

Economics Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Industry, Innovation, Science, Research and Tertiary Education Portfolio
Additional Estimates Hearing 2012-13
13 February 2013

AGENCY/DEPARTMENT: AUSTRALIAN SKILLS QUALITY AUTHORITY (ASQA)

TOPIC: Industrial Relation Conditions

REFERENCE: Question on Notice (Hansard, 13 February 2013, page 99-100)

QUESTION No.: AI-50

Mr C Robinson: In our standards, the VET sector training packages generally set out requirements for industry experience in different sectors, and the national standards go to the issue of qualifications that teachers ought to have. There is a similar set, as I understand it, in the ELICOS area as well. We assess whether people have met those particular standards or not in relation to assessing their continuing registration.

Senator RHIANNON: In making that assessment, are you looking at the conditions of the work—the working conditions and levels of pay—in terms of judging that quality?

Mr C Robinson: They are essentially a matter for the industrial relations sector. Sometimes those things lead to complaints being made to us by staff of an organisation. If they were about whether people were being paid award wages or the like, we would be tending to refer those on to the industrial relations authorities to have a look at.

Senator RHIANNON: But wouldn't you recognise that the conditions under which people work impact on how they work and therefore the standard of teaching?

Mr C Robinson: The focus of our assessment would be more on whether these matters are leading to an unacceptable level in the teaching standards being achieved, the teaching programs and the assessment approach. We fundamentally assess providers around the quality of their delivery, the quality of their assessment and, as you say, the qualifications required of the staff. There are other related matters that may contribute to that which may be of concern to us, but we would fundamentally be assessing whether they are affecting those core issues in the standards.

Senator RHIANNON: So do you look at industrial relations conditions or not?

Mr C Robinson: We look at the quality of the teaching and the quality of the assessment. If those issues were flowing through to that issue then we could take some action, but we might also refer some of the matters across to other authorities if we thought there was some sort of issue of breach there.

Senator RHIANNON: Have you done that?

Mr C Robinson: Not that I am aware of in relation to IR issues.

Senator RHIANNON: Can you take that on notice if you need to?

Mr C Robinson: Yes.

ANSWER

The Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) regulates the Registered Training Organisation for which it is responsible against the *Standards for NVR Registered Training Organisations 2012* (the Standards).

The Standards have been developed by the National Skills Standards Council and have been approved by the Standing Council for Tertiary Education, Skills and Employment. These standards do not cover the employment conditions of registered training organisation staff.

If ASQA identified any possible IR issues in the course of regulating a vocational education and training provider we would refer these IR matters onto other relevant government bodies.

To date ASQA has not referred any matters relating to IR issues.