance against KPI 4:

- collaboration with the Department of Education and Training (the department) to streamline and automate data collection on providers, and enhance access and sharing
- collaboration with professional bodies to enhance data sharing and thus reduce regulatory burden on providers that are regulated by both TEQSA and a professional body
- specific interactions with international regulatory agencies, as warranted, for assessments of cross-border education from Australian providers
- demonstrated transparency of inspection and monitoring arrangements.

In 2017-18, agency staff regularly met with departmental officers to ensure the national data collection was fit for purpose and available for annual risk assessments. A Memorandum of Understanding with the department about sharing of information has been maintained. For providers that do not report through the department’s Higher Education Information Management System (HEIMS), TEQSA collected information through a provider information request under section 28 of the *Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011* (TEQSA Act).

TEQSA currently has 25 agreements in place with professional bodies, and signed or renewed agreements with seven bodies in 2017-18<sup>19</sup>. The agency continued to meet quarterly with CPA Australia to share information about providers of accounting courses. TEQSA also contributed to reviews of professional accreditation, including for the health professions, that sought to reduce duplication in requirements for providers delivering courses that require professional accreditation.

In late 2017, TEQSA undertook a joint assessment with the Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications of a course delivered by a third party on behalf of an Australian university. The key purpose of the exercise was to determine the equivalence of the accreditation processes of the two agencies as a first step to reducing duplication in international quality assurance. This information will also be used as part of the renewal of registration assessment of the Australian university.

For KPI 4, an average of 52 per cent of providers rated TEQSA as good or excellent in the 2018 survey which is comparable with the 2017 results (average of 55 per cent)<sup>20</sup>.

### **Self-assessment – achieved**

TEQSA has continued to seek and engage in opportunities to improve the use of data and to collaborate with relevant national and international groups to improve coordination of actions on providers. This collaboration is taking time to develop into changed processes for professional accreditation, as many pre-date the establishment of TEQSA. TEQSA has effectively utilised its association with international quality networks to share information with a view to building shared approaches to quality assurance to further enhance monitoring of the sector and focus regulatory intervention where there is the greatest risk.

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<sup>19</sup> TEQSA Annual Report 2017-18 p.40.

<sup>20</sup> TEQSA Stakeholder Survey 2018 pp.11-12 and 24.

## KPI 5 – TEQSA’S DEALINGS WITH HIGHER EDUCATION PROVIDERS ARE OPEN, TRANSPARENT AND CONSISTENT

The following targets were used to assess performance against KPI 5:

- a clear publicly-available risk framework and articulated risk analysis process
- transparency in the results of the regulatory decision-making process
- public sharing of aggregate observations of performance and risks derived from regulatory experience with the sector, through publication of analytical reports
- a consultative approach taken for new application guides and guidance notes for the transition to the *Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2015*.

Consistent with previous years, the agency continued to make the Risk Assessment Framework available on the TEQSA website with the updated Framework published in April 2018. This was viewed over 1,800 times by 30 June 2018<sup>21</sup>. As noted in KPI 3, discussions with providers in 2018 revealed the need to provide further information regarding the risk assessment process.

In 2017-18, TEQSA continued to maintain and update the National Register of Higher Education Providers (National Register). As reported in the TEQSA Annual Report 2017-18, the National Register was viewed more than 230,000 times since the launch of the new TEQSA website in November 2017. Stakeholders continued to rate the quality of the information on the National Register highly, with 74 per cent of providers rating the quality of the information on the National Register as good or excellent, a slight decrease from the previous year’s result of 79 per cent<sup>22</sup>.

In November 2017, TEQSA released the third edition of the *Key financial metrics on Australia’s higher education sector*. The report included a special focus on newly registered providers. The annual statistics report and a report on the assessment insights gathered from analysis of assessment outcomes were prepared during 2017-18, and these reports were released in early 2018-19.

As outlined under KPI 2, guidance notes continued to be heavily accessed and highly rated by providers. New guidance notes continued to be developed in response to identified needs of providers. In 2017-18, the agency also engaged with prospective providers through a joint workshop with the Council of Private Higher Education Providers and through targeted individual meetings with prospective providers.

The average stakeholder survey results for 2018 indicate a decrease in the proportion of stakeholders that rated the agency good or excellent for KPI 5, from 68 per cent in 2017 to 62 per cent in 2018<sup>23</sup>.

### **Self-assessment – achieved**

In 2017-18, TEQSA continued to prepare and provide information to inform providers and other stakeholders about regulation of the sector. This program of work is now well established and responding to meet the changing needs of providers and other stakeholders.

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<sup>21</sup> TEQSA Annual Report 2017-18 p.37.

<sup>22</sup> TEQSA Stakeholder Survey 2018 p.12.

<sup>23</sup> TEQSA Stakeholder Survey 2018 pp.12 and 23-24.

## KPI 6 – TEQSA’S REGULATORY FRAMEWORK CONTINUES TO BE IMPROVED IN CONSULTATION WITH STAKEHOLDERS

The following targets were used to assess performance against KPI 6:

- well-established, productive consultative mechanisms with stakeholders, and use of a variety of media and channels to convey information to stakeholders
- regular engagement with the Minister for Education and the department.

In addition to the consultations reported under KPI 2 and individual engagements of Commissioners and senior staff at higher education conferences and meetings, the agency held the first of two roundtable events to discuss areas where TEQSA could improve based on the TEQSA Stakeholder Survey 2017. The feedback from these sessions informed the development of the *TEQSA Corporate Plan 2018-22*.

In late 2017, the agency established a Student Expert Advisory Group. The Group met in March and July 2018 and discussed the role of TEQSA and how the agency can engage with the wider higher education student community.

The agency launched a new website in November 2017 that incorporated feedback from external stakeholders. The second TEQSA conference was held in late November 2017 with almost 800 registrations including 65 sponsored students for the three-day event. Students featured prominently in the conference consistent with the theme of *Students, Quality, Success*.

An occasional forum series was launched on 2017-18, with forums held on student attrition and contract cheating. Both forums were well attended and accompanied by published reports, made available through the TEQSA website and in hardcopy.

As identified in KPI 4, TEQSA staff regularly meet with officers from the department to ensure the national data collection is fit for purpose. TEQSA also regularly meets with other agencies, including the regulator of the vocational education and training sector, the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) and other regulators to share information about prospective and current providers and their related entities.

In 2017-18, TEQSA and ASQA negotiated an approach for coordinated assessment of dual-sector providers based on periodic sharing of findings rather than through joint assessment. The joint register of risk profiles for dual-sector providers was maintained and used by assessment staff to establish evidence requirements and inform the scope of assessment.

The TEQSA Commissioners and CEO met regularly with the Higher Education Standards Panel during 2017-18. Key topics discussed included: the regulatory impact of professional accreditation; the sector’s response to sexual assault and sexual harassment; and the review of the impact of the TEQSA Act.

The average stakeholder survey results for this KPI show a drop in satisfaction compared with 2017 where 61 per cent of providers rated the agency as good or excellent, compared with 57 per cent in 2018<sup>24</sup>. The drop was particularly evident in relation to making process improvements where the proportion of providers that rated the agency as good or excellent dropped from 62 per cent in 2017 to 52 per cent in 2018<sup>25</sup>. In relation to this measure, TEQSA acknowledges the further deterioration in the time taken to make decisions as reported in the *TEQSA Annual Report 2017-18*<sup>26</sup>.

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<sup>24</sup> TEQSA Stakeholder Survey 2018 pp.13-14 and 23-24.

<sup>25</sup> TEQSA Stakeholder Survey 2018 pp.13-14 and 23.

<sup>26</sup> TEQSA Annual Report 2017-18 pp.32-33.

## **Self-assessment – achieved**

During 2017-18, TEQSA broadened both the type and scale of its engagement with stakeholders, and stakeholder feedback was regularly used to review the regulatory approach and for planning. This is reflected in the *TEQSA Corporate Plan 2018-22* which focusses on the key areas of concern regarding the time taken to complete assessments and make decisions, and the relationship between providers and assessment staff. The agency is also continuing to refine its engagement with other regulators, particularly ASQA and also professional accreditation bodies, to increase its use of data and responsiveness to risks.

# APPENDIX A – Comparison of stakeholder survey results

Table 2 summarises the results of the survey of providers about 2017-18 activity compared with 2016-17 for each KPI.

Table 2. Summary of provider principal contact ratings, 2017 and 2018

	% OF SCORES AS GOOD OR EXCELLENT	
	PROVIDER (2018)	PROVIDER (2017)
<b>KPI 1</b> - Regulation by TEQSA does not unnecessarily impede the efficient operation of higher education providers	55.8	66.0
<b>KPI 2</b> - TEQSA's communication with higher education providers is clear, targeted and effective	63.8	71.7
<b>KPI 3</b> - Regulatory actions undertaken by TEQSA are proportionate to the risks being managed	51.7	57.0
<b>KPI 4</b> - TEQSA's compliance and monitoring approaches are streamlined and coordinated	51.6	54.9
<b>KPI 5</b> - TEQSA's dealings with higher education providers are open, transparent and consistent	61.5	67.6
<b>KPI 6</b> - TEQSA's regulatory framework continues to be improved in consultation with stakeholders	57.2	60.8
<b>Overall</b>	71.1	79.7

Table 3 presents the results for Peak Professional and Student Bodies (PPSB). With the exception of KPI 4, the results for PPSB respondents are consistent with or better than those observed in 2017.

**Table 3. Summary of Peak Professional Student Bodies (PPSB) scores, 2017 and 2018**

	% OF SCORES AS GOOD OR EXCELLENT	
	PPSB (2018)	PPSB (2017)
<b>KPI 1</b> - Regulation by TEQSA does not unnecessarily impede the efficient operation of higher education providers	93.7	91.7
<b>KPI 2</b> - TEQSA's communication with higher education providers is clear, targeted and effective	87.1	84.6
<b>KPI 3</b> - Regulatory actions undertaken by TEQSA are proportionate to the risks being managed	93.3	89.5
<b>KPI 4</b> - TEQSA's compliance and monitoring approaches are streamlined and coordinated	80.0	85.0
<b>KPI 5</b> - TEQSA's dealings with higher education providers are open, transparent and consistent	91.3	88.9
<b>KPI 6</b> - TEQSA's regulatory framework continues to be improved in consultation with stakeholders	79.0	66.7
<b>Overall</b>	100.0	87.5