



SLG Terms of Reference

Terms of Reference

Purpose

The purpose of the ASQA Stakeholder Liaison Group (SLG) is to engage and consult with sector experts on ASQA's regulatory engagement and education and interactions with regulated entities as part of ASQA's Regulatory Operating Model.

Background

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

ASQA's strategic objective is to achieve its purpose over the next four years through its regulation and partnership with others. Our 2021–22 Corporate Plan commits us to engaging and partnering with stakeholders constructively and with mutual respect. This is underpinned by the principles of best practice outlined in the Australian Government's Regulator Performance Guide: continuous improvement and building trust; risk-based and data driven; and collaboration and engagement.

The Regulator Performance Guide sets out that best practice regulators are transparent and responsive communicators, implementing regulations in a modern and collaborative way, consulting effectively with affected key stakeholders at all stages of the regulatory cycle.

Objectives

Stakeholder engagement supports ASQA's strategic objective and government priorities for quality VET outcomes and continuous improvement of the regulatory framework.

The objective of the SLG is to inform and improve how ASQA interacts with providers in its pursuit of regulatory outcomes. SLG members contribute input and feedback about ASQA's interactions with regulated entities, specifically implementation of activities under the Regulatory Operating Model within ASQA's Regulatory Risk Framework. This includes:

- environmental scanning for provider and systemic risk (risk insights and intelligence) and other strategic review and evaluation activities
- regulatory education programs for providers and accredited course owners
- approaches to building provider capability for self-assurance and continuous improvement
- continuous improvement of monitoring, performance assessment and compliance approaches
- ASQA's Service Standards
- implementation of cost recovery
- communication with the sector in support of all of these activities.

In advancing these objectives, ASQA will also facilitate feedback loops between the SLG and the peak provider associations that comprise the Provider Roundtable, which is ASQA's primary forum for strategic engagement and consultation with the peak VET, dual sector and English language provider associations on regulatory design, reform and benefits realisation.

The SLG is not an ASQA governance committee, is consultative in nature, and is not empowered to make binding decisions or determinations.

Membership

Members of the SLG possess individual leadership and operational and VET sector expertise and experience. Members will have demonstrated motivation to the promotion of quality VET, and commitment to developing confidence in the broader VET sector and in ASQA as the national VET regulator. Membership of the SLG reflects the diversity of ASQA's regulated community (including the nature and modes of training delivery, scale, locations, diversity of student populations, and provider performance).

The SLG comprises:

- ASQA Deputy CEO (Chair)
- ASQA Executive Director, Regulatory Engagement and Education (Deputy Chair)
- ASQA senior executive/s and relevant personnel
- training providers that are broadly representative of the diversity of ASQA's regulated community, including the following cohorts:
 - two TAFE providers delivering training to domestic students – this may include a dual-sector institution
 - one community college
 - one enterprise Registered Training Organisation (RTO)
 - one school that is an RTO
 - up to seven private RTOs – this may include a provider registered on CRICOS to deliver ELICOS training
- one or more VET sector consultant/s.

The SLG membership is maintained through an Expression of Interest (EOI) process open to all ASQA-regulated VET providers and VET sector consultants. The term of membership is generally two years. To support the goal of continuity, ASQA will consider applications from existing members to extend their membership for an additional term.

The Chair may consider and agree to a replacement in the event that a member resigns or changes position. Substitute attendees for quarterly and subgroup meetings are permitted only as an exception and with the Chair's advance permission.

The SLG will undertake an annual review of its effectiveness, including its Terms of Reference.

Member conduct

Members agree to:

- respect the views of other members and constructively contribute to conversations
- advance the purpose of the SLG and not the concerns or interests of any particular training provider or organisation
- conduct themselves consistent with the ASQA SLG Member Code of Conduct (see Appendix A)
- disclose any matters that could be perceived to be, or are, conflicts of interest, or material changes that may potentially impact on their role on the SLG to the Chair on a confidential basis (see ASQA SLG Member Disclosure Declaration at Appendix B)
- respect the confidentiality of discussions and the information provided by other participants (Chatham House rule) and not communicate matters without the permission of the Chair, except for the purposes of feedback loops facilitated by ASQA between the SLG and the Provider Roundtable
- not speak to media about matters discussed by the SLG, and direct media queries to the ASQA Communications team via media@asqa.gov.au

Meetings

Frequency

The SLG meets formally four times a year with meetings set well in advance. Four weeks ahead of each meeting, members are invited to submit meeting agenda items (some of which may be handled out-of-session as appropriate). ASQA commits to providing relevant papers in support of agenda items.

Meetings will chiefly be held via a business communication platform hosted by government (such as Microsoft Teams).

Out-of-session activities

Additional meetings and SLG subgroups (working groups) may be convened as required. Information may also be circulated by ASQA out-of-session and members can request follow-up briefing meetings.

Communiqués

A draft Communiqué will be sent to SLG members for approval within a week of each meeting. The approved Communiqué will be released to the ASQA Provider Roundtable for information/reference, and published on the ASQA website, after which SLG members are encouraged to circulate it among their networks.

Minutes

Draft Minutes will be circulated within one week of each meeting for members' feedback. The draft Minutes will be revised to incorporate members' feedback and be confirmed at the subsequent meeting. The Minutes are a confidential record of the meeting.

Secretariat

ASQA will provide Secretariat services to the SLG.

SLG member correspondence and queries are processed through engage@asqa.gov.au

Appendix A: ASQA SLG Member Code of Conduct

As a member of the ASQA SLG, I acknowledge the Terms of Reference and agree to:

- particulate in good faith to contribute my sector insights, information and experience to support the objectives of the SLG
- behave honestly and with integrity in connection with my role on the SLG
- respect the views of others and treat members with respect and courtesy
- not disclose or distribute information that is discussed at SLG meetings unless permission is obtained from the SLG Chair, except for the purposes of feedback loops facilitated by ASQA between the SLG and the Provider Roundtable
- not engage with the media in relation to matters discussed by the SLG unless permission is obtained from the SLG Chair
- take reasonable steps to avoid any conflict of interest (real or apparent) and disclose to the Chair details of any personal interest in connection with the SLG (as per the ASQA SLG Member Disclosure Declaration)
- disclose material changes to their business operations, including adverse decisions by ASQA or other government agencies that have (real or apparent) impact on their role on the SLG (as per the ASQA SLG Member Disclosure Declaration at Appendix B)
- not improperly use inside information to gain, or seek to gain, a benefit or an advantage; or to cause, or to seek to cause, detriment to ASQA
- attend meetings and provide apologies with sufficient notice where attendance is not possible
- agree to ASQA publishing my name as an SLG member
- acknowledge that the SLG is consultative in nature and is not an ASQA governance or decision-making committee.

I understand that where an individual member breaches this Code of Conduct, the Chair may withdraw that individual's membership of the SLG.

Name			
Position title			
Organisation name			
Signature		Date	

Appendix B: ASQA SLG Member Disclosure Declaration

Members of SLG are expected to:

- take reasonable steps to avoid any conflict of interest (real or apparent) and disclose to the Chair details of any personal interest in connection with the SLG
- disclose material changes to the Chair relating to business operations, including adverse decisions by ASQA or other government agencies, that have (real or apparent) impacts on their role on the SLG.

The disclosure is considered and assessed by the Chair on a confidential basis.

The Chair will determine, on a case-by-case basis, the appropriate response, which may include asking the member to absent themselves from an upcoming meeting or for a period of time.

Without binding the regulator, all matters disclosed are confidential between the Chair and the member involved.

Name			
Position title			
Organisation name			
Signature		Date	

Privacy

ASQA is committed to protecting the privacy of your personal information. An overview of how ASQA handles your personal information, under the *Privacy Act 1988* (Privacy Act) and the Australian Privacy Principles (APPs), is provided at <https://www.asqa.gov.au/about/reporting-and-accountability/privacy-policy>