

Senate Committee: Education and Employment

**QUESTION ON NOTICE
Supplementary Budget Estimates 2015 - 2016**

Outcome: Agency: ASQA

Department of Education and Training Question No. SQ15-000802

Senator Carr, Kim provided in writing.

ASQA - slogans used by RTOs

Question

Is ASQA taking action on RTOs who use advertising slogans such as “government-funded courses” “funded by the government” or “study now, pay later”?

Is the use of these slogans permitted?

Has the Department or ASQA received complaints about training companies who use the abovementioned slogans?

There have been a number of media reports about job search websites providing the details of people looking for work to training companies and brokers. Is this permitted under the guidelines?

Answer

The Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) has provided the following response.

In the VET FEE-HELP context, slogans such as ‘study now, pay later’ do not breach the *Standards for Registered Training Organisations 2015* (the Standards).

However, advertising slogans such as “government-funded courses” or “funded by the government” in relation to VET FEE-HELP would breach Standard 4.1 of the Standards (which requires that information disseminated by a registered training organisation, or on its behalf, is both accurate and factual). If a provider was found to be in breach of Standard 4.1 at audit, ASQA will take appropriate regulatory action.

Since the new Standards fully commenced on 1 April 2015, ASQA has received 68 complaints about VET FEE-HELP related marketing. In investigating complaints of this nature, ASQA makes assessments about the seriousness of the allegation and responds accordingly. Such responses range from providing direct advice to the organisation about their obligations under the Standards to more robust action, such as an investigation of the specific allegations or broader audit activity. Where significant issues are detected and not corrected adequately, these actions can result in sanctions being applied to providers.

Claims that job seeker websites are providing the details of job seekers to training companies and brokers are not a matter for ASQA. Individuals affected by such a practice may be able to lodge a complaint under the Privacy Act 1988.

Please refer to SQ15-000906 for related information.