

**Senate Standing Committee on Education Employment and Workplace  
Relations**

**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE  
Supplementary Budget Estimates 2010-2011**

**Outcome 3 - Higher Education**

**DEEWR Question No.EW0505\_11**

**Senator Hanson-Young provided in writing.**

**Question**

**TEQSA POWERS**

Will TEQSA set, monitor and ensure compliance with standards? Is there not a case for separating the standards-setting power from monitoring and compliance?

**Answer**

One of the issues raised during the Bradley Review of Higher Education and in subsequent consultations was the need for clear and strong standards that provide an appropriate gateway for new higher education providers.

It is proposed that the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA), once established, will register and evaluate the performance of higher education providers against the new Higher Education Standards Framework. In particular, TEQSA's standards-based regulatory and quality assurance framework aims to establish minimum standards that all higher education providers are required to meet in order to be registered and accredited, as well as standards relating to the quality of output and outcomes such as teaching and learning, research and information standards.

It is proposed that a Higher Education Standards Panel will be established within TEQSA to advise the Commonwealth Minister on the development and maintenance of the Higher Education Standards Framework. The Standards Panel will be responsible for ensuring the currency and overall quality, appropriateness and effectiveness of the Standards Framework.

It is proposed that the Panel will have an independent line of reporting to the Commonwealth Minister. It will be supported by the resources and facilities of TEQSA but will not report to TEQSA. The Commonwealth Minister will make the standards on the advice of the Standards Panel.

To ensure the authority and legitimacy of the standards against which higher education institutions will be assessed, the Standards Panel will be made up of experts drawn from the sector who will guide the development of the standards and advise on their ongoing validity.

These arrangements separate standards setting from regulation while ensuring developments and changes to the standards will be responsive to and involve the active participation of the higher education sector. This separation provides protection against any possible perception of interference in regulatory decisions.