Australian Government
Australian Skills Quality Authority

ASQA

ASQA Corporate Plan 2021–22

Quality outcomes for Australia's vocational education and training sector

Contents

Chief Executive Officer's message

The Australian Skills Quality Authority's (ASQA) Corporate Plan 2021–22 outlines our focus on best practice regulation of Australia's vocational education and training (VET) sector. This focus is critical in enabling the sector's role in supporting economic recovery and Australia's future growth and prosperity.

This plan reflects the priorities set by the Australian Government – achieving our purpose by positioning ASQA as an effective modern regulator that supports continuous improvement in training provision across the VET sector.

Underpinning government expectations of ASQA is a shift in our regulatory posture, away from input and compliance controls to a focus on self-assurance and excellence in training outcomes, enabled by improved engagement with all stakeholders and expanded use of education as a regulatory tool. This shift also supports ASQA's contribution to the broader VET reform, articulated in the Heads of Agreement for Skills Reform.

We are conscious of the impact of COVID-19 and its ongoing effects on the sector, particularly on methods of training delivery, access to work placements and delivery to international students. As an agency, both internally and in support of the sector, we have enhanced our engagement and responded with resilience, flexibility, agility, transparency of information and improved understanding of risk. These learnings stand us in good stead for future years.

This plan sets ASQA's strategic direction for the next 4 years. It is grounded in clarity of our role and regulatory culture of enabling self-assurance by providers as a complementary tool to support our understanding of sector performance and excellence in training outcomes. The plan frames our commitment to working in partnership with stakeholders to address risks to quality outcomes and build confidence that the national VET regulator will act as required, using the appropriate mix of our full range of educative, compliance and enforcement tools and approaches to ensure quality VET and the integrity of national qualifications issued by training providers.

We apply a risk-based approach to regulation. This means that through all our foundational risk treatments – education, registration and approvals, course accreditation, monitoring and performance assessment (audit), compliance management and internal review of decisions – we apply risk-based principles and proportionate, fit-for-purpose responses. Our performance framework enables us to work with stakeholders to understand which of our actions are effective, where we need to adjust our approach and, through both, promote continuous quality improvement and understanding of the impact and effectiveness of our regulatory activities.

We respond to applications for accreditation of courses to ensure nationally recognised courses are available to meet established industry, enterprise, educational, legislative or community needs, where these are not covered in nationally endorsed training packages. We do this in collaboration with national bodies with responsibility for the development and endorsement of training packages to support capacity to address changes in skill needs, and the needs of emerging industries, in a responsive manner.

As always, our workforce and organisational capability are critical to our success as a best practice regulator and we will continue to support our staff through ongoing organisational change with a clear commitment to learning and development, wellbeing and workplace health and safety.

We look forward to building our key partnerships and reporting on our performance and achievements throughout the year, using this plan as our strategic foundation.

ASQA

Statement of preparation

I, Saxon Rice, as the accountable authority of the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA), present our Corporate Plan 2021–22, which covers the period 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2025, as required under section 35(1)(b) of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* (PGPA Act).

This plan is prepared in accordance with the Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Rule 2014. This plan also meets the corporate plan requirements of sections 218(1) of the *National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Act 2011* (NVR Act).

Saxon Rice
Chief Executive Officer
30 June 2021
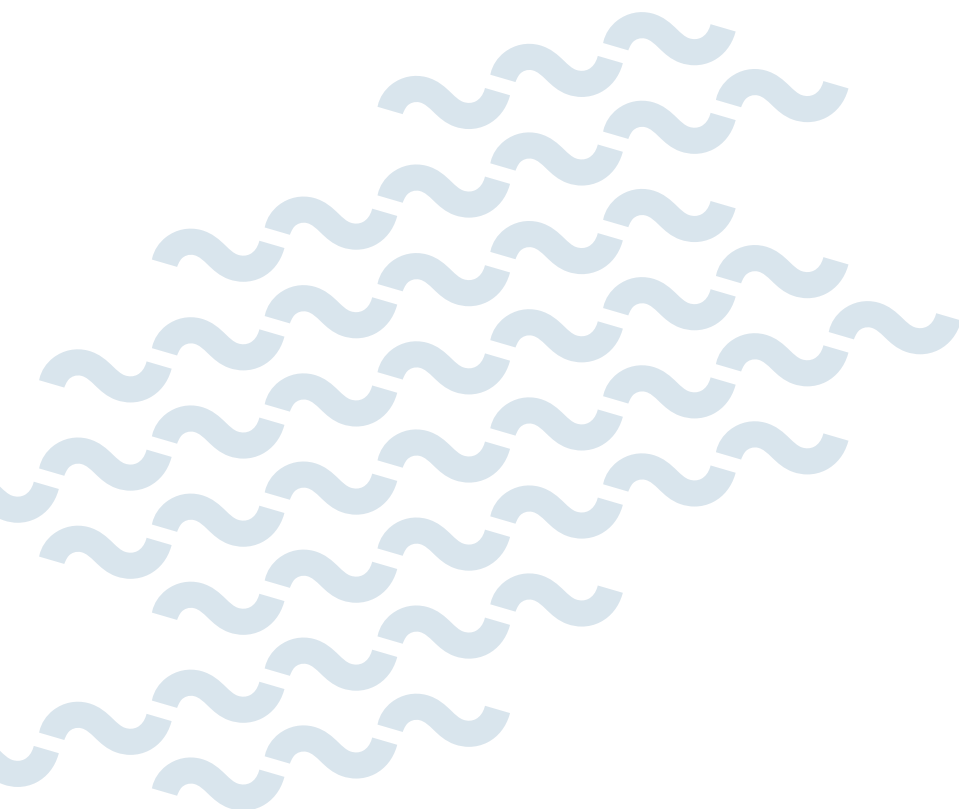
Our operating environment

Government priorities for VET

The Australian Government, state and territory governments, industry, public, community and private VET training providers and VET accredited course owners work together to provide nationally consistent training across Australia. VET qualifications provide the skills that students need, employers rely on and industries trust. More than 4 million VET students undertake training each year with some 4,000 registered training providers. This is the main way Australians upskill or reskill – there are around 3 times as many VET students as there are higher education students each year.

The Heads of Agreement for Skills Reform[1] was signed by the Commonwealth, states and territories in August 2020. It sets out reforms to improve the VET sector, and an approach and priorities for developing a new National Skills Agreement to replace the National Agreement on Skills and Workforce Development. Broadly, the priorities in the Heads of Agreement for Skills Reform are aimed at ensuring the VET system is delivering for students and employers and equipping Australians with the skills they need for emerging jobs.

As part of these broader sector reforms, we will work together with VET providers, and those who are applying for or maintaining VET course accreditation, along with our key stakeholders to move the system of regulation from its focus on compliance to a focus on excellence in training and quality outcomes. As set out in this plan, our staged implementation of changes to regulatory culture and practice over the next 4 years, includes deliverables linked with the broader VET reform agenda, in particular reforms to the Quality Framework, including the *Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015* (the Standards for RTOs).

Changes in the market

Market responses to COVID-19, policy or regulatory settings and numerous other factors including technical change, new business models for industry participants, and changes in consumer preferences or behaviours, are characteristic of a changing VET sector.

Government priorities also recognise that reforms to Australia's vocational education system must meet the needs of a post-COVID economy. As the national regulator, ASQA recognises the global pandemic has posed challenges for providers. Our regulatory strategies and approaches will build on new approaches applied in 2020–21, and we will continue to apply risk-based proportionate responses, working with providers to monitor risks and respond using a range of fit-for-purpose tools.

ASQA is maintaining the appropriate safeguards for quality while engaging with the sector on a range of risks to promote better practice, innovation and resilience. An example is the shift to online learning during COVID-19, with providers moving more components of training delivery and assessment online and at a rapid pace. Recognising the importance of these changes in the market, we will complete a strategic review of online learning in 2021–22, to understand the opportunities and risks and ensure our regulatory approaches are effective in responding to our changing environment.

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1   Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, *Heads of Agreement for Skills Reform* 5 August 2020
www.pmc.gov.au/resource-centre/domestic-policy/heads-agreement-skills-reform

Our strategic direction

Our purpose is to ensure quality vocational education and training so that students, employers, governments, and the community can have confidence in the integrity of national qualifications issued by training providers.	
Strategic deliverables	**Key performance indicators**
1. Our regulatory approach promotes a culture of self-assurance and continuous improvement	**ASQA delivers improved provider self-assurance capability and continuous quality improvement*** • The regulatory system enables provider self-assurance • There is systemic use of our self-assurance resources by providers to improve the quality of training delivered to students • Provider self-assurance capability improves
2. Our regulatory approach is best practice, integrated, risk-based and proportionate	**ASQA regulation is best practice, integrated, risk-based, data-driven and proportionate*** • Stakeholders are confident that our regulation is best practice and reflects areas of shared responsibility • Stakeholders are confident that our regulatory processes promote quality outcomes and self-assurance • Our risk-based regulatory insights support and enable improved provider performance • Our regulation is proportionate • ASQA is an active member of the regulator community of practice
3. Our regulatory approach is transparent and accountable	**ASQA is transparent in the performance of its regulatory functions and its responsibilities as a regulator, including compliance with the *Standards for VET Regulators 2015**** • Key stakeholders, providers and the Australian community can access a broad range of information about our regulatory activity and performance • We provide meaningful reports on provider performance
4. We engage and partner with stakeholders constructively and with mutual respect	**ASQA's engagement and partnerships provide clarity of the role of the national regulator and improve regulatory impact*** • Our partnerships and strategic engagement improve regulatory outcomes • There are feedback loops with key stakeholders to inform broader VET reforms and improve regulatory policy and regulatory outcomes • There is common understanding of our role and regulatory approach, and areas of shared responsibility
5. We add value and are efficient, effective, and continuously improve	**ASQA is efficient, effective and continuously improves*** • We implement the Australian Government's decision regarding cost recovery • ASQA is efficient and effective • We achieve the organisational and cultural change necessary for a best practice regulator • We share information about our assurance and quality control activities • We share information about evaluation of our regulatory operations
6. Our understanding of sector performance and promotion of self-assurance contributes to quality VET and informed consumers	**ASQA publishes information about the performance of the sector to support transparency and accountability*** • The Australian community can access information about our regulatory decisions • The Australian community can access information about ASQA's insights into sector performance and quality VET

*Wording in bold is a Portfolio Budget Statement 2021–22 Performance Criteria.

Our purpose

Our purpose is to ensure quality vocational education and training so that students, employers, governments, and the community can have confidence in the integrity of national qualifications issued by training providers.

Our role

ASQA is the national VET regulator.

We regulate:

- providers that deliver VET qualifications and courses to students in Australia or offer Australian qualifications internationally

- providers that deliver VET courses to overseas students – training providers must be approved on the Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students (CRICOS) to teach overseas students on student visas in Australia

- certain providers that deliver English Language Intensive Courses for Overseas Students (ELICOS).

We accredit VET courses to make sure nationally approved standards are met, based on established industry, enterprise, education, legislative or community need.

We operate within a framework of wider VET legislation, including the requirements for training packages that define the skills and knowledge learners need to perform jobs.

Our legislative framework includes the:

- legislation establishing ASQA as the national VET regulator

- VET Quality Framework of standards and requirements of providers

- *Standards for VET Accredited Courses 2021*

- legislation relating to education services for overseas students (ESOS).

Key legislation is set out in Appendix B.

Strategic deliverables to achieve our purpose
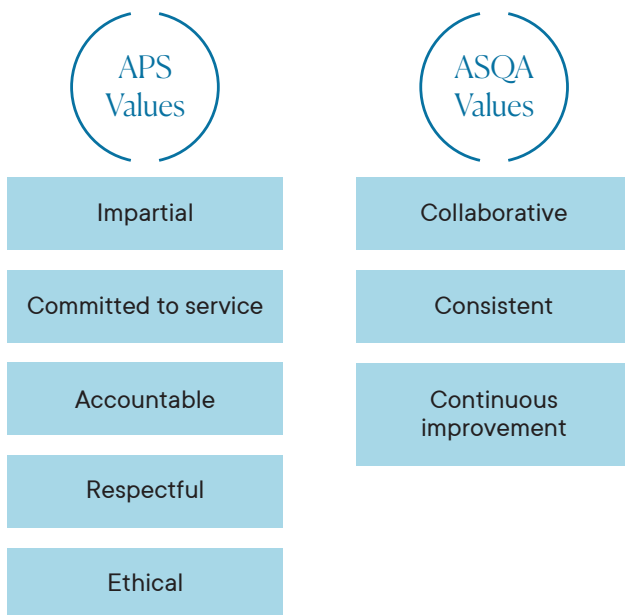
During 2020–21, we worked with our key stakeholders to identify the 6 strategic deliverables we need to pursue over the next four years to achieve our purpose.

We have built our 4 year program of work around these strategic deliverables and engaged with our key stakeholders to develop our performance framework so we can track our achievement of our strategic deliverables.

ASQA

Our values

The APS Values, Employment Principles and Code of Conduct serve as the basis for ASQA's rules and procedures as well as our own values. They create a strong, ethical working environment, which encourages equal opportunity, workplace diversity, honesty, disclosure, accountability and professionalism.

APS Values

| Impartial |
| Committed to service |
| Accountable |
| Respectful |
| Ethical |

ASQA Values

| Collaborative |
| Consistent |
| Continuous improvement |

We place a high value on **consistency**, **collaboration** and **continuous improvement.** These values drive the work we do because we believe they lead to quality outcomes, for our sector and for best practice regulation.

We put these values into practice by:

- engaging and **collaborating** with the sector

- being clear in our expectations and **consistent** in our regulatory approach and **holding providers to account** for the standards of VET

- promoting **continuous improvement** and self-assurance by providers and course owners of the quality of training outcomes.

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2   Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, *Regulator Performance Guide* July 2021
      https://deregulation.pmc.gov.au/priorities/regulator-best-practice-and-performance/regulator-performance-guide#download

How we regulate

We are committed to best practice regulation. This means a greater focus on outcomes and an emphasis on a proportionate risk-based approach and genuine stakeholder collaboration, including to build and support systemic capability for self-assurance and continuous improvement of quality outcomes.

Consistent with the principles of best practice regulation[2] we are committed to a regulatory approach that adopts a whole-of-system perspective, continuously improving performance, capability and culture, to build trust and confidence in our regulatory settings, including transparency of our operation as the national VET regulator. We know this is essential to build confidence in the integrity of national VET qualifications.

The *Standards for VET Regulators 2015*, made under section 189 of the NVR Act, also require ASQA to implement a risk-based approach to regulation to reduce regulatory burden for high-performing providers and focus regulatory attention on those providers considered higher risk.

Our approach to regulation is set out in our Regulatory Risk Framework, which communicates our management of sector and provider risk. The framework describes our Regulatory Operating Model and sets out our regulatory functions and how they are applied. We are committed to engaging with stakeholders and providing information to support their understanding of what to expect from ASQA and how specific regulatory processes are applied.

Taking a risk-based approach to regulation

We apply risk-based and data-driven approaches to manage risks proportionately and minimise regulatory burden. In doing so, we make the best use of a range of regulatory approaches to support providers to understand risks to quality outcomes and to ensure compliance.

Risk management is integral to our regulatory practice, including how we:

- focus on addressing greatest potential for harms
- innovate in key areas of regulatory practice
- engage and partner with our stakeholders
- drive self-assurance and continuous improvement across the sector
- are accountable for effective allocation of regulatory resources.

To achieve this, we apply a regulatory approach that strives for best practice, underpinned by an operating model characterised by effective use of data, information and gathered intelligence, integrated, contemporary approaches across our regulatory processes, and the achievement of quality outcomes in the sector as a result of our regulatory approach. We are committed to a structured and consistent focus on monitoring and reporting on regulatory impact to identify and reprioritise risks over time, understand, adapt and strengthen evidence underpinning regulatory initiatives, and continuously improve.

The VET sector spans every industry in Australia and comprises thousands of training products. Changing economic circumstances and employer expectations, as well as changes within the VET sector, mean that the level of risk is not static. This means we cannot afford to just rely on performance assessments (audits) to treat risk. We must be responsive to this changing environment with a focus on detecting and acting to minimise specific risks or harms, looking at the whole regulatory landscape. Even where strategies have worked in the past, we have learnt that new challenges such as those presented by the COVID-19 pandemic, require new responses by the regulator.

When we are deciding what action to take, our response to risk, relevant to the decision being made, is based on a risk assessment and determining the most effective response, across engagement, communication and regulatory operational activities, including a graduated approach to the use of escalating regulatory tools and considering broader behavioural insights to support change. This means we will make good use of the full range of our available regulatory tools and escalate matters sufficiently to deter and address identified harmful conduct.

We made foundational changes to ASQA's governance and structure in 2020–21 to support risk-based organisational decision-making, based on developing data, intelligence and analysis, regulatory design, and a higher level of engagement with stakeholders on risk. We will continue to invest in our regulatory skill set and capabilities to enable a risk-based regulatory approach.

Our risk-based regulatory program in 2021–22 will target both provider risk (provider behaviour that can present a risk to the quality of student outcomes and the reputation of the VET sector) and systemic risks (risks likely to affect a significant proportion of providers or relate to a particular cohort of providers across the VET sector or specific industry sector).

In 2021–22 we will also assign our resources to routinely interact with a sample of providers for which we have not identified risk. This is important to ensure we interact with a range of providers and have sufficient oversight to support public confidence in the performance of the sector as a whole.

Self-assurance

Self-assurance is a cornerstone of achieving ASQA's regulatory purpose, improving market performance and the role of regulation in improving confidence in VET.

Our approach to self-assurance is to partner with stakeholders and apply best practice regulation (strategic deliverable 2 refers to this).

In the 4 years 2021–25, we will build on foundations established in 2020–21 with key stakeholders and collaborate with stakeholders to ensure that our regulatory approach moves from input and compliance controls to a focus on self-assurance and excellence in training outcomes.

We will draw on evidence and best practice policy and regulatory approaches to self-assurance, and use our data and regulatory insights to support providers to self-assure their own operations and continuously improve their performance against the Standards for RTOs.

The use of self-assurance as a key driver of quality outcomes is a reasonably new concept to much of the VET sector and our key stakeholders. Self-assurance is not self-regulation. It is about the actions of providers to ensure they are meeting and continuously improving against the Standards for RTOs. This approach does not reduce the focus on the full suite of other regulatory tools available, but rather it enhances that suite of tools.

To support this shift, we are working with our key stakeholders and providers to build a shared understanding of what self-assurance is, how the regulatory framework can promote self-assurance, how it benefits providers and achieves quality outcomes for students, and how each provider can build their own self-assurance capability. This includes:

- developing guidance and support for providers to assist them in understanding their registration requirements

- clarifying our expectations around continuous improvement of outcomes

- engaging with providers and course owners/developers about areas of risk and sharing our regulatory insights with the sector to support providers and course owners/developers to critically review their performance

- clearly communicating with non-compliant providers, so they can understand where they have not met requirements and where they need to improve their performance

- clearly communicating with prospective applicants and course owners for VET course accreditation to support their capacity to understand and maintain the requirements of *Standards for VET Accredited Courses 2021*.

We are mindful of the cultural change required across the sector, including within ASQA, to successfully achieve the shift to self-assurance, and we are committed to building the strong partnerships and relationships of mutual trust and respect necessary to achieve this shift.

We will establish a baseline to measure the improvement in provider self-assurance capability within the 4 year corporate plan reporting period. Our performance measures in this respect reflect the way we are working together with providers and course owners and key stakeholders to make this change.

Engagement and collaboration

Engagement supports our regulatory objectives and government priorities for VET quality outcomes and continuous improvement of the regulatory framework. This is highlighted in strategic deliverable 4: *We engage and partner with stakeholders constructively and with mutual respect* (see page 26).

Our focus is on:

1. Partnerships that result in a national approach to the regulation of the VET sector – continuously improving our partnership and engagement on matters relevant to ASQA's role as the national VET regulator and building common understanding and alignment of our role and regulatory approach to evolving government expectations of ASQA.

2. Partnerships and strategic engagements that improve regulatory outcomes – collaborating to identify regulatory risks and designing regulatory approaches and strategies that are well-informed and take account of the current and emerging environment in which we are operating. This means clarifying expectations, sharing information with stakeholders to better understand risk, and raising awareness and providing clear feedback and support for providers and course owners to self-assure and continuously improve.

3. Feedback loops that inform broader VET reforms and improve regulatory policy and regulatory outcomes – providing input to the reforms to the VET Quality Framework and the review of the Standards for RTOs.

4. Building common understanding of ASQA's role and regulatory approach, what stakeholders can and cannot expect of ASQA and areas of shared stakeholder responsibility – recognising that our regulatory operations intersect with other parts of the VET system with many influences on provider quality and partnering with other entities to address risks, enhance quality outcomes and reduce regulatory burden for providers. <RRR 7>[3]

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3 In this plan, we note where planned activities relate to recommendations in the April 2020 Rapid Review of the Australian Skills Quality Authority's Regulatory Practices and Processes, using this symbol with the specific recommendation number <RRR #>. For further information on the Rapid Review, please see Appendix F.

ASQA

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We recognise the impact of COVID-19 on the sector, and we are committed to providing relevant, coordinated and fit-for-purpose engagement. We are also committed to investing in partnerships to co-design key elements of our reform and approaches to sector risks. We will listen and work with our stakeholders to ensure the additional challenges they are facing during this period are recognised in our regulatory processes and structures.

ASQA engages and collaborates with:
The Australian Government and state and territory governments, together with other entities that form Australia's VET regulatory framework
Individual VET providers
Peak body representatives of VET providers
Industry and employers
Students and the consumer protection network
Course owners/developers

Key activities and performance measurement

Our key activities detailed below reflect our shift in regulatory posture, away from input and compliance controls to a focus on self-assurance and excellence in training outcomes, enabled by improved engagement with all stakeholders and expanded use of education as a regulatory tool.

We recognise the cultural change this requires across the sector, including within ASQA, and we are committed to building the strong partnerships and relationships of mutual trust and respect necessary to achieve this shift. Our performance measures reflect the changes we are making, working together with our key stakeholders.

Our 6 strategic deliverables align with the performance criteria in our Portfolio Budget Statement (PBS) 2021–22. For each strategic deliverable, we have identified key activities, key performance indicators (KPIs), measures and targets to assess our performance.

As part of delivering best practice regulation for Australia's VET sector, we will enhance our performance framework in partnership with stakeholders to, year-by-year, improve the quality, relevance and timeliness of information about our performance, and the performance of the sector we regulate. A key part of this will be successfully concluding consultations we began last year with stakeholders to articulate the benefits to be realised by ASQA as a best practice regulator and in the context of broader VET reforms.

Our planned activities also take account of the Rapid Review recommendations. Government supported all 24 recommendations, which cover short, medium, and long-terms actions.

During 2020–21, a transition year for ASQA, we implemented 8 recommendations and addressed a range of strategic and operational issues in close collaboration with key stakeholders and providers. This enabled us to formulate and embed the agency-wide strategic direction reflected in this corporate plan.

The Australian National Audit Office (ANAO) also conducted an in-flight audit, providing an opportunity for us to consider our design and early implementation of the Rapid Review findings. The Auditor-General Report No. 48 2020–21, *Effectiveness of Planning and Implementation of Reform by the Australia Skills Quality Authority* was released on 29 June 2021.

We have taken account of the 4 ANAO recommendations in developing this corporate plan (as set out in Appendix C).

Strategic deliverable 1:
Our regulatory approach promotes a culture of self-assurance and continuous improvement

Key activities for strategic deliverable 1

To achieve our purpose, over the next 4 years we will:

- Establish a research partnership and, through it, enhance ASQA's and the sector's access to best practice policy and regulatory approaches to self-assurance, drawing on the body of knowledge established in Australia and elsewhere.

- Use our data, insights and research knowledge base to inform the broader VET reforms and quality framework (see also strategic deliverable 2) and develop resources to support providers to self-assure their operations and continuously improve performance against the standards, including co-designed self-assessment tools. <RRR 3, 10>

- Work in partnership with the sector to redesign the Annual Declaration on Compliance to provide a robust assurance of a provider's performance and encourage continuous improvement.[4] <RRR 10, 13>

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4   As set out in strategic deliverable 2, we will work with stakeholders (including students) to achieve a shift in understanding about the importance of engagement and education as regulatory functions that measurably improve a provider's self-assurance capability within the 4 year reporting period.

(1) Strategic deliverable 1

Performance measures for strategic deliverable 1

Strategic deliverable 1:			
Our regulatory approach promotes a culture of self-assurance and continuous improvement			
PBS performance criteria: ASQA delivers improved provider self-assurance and continuous quality improvement			
KPI	Performance measure	Year	Target
1.1 The regulatory system enables provider self-assurance	1.1a) Number of key stakeholders[5] and providers that use our published research about self-assurance to enhance and promote systemic move to self-assurance	2021–22	70% of key stakeholders[6] Establish benchmark for providers
		2022–23	75% of key stakeholders Upward trend for providers
		2023–24	80% of key stakeholders Upward trend for providers
		2024–25	85% of key stakeholders 80% of providers
	1.1b) Percentage of key stakeholders and providers confirming shared understanding of self-assurance	2021–22	70% of key stakeholders Establish benchmark for providers
		2022–23	75% of key stakeholders Upward trend of providers
		2023–24	80% of key stakeholders Upward trend of providers
		2024–25	85% of key stakeholders Upward trend of providers
	1.1c) Percentage of providers systematically monitoring and evaluating their own systems and processes and using the outcomes of their evaluations to continually improve their training and assessment strategies and practices	2021–22	Establish benchmark
		2022–23	Upward trend
		2023–24	Upward trend
		2024–25	80% of providers

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5   Unless otherwise specified, in this performance framework 'key stakeholders' are the Australian Government and state and territory governments, together with other entities that form Australia's VET regulatory framework, and peak body representatives of VET providers.

6   All key stakeholder and provider statistics will be from annual surveys.

Strategic deliverable 1:			
Our regulatory approach promotes a culture of self-assurance and continuous improvement			
PBS performance criteria: ASQA delivers improved provider self-assurance and continuous quality improvement			
KPI	Performance measure	Year	Target
1.2 There is systemic use of our self-assurance resources by providers to improve the quality of training delivered to students	1.2a) Percentage of providers using resources	2021–22	N/A
		2022–23	Establish benchmark
		2023–24	Upward trend
		2024–25	80% of providers
1.3 Provider self-assurance capability improves	1.3a) Number of Annual Declarations on Compliance showing increased capability compared with previous year results	2021–22	N/A
		2022–23	N/A
		2023–24	Establish benchmark
		2024–25	Upward trend on previous year results

Strategic deliverable 2:
Our regulatory approach is best practice, integrated, risk-based and proportionate

Key activities for strategic deliverable 2

To achieve our purpose, over the next 4 years we will:

- Continuously improve our performance framework in partnership with stakeholders to, year-by-year, improve the quality, relevance, and timeliness of information about our performance and the performance of the sector we regulate. This will include continuing stakeholder consultations commenced in 2020–21 to articulate the benefits to the Australian community that are realised by ASQA's best practice regulation of the sector including in the context of broader VET reforms.

- Work with key stakeholders and providers to embed and test the efficacy of changes made in 2020–21 to our Regulatory Operating Model including:

  - enhancing and separating functions for monitoring provider performance against the standards, and determining the most appropriate regulatory response where non-compliance is identified to improve consistency of performance assessment (audit) outcomes and proportionality of regulatory responses <RRR 15>

  - ensuring providers have the opportunity to remedy any identified non-compliance within 20 working days, or in accordance with an agreement to rectify (providing a longer period to address the non-compliance on a more systemic and sustained basis) <RRR 16>

  - enhancing opportunities for early dispute resolution <RRR 17>

  - improving the quality of performance assessment reports given to providers to more comprehensively describe any non-compliance as identified issues against the student-centred journey, reduce non-essential text, and distinguish between minor non-compliances or areas for improvement and more significant non-compliance.[7] <RRR 18>

- Collaborate with our stakeholders to build our capability and the capability of the sector to understand sector and individual provider risks in the context of our shared operating environment, and to co-design regulatory responses including by:

  - expanding our post-market monitoring of providers to include risk-based and routine monitoring to support public confidence in the regulation of the sector <RRR 12>

  - adopting a range of monitoring activities that can be selected based on risk and the purpose for monitoring to better align regulatory effort to risk. <RRR 14>

- Continuously improve, in partnership with our stakeholders and providers, our risk-based and proportionate regulatory practice with a focus on:

  - accreditation of courses

  - market entry of new VET providers as well as renewal of registration of existing VET providers

  - Annual Declaration on Compliance as a tool to support individual providers, the sector and ASQA to understand the extent to which providers are proactively improving their governance, systems, and processes to continuously improve their performance against the standards (see strategic deliverable 1).

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7   As set out in strategic deliverable 3, from 2021–22 we will conduct quarterly internal assurance on the above improvements to identify opportunities for continuous systemic improvements, share these results with stakeholders and work with them to design and implement those improvements.

Performance measurement for strategic deliverable 2

Strategic deliverable 2: Our regulatory approach is best practice, integrated, risk-based and proportionate			
PBS performance criteria: ASQA's regulation is best practice, integrated, risk-based, data-driven, and proportionate			
KPI	**Performance measure**	**Year**	**Target**
2.1 Stakeholders are confident that our regulation is best practice and reflects areas of shared responsibility	2.1a) Percentage of key stakeholders and providers confident that our approach to assessment of standards consistently ensures quality VET	2021–22	70% of key stakeholders Establish benchmark for providers
		2022–23	75% of key stakeholders Upward trend of providers
		2023–24	80% of key stakeholders Upward trend of providers
		2024–25	85% of key stakeholders Upward trend of providers
	2.1b) Percentage of key stakeholders and providers confident our regulatory approach addresses risks to quality outcomes	2021–22	70% of key stakeholders Establish benchmark for providers
		2022–23	75% of key stakeholders Upward trend of providers
		2023–24	80% of key stakeholders Upward trend of providers
		2024–25	85% of key stakeholders 80% of providers
	2.1c) Percentage of key stakeholders who confirm that ASQA applies a fit-for-purpose framework to monitor our performance as a regulator	2021–22	70% of key stakeholders
		2022–23	75% of key stakeholders
		2023–24	80% of key stakeholders
		2024-25	85% of key stakeholders

Strategic deliverable 2: Our regulatory approach is best practice, integrated, risk-based and proportionate			
PBS performance criteria: ASQA's regulation is best practice, integrated, risk-based, data-driven, and proportionate			
KPI	Performance measure	Year	Target
	2.1d) We report on the number of Rapid Review recommendations implemented by our published deadlines	2021–25	Annual reporting on deadline achievement
	2.1e) We report on our performance against the *Standards for VET Regulators 2015*, and have our performance externally reviewed including that we: • effectively and efficiently regulate providers • accredit courses in accordance with the *Standards for VET Accredited Courses 2021* • evaluate and improve our regulatory performance and ensure our delegates comply with the *Standards for VET Regulators 2015*	2021–25	Annually
2.2 Stakeholders are confident that our regulatory processes promote quality outcomes and self-assurance	2.2a) Percentage of key stakeholders who confirm that we collaborate and engage on our regulatory approaches including for self-assurance	2021–22	70% of key stakeholders
		2022–23	75% of key stakeholders
		2023–24	80% of key stakeholders
		2024–25	85% of key stakeholders

2 Strategic deliverable 2

Strategic deliverable 2: Our regulatory approach is best practice, integrated, risk-based and proportionate			
PBS performance criteria: ASQA's regulation is best practice, integrated, risk-based, data-driven, and proportionate			
KPI	Performance measure	Year	Target
	2.2b) Percentage of key stakeholders and providers who confirm our regulatory resources focus on ensuring quality outcomes and building capability for self-assurance	2021–22	70% of key stakeholders Establish benchmark for providers
		2022–23	75% of key stakeholders Upward trend of providers
		2023–24	80% of key stakeholders Upward trend of providers
		2024–25	85% of key stakeholders Upward trend of providers
	2.2c) Percentage of non-compliant providers that return to sustained compliance within agreed timeframes	2021–22	Establish benchmark for providers
		2022–23	Upward trend of providers
		2023–24	Upward trend of providers
		2024–25	95% of non-compliant providers
	2.2d) The data we use to inform our regulatory program is updated	2021–25	At least quarterly
2.3 Our risk-based regulatory insights support and enable improved provider performance	2.3a) We release risk-based regulatory insights to support and enable provider performance	2021–25	Quarterly
	2.3b) We report on improved sector performance	2021–25	Annually

Strategic deliverable 2: Our regulatory approach is best practice, integrated, risk-based and proportionate			
PBS performance criteria: ASQA's regulation is best practice, integrated, risk-based, data-driven, and proportionate			
KPI	Performance measure	Year	Target
2.4 Our regulation is proportionate	2.4a) Number of regulatory processes reviewed in consultation with key stakeholders where the ASQA administrative burden on providers and/or course owners is reduced while essential safeguards are maintained	2021–25	2 per year
	2.4b) Percentage of key stakeholders and providers and course owners who agree that our regulatory decision-making is proportionate	2021–22	70% of key stakeholders 70% of providers 70% of course owners
		2022–23	75% of key stakeholders 75% of providers and 75% of course owners
		2023–24	80% of key stakeholders 80% of providers 80% of course owners
		2024–25	85% of key stakeholders 85% of providers 85% of course owners
2.5 ASQA is an active member of the regulator community of practice	2.5a) We publish evidence of ASQA's active participation in the regulator community of practice	2021–25	Annually

Strategic deliverable 3: Our regulatory approach is transparent and accountable

Key activities for strategic deliverable 3

To achieve our purpose, over the next 4 years we will:

- Continue to systematically improve the quality, relevance, and timeliness of the information we release publicly including about:

  - how our risk-based regulatory model works

  - our performance and evaluation

  - the continuous improvements we make, including our implementation of the Rapid Review recommendations

  - our regulatory decisions.

- Continue to systematically improve the quality, relevance and timeliness of:

  - the information we share with other government entities to improve the broader efficacy of regulatory practice and impact

  - the information, including in relation to our decisions, that we make available to providers and the community.[8]

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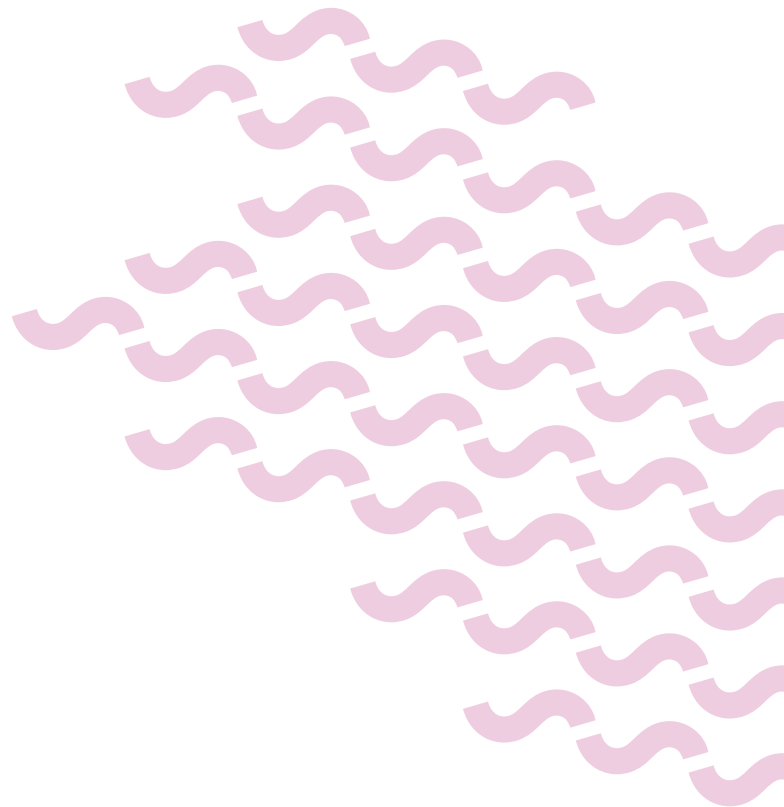
8   As set out under strategic deliverable 5, recognising the importance of being accountable and transparent, we will share the results of our own assurance processes over the coming 4 years.

Performance measurement for strategic deliverable 3

Strategic deliverable 3: Our regulatory approach is transparent and accountable			
PBS performance criteria: ASQA is transparent in the performance of our regulatory functions and responsibilities as a regulator, including compliance with the *Standards for VET Regulators 2015*			
KPI	Performance measure	Year	Target
3.1 Key stakeholders, providers and the Australian community can access a broad range of information about our regulatory activity and performance	3.1a) Percentage of key stakeholders and providers and course owners/developers satisfied they can access a broad range of information about our regulatory activity	2021–22	70% of key stakeholders Establish benchmark for providers
		2022–23	75% of key stakeholders Upward trend of providers
		2023–24	80% of key stakeholders Upward trend of providers
		2024–25	85% of key stakeholders 80% of providers
	3.1b) Percentage of key stakeholders and providers satisfied with the quality of our information	2021–22	70% of key stakeholders Establish benchmark for providers
		2022–23	75% of key stakeholders Upward trend of providers
		2023–24	80% of key stakeholders Upward trend of providers
		2024–25	85% of key stakeholders 80% of providers
	3.1c) Percentage of providers who agree we provide relevant and timely information about sector risks and areas of regulatory focus	2021–22	70% of providers
		2022–25	75% of providers

Strategic deliverable 3: Our regulatory approach is transparent and accountable			
PBS performance criteria: ASQA is transparent in the performance of our regulatory functions and responsibilities as a regulator, including compliance with the *Standards for VET Regulators 2015*			
KPI	Performance measure	Year	Target
	3.1d) Percentage of ASQA Service Standards that we meet[9]	2021–25	100%
	3.1e) We analyse and report on trends in relation to complaints about the sector	2021–25	Annually
	3.1f) We report on our performance against the *Standards for VET Regulators 2015* and have our performance externally reviewed including that we communicate effectively and implement a transparent complaints process responding to stakeholder/provider complaints about ASQA's regulatory practices to enhance regulatory practices and outcomes	2021–25	Annually
3.2 We provide meaningful reports on provider performance	3.2a) Percentage of times we notify government agencies when ASQA has made a notifiable decision relating to a provider	2021–25	100%
	3.2b) Percentage of providers who confirm that our performance assessments comprehensively describe any non-compliance as identified issues against the student-centred journey	2021–22	Establish benchmark
		2022–23	80% of providers
		2023–24	85% of providers
		2024–25	90% of providers

9   See Appendix D for ASQA's Service Standards.

Strategic deliverable 4:
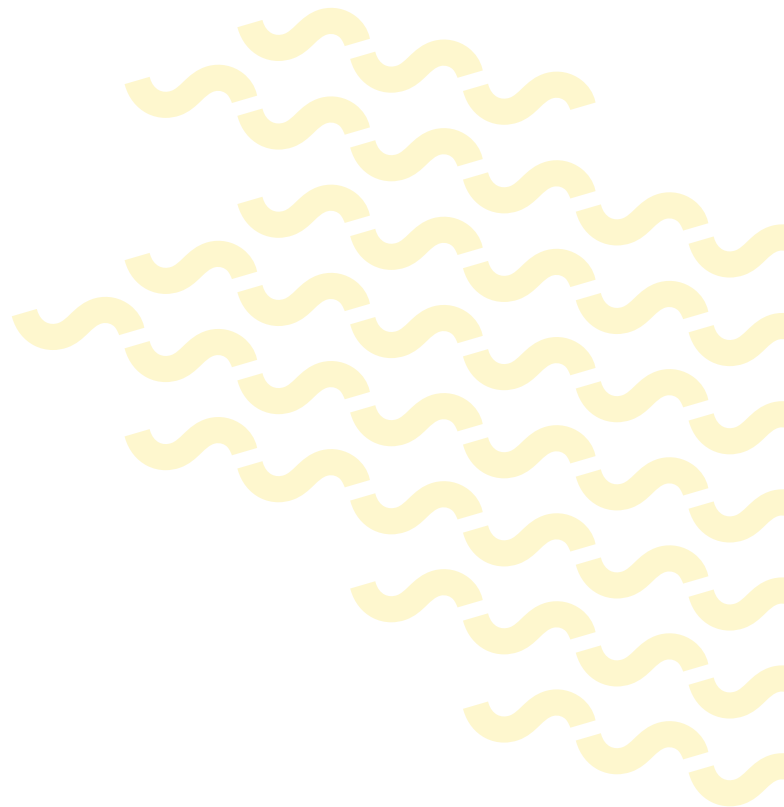We engage and partner with stakeholders constructively and with mutual respect

Key activities for strategic deliverable 4

To achieve our purpose, over the next 4 years we will:

- Build on the work we started in 2020–21, continuously improving our partnership and engagement on matters relevant to our role and regulatory approach and aligning these to evolving government expectations of ASQA. In particular, we will focus on:

  - partnerships that result in a national approach to the regulation of the VET sector

  - partnerships and strategic engagements that improve regulatory outcomes

  - feedback loops that inform broader VET reforms and improve regulatory policy and regulatory outcomes <RRR 11>

  - engagement that continues to build a common understanding of our role and regulatory approach, what stakeholders can and cannot expect of us, and areas of shared stakeholder responsibility. <RRR 7>

Performance measurement for strategic deliverable 4

Strategic deliverable 4: We engage and partner with stakeholders constructively and with mutual respect			
PBS performance criteria: ASQA's engagement and partnerships provide clarity regarding the role of the national regulator and improve regulatory impact			
KPI	**Performance measure**	**Year**	**Target**
4.1 Our partnerships and strategic engagement improve regulatory outcomes	4.1a) Percentage of key stakeholders who confirm that collaboration with ASQA improves effective regulation of the VET sector, in particular: • state-based VET regulators • the Tertiary Education Quality Standards Agency • student-focused stakeholders including ombudsmen, complaints-handling bodies, consumer advocates and skills commissions	2021–22 2022–23 2023–24 2024–25	80% of key stakeholders 85% of key stakeholders 90% of key stakeholders 90% of key stakeholders
	4.1b) Number of employer representatives in targeted industries who are satisfied with their engagement with ASQA to help shape the regulatory system to meet future employer needs	2021–22 2022–25	Establish benchmark Upward trend
	4.1c) We publish joint assessments with our partners on the efficacy of our partnerships	2021–25	Annually
	4.1d) We use student feedback to target risks and improve quality outcomes	2021–25	Annually
	4.1e) We engage with key consumer representatives to share information about risk	2021–25	Annually
4.2 There are feedback loops with key stakeholders to inform broader VET reforms and improve regulatory policy and regulatory outcomes	4.2a) Intergovernmental forums and partner agencies confirm that feedback loops with ASQA are facilitating broader VET reforms, regulatory policy, and regulatory outcomes, including in relation to training packages, their broader intent, and their delivery by providers and course owners	2021–25	Annual

Strategic deliverable 4: We engage and partner with stakeholders constructively and with mutual respect			
PBS performance criteria: ASQA's engagement and partnerships provide clarity regarding the role of the national regulator and improve regulatory impact			
KPI	Performance measure	Year	Target
4.3 There is common understanding of our role and regulatory approach, and areas of shared responsibility	4.3a) ASQA's Statement of Intent is developed in consultation with key stakeholders and remains contemporary	2021–25	Publish annually, updated in line with changes to Statement of Expectations
	4.3b) Percentage of key stakeholders and providers who share our understanding of our role and regulatory approach including areas of shared responsibility	2021–22	Establish benchmark for key stakeholders Establish benchmark for providers
		2022–23	70% of stakeholders 70% of providers
		2023–24	75% of stakeholders 75% of providers
		2024–25	80% of stakeholders 80% of providers

Strategic deliverable 5:
We add value and are efficient, effective, and continuously improve

Key activities for strategic deliverable 5

To achieve our purpose, over the next 4 years we will:

- Implement government decisions in relation to cost recovery.

- Align our cost recovery to reflect our new approach to performance monitoring. <RRR 6>

- Use our assurance practices to test the efficacy and quality of what we do and engage with stakeholders to identify and implement continuous improvements to our regulatory operations. <RRR 24>

- Undertake a review of our service standards in collaboration with key stakeholders.

- Implement a comprehensive independent program of evaluation progressively across our Regulatory Operating Model, co-designed with stakeholders to:

  - drive continuous improvement of our performance and the performance of the sector in line with standards and a focus on provider self-assurance

  - confirm our implementation of the recommendations of the Rapid Review.

5 Strategic deliverable 5

Performance measurement for strategic deliverable 5

Strategic deliverable 5: We add value and are efficient, effective, and continuously improve			
PBS performance criteria: ASQA is efficient, effective, and continuously improves			
KPI	Performance measure	Year	Target
5.1 We implement government decisions regarding cost recovery	5.1a) We transition to full cost recovery in line with government decisions	2021–25	1 January 2022
5.2 ASQA is efficient and effective	5.2a) Number of occasions that we implement more efficient and effective: • regulatory processes • processes for providers • processes for course owners	2021–25	Report annually on number of occasions
	5.2b) We improve our service standards following review in partnership with key stakeholders	2021–22	Report on results of review and publish new standards
		2022–25	Report quarterly on our progress against targets
5.3 We implement the organisational and cultural change necessary for a best practice regulator	5.3a) We align resources to our Regulatory Operating Model	2021–25	Report annually on alignment
	5.3b) Percentage of key stakeholders and providers who confirm our actions are consistent with our purpose	2021–22	70% for key stakeholders Establish % benchmark for providers
		2022–23	75% for key stakeholders Upward trend of providers
		2023–24	80% for key stakeholders Upward trend of providers
		2024–25	85% for key stakeholders 80% of providers

Strategic deliverable 5: We add value and are efficient, effective, and continuously improve			
PBS performance criteria: ASQA is efficient, effective, and continuously improves			
KPI	Performance measure	Year	Target
	5.3c) We report on our performance against the *Standards for VET Regulators 2015* and have our performance externally reviewed as meeting standard number 6: • the VET regulator must be effectively and efficiently managed	2021–25	Annually
5.4 We share information about our assurance and quality control activities	5.4a) % of key stakeholders and providers satisfied with ASQA's reporting on key assurance activities	2021–22	70% for key stakeholders Establish % benchmark for providers
		2022–23	75% for key stakeholders Upward trend of providers
		2023–24	80% for key stakeholders Upward trend of providers
		2024–25	85% for key stakeholders 80% of providers
5.5 We share information about evaluation of our regulatory operations	5.5a) We publish iterative evaluation of our regulatory operations	2021–25	Annually

Strategic deliverable 6:
Our understanding of sector performance and promotion of self-assurance contributes to quality VET and informed consumers

Key activities for strategic deliverable 6

To achieve our purpose, over the next 4 years we will:

- Continue to contribute to reforms to the quality framework, drawing on our understanding of quality and risk.

- Publish information about our decisions and assessments to:

  - enable students and employers to differentiate between providers <RRR 5>

  - improve transparency of decision-making <RRR 20>

  - meet our legislative obligations

  - identify systemic risks to the VET sector

  - share insights on sector risk, performance and quality

  - provide a summary of our findings regarding provider performance against the standards <RRR 21>

  - promote increased understanding of VET quality outcomes.

- Continue to undertake strategic reviews, engaging with stakeholders and publishing the results to build the information base available to all interested parties. In 2021–22, we will complete a strategic review of online learning, designed to understand the opportunities and risks of online learning in the VET sector and ensure our regulatory approaches are effective in responding to our changing environment.

6

Strategic deliverable 6

Performance measurement for strategic deliverable 6

Strategic deliverable 6: Our understanding of sector performance and promotion of self-assurance contributes to quality VET and informed consumers			
PBS performance criteria: ASQA publishes information about performance of the sector to support transparency and accountability			
KPI	**Performance measure**	**Year**	**Target**
The Australian community can access information about our regulatory decisions	6.1a) ASQA complies with any requirements prescribed by audit report rules relating to the publication of audit reports	2021–22	N/A
		2022–25	Annually
	6.1b) We publish information about provider performance to enable students and employers to differentiate between providers	2021–22	N/A
		2022–25	Annually
	6.1c) We publish a summary of our findings regarding providers' performance against the standards	2021–23	N/A
		2023–25	Annually
	6.1d) We meet our legislative obligations to publish information about regulatory decisions on the National Register	2021–25	Ongoing
The Australian community can access information about ASQA's insights into sector performance and quality VET	6.2a) We report on our strategic reviews of serious systemic risks to the VET sector	2021–25	Annually
	6.2b) Percentage of our regulatory activities subject to at least annual reporting	2021–25	100%
	6.2c) We publish insights reports on sector risk, performance and/or quality	2021–25	Quarterly

Capability

Achievement of ASQA's purpose and strategic deliverables are underpinned by core capabilities across people and culture, our risk intelligence and frameworks, organisational structures and infrastructure. These elements are outlined below.

People and culture

ASQA continues to build a highly skilled and engaged workforce, supported by strong leaders, within a values-aligned organisational culture.

To achieve our purpose, implement our strategic deliverables effectively and derive benefits for the VET sector, employers, students and the Australian community, ASQA continues to invest in a skilled and engaged workforce, confidently executing contemporary regulatory best practice, supported by strong leaders. Our goal is to ensure that ASQA has the right people with the right skills to achieve our purpose. Our workforce comprises around 200 staff.

We are fostering a progressive, high performing and inclusive culture and workforce that:

- exemplifies our principles (leadership, organisational capability, best practice, risk management and continuous improvement)

- demonstrates consistency, collaboration and continuous improvement

- responds positively and with agility to changes to our operating environment to continue to ensure quality VET outcomes

- is supported and enabled by a broad range of opportunities for reward, recognition and professional and personal development

- embraces and celebrates diversity and actively promotes and supports staff health and wellbeing.

In 2020–21, we established new lines of accountability across our agency to reflect our best practice Regulatory Operating Model. Looking to the future, we will introduce a new capability framework based on performance outcomes and the demonstration of desired behaviours aligned to APS and AQSA values. This is a priority activity for 2021–22 and will be structured around the employee life cycle:

- attract, select, develop and retain the capabilities ASQA requires

- add rigour and structure to how we induct and orient our workforce

- ensure staff are supported throughout their career with us by providing access to continuing professional development for all ASQA staff.

While embedding this framework will take time, it is an important step to build our capability and demonstrate consistency, collaboration and continuous improvement.

Risk management and assurance

Effective, integrated management of risk continues to be critical to the achievement of our purpose. Effective risk management helps us to:

- guard against the possibility that by act, oversight or omission, our ability to achieve our purpose is compromised

- make sound evidence-based decisions in relation to our strategic deliverables, management approaches and day-to-day operations

- build our capacity to innovate

- engender the confidence of our stakeholders.

Our system of risk oversight, management and internal controls are aligned with section 16 of the PGPA Act 2013 and the Commonwealth Risk Management Policy.

We will continue to strengthen our risk maturity, ensuring risk management is:

- integral to all our activities, functions and processes including how we innovate in key areas such as self-assurance, how we engage and partner with our stakeholders, and, ultimately, how we meet our obligations to our stakeholders

- a key element of good governance and our best practice regulatory decision-making

- pivotal to ASQA's management practices at all levels, including accountability and transparency

- part of the day-to-day work of everyone in ASQA as we build individual capability to engage

- cognisant of changes in our operating environment

- a driver of continuous improvement within ASQA and across the sector.

We accept that, despite best efforts and robust risk management practices, things will go wrong. A positive risk culture is key to our continuous improvement – we review the reasons for failure, and use our learnings to further strengthen our systems, processes and controls, reducing the likelihood of reoccurrence. Our risk culture reflects that everyone in ASQA has a role in risk management (as set out in Appendix C).

Types of risk defined	
Strategic risk	Strategic risks are risks that originate from sources external to our agency, and for which ASQA has limited control. While we have limited control over these risks, horizon scanning and adaptive leadership supports our preparedness for these changes and to manage strategic risks.
Enterprise risk	Enterprise risks are those that impact on the agency as a whole and our ability to achieve our strategic deliverables and operate effectively. As such, there are often a number of types of risks that contribute to enterprise risks, such as reputation risks, safety risks, financial risks, or operational/process risks.
Operational risk	Operational risks are those which could impact on, or contribute to, strategic or enterprise risks from the perspective of the operations of a particular business team or area.
Shared risk	A shared risk is where more than one entity is exposed to or can significantly influence the risk.

Summary of key strategic and enterprise risks

All risks are relevant to all strategic deliverables and all Rapid Review recommendations.

Strategic risk	Controls summary
Risk of not responding efficiently and effectively to COVID-19 and its impact on the VET sector	• Quarterly e-scan to identify emerging risks • Ongoing engagement with external stakeholders through established channels and forums (e.g. Stakeholder Liaison Group, Provider Roundtable, DESE meetings, states and territories engagement, and VET regulators) • Regulatory risk framework and operating model and systems to design and implement regulatory responses • Performance measurement and evaluation
Risk of not responding efficiently and effectively to changes in government priorities	• Systems and processes established with Minister, DESE, states, and territories to engage with broader VET reforms and other changes in government priorities • System of governance established to respond to changes in government priorities including lines of accountability

Enterprise risk	Controls summary
Risk that governance and management does not set strategic direction and ensure ASQA meets performance and/or conformance requirements	• ASQA works closely with DESE to implement any changes to policy settings or legislation • System of governance addresses performance and conformance risks, monitors efficacy of frameworks and ensures resources are aligned to our purpose • Performance framework monitors implementation and continuous improvement • Strategic direction, associated program of work and performance framework are clear and lines of accountability established
Risk of inadequate skills, expertise, or organisational culture to achieve our purpose	• Organisational culture and capability frameworks and strategies aligned to our purpose and workforce strategies • Assurance in place for implementation of frameworks and strategies
Risk of compromised health and safety of workforce	• Clear accountabilities for work health and safety (WHS) • WHS management systems, and risk management • Targeted strategies to prevent and control risks to the health and safety of our people while promoting physical and mental wellbeing and diversity • Assurance in place for implementation of frameworks and strategies
Risk that ASQA's stewardship of public resources is not aligned to government priorities, well protected, and used efficiently and effectively	• Frameworks, systems and processes at 'defined' maturity; all align with government priorities and conformance with government requirements (e.g. Accountable Authority Instructions, Certificate of Compliance, Fraud Control Policy/Plan, Business Continuity Framework) (refer risks below) • Assurance in place for implementation of frameworks and strategies

ASQA

Enterprise risk	Controls summary
Risk of poorly designed Regulatory Operating Model (ROM)	• ROM is aligned with best practice requirements • Co-design both the ROM and the performance framework involving a range of stakeholders • Regular review of ROM including through independent evaluation to ensure it remains fit-for-purpose and best practice
Risk of disproportionate regulatory response or other implementation inconsistent with design	• ROM and Compliance Policy supports use of full suite of actions in our regulatory toolkit to address identified risks/issues • Strong analytical capabilities and structured frameworks for decision-making • Increasing transparency about our regulatory decisions and the reasons for them and complaints • Range of review and independent appeal mechanisms • Active assurance program: assurance results shared with stakeholders ensuring high degree of transparency about how ROM is operationalised and our continuous improvement
Risk of failing to achieve a cultural shift in self-assurance or continuous improvement in partnership with stakeholders	• Regulatory approach/ROM built through engagement with key external stakeholders and broader sector views (through public consultation) to build a shared understanding • Self-assurance approach integrated into sector education and guidance • Self-assurance approach integrated into assessment and compliance approach, manuals, and tools (including internal review) • Regular and ongoing stakeholder engagement shares information and co-design/improve our regulatory approach • Mechanisms to engage with external stakeholders and providers on the self-assurance approach ensure timely communications, education and guidance, regulatory campaigns, stakeholder surveys • Ongoing engagement with external stakeholders through established channels and forums (e.g. Stakeholder Liaison Group, Provider Roundtable, DESE meetings, engagement with states and territories, and VET regulators) • Shared risk identified and controls and treatments established in partnership with stakeholders
Risk of ineffective engagement with our external stakeholders constrains best practice regulatory outcomes and continuous improvement	• Focus on education and engagement functions as regulatory tools in the ROM • Frameworks and systems in place to ensure engagement and partnership with external stakeholders including in the co-design of regulatory material, tools and approaches • Performance framework tracks and tests efficacy and provides transparency of results • Independent evaluation of efficacy of engagement.
Risk that ASQA's regulatory system is not transparent and accountable and that it does not continuously improve	• Systems and processes to ensure transparency in relation to our assurance and subsequent co-design of continuous improvement • Default position is engagement and partnership with stakeholders and providers including in co-design • Reviews and evaluations built into the ROM, including co-designed with stakeholders • Performance Framework subject to ongoing improvement in consultation with stakeholders • Complaints mechanisms established with feedback loops.

Risk intelligence and frameworks

ASQA continues to build strong analytical capabilities, using available data and specialist expertise within structured frameworks to support well-founded, risk-based decisions.

Establishing and maintaining robust frameworks supports efficient and effective practices and promotes high quality and consistent decisions. Access to timely and relevant data and insights on the VET sector, needs of employers, student experience, the performance and level of maturity of individual providers, and the broader operating environment, is integral to enabling well-founded, risk-based decisions.

Our data is a key strategic asset, and we are committed to its effective use, governed by our Data Governance Framework, Data Strategy and Roadmap, and Data and Business Intelligence Operating Model.

We engage with other agencies to harness collective expertise and enhance our agency's ability to identify, assess and respond to risks in a rapidly changing environment.

Our effective use of data and the ongoing development of our data maturity is underpinned by five key principles:

- We partner and share data to support our regulatory purpose and benefit the Australian community.

- We maintain strong data governance, and information security and protect the privacy of individuals.

- We invest in our staff as effective knowledge workers to build our data literacy.

- We continuously improve our data analytics to support regulatory insights and intelligence capability.

- We leverage and support broader government data collection and sharing initiatives to improve the way data is collected, stored and shared.

Organisational effectiveness and infrastructure

ASQA maintains efficient and effective organisational structures and practices, building the infrastructure that supports our regulatory operations while reducing administrative burden on providers and course owners. Our systems and premises are secure and fit-for-purpose.

Our infrastructure is fundamental to our operation as an efficient, effective, best practice regulator. We maintain safe, reliable and secure workplaces and technology that supports collaboration and flexible ways of working for us and in our interactions with regulated entities.

We are developing a 3 year digital transformation roadmap to guide an agency-wide approach to investment in and development of ICT and digital systems. Our digital enhancement will underpin our continuous improvement of regulatory best practice and make ASQA easier to interact with, informed by users, and fit for the digital age. The roadmap will assist us by providing a clear picture of current and future needs, capabilities and risks.

Using co-design principles, we will work with our stakeholders to develop digital capability and enhancements aligned with our strategic deliverables to further support providers and course owners to self-assess, improve self-service access to information about performance and self-assurance, and enhance the provider and stakeholder experience of interacting with the regulator. Our digital transformation work will, over future years:

- support more agile and responsive regulation to meet emerging trends and changing sector needs

- improve engagement with providers and course owners to drive continuous improvement across the sector

- enable more innovative approaches to our regulatory practice and activities to support behaviour change

- improve our end-to-end data management to inform decision-making

- better support the sector to engage with regulatory processes

- enable our staff to focus on higher value activities including thought leadership and sharing insights across the sector

- provide enhanced intelligence and digital tools to improve productivity and quality

- demonstrate return on digital investment associated with value outcomes, for benefits realisation.

We have systems and frameworks in place that ensure our workplaces are safe, secure and compliant, our data holdings are safe and secure, individual privacy is safeguarded and compliant with legislative obligations, and our IT network and systems are secure.

Appendix A: Table of requirements

The corporate plan has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of:

- subsection 35(1) of the PGPA Act

- the PGPA Rule 2014.

The following table details the requirements met by ASQA's corporate plan and the page reference(s) for each requirement.

Requirement	Page (s)
Introduction • Statement of preparation • the reporting period for which the plan is prepared • the reporting periods covered by the plan	2–4
Purposes	5
Key activities	11–36
Operating context	3
Environment	3
Capability	37
Risk oversight and management	37–42, 46–47
Cooperation	9
Performance	11–36

Appendix B: Key legislation

Acts

National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Act 2011 (NVR Act)

Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000 (ESOS Act)

Education Services for Overseas Students (Registration Charges Act 1997 (ESOS Registration Charges Act)

National Vocational Education and Training Regulator (Charges) Act 2012 (NVR Charges Act)

Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013 (PGPA Act)

Instruments

ASQA Authorised Officer Requirements 2012 (s 89(2A) NVR Act)

Australian Skills Quality Authority Instrument Fixing Fees Amendment Declaration (No 1) 2018 (s 232 of the NVR Act)

Australian Skills Quality Authority Instrument fixing fees No 1 of 2013 (ss 232(1) and 232(5) of the NVR Act)

ELICOS (English Language Intensive Courses for Overseas Students) Standards 2018 (s 176B(1) of the ESOS Act)

Financial Viability Risk Assessment Requirements 2021 (s 158 of the NVR Act)

Fit and Proper Person Requirements 2011 (s 186 of the NVR Act)

National Vocational Education and Training Regulator (Charges) Determination 2013 (No 1) (ss 6B(1), 9(2), 12(2) and 13 of the NVR Act)

National Vocational Education and Training Regulator (Data Provision Requirements) (s 187 of the NVR Act)

National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Regulations 2011 (s 235 NVR Act)

Standards for NVR Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015 (s 185 of the NVR Act)

Standards for VET Accredited Courses 2021 (s 188 of the NVR Act)

Standards for VET Regulators 2015 (s 189 of the NVR Act)

National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018 (s 33(1) of the ESOS Act)
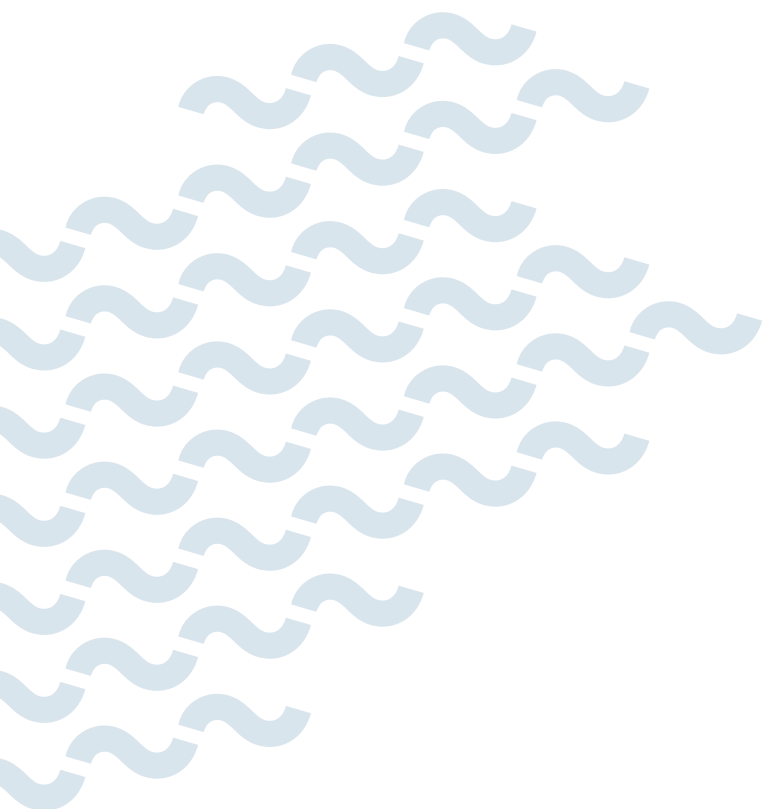
Appendix C: Summary of risk management responsibilities

All ASQA staff are required to manage risk within their responsibilities.

(i) ASQA CEO is the accountable authority for ASQA's risk management and is responsible for:

- Risk Management Policy Statement and Risk Management Framework.

- Articulating ASQA's risk culture and risk appetite.

- Leading the agency-wide implementation of ASQA's Risk Management Policy Statement and the Risk Management Framework requirements including ensuring:

  - there is appropriate and effective training and development that builds capability from an understood base

  - there are efficient, effective systems and processes in place to support and enable implementation, monitoring, reporting, and continuous improvement

  - the efficacy of controls and treatments where the CEO is the risk owner

  - modelling behaviours which promote a positive risk culture, and which demonstrate understanding and active application of ASQA's risk management approach.

(ii) Director, Risk Assurance and Compliance:

- Oversees the regular maintenance, review, and update of the Risk Management Policy Statement and Risk Management Framework documents for consideration by the ASQA CEO.

- Ensures the conduct of strategic, enterprise, and operational risk assessments and the monitoring of risks in the appropriate risk registers.

- Oversees the provision and continuous improvement of ASQA's risk management capability.

- Develops, monitors, reports on, reviews (or causes to be reviewed), and continuously improves the systems and processes in relation to risk culture, risk appetite, Risk Management Policy Statement and Risk Management Framework including non-compliance and systemic opportunities to reduce non-compliance.

- Supports, monitors and reports on risk management in ASQA, including coordination of the Risk Management Framework and maintenance of ASQA's risk registers.

(iii) ASQA's Audit Committee:

- Provides independent assurance to ASQA's accountable authority on ASQA's financial and performance reporting, systems of risk oversight and management, and system of internal control.

Specific responsibilities of the Audit Committee in relation to risk management are as follows:

- Review whether management has in place an appropriate and robust Risk Management Framework and associated internal controls for effective identification and management of the entity's strategic, enterprise, operational and other risks in keeping with the Commonwealth Risk Management Policy, including fraud and security.

- Satisfy itself that an appropriate approach has been followed in managing the entity's highest risks – including those associated with individual projects, program implementation, and activities.

- Review the process for developing and implementing the entity's fraud control arrangement and satisfy itself the entity has adequate processes in place to detect, capture and effectively respond to fraud risks.

- Review reports on fraud from management that outline any significant or systemic allegations of fraud, the status of any ongoing investigations, and any changes to identified fraud risk in the entity.

(iv) Deputy CEO:

- As per accountabilities of Executive Directors and risk owners.

- Maintenance and operationalisation of the Regulatory Risk Framework, and coordination of this with the ASQA Risk Management Framework.

(v) Executive Directors are accountable for:

- Ensuring implementation of the Risk Management Policy Statement and the Risk Management Framework occurs consistently in all areas within their span of control and across the agency, holding other members of the senior executive accountable.

- Modelling behaviours which promote a positive risk culture, and which demonstrate understanding and active application of ASQA's risk management approach.

(vi) Risk owners:

- Individual risks within ASQA are at Executive Level 2 or above who are responsible for overall management of the risk including controls which modify the risk, as well as the implementation of associated risk treatments.

- Risk owners:

  - Assess whether the risk is a shared risk and take appropriate actions to collectively manage this risk as outlined in the Risk Management Framework.

- may delegate components of the risk to other team members (e.g. monitoring a control, implementing a treatment plan) but they remain ultimately responsible for effective management of that risk.

(vii) All staff members:

- Actively manage risks that are part of their day-to-day work and be accountable for any delegated tasks from risk owners.

- Identify, analyse, and escalate significant business risks in activities undertaken.

- Be vigilant about fraud indicators and identification, and report all suspected incidents of fraud, and complete fraud awareness training.

Where staff members are also supervisors/managers, there is additional accountability to promote risk management awareness and utilisation of the Risk Management Framework and related guidance.

(viii) Strategic Leadership Committee is accountable for:

- Overseeing the actions identified at (i) to (v) above.

- Identifying any risks in relation to these actions, determining where ASQA's risk management and culture can be improved, and providing leadership and requiring actions that ensure demonstrated and measurable continuous improvement in both.

- Modelling behaviours that promotes a positive risk culture and demonstrates understanding and active application of ASQA's risk management approach.

Appendix D: ASQA's Service Standards

As reflected in our performance framework, in 2021–22 we will review our service standards (required under section 157(o) of the NVR Act) in partnership with key stakeholders. We will report the results of this review in 2021–22 and publish new service standards. From 2022–23 onward, we will report quarterly against the revised standards and targets.

ASQA Service Standards

Service	Standard
Performance assessments (audits)	• Performance assessment reports provided within 20 working days of last day of performance assessment. • When we have accepted additional evidence from a provider after a performance assessment, we will provide the decision within 30 working days. • Reconsideration applications finalised within 65 working days (3 months).
Applications	**Registrations[10]** • Initial registration applications finalised within 130 working days (6 months).* • Renewal of registration applications finalised prior to expiry date.# • Change of scope applications finalised within 130 working days (6 months).* **Course accreditation** • Course accreditation applications finalised within 130 working days (6 months). • Course amendment applications finalised within 20 working days.
Info Line engagement	• Simple procedural email queries responded to within 2 working days. • Complex telephone queries escalated within 2 working days (with likely resolution time, if applicable). • Complex email queries responded to within 10 working days.

* subject to the application being complete on submission
# subject to the application being complete and submitted in accordance with legislative timeframes

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10 The timeframes below relate to ASQA making a decision on an application. They do not relate to any subsequent review processes associated with that decision.

ASQA

Appendix E:
Effectiveness of Planning and Implementation of Reform by Australian Skills Quality Authority, 29 June 2021

Incorporating ANAO recommendations into our corporate plan

ANAO recommendation no. 1:

Australian Skills Quality Authority:

(a) ensure the Corporate Plan aligns its strategic approach to the implementation of the recommendations made in the Rapid Review of the Australian Skills Quality Authority's Regulatory Practices and Processes; and

(b) ensure action items to address strategic deliverables have realistic and achievable deadlines, with specific dates for completion, that can be progressively monitored.

ASQA response: Agreed

This corporate plan aligns our approach to implementing the Rapid Review recommendations. We have ensured our actions against each strategic deliverable have realistic and achievable deadlines, with specific dates for completion that can be progressively monitored.

As at 30 June 2021, we have completed the implementation phase of 8 of the 24 Rapid Review recommendations and are now tracking our performance and continuous improvement through our performance framework.

Three of the remaining 16 Rapid Review recommendations are led by the Department of Education, Skills and Employment (DESE), and we will continue to support DESE's work on these.

Our performance framework will track our progress with implementation of the other 13 recommendations and, as referenced at performance measure 2.1d), we will report on the number of Rapid Review recommendations implemented by our published deadlines, which are set out in Appendix F.

Incorporating ANAO recommendations into our corporate plan

ANAO recommendation no. 2:

Australian Skills Quality Authority improve its quality controls to ensure:

(c) deliverables address scope requirements and/or the relevant recommendations outlined in the Rapid Review of the Australian Skills Quality Authority's Regulatory Practices and Processes;

(d) benefits identified for the project, process redesign, and/or tools have been achieved;

(e) technical aspects of control redesign have been sufficiently identified, considered and addressed (including compliance with relevant legislation and standards in force at the time of implementation); and

(f) organisational service standards and cost information have been sufficiently identified, considered and addressed (particularly impacts on efficiency and effectiveness of new processes/templates).

ASQA response: Agreed

This corporate plan includes actions to ensure our assurance and quality controls framework, systems and processes are structured, transparent and inclusive of key stakeholders, to make sure we focus on providing the best possible regulatory results in a proportionate and effective manner, including through the implementation of the Rapid Review recommendations.

As referenced at performance measure 5.4a), we will share information about our assurance and quality control activities with our Assurance Forum of stakeholders, and work with them to ensure continuous improvement of our processes and regulatory systems.

ANAO recommendation no. 3:

Australian Skills Quality Authority improve its approach to organisational and regulatory risk management to ensure procedures provide practical guidance to staff to enable consistent application and decision making.

ASQA response: Agreed

Consistent with continuous improvement of our assurance and quality controls, this corporate plan reflects the range of actions we are undertaking to continuously improve our approach to organisational and regulatory risk management. As the ANAO report notes, at the time of the audit, we have identified a desired risk maturity state of Level 3 (Defined), to be achieved within 12 to 15 months. In June 2021, Comcover confirmed we had achieved 'Defined' risk maturity, in advance of this timeframe. The actions set out in this corporate plan will support our achievement of 'Embedded'.

ANAO recommendation no. 4:

Australian Skills Quality Authority develop performance measures which identify its progress in implementing the reform, and measure benefits realisation of the reform program.

ASQA response: Agreed

This corporate plan describes our established systems and processes for collaborating with key stakeholders to develop our performance framework, which not only identifies our progress in implementing the Rapid Review recommendations but also tracks our performance and the performance of the sector more broadly. We are committed to continuing to collaborate with DESE to articulate the integrated benefits from implementing the Rapid Review recommendations, and as part of the broader VET reforms.

Appendix F:
Rapid Review of the Australian Skills Quality Authority's Regulatory Practices and Processes – Released April 2020

1	**2**	**3**
Develop a shared understanding of what 'quality' and 'outcomes' look like, how these should be reflected in outcomes-focused standards and performance assessed by ASQA.	Develop new standards in consultation with the sector, with a view to decreasing prescriptive detail and increasing the focus on quality training delivery and outcomes for students and employers.	Develop resources to support providers to meet the standards including self-assessment tools to encourage continuous improvement.
DESE has implementation carriage	DESE has implementation carriage	Implementation Q2 2022–23
4	**5**	**6**
Adjust ASQA's approach to performance monitoring in line with revised standards and a focus on provider self-assurance.	Publish more information regarding provider performance to support students and employers to differentiate between providers.	Realign ASQA's cost recovery arrangements to reflect ASQA's new approach to performance monitoring.
Implementation dependent on 1 and 2	Implementation Q2 2021–22	Implementation Q3 2021–22
7	**8**	**9**
Build a common understanding of ASQA's role and regulatory approach, what stakeholders can and cannot expect of ASQA and areas of shared stakeholder responsibility.	Change ASQA's organisational structure and focus to strengthen strategic oversight and managerial capacity to: • support implementation of critical reforms (including in relation to engagement and education, performance assessment and proportionate response to non-compliance) • support change management • strengthen internal systems and quality controls.	Establish an advisory council to improve access to high-level ongoing expert advice including in relation to ASQA's strategic objectives and approach to regulation.
Implementation Q1 2021–22	Implementation complete Continuous improvement focus	DESE has implementation carriage

10	11	12
Strengthen ASQA's strategic stakeholder engagement and education, including to: • build provider capacity for self-assurance • co-design new regulatory tools with the sector (for example, to support self-assessment) • identify common areas of non-compliance and develop consistent guidance for external stakeholders and for ASQA.	Strengthen strategic engagement with SSON, IRCs and SSOs to establish a feedback loop regarding broader VET reform, training packages, their intent and their implementation by providers.	Expand ASQA's post-market monitoring to include risk-based and routine monitoring to support public confidence in the regulation of the sector.
Implementation Q2 2022–23	Implementation by Q2 2021–22	Implementation by Q2 2021–22
13	**14**	**15**
Review the provider self-assessment tool and the Annual Declaration on Compliance, such that they better support providers to identify and address non-compliance and drive continuous improvement.	Adopt a range of monitoring activities that can be selected based on risk and the purpose for monitoring, to better align regulatory effort to risk.	More clearly distinguish the functions of monitoring provider performance and determining the most appropriate regulatory response where non-compliance is identified to improve consistency of audit outcomes and proportionality of regulatory response.
Implementation Q2 2022–23	Implementation Q2 2021–22	Implementation complete Continuous improvement focus

![ASQA]

16	**17**	**18**
Give providers opportunity to remedy any identified non-compliance within 20 working days, or in accordance with an undertaking to remedy (providing a longer period within which to address the non-compliance on a more systemic and sustained basis).	Enhance opportunity to undertake early dispute resolution.	Revise the report that is given to providers following audit to more comprehensively describe any non-compliance as identified issues against the student-centred journey; reduce the amount of non-essential text; and distinguish between minor non-compliances or areas for improvement and more significant non-compliances.
Implementation complete Continuous improvement focus	Implementation complete Continuous improvement focus	Implementation complete Continuous improvement focus
19	**20**	**21**
Notify government agencies of provider non-compliance after the provider has had the opportunity to respond to the audit report (except where there is significant and immediate risk to public funding, students or others as a result of the identified non-compliance).	In the short term, build on the information ASQA publishes in respect of regulatory decisions to include the main reasons for the decision, so as to improve transparency of decision-making.	In the long-term, publish a summary of ASQA's findings regarding the provider's performance against the standards.
Implementation complete Continuous improvement focus	Implementation Q3 2021–22	Implementation Q2 2023–24
22	**23**	**24**
Strengthen induction training for ASQA auditors and decision-makers, including to support consistent regulatory practice, decision-making and documentation.	Implement a formal program for continuing professional development for ASQA auditors and decision-makers.	Implement a program of internal quality assurance, including regular: • opportunities for moderation of audit outcomes and decision-making • internal review of audit reports and compliance outcomes.
Implementation complete Continuous improvement focus	Implementation Q2 2021–22	Implementation complete Continuous improvement focus

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