

Overview

Quality Assurance System
in Higher Education

AUSTRALIA

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Introduction

In addition to its core activities of university evaluation, awarding of degrees and research activities, the National Institution for Academic Degrees and University Evaluation (NIAD-UE) is working closely with overseas quality assurance organisations, particularly those having advanced higher education systems and close ties with Japan, to gain the trust of the international community in Japanese higher education and promote international collaboration among higher education institutions (HEIs).

As each country possesses different political, societal, cultural and language element, the structure of its quality assurance system for higher education also differs. In building relationships and realising effective cooperation that transcend these barriers, ‘mutual understanding’ must first be enhanced among cooperating organisations by exchanging accurate information on their respective quality assurance systems and the higher education systems that underlie them. Amidst growing globalisation of higher education and increase of educational collaboration in the international dimension, it has also become important for HEIs to share information on their activities of quality assurance with their partners in order to provide an effective and quality-assured collaborative program.

In this context, International Affairs Division of NIAD-UE has developed the ‘Information Package’ as a means for publishing basic information on higher education and its quality assurance system in Japan as well as some other countries. We have produced these of Japan, US, UK, Australia, Netherlands, France, Korea, China, and Germany.

Australia attracts many international students from all over the world for its high quality education. Australia gives students protection under ESOS act and also offers advancing information transmission such as CRICOS, directory of institutions that can accommodate international students, and National Register from which students can get information on accredited higher education institution. In terms of quality assurance, under the TEQSA act, TEQSA (Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency) is responsible for quality assurance in Australia. TEQSA has been providing standard and risk based quality assurance activities. The scale, shape, structure and purpose of learning provision are changing in the Australia and further development has been made in the area of quality assurance system. Based on these recent trend of the Australia, NIAD-UE has produced the **“Overview of the Quality Assurance System in Higher Education: Australia (second edition)”** in both English and Japanese. We hope that these information would help for development of higher education cooperation between Australia and Japan.

This ‘Overview’ document is produced based on public information concerning Australian higher education system and quality assurance system. We would like to thank the people who gave us useful comments and suggestions to produce the document. We would also like to express our special thanks to Australian Embassy in Japan and Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA), for their contributions to the production of this document.

This ‘Overview’ document is also available from our website:

http://www.niad.ac.jp/english/unive/publications/information_package.htm

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Map of Australia



I. Basic information on the country

Name of country	Commonwealth of Australia		
Capital	Canberra		
Official language	English		
Population*	23,319,400 (as of Dec 2013)		
Nominal GDP**	1,555,287million USD (2012)		
Nominal GDP per capita **	67,855 USD (2012)		
Public expenditure on education as a percentage of total public expenditure ***	All levels of education combined: 14.4% (OECD average: 12.9%) Tertiary education ¹ : 3.3% (OECD average: 3.2%) (2011)		
Public expenditure on education as a percentage of GDP***	All levels of education combined: 4.8% (OECD average: 5.6%) Tertiary education: 1.1% (OECD average: 1.4%) (2011)		
Annual expenditure per student by educational institutions***	Tertiary education: 16,267 USD (OECD average: 13,958 USD) (2011)		
Annual public expenditure on educational institutions per student ***	Tertiary education: 7,475 USD (OECD average: 9,221 USD) (2011)		
Entry rates into tertiary education***	Tertiary-type A ² : 102% (Japan: 52%) Adjusted for international students ³ : 76% Advanced research programs: 3.5% (Japan: 1.0%) Adjusted for international students: 2.2% (2012)		
Organisation of education system	See I-1.Diagram of the Australian education system (p.2)		
Language of instruction	English		
Academic year****	School	The school year is from February to December. Most states and territories operate on a four term per year system, but Tasmania has a three-term system.	
	Tertiary Education	In the vocational education and training (VET) sector, the academic year is from late January to mid-December. In most states and territories it is divided into two semesters. Some states use a three term system. ----- In the higher education sector, the academic year is from February to November. Most institutions use the semester system. Some institutions have a trimester system or summer and winter sessions which are additional to the two main semesters. Some non-university institutions run programs year round.	

Sources:

* Australian Bureau of Statistics website: <http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/mf/3101.0>

** IMF, World Economic and Financial Surveys, World Economic Outlook Database, April 2014 Edition: <http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/weo/2014/01/weodata/weoselgr.aspx>

*** OECD, *Education at a Glance 2014*, p.215, p.249, p.257, pp.338-339

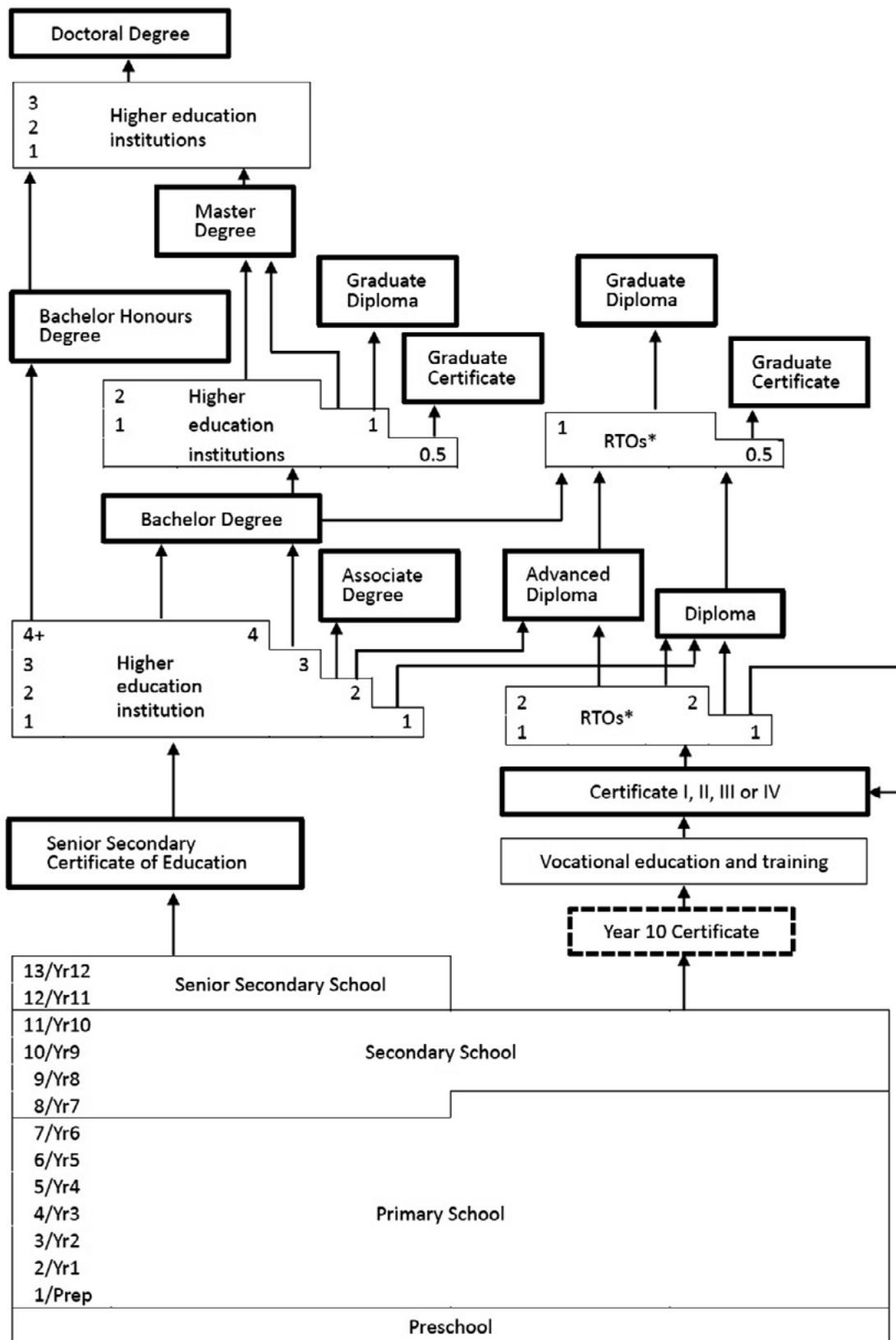
**** Australian Government, AEI, *Country Education Profiles, Australia*, p.2

¹ Australian postsecondary education is known as tertiary education. Tertiary education includes higher education and vocational education and training (VET).

² Largely theory-based programs designed to provide sufficient qualifications for entry to advanced research programs and professions with high skill requirements, such as medicine, dentistry or architecture. Duration is at least three years full-time, though usually four or more years. Entry rates of Tertiary-type B education that programs are typically shorter than those of tertiary-type A and focus on practical, technical or occupational skills for direct entry into the labor market, although some theoretical foundations may be covered in the respective programs, is not available.

³ Adjusted entry rates correspond to the entry rate when international students are excluded.

1. Diagram of the Australian education system



* RTOs: Registered Training Organisations (See p.33 for further information.)

Source: Australian Government, AEI, Country Education Profiles Australia, p.6

2. Australian education system

The Commonwealth of Australia consists of six states and two territories—New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia, Tasmania, Victoria, Western Australia, the Australian Capital Territory and the Northern Territory.

There are three levels of Australian government: Australian (Federal), state and territory, and local. Education and training is the responsibility of the Australian and state and territory governments.

School education

School education has a similar structure across Australia with only slight variations between states and territories. School education is compulsory between the ages of six and 16 (Year 1 to Year 9 or 10). School education is 13 years and divided into:

- primary school: seven or eight years—Kindergarten/Preparatory-Year 6 or 7;
- secondary school: three or four years—Years 7–10 or 8–10; and
- senior secondary school: two years—Years 11 and 12.

Postsecondary education

Postsecondary education is known as tertiary education. Tertiary education includes higher education and vocational education and training (VET).

Source: Australian Government, AEI, *Country Education Profiles, Australia*, p.2

3. Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF)

The Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) is the national policy for regulated qualifications from the tertiary education⁴ sector in addition to the school-leaving certificate; the Senior Secondary Certificate of Education. It incorporates the qualifications into a single comprehensive national qualifications framework.

The organising framework for the AQF is a taxonomic structure of levels and qualification types each of which is defined by a taxonomy of learning outcomes*. The taxonomic approach is designed to enable consistency in the way in which qualifications are described as well as clarity about the differences and relationships between qualification types. There are 14 AQF qualification types from across all education and training sectors and each, with the exception of the Senior Secondary Certificate of Education, is located at one of the 10 levels. (See pp.7-10 for further information.)

*AQF defines that the learning outcomes are the expression of the set of knowledge, skill and the application of knowledge and skills a person has acquired and is able to demonstrate as a result of learning.

The rapid development of the higher education sector in the late 1960s emphasised differences between the different states and territories and necessitated some standardisation of programs and award nomenclature. At the beginning, the following categories of the advanced awards were defined: Master's Degree, Graduate Diploma, Bachelor's Degree, Diploma and Associate Diploma. Subsequently, national guidelines and systems were developed, which incorporated vocational education and training sector's qualification in addition to advanced awards. Following this, the AQF was first introduced in 1995 and fully implemented from 2000. In 2011, a revised AQF (the *Australian Qualifications Framework First Edition July 2011*) was introduced. The *Australian Qualifications Framework Second Edition January 2013* is the current edition of the AQF and is effective from 1 January 2013. All requirements of the AQF will be met from 1 January 2015.

Main contents of recent amendment of AQF

- *The Australian Qualifications Framework First Edition July 2011:*
The most significant change was the introduction of the Bachelor Honours Degree as a standard-alone qualification on the Framework. It was previously a subject of the Bachelor Degree category. A ten-level system was also introduced.
- *The Australian Qualifications Framework Second Edition January 2013:*
The Vocational Graduate Certificate and Vocational Graduate Diploma were removed, allowing the Graduate Certificate and Graduate Diploma to be accredited and issued in both the vocational education and training and higher education sector.

Sources: Australian Government, AEI, *Country Education Profiles Australia*, p.2, p.4, pp.66-69
Australian Qualifications Framework Second Edition, January 2013, p.11, p.97, p.103, p.111

⁴ In Australia, tertiary education includes higher education and vocational education and training (VET).

3-1. Objectives of the AQF

The objectives of the AQF are to provide a contemporary and flexible framework that:

- accommodates the diversity of purposes of Australian education and training now and into the future
- contributes to national economic performance by supporting contemporary, relevant and nationally consistent qualification outcomes which build confidence in qualifications
- supports the development and maintenance of pathways which provide access to qualifications and assist people to move easily and readily between different education and training sectors and between those sectors and the labor market
- supports individuals' lifelong learning goals by providing the basis for individuals to progress through education and training and gain recognition for their prior learning and experiences
- underpins national regulatory and quality assurance arrangements for education and training
- supports and enhances the national and international mobility of graduates and workers through increased recognition of the value and comparability of Australian qualifications
- enables the alignment of the AQF with international qualifications frameworks.

Source: *Australian Qualifications Framework Second Edition, January 2013, p.8*

3-2. AQF and quality assurance

The Australian Qualifications Framework Council was established to govern and monitor the AQF and operated from 2008-2014. The AQF Council was responsible for providing strategic and authoritative advice to national ministers responsible for tertiary education, training and employment on the AQF to ensure it is nationally and internationally robust and supports qualification linkages and pathways. The AQF Council comprised 12 members with expertise and experience in the following areas: higher education, vocational education and training, schools, employers, unions and government. Membership was non-representative with an independent chair to ensure that its advice benefits Australia's education system as a whole. The work of the AQF Council was subsumed into the Department of Education in 2014.

The accrediting authorities in each education and training sector are responsible for the implementation and monitoring of the use of the AQF qualification type specifications which provide the requirements for construction of AQF qualifications. For example, in higher education sector, Tertiary Education Qualification and Standards Agency (TEQSA)⁵ maintains and enhances quality through nationally consistent higher education regulatory arrangements, such as registration of higher education providers and accreditation of higher education courses. These registered providers and courses of study are listed on the National Register of Higher Education Providers, on the TEQSA website.

The authorised issuing organisations for AQF qualification (2013)

- State and territory government authorised statutory bodies responsible for issuing the Senior Secondary Certificate of Education in their own state or territory.
- Registered training organisations (RTOs) authorised by the Australian Skills and Quality Authority (ASQA)⁶ and the government accrediting authorities in Victoria and Western Australia to issue AQF qualifications in VET.

⁵ TEQSA is the independent, national regulatory and quality assurance agency for the higher education sector in Australia. See pp.37-39 for further information.

⁶ ASQA is the national regulator for Australia's VET sector. See p.34 for further information.

- Self-accrediting higher education providers⁷ and non-self-accrediting higher education providers authorised by TEQSA to issue AQF qualifications in higher education.

The accrediting authorities (2013)

- State and territory government authorised statutory bodies responsible for the Senior Secondary Certificate of Education in their own state or territory.
- ASQA and the state government accrediting authorities in Victoria and Western Australia responsible for accrediting AQF qualifications and for authorising RTOs to issue AQF qualifications for VET.
- The National Skills Standards Council (NSSC)⁸
- TEQSA

In addition, there are approximately 40 self-accrediting higher education providers responsible for accrediting their own AQF qualifications for their own use in higher education.

Sources: *Australian Qualifications Framework Second Edition January 2013*, pp.21-22, p.105
 Australian Government, AEI, *Country Education Profiles Australia*, pp.32-33
 Australian Government, *Review of Higher Education Regulation REPORT*, p.5
 TEQSA website: <http://www.teqsa.gov.au/for-providers/self-accrediting-authority>

3-3. AQF Qualifications Pathways Policy

The AQF Qualifications Pathways Policy builds into the AQF the capacity to genuinely support students' lifelong learning. It is Australia's national policy on qualifications pathways. The purpose of the policy is to maximise the credit that students can gain for learning already undertaken. It aims to enhance student progression into and between AQF qualifications, recognise the multiple pathways that students take to gain AQF qualifications and that learning can be formal, non-formal or informal, and support the development of pathways in qualifications design. This policy covers all education and training sectors that issue AQF qualifications and the responsibilities for making qualification pathways accessible to students. Accrediting authorities in each education and training sector are responsible for the implementation and monitoring of the use of this policy.

The AQF Qualifications Pathways Policy relates to two types of pathways:

- Credit for entry into a qualification—direct articulation from one qualification to another, such as a Certificate II in one field which articulates to a Certificate III level in several fields.
- Credit towards a qualification—entry from one qualification to another with credit decided between students and institutions or through negotiated agreements between institutions.

Credit agreements negotiated between authorised issuing organisations for credit for students towards AQF qualifications at any level, vertical or horizontal, will take into account the comparability and equivalence of learning outcomes, volume of learning, program of study (including content), and learning and assessment approaches.

Credit agreements negotiated between authorised issuing organisations for credit for students towards higher level AQF qualifications in the same or a related discipline, having taken into account above article, should use the

⁷ Self-accrediting higher education providers are authorised to self-accredit some or all of their higher education courses of study. Accrediting a course means that institutions interpret the requirements of the Threshold Standards (see pp.40-41 and Appendix A for further information) and judge whether these will be appropriately applied and met throughout the development, approval, delivery and discontinuance of a course of study. See p.46 for further information.

⁸ NSSC is a committee of the Standing Council on Tertiary Education Skills and Employment (SCOTESE) which is the key decision-making body in the VET sector and has overall responsibility for the sector, responsible for the endorsement of AQF qualifications in national Training Packages for VET. It was established to complement the regulatory work of ASQA by advising SCOTESE on standards to be implemented for regulation of the VET sector. This separates the standard setting role from the regulatory role of ASQA.

following as the basis of negotiations:

- 50% credit for an Advanced Diploma or Associate Degree linked to a 3 year Bachelor Degree
- 37.5% credit for an Advanced Diploma or Associate Degree linked to a 4 year Bachelor Degree
- 33% credit for a Diploma linked to a 3 year Bachelor Degree
- 25% credit for a Diploma linked to a 4 year Bachelor Degree.

Source: *Australian Qualifications Framework Second Edition, January 2013, pp.77–80*

3-4. Location of AQF qualification types in the levels structure



Source: *Australian Qualifications Framework Second Edition, January 2013, p.19*

Reference: Former AQF Qualification by Sector of Accreditation

Schools Sector Accreditation	VET Sector Accreditation	HE Sector Accreditation
		Doctoral Degree
		Masters Degree
		Graduate Diploma
	Vocational Graduate Diploma	Graduate Diploma
	Vocational Graduate Certificate	Graduate Certificate
		Bachelor Degree
	Advanced Diploma	Associate Degree Advanced Diploma
	Diploma	Diploma
Senior Secondary Certificate of Education	Certificate IV	
	Certificate III	
	Certificate II	
	Certificate I	

Source: *Australian Qualifications Framework, Implementation Handbook Fourth Edition 2007, p.1*

3-5. AQF levels summaries and AQF qualification types

Higher education in Australia refers to university and non-university institutions which award AQF level 5 to 10 qualifications. There are three cycles of higher education lead to Bachelor, Master and Doctoral Degree but there are also sub-degree undergraduate qualifications and postgraduate qualifications.

Level	1	2	3	4	5
Summary	Graduates at this level will have knowledge and skills for initial work, community involvement and/or further learning	Graduates at this level will have knowledge and skills for work in a defined context and/or further learning	Graduates at this level will have theoretical and practical knowledge and skills for work and/or further learning	Graduates at this level will have theoretical and practical knowledge and skills for specialised and/or skilled work and/or further learning	Graduates at this level will have specialised knowledge and skills for skilled/paraprofessional work and/or further learning
Qualification Type	Certificate I	Certificate II	Certificate III	Certificate IV	Diploma

Level	6	7	8	9	10
Summary	Graduates at this level will have broad knowledge and skills for paraprofessional/ highly skilled work and/or further learning	Graduates at this level will have broad and coherent knowledge and skills for professional work and/or further learning	Graduates at this level will have advanced knowledge and skills for professional highly skilled work and/or further learning	Graduates at this level will have specialised knowledge and skills for research, and/or professional practice and/or further learning	Graduates at this level will have systematic and critical understanding of a complex field of learning and specialised research skills for the advancement of learning and/or for professional practice
Qualification Type	Advanced Diploma Associate Degree	Bachelor Degree	Bachelor Honours Degree Graduate Certificate Graduate Diploma	Masters Degree	Doctoral Degree

Source: *Australian Qualifications Framework Second Edition, January 2013, p.18*

3-6. AQF Qualification Issuance Policy

AQF Level	Qualification Type	Qualification Title	Typical volume of learning
	Senior Secondary Certificate of Education	Titles will vary across jurisdictions; the use of the titles will be accompanied by the statement: '(Certificate Title) is a Senior Secondary Certificate of Education within the Australian Qualifications Framework.'	2 years
1	Certificate I	Certificate I (Field of study/discipline)	0.5 – 1 year
2	Certificate II	Certificate II (Field of study/discipline)	0.5 – 1 year
3	Certificate III	Certificate III (Field of study/discipline)	1 – 2 years (Up to 4 years may be required to achieve the learning outcomes through a program of indentured training/employment.)
4	Certificate IV**	Certificate IV (Field of study/discipline)	0.5 – 2 years
5	Diploma	Diploma (Field of study/discipline)	1 – 2 years
6	Advanced Diploma	Advanced Diploma (Field of study/discipline)	1.5 – 2 years
	Associate Degree	Associate Degree (Field of study/discipline)	2 years
7	Bachelor Degree**	Bachelor (Field of study/discipline)	3 – 4 years
8	Bachelor Honours Degree	Bachelor (Field of study/discipline) (Honours)	1 year (following a Bachelor Degree)***
	Graduate Certificate****	Graduate Certificate (Field of study/discipline)	0.5 – 1 year
	Graduate Diploma****	Graduate Diploma (Field of study/discipline)	1 – 2 years
9	Master Degree (Research)	Master (Field of study/discipline)	1 – 2 years *****
	Master Degree (Coursework)	Master (Field of study/discipline)	
	Master Degree (Extended)	Master (Field of study/discipline)*****	3 – 4 years (following completion of a minimum of a 3 year level 7 qualification)
10	Doctoral Degree	Doctor (Field of study/discipline)	3 – 4 years
	Higher Doctoral Degree	Doctor (Field of study/discipline)	An additional kind of Doctoral Degree, the Higher Doctorate, may be awarded by an authorised issuing organisation on the basis of an internationally recognised original contribution to knowledge rather than through the process of supervised independent study.

* There may be variations between short duration specialist qualifications that build on knowledge and skills already acquired and longer duration qualifications that are designed as entry level requirements for work.

** In Australia it is quite common for students to enroll in a double or combined Bachelor Degree program which leads to the award of two Bachelor Degrees. This is most common in the fields of arts, commerce, law and science.

*** A Bachelor Honours Degree may also be embedded in a Bachelor Degree, typically as an additional year.

**** The Vocational Graduate Certificate and Vocational Graduate Diploma qualification types are removed from the AQF effective from 1 January 2013. The amended Graduate Certificate and Graduate Diploma qualification types, available for accreditation and issuance in higher education and vocational education and training, are available for use from 1 January 2013.

***** Exceptions are following.

The use of the qualification title 'Juris Doctor' is permitted for a Master Degree (Extended) for legal practice.

The use of the qualification title 'Doctor of ...' is permitted for a Master Degree (Extended) for five professions: medical practice; physiotherapy; dentistry; optometry and veterinary practice.

Further exceptions may be permitted in accordance with the AQF Qualification Type Addition and Removal Policy.

***** In the same discipline: 1.5 years following a level 7 qualification or 1 year following a level 8 qualification
In a different discipline: 2 years following a level 7 qualification or 1.5 years following a level 8 qualification

Sources: *Australian Qualifications Framework Second Edition, January 2013*, pp.14-17, p.72
Australian Government, AEI, *Country Education Profiles Australia*, p.9
Australian Government, Future Unlimited website:
<http://www.studyinaustralia.gov.au/usa/australian-education/university-and-higher-education>

II. Tertiary education in Australia

1. Overview of tertiary education providers

Australian postsecondary education is known as tertiary education. Tertiary education includes higher education and vocational education and training (VET). Tertiary education providers include higher education providers such as Australian Universities, VET providers, and education institutions approved to recruit, enroll and deliver education and training services to overseas students, and details of their courses.

There are some regulation systems such as registration and courses accreditation by external agencies on each education and training. TEQSA* regulates the higher education sector, on the other hand, ASQA** regulates the VET sector (except for some states). In addition, all providers that enroll overseas students are required to meet necessary conditions in order to be registered on CRICOS*** (see p.31, pp.55-56 for details). Registered providers on CRICOS (CRICOS providers/see below) also include schools for primary and secondary education.

Higher education providers may be granted the authority to self-accredit some or all of their courses of study after making an application for self-accrediting authority to TEQSA. If a provider is granted self-accrediting authority, it may accredit its own course(s)⁹ as opposed to applying for accreditation by TEQSA. However, these providers are still required to meet the Threshold Standards and conform with the AQF. There are now more than forty self-accrediting higher education providers comprising mainly Australian Universities.

Today there are also a significant number of dual or multi sector providers which operate across two or more of the tertiary spheres. Approximately 50 per cent of higher education providers regulated by TEQSA are also regulated by ASQA for their VET delivery. Moreover, the majority of higher education providers are also registered CRICOS providers.

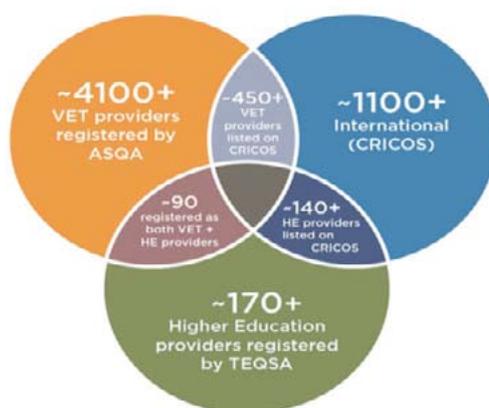


Figure: Tertiary Education Provider Overview¹⁰

* TEQSA : the independent, national regulatory and quality assurance agency for the higher education sector (see pp.37-39 for further information)

** ASQA: the interdependent, national regulator for Australia's VET sector (see p.34 for further information)

*** CRICOS: Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students (see p.31, pp.55-56 for details)

Source: Australian Government, *Review of Higher Education Regulation REPORT*, pp.5-6
<http://docs.education.gov.au/system/files/doc/other/finalreviewreport.pdf>

⁹ See p.6 (footnote 7) for details.

¹⁰ The numbers of providers are based on the report "*Review of Higher Education Regulation REPORT*" in 2013, and subject to change on a regular basis. There are currently 177 higher education providers registered by TEQSA as at 15 August 2014. See p.18 for details.

2. Administration and finance of tertiary education

Education and training is the responsibility of the Australian and state and territory governments.

Administration and finance of higher education

The Australian Government has significant financial and policy responsibility for higher education. State and territory governments had major legislative responsibility until TEQSA was established (See p.36-39 for further information). The Australian Government provides significant funding to higher education institutions. As a condition of funding, institutions must meet a range of quality and accountability requirements that are set out in the Higher Education Support Act 2003 (HESA). Consultation between the Australian government and state and territory governments occurs at ministerial level through the Standing Council on Tertiary Education, Skills and Employment (SCOTESE)¹¹, which reports to the Council of Australian Governments (COAG)¹² and is supported by the secretariat of the National Advisory for Tertiary Education, Skills and Employment (NATESE).

Administration and Finance of vocational education and training (VET)

State and territory governments are responsible for administering VET in their jurisdictions including state-level planning, allocation of funds to public and private training providers, setting student fees and managing colleges and institutes of Technical and Further Education (TAFEs)¹³. State and territory authorities report to their Minister, who is a member of SCOTESE. The Australian government contributes about one-third of government funding for VET, with the other two-thirds coming from state and territory governments. Australian government funds are used to support national priorities. State and territory governments can allocate funding depending on particular needs in their state or territory.

Australian Government: Department of Education and Training

The Australian government Department of Education and Training is responsible for national policies and programs that help Australians access quality and affordable childcare; early childhood education, school education, post-school, higher education, international education and academic research. Main matters dealt with by the Department are following.

- Schools education policy and programs, including vocational education and training in schools
- Higher education policy, regulation and programs
- Policy, coordination and support for international education and research engagement
- Co-ordination of research policy in relation to universities, Creation and development of research infrastructure, Research grants and fellowships

The predecessors of the Department of Education:

- 2011.12	Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR)
2011.12 - 2013.3	Department of Industry, Innovation, Science, Research and Tertiary Education (DIISRTE): The tertiary education division of DEEWR was merged into the Department of Industry, Innovation, Science; Research (DIISR) upon the latter's inauguration.

¹¹ SCOTESE is one of 12 Standing Councils to be established as part of the new COAG Council System to support COAG in September 2011. SCOTESE has high-level policy responsibility for the national tertiary education, skills and employment system, including strategic policy, priority setting, planning and performance, and key cross-sectoral issues. The Standing Council on School Education and Early Childhood (SCSEEC) has responsibility for school education and early childhood education. SCOTESE and SCSEEC will be merged to the new Education Council in 2014.

¹² COAG is the peak intergovernmental forum in Australia. The members of COAG are the Prime Minister, State and Territory Premiers and Chief Ministers and the President of the Australian Local Government Association.

¹³ In Victoria and Western Australia, state governments are also responsible for regulation of training providers. See p.34 for further information.

2013.3 - 2013.9	Department of Industry, Innovation, Climate Change, Science, Research and Tertiary Education (DIICCSRTE): With the abolition of the former Department of Climate Change and Energy Efficiency (DCCEE), its climate change division was transferred to the DIISRTE upon the latter's inauguration.
2013.9 - 2014.12	Department of Education: It was established by changes of the Administrative Arrangements Order made in September 2013. Department of Education and Department of Employment were created out of the former DEEWR. (Department of Employment is responsible for employment and work.)
2014.12 -	Department of Education and Training: Child care policies and programmes have been to transferred to the Department of Social Services.

State and territory governments

New South Wales:	NSW Department of Education and Communities (http://www.dec.nsw.gov.au/)
Victoria:	Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (http://www.education.vic.gov.au/Pages/default.aspx)
Queensland:	Department of Education, Training and Employment (http://deta.qld.gov.au/index.html)
Western Australia:	Department of Education Services (http://www.des.wa.gov.au/)
South Australia:	Department of Further Education, Employment, Science and Technology (http://www.dfeest.sa.gov.au/)
Tasmania:	Department of Education Tasmania (http://www.education.tas.gov.au/Pages/default.aspx)
Northern Territory:	Department of Education (http://www.education.nt.gov.au/)
Australian Capital Territory:	Education and Training Directorate (http://www.det.act.gov.au/)

Sources: Australian Government, Department of Education and Training website: <http://education.gov.au/>
Australian Government, Department of Employment website: <http://employment.gov.au/>
Australian Government, AEI, *Country Education Profiles Australia*, p.2, p.19, pp.32-33
COAG website: <http://www.coag.gov.au/>

3. Other higher education related bodies

Australian Qualification Framework Council (AQFC)

The Australian Qualifications Framework Council was established to govern and monitor the AQF. See p.5 for further information.

Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA)

TEQSA is the independent, national regulatory and quality assurance agency for the higher education sector. See p.37 for further information.

Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA)

ASQA is the independent, national regulator for Australia's vocational education and training (VET) sector. See pp.37-39 for further information.

Major university / college associations

- Universities Australia (UA) : UA was established on 22 May 2007 as the peak body representing the university sector. UA represents Australia's 39 universities¹⁴ in the public interest, both nationally and internationally. Members of UA are the universities, represented by their Chief Executive Officer - the Vice-Chancellor.
- Group of Eight (Go8): Go8 is a coalition of leading Australian universities, comprehensive in general and professional education and distinguished by depth and breadth in research.

Source: Universities Australia website: <http://www.universitiesaustralia.edu.au/page/about-us/>
Group of Eight website: <https://go8.edu.au/page/go8-indicators>
Reference: Universities Australia, *University Profiles (August 2013)*

¹⁴ As of August 2013, Torrens University Australia, newly established, is not a member of UA.

Student Organisations

- National Union of Students (NUS): NUS is the peak representative body for undergraduate students in Australia and works to protect the rights of students across Australia.
- Council of International Students Australia (CISA): CISA is the peak national student representative organisation for international students studying at the postgraduate, undergraduate, private college, TAFE, ELICOS and foundation level.
- Australian Federation of International Students (AFIS): AFIS's primary aim is to create awareness among students about the diversity of activities available to them, and enrich their experience of living and studying in Australia.
- Council of Australian Postgraduate Associations (CAPA): CAPA is a membership based non-profit organisation. Its main role is in protecting and promoting the interests and needs of Australia's 320,000+ postgraduate students.

Sources: CISA website: <http://cisa.edu.au/>

AFIS website: http://www.afis.org.au/?page_id=44

CAPA website: <http://www.capa.edu.au>

Reference: Australian Government, Future Unlimited website: <http://www.studyinaustralia.gov.au/usa/live-in-australia/support-services>

4. Statistics of higher education

4-1. Summary of student number – Type of attendance

	Full-time		Part-time		Total	
	2007	2012	2007	2012	2007	2012
Public Universities and a public self-accrediting higher education provider ¹⁵	664,381 (68.0%)	825,566 (70.5%)	312,405 (32.0%)	346,171 (29.5%)	976,786	1,171,737
Private Universities and Other Higher Education Providers ¹⁶	35,626 (67.1%)	58,538 (68.1%)	17,434 (32.9%)	27,447 (31.9%)	53,060	85,985
Total ¹⁷	700,007 (68.0%)	884,104 (70.3%)	329,839 (32.0%)	373,618 (29.7%)	1,029,846	1,257,722

Source: Australian Government, Department of Industry website, 2012 and 2007 Full Year Student Summary table:
<http://www.innovation.gov.au/highereducation/HigherEducationStatistics/StatisticsPublications/Pages/Students.aspx>

4-2. Summary of student number – Citizenship

Type of Citizenship		2007	2012
Domestic	Australian	720,185 (69.9%)	886,815 (70.5%)
	New Zealand	6,510 (0.2%)	10,745 (0.9%)
	Permanent Resident	28,654 (2.8%)	33,530 (2.7%)
	Humanitarian Visa	1,398 (0.1%)	3,020 (0.2%)
	Total Domestic	756,747 (73.5%)	934,110 (74.3%)
Overseas	273,099 (26.5%)	323,612 (25.7%)	
Total ¹⁸	1,029,846	1,257,722	

Source: Australian Government, Department of Industry website, 2012 and 2007 Full Year Student Summary table:
<http://www.innovation.gov.au/highereducation/HigherEducationStatistics/StatisticsPublications/Pages/Students.aspx>

¹⁵ Public universities and public self-accrediting higher education provider numbered 38 providers. A public self-accrediting higher education provider is Bachelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education.

¹⁶ This figure includes private self-accrediting higher education providers and TAFEs (colleges and institutes of Technical and Further Education) which are public RTOs (see p.33 for details). Number of these providers was 67 in 2007 and 91 in 2012.

¹⁷ Number of providers was 105 (38 + 67) in 2007 and 129 (38 + 91) in 2012.

¹⁸ This figure corresponds to the same providers in 4.1 "Type of attendance".

4-3. Summary of student number – Broad field of education

Field of education	2007	2012
Natural and Physical Sciences	77,195 (7.5%)	100,074 (8.0%)
Information Technology	50,733 (1.9%)	49,524 (3.9%)
Engineering and Related Technologies	69,642 (6.8%)	91,962 (7.3%)
Architecture and Building	22,676 (2.2%)	29,483 (2.3%)
Agriculture, Environmental and Related Studies	16,080 (1.6%)	19,068 (1.5%)
Health	131,077 (12.7%)	185,509 (14.7%)
Education	101,816 (9.9%)	119,460 (9.5%)
Management and Commerce	304,443 (29.6%)	334,770 (26.6%)
Society and Culture	222,925 (21.6%)	278,656 (22.2%)
Creative Arts	68,178 (6.6%)	86,547 (6.9%)
Food, Hospitality and Personal Services	570 (0.1%)	288 (0.0%)
Mixed Field Programs	3,019 (0.3%)	9,037 (0.7%)
Non-award courses	22,589 (2.2%)	18,122 (1.4%)
Total ¹⁹	1,029,846	1,257,722

Source: Australian Government, Department of Industry website, 2012 and 2007 Full Year Student Summary:
<http://www.innovation.gov.au/highereducation/HigherEducationStatistics/StatisticsPublications/Pages/Students.aspx>

4-4. Number of full-time and fractional full-time staff²⁰ by current duties classification

Staff classification		2001	2007	2012
Academic staff	Above Senior Lecturer	7,050	10,109	13,307
	Senior Lecturer	8,372	9,922	11,596
	Lecturer	11,603	14,011	16,827
	Below Lecturer	6,425	8,182	8,619
	Sub-total Academic Classifications	33,450	42,224	50,349
Sub-total Non-academic Classifications		44,755	52,838	63,281
Total ²¹		78,205	95,062	113,630

Sources: Australian Government, Department of Industry website, 2012 Staff Numbers (Selected Higher Education Statistics):
<http://www.innovation.gov.au/highereducation/HigherEducationStatistics/StatisticsPublications/Pages/Staff.aspx>
 Australian Government, Department of Education website:
[http://heimshelp.deewr.gov.au/sites/heimshelp/resources/glossary/pages/glossaryterm?title=Work Contract#FractFTWContract](http://heimshelp.deewr.gov.au/sites/heimshelp/resources/glossary/pages/glossaryterm?title=Work%20Contract#FractFTWContract)

¹⁹ The data takes into account the coding of Combined Courses to two fields of education. As a consequence, counting both fields of education for Combined Courses means that the totals may be less than the sum of all broad fields of education. This figure corresponds to the same providers in 4.1 "Type of attendance".

²⁰ Fractional full time work contract: the number of hours to be worked each week is a specified fraction of the number of hours which would be worked by a member of staff with a full-time work contract for the job or position and with the same classification type and level.

²¹ The sum total of staff at 42 higher educational providers (including 39 universities, Avondale College and Melbourne College of Divinity [now MCD University of Divinity]). Therefore, this figure does not correspond to the number of institutions in 4.1 "Types of attendance", 4.2 "Citizenship" nor 4.3 "Broad field of education". Moreover, the number of universities on p. 18 is 40 providers, but the newly established Torrens University Australia (private) is not included in 4.4 "Number of full-time and fractional full-time staff". Furthermore, on p. 18, MCD University of Divinity is included in the category of "Australian University of Specialisation".

5. Historical overview of higher education

The first universities in Australia were established in four of the original British colonies – the University of Sydney in 1850 in New South Wales, the University of Melbourne in 1853 in Victoria, the University of Adelaide in 1874 in South Australia and the University of Tasmania in 1890. Following the creation of the Commonwealth of Australia in 1901, the University of Queensland was established in 1909 and the University of Western Australia in 1911.

Between the two World Wars, two university colleges were established – Canberra University College in 1930 in the Australian Capital Territory which later joined the Australian National University in the 1960s and the New England University College in 1938 in northern New South Wales which became the University of New England in 1954. The post war period saw the establishment of the Australian National University in 1946 and several more new universities until the number of universities had risen to nineteen by the late 1970s.

The 1960s saw the development of a binary system of higher education, consisting of the universities and a large group of advanced education institutions. Eventually there were about 70 institutions or colleges of advanced education (CAEs) which included many long established institutions such as the large central institutes of technology, regional colleges, colleges specialising in teacher education and a number of small colleges specialising in fields such as agriculture. The advanced education institutions initially offered sub-degree level awards and later offered awards mainly at the pass Bachelor degree level, but did not offer Bachelor Honours degrees. With a few exceptions, they were not funded for research and did not offer post graduate awards.

As part of a major reform process in 1987 the binary divide between universities and other higher education institutions, such as CAEs, was abolished. This resulted in a major program of amalgamations and rationalisations, resulting in significantly fewer higher education institutions.

The expansion of Australia's higher education system over the past fifty years has been accompanied by substantial structural and funding changes. During World War II and in the following years the Australian Government began to play a more prominent role in public higher education funding and policy, assuming full funding responsibility for higher education in 1974 and abolishing tuition fees in the same year.

The major reorganisation of the higher education sector was undertaken by the Australian Government in the 1980s against a background of significant policy reforms aimed at engaging Australia with the global economy and the huge increase in participation rates in the final year of schooling. During this period the Australian Government introduced student contributions through the Higher Education Contribution Scheme (HECS), designed to provide a more equitable arrangement for funding of the higher education sector.

From 1986 universities were able to charge full fees for overseas students. Universities were quick to take up the opportunity to generate additional income flowing from this initiative and to market themselves as high quality education providers.

The deregulation of higher education gained momentum in the 1990s. Fee-paying post graduate courses for Australian students were introduced and growth in domestic fee-paying students dominated growth in post-graduate studies in the 1990s.

From 1998, universities were given the flexibility to offer fee-paying places to Australian undergraduate students which has led to greater numbers of domestic fee-payers and greater flexibility in the setting of fees by universities. Afterward, the Australian Government introduced the "Our Universities: Backing Australia's Future" reforms, designed to establish a partially deregulated higher education system. This arrangement for student financing is the Higher Education Loan Scheme (HELP), which replaces HECS. The number of Commonwealth-supported places was

formerly capped by the Australian Government. In 2012 a demand-driven system was introduced that allows public universities to decide how many places they will offer and the specialisations they will offer them in. (There are some exceptions. See p.24-27 for further information.)

Sources: Australian Government, AEI, *Country Education Profiles Australia 2006*, pp.72-73
Australian Government, AEI, *Country Education Profile, Australia*, p.19
Australian Government, DIISRTE, *Administrative information for higher education providers: student support, Effective from 1 January 2012*, p.11

Recent topics on Higher Education

- Higher Education and Research Reform Amendment Bill 2014

In 2014, Minister for Education introduced the Higher Education and Research Reform Amendment Bill 2014 to the parliament. This bill includes fee deregulation and expansion of demand driven funding to higher education qualifications below the level of bachelor degree, including higher education diplomas, advanced diplomas, and associate degrees, and also to private universities and non-university higher education providers. The Bill, is passed by the Parliament, will enable providers to determine the amount that students contribute to the cost of their courses and also restructures Commonwealth subsidies for Commonwealth supported places. Through this Bill, the Government expects the reforms to expand opportunity and choice in higher education in Australia, and ensure that Australia is not left behind at a time of rising performance by universities around the world.

Source: Australian government, Department of Education and Training website,
<https://education.gov.au/news/higher-education-and-research-reform-amendment-bill-2014>

- The New Colombo Plan

The Australian Government published *Australia in the Asian Century White Paper* in October 2012. This White Paper provides a roadmap for the whole of Australia—governments, business, unions, and the broader community—in this next phase. The goal is to secure Australia as a more prosperous and resilient nation that is fully part of our region and open to the world. In the White Paper, the main objectives of education are as follows.

- All Australian students will have the opportunity, and be encouraged, to undertake a continuous course of study in an Asian language throughout their years of schooling; all students will have access to at least one priority Asian language that will be Chinese (Mandarin), Hindi, Indonesian and Japanese.
- A larger number of Australian university students will be studying overseas and a greater proportion will be undertaking part of their degree in Asia.
- Australia's vocational education and training institutions will have substantially expanded services in more nations in the region, building the productive capacity of the workforce of these nations and supporting Australian businesses and workers to have a greater presence in Asian markets.

In August 2013, the Australian Government announced the New Colombo Plan. This is a signature initiative of the Australian Government which aims to improve knowledge of the Indo Pacific in Australia. The plan will increase the number of Australians studying in the region, through supporting study and internship opportunities, thereby generating a genuine, two-way flow of students between Australia and the Indo Pacific. The government plans to spread the New Colombo Plan in more than 35 Indo-Pacific locations from January 2015. Approximately 60 scholarships and \$8 million in mobility grants will be offered in 2015.

Sources: Australian Government, *Australia in the Asian Century White Paper*, pp.15-17, p.165, p.175
Australian Government, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade website: <http://www.dfat.gov.au/new-colombo-plan/>

6. Overview of higher education system

Higher Education (HE) in Australia refers to university and non-university institutions which award Australian Qualification Framework (AQF) level 5 to 10 (see Table 1). Programs can be taken either full-time or part-time. Distance and online education is common. There are three cycles of higher education leading to Bachelor, Master and Doctoral Degrees but there are also sub-degree undergraduate qualifications and postgraduate qualifications. In Australia it is quite common for students to enroll in a double or combined Bachelor Degree program which leads to the award of two Bachelor Degrees. This is most common in the fields of arts, commerce, law and science.

Sources: Australian Government, AEI, *Country Education Profiles Australia*, pp.8-9
 Australian Government, Future Unlimited website:
<http://www.studyinaustralia.gov.au/usa/australian-education/university-and-higher-education>

6-1. Provider category and number of providers

Higher education providers fall into the six categories below. A registered Higher Education Provider will be categorised as Higher Education Provider according to the Provider Category Standards, which are part of the Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards). If the higher education provider meets the appropriate criteria, it will be categorised in that category. See pp.40-41 and Appendix A for further information.

Table 1: Provider Category and number of providers of Higher Education

Provider Category		Number of providers
Australian University	Public	37
	Private	3
Australian University of Specialisation	Public	0
	Private	1
Overseas University ²²		2
Overseas University of Specialisation		0
Australian University College		0
Higher Education Provider	Self-accrediting authority ²³	4
	Non-self-accrediting authority	130
Total ²⁴		177

: Self-accrediting higher education provider

- Australia's higher education sector is very diverse in size – approximately half of providers have fewer than 500 students and approximately 20% have more than 10,000.
- Approximately 25% of Australian providers deliver higher education offshore.

Sources: Australian Government, TEQSA, *TEQSA Annual Report 2012-13*, p.33
 TEQSA website, National Register of higher education providers: <http://www.teqsa.gov.au/national-register>
 Reference: TEQSA website, TEQSA Provider Briefing, TEQSA Snapshot, 17 August 2012:
<https://s3-ap-southeast-1.amazonaws.com/ap-southeast-1.accounts.ivvy.com/account3173/events/6849/files/5031dc29e1651.pdf>

²² Overseas Universities are the University College London and the Carnegie Mellon University. Both of them have self-accrediting authority.

²³ There are four self-accrediting higher education providers in which are categorised as "Higher Education Provider" category. Two are authorised to accredit all of their higher education courses of study, and for the remaining two, some of their higher education courses.

²⁴ As of 2 October 2013

6-2. Admission requirements

Undergraduate	Diploma, Advanced Diploma, Associate Degree, Bachelor Degree <AQF level: 5-7>
	Undergraduate admission is usually based on the Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR). The ATAR is a number (rank), not a mark. It is used by institutions to rank and select students for admission to tertiary courses. Other selection criteria may be used together with the ATAR for course entry requirements. ATARs are not the only mode of entry into course. There are many ways to enter university, more than half of all Bachelor degree students don't enter with an ATAR score, but through a bridging program or alternate entry.
	Other undergraduate admission pathways include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a vocational education and training (VET) qualification, such as a Certificate III or IV; • additional requirements such as an interview, portfolio of work, prerequisite courses, and/or a demonstrated interest or aptitude for the study program; or • mature-age entry for students over 25 years based on related work experience, an entrance examination, or a demonstrated aptitude for study. <p>ATAR: All Australian states and territories (except Queensland²⁵) use a common index called ATAR to measure student achievement. It indicates a student's position in relation to their Year 7 cohort, including students who did not complete Year 12. The ATAR is reported on a scale of 0 to 99.95 with increments of 0.05. For example, an ATAR of 90.00 puts a student in the top 10 percent of their cohort. The ATAR is calculated by a state or territory Tertiary Admission Centre (TAC), and it is based on the marks students receive in their Higher School Certificate (HSC)²⁶ (or equivalent) courses.</p>
	Bachelor Honours Degree <AQF level: 8>
	Entry to a Bachelor Honours Degree program is usually based on academic achievement in a related Bachelor Degree program.
Postgraduate	Graduate Certificate, Graduate Diploma <AQF level: 8>
	Entry is normally based on a Bachelor Degree. Exceptions may be made for those with appropriate work experience, depending on the institution and field of study.
	Master Degree <AQF level: 9>
	The basic entry requirement is a Bachelor Degree. For a research-based Master Degrees a Bachelor Honours Degree, research-based Graduate Diploma, or preparatory program may be required, though these may be given credit in the Master Degree course. A common pathway to a Master Degree is through completion of a Graduate Certificate and Graduate Diploma, which represent the first year of some coursework-based Master Degrees.
	Doctoral Degree <AQF level: 10>
	Entry is normally based on a research-based Master Degree or a Bachelor Honours Degree.

Sources: Australian Government, AEI, *Country Education Profiles Australia*, p13
New South Wales Government website: <http://www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/hsc-results/employers.html#what-is-hsc>
Universities Admissions Centre website: <http://www.uac.edu.au/undergraduate/atar/>
Australian Government, MyUniversity website: <http://myuniversity.gov.au/>

²⁵ Queensland uses a similar ranking system of Overall Positions (OPs) and Field Positions (FPs).

²⁶ HSC is the highest education award in New South Wales schools. To be eligible, students must meet HSC course requirements and sit for the statewide HSC examinations.

6-3. Courses and qualifications

Diploma: AQF level 5
Diploma is a paraprofessional qualification. Diploma is offered as a vocational education and training (VET) qualification as well as a higher education qualification. Programs are usually one to two years full-time.
<p>Diploma in higher education</p> <p>Diploma programs prepare graduates for paraprofessional work or further learning based on an applied academic course. Diploma graduates may continue to employment or further education in the higher education sector (usually with up to one year of credit granted towards a related Bachelor Degree program).</p>
<p>Diploma in VET</p> <p>Diploma programs qualify graduates for skilled or paraprofessional work or further learning. Diploma graduates may continue to employment or further education in the VET sector (usually an Advanced Diploma program), or in the higher education sector (usually with one year of credit in a related Bachelor Degree program).</p>
Advanced Diploma*: AQF level 6
Advanced Diploma is offered as a VET qualification as well as a higher education qualification. Advanced Diploma programs prepare graduates for paraprofessional or advanced skilled work or further learning. Programs are usually eighteen months to two years full-time. Advanced Diploma graduates may continue to employment or further education in the higher education sector (usually with between one and two years of credit in a related Bachelor Degree program).
Associate Degree*: AQF level 6
Associate Degree programs prepare graduates for paraprofessional work or further learning. Programs are usually two years full-time. Associate Degree graduates may continue to employment or further education (usually with one-and-a-half to two years' credit in a related Bachelor Degree program).
* The Associate Degree and the Advanced Diploma are at the same level on the AQF. The difference is in the focus of the programs. Associate Degrees are more academically oriented, whereas Advanced Diplomas emphasise vocational or professional studies.
Bachelor Degree: AQF level 7
<p>Bachelor Degree programs focus on a progressive development of knowledge, analytical skills and problem solving techniques which provides a basis for postgraduate study or for professional work. Bachelor Degrees include three-year degrees, four-year degrees, professional degrees and combined degrees. All Bachelor Degree programs are required to meet the AQF descriptors for the Bachelor Degree regardless of length or specific program requirements. Bachelor Degree programs in professional fields are usually four or more years full-time. The additional study time is required for professional preparation.</p> <p>It is quite common for students to enroll in a double or combined Bachelor Degree program which leads to the award of two Bachelor Degrees. This is most common in arts, commerce, law and science. Such programs are at least four years full-time. Some institutions offer Bachelor Degrees which cannot be entered directly from senior secondary school. Most of these programs are in professional specialisations. They are known as graduate-entry Bachelor Degrees.</p>
<p>Bachelor Degree program requirements</p> <p>Bachelor Degree programs differ depending on the major subject area, the department and/or faculty and the institution. Programs include mandatory core subjects, specialisation subjects and elective subjects. Programs must normally have at least one major specialisation that is studied over three years. Many students undertake two or even three majors. Most universities have regulations concerning the minimum and maximum numbers of units to be completed at each year level.</p> <p>Undergraduate study may involve lectures, tutorials, seminars, laboratory work, fieldwork, or supervised practical work. The number of class contact hours per week varies according to the nature of the program of study. Assessment usually involves examinations, performance in tutorials, seminars and laboratory work, completion of assignments, field or practical work, and individual or group research work.</p>

Bachelor Honours Degree: AQF level 8
Bachelor Honours Degree programs include a coherent and advanced development of knowledge and skills in one or more specialisations in addition to research principles and methods. A significant research thesis or project is required. Programs require an additional year of study after a Bachelor Degree, or may be undertaken as a four year integrated program. Bachelor Honours Degrees are usually awarded with the abbreviation ‘Hons’—for example, BA (Hons)—and in a class or division—for example First Class or Second Class (Upper Division). Graduates with Honours in the First or Second (Upper Division) classes may enter a Doctoral Degree program directly.
Graduate Certificate*: AQF level 8
Graduate Certificate is offered as a VET qualification as well as a higher education qualification. Graduate Certificate programs are designed for professional or highly skilled work or further learning.
Graduate Certificate in higher education
Programs may extend the knowledge and skills gained in a preceding Bachelor Degree or other qualification. Graduate Certificate programs normally require one semester of full-time study.
Graduate Certificate in VET
Programs aim to build on prior knowledge and skills in specialised vocational areas. Programs may extend the knowledge and skills gained in a preceding qualification or the workplace. Programs are usually six to twelve months full-time. Graduates may continue to employment or further education in the VET sector (usually a Graduate Diploma with up to 50 percent advanced standing) or, under certain articulation agreements, continue to a Master Degree program.
Graduate Diploma*: AQF level 8
Graduate Diploma is offered as a VET qualification as well as a higher education qualification. Programs are usually one year full-time.
Graduate Diploma in higher education
Programs are designed for professional or highly skilled work or further learning. Programs may extend the knowledge and skills gained in a preceding Bachelor Degree or other qualification.
Graduate Diploma in VET
Programs aim to build on prior knowledge and skills in highly specialised vocational areas. Programs may extend the knowledge and skills gained in a preceding qualification or in the workplace. Graduates may continue to employment or, under certain articulation agreements, continue to a Master Degree program.
* The Graduate Certificate and the Graduate Diploma in vocational sector are more vocationally oriented than the Graduate Certificate or Graduate Diploma in the higher education sector. Programs focus on industry competencies more than academic outcomes. They also provide a VET pathway from a Bachelor Degree for specialist industries or those that require specific occupational competencies.
Master Degree: AQF level 9
There are three types of Master Degree programs: coursework, research and extended. Most Master Degrees require eighteen months to two years of full-time study after a three-year Bachelor Degree or one year of full-time study after a four-year (or longer) Bachelor Degree or Bachelor Honours Degree. There are several other pathways.
Master Degree (Research): Programs are designed to provide graduates with advanced knowledge for research, scholarship and further learning purposes. Programs are at least two-thirds research with a substantial thesis, which is externally examined. Programs normally require at least one to two years of full-time study, depending on the preceding qualification and if it is in a related specialisation to the student’s previous qualifications. Graduates can continue to a Doctoral Degree program.
Master Degree (Coursework): Programs are designed to provide graduates with advanced knowledge for professional practice, scholarship and further learning purposes. Programs normally require one to two years of full-time study, depending on the preceding qualification and if it is in a related specialisation to the student’s previous qualification(s). Programs are often structured in a four semester articulation arrangement, with the Graduate Certificate (one semester), Graduate Diploma (a further semester) and Master Degree (a further two semesters).
Master Degree (Extended): Programs are designed to provide graduates with advanced knowledge for the advancement of learning or for professional practice. Programs are usually three to four years full-time after a three-year Bachelor Degree.

Doctoral Degree: AQF level 10
<p>Doctoral Degree programs focus on a critical understanding of a complex field of learning and specialised research skills. Graduates are expected to undertake research that makes a substantial original contribution to knowledge in the form of new knowledge or significant and original adaptation, application and interpretation of existing knowledge. Programs are usually three to four years full-time. There are two types of Doctor Degree programs: research and professional. All Doctoral Degrees require completion of a thesis, dissertation, exegesis, or similar. It is usually examined by two or three expert academics of international standing, at least two of which must be external.</p>
<p>Doctoral Degree (Research): Research Doctoral Degrees are by supervised research and an original thesis. At least two-thirds of the program must consist of research.</p>
<p>Doctoral Degree (Professional): Professional Doctoral Degrees require significant professional practice either prior to or as part of the program. Programs include structured coursework and independent supervised study. At least two years of the program consists of research.</p>

Sources: *Australian Qualifications Framework Second Edition, January 2013*, p.53, p.58, p.63
 Australian Government, AEI, *Country Education Profiles Australia*, pp.8-12, pp.25-26

6-4. Higher education’s grading systems

There is no national grading system in Australia. Each institution develops its own grading system.

Unit or subject grades

There are variations of several main types of unit/subject grades:

- descriptive grades – for example, High Distinction, Distinction, Credit, Pass;
- letter grades - for example, A – E;
- numeric grades - for example, 7 – 1, where 7 is the highest mark; and
- percentage grades - often the above grading systems are notionally aligned to a percentage system.

Usually the grading system is indicated on the transcript.

Descriptive grade	Letter grade	Numeric grade	Percentage 1	Percentage 2
High Distinction	A	7	85% - 100%	80% - 100%
Distinction	B	6	75% - 84%	70% - 79%
Credit	C	5	65% - 74%	60% - 69%
Pass	D	4	50% - 64%	50% - 59%
Fail (Conditional)	E/F	3	46% - 49%	Below 50%
Fail	F	2	Below 45%	
Low fail		1		

Source: Australian Government, AEI, *Country Education Profiles Australia*, p.62

6-5. Credit systems

Australia does not have a national credit system. Instead, the AQF defines qualifications and indicates the typical volume of learning required in terms of years of full-time study.

Each institution has its own credit system to represent the quantitative load of a program of study. For example, a Bachelor Degree may require a total of 24 credits at one institution and 600 credits at another. This does not mean that a 600 credit Bachelor Degree is longer or more substantial than a 24 credit Bachelor Degree.

Programs may be described in terms of Equivalent Full Time Study Load (EFTSL). This works on the basis that each unit of study (subject) in an Australian Bachelor Degree is worth 0.125 EFTSL, and a usual full-time study requirement of four units per semester. Therefore one year of full-time study equals 1 EFTSL (0.125 x 8 units).

The various credit systems used by Australian institutions cannot be converted into contact hours, study hours or workload. Credits represent full-time study load only. A subject may be worth 1 credit or 25 credits, and have different study hour requirements, but each subject has the same status in terms of full-time study load.

Credit can also be given for previous vocational education and training (VET) studies. The AQF Qualifications Pathways Policy specifies the minimum amount of credit recommended for a range of VET and higher education qualifications.

Source: Australian Government, AEI, *Country Education Profiles Australia*, p.8, pp.13-14

References: Australian Government, DIISRTE, *Administrative information for higher education providers: student support*, p.29
Higher Education Support Act 2003, p.191

6-6. Credit transfer and recognition of prior learning

Credit transfer refers to the recognition of previous formal learning so that study does not have to be repeated. Credit transfer is available in both undergraduate and postgraduate programs, at the discretion of the institution. The AQF Qualifications Pathways Policy specifies the minimum amount of credit recommended for a range of VET and higher education qualifications.

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is for students to seek recognition of previous informal training, work experience, professional development, professional licensing and examinations and other work-based education and training. Applicants may apply to Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) (See p.33) for an assessment of their existing or current skills and knowledge. This can lead to admission or credit in a particular program. RPL is an assessment process that can lead to alternative entry pathways to qualifications.

In higher education, decisions about credit transfer and RPL processes are made separately from admission decisions and students must have an enrolment offer before any formal consideration of credit occurs.

Sources: Australian Government, Australian Education International, *Country Education Profiles Australia*, pp.13-14, p.28

Australian Government, Future Unlimited website:

<http://www.studyinaustralia.gov.au/usa/australian-education/education-system/course-credits>

6-7. Fees, loan program and financial support for students

6-7-1. Fees

Students must pay to participate in higher education. The amount a student has to pay and when they have to pay it depends on how the student is enrolled. Students can enroll as either Commonwealth-supported students or fee paying students. And overseas students are charged fees for overseas students.

Commonwealth supported places

A Commonwealth supported place is one occupied by a Commonwealth supported student. A higher education provider may receive grants which are known as the Commonwealth contribution amounts, from the Commonwealth through the Commonwealth Grant Scheme (CGS) for students in Commonwealth supported places.

A student may be eligible for a Commonwealth supported place if they meet the citizenship requirements. To meet the requirements a student must be:

- an Australian citizen; or
- a New Zealand citizen who will be resident in Australia for the duration of their unit of study; or
- the holder of a permanent visa who will be resident in Australia for the duration of their unit.

A provider must require every student in a Commonwealth supported unit of study, who is not an exempt student, to pay the student contribution amount for the unit. The provider cannot charge these students tuition fees for the unit. How students can pay their student contribution depends on their citizenship and residency status.

- Australian citizens and holder of a permanent humanitarian visa:
Australian citizens and permanent humanitarian visa holders may be eligible for HECS-HELP assistance for their student contribution.
- Holders of other permanent visa and New Zealand citizens:
Holders of a permanent visa (other than a permanent humanitarian visa) and New Zealand citizens are required to pay their student contribution up-front in full on or before the census date. These students are not eligible for HECS-HELP assistance and therefore no discount applies to up-front payments.

The Student Learning Entitlement (SLE) which limits a student to the equivalent of approximately seven years full-time study as a Commonwealth supported student has been abolished. From 1 January 2012, eligibility for a Commonwealth supported place no longer depends on a student having sufficient SLE to cover their study.

The number of Commonwealth-supported places was formerly capped by the Australian Government. In 2012 a demand-driven system was introduced that allows public universities to decide how many places they will offer and the specialisations they will offer them in. These decisions are based on student demand and employer requirements. The Australian Government continues to allocate the number of Commonwealth-supported places for sub-degree undergraduate courses, medical courses and non-research postgraduate courses.

Commonwealth Grant Scheme funding cluster amounts for 2013

	Funding cluster	Commonwealth contribution (per EFTSL ²⁷)
1	Law, accounting, administration, economics, commerce	A\$1,933
2	Humanities	A\$5,369
3	Mathematics, statistics, behavioral science, social studies, computing, built environment, other health	A\$9,498
4	Education	A\$9,882
5	Clinical psychology, allied health, foreign languages, visual and performing arts	A\$11,681
6	Nursing	A\$13,041
7	Engineering, science, surveying	A\$16,606
8	Dentistry, medicine, veterinary science, agriculture	A\$21,075

Sources: Australian Government, Department of Education and Training website:
<https://docs.education.gov.au/system/files/doc/other/rates2013.pdf>
 Australian Government, DIISRTE, *Administrative information for higher education providers: student support, January 2012*, p.29

Maximum annual student contribution amounts for a place in 2013

Band ²⁸		Funding cluster	2013 maximum student contribution Amount (per EFTSL)
3	Law, Accounting, Administration, Economics, Commerce	1	A\$9,792
	Dentistry, Medicine, Veterinary Science	8	
2	Mathematics, Statistics, Computing, Built Environment, Other Health	3	A\$8,363
	Allied Health	5	
	Science, Engineering, Surveying	7	
	Agriculture	8	
1	Humanities	2	A\$5,868
	Behavioral Science, Social Studies	3	
	Education	4	
	Clinical Psychology, Foreign Languages, Visual and Performing Arts	5	
	Nursing	6	

Sources: Australian Government, Department of Education and Training website:
<https://docs.education.gov.au/system/files/doc/other/rates2013.pdf>
 Australian Government, Study Assist website:
<http://studyassist.gov.au/sites/studyassist/help-paying-my-fees/csps/pages/student-contribution-amounts>

²⁷ EFTSL (Equivalent Full-Time Study Load) is an equivalent full-time student load. It is a measure of the study load, for a year, of a student undertaking a course of study on a full-time basis.

²⁸ The "National Priority" Band was abolished on 1 January 2013 (National Priority Band for the year 2012 included mathematics, statistics and science).

Fee paying places

A provider must require every domestic student that the provider enrolls, who is not Commonwealth supported in a unit of study, and who is not an exempt student, to pay a tuition fee for the unit. These students may be eligible for FEE-HELP assistance for all or part of those tuition fees. The Higher Education Support Act 2003 (HESA) sets out requirements for minimum amount that can be charged as tuition fee. There are no requirements concerning maximum tuition fees.

Public universities and a public self-accrediting higher education provider cannot offer fee paying places to domestic students commencing an undergraduate course of study on or after 1 January 2009 except some cases. Fee paying undergraduate places can be offered at private universities, overseas universities, and other approved higher education providers. However, all providers may offer fee paying places in postgraduate courses and enabling courses²⁹.

Sources: Australian Government, AEI, *Country Education Profiles, Australia*, pp.19-20
 Australian Government, DIISRTE, *Administrative information for higher education providers: student support, January 2012*, p.11, p.26, p.56, p.59, p.67, pp.71-73

Fees for overseas students

The Commonwealth does not contribute to the educational costs for overseas students unless the students are recipients of an Australian Government sponsored scholarship. Commonwealth grant amounts provided for the education of domestic students are not provided for the purposes of subsidising places or services for overseas students. A provider must charge all overseas students a fee for their course that is sufficient to recover the full average cost of providing the course to those students. The fee must be no less than the relevant minimum indicative course fee specified in the Higher Education Provider Guidelines with some exceptions.

Source: Australian Government, DIISRTE, *Administrative information for higher education providers: student support, January 2012*, p.76

Minimum indicative course fees for fee - paying overseas students in 2013

Course Categories		Total without capital component		Total with capital component	
Law, Economics, Business, Humanities, Math/Statistics, Social Science, Education, Computing, Architecture, Design, Nursing, Arts, Science (non - lab - based)	On campus	Fees per year (Equivalent Full - time)	A\$9,602	Fees per year (Equivalent Full - time)	A\$11,456
	External				A\$10,120
Science (lab - based), Paramedical, Engineering, Pharmacy, Agriculture	On campus		A\$14,498		A\$17,133
	External				
Medicine, Dentistry, Veterinary Science	On campus		A\$20,049		A\$23,597
ELICOS	On campus		Fees weekly		A\$279
	External				

Source: Australian Government, Department of Education and Training website:
<https://docs.education.gov.au/system/files/doc/other/rates2013.pdf>

Reference: Australian Government, DIICSRTE, *Higher Education Provider Guidelines 2012*

²⁹ An enabling course is a course of instruction provided to a person for the purpose of enabling the person to undertake a course leading to a higher education award.

6-7-2. Higher Education Loan Program (HELP)

For higher education providers, HELP consists of following 5 HELPs. A person becomes liable to make a compulsory repayment towards their HELP debt when their repayment income is above the minimum repayment income for the income year. These repayments are made to the Australian Tax Office (ATO) through the taxation system.

HECS-HELP (Higher Education Contribution Scheme-HELP)

HECS-HELP provides eligible students, enrolled in Commonwealth supported places, with a loan to cover their student contribution amount and/or a discount if they choose to pay all, or at least a \$500, of their student contribution up-front. To be eligible for HECS-HELP assistance for a unit of study, the student must be an Australian citizen, or the holder of a permanent humanitarian visa who will be resident in Australia for the duration of the unit. A student is not eligible for HECS-HELP assistance for a unit of study, if the unit forms a part of a course of study that is, or is to be, undertaken primarily at an overseas campus.

FEE-HELP (Fee-paying students-HELP)

FEE-HELP provides an income contingent loan to eligible fee payment students to pay for all or part of their tuition fees for units of study undertaken with an approved higher education provider under HESA. To be eligible for FEE-HELP assistance for a unit of study, a person must be an Australian citizen, the holder of a permanent humanitarian visa who will be resident in Australia for the duration of the unit, or the eligible holder of other permanent visa. If the loan relates to FEE-HELP assistance for a unit of study except for certain courses and studies, that forms part of an undergraduate course of study, the amount of the FEE-HELP debt is the amount of the loan plus 25%.

OS-HELP (Overseas Study-HELP)

OS-HELP provides financial assistance to eligible Commonwealth supported students to undertake part of their course of study overseas. OS-HELP may be used to cover expenses associated with the overseas study, such as airfares, accommodation and other travel or settling expenses. To be entitled to OS-HELP assistance in relation to a 6 month study period, a student must be an Australian citizen or the holder of a permanent humanitarian visa. The *Higher Education Support Amendment (Asian Century) Bill 2013*³⁰ assented in July 2013, removed the requirement that a student must be enrolled in an undergraduate course of study to be entitled to OS-HELP assistance. This allows postgraduate Commonwealth supported students to be eligible for OS-HELP assistance.

SA-HELP (Student services and Amenities fee-HELP)

SA-HELP provides eligible students with a loan to cover a student services and amenities fee imposed on them by their higher education providers. To be eligible for SA-HELP for a student services and amenities fee, the student must be an Australian citizen, or the holder of a permanent humanitarian visa who will be resident in Australia for the duration of the unit.

VET FEE-HELP (Vocational Education and Training FEE-HELP)

VET FEE-HELP is a loan scheme that helps eligible students pay their tuition fees for diploma and above VET courses undertaken at an approved provider. To be eligible for the VET FEE-HELP, the student must be an Australian citizen or permanent humanitarian visa holder resident in Australia for the duration of the unit of study.

A person can make a voluntary repayment towards their HELP debt at any time to the ATO. Voluntary repayments of a \$500 or more attract a 5% bonus on the payment amount. (From 1 January 2012, the Government reduced the

³⁰ The Bill is to amend the Higher Education Support Act 2003 (HESA) to broaden student eligibility for OS-HELP and in particular to increase incentives for Australians to study in Asia.

10% voluntary HELP repayment bonus to 5% bonus.)

Sources: Australian Government, DIISRTE, *Administrative information for higher education providers: student support, January 2012*, p.11, pp.79-106, p.113
Australian Government, Study Assist website: <http://studyassist.gov.au/sites/studyassist/pages/welcome>
Parliament of Australia website:
http://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Bills_Legislation/Bills_Search_Results/Result?bId=r4971
Australian Government, DEEWR, *SA-HELP Information for 2012*, p.1, p.3
Australian Government, DIISRTE, *Support for overseas study, OS-HELP information for 2013*
Australian Government, DIISRTE, *Want to study a VET qualification?, VET FEE-HELP information for 2013*

6-7-3. Scholarships and grants

The Australian Government has scholarships and grants to support students, such as;

- grants for short-term mobility for a variety of experiences and preparatory language study
- scholarship which is designed to assist students who move away from home to attend university
- scholarship helping with the upfront costs of education such as textbooks, stationary, computers and internet connections.

There are many scholarships, grants, and bursaries which support students who study in Australia financially. They are offered by the Australian Government, education institutions, and a number of other public and private organisations.³¹

Sources: Australian Government, Aei. gov. au website (Department of Education's website for international education):
<https://www.education.gov.au/international-education>
Australian Embassy, Tokyo website: <http://www.australia.or.jp/en/education/>
Australian Government, Future Unlimited website: <http://www.studyinaustralia.gov.au/usa/australian-education/scholarships>
Australian Awards Endeavour Scholarships and Fellowships website: <http://endeavour.australia.or.jp/>

6-8. Student surveys

6-8-1. Australian Graduate Survey (AGS)

The Australian Graduate Survey (AGS) is an annual national survey of newly qualified higher education graduates. The AGS is managed by Graduate Careers Australia (GCA)³². The AGS is a census in which new graduates all Australian Universities (and a number of higher education colleges) are surveyed approximately four months after they complete the requirements for their awards. The annual response rate for the domestic graduate population is generally between 60 and 65 per cent.

The AGS comprises the Graduate Destination Survey (GDS), the Course Experience Questionnaire (CEQ), or the Postgraduate Research Experience Questionnaire (PREQ).

Graduate Destination Survey (GDS)	The first national GDS was conducted in 1972. The GDS collects information regarding graduates' employment and salary outcomes, continuing study and labor market status, job search behavior, previous education history and other key respondent characteristics.
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³¹ As typical scholarships, there are the Australia Awards Endeavour Scholarships and Fellowships. They support Australians to undertake study, research and professional development overseas and citizens from eligible countries to undertake these activities in Australia.

³² GCA is the leading on graduate employment issues in Australia. The GCA uses this position to foster employment and career opportunities for graduates, in association with the higher education sector, government and business.

Course Experience Questionnaire (CEQ)	The CEQ was added in 1992 and updated in 2002. The CEQ probes key elements of the higher education experience relevant to coursework graduates, focusing largely on their perceptions of course quality, their self-rated skill levels, and their overall satisfaction with their course.
Postgraduate Research Experience Questionnaire (PREQ)	The PREQ was added in 1999. The PREQ probes key elements of the higher education experience relevant to research degree graduates.

Source: GCA website: <http://www.graduatecareers.com.au/>

6-8-2. Australasian Survey of Student Engagement (AUSSE)

The Australasian Survey of Student Engagement (AUSSE) is an annual survey of students and staff enrolled in Australia and New Zealand universities and other higher education and tertiary education institutions. The AUSSE is managed by the Australian Council for Education Research (ACER)³³. The information collected by the AUSSE can be used by higher education institutions to improve student outcomes, manage and monitor resources, programs and services, and help identify how to attract, and importantly, retain students. The AUSSE incorporates the Student Engagement Questionnaire (SEQ), the Postgraduate Survey of Student Engagement (POSSE), and the Staff Student Engagement Survey (SSES). Over the past six years the AUSSE has been administered at over 60 institutions across Australia. Over 200,000 undergraduate students, postgraduate coursework students and academic staff have completed the SEQ, POSSE or SSES surveys since 2007 making the AUSSE one of the largest surveys of higher and tertiary education students and staff.

Student Engagement Questionnaire (SEQ)	The SEQ is a survey which is administered a representative sample of first- and later-year undergraduate and tertiary students, or is conducted as a census of these students. It is designed for administration 15 minutes or less, either online or using a paper form. The SEQ has formative links with the USA National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) ³⁴ . The SQA results can be benchmarked with NSSE results.
Postgraduate Survey of Student Engagement (POSSE)	The Postgraduate Student Engagement Questionnaire (PSEQ), the survey instrument for the POSSE, is an adaptation of the SEQ that is designed to be administered to postgraduate coursework students. The PSEQ is conducted online only and takes 15 minutes or less complete. The PSEQ was piloted with institutions in 2009 and will be offered as an option to all institutions from 2010.
Staff Student Engagement Survey (SSES)	The Staff Student Engagement Questionnaire (SSEQ), the survey instrument for the SSES, builds directly on the USA Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (FSSE) ³⁵ . The SSEQ is a survey of academic staff about the undergraduate students they have taught during the past two years. The SSEQ is conducted online only and takes around 15 minutes to complete. The survey measures academics' perceptions of how often their students engage in different activities, the importance they place on various aspects of learning, the nature and frequency of their interaction with students and how they organise their time, both in and out of the classroom. As the structure and content of the SSEQ closely mirrors that of the SEQ, the results for many of the SSEQ items can be directly compared to those on the SEQ.

³³ The ACER is an independent and not-for-profit organisation. ACER's mission is to create and promote research-based knowledge, products and services that can be used to improve learning across the life span.

³⁴ The NSSE was developed in the mid-1990s and it has been run 1,300 USA and Canadian higher education institutions over the past decade.

³⁵ The FSSE is a survey that has been run by Indiana University's Center for Postsecondary Research since 2004.

The survey instruments used in the AUSEE collect information on around 100 specific learning activities and conditions along with information on individual demographics and educational contexts.

The instruments contain items that map onto six student engagement scales:

- Academic Challenge – the extent to which expectations and assessments challenge students to learn;
- Active Learning – student’ efforts to actively construct knowledge;
- Student and Staff Interactions – the level and nature of student’ contact and interaction with teaching staff;
- Enriching Educational Experience – student’ participation in broadening educational activities;
- Supportive Learning Environment – student’ feelings of support within the university community; and
- Work integrated Learning – integration of employment-focused work experiences into study.

The instruments also contain items that map onto seven outcome measures³⁶:

- Higher-Order Thinking – participation in higher-order forms of thinking;
- General Learning Outcomes – development of general competencies;
- General Development Outcomes – development of general forms of individual and social development;
- Career Readiness – preparation for participation in the professional workforce;
- Average Overall Grade – average overall grade so far in course;
- Departure Intention – non-graduate students’ intentions on not returning to study in the following year; and
- Overall Satisfaction – student’ overall satisfaction with their educational experience.

Source: ACER website: <http://www.acer.edu.au/>

6-8-3. Other: Graduate Skills Assessment (GSA)

The Graduate Skills Assessment (GSA) consists of a multiple-choice test, is two hours long and two writing tests, is 60 minutes long. The Australian Government commissioned the ACER to develop a new test to assess the skills of university graduate, and the GSA was implemented in 2000. The GSA is a standardised assessment of critical thinking, problem-solving, interpersonal understanding and written communication. Many universities have identified these skills as important and they are included in their graduate attributes or capabilities statements. Results of the GSA at enrollment are used diagnostically to identify and provide support to students with learning skills issues. It is expected that the results of the exit GSA will provide indicators for additional post-graduate study entry criteria as well as demonstrate students’ acquired skills.

However, such standardised assessment is ineffective in promoting student learning and has drawn widespread criticism (Pitman & Broomhall, 2009; Bath et al, 2004; Green et al, 2009). The GSA has low consequential validity, decouples the teaching and learning process from assessment, and has limited authenticity in promoting student learning.

Sources: ACER website: <http://www.acer.edu.au/>

Graduate Skills, Review on the assessment of graduate skills and academic standards, pp.8-9

³⁶ The SSEQ captures staff perception on five of the seven outcome measures: Higher-Order Thinking, General Learning Outcomes, General Development Outcomes, Departure Intention and Overall Satisfaction.

7. Australian education and overseas students

Australia provides education and training in Australia to overseas students on a student visa and to students offshore. Overseas students may be enrolled in higher education, vocational education and training, English Language Intensive Course for Overseas Students (ELICOS), school education and non-award programs such as foundation courses.

7-1. Regulation of international education

Higher Education is part of Australia's fourth largest export trade sector and is Australia's largest services export. Regardless of what you are studying or how long you are studying for, Australia's laws promote quality education and protection for international students. These laws include the Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) Act 2000³⁷ and the National Code of Practice for Registration Authorities and Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2007 (National Code)³⁸. These provide nationally consistent standards for providers of education and training for international students, regardless of the sector.

The ESOS Act provides an extra layer of regulation for Australian institutions that enroll overseas students studying in Australia on a student visa. It requires all providers and courses that enroll overseas students to be registered on the Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students (CRICOS)³⁹. The CRICOS website (<http://www.cricos.deewr.gov.au/>) is a searchable database managed by the Australian Government. This website lists all Australian education providers that are registered to offer courses to people studying in Australia on student visas and the courses they are authorised to offer.

The main objectives of the ESOS Act are to:

- provide tuition assurance to overseas students for courses for which they have paid;
- protect and enhance Australia's reputation for quality education and training services; and
- complement Australia's migration laws by ensuring providers collect and report information relevant to the administration of the law relating to student visas.

All overseas students enrolled in Australian education providers on a student visa are registered on a database called the Provider Registration and International Students Management System (PRISMS). It is a requirement under the ESOS Act that providers monitor overseas student compliance with certain student visa conditions, such as attending classes or making progress in their course. Providers must use PRISMS to inform the Department of Immigration and Border Protection of any overseas student that has breached a visa condition.

³⁷ Recent changes have been made to the ESOS Act to further strengthen the regulation of international education in Australia. The Tuition Protection Service (TPS) is a placement and refund service for international students, which is activated in the event that the provider is unable to teach course for student. Read more about this service on the Tuition Protection Service website (<https://tps.gov.au/Home/NotLoggedIn>).

³⁸ The National Code which established under ESOS Act provides nationally consistent standards for the conduct of registered providers and the registration of their courses. See p.55 for further information.

³⁹ Any course offered onshore to an overseas student who holds a visa must be registered on CRICOS, but courses delivered offshore do not need to be registered on CRICOS. However, if they are AQF qualifications, such courses must meet existing onshore registration, accreditation, quality assurance and date collection arrangements.

7-2. Transnational education and training

Australian transnational education and training, also known as offshore or cross-border education and training, refers to the delivery and/or assessment of programs and courses by an accredited Australian institution in a country other than Australia. Transnational programs may lead to an Australian qualification or may be a non-award course.

Australian institutions offering Australian qualifications offshore must meet the quality assurance requirements under the TEQSA Act, and the regulatory requirements of the country in which they are operating. The ESOS legislation and overseas student tuition fee protection arrangements, however, do not apply outside of Australia.

Education and training delivered offshore may take many different forms, including:

- a campus wholly-owned by an Australian institution;
- courses and programs offered in partnership with local institutions;
- twinning arrangements;
- franchising of curricula or course where an accredited Australian institution remains an identifiable partner;
- distance education programs that contain a component of face-to-face instruction by local and/or Australian instructors;

Sources: Australian Government, AEI, *Country Education Profiles Australia*, pp.72-73

Australian Government, Future Unlimited website:

<http://www.studyinaustralia.gov.au/usa/australian-education/education-system/esos-act>,

<http://www.studyinaustralia.gov.au/global/australian-education>

Australian Government, Department of Education, CRICOS website: <http://www.cricos.deewr.gov.au/default.aspx>

Australian Government, DEEWR, *National Code of Practice for Registration Authorities and Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2007 (National Code 2007)*, p.1

Australian Government, DIISRTE, *Administrative information for higher education providers: student support, January 2012*, p.77

TEQSA website: <http://www.teqsa.gov.au/for-providers/cricos>

TEQSA, *A Snapshot of TEQSA*: http://www.teqsa.gov.au/sites/default/files/TEQSAsnapshot_Eng.pdf

8. Vocational Education and Training (VET)

Australia's vocational education and training (VET) sector is based on a partnership between governments and industry. Governments provide funding, develop policies and contribute to regulation and quality assurance of the sector. Industry and employer groups contribute to training policies and priorities, and in developing qualifications that can deliver skills to the workforce. Australia's national training system provides high-quality and nationally recognised training.

Source: Australian Government, AEI, *Country Education Profiles Australia*, p.29

8-1. Registered Training Organisations (RTOs)

VET is offered by Registered Training Organisations (RTOs). Generally, only RTOs can issue nationally recognised qualifications and statements of attainment. There are about 4,100 RTOs, including TAFEs⁴⁰, other government providers, and private providers. Some RTOs are also higher education providers that are accredited to offer higher education qualifications such as Associate Degrees and Bachelor Degree. Training.gov.au (<http://training.gov.au/>) is the official National Register on VET in Australia and is the authoritative source of information on training packages, qualifications, accredited courses, units of competency, skill sets.

Sources: Australian Government, AEI, *Country Education Profiles Australia*, p.29
Australian Government, *Review of Higher Education Regulation REPORT*, p.5
ASQA website: <http://www.asqa.gov.au/>
Australian Government, Training.gov.au website: <http://training.gov.au/>

8-2. Courses and qualifications

VET qualifications are offered at Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) levels 1 to 6 and level 8. AQF VET qualifications are outcomes-based and focus on the occupational skills and competencies gained.

Training Packages and accredited courses provided by RTOs lead to the following AQF qualifications:

- Certificate I (AQF level 1), Certificate II (AQF level 2), Certificate III (AQF level 3) and Certificate IV (AQF level 4);
- Diploma (AQF level 5) and Advanced Diploma (AQF level 6); and
- Vocational Graduate Certificate (AQF level 8) and Vocational Graduate Diploma (AQF level 8).

Training Package: Training Packages are nationally recognised programs developed by industry to meet industry needs. A Training Package usually includes more than one AQF qualification. Training Packages are delivered by RTOs and are usually developed by Industry Skills Councils (ISCs)⁴¹.

Source: Australian Government, AEI, *Country Education Profiles Australia*, pp.22-24, p.32

⁴⁰ TAFEs (colleges and institutes of Technical and Further Education) are included public RTOs. TAFEs are the largest providers of VET in Australia. They are owned and administered by state and territory governments. Some TAFEs are affiliated to universities. TAFEs mostly operate on a two or three-term year.

⁴¹ ISCs represent their industry's interest in the VET sector. A main role is to assist in the development of Training Packages that meet industry needs.

8-3. Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA)

The Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) is the national regulator for Australia's vocational education and training (VET) sector. ASQA regulates courses and training providers to ensure nationally approved quality standards are met.

An education provider falls within ASQA's jurisdiction if it:

- offers courses in any of the Australian Capital Territory (ACT), New South Wales (NSW), the Northern Territory (NT), South Australia (SA), Queensland (QLD), or Tasmania (TAS)
- is registered on CRICOS for delivery to overseas students
- offers courses online.

On 1 July 2011, ASQA became the regulatory body for the VET sector for ACT, NT and NSW. ASQA became the regulatory body for the VET sector in TAS after state referral legislation was proclaimed on the 15 February 2012, the regulatory body for the VET sector in SA on 26 March 2012, and the regulatory body for the VET sector in QLD on 1 July 2012. These are the states and territories that have referred their authority for VET regulation to ASQA. Victoria and Western Australia do not plan to refer their regulatory powers to ASQA. The Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) and Western Australia's Training and Accreditation Council (TAC) are the regulatory body for registered training organisations in their states (unless the provider delivers education to international students).

Sources: Australian Government, AEI, *Country Education Profiles Australia*, pp.31-32
ASQA website: <http://www.asqa.gov.au/>

9. Information service for higher education

9-1. MyUniversity

The MyUniversity website is the Australian Government's online higher education information service that provides students with access to clear, meaningful and transparent information about Australia's higher education providers. Students can search for universities and courses. As searching for universities, they can compare comprehensive information about Australian universities. As searching for undergraduate courses, they can search thousands of undergraduate accredited courses of tertiary education and compare details.

Main information contents are following:

Universities	About university	
	University statistics	Student demographics – Total numbers, Rate of International students and Low socio-economic status
		Staff demographics – Academic Full Time Equivalent Staff, Academic Staff Qualifications
	Subject statistics	Number of Applications and Offers, Number of commencing and completing students, Attrition rate
		Student survey results - Overall Satisfaction Rate, Generic Skills Scale
Rate of Graduates in full time study and employment, Amount of median graduate salary		
Courses	Course overview (such as award and duration), Course fees for Commonwealth supported students, Previous ATAR cut-off scores, Additional entry criteria	

Source: Australian Government, MyUniversity website: <http://www.myuniversity.gov.au/>

9-2. Information center to promote recognition of qualifications

The Qualifications Recognition Policy Unit (QRP)⁴² in the International Group of the Department of Education and Training undertakes a role of the official National Information Center for qualifications recognition in Australia, providing official information and advice on the comparability of overseas qualifications with Australian qualifications, using the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF/See pp.4-10) as a benchmark. This aims to help overseas qualified people work and study in Australia.

Main role in qualifications recognition is to provide:

- information on how overseas qualifications compare with Australian qualifications in Country Education Profiles (CEP) Online⁴³
- assessments of overseas qualifications⁴⁴
- financial support for programs that support international recognition of Australian qualifications and professional recognition of overseas qualifications.

Source: Australian Government, Aei. gov. au website: <https://aei.gov.au/pages/default.aspx>

⁴² QRP has had previous names prior to 2014 including AEI-NOOSR (Australian Education International-National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition).

⁴³ CEP Online is an easy-to-use online recognition tool used by universities and other education providers, professional bodies, employers and international organisations and governments. As of April 2015, CEP Online covered 127 countries. CEP is available with subscription fees, but QRP provides free access to the sample contents of Australia and one country.

⁴⁴ QRP's assessments are a guide to the educational level of an overseas qualification in terms of a qualification on the Australian Qualifications Framework. QRP does not assess for admission to study, migration to Australia, membership of a professional body, and employment. QRP assesses higher education, post-secondary technical and vocational overseas qualifications for general purposes.

III. Regulatory and quality assurance system for higher education in Australia

1. History of Australian higher education regulatory and quality assurance system

Since the late 1970s the Australian Government has encouraged universities to critically monitor their own performance. Throughout the 1980s this focus has been sharpened to include the improvement of efficiency and effectiveness, and an increased awareness of public accountability.

The Australian Government funded major discipline reviews during the mid-1980s to determine standards and to improve quality and efficiency in universities. While the reviews revealed the importance of quality assurance within institutions and across the sector, there was no way to ensure that institutions acted upon review recommendations.

The Australian Government was concerned about maintaining and further enhancing the quality of Australian higher education during a time of large-scale structural reorganisation in the late 1980s and rapid growth in higher education participation from the early 1990s.

In 1991 the Australian Government moved from the discipline review approach to a whole of institution approach to quality assurance. It announced a comprehensive set of measures to enhance the quality of higher education teaching and research. Those universities able to demonstrate a high level of quality assurance in the context of their missions and goals were provided with extra funding.

The Australian Government established the Committee for Quality Assurance in Higher Education in 1992 to provide advice on quality assurance issues, conduct independent audits of institutional quality assurance policies and procedures, and make recommendations about the allocation of annual quality-related funds. The Committee conducted three rounds of independent whole of institution audits from 1993 to 1995. The voluntary self-assessment undertaken by institutions under this program triggered considerable change at the institutional level as gaps were identified and outcomes measured.

In 1995, the Ministerial Council on Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA) endorsed the establishment of the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF), which worked as a national register of Australian higher education providers and award descriptions.

Previously, all publicly funded institutions were required to submit an Institutional Quality Assurance and Improvement Plan to the Australian Government as part of the educational profiles process. This annual process included institutions providing a number of documents and plans to the government, and visits to universities were sometimes arranged, to obtain further information. The plans outlined the universities' goals and aims in the key areas of teaching and learning, research, management and community service. Each institution was required to provide details of the strategies that had been adopted to achieve their goals and the performance indicators used to assess their success. The plans were expected to include the outcomes data from two national surveys: the Course Experience Questionnaire (CEQ) that assesses graduate perceptions of the teaching they received at university, and the Graduate Destination Survey (GDS) that assesses the employment success of recent graduates. The plans enabled the Australian Government to report to the wider community on the quality and quality assurance processes of Australian universities. More importantly they were a means of public accountability in the area of quality assurance for Australia's publicly funded universities, and enabled students to make more informed choices about the institution that best suited their particular needs.

In March 2000, MCEETYA endorsed two new initiatives to enhance and strengthen the quality assurance framework for higher education in Australia:

- an independent audit body, the Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA); and
- the National Protocols for Higher Education Approval Processes.

In 2008, the *Review of Australian Higher Education* (the Bradley Review) recommended an independent national regulatory body be responsible for regulating all types of tertiary education. In responding to the Bradley Review in 2009, the Australian Government announced a landmark reform package for higher education to expand the system and create new opportunities for all Australians to reach their potential through higher education. The government also committed to ensuring that growth in the higher education system would be underpinned by a robust quality assurance and regulatory framework that placed a renewed emphasis on student outcomes and the quality of the student experience. In 2011, an agency was established under the *Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011* (TEQSA Act) to implement this new understanding. AUQA's⁴⁵ audit and quality enhancement operations, and the functions of the state and territory government accrediting authorities for higher education, were subsequently transferred to TEQSA.

Sources: TEQSA website: <http://www.teqsa.gov.au/about>, <http://www.teqsa.gov.au/glossary>
AUQA website: <http://pandora.nla.gov.au/pan/127066/20110826-0004/www.auqa.edu.au/aboutauqa/teqsa/index.html>

2. Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency

The Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) was established under the *Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011* (TEQSA Act) as the independent, national regulatory and quality assurance agency for the higher education sector in Australia.

TEQSA's vision is to maintain and enhance quality, diversity and innovation in the Australian higher education sector through streamlined and nationally consistent higher education regulatory arrangements: registration of higher education providers; accreditation of higher education courses; quality assurance; and dissemination of higher education standards and performance.

Sources: TEQSA website: <http://www.teqsa.gov.au/>
Australian Government, TEQSA, *TEQSA Annual Report 2012–2013*, p.8
Australian Government, TEQSA, *A Snapshot of TEQSA*: http://www.teqsa.gov.au/sites/default/files/TEQSAsnapshot_Eng.pdf

⁴⁵ Prior to the establishment of TEQSA, AUQA was the principal national quality assurance agency in higher education with the responsibility of providing public assurance of the quality of Australia's universities and other higher education providers, and assisting in enhancing the academic quality of these providers. See the first edition of this document for further information.

2-1. Overview of TEQSA

Name of the agency	Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA)	
Responsibility	Department of Education and Training, Australian Government	
Establishment	July 2011 (assuming full regulatory functions on 29 January 2012)	
Location	Level 14, 530 Collins Street, Melbourne Victoria 3000, Australia	
Postal address	GPO Box 1672, Melbourne Victoria, 3001, Australia	
Contact number	+61 1300 739 585	
Representative	Dr Nicholas Andrew Saunders AO (Acting Chief Commissioner and Chief Executive Officer)	
Organisation	<p>Chief Commissioner and Chief Executive Officer Commissioner (Full-time): 2 Commissioner (Part-time): 2 Non-SES (Senior Executive Service) employee: 83 (Full-time: 75 (ongoing), 2 (non-ongoing)/Part-time: 6)⁴⁶</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regulation and Review Group: This Group is the largest group within TEQSA and is central to the development and implementation of its provider registration and course accreditation processes. It provides advice to the TEQSA Commission⁴⁷ on the compliance of individual providers. • Regulatory Risk and Information Group: This Group has responsibility for leading the acquisition, management and analysis of provider data to guide TEQSA's decision-making processes. This includes developing and implementing TEQSA's Regulatory Risk Framework to systematically monitor risks to the quality of higher education. • Legal Group: This Group is a small team of lawyers proficient in dealing with the legal issues that arise in a Commonwealth regulatory agency. The Group is responsible for all legal services required by TEQSA. • Corporate Group: This Group supports TEQSA through the following services: strategic advice, business governance and planning processes, financial management and reporting, procurement and contract management, human resource management, corporate communications, international engagement, , systems and technology support, security management and formal investigations into regulatory matters, as well as project and property management. <p>In addition, TEQSA has selected over 500 experts⁴⁸ from academia and industry who are called on to provide discipline expertise in particular, on the basis of renewable two-year contracts.</p>	
Finance: 2012.7-2013.6	Total Income (\$'000)	A\$17,351 (Revenue from Government: 17,282/Own-source revenue: 66/Other comprehensive income [i.e. changes in asset revaluation surplus]: 3)
	Total Expenses (\$'000)	A\$18,641
Website	http://www.teqsa.gov.au	

Sources: Australian Government, TEQSA, *TEQSA Annual Report 2012–2013*, pp.13–14, p.27, p.75, p.126
 Australian Government, TEQSA, *TEQSA Annual Report 2011–2012*, p.6

⁴⁶ Current at 30 June 2014.

⁴⁷ The Commission comprises a Chief Commissioner, two full-time Commissioners and two part-time Commissioners.

⁴⁸ Current at September 2013.

2-2. Key issue and development of TEQSA

December 2008	The <i>Review of Australian Higher Education</i> (the Bradley Review), led by Professor Denise Bradley AC, advocated a shift in higher education funding and proposed a significant re-design of Australia's higher education regulatory environment. The Bradley Review recommended the establishment of an independent national regulator for the sector by 2010.
March 2009	The Australian Government, in responding to the Bradley Review, committed to significantly expanding student access to the higher education system, and to ensuring that growth in the higher education system would be underpinned by a robust quality assurance and regulatory framework.
May 2009	The 2009–2010 Federal Budget subsequently allocated funding for the establishment and operations of TEQSA.
June 2011	On 22 June 2011, legislation establishing TEQSA passed through Federal Parliament (Royal Assent was granted on 29 June 2011).
29 July 2011	AUQA staff transitioned to TEQSA on 29th of July 2011 and TEQSA commenced operations in a quality assurance capacity before assuming full regulatory functions on 29 January 2012. AUQA's audit and quality enhancement operations, and the functions of the state and territory government accrediting authorities for higher education, were transferred to TEQSA.
December 2011	On 12 December 2011, TEQSA and ASQA signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) detailing how the two regulators would work together towards a streamlined national regulatory approach for 'dual sector providers'—providers offering both vocational education and training and higher education. The <i>Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2011</i> was made on 22 December 2011, and the Act was registered on 29 January 2012.
29 January 2012	TEQSA assumed its regulatory responsibilities. TEQSA released the National Register of Higher Education Providers.
February 2012	The Amendment No.1 to the <i>Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2011</i> was registered. TEQSA released its Regulatory Risk Framework (revised and re-issued February 2014)
July 2012	TEQSA assumed full responsibility for making determinations under the ESOS Act. ASQA and TEQSA given designated and delegated powers under the ESOS Act for providers registered or seeking registration on CRICOS.
August 2012 – November 2012	TEQSA implemented its first Provider Information Request (PIR). The 2012 PIR focused on student and staff data, financial information, and student survey information. All registered providers that were required to respond to the PIR submitted a response (170 providers).
May 2013	The Australian Government announced the Higher Education Red Tape Reduction Action Plan in <i>Assuring Quality While Reducing the Higher Education Regulatory Burden</i> .
August 2013	The Australian Government announced an independent expert review of higher education regulation in the <i>Review of Higher Education Regulation Report</i> . That review formed part of the action plans of the <i>Assuring Quality While Reducing the Higher Education Regulatory Burden</i> .
September 2013	TEQSA released information papers on its approach to regulating the offshore provision of regulated higher education awards, and its assessment of joint and dual awards.
October 2013	TEQSA announced its reform agenda to reduce red tape for registered Australian higher education providers. TEQSA released discussion papers to the higher education sector seeking feedback on the future directions of its regulatory processes (relating to: renewal of registration; course accreditation; and renewal of course accreditation) and Regulatory Risk Framework.

Sources: Australian Government, TEQSA, *TEQSA Annual Report 2011-2012*, pp.6–7, p.11, p.28
 Australian Government, TEQSA, *TEQSA Annual Report 2012–2013*, pp.32–33, p.133
 Australian Government, *Assuring Quality While Reducing the Higher Education Regulatory Burden*, <http://apo.org.au/research/assuring-quality-while-reducing-higher-education-regulatory-burden>
 Australian Government, *Review of Higher Education Regulation Report*, <https://docs.education.gov.au/system/files/doc/other/finalreviewreport.pdf>
 TEQSA website: <http://www.teqsa.gov.au/for-providers/provider-resources>,

2-3. Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011

The *Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011* (TEQSA Act) was passed on June 2011 and is the primary basis of TEQSA's powers. The objects of the TEQSA Act are:

- to provide for national consistency in the regulation of higher education
- to regulate higher education using a standards-based quality framework and principles relating to regulatory necessity, risk and proportionality
- to protect and enhance Australia's reputation for and international competitiveness in higher education, as well as excellence, diversity and innovation in higher education in Australia
- to encourage and promote a higher education system that is appropriate to meet Australia's social and economic needs for a highly educated and skilled population
- to protect students undertaking, or proposing to undertake higher education, by requiring the provision of quality higher education
- to ensure that students have access to information relating to higher education in Australia.

Source: Australian Government, TEQSA, *TEQSA Annual Report 2012–2013*, p.8

2-4. Higher Education Standards Framework

Under the TEQSA Act, the Commonwealth Minister responsible for Education (the Minister) is able to make standards which are the foundation for TEQSA's regulation of all registered providers of higher education. The standards currently consist of the Higher Education Threshold Standards (which are regulated against by TEQSA) and Non-Threshold Standards (which are yet to be specified but are nominated to cover Teaching and Learning, Information and Research).

On 22 December 2011, the Commonwealth Minister for Industry and Innovation, acting on behalf of the Minister, made the *Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2011*, which includes the Provider and Qualifications standards (refer to the table below). All providers must meet these standards in order to enter and remain within Australia's higher education system. The Threshold Standards draw on previous assurance requirements, the National Protocols for Higher Education Approval Processes (National Protocols), as well as the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF).

Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards)

Provider Registration Standards	Provider Registration Standards consist of seven standards relate to the accountability and corporate viability of a provider and its capacity to deliver academic quality and integrity.
Provider Category Standards	Provider Category Standards formalise category titles for registered providers that are well understood internationally and which are meaningful to the general public. The category title signals to the public that the provider is a bona fide provider of quality education in Australia.
Provider Course Accreditation Standards	Provider Course Accreditation Standards consist of seven standards about courses, including a standard for self-accrediting higher education providers.

Qualification Standards	Qualification Standards consist of three standards that relate to accreditation and re-accreditation of all higher education awards, the certification of documentation relating to awards and protection against fraudulent use, and processes for recognising prior learning, the transfer of credits and the articulation of the awards.
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* See Appendix A for further information about Threshold Standards.

The Higher Education Standards Panel (HESP)⁴⁹ provides independent advice to the Minister on making and varying the Higher Education Standards Framework. HESP has reviewed the current Higher Education Standards Framework and has proposed a new Framework to the HE sector for comment. The Panel will propose revisions of the Threshold Standards and related matters to the Commonwealth Minister for Education. The HESP has made its proposed Framework available for comment at www.hestandards.gov.au.

Sources: Australian Government, TEQSA, *TEQSA Annual Report 2011–2012*, p.21, pp.29–31
 Australian Government, TEQSA, *TEQSA Annual Report 2012–2013*, p.133, p.137
 Australian Government, Higher Education Standards website:
<http://www.hestandards.gov.au/higher-education-standards-framework>

2-5. TEQSA’s regulation

TEQSA has regulatory power under the TEQSA Act and the ESOS Act. TEQSA ensures that higher education providers comply with the Standards in the *Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2011* and, for providers who are registered under the ESOS Act, the *National Code of Practice for Registration Authorities and Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2007*. TEQSA has a standards and risk-based approach to higher education regulation.

TEQSA’s main activities are the initial registration and re-registration of higher education providers, accreditation and re-accreditation of higher education courses of study, and registration of providers on CRICOS. Monitoring providers’ compliance against the TEQSA Act and the Threshold Standards, and the ESOS Act and the National Code, is also a key activity.

Source: Australian Government, TEQSA, *TEQSA Annual Report 2012–13*, p.28

2-5-1. Key features of the TEQSA model of regulation

Standards	Provider entry to and continued operations within Australia’s higher education sector is determined by compliance with the Threshold Standards.
	The Standards are developed and promulgated independently of TEQSA.
	The Standards apply to all registered higher education providers offering courses leading to an Australian higher education award, irrespective of where and how a course is delivered.
	Regulation against the Standards takes account of different teaching methods and ways of delivering higher education.
Risks	A risk-management approach is used by TEQSA to identify specific areas of concern within the sector or within the operations of a provider, and how these risks are controlled by the provider.
	Regulatory action reflects the nature and scale of risks identified.

Source: Australian Government, TEQSA, *TEQSA Annual Report 2012–13*, p.28

⁴⁹ In accordance with the TEQSA Act, the Higher Education Standards Panel (HESP) has been established to provide independent advice to the Minister on making and varying the Higher Education Standards Framework. TEQSA is responsible for interpreting and implementing the Higher Education Standards Framework for the purposes of regulating higher education providers. In this way, the setting of standards by HESP is clearly separated from the monitoring and enforcement functions carried out by TEQSA. HESP was formally constituted on 10 January 2012.

2-5-2. Regulatory principles

Under the TEQSA Act, TEQSA must comply with the following three regulatory principles.

Reflecting risk	TEQSA's risk-based approach helps it to focus on areas of higher risk. Risk assessments inform the level of regulatory monitoring or action that may be necessary.
Proportionate regulation	TEQSA's regulatory actions are in proportion to any non-compliance, or the risk of future non-compliance, by the provider. TEQSA balances the interests of students and the potential impact of TEQSA's actions on the provider and on the reputation of the sector.
Regulatory necessity	TEQSA only intervenes when necessary. In making its regulatory decisions, the Commission considers the particular circumstances of a provider and ensures its regulatory responses are the most effective and the least burdensome means of addressing the provider's compliance with the Standards.

Sources: Australian Government, TEQSA, *TEQSA Annual Report 2012–13*, p.29
Australian Government, TEQSA, *A Snapshot of TEQSA*: http://www.teqsa.gov.au/sites/default/files/TEQSAsnapshot_Eng.pdf

2-6. Risk-based approach

2-6-1. TEQSA's Risk Assessment Framework

The Risk Assessment Framework (RAF) outlines TEQSA's approach to undertaking structured risk assessments of registered higher education providers. Risk assessments play a key role in TEQSA's risk-based regulation of the sector by helping to prioritise TEQSA's regulatory focus.

The RAF and use of risk assessments:

- Strengthens the protection of students' interests and the sector's reputation by monitoring key aspects of providers' operations during registration periods.
- Reduces regulatory burden by using risk assessments to inform a differentiated approach to evidence and reporting requirements in regulatory processes.
- Supports TEQSA case managers and providers to engage in early discussion about emergent issues prior to any formal regulatory review.
- Supports quality improvement activities through the sharing of information with providers about potential risks and good practices in the sector.

TEQSA utilises a standard format and set of risk indicators across areas of institutional practice and outcomes that are central to all providers. The RAF recognises the importance of provider context in assessing potential regulatory risks. It allows for expert judgment and embeds providers' history and context within the risk assessment process. TEQSA's approach to risk assessments is informed by the ISO Risk Management Standards, while adapted for TEQSA's regulatory context and purpose.

Sources: Australian Government, TEQSA website, <http://www.teqsa.gov.au/regulatory-approach/risk-assessment-framework>

2-6-2. Provider information

TEQSA relies heavily on existing data collected within the sector for its risk assessments, predominantly the national

higher education collections managed by the Department of Education and survey data from Graduate Careers Australia. TEQSA sources a limited set of key data directly from some providers through an annual Provider Information Request (PIR). The PIR reflects that a significant part of the sector is not currently captured within the existing national collections. The PIR focuses on core data relating to students, staff, financial and survey information. Further information on TEQSA’s PIR is available at :

<http://www.teqsa.gov.au/for-providers/provider-obligations/data-collection>

Source: Australian Government, TEQSA website <http://www.teqsa.gov.au/regulatory-approach/risk-assessment-framework>

2-6-3. Key steps in the risk assessment process

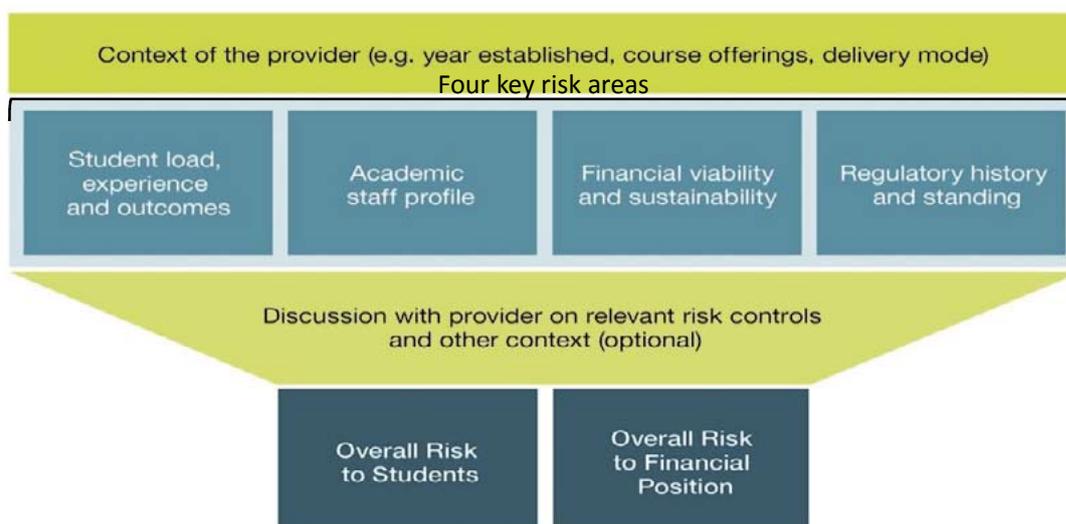
TEQSA undertakes an annual cycle of risk assessments of all providers, over the first half of the calendar year (following TEQSA’s Provider Information Request). An overview of key steps in TEQSA’s risk assessment process is reflected in the figure below.



Source: Australian Government, TEQSA, TEQSA website, <http://www.teqsa.gov.au/regulatory-approach/risk-assessment-framework>

2-6-4. Key components of a risk assessment

The key components of a TEQSA risk assessment are below. Regulatory history, context and risk indicators are used to inform an overall evaluation of ‘Risk to Students’ and ‘Risk to Financial Position’.



- **Overall Risk Evaluation:** The evaluation uses a high, moderate or low rating (represented with traffic light colours). This is a qualitative expert judgment taking into consideration the provider’s context, history and standing, and analysis of risk indicators. Where an overall evaluation is not able to be established due to

lack of information, conflicting information, or unreliable data, a 'No Confidence' rating may be applied.

- **Risk Indicators:** In addition to the four key risk areas, risk indicators have been identified giving consideration to data availability (on an annual basis), applicability across the sector and to different provider circumstances. The indicators are as follows:

Student Profile and Outcomes	
1.	Cohorts completed
2.	Student load
3.	Attrition rate
4.	Progress rate
5.	Completions (by Undergraduate / Postgraduate Coursework and Higher Degree by Research, as applicable)
6.	Student Satisfaction (by Undergraduate / Postgraduate Coursework and Higher Degree by Research, as applicable)
7.	Graduate destinations
Staff Resources and Profile	
8.	Senior academic leaders
9.	Students to staff ratio (SSR)
10.	Academic staff on casual work contracts
Financial Viability and Sustainability	
11.	Financial viability
12.	Financial sustainability

Source: Australian Government, TEQSA website, <http://www.teqsa.gov.au/regulatory-approach/risk-assessment-framework>

2-6-5. Actions in response to risk assessments

A final risk assessment will typically identify action in line with the following:

No action	If no significant risks are identified, then TEQSA will not take any action in response to the final risk assessment.
Recommendation	TEQSA may recommend that the provider closely monitor identified risks and/or put in place appropriate controls or improvement strategies. A recommendation arising from a risk assessment does not constitute a formal condition on registration.
Formal Request for Information	TEQSA may identify risks that require further consideration by TEQSA. In such cases, TEQSA may seek additional information from the provider so that TEQSA may determine if further action is necessary. Requests for information may also be used to monitor identified risks between risk assessment cycles.
Formal regulatory action (e.g. compliance assessment or conditions)	If TEQSA identifies significant risks, it may determine that formal regulatory action is necessary outside a scheduled review process. This may include, for example, undertaking a compliance assessment to satisfy TEQSA that the provider continues to comply with the Threshold Standards, or imposing formal conditions on registration.
To be considered in scheduled regulatory review	If the provider has a forthcoming regulatory review process (e.g. re-registration), TEQSA may indicate that risks identified in the risk assessment will be considered further in that process rather than identify additional action at that time.

Source: Australian Government, TEQSA website, <http://www.teqsa.gov.au/regulatory-approach/risk-assessment-framework>

2-7. Registration and renewal of registration as a higher education provider

Any regulated entity (a constitutional corporation or a corporation established by or under a law of the Commonwealth or Territory, or a person who conducts activities in a Territory) that intends to deliver higher education in Australia must be registered by TEQSA. Registration is for a period not exceeding seven years. Any registered provider that intends to continue delivering higher education in Australia must apply to have their registered renewed by TEQSA.

A new entity may apply to TEQSA for approval to be registered as a higher education provider within the provider categories. An existing higher education provider is able to seek approval change their particular provider category under the TEQSA Act. There are 5 categories that use the word “university”:

- Australian University
- Australian University College
- Australian University of Specialisation
- Overseas University
- Overseas University of Specialisation.

A higher education provider must meet the additional criteria for use of a provider category that uses the word “university”.

All higher education providers registered by TEQSA are listed on the National Register of Higher Education Providers⁵⁰. The National Register is published on the TEQSA website. Under the TEQSA Act, a registered higher education provider may apply to TEQSA to change the category in which the provider is registered. TEQSA may also change the category in which a provider is registered on its own initiative or on a provider’s application to change the category. This decision is reviewable.

Sources: *Amendment No.1 to the Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2011*, p.8
Australian Government, TEQSA, *Application Guide, Application for Registration as Higher Education Provider, Version 2.2 Updated October 2013*, p.4
Australian Government, TEQSA, *Application Guide, Application for Renewal of Registration as Higher Education Provider, Version 2.2 Updated October 2013*
TEQSA website: <http://www.teqsa.gov.au/national-register>,
<http://www.teqsa.gov.au/for-providers/registration/other-provider-categories>

⁵⁰ TEQSA is required by the TEQSA Act to establish and maintain a National Register of Higher Education Providers and to make it available for inspection online. The purpose of the National Register is to be the authoritative source of information on the status of registered higher education providers in Australia. (The National Register is not designed to be a tool for searching or finding information about courses of study or the range of courses offered by a particular provider or institution. This information can be found on the Australian Government’s Study Assist website, or MyUniversity’s Course Finder.)

2-7-1. Self-accrediting authority

Australian higher education providers consist of self-accrediting higher education providers and non-self-accrediting higher education providers. Self-accrediting higher education providers are authorised to self-accredit some or all of their higher education courses of study⁵¹. Providers who self-accredit some or all of their higher education courses of study are accountable for:

- interpreting the requirements of the Threshold Standards (in particular the Provider Course Accreditation Standards and the Qualification Standards), and;
- judging whether these will be appropriately applied and met throughout the development, approval, delivery and discontinuance of a course of study.

In exercising this authority, the provider is also responsible for ensuring that compliance across all the Threshold Standards (the Provider Registration Standards, the Provider Category Standards, the Provider Course Accreditation Standards and the Qualification Standards) is sustained throughout their higher education operations.

Under section 41 of the TEQSA Act, a registered higher education provider may apply to TEQSA for authority to self-accredit one or more courses of study. TEQSA will assess applications against the self-accrediting criteria contained in the Threshold Standards.

- **Australian University:** Each Australian university that meets the requirements under subsection 45(1)⁵² of the TEQSA Act is authorised under the TEQSA Act to self-accredit each course of study that leads to a higher education award that the provider offers or confers.
- **Australian University College:** The Criteria for authorising self-accrediting authority within the Threshold Standards provide that TEQSA will authorise each provider in the Australian University College category to self-accredit all courses of study. An application for self-accrediting authority is automatically included in the Application Form – Application for Change of Provider Category to ‘Australian University College’ or Application for Registration as an ‘Australian University College’.
- **Australian University of Specialisation:** The Criteria for authorising self-accrediting authority within the Threshold Standards provide that TEQSA may authorise a provider registered in the Australian University of Specialisation category to self-accredit all courses of study in one or two broad fields of study only.
- **Higher education provider, Overseas University, or Overseas University of Specialisation:** TEQSA may authorise the provider to self-accredit a course(s) of study at one or more higher education award levels and in one or more broad fields of study or discipline areas. The criteria for giving self-accrediting authority to providers in this provider category are available in the Higher Education Standards Framework.

Sources: TEQSA website: <http://www.teqsa.gov.au/>

Australian Government, *Review of Higher Education Regulation REPORT*, p.5

Australian Government, TEQSA, *Application Guide, Application for Accreditation of a Higher Education Course of Study (AQF Qualification), Version 2.2 Updated October 2013*, p.4

⁵¹ A higher education course of study means a course that will lead to a qualification recognised under the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF).

⁵² Each registered higher education provider that is registered in the Australian University Provider Category and is established by or under, or recognised by, a law of the Commonwealth, a State or a Territory, or registered as a company under Part 2A.2 of the Corporations Act 2001.

2-7-2. Initial registration

A regulated entity (a constitutional corporation or a corporation established by or under a law of the Commonwealth or Territory, or a person who conducts activities in a Territory) that intends to become a higher education provider may apply to TEQSA for approval to be registered as a Higher education provider. If TEQSA grants the application, TEQSA will determine a period for which the applicant is registered. Under the TEQSA Act this period cannot exceed seven years.

In order to be registered as a higher education provider by TEQSA, TEQSA must be satisfied that the applicant meets the Threshold Standards (see Appendix A. for further information). Under the TEQSA Act, a registered higher education provider must offer at least one accredited course. Therefore an application for registration as a higher education provider must be accompanied by an application for accreditation of at least one AQF course of study. Applicants should note that the Application Form is not applicable to courses of study, such as ELICOS courses or Foundation Programs which lead to a qualification not recognised under the AQF⁵³.

There are nine sections to the Application for Registration as a Higher Education Provider. They are:

1. Applicant Details
2. Provider Standing: Applicant Ownership and Corporate Structure
3. Provider Standing: Applicant History
4. Corporate and Academic Governance
5. Financial Viability and Sustainability
6. Academic Quality and Integrity
7. Management Systems and Human Resources
8. Responsibilities to Students
9. Physical and Electronic Resources and Infrastructure

⁵³ Under ESOS Act, all providers and courses that enroll overseas students are required to register on CRICOS (see p.55 for further information).

In summary, the registration process involves the following main stages.



Sources: Australian Government, TEQSA, *Application Guide, Application for Registration as Higher Education Provider, Version 2.2 Updated October 2013*, pp.4-6, pp.8-11
Australian Government, TEQSA, *Application Guide, Application for Accreditation of a Higher Education Course of Study (AQF Qualification), Version 2.2 Updated October 2013*, p.5
Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (Consequential Amendments and Transitional Provisions) Act 2011, Item 15 of Schedule 3
Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011
Australian Government, TEQSA, *TEQSA Annual Report 2012-13*, p.18
TEQSA website: <http://www.teqsa.gov.au/>

⁵⁴ Under the TEQSA Act, TEQSA had to make a decision within nine months (not exceeding a further nine months if TEQSA judged it necessary) of receiving the application, but the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (Consequential Amendments and Transitional Provisions) Act 2011 (TEQSA CATP Act) revised this figure to six months (not exceeding a further six months if TEQSA is judged necessary). See <http://www.comlaw.gov.au/Series/C2011A00073>.

2-7-3. Renewal of registration

The TEQSA Act requires applications for renewal of registration to be submitted at least 180 days before current registration ends (a shorter period may be approved by TEQSA). The period for which the registration is renewed cannot exceed seven years.

The core assessment scope is against seven Provider Registration Standards (PRSs):

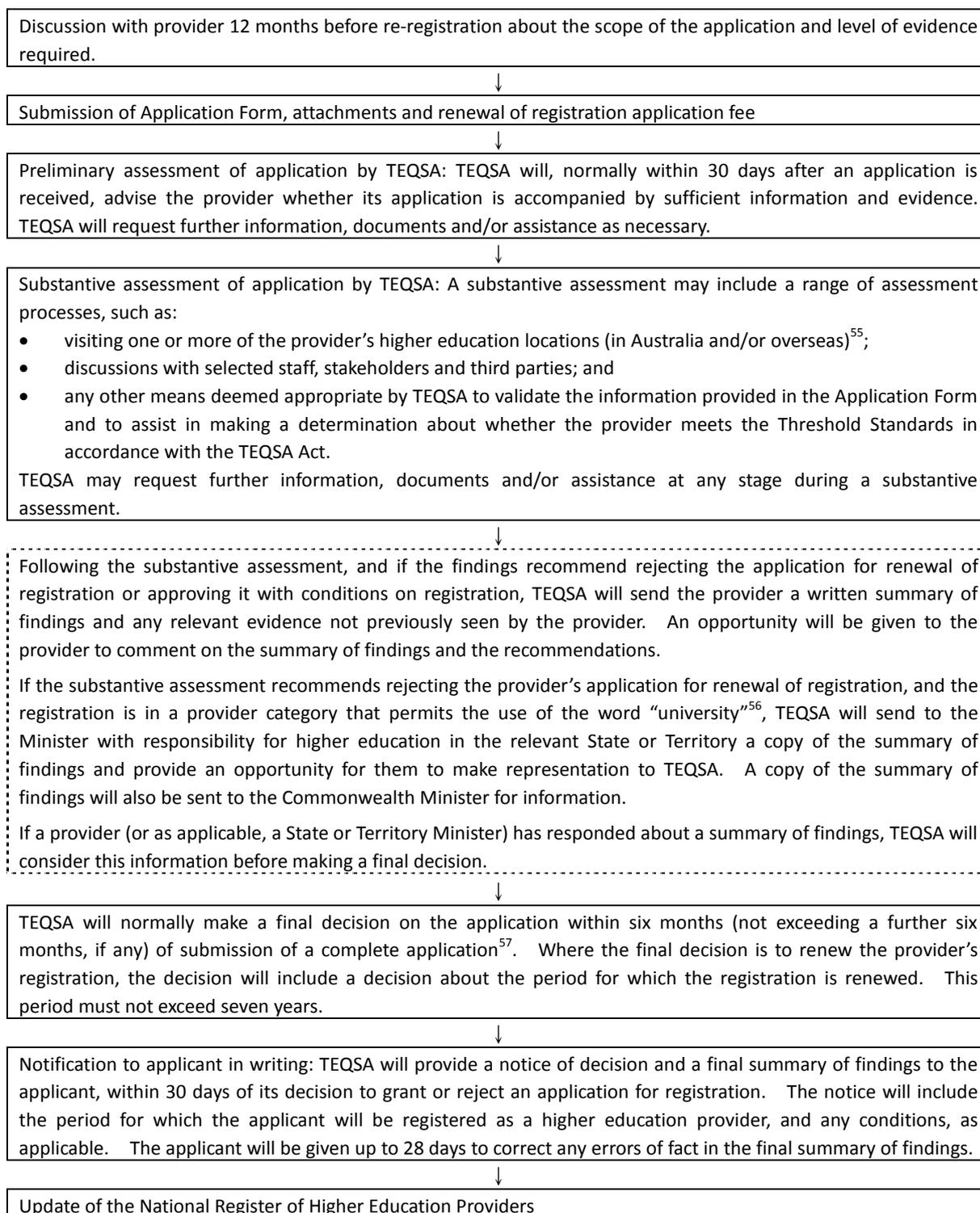
1. Governance (Risk Management (PRS 3.4) and Corporate and Academic Governance (PRS 3.7))
2. Planning and Performance Outcomes (PRS 3.6 and PRS 5.6)
3. Academic Quality Assurance* (PRS 3.8)
4. Student Experience and Support (Grievance processes (PRS 6.4); Transition, academic language and learning support (PRS 6.5)).

*Assessment of implementation of these processes may be through examining one or more courses (to a maximum of five) as case studies.

If TEQSA does not already have relevant information about the provider's practices and how they are implemented and this is considered necessary to assess the application, the scope of the assessment will be extended.

Under the TEQSA Act, registered higher education providers which do not intend to seek renewal of registration, may apply to TEQSA to withdraw their registration. TEQSA may grant the application if satisfied that it is appropriate to allow the registration to be withdrawn.

In summary, the renewal of registration process involves the following main stages.



Sources: Australian Government, TEQSA, *Application Guide, Application for Renewal of Registration as Higher Education Provider, Version*

⁵⁵ Providers will be advised at an early stage of the assessment whether or not any site visits will be required to ensure that there is time for appropriate arrangements to be made.

⁵⁶ Only a higher education provider that is registered as “Australian University”, “Australian University College”, “Australian University of Specialisation”, “Overseas University”, or “Overseas University of Specialisation” category, permits the use of the word “university”.

⁵⁷ Under TEQSA CATP Act, TEQSA must make a decision on the application within six months (not exceeding further six months, if any) of receiving it.

2.2 Updated October 2013, p.4, p.6, p.8, pp.10-12

Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (Consequential Amendments and Transitional Provisions) Act 2011, pp.38-39

Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011, pp.21-22, pp.29-30, p.117

Australian Government, TEQSA, *TEQSA Annual Report 2012-13*, p.18

TEQSA website: <http://www.teqsa.gov.au/for-providers/registration/withdrawal>

2-8. Accreditation and renewal of accreditation of higher education course of study

Under the TEQSA Act, a registered higher education provider must offer at least one accredited course. A registered higher education provider that does not have the authority to self-accredit its courses of study must apply to TEQSA for accreditation of one or more new, or additional, courses of study that the higher education provider plans to deliver. The course of study which is accredited by TEQSA is listed on the National Register of Higher Education Providers.

TEQSA can accredit a higher education course of study which leads to a qualification that is located against levels 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 or 10 of the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF). Applicants also need to apply for accreditation under the ESOS Act of ELICOS or Foundation Program courses of study that are classified as non - AQF awards.

AQF Level	Higher Education Qualification
5	Diploma
6	Advanced Diploma, Associate Degree
7	Bachelor Degree
8	Bachelor Honour Degree, Graduate Certificate, Graduate Diploma
9	Masters Degree (Research), Masters Degree (Coursework), Masters Degree (Extended)
10	Doctoral Degree

Sources: Australian Government, TEQSA, *Application Guide, Application for Accreditation of a Higher Education Course of Study (AQF Qualification), Version 2.2 Updated October 2013*, p.4

Australian Government, TEQSA, *Application Guide, Higher Education Provider; Application for Renewal of Accreditation of a Higher Education Course of Study (AQF Qualification), Version 2.2 Updated October 2013*, p.3

2-8-1. Accreditation of higher education course of study

TEQSA assesses each application for course accreditation against the requirements of the Higher Education Provider Course Accreditation Standards (which incorporate the Qualifications Standards).

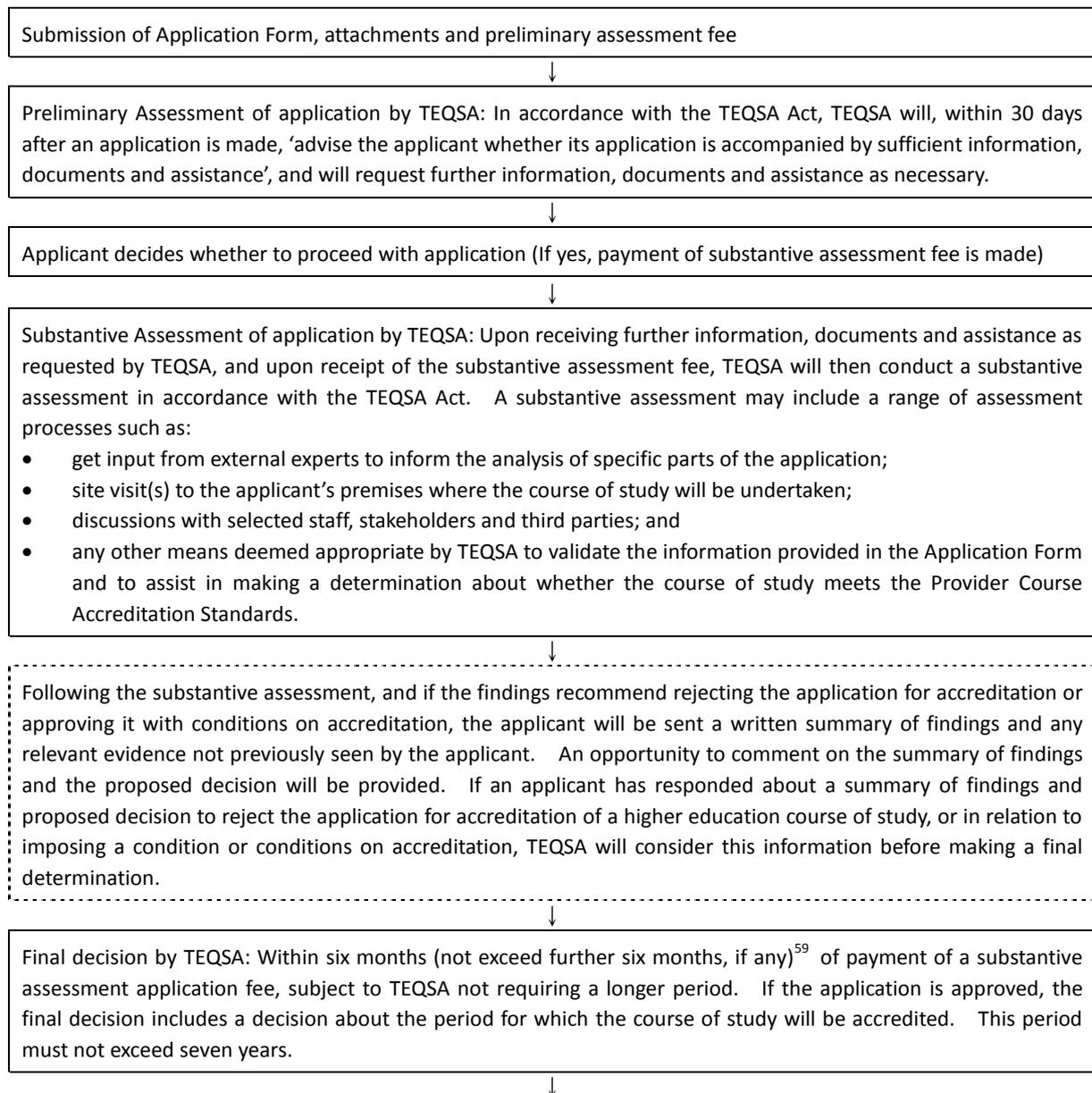
The minimum evidence requirements for each new course are:

1. Course details
2. Course documentation
3. Course development and approval
4. Staff details.

If TEQSA does not already have relevant information about the provider's practices and how they are implemented and this is considered necessary to assess the application, the scope of the assessment will be extended.

In the case of joint awards⁵⁸ conferred by one or more provider, a single application form should be submitted. Where both providers are registered by TEQSA and do not have self-accrediting authority, one provider should take the lead role in the application. Where a registered HEP without self-accrediting authority is conferring a joint award with one or more providers who have self-accrediting authority, a single application form should be submitted by the registered HEP without self-accrediting authority.

In summary, the accreditation of a course of study process involves following main stages.



⁵⁸ Joint awards are also known as double badged awards. TEQSA defines that joint awards involve the awarding of a single qualification which is jointly conferred by two or more providers and recognised within the Australian Qualifications Framework. Joint awards involve close cooperation among the providers in curriculum development, design, organisation, course delivery, and assessment of learning outcomes as well as requirements necessary for awarding the qualification. The certification documentation for joint awards normally takes the form of a single testamur, but may also involve two separate testamurs, each recognising that the qualification was undertaken through a joint program.

⁵⁹ Under the TEQSA Act, TEQSA had to make a decision within nine months (not exceeding a further nine months if TEQSA was judged necessary) of receiving the application, but the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (Consequential Amendments and Transitional Provisions) Act 2011 (TEQSA CATP Act) revised this figure to six months (not exceeding a further six months if TEQSA is judged necessary). See <http://www.comlaw.gov.au/Series/C2011A00073>.

Notification to applicant in writing: TEQSA will provide a notice of decision to the applicant within 30 days of its decision to grant or reject an application for a higher education course of study to be accredited. If the application is approved, the notification will include the period for which the course of study is accredited and any conditions, as applicable. If the application is rejected, or if the application is approved with conditions on accreditation, the notification will include a statement of reasons. An applicant is also given a copy of a draft public report about the decision and up to 28 days in which to provide feedback on the public report. This feedback is taken into account by TEQSA prior to any decision on whether to publish the report.



Update of the National Register of Higher Education Providers: The course of study accredited by TEQSA is listed on the National Register, including the provider's details such as the Provider's name, status of accreditation (e.g. Accredited, Accreditation expired, or Accreditation ongoing pending renewal), renewal date, and condition of delivering in language other than English (Yes or No).

Sources: Australian Government, TEQSA, *Application Guide, Application for Accreditation of a Higher Education Course of Study (AQF Qualification), Version 2.2 Updated October 2013*, pp.4-10
Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (*Consequential Amendments and Transitional Provisions*) Act 2011, pp.38-39
Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011, pp.37-38
Australian Government, TEQSA, *TEQSA Annual Report 2012-13*, p.18
Australian Government, TEQSA, *Information Paper; TEQSA's approach to the assessment of joint and dual awards, September 2013*, p.1
TEQSA website: <http://www.teqsa.gov.au/national-register>

2-8-2. Renewal of accreditation of higher education course of study

The TEQSA Act requires applications for renewal of accreditation of a higher education course of study to be submitted at least 180 days before the accreditation of the course of study is to end or such shorter period approved by TEQSA.

TEQSA will assess each application for course accreditation against the requirements of the Higher Education Provider Course Accreditation Standards (which incorporate the Qualifications Standards).

The minimum evidence requirements for re-accrediting each course are:

1. Course details
2. Course monitoring and review
3. Staffing.

If TEQSA does not already have relevant information about the provider's practices and how they are implemented and this is considered necessary to assess the application, the scope of the assessment will be extended.

In summary, the renewal of accreditation of a higher education course of study process involves following main stages.

Submission of Application Form, attachments and renewal of accreditation application fee



Preliminary Assessment of application by TEQSA: TEQSA will, normally within 30 days after an application is received, advise the provider whether its application is accompanied by sufficient information and evidence. TEQSA will request further information, documents and/or assistance as necessary.



Substantive Assessment of application by TEQSA: A substantive assessment may include a range of assessment processes, such as:

- get input from external experts to inform the analysis of specific parts of the application ;

- one or more site visits⁶⁰ to the provider's premises where the course of study is undertaken ;
- discussions with selected staff, stakeholders and third parties ; and
- any other means deemed appropriate by TEQSA to validate the information provided in the Application Form and to assist in making a determination about whether the course or courses of study meets the Provider Course Accreditation Standards and the Qualification Standards.

Following the substantive assessment, and if the findings recommend rejecting the application for renewal of accreditation of a higher education course of study, or approving the application with conditions on accreditation, the provider will be sent a written summary of findings and any relevant evidence not previously seen by the provider. The provider will be given an opportunity to comment on the summary of findings. If a provider has responded about a summary of findings and recommendation to reject the application for renewal of accreditation of a higher education course of study, or to approve the application with conditions on accreditation, TEQSA will consider this information before making a final determination.

TEQSA will reach a proposed decision normally within six months (not exceeding further six months, if any) of commencing a substantive assessment⁶¹. Where an application is approved, the final decision includes a decision about the period for which accreditation is renewed. This period must not exceed seven years.

Notification to provider in writing: TEQSA will provide a notice of decision to the provider within 30 days of its decision to grant or reject an application for renewal of accreditation of a course of study. If the application is approved, the notification will include the period for which the course of study is accredited and any conditions, as applicable. If the application is rejected, or if the application is approved with conditions on accreditation, the notification will include a statement of reasons. A provider is also given a copy of a draft public report about the decision and up to 28 days in which to provide feedback on the public report. This feedback is taken into account by TEQSA prior to any decision on whether to publish the report.

Update of the National Register of Higher Education Providers

Sources: Australian Government, TEQSA, *Application Guide, Higher Education Provider; Application for Renewal of Accreditation of a Higher Education Course of Study (AQF Qualification), Version 2.2 Updated October 2013*, p.4, pp.6-9
 Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (Consequential Amendments and Transitional Provisions) Act 2011
 Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011
 Australian Government, TEQSA, *TEQSA Annual Report 2012-13*, p.18
 Australian Government, TEQSA, *Information Paper; TEQSA's approach to the assessment of joint and dual awards, September 2013*, p.2

2-8-3. Offshore provision (transnational education)

The quality of offshore education involving Australian higher education providers is critical to the reputation of not only the provider, but also the Australian higher education sector in general. TEQSA is committed to a rigorous approach to the regulation of offshore provision⁶² of Australian higher education that recognises the strengths of the system while ensuring that students, in whatever location they are studying, have a quality education experience.

⁶⁰ Providers will be advised at an early stage of the assessment whether or not any site visits will be required to ensure that there is time for appropriate arrangements to be made.

⁶¹ Under TEQSA CATP Act, TEQSA must make a decision on the application within six months (not exceeding further six months, if any) of receiving it.

⁶² TEQSA defines that: "Offshore provision (also referred to as Transnational Education (TNE)) involves an arrangement whereby a course of study that leads to a regulated higher education award by AQF is provided either partly or fully outside Australia by either (a) a registered higher education provider (irrespective of the provider category in which they are registered), or (b) through collaboration between a registered higher education provider and one or more third parties. Other terms commonly used include "cross-border education" or "borderless education."

Whatever offshore arrangement is contemplated by a regulated higher education provider, and irrespective of the delivery location, responsibility for each regulated award (as determined by the Australian Qualifications Framework) granted and its academic standard is the responsibility of the registered higher education provider.

Most TNE engagement is undertaken through partnership or other third party arrangements, and third parties may not necessarily be higher education institutions.

The TEQSA Act requires a registered higher education provider that offers or confers a regulated higher education award for the completion of a course of study provided wholly or partly by another entity to ensure that the other entity provides the course of study consistently with the Threshold Standards. The Threshold Standards apply to all a provider's activities, regardless of delivery site and place, and cover arrangements with third parties. TEQSA also complies with three regulatory principles (regulatory necessity, reflecting risk, and proportionality) for regulation of offshore provision.

TEQSA's regulatory processes for offshore provision can include a site visit to the partner/third party, if such a visit is deemed necessary.

Source: Australian Government, TEQSA, *Information Paper; TEQSA's approach to regulating the offshore provision of regulated HE awards, September 2013*, pp.1-3,
<http://www.teqsa.gov.au/sites/default/files/RegulatingOffshoreProvisionOfRegulatedHEAwardsInfoSheetv2.pdf>

2-9. CRICOS registration

The Education Service for Overseas Students Act 2000 (ESOS Act) provides an extra layer of regulation for Australian institutions that enroll overseas students studying in Australia on a student visa. It requires all providers and courses that enroll overseas students to be registered on the Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students (CRICOS).

The ESOS Act and the associated legislation form the legal framework for the provision of education services to overseas students. The ESOS legislative framework sets out roles and responsibilities for education providers who wish to deliver courses to overseas students. The Australian Government administers the ESOS Act and its associated instruments.

ESOS legislative framework

- Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000
- Education Services for Overseas Students 2000 – Regulations (Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) Regulations 2001)
- The National Code
- Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000 – Legislative Instruments

Under the ESOS legislative framework, the designated authority will recommend a maximum cap on the number of international students the provider may enroll, the period of registration of no more than five years, and any other conditions on registration deemed appropriate. TEQSA has designated authority under the ESOS Act and TEQSA Act as follows:

- all higher education providers registered under the TEQSA Act
- all providers of Foundation Programs except where delivered by a school
- all providers of ELICOS in a pathway arrangement with a registered higher education provider

Other designated authorities and their jurisdictions are as follows:

The Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA):

- all Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) registered on CRICOS in all states and territories
- providers of ELICOS except where a provider delivers the program in the capacity of school or a higher education provider, or in a pathway arrangement with a registered higher education provider.

State and Territory regulatory authorities:

- all providers of ELICOS and Foundation Programs delivered in schools.

The CRICOS website (<http://www.cricos.deewr.gov.au/>) is a searchable database managed by the Department of Education under the ESOS legislative framework. CRICOS provides details of those education institutions approved to recruit, enroll and deliver education and training services to overseas students, and details of their courses.

Sources: Australian Government, Aei. gov. au website: <https://aei.gov.au/regulatory-information/pages/regulatoryinformation.aspx>
TEQSA website: <http://www.teqsa.gov.au/for-providers/cricos>, <http://www.teqsa.gov.au/news-and-publications/teqsa-asqa>
ASQA website:
<http://www.asqa.gov.au/for-training-organisations/become-a-cricos-provider/become-a-cricos-provider.html#cricos>

2-10. TEQSA's international engagement

TEQSA has an important role to play in protecting, enhancing and promoting the quality and integrity of Australia's higher education sector in the international sphere. TEQSA's international engagement informs wide international understanding of, and confidence in, Australian higher education regulation and quality assurance, and supports the recognition of qualifications, employability of graduates and mobility of students.

In order to protect the reputation of Australian higher education and the interests of students, TEQSA applies a rigorous approach to offshore provision of higher education. It also develops cooperative relationships with overseas regulatory and quality assurance agencies, governments and other related bodies, with whom it shares information on the rigour of the Australian regulatory system.

TEQSA has formal memberships with the following organisations:

- Asia-Pacific Quality Network (APQN)
- International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE)
- CHEA International Quality Group

Source: TEQSA website: <http://www.teqsa.gov.au/about/international-engagement>

2-11. Recent topic

TEQSA is committed to continually improving its regulatory processes to reduce the regulatory burden on all higher education providers to ensure its processes remain effective in managing risks and maintaining quality in the sector.

TEQSA is implementing an agenda to reduce the regulatory burden for providers addressing main areas of concern to the sector, including:

- reporting requirements;
- duplication of requirements across regulatory bodies;
- the time taken to make regulatory decisions; and
- ensuring that regulatory assessments take a risk-based and proportionate approach.

TEQSA's latest updates are available at : <http://www.teqsa.gov.au/>

Source: TEQSA website: <http://www.teqsa.gov.au/news-publications/news/teqsa-reform-agenda-and-continuous-improvement>

Appendix A. Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards)

Provider Registration Standards (PRS)

1. Provider standing
2. Financial viability and sustainability
3. Corporate and academic governance
4. Primacy of academic quality and integrity
5. Management and human resources
6. Responsibilities to students
7. Physical and electronic resources and infrastructure

Provider Category Standards

1. "Higher Education Provider" Category
2. "Australian University" Category
3. "Australian University College" Category
4. "Australian University of Specialisation" Category
5. "Overseas University" Category
6. "Overseas University of Specialisation" Category

Provider Course Accreditation Standards

1. Course design is appropriate and meets the Qualification Standards
2. Course resourcing and information is adequate
3. Admission criteria are appropriate
4. Teaching and learning are of high quality
5. Assessment is effective and expected student learning outcomes are achieved
6. Course monitoring, review, updating and termination are appropriately managed

Qualification Standards

1. Higher education awards delivered meet the appropriate criteria
2. Certification documentation issued is accurate and protects against fraudulent use
3. Articulation, recognition of prior learning and credit arrangements meet the appropriate criteria

For more information about the Higher Education Standards Framework, visit the Australian Government legislation database at http://www.comlaw.gov.au/Details/F2012L00003/Html/Text#_Toc311791717.

Source: ComLaw website: <http://www.comlaw.gov.au/Details/F2012L00003>, *Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2011*

Appendix B. The National Code's standards for registered providers

The 15 standards are logically grouped under relevant topics: pre-enrolment engagement of students (Standards 1-4); care for and services to students (Standards 5-6); students as consumers (Standards 7-8); the student visa program (Standards 9-13); staff, educational resources and premises (Standards 14-15).

<p>Standard 1 – Marketing information and practices Outcome: Registered providers ensure that marketing of their education and training services is professional, accurate and maintains the integrity and reputation of the industry.</p>
<p>Standard 2 – Student engagement before enrolment Outcome: Registered providers recruit students in an ethical and responsible manner and provide information that enables students to make informed decisions about studying with the registered provider in Australia. Registered providers ensure students' qualifications, experience and English language proficiency are appropriate for the course for which enrolment is sought.</p>
<p>Standard 3 – Formalisation of enrolment Outcome: Written agreements between registered providers and students set out the services to be provided, fees payable and information in relation to refunds of course money.</p>
<p>Standard 4 – Education agents Outcome: Registered providers take all reasonable measures to use education agents that have an appropriate knowledge and understanding of the Australian international education industry and do not use education agents who are dishonest or lack integrity.</p>
<p>Standard 5 – Care for and services to students Outcome: Where students under the age of 18 are not being cared for in Australia by a parent or suitable nominated relative, registered providers ensure the arrangements made to protect the personal safety and social well-being of those students are appropriate.</p>
<p>Standard 6 – Student support services Outcome: Registered providers support students to adjust to study and life in Australia, to achieve their learning goals and to achieve satisfactory progress towards meeting the learning outcomes of the course.</p>
<p>Standard 7 – Transfer between registered providers Outcome: Registered providers assess requests from students for a transfer between registered providers prior to the student completing six months of the principal course of study in accordance with their documented procedures.</p>
<p>Standard 8 – Complaints and appeals Outcome: Registered providers' complaints and appeals processes are independent, easily and immediately accessible and inexpensive for the parties involved.</p>
<p>Standard 9 – Completion within the expected duration of study Outcome: Registered providers monitor the enrolment load of students to ensure they complete the course within the duration specified in their Confirmation of Enrolment (CoE) and do not exceed the allowable portion of online or distance learning. Registered providers only enable students to extend the expected duration of study for the course through the issuing of a new CoE in limited circumstances.</p>
<p>Standard 10 – Monitoring course progress Outcome: Registered providers systematically monitor students' course progress. Registered providers are proactive in notifying and counseling students who are at risk of failing to meet course progress requirements. Registered providers report students, under the ESOS Act, who have breached the course progress requirements.</p>
<p>Standard 11 – Monitoring attendance Outcome: Registered providers systematically monitor students' compliance with student visa conditions relating to attendance. Registered providers are proactive in notifying and counseling students who are at risk of failing to meet attendance requirements. Registered providers report students, under the ESOS Act, who have breached the attendance requirements.</p>
<p>Standard 12 – Course credit Outcome: Registered providers appropriately recognise course credit within the ESOS framework.</p>

Standard 13 – Deferring, suspending or cancelling the student’s enrolment

Outcome: Registered providers may only enable students to defer or temporarily suspend their studies, including granting a leave of absence, during the course through formal agreement in certain limited circumstances.

Standard 14 – Staff capability, educational resources and premises

Outcome: The staff of registered providers are suitably qualified or experienced in relation to the functions they perform for students. The educational resources of registered providers support the delivery of courses to students. The premises of registered providers, including the floor space available for each student, support students to achieve their course outcomes.

Standard 15 – Changes to registered providers’ ownership or management

Outcome: Registered providers proactively inform the designated authority of prospective ownership and/or management changes.

Sources: Australian Government, Aei. gov. au website:

<https://aei.gov.au/Regulatory-Information/Education-Services-for-Overseas-Students-ESOS-Legislative-Framework/National-Code/Pages/default.aspx>

Australian Government, DEEWR, *National Code of Practice for Registration Authorities and Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2007*, pp.11-25

Appendix C. Fees payable for the performance of TEQSA's main functions

Item	Activity for which the fee is imposed	Amount of the fee
1	Preliminary Assessment of Application for registration as a higher education provider – s 19 of the Act Where the application is for registration in one of the following provider categories: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Australian University; • Overseas University; • Australian University College; • Australian University of Specialisation; and • Overseas University of Specialisation. 	\$25,000
2	Preliminary Assessment of Application for registration as a higher education provider – s 19 of the Act Where the application is for registration in the Higher Education Provider category	\$5,500
3	Substantive Assessment of Application for registration as a higher education provider – s 20 of the Act Where the application is assessed by TEQSA, pursuant to paragraph 19(1)(a) of the Act, as appropriate for one of the following provider categories: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Australian University; • Overseas University; • Australian University College; • Australian University of Specialisation; and • Overseas University of Specialisation. 	\$60,000
4	Substantive Assessment of Application for registration as a higher education provider – s 20 of the Act Where the application is not one to which Item 7 applies	\$16,500
5	Renewal of Registration Application – s 35 of the Act Where the application is to renew registration for one of the following provider categories: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Australian University; · Overseas University; · Australian University College; · Australian University of Specialisation; and · Overseas University of Specialisation. 	Where an application to renew registration is made at the same time as an application under s 38 of the Act to change the Provider Category in which the provider is registered, no fee is payable for the application to renew registration. In all other cases, the fee is \$75,000
6	Renewal of Registration Application – s 35 of the Act Where the application is to renew registration for the Higher Education Provider category	Where an application to renew registration is made at the same time as an application under s 38 of the Act to change the Provider Category in which the provider is registered, no fee is payable for the application to renew registration. In all other cases, the fee is \$20,000

7	<p>Application for change of Provider Category in which a provider is registered to one of the following Provider Categories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Australian University; • Overseas University; • Australian University College; • Australian University of Specialisation; • Overseas University of Specialisation. <p>(s 38 of the Act)</p>	\$85,000
8	<p>Application to TEQSA as a designated authority for a recommendation that an approved provider be registered to provide a course at a location - s 9AA of the <i>Education Services for Overseas Students Act</i></p>	<p>(a) Application for the purposes of registration of an approved provider under section 9AB to provide a course of study to overseas students, or for renewal of the provider's registration. - \$5,000</p> <p>(b) Application for the purposes of adding a course of study under section 9AG to a provider's registration on CRICOS – No fee is payable</p>
9	<p>Application to self-accredit one or more courses of study – s 41 of the Act</p>	<p>(a) Where the application is by a provider registered in the higher education provider category:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · For an application by a provider with no existing authority under the Act to self accredit a course or group of courses of study – the fee is \$22,000. · For an application by a provider which is authorised under the TEQSA Act to self accredit one or more courses of study – the fee is \$10,000 <p>(b) Where the application is by a provider registered in one of the following categories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overseas University; • Australian University College; • Australian University of Specialisation; • Overseas University of Specialisation. • No fee is payable
10	<p>Preliminary Assessment of Application for accreditation of a course of study – s 47 of the Act</p>	<p>Where an application is for accreditation of a single course of study, \$2,000.</p> <p>Where an application is for accreditation of more than one course of study, or where more than one application to accredit a course of study is submitted at the same time, the fee is \$2,000 for the first course of study and \$1,400 for each additional course of study.</p>
11	<p>Substantive Assessment of Application for accreditation of a course of study – s 48 of the Act</p>	<p>Where an application is for accreditation of a single course of study, \$7,000.</p> <p>Where an application is for accreditation of more than one course of study, or where more than one application to accredit a course of study is submitted at the same time, the fee is \$7,000 for the first course of study and \$4,900 for each additional course of study.</p>

12	Application for renewal of Accreditation for a course of study – s 55	<p>(a) \$1,000 for each application for renewal of accreditation of a course of study on the basis that:</p> <p>(i) No new enrolments will be permitted in the course, and</p> <p>(ii) The course will cease to be provided to students within 24 months of the date on which the provider’s current accreditation for the course is to end, and</p> <p>(iii) The provider has not previously applied for renewal of the accreditation of the course of study on this basis.</p> <p>(b) Otherwise:</p> <p>(i) Where an application is for renewal of accreditation of a single course of study, \$8,000.</p> <p>(ii) Where an application is for renewal of accreditation of more than one course of study, or where more than one application to renew accreditation of a course of study is submitted at the same time, the fee is \$8,000 for the first course of study and \$5,600 for each additional course of study.</p>
13	Application to vary or revoke a Condition of registration or accreditation – s 32(3) or s 52(3)	<p>For the first two conditions included in an application - \$2,500 for each condition</p> <p>For each condition in addition to the first two conditions which are included in an application - \$1,500 for each condition</p>
14	Applications for TEQSA, as a designated authority, to approve proposed changes to arrangements with other providers or to the maximum number of students that a provider can enrol – paragraphs 10.4 and 12 of Part C of the <i>National Code of Practice for Registration Authorities and Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2007</i>	\$2,500 for each application to approve one or more changes
15	Application for internal review of a decision made by delegates of TEQSA - s184	\$1,000 for each application to review one or more decisions

Source: Commonwealth of Australia, *Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011, Determination of Fees No.3 of 2014*
<http://www.comlaw.gov.au/Details/F2013L02162>

Appendix D. Glossary

ACER	Australian Council for Education Research
AGS	Australian Graduate Survey
APQN	Asia-Pacific Quality Network
AQF	Australian Qualifications Framework
AQFC	Australian Qualifications Framework Council
ASQA	Australian Skills Quality Authority
AUQA	Australian Universities Quality Agency
AUSSE	Australasian Survey of Student Engagement
CEQ	Course Experience Questionnaire
CHEA	Council for Higher Education Accreditation
CIQG	CHEA International Quality Group
COAG	Council of Australian Governments
CRICOS	Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students
DEEWR	Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations
DIICSRTE	Department of Industry, Innovation, Climate Change, Science, Research and Tertiary Education
DIIRTE	Department of Industry, Innovation, Science, Research and Tertiary Education
DoE	Department of Education
ELICOS	English Language Intensive Course for Overseas Students
ESOS Act	Education Service for Overseas Students Act
GDS	Graduate Destination Survey
GSA	Graduate Skills Assessment
HECS-HELP	Higher Education Contribution Scheme-HELP
HELP	Higher Education Loan Program
HEP	Higher Education Provider
HESA	Higher Education Support Act 2003
HESP	Higher Education Standards Panel
INQAAHE	International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education
National Code	National Code of Practice for Registration Authorities and Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students
NSSC	National Skills Standards Council
PIR	Provider Information Request
POSSE	Postgraduate Survey of Student Engagement
PREQ	Postgraduate Research Experience Questionnaire
PSEQ	Postgraduate Student Engagement Questionnaire
RTOs	Registered Training Organisations
SCOTese	Standing Council on Tertiary Education Skills and Employment
SEQ	Student Engagement Questionnaire
SSES	Staff Student Engagement Survey
SSEQ	Staff Student Engagement Questionnaire
TAFE	(colleges and institutes of) Technical and Further Education
TEQSA	Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency
TEQSA Act	Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011
VET	Vocational Education and Training

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