Welcome to the September edition of the ASQA Update, prepared by the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA)—the new national vocational education and training (VET) regulator.

The ASQA Update will be provided each month to ASQA registered training organisations (RTOs) and course owners, ASQA stakeholders and subscribers to ASQA updates.

ASQA updates and additional information about ASQA are available on our website at www.asqa.gov.au.

Current applications with ASQA

ASQA’s risk assessment and audits teams continue to work through around 600 pending applications transferred from referring states and territories on 1 July 2011 and new applications submitted to the national regulator since it began operations.

If you are waiting for confirmation of your application, thank you for your patience. ASQA is completing applications in the order in which they were received, and is committed to completing them as soon as possible.

ASQA’s regulatory approach

For registration of training organisations, ASQA performs its role by assessing them against the conditions of registration found in the National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Act 2011 (the Act).

One of the core conditions of registration for training organisations is that relevant applicants and RTOs comply with the requirements set out in the new VET Quality Framework. The VET Quality Framework came into effect from 1 July 2011 for all RTOs that transferred to ASQA and new applicants.

ASQA assesses courses submitted for accreditation for compliance with the Standards for VET Accredited Courses, also a requirement under the Act.

Training providers seeking to deliver courses (VET, ELICOS and Foundation Programs) are assessed by ASQA against the Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000 requirements and the relevant standards.

All providers applying to register or applying to extend their registered scope will have their applications assessed against the relevant standards, including the Standards for NVR RTOs, the National Code (CRICOS registration), the National ELICOS Standards or Foundation Programs Standards.

- **Responsibility for compliance rests with providers and course owners.** Providers, their boards of management, and course owners are responsible for ensuring that they comply at all times with the relevant approved national standards.

- **Regulation is risk-based and targeted.** ASQA will apply a primarily risk-based approach to regulation and, in line with international best practice, will focus on anticipating potential problems. Resources will be targeted to areas that pose the greatest risk to the delivery of quality VET. Regulatory interventions will be minimised for RTOs that consistently demonstrate that their operations comply with approved national standards.

- **Sanctions will be proportionate and meaningful.** ASQA’s processes will identify non-compliant RTOs/CRICOS providers and determine appropriate regulatory interventions to apply, including sanctions proportionate to the impact of non-compliance. ASQA will require amendments or cancellation where courses do not meet standards. Consistency in the application of sanctions will provide increased certainty in the training market.
ASQA also has a suite of regulatory tools to address non-compliance. More information about our regulatory approach is available on the ASQA website.

National Standards and Skills Council

From 1 July, the National Skills Standards Council (NSSC) replaced the National Quality Council in providing advice on the development of national standards for regulation of vocational education and training.

The NSSC develops the standards applied by ASQA in the regulation of RTOs and accredited courses. The key functions of the National Skills Standards Council are to:

- develop and maintain national standards for regulation of vocational education and training for approval by the Standing Council for Tertiary Education, Skills and Employment (SCOTeSE) and provide advice to SCOTeSE on development and implementation of the standards
- provide information, through SCOTeSE, to the regulators of vocational education and training on the implementation and interpretation of the national standards and on issues of quality standards generally in the vocational education and training sector
- provide information to the vocational education and training sector on the national standards and any changes to the standards
- provide advice to SCOTeSE on the operation of the regulators of vocational education and training
- endorse national training packages.

The Council is led the Hon John Dawkins AO, former Chair of the National Quality Council. Mr Dawkins has an extensive experience in VET quality issues and currently chairs the Australian Qualifications Framework Council. For further information, visit the NSSC website.

Presentations at VET events

ASQA’s Commissioners and Industry Engagement Team have been presenting at VET events around the country to provide RTOs, course owners, providers, industry and the community with information about the new authority.

Chris Robinson recently spoke at the Australian Council for Private Education and Training’s Annual Conference in Queensland. Dianne Orr spoke at the Construction and Property Services Annual Conference and the Victorian TAFE International meeting in Melbourne.

This month, you can see Dianne Orr speak at the TAFE Directors Australia National Conference in Sydney on 5 September. Chris Robinson is speaking at the National Centre for Vocational Education Research Forum for provider stakeholders on 20 September. You can download a copy of Dianne Orr’s presentation from a previous event from the ASQA website.

Non-endorsed ASQA events

ASQA wishes to advise RTOs that it has not sponsored or authorised, nor does it endorse, any workshops about ASQA of the VET Quality Framework other than those workshops advertised directly by ASQA on its website from time to time.

Further information

Visit our website—www.asqa.gov.au—for regularly updated information about ASQA.

Call the ASQA Info line on 1300 701 801 to speak to an adviser, Monday to Friday, from 9.00 am to 7.00 pm EST. You can also ask ASQA a question or provide feedback by emailing enquiries@asqa.gov.au.