

Media Release —

TEQSA & ASQA Regulatory Convergence Call – It’s time to cut red tape

— 29 May 2020
For Immediate Release

It’s time to cut red-tape in the tertiary education sector through appropriate alignment of regulatory standards of the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) and the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA), the regulators for the higher education sector and the vocational education and training sector respectively. The call was made by the Independent Tertiary Education Council Australia (ITECA), the peak body representing independent providers in the higher education, vocational education, training and skills sectors.

“There are sixty one independent providers that are dual sector; operating across both the higher education sector and the vocational education and training sector. They are drowning in red tape as they deal with two different sets of regulatory standards enforced by TEQSA and ASQA. It’s time we act to relieve that burden in a way that preserves quality in the sector,” said Troy Williams, ITECA Chief Executive Officer.

ITECA has proposed a process of regulatory convergence where regulatory standards overseen by TEQSA and ASQA would be aligned where this is possible. This approach recognises that the two sectors have very different personalities, particularly concerning the student experience and learning outcomes. However, it also recognises that there are some areas where TEQSA and ASQA review governance, administrative and financial arrangements of training providers and convergence would be possible.

“This is all about improving outcomes for students. We want tertiary education providers focussed on supporting students rather than filling in two sets of forms from two different regulators for the same purpose. Regulators can preserve the integrity of the system and cut red tape at the same time,” Mr Williams said.

ITECA believes that alignment of the *Higher Education Standards Framework 2015 (Cth)* and the *Standards for Registered Training Organisations 2015 (Cth)* is an essential first step towards a more coherent tertiary education sector.

“We have different regulatory standards, different student funding mechanisms, and different regulatory systems. These hamper student outcomes and serve independent tertiary education providers very poorly. It’s time for reform,” Mr Williams said.

ITECA has written to both TEQSA and ASQA with formal requests to commence a scoping study into aligning and converging regulatory standards. ITECA has also raised the matter with the Minister for Education and the Minister for Employment, Skills, Small and Family Business.

Independent providers support around 10% of the 1.5 million students in higher education and more than 80% of the 4.1 million students in vocational education and training.

Ends.

Media Contact:

Michellé Mabile – ITECA Communications Director

e: media@iteca.edu.au m: 0436 522 189

[ITECA Ref: N9.2.5]