



Submission to Senate Education and Employment Standing Committee

TEQSA Amendment Bill 2014

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the above Bill currently before the Committee.

The University of the Sunshine Coast is one of a small number of universities who has been through the TEQSA re-registration process. Despite some initial problems, the University found TEQSA to be very responsive to feedback concerning issues and concerns. The process itself, which has since been further modified as a result of stakeholder feedback, was not a difficult one. USC was able to apply its own judgement about what was relevant and sufficient evidence of compliance with the higher education standards. While the standards apply to all higher education providers, the approach to demonstrating compliance was not 'one size fits all'. Overall, the University found the exercise to be a positive experience and much less expensive in terms of costs and staff time as the previous AUQA audit model.

We would also like to note here that while there were some initial problems with CRICOS registrations, following feedback from the sector, there is now a very efficient process in place for these decisions.

The University broadly supports the amendment to remove the quality assessment function from TEQSA, so long as TEQSA has the resources and processes in place to deal effectively and efficiently with any issues that might be identified through the new streamlined risk assessment exercise.

Effective monitoring of the performance of higher education providers using the regulatory risk framework should enable TEQSA to effectively decide on the level, timing and appropriateness of any institutional review for re-registration. The protection of the quality and standing of Australian education should always be paramount in these activities.

USC strongly supports measures to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of TEQSA. However, as a new regulator in a sector that has been undergoing almost constant change in recent years, we believe that TEQSA should be given time to establish itself and its processes, through continued engagement with the sector.

The University hopes that this submission assists the Committee with its consideration of the amendment Bill and would be pleased to provide further information if required.

Yours sincerely,

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