

TEQSA: A New Regulatory Agency for Australian Higher Education

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Commissioner

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Australian Government

**Tertiary Education Quality
and Standards Agency**

A New World

On Sunday 29 January 2012, TEQSA assumed its full regulatory powers.

What has changed?

- Nine government regulators' powers now assumed by a single, independent, national regulator.
- All higher education providers to be regulated by TEQSA, including universities.
- AUQA operations ceased at the end of 2011.

A Snapshot of TEQSA

- One national scheme
 - broad coverage (n=170+)
 - common rules (Threshold Standards)
- Commission model
- Regulation AND quality improvement
- Up to 7 year cycle
- Continuous disclosure of material changes
- Annual cycle of risk assessments and data collections
- Unscheduled reviews
- High stakes consequences – cancel, suspend, restrict
- Scaled process and response – proportionate, risk-based and necessary regulation
- Reviewable decisions

TEQSA's Objects

- To provide national consistency in the regulation of higher education.
- To regulate using a standards-based quality framework and applying three regulatory principles.
- To protect and enhance Australia's reputation for and international competitiveness in the provision of quality higher education and training services, as well as excellence, diversity, and innovation in higher education.
- To encourage and promote a higher education system that is appropriate to meet Australia's social and economic needs.
- To protect students undertaking higher education.
- To ensure that students have access to information relating to higher education.

Basic Principles of Regulation

- Standards-based approach
- Regulation is based on the principles of:
 - Regulatory Necessity
 - Reflecting Risk
 - Proportionate Regulation

Standards Framework

Threshold Standards

- *Provider Standards*
 - *Provider Registration*
 - *Provider Category*
 - *Course Accreditation*
- *Qualifications Standards*

Other Standards

- *Teaching and Learning Standards*
- *Research Standards*
- *Information Standards*

Provider Standards

- 1. *The Provider Registration Standards cover:*** provider standing; financial viability and safeguards; corporate and academic governance; primacy of academic quality and integrity; management and human resources; responsibilities to students; physical and electronic resources and infrastructure.
- 2. *The Provider Category Standards include six provider categories:*** Higher Education Provider; Australian University; Australian University College; Australian University of Specialisation; Overseas University; Overseas University of Specialisation.
- 3. *The Provider Course Accreditation Standards*** require all courses to comply with 6 standards, including those that are developed by a higher education provider with the authority to self-accredit. These cover course design, course resourcing, admission criteria, assessment, teaching and learning quality , course monitoring, review and termination.

Qualification Standards

- The Qualifications Standards specify the requirements to ensure that awards issued are quality assured, protected against fraudulent use and provide pathways for further learning.
- **The Qualification Standards apply to all qualifications, including those developed by higher education providers with self-accrediting authority.**
- TEQSA will require all new courses and awards developed from 29 January 2012 to meet the revised Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF), Australia's national policy for regulated qualifications.
- A plan for achieving full compliance with the revised AQF by 1 January 2015 will be required for all existing courses.

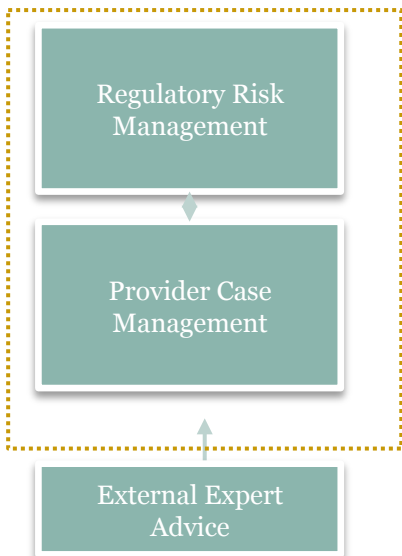
TEQSA's REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

TEQSA Act
 Threshold Standards
 Regulatory principles - reflecting risk, proportionate regulation and regulatory necessity

INPUTS

- Information and Data Collection**
- Scheduled and non-scheduled reviews
 - DIISRTE data collections
 - Other national and international sources
 - Material change notifications
 - Providers
 - Other

ANALYSIS



MODES OF FORMAL INQUIRY

- Scheduled Reviews
- Non-scheduled Reviews
- Quality Assessments (Sector and Provider)

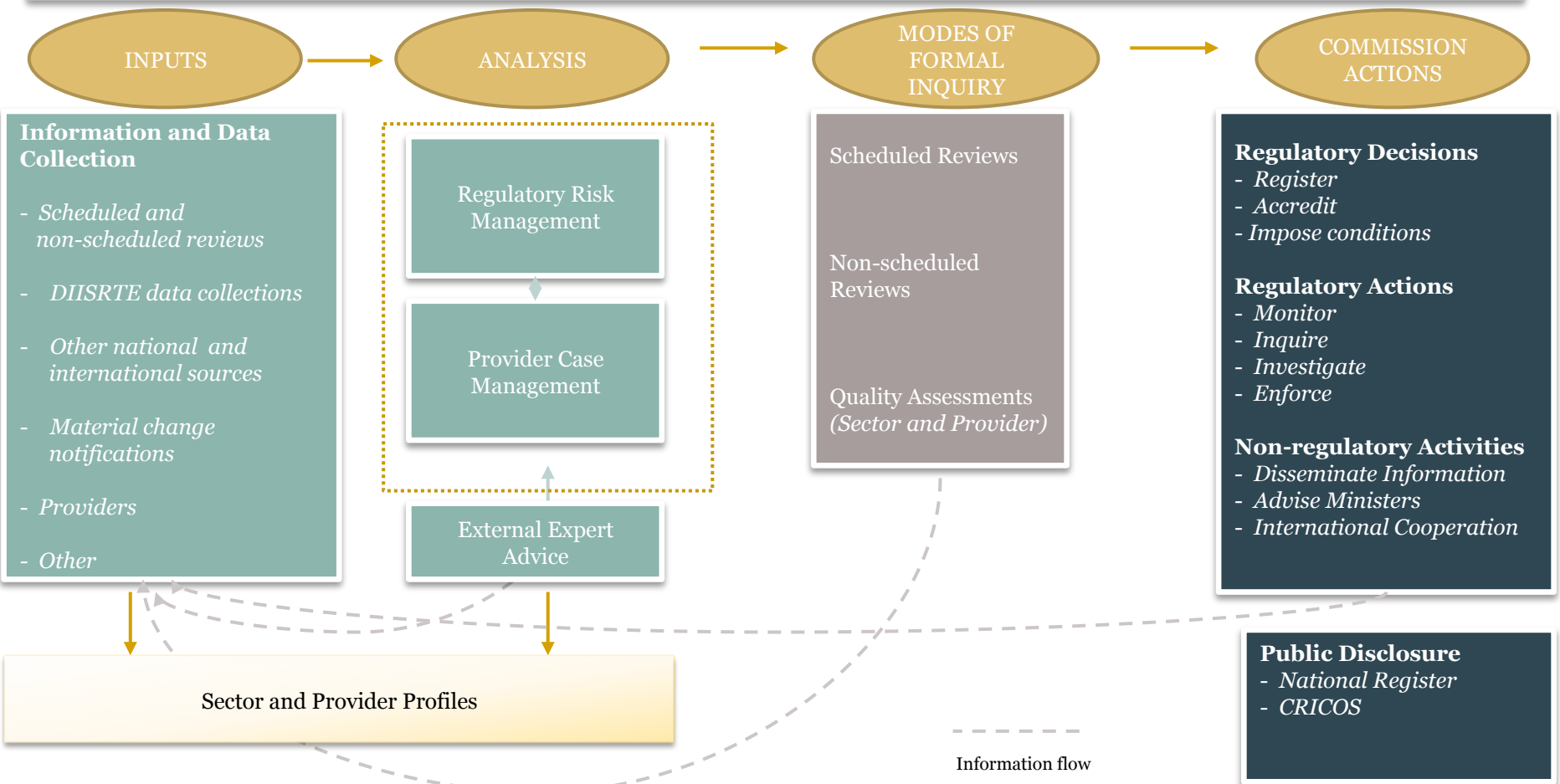
COMMISSION ACTIONS

- Regulatory Decisions**
 - Register
 - Accredit
 - Impose conditions
- Regulatory Actions**
 - Monitor
 - Inquire
 - Investigate
 - Enforce
- Non-regulatory Activities**
 - Disseminate Information
 - Advise Ministers
 - International Cooperation

Sector and Provider Profiles

- Public Disclosure**
- National Register
 - CRICOS

Information flow



INPUTS

Information and Data Collection

- *Scheduled and non-scheduled Reviews*
- *DIISRTE data collections*
- *Other national and international sources*
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- *Providers*
- *Other*



Sector and Provider Profiles

ANALYSIS

Regulatory Risk Management



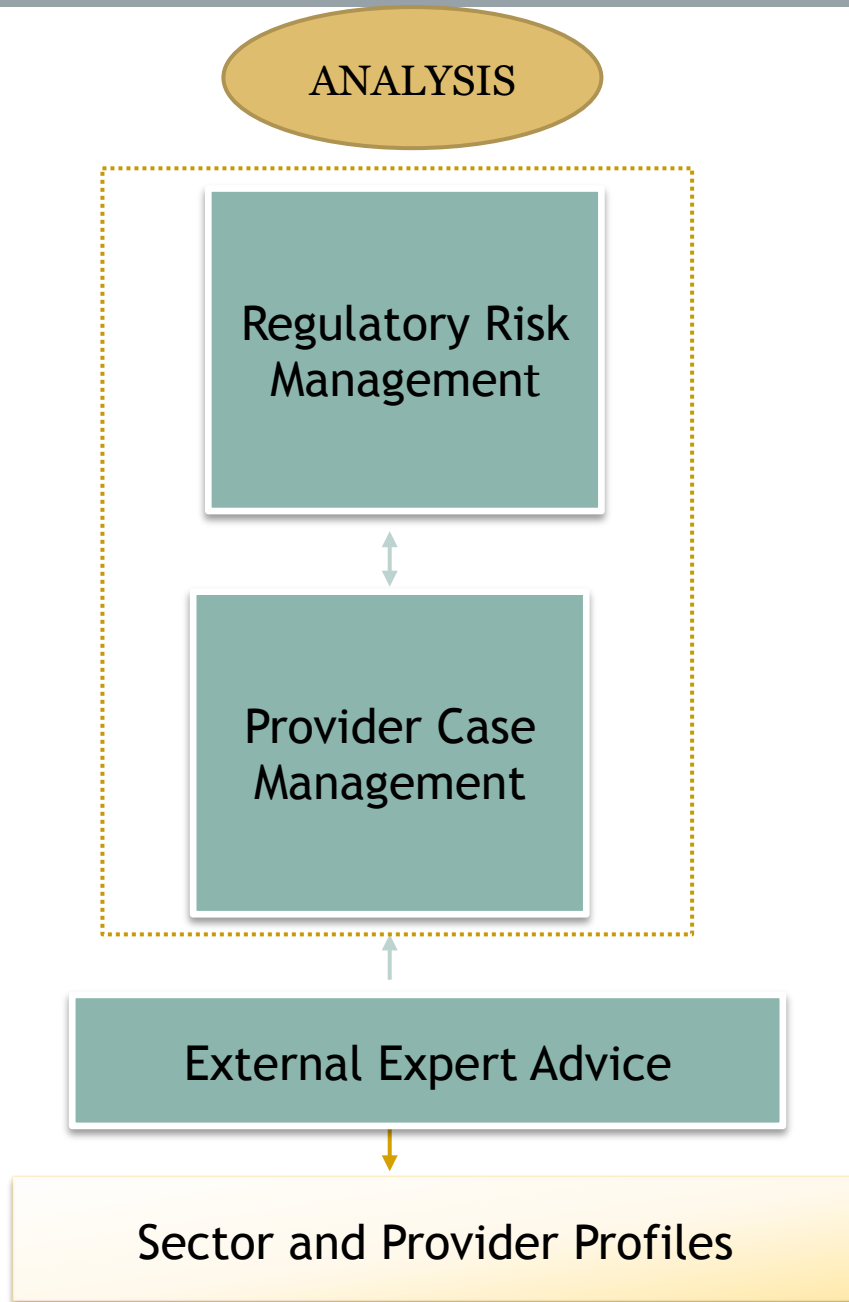
Provider Case Management



External Expert Advice



Sector and Provider Profiles



MODES OF FORMAL INQUIRY

Scheduled
Reviews

Non-scheduled
Reviews

Quality
Assessments
*(Sector and
Provider)*

COMMISSION ACTIONS

Regulatory Decisions

- *Register*
- *Accredit*
- *Impose conditions*
- **Regulatory Actions**
- *Monitor*
- *Inquire*
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Non-regulatory Activities

- *Disseminate Information*
- *Advise Ministers*
- *International Cooperation*

Public Disclosure

- *National Register*
- *CRICOS*

Material Change – Continuous Disclosure

- Under Section 29 of the TEQSA Act, providers have an obligation to notify TEQSA on what they consider to be a material change or set of changes;
- TEQSA has developed guidelines for providers to assist with material change notification;
- This is not a requirement to seek approval, but a requirement to notify;
- Depending on the type of material change, TEQSA will decide what further action, if any, it may take.

Regulatory Risk Framework

- TEQSA's Regulatory Risk Framework will underpin TEQSA's regulatory and quality assurance activities.
- It is a regulatory tool to assess risk to quality higher education and guide regulatory action in response.
- TEQSA is taking a holistic approach to risk assessment, balancing quantitative and qualitative information to develop 'Risk Profiles', and is committed to two-way dialogue with providers.

Risk Assessment Methodology

- The overall risk assessment focuses on 3 priority risk areas:
 - risk to students
 - risk of provider collapse
 - risk to national reputation.
- Risk categories, with risk indicators under each, are based on the Threshold Standards.

Provider Information Request 2012

- To carry out its regulatory functions, TEQSA requires access to complete and up-to-date provider information.
- TEQSA proposes to:
 - rely on data already collected by DIISRTE where this is available
 - ask for information (on students and staff) directly from those registered providers
 - that currently do not report to DIISRTE; and
 - where the DIISRTE data does not fully meet TEQSA's requirements.

Working with the sector

- TEQSA continues to work closely with DIISRTE to establish a comprehensive data sharing capability in order to minimise the reporting burden on providers; and
- TEQSA will establish in the near term an Expert Advisory Group on data which will comprise of nominees from the four peak bodies and a limited number of other stakeholders.

Challenges for TEQSA

- Sector understanding of our role (legislative)
- Transition issues
- Higher Education Standards Framework
- Data collection
- ESOS/ CRICOS
- No-one to copy

Further information and updates

www.teqsa.gov.au

QUESTIONS



Australian Government

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