ACDICT Annual Council Meeting

25 JULY 2011

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OVERVIEW

• Context for regulatory change
• The Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA):
  • Challenges for the new regulatory approach
  • Challenges for a standards-based approach
  • Quality improvement
• Transitioning to the new environment
CONTEXT FOR A NEW APPROACH

2008 Review of Australian Higher Education

• Move to a more open and competitive system in 2012 – no government limits on university enrolments

• Independent national regulator to accompany opening up of system because of the fragmented nature of current regulatory interventions

• Establishment of independent regulator supported in the sector to protect national reputation and ensure students get a fair deal
PLANNING ASSUMPTIONS FOR THE NEW APPROACH

• Should not entrench the status quo
• Transparent
• Regulation based on prevention
• Standards based approach
• Regulatory process has real consequences but is not burdensome on high quality providers (level of intervention related to assessment of risk)
• Greater power to intervene and enforce compliance
• Combines regulatory and quality improvement activities
DEVELOPING THE REGULATORY APPROACH

Legislation includes three basic principles for regulation with which TEQSA must comply:

1. Principle of regulatory necessity
2. Principle of reflecting risk
3. Principle of proportionate regulation
DEVELOPING THE REGULATORY APPROACH

• A risk management framework:
  – Institutions will be continuously assessed against a risk framework which employs both quantitative and qualitative indicators. Regulatory interventions are possible at any time
  – A formal (up to) 7 year cycle of registration and accreditation
  – A range of factors, including the provider’s history of scholarship, teaching and research, its students’ experiences, its financial status and capacity, and its history of compliance will mediate risk judgements
  – The institution’s risk rating will determine the level and frequency of regulatory activity
CHALLENGES FOR THE REGULATORY APPROACH

• Implementing the 80/20 approach
• Finding the right risk factors
• Balancing professional judgement with a compliance regime
• Identifying outcomes which a regulator can use
• Developing an approach for dual sector providers
• Regulation of off-shore provision
DEVELOPING THE STANDARDS-BASED APPROACH

TEQSA will register and evaluate the performance of higher education providers against a new Higher Education Standards Framework comprising:

- Provider Standards
- Qualifications Standards
- Teaching and Learning Standards
- Information Standards
- Research Standards

Threshold Standards
DEVELOPING THE STANDARDS-BASED APPROACH

Responsibility for standards setting:

• Higher Education Standards Panel will consult widely and develop standards statements

• Panel will be set up within TEQSA but report separately to Ministers of Tertiary Education and of Research

• Relevant Minister will establish standards after panel has developed draft

  • Relevant Minister must consult with the Ministerial Council, the other Minister, & the TEQSA Commission.
DEVELOPING THE STANDARDS-BASED APPROACH

• **Provider Standards** (translation of the National Protocols) nearing finalisation after significant sector consultation

• **Qualification Standards** will be based on the AQF

• Both Provider Standards and Qualification Standards will be made into legislative instruments

• **Teaching and Learning Standards** – discussion paper released

• **Information Standards** – still to be developed

• **Research Standards** – still to be developed, likely to link to *Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research*
CHALLENGES FOR THE STANDARDS-BASED APPROACH

- Standards or standardisation – encouraging diversity
- The implications of aiming for minimum standards
- Finding a sensible, accepted and economic way of setting and monitoring learning standards
- Establishing a consistent but fair approach to evidence and data collection
QUALITY ENHANCEMENT

• All information about performance except the current risk rating will be public information
• TEQSA will be able to act at course, cohort, institution or sector level
• TEQSA will conduct thematic reviews
• TEQSA will have capacity to encourage and share best practice
TRANSITION TO NEW ARRANGEMENTS

- TEQSA will begin operating in a quality assurance capacity on 30 July 2011
- Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA) will transition into TEQSA and AUQA’s current Cycle 2 audits will continue into 2012
- State and Territory regulatory responsibilities will transfer in January 2012
- Working with ASQA on streamlining regulation of dual sector providers
INTERNATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

• Australian approach is new

• Considerable interest already from other countries - particularly Japan, UK, China and New Zealand

• General consensus is Australia is now at forefront of international attempts to apply effective regulatory interventions
FURTHER INFORMATION AND UPDATES

www.deewr.gov.au/teqsa