

**Senate Standing Committee on Education Employment and Workplace
Relations**

**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Supplementary Budget Estimates 2010-2011**

Outcome 3 - Higher Education

DEEWR Question No.EW0509_11

Senator Hanson-Young provided in writing.

Question

TEQSA - AUDIT FUNCTION

“Revision of the process for accreditation and audit” In what ways will the audit functions of the Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA) be changed?

Answer

The Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA) evaluates the quality of Australian higher education institutions and is respected as an authority in Australia and internationally. AUQA’s Cycle 2 audits commenced in 2008 with an agenda to report on institutional compliance with the National Protocols for Higher Education Approval Processes, and the outcomes and standards achieved by institutions in relation to their mission and objectives. The second cycle focuses on two themes specific to each institution. For most universities this includes the theme of ‘internationalisation’.

The Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) will build on the important steps already taken by AUQA, especially in relation to the development of a more standards focused quality regime.

In addition, TEQSA will have the power to take action and to intervene with an escalating series of responses when poor quality is identified.

It is proposed that TEQSA implement a new approach to regulation which will be risk-based and proportionate. Under this approach, institutions will be assessed against a risk framework and audited accordingly. Instead of the current time-based auditing cycle, in which institutions are audited every so many years, the new system will be based on a measure of risk. This will allow TEQSA to set the timeframe for re-registration or quality evaluation, based on a risk assessment of each institution. It will also provide a basis for interventions at any time, when a risk is identified.