

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. ED0254_15

Senator Rhiannon provided in writing.

Question

Accreditation, Swinburne & Data collection

1. Will all education providers and courses currently approved by TEQSA automatically qualify for commonwealth support as a result of the government's reforms to higher education funding or will they be required to go through a re-accreditation process?
2. Has the Minister's office ever communicated with TEQSA officials or staff about the status of an application from any education provider? If so which providers were involved in the applications that the Minister's office communicated with the department about?
3. As a percentage, what proportion of education providers or courses have conditions applied to their approvals?
4. On average, how many conditions are generally applied to providers or courses? What is the largest number of conditions applied to a provider and applied to a course? Please provide some examples of the conditions applied a private provider and to specific courses?
5. Is TEQSA aware that according to Swinburne Online's Submission to the Review of the Demand Driven System (16 December 2013) that enrolments (on an EFTSL basis) increased from 824 in 2012 to 2,854 in 2013 (an increase of 2030 EFTSL or almost 250%)?
6. Does TEQSA have any concern about the rapid expansion of enrolments upon the SOL's capacity to deliver quality education and support to all students enrolled in its courses?
7. Noting that Swinburne University itself does not itself offer an education degree, does the TEQSA have any concerns about the learning equivalence or quality assurance delivered through SOL? If you have concerns could you please outline what those concerns are?
8. Considering public universities are required to collect and report considerable data on students, staff, finance, research and space, and this data is publicly available. Also public institutions are required to comply with various public accountability requirements: freedom of information, ombudsman review, equal opportunity, etc. which of each of these requirements are currently imposed on private institutions? If not why not?

Answer

1. This is a question for the Department of Education (see below).
2. No, the Minister's Office has never communicated with TEQSA officials or staff about the status of an application from any specific education provider.
- 3 & 4. Of the 174 registered providers currently on the National Register:

- Eleven (6.3%) currently have one or more conditions imposed on their registration and/or one or more of their courses;
- Five (2.9%) currently have one or more conditions imposed on their provider registration only;
- Nine (5.2%) currently have one or more conditions imposed on one or more of their accredited courses only.

Of the 1094 accredited courses currently on the National Register:

- 24 (2.2%) currently have one or more conditions placed on them [average number of conditions/course = 2.9]

Conditions are imposed on a provider's registration or course accreditation when there is a at risk of non-compliance with the Threshold Standards. TEQSA publishes information about the status of registered higher education providers and TEQSA accredited courses on its National Register. Information on conditions imposed by TEQSA and the reasons for those decisions can be found on the National Register.

<http://teqsa.gov.au/national-register/>

5. TEQSA monitors student data of its registered providers through the annual Provider Information Request.
- 6 & 7. It would not be appropriate for TEQSA to comment on the regulation of an individual provider. Swinburne Online is a division of Swinburne University of Technology, which is a self-accrediting provider and is responsible for the accreditation of its own courses and management of its student load.
8. The Department of Education manages the major national higher education data collections and reporting from that collection. TEQSA sources key data directly from providers that do not already report that data in the main national higher education collections through its annual Provider Information Request (PIR). Information is collected on students, staff, finances and student surveys for TEQSA's regulatory purposes. The Department of Education is leading work towards the establishment of a single national higher education collection.

The Department of Education has provided a response to question 1:

The Quality, Deregulation and Information Working Group (the Working Group) will provide recommendations to the Government on eligibility for non-university higher education providers to access Commonwealth Grant Scheme funding. The Working Group is expected to report to the Government in July.