

Australian perspectives on TEQSA's establishment

Interim TEQSA Chair

Emeritus Professor Denise Bradley AC

Australia-Japan Quality Assurance Seminar

NIAD-UE, Japan

8 December 2010

Overview

- Australia's higher education system
- Drivers of change
- Operation of TEQSA and new approach to regulation
- Future challenges

Size and shape of the Australian Higher Education sector

- Diverse higher education sector, including:
 - 37 public universities
 - 2 private universities, and two branches of overseas universities
 - 3 other self accrediting providers
 - ≈ 150 other higher education providers approved by state and territory legislation

Complexities of Higher Education Governance

- Australian universities have historically been established by Acts of State Parliaments and 96% of domestic higher education students are enrolled in them
- Commonwealth Government is the primary funder of universities and determines broad higher education policy
- Universities are autonomous institutions responsible for the quality of their academic activities
- 150 other higher education providers are regulated by states and territories and enrol fee paying students in all levels of higher education award up to doctorates.

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Australian Higher Education - some facts

	Population of country (2010)	Number of universities	Number of domestic students	Number of international students	Total number of HE students outside of universities	Total number of students enrolled at a higher education provider
Australia	22,531,846	39	771,932	294,163	50,271	1,066,095

Drivers for a National Regulator

- Review of Higher Education – 2008
- Growth and growing complexity of higher education provision
- Move to a more competitive market based system in 2012 – universities can enrol as many students as they wish and government funding will follow
- Consumer protection – maintenance of quality

New Era for Tertiary Education Quality

- Independent national regulator for all providers including universities
- Combines responsibility for overseeing compliance with standards as well as responsibility for quality improvement initiatives
- Aims to work with the sector to reach agreements about threshold standards
- Alignment between regulation of higher education, VET and international education

So, how will TEQSA operate?

- New approach to regulation
 - Risk-based and proportionate
- BUT TEQSA will build on strong foundations
 - Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA)
 - State and Territory Accreditation Authorities
 - Australian and international best practice
 - Streamline – not duplicate – current practice

Upon establishment

- Rollover of all existing providers with current status maintained
- AUQA will transition into TEQSA and AUQA's current Cycle 2 audits will continue into 2012
- Ensuring business continuity is critical
- But TEQSA will have new powers to intervene with an escalating set of actions up to removal of provider registration

New approach to regulation

Shift in direction to:

- more integrated regulation
- benchmarking against threshold standards
- risk-based regulation
- greater power to take action

TEQSA will be able to act at course, cohort, institution or national level to accredit courses, register institutions, investigate compliance with standards or review areas of concern in thematic reviews

Underpinning Principles

- Should not entrench the status quo
- Transparent
- Regulation based on prevention
- Regulatory process has real consequences
- Standards-based approach

Standards Framework

- TEQSA will register and evaluate the performance of higher education providers against a new **Higher Education Standards Framework**:
 - Provider Standards
 - Qualification Standards
 - Information Standards
 - Teaching and Learning Standards
 - Research Standards

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Governance

- TEQSA will be established by an Act of the national parliament – planned for mid 2011
- Legislation similar to that of other regulatory bodies in Australia like those which regulate the banks
- There will be a Commission of five Commissioners
- Higher Education Standards Panel to be established within, and supported by, the TEQSA organisation but with direct accountability to the Minister
- TEQSA will be established in Melbourne

International activities

- TEQSA will open relationships with agencies which are responsible for quality in higher education in other countries
- TEQSA will wish to continue AUQA's connection to INQAAHE
- TEQSA will be ready to participate in collaborative international activities to explore and promote good practice like OECD and European Union programs

MyUniversity

- Interactive, searchable public website.
- Announced March 2010. Under development.
- Will provide searchable information on courses, campus facilities, support services, and the quality of teaching and learning outcomes, including information such as:
 - student to staff ratios
 - results of student satisfaction surveys
 - measures of graduate skills
 - graduate outcomes
 - information about fees
 - information about access to student services.

Future challenges

- TEQSA legislation must be passed by Parliament in 2011
- Finalising policy underpinning – the nature of TEQSA's approach to regulation – balance between compliance and improvement activities
- Maintaining support in the higher education sector for national regulation while legislation is still pending

Future challenges

- Clarifying the precise relationship with regulation of international education
- The development of teaching and learning, research and information standards
- Developing detailed guides to TEQSA's regulatory approaches
- Aligning approach to regulation in higher education with that in vocational education and training

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QUESTIONS?