

VET regulatory reform implementation

ASQA Provider Roundtable

24 July 2014



Australian Government

Australian Skills Quality Authority

VET regulatory reform announcements

Minister for Industry, National Skills Summit

The Hon Ian Macfarlane MP, Minister for Industry, gave a keynote presentation at the ACCI-ACPET National Skills Summit on 25 June 2014. This included announcements related to ASQA's regulatory reform:

- *“We have cut the red tape and eliminated fees imposed on training providers when minor changes are made to training packages. We are working across Government to extend this reform measure to registration requirements around international students”*

VET regulatory reform announcements

Minister for Industry, National Skills Summit continued

- *“In conjunction with key stakeholders we’ve developed a revised draft set of standards. Today I am releasing these draft standards for your comment and further input...ASQA is working to ensure that, by the time the final standards are released, there will be sufficient information available for the sector so that providers are clear about what compliance with those new standards means”*
- *“ASQA will be paying more attention to working with poor quality providers and, where necessary, take action to sanction them”.*

VET regulatory reform announcements

ASQA Chief Commissioner, National Skills Summit

ASQA's Chief Commissioner, Chris Robinson also presented at the ACCI-ACPET National Skills Summit. Chris provided more detail about ASQA's planned VET regulatory reforms to reduce regulatory burden and cost, support RTOs to understand and meet the national standards and focus regulatory efforts on poor providers. This included:

- Ceasing financial viability assessments as a requirement for renewing RTO and CRICOS registration from 1 July 2014
- Enhanced information and guidance to providers including:
 - giving Info line callers a specific ASQA contact and access to auditors, and
 - launching a rebranded ASQA website on 1 July 2014 including a Help Centre and enhanced functionality and search facilities.

VET regulatory reform announcements

ASQA Chief Commissioner, National Skills Summit continued

- Development of comprehensive information about the new national standards including:
 - an ASQA user's guide
 - online videos and published questions and answers, and
 - a national series of 28 information sessions across Australia to explain the changes to the standards.

ASQA launched a new sub-site of the ASQA website explaining the VET regulatory reforms announced to date: <http://www.asqa.gov.au/vet-regulatory-reforms/vet-regulatory-reforms.html>

Reform implementation update

1. Equivalent training package scope updates

ASQA implemented this reform on 1 July 2014 for RTOs by:

- identifying training package changes that occurred in the previous 12 months that an Industry Skills Council deemed to be equivalent to the superseded item
- identifying RTOs that were registered to deliver the superseded training package product (qualification or unit of competency) but did not have the replacement equivalent product on scope (673 RTOs)
- updating these RTOs' scope of registration to include the replacement equivalent product (2750 products)
- emailing all RTOs whose scope was updated with details about the specific scope changes, compliance obligations and opt-out processes.

Reform implementation update

1. Equivalent training package scope updates continued

From now on, ASQA will automatically update its providers' scope of registration when new equivalent training packages are released without requiring an application or a fee.

ASQA RTO annual registration and renewal of registration fees that were issued after 1 July 2014 were calculated to count superseded and replacement equivalent training package products as a single item.

ASQA received legal advice to confirm that this reform could be extended to CRICOS providers and has worked with the VET Reform Taskforce and the Department of Education to prepare for the implementation of this reform. This is expected to be implemented shortly.

Reform implementation update

2. Removal of financial viability risk assessment from renewal

On 1 July 2014, ASQA removed the requirement for an automatic financial viability risk assessment (FVRA) as part of the renewal of registration process for private and community training providers who have been registered for less than five years, in all but extreme high-risk cases.

Unless they meet one of the listed exclusion categories, applicants for initial registration—as either an RTO or CRICOS provider—are still required to complete and submit the ‘Financial Viability Risk Assessment Pack’ inline with the FVRA changes announced by ASQA in October 2013.

ASQA has updated its application forms and website material to reflect this change.

Reform implementation update

3. Implementation of the revised standards

The Minister has released a draft of the new standards for RTOs and regulators for comment by 23 July 2014. Following this consultation, the new standards will be considered by the COAG Industry and Skills Council. The new standards are expected to come into effect on 1 January 2015.

To support the implementation of the new standards, ASQA is working with the state-based regulators in Victoria and Western Australia to develop:

- an ASQA user's guide
 - online videos and published questions and answers; and
 - a national series of 28 RTO workshops across Australia to explain the standards.
- These are scheduled to run from late September to November 2014.

Reform implementation update

4. Enhanced information and guidance for providers

The rebranded ASQA website was launched on 1 July 2014. This is the first stage of improvements to the website which will be further enhanced by:

- more comprehensive information on the standards
- more online interactive education materials.

In response to feedback from stakeholders through the ASQA survey, the ASQA Info line has been enhanced to ensure callers are given a specific ASQA contact and access to auditors.

Reform implementation update

5. Further Reform

- Further measures to reduce regulatory burden and cost for higher quality providers are under consideration.