



Improving Transparency and Accountability: Student Records Management

Overview

The Australian Government is providing additional funding to enable the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) to have the legislative authority and the capacity to assume control of student records from a registered higher education provider in the event the provider ceases operations.

TEQSA will be provided with \$2 million over four years (non-ongoing) to develop the required capability and ICT infrastructure so that it can securely collect, store and manage student academic records of providers that cease operation. Contractors specialising in networking and infrastructure development, cyber security and information management will complete the enhancements to TEQSA's ICT infrastructure.

This measure will provide TEQSA with similar legislative powers to those of the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) in sections 211 to 214 of the *National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Act 2011*. This requires registered training organisations (RTOs) to provide ASQA with a copy of their student records within 30 days of ceasing operation unless the records have been transferred to another RTO because the student has transferred to the new RTO.

This measure will allow current and former students of closed higher education providers to obtain their academic records from TEQSA in an efficient manner, including details of qualifications earned. This measure has particular importance for international students, who may have difficulty advocating on their own behalf to secure academic records where their higher education provider collapses.

Frequently asked questions

How many higher education providers have ceased operation in recent years?

Since TEQSA began in 2012, 43 higher education providers have ceased operation.

If a higher education provider ceases operation, how do current and former students receive their academic records at present?

As TEQSA does not have the legislative powers to obtain academic records from providers which close, current arrangements are unclear, resulting in the possibility that a number of different entities may take possession of these records including liquidators, other higher education providers or, in some cases, TEQSA itself.

If there is no clear process in place to access historical records from a closed higher education provider, a student may have to approach a number of different entities such as liquidators, parent companies, new owners, former managers or academics in order to access their academic records, which in some cases may be incomplete or unusable.

How many students are affected?

TEQSA does not have specific data on the number of students affected. However, the closure of these providers not only affects their current students and access to academic records for recently completed or incomplete courses, but also former students who seek confirmation of qualifications awarded in the past.

Will this measure provide TEQSA similar legislative powers to the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA)?

This measure will provide TEQSA with similar legislative powers to those of ASQA in sections 211 to 214 of the *National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Act 2011*. These powers will require the provision of all academic records to TEQSA within 30 days of a provider having its registration cancelled or ceasing to operate and give TEQSA the authority to provide those records to another tertiary education provider if requested by the student or if the new student has enrolled with them. TEQSA will also have explicit authority to provide a student's records to the student concerned, if requested.

How will students obtain their academic records from TEQSA once a provider closes?

TEQSA will develop an online mechanism to manage student access requests. This will assist students to request and obtain their academic records from TEQSA in an efficient manner.

Why is this measure non-ongoing?

After the initial development phase of enhancements to TEQSA's ICT infrastructure, administration of those assets will be integrated in TEQSA's existing ICT environment and TEQSA's business as usual.

Why won't costs associated with this measure be cost recovered by TEQSA?

This measure's costs are non-ongoing and not suited to cost recovery.