

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

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

Outcome 3 - Higher Education

DEEWR Question No.EW0506_11

Senator Hanson-Young provided in writing.

Question

TEQSA DEFINITIONS

What is meant by 'national consistency'? What is meant by 'comparable benchmarks'?

Answer

National Consistency

The *Review of Australian Higher Education*(Bradley Review) identified a need to develop a new quality assurance approach to underpin both domestic and international confidence in the higher education sector. It recommended an independent national regulatory body be responsible for regulating all types of tertiary education.

The Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) will be a national body for regulation and quality assurance of the Australian higher education sector. It will accredit providers, carry out audits of performance, protect and quality assure international education, and streamline current regulatory arrangements to reduce duplication and provide for national consistency. It will bring together and build upon functions currently undertaken by the Australian Universities Quality Agency and state and territory governments.

In particular, the introduction of a higher education standards-based quality regulatory framework under TEQSA will ensure that all higher education providers meet a set of minimum standards. This national approach will ensure that students in different states and regions can be assured of quality consistent qualifications.

Comparable benchmarks

Comparable benchmarks are usually defined in the higher education sphere as standards or references against which the performance of an institution can be measured and subsequently compared to other like institutions. There is a range of ongoing work being undertaken both internationally and domestically in this area of developing appropriate and workable benchmarks across different potential performance outcomes. TEQSA may look at some of this work in the development of its standards based framework.