



# Course accreditation and re-accreditation policy (registered providers)

## Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish and describe TEQSA's approach to scoping and assessment of course accreditation and renewal of accreditation.

## Scope

This policy applies to applications for course accreditation and renewal of accreditation. It does not apply to course-related applications that have been submitted as part of an initial registration application.

## Principles

### General

1. All course assessments will be considered in relation to any relevant contextual factors—so that, for all principles listed below, adherence to those principles is subject to the judgement of case teams as to whether a principle ought to be applied in a particular case, given the best information available at the time.
2. In particular, the extent of the scope of a course assessment, and the extent of the use of external experts in relation to an assessment, will be determined by case teams on the basis of contextual factors including risk indicators, in order to focus regulatory activity on issues raising material concerns, especially those directly impacting on student outcomes or the reputation for quality of Australia's higher education providers.
3. Typically, contextual factors an assessment team will consider in determining the scope of a course assessment and the need for external experts, include:
  - the provider's compliance history
  - any available data on the provider's risk indicators in the relevant broad field of education (BFOE)
  - interactions with professional body accreditation
  - the history of complaints relating to the provider

- for renewals of accreditation, the extent to which the content of the course has changed since it was last reviewed by TEQSA
  - for renewals of accreditation, the impact of any changes to the AQF that may have occurred since the course was last considered by TEQSA
  - for new accreditations, whether or not the course is at a new AQF level or broad field of education
  - any other relevant intelligence.
4. It is accepted good practice in higher education for all providers, with or without self-accrediting authority, to submit their activities to periodic external review, including periodic review of courses (or a sample of their courses in a particular field of education). This principle should be taken into account in scoping all assessments.

## Initial course accreditation

5. For registered providers assessed by TEQSA as presenting low risks to students:
- new courses will usually be assessed by a single external expert against the set of core standards only
  - where an expert report is favourable, this will be sufficient evidence to accredit the course, without further consideration by case teams
  - where a report is unfavourable, case teams will determine, on the basis of contextual factors, the scope of any further analysis and/or evidence that might be required to inform a final assessment
  - in all cases, the expert report will be sent to the provider to inform internal quality assurance.
6. For applications that present some indications of risk, new courses will usually be assessed by at least one external expert, in relation to selected standards relevant to the risk. Case teams will determine, on the basis of contextual factors, how broad the scope of assessment should be and whether more than one external expert will make an assessment.

## Renewal of course accreditation

7. For a course that has previously been assessed by TEQSA, where there are no unresolved compliance matters or indicators of significant risks specific to the course, the assessment for renewal of accreditation will focus on the key requirements set out in Standard 5.3 (*Monitoring, Review and Improvement*) and, in particular, on ensuring that:
- the provider's monitoring, review and improvement processes are comprehensive and overseen by peak academic governance processes
  - comprehensive reviews are supported by regular interim monitoring
  - the monitoring and review processes include external referencing or other benchmarking activities, and that the external element in such processes is genuinely independent of the provider
  - the monitoring and review processes involve the necessary subject matter expertise.
8. If the provider's comprehensive periodic review has not included review by an independent external discipline expert, or the extent of external, independent

academic scrutiny is not evident, the course should be referred to a TEQSA discipline expert for review.

9. Where there are unresolved compliance matters or adverse risk indicators, the scope of assessment of the course will be considered according to context on a case-by-case basis, and the case team may seek expert advice to resolve relevant matters.
10. If more than 50 per cent of units have been replaced or redesigned within an accreditation period, the case team may apply the process for initial course accreditation.
11. Where course assessments identify issues relating to processes, with no specific impact evident on the particular course under assessment, case teams may refer these for consideration during the next renewal of registration assessment.

## Contact

Any enquiries about TEQSA's course accreditation and re-accreditation policy can be directed to: [enquiries@teqsa.gov.au](mailto:enquiries@teqsa.gov.au)

## Document information

<b>IQAF Document Category</b>		Regulatory Policy	
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1.0	TEQSA Commission	N/A	26 April 2018
1.1	TEQSA Commission	To provide greater flexibility to TEQSA to consider different governance arrangements within providers regarding independent oversight of courses and/or external review of courses, and to provide more flexibility as to whether TEQSA engages subject matter experts.	1 July 2019