

**Senate Standing Committee on Education and Employment - Education**

**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE  
Budget Estimates 2014-2015**

**Agency - Tertiary Education Quality & Standards Agency (TEQSA)**

**Department of Education Question No. ED0020\_15**

**Senator Carr provided in writing.**

**Question**

**TESQA rate of approval of new higher education courses**

Can TEQSA confirm a report in New Matilda (Friday 6 June 2014) which says that, prior to the 2013 federal election, TEQSA approved new higher education courses at an average rate of 7.3 a month; and that, since the election, applications have been approved at a rate of 38.8 a month? If those figures are inaccurate, can TEQSA provide accurate monthly approval figures? Can TEQSA confirm that the number of applications that have been refused is 3.3 per cent? If not, what percentage has been refused? What is the reason for this increase in the approval rate? Does TEQSA expect to be able to maintain the higher approval rate after the funding cuts for the Agency announced in the 2014 Budget? How will this be achieved?

**Answer**

Between 29 January 2012 and 31 May 2014, TEQSA made 276 decisions on applications for new courses: 110 were made prior to 7 September 2013 (average rate approximately 5.6 per month) and 166 subsequent to that date (average rate approximately 18.7 per month). Of the 276 decisions, 16 initial course accreditations (or 5.8%) have been rejected.

A number of factors have affected the increased approval rate, including the lead times for application assessments following the establishment of TEQSA; the introduction of TEQSA's streamlined regulatory processes; and the delegation of decision-making for the accreditation and re-accreditation of courses.

The introduction of TEQSA's streamlined regulatory processes and use of the annual risk assessment as a key tool will allow resources to be focussed on providers where there are concerns about compliance with the Threshold Standards, rather than on lower risk providers with a good track record and no regulatory history.

The funding cuts to the financial year 2014-15 are lower than the cuts over the forward estimates, which allows TEQSA the opportunity to consider other mechanisms including business processes and work methods, to effectively manage the ongoing workload.