

# ASQA survey of RTOs and stakeholders 2013

## Report of overall findings

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# Table of contents

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Executive summary	1
Introduction	4
Methodology	4
Questionnaire	4
Data collection	4
Data analysis	5
Don't know and question non-response	5
Response and sample profile	6
RTO key findings	8
RTO: Regulatory interactions with ASQA	8
RTO: ASQA's performance during application interactions	9
RTO: Consultation and communication	16
RTO: ASQA Overall	28
Stakeholder key findings	29
Interacting with ASQA as a stakeholder	29
Stakeholder: Demonstration of ASQA's values	30
Stakeholder: Consultation and communication	31
Stakeholder: Regulatory decisions	33
Stakeholder: ASQA staff	34
Stakeholder: Being informed about ASQA	36
Stakeholder: ASQA overall	43
Conclusions	45

Australian Survey Research Group Pty Ltd is accredited under the AS ISO 20252 quality standard applying to market and social research.

This research project was carried out in compliance with the AS ISO 20252 quality standard.

# Executive summary

In July 2013, the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) conducted a study of its stakeholders and the training providers it regulates as part of a requirement to collect stakeholder feedback. ASQA engaged Australian Survey Research (ASR) to deploy and analyse a web survey of 4017 Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) and 198 stakeholders. The following types of stakeholders were invited to give feedback:

- Various government departments state and federal
- Industry associations
- Industry skills councils
- Employer peak bodies
- Employee associations, and
- Professional associations.

## Data collection

The 2013 RTO and Stakeholder web surveys were developed by both ASQA and ASR. The Australian Bureau of Statistics Statistical Clearing House approved the 2013 RTO survey. ASQA provided ASR with a full listing of all RTOs (n=4017) across Australia and the lists included each RTO's designated contact, their email address and details such as state and units on scope. The RTO survey was conducted as a census of ASQA's regulated training organisations. A total of 2581 RTOs responded which is a statistically representative sample and which reflects the population profile across a number of attributes. Further to this, ASQA provided ASR with a list of stakeholder names, organisations and contact details (n=198). A total of 90 stakeholders responded which is also a representative sample.

## Key findings

The RTO questionnaire contained 75 rated items which used a five-point rating scale, plus a number of multiple choice and open-ended questions. Of the 75 rated items, six scored below 3.0 (fair) on the five-point scale. This was in contrast to the majority given that 44 of the 75 items had 60% or more positive responses.

The Stakeholder survey contained 56 rated items which used a five point scale plus a number of multiple choice and open-ended questions. Of the rated items only no items scored below 3.0 (fair) on the five-point scale 32 of the 56 items had 60% or more positive responses.

## Highest and lowest scoring items

The two tables below display the highest and lowest scoring items from the RTO and stakeholder surveys. Note that high and low scores have been cut off at different points for the RTO and stakeholders surveys. The top ten highest scoring items are shown below for both surveys. The range of mean scores for the stakeholder survey was from a high of 4.5 to a low of 3.0 and was more positive when compared with the RTO survey. Mean scores for the RTO survey ranged from 4.1 to 2.6.

*Mean based on rating scale of 5= excellent to 1=very poor. Don't know / no answer excluded.*

RTOS HIGHER SCORING ITEMS	MEAN	STAKEHOLDERS HIGHER SCORING ITEMS	MEAN
ASQAnet: Ease of access	4.1	Industry Engagement Team: Courtesy of team members	4.5
Paying a fee or charge: Ease of making a payment	4.1	Staff: Courtesy	4.4
ASQA Fact sheets and FAQs: Helpful information	4.0	Respecting the privacy and confidentiality of organisations and individuals	4.4
ASQA Info line: Courtesy of staff answering	4.0	Speech by ASQA Commissioner or senior staff member Timely / not out-dated information	4.3

RTOS HIGHER SCORING ITEMS	MEAN	STAKEHOLDERS HIGHER SCORING ITEMS	MEAN
ASQA Fact sheets and FAQs: Timely information	4.0	Impartiality	4.2
ASQA Update: Timely information	4.0	Industry Engagement Team Knowledge of team members	4.2
ASQA email service: Courtesy of staff answering	4.0	Speech by ASQA Commissioner or senior staff member Insight that considered a wide range of issues	4.2
ASQA Website: Current / up-to-date material	4.0	Speech by ASQA Commissioner or senior staff member Useful information	4.2
ASQA Update: Helpful information	4.0	ASQA Update Helpful information	4.2
Paying a fee or charge: Options available to make a payment	4.0	Industry Engagement Team Quality of advice	4.2
Speech: Timely / not dated information	4.0		

Lower scoring items were those that rounded down to *fair* or below in both surveys and are displayed in the table below.

*Mean based on rating scale of 5= excellent to 1=very poor. Don't know / no answer excluded.*

RTO LOWER SCORING SURVEY ITEM	MEAN	STAKEHOLDER LOWER SCORING SURVEY ITEM	MEAN
ASQA Info line: Complete answers	3.4	ASQA email service Complete answers (did not have to email back)	3.4
Renewal of RTO registration: Any follow up assistance that was required	3.4	Acts on complaints received about training providers	3.4
Provides sufficient contact information so that my organisation can contact / recontact an ASQA staff member	3.4	Acts on stakeholder feedback	3.4
Change of scope of RTO registration: Any follow up assistance that was required	3.4	ASQA Info line Complete answers (did not have to call back)	3.2
Change of scope of CRICOS registration: Helpfulness of information about making applications on ASQA's website	3.4	Minimises the effort to get an answer to a question	3.2
Renewal of CRICOS registration: Helpfulness of information about making applications on ASQA's website	3.4	Acts on complaints received about its own performance	3.1
Minimises the effort to get an answer to a question	3.3		
Other application: Any follow up assistance that was required	3.3		
Other application: The time ASQA took to act on the application	3.0		
Initial RTO registration: The time ASQA took to act on the application	3.0		
Initial CRICOS registration: Any follow-up assistance that was required	3.0		
Decision reconsidered: Helpfulness of information about making these types of applications on ASQA's website	2.9		
Change of scope of CRICOS registration: The time ASQA took to act on the application	2.8		
Renewal of CRICOS registration: The time ASQA took to act on the application	2.8		
Decision reconsidered: Any follow-up assistance that was required	2.6		
Decision reconsidered: The time ASQA took to act on your application	2.6		
Initial CRICOS registration: The time	2.6		

RTO LOWER SCORING SURVEY ITEM	MEAN	STAKEHOLDER LOWER SCORING SURVEY ITEM	MEAN
ASQA took to act on the application			

### *Stakeholder survey year comparison*

The 2012 stakeholder survey yielded a very large number of don't know / NA responses. When comparing results between years the proportion of respondents who indicated don't know or no answer has decreased dramatically for most items. The mean scores between periods showed relatively small changes. However there were six statistically significantly different item scores between the 2012 and 2013 surveys and all 2013 mean scores on these items were higher than in 2012. The most notable improvements were evident in staff demonstrating ASQA values.

### *Conclusions*

Overall ASQA is seen as an effective regulator. Staff courtesy is a strength and RTOs are willing to engage with ASQA above and beyond their mandatory obligations. The areas where respondents believe ASQA could improve were:

- Timeliness of response by ASQA was too slow
- The way RTOs communicate with ASQA. RTOs would prefer a more tailored / personalised service or a case manager type relationship with ASQA.
- ASQA's image is perceived negatively
- Staff knowledge especially Info line staff.

# Introduction

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In July 2013, the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) conducted a study of its stakeholders and the training providers it regulates as part of a requirement to collect stakeholder feedback. ASQA engaged Australian Survey Research (ASR) to deploy and analyse web surveys of all Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) and key industry stakeholders including government departments, industry councils and employer representatives.

This report outlines the methodology used to conduct and analyse the two surveys as well as key findings.

Key findings are presented from an overall perspective, as well as by survey type (RTO or stakeholder). Historical comparison of stakeholder results for 2013 and 2012 on comparable items is also presented and discussed.

## Methodology

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This section outlines how the two surveys were developed and tested, how survey participants were identified and how the survey was administered and analysed.

### Questionnaire

Questionnaires were developed to gather feedback from two target audiences: RTOs and stakeholders. Together, ASQA and ASR developed the content of two web questionnaires. In 2012, ASQA conducted a small stakeholder survey of 72 respondents and some questions were drawn from that survey. Other questions were based on ASQA's published documents including its current strategic and operating plans and corporate operating plan requirements under its governing legislation. Some questions were common to both questionnaires while some were unique to a particular group.

Note that RTO audits were out of scope for the RTO survey, as audit feedback is collected in another way. RTO respondents were clearly advised that audits were out of scope in this survey.

Both the RTO and stakeholder web questionnaires were loaded into ASR's proprietary web surveying tool, SurveyManager, and hosted on ASR's internet servers located in a high security data centre in Melbourne's CBD.

The RTO questionnaire was pilot tested with around 12 volunteer RTOs and as a result of their feedback, refinements were made to the survey instrument.

In June 2013, the Australian Bureau of Statistics Statistical Clearing House approved the RTO survey in concept and execution, including the questionnaire.

### Data collection

ASQA provided ASR with a full listing of all RTOs (n=4017) across Australia and the lists included each RTO's designated contact, their email address and details such as state and units on scope. The RTO survey was conducted as a census of ASQA's regulated training organisations.

Further to this, ASQA provided ASR with a list of stakeholder names, organisations and contact details (n=198). The following types of stakeholders were invited to give feedback:

- Various government departments state and federal
- Industry associations
- Industry skills councils
- Employer peak bodies
- Employee associations, and
- Professional associations.

Prior to going live with the full survey, ASQA Chief Commissioner, Chris Robinson, emailed a letter to the CEOs of all RTOs and to all stakeholders, advising them of the survey. Soon after, ASR sent an email invitation to a contact within each RTO and to each stakeholder. The email invitation contained a unique organisational hyperlink to access the recipient's questionnaire.

ASR tracked the response rate and sent two targeted reminder emails to all non-responders in both surveys. When answering, respondents were asked to focus on ASQA's performance in the 2012/2013 financial year. Both questionnaires were live and in field from 3 July to 17 July 2013. In ASR's experience of doing numerous web surveys of this type, RTOs responded extremely quickly and most fully answered the questionnaire presented to them.

## Data analysis

Results were analysed to produce mean scores (averages) and frequency distributions. Means have been calculated using only the number of respondents who chose a rating point answer. In other words *don't know*, *not applicable* and *no answers* (blank) have been excluded from statistical calculations.

The rating scale used to assess most items is displayed in the table below. It is important to understand what the numbers represent because results subsequently described in the report are presented in numeric form only. For example, a mean (average) score of 4.0 indicates that, overall, respondents agreed that ASQA was performing at a *good* level on a particular item.

RATING SCALE DESCRIPTION	ASSIGNED NUMERIC VALUE
Excellent	5
Good	4
Fair	3
Poor	2
Very poor	1

## Don't know and question non-response

Sometimes what people don't know is as important to understand as the opinions they do have. There are some key reasons why people choose a *don't know* option as an answer to a question, or choosing not to answer a question:

- They don't have **enough experience** or evidence to offer an opinion. As ASQA has only been in operation for just over 12 months, it is possible that a considerable proportion of respondents have answered *don't know* to some items, particularly in the stakeholder survey. When looking at the frequency distribution charts later in this report, and understanding that the nature of some questions implies knowledge of a particular activity, the level of *don't knows* is not surprising.
- Answering might **incriminate** the respondent. This is much less likely to be the case in this survey, but it is still a reason for answering *don't know* when people are answering about themselves.
- Respondents are **being cautious** and taking a low-risk option. This may be the case if a respondent believes that they might be identified at a later stage, that is, their identity and answers are not confidential.
- People genuinely might **not remember**.

ASR's sense in this survey, and reinforced by a number of free text comments, is that in most cases a lack of an answer is about a lack of experience or evidence. It gives ASQA some useful information about where it can focus its communication activities. If ASQA wants its stakeholders and RTOs to have a view on certain items, it may need to inform them more about its activities in particular areas.

It also means that the proportion of *don't know* answers may be useful to track in future, similar surveys. The more people who are able to offer an opinion in responding to a question demonstrates that they have the experience and or evidence on which to base and express an opinion—usually a good thing. The number of responses to a question may be as important as the overall response rate.

## Response and sample profile

A total of 2581 RTOs responded to the survey yielding a **response rate of 64%**. The sample is statistically representative of the RTO population at the 95% confidence level and the  $\pm 1\%$  confidence interval (see note below explaining confidence interval and level). This is lower (more rigorous and therefore better) than an acceptable scientific confidence interval, normally  $\pm 5\%$ , and the market research acceptable confidence interval of  $\pm 10\%$ .

A total of 90 stakeholders answered the survey achieving a **response rate of 45%**. The results for the stakeholder survey are representative at the  $\pm 7\%$  confidence interval.

Representativeness of a sample is usually assessed at a 95% confidence level (accuracy) and a  $\pm 5\%$  confidence interval (precision).

The **confidence level** tells you how sure you can be. It is expressed as a percentage and represents how often the true percentage of the population who would pick an answer lies within the confidence interval. The 95% confidence level means you can be 95% certain; the 99% confidence level means you can be 99% certain. Most researchers use the 95% confidence level.

The **confidence interval** is the plus-or-minus figure usually reported in newspaper or television opinion poll results. For example, if you use a confidence interval of 4 and 47% of your sample picks an answer, you can be "sure" that if you had asked the question of the entire relevant population between 43% (47-4) and 51% (47+4) would have picked that answer.

Reference: [www.surveysystem.com/sscalc.htm](http://www.surveysystem.com/sscalc.htm)

The RTO population and sample profiles have been compared by state, size and units on scope to identify if any sub-groups were over/under-represented in the response set. The response profiles in the RTO survey sample follow similar patterns to those in the population. As a result, no weighting has been applied to the sample.

Examination of the profile for units on scope (% of responses for each sector) is similar for all groups. Note that the confidence intervals for all units are under  $\pm 5\%$ . It means that results are statistically representative for all subgroups.

The pattern of results by state is also comparable. However the confidence intervals for the smaller states/territories such as Tasmania and the Northern Territory are quite high. As such, the results for these smaller groups should be treated with caution and can be viewed as indicative only.

There was no information in the population regarding number of students. The table and chart below displaying number of students shows results from the survey sample only.

The response sample and population profiles are displayed in the following tables.

UNITS ON SCOPE	RESPONSE SAMPLE		RTO POPULATION		CONFIDENCE INTERVAL
	<i>Freq</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Freq</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>±%</i>
0 units	1417	54.9	2329	58.0	1.6
1-10 units	840	32.5	1234	30.7	1.9
11-20 units	195	7.6	264	6.6	3.6
20+ units	129	5.0	190	4.7	4.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>2581</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>4017</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>1.15</b>



STATE	RESPONSE SAMPLE		RTO POPULATION		CONFIDENCE INTERVAL
	<i>Freq</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Freq</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>±%</i>
ACT	81	3.1	129	3.2	6.7
NSW	748	29.0	1138	28.3	2.1
NT	36	1.4	58	1.4	10.2
QLD	915	35.5	1527	38.0	2.1
SA	187	7.2	279	6.9	4.1
TAS	57	2.2	92	2.3	8.1
VIC	422	16.4	612	15.2	2.7
WA	135	5.2	182	4.5	4.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>2581</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>4017</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>1.15</b>

NUMBER OF RTO STUDENTS	RESPONSE SAMPLE	
	<i>Freq</i>	<i>%</i>
More than 500	685	26.5
201-500	552	21.4
51-200	719	27.9
1-50	583	22.6
No answer	42	1.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>2581</b>	<b>100.0</b>

## RTO key findings

This section outlines the key findings from the RTO survey. For each item, mean scores are presented along with a frequency distribution. Results are presented by topic, in the same order as presented to respondents in the survey. The most common themes within free text comments are discussed.

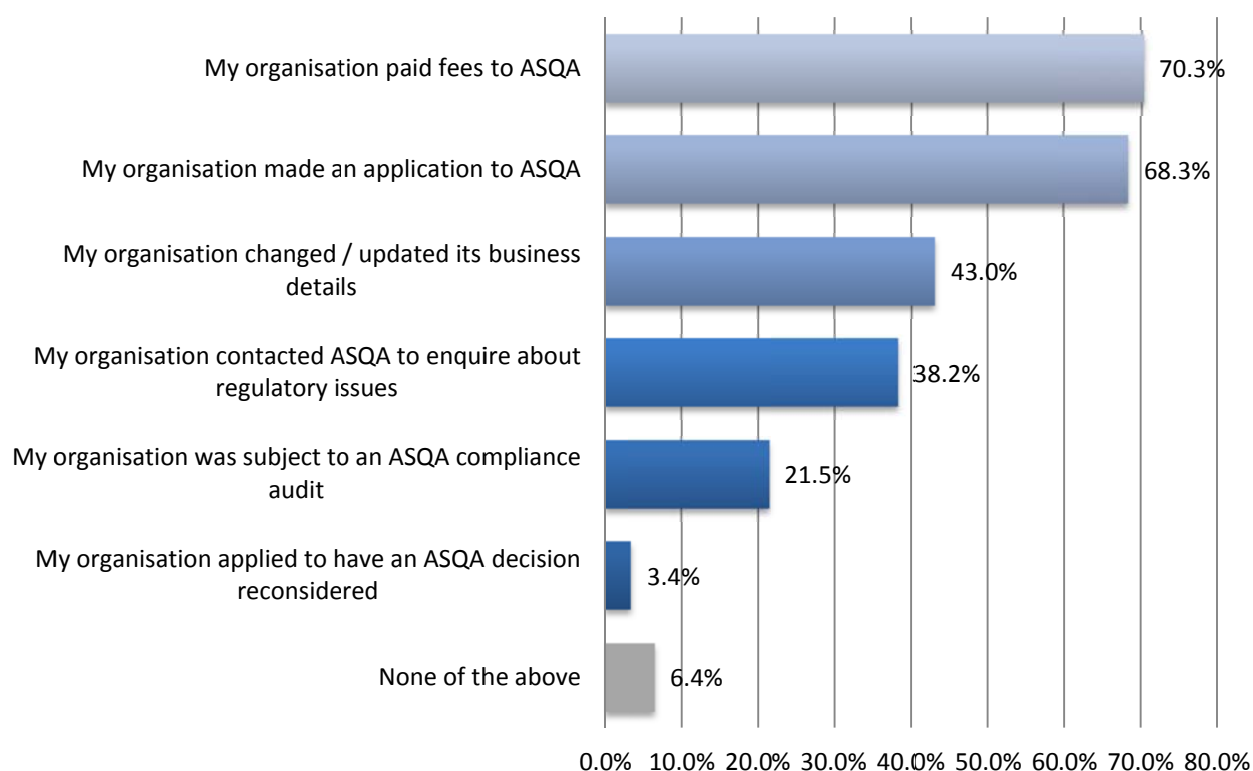
Overall, in 59% of rated items, 60% or more of respondents selected *good* or *excellent* as their answer.

### RTO: Regulatory interactions with ASQA

The table below displays the types of regulatory issue interactions organisations had with ASQA in 2012/2013.

#### RTO: Types of interactions with ASQA in 2012/2013 about regulatory issues

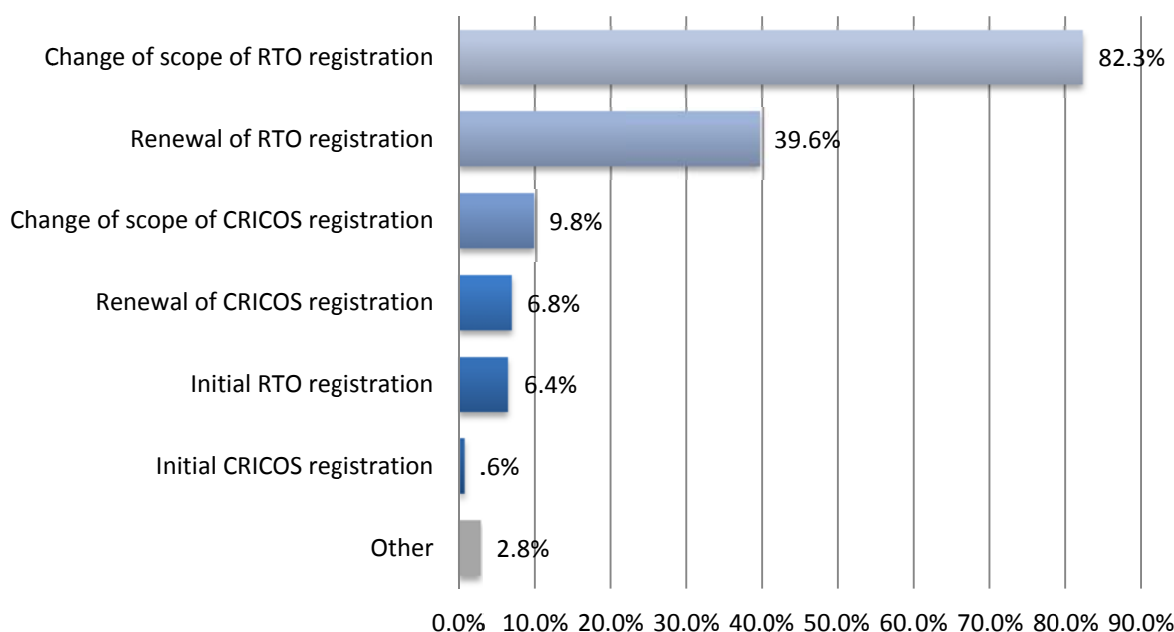
Multiple answers allowed; % based on n=2581



Respondents who had made an application to ASQA (n=1764) were then asked to specify the type of interaction their application related to. The results from this question were used within the survey to drive the presentation of other questions. Only those who indicated having a specific interaction, eg initial RTO registration, were asked to rate it.

### RTO: Types of applications made to ASQA in 2012/2013

multiple answers allowed % based on n=1764



### RTO: ASQA's performance during application interactions

This section outlines RTOs' views of the interactions they had with ASQA while making applications. The following series of tables and charts display the mean scores and frequency distributions describing various aspects of these interactions.

Overall, clear and easy to understand application forms is a key strength for ASQA. Clear and easy forms was the highest rated aspect of all interactions as shown in the table below and it was consistently rated highly regardless of interaction type.

Mean based on rating scale of 5= excellent to 1=very poor. Don't know / no answer excluded.

RTO: ASPECT OF INTERACTION— REGISTRATION APPLICATIONS	MEAN SCORES FOR DIFFERENT REGISTRATIONS						
	INITIAL RTO n=113	INITIAL CRICOS n=11	RENEW RTO n=699	RENEW CRICOS n=120	CHANGE SCOPE RTO n=1452	CHANGE SCOPE CRICOS n=172	OTHER APPL n=49
ASQA's application form was clear and easy to understand	3.8	3.7	3.8	3.6	3.9	3.6	3.5
Helpfulness of information about making applications on ASQA's website	3.5	3.2	3.6	3.4	3.6	3.1	3.2
Any follow up assistance that was required	3.5	3.0	3.4	3.0	3.4	3.2	3.3
The time ASQA took to act on the application	3.0	2.6	3.2	2.8	3.1	2.8	3.0

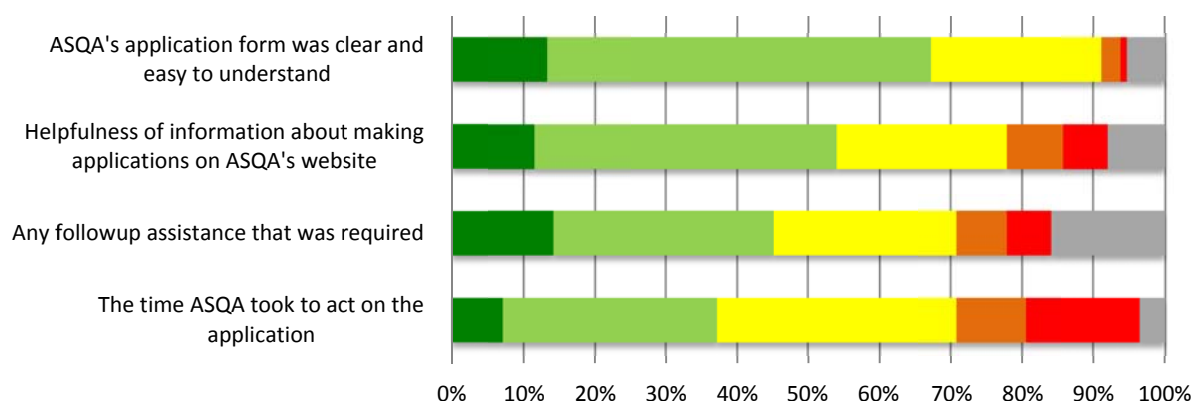
The following charts show the frequency distribution of answers (proportion of respondents choosing a particular answer) for each application type.

When reading the charts it is important to note that each chart has been sorted by the proportion of positive responses and is presented in descending order. The *Don't know or NA* was offered as a single

answer in the questionnaire and *No answer* refers to those respondents who did not select any answer. The scores for *Don't know or NA* and *No answer* have been combined in all charts.

ASQA believes the high proportion of don't know/ NA in the series of charts below for the item *Any follow up assistance that was required* relates to a respondents' lack of experience or the one off nature of their application.

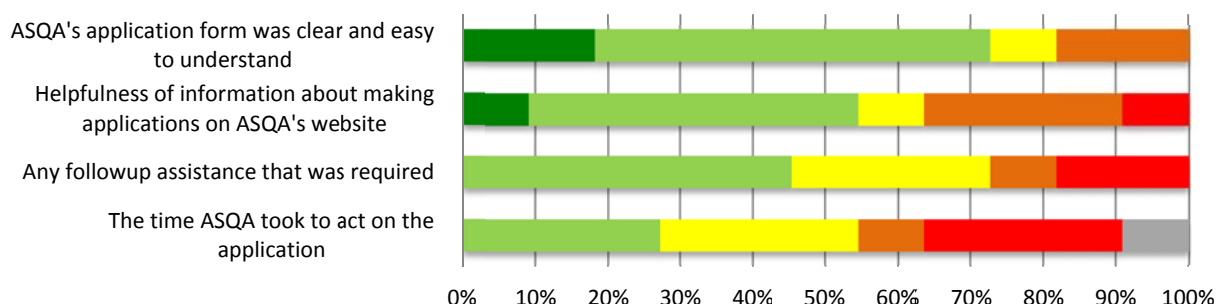
**RTO: Applying for initial RTO registration**  
*% of respondents choosing a rating point, n=113*



	The time ASQA took to act on the application	Any followup assistance that was required	Helpfulness of information about making applications on ASQA's website	ASQA's application form was clear and easy to understand
■ Excellent	7.1	14.2	11.5	13.3
■ Good	30.1	31.0	42.5	54.0
■ Fair	33.6	25.7	23.9	23.9
■ Poor	9.7	7.1	8.0	2.7
■ Very poor	15.9	6.2	6.2	.9
■ Don't know or NA or No answer	3.5	15.9	8.0	5.3

## RTO: Applying for initial CRICOS registration

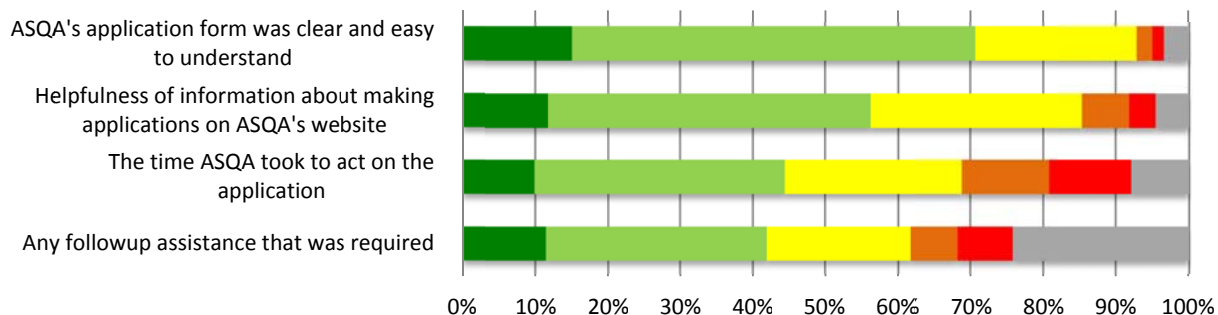
% of respondents choosing a rating point, n=11



	The time ASQA took to act on the application	Any followup assistance that was required	Helpfulness of information about making applications on ASQA's website	ASQA's application form was clear and easy to understand
■ Excellent	0.0	0.0	9.1	18.2
■ Good	27.3	45.5	45.5	54.5
■ Fair	27.3	27.3	9.1	9.1
■ Poor	9.1	9.1	27.3	18.2
■ Very poor	27.3	18.2	9.1	0.0
■ Don't know or NA or No answer	9.1	0.0	0.0	0.0

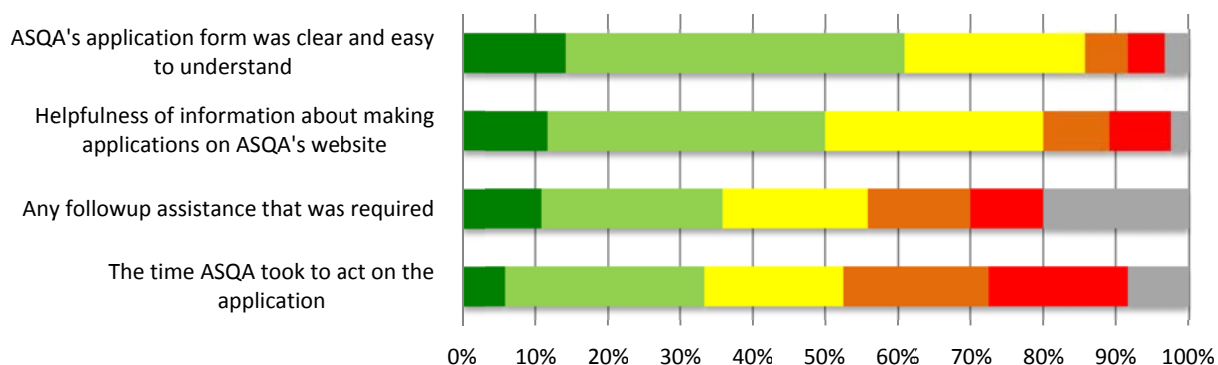
## RTO: Renewing RTO registration

% of respondents choosing a rating point, n=113



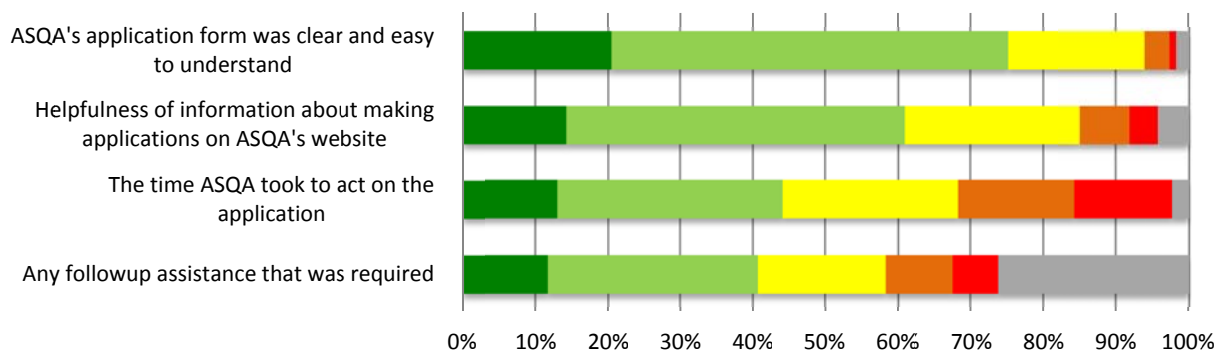
	Any followup assistance that was required	The time ASQA took to act on the application	Helpfulness of information about making applications on ASQA's website	ASQA's application form was clear and easy to understand
■ Excellent	11.4	9.9	11.7	15.0
■ Good	30.5	34.6	44.5	55.7
■ Fair	19.7	24.3	29.2	22.2
■ Poor	6.6	12.0	6.4	2.1
■ Very poor	7.6	11.3	3.6	1.6
■ Don't know or NA or No answer	24.2	7.9	4.6	3.4

**RTO: Renewing CRICOS registration**  
*% of respondents choosing a rating point, n=120*



	The time ASQA took to act on the application	Any followup assistance that was required	Helpfulness of information about making applications on ASQA's website	ASQA's application form was clear and easy to understand
■ Excellent	5.8	10.8	11.7	14.2
■ Good	27.5	25.0	38.3	46.7
■ Fair	19.2	20.0	30.0	25.0
■ Poor	20.0	14.2	9.2	5.8
■ Very poor	19.2	10.0	8.3	5.0
■ Don't know or NA or No answer	8.3	20.0	2.5	3.3

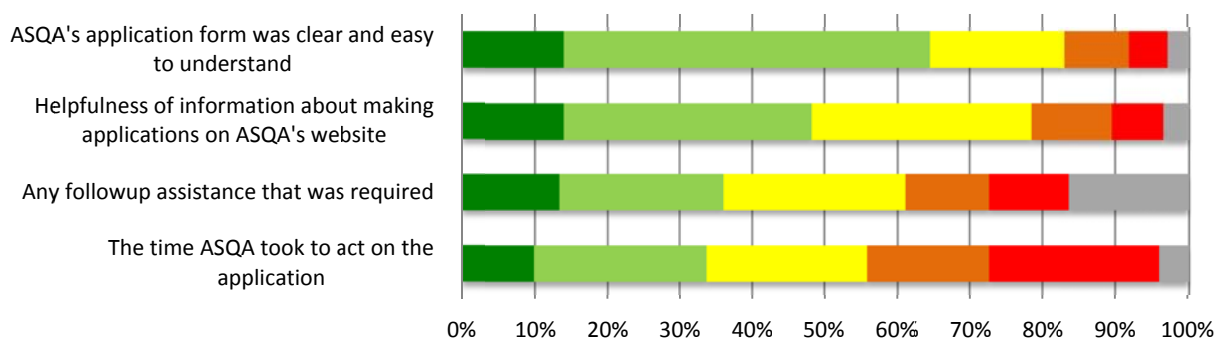
**RTO: Application to change scope of RTO registration**  
*% of respondents choosing a rating point, n=1452*



	Any followup assistance that was required	The time ASQA took to act on the application	Helpfulness of information about making applications on ASQA's website	ASQA's application form was clear and easy to understand
■ Excellent	11.7	13.0	14.3	20.5
■ Good	29.0	31.2	46.6	54.8
■ Fair	17.6	24.1	24.2	18.7
■ Poor	9.3	16.0	6.7	3.4
■ Very poor	6.3	13.3	3.9	.9
■ Don't know or NA or No answer	26.2	2.3	4.3	1.8

### RTO: Application to change scope of CRICOS registration

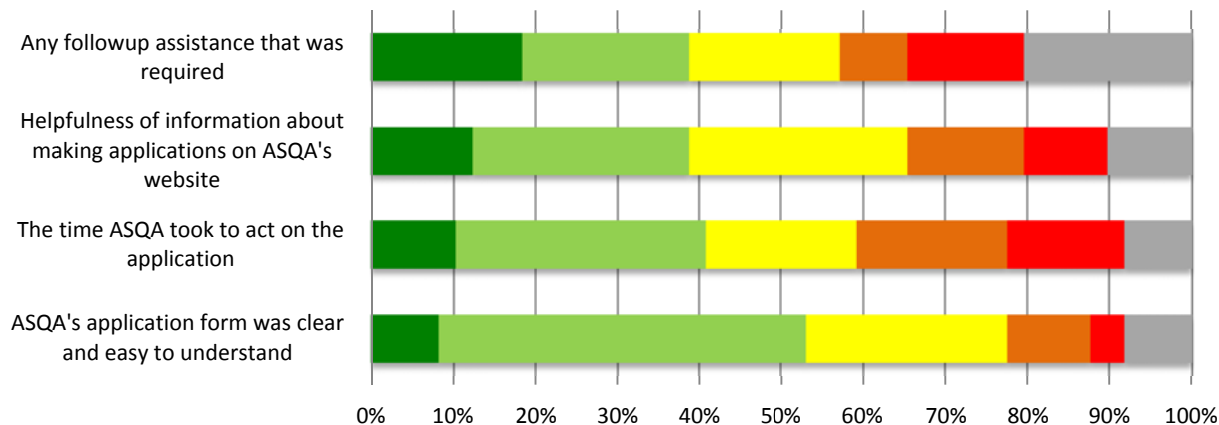
% of respondents choosing a rating point, n=172



	The time ASQA took to act on the application	Any followup assistance that was required	Helpfulness of information about making applications on ASQA's website	ASQA's application form was clear and easy to understand
■ Excellent	9.9	13.4	14.0	14.0
■ Good	23.8	22.7	34.3	50.6
■ Fair	22.1	25.0	30.2	18.6
■ Poor	16.9	11.6	11.0	8.7
■ Very poor	23.3	11.0	7.0	5.2
■ Don't know or NA or No answer	4.1	16.3	3.5	2.9

### RTO: Other types of applications

% of respondents choosing a rating point, n=49



	ASQA's application form was clear and easy to understand	The time ASQA took to act on the application	Helpfulness of information about making applications on ASQA's website	Any followup assistance that was required
■ Excellent	8.2	10.2	12.2	18.4
■ Good	44.9	30.6	26.5	20.4
■ Fair	24.5	18.4	26.5	18.4
■ Poor	10.2	18.4	14.3	8.2
■ Very poor	4.1	14.3	10.2	14.3
■ Don't know or NA or No answer	8.2	8.2	10.2	20.4

## RTO: Application to have an ASQA decision reconsidered

All mean scores were below *fair* on the rating scale. Note the very small n count for this item.

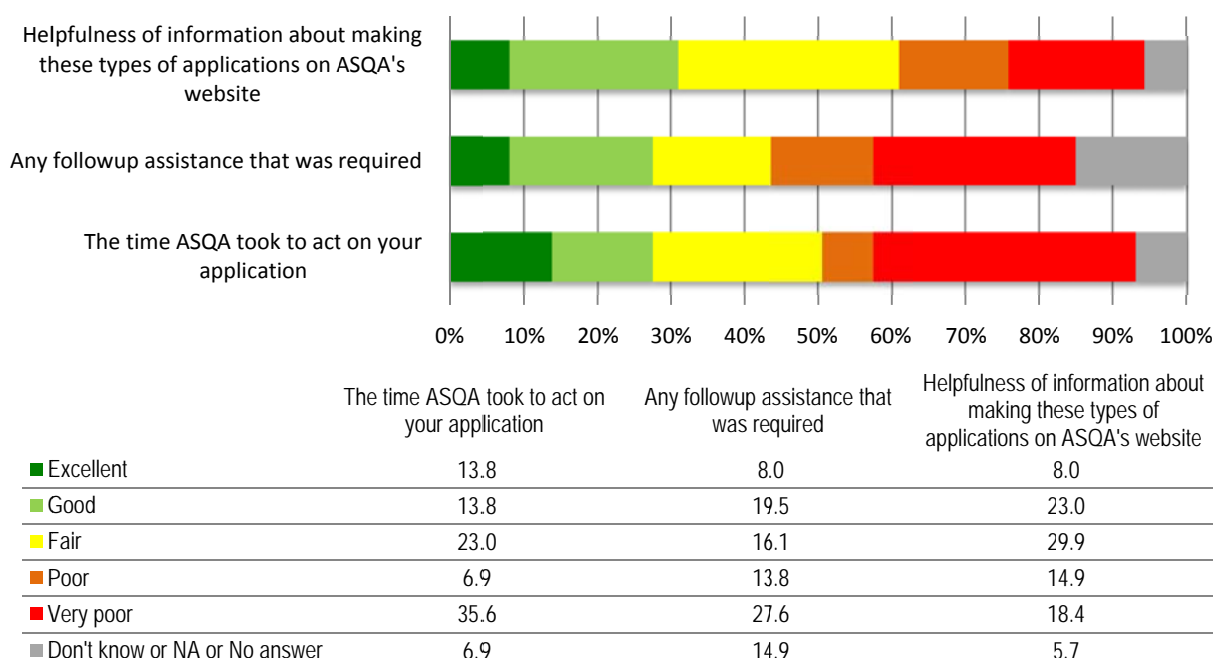
Mean based on rating scale of 5= excellent to 1=very poor. Don't know / no answer excluded.

RTO: APPLICATION TO HAVE ASQA DECISION RECONSIDERED n=87		MEAN
Helpfulness of information about making these types of applications on ASQA's website		2.9
Any follow up assistance that was required		2.6
The time ASQA took to act on your application		2.6

While many respondents rated ASQA poorly, the frequency distribution chart below shows that around a quarter of respondents were satisfied with ASQA's performance in these areas.

### RTO: Applying to have ASQA decision reconsidered

% of respondents choosing a rating point, n=87





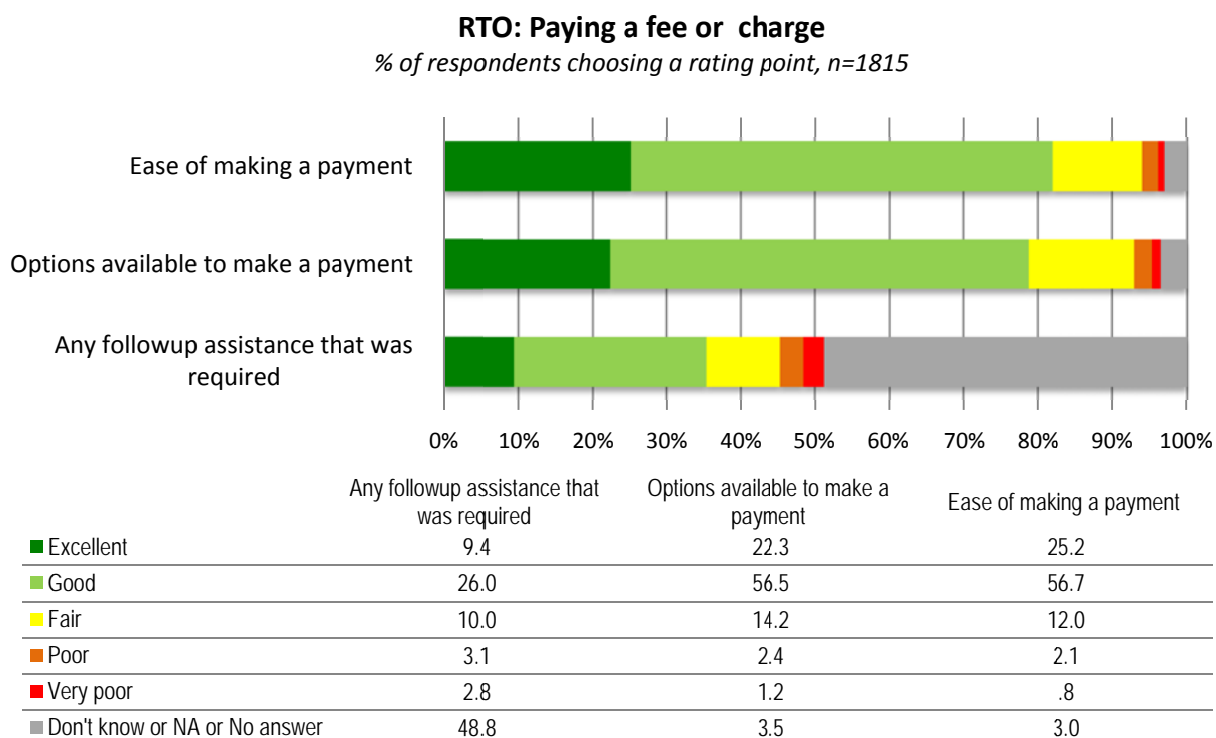
## RTO: Paying a fee or charge

Paying a fee or charge was the most common type of RTO interaction and the mean scores for the three aspects of paying a fee/charge were all fairly high. Refer to the table below.

Mean based on rating scale of 5= excellent to 1=very poor. Don't know / no answer excluded.

RTO: PAYING A FEE OR CHARGE n=1815	MEAN
Ease of making a payment	4.1
Options available to make a payment	4.0
Any follow up assistance that was required	3.7

While the proportion of *Don't know/not applicable or no answers* for the item *Any follow up assistance that was required* was very large (49%), this could be attributed to the on-off or infrequent nature of paying fees and charges. In other words, probably little follow up was required in many cases. If *don't know/not applicable or no answers* scores are excluded from calculating the percentage of positive scores, the percentage of positive scores increases from 35% (as seen in the chart below) to 69% which is a fairly good result.



## RTO: Changing or updating business details

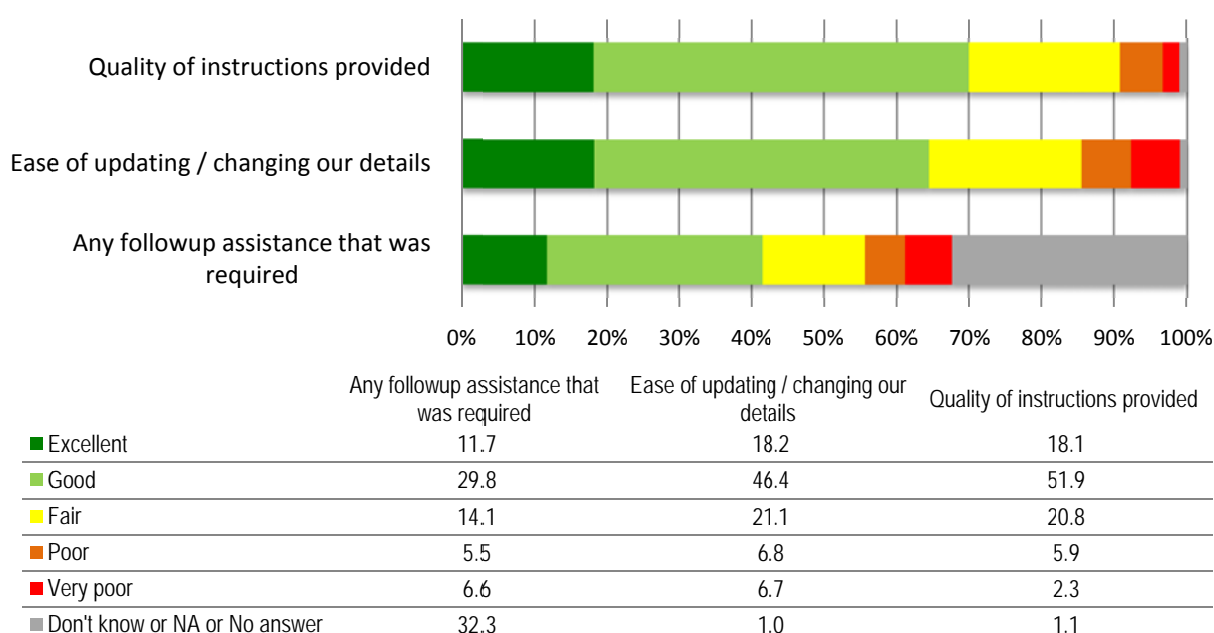
Mean scores for aspects of this application are presented in the table below. Quality of instructions was rated on average as *good* but some respondents indicated that changing details could be improved, as could follow up assistance.

Mean based on rating scale of 5= excellent to 1=very poor. Don't know / no answer excluded.

CHANGING OR UPDATING BUSINESS DETAILS n=1111	MEAN
Quality of instructions provided	3.8
Ease of updating / changing our details	3.6
Any follow up assistance that was required	3.5

### RTO: Changing or updating business details

% of respondents choosing a rating point, n=1111



## RTO: Consultation and communication

This topic focused on ASQA's behaviour in terms of communicating with RTOs and mean scores for items are presented below. Provision of timely information about changes was rated on average as *good* but has some room for improvement both in terms of timeliness and method.

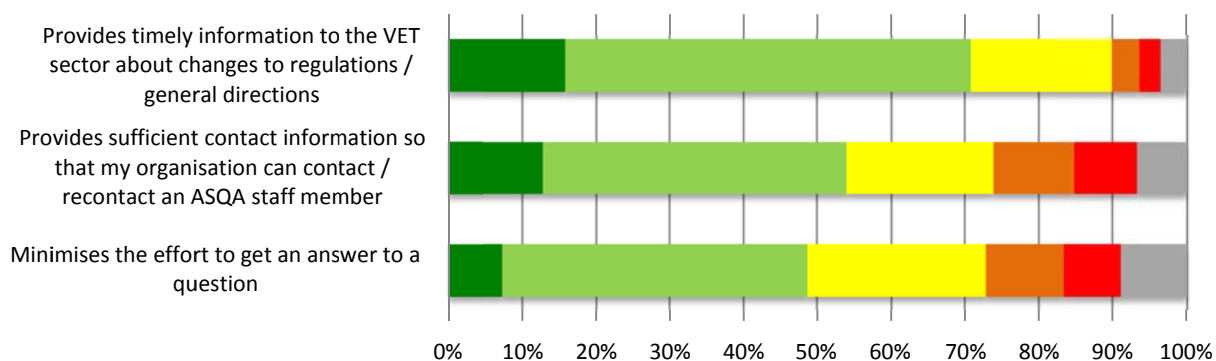
Mean based on rating scale of 5= excellent to 1=very poor. Don't know / no answer excluded.

RTO: CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION n=2581	MEAN
ASQA provides timely information to the VET sector in general about changes to regulations / general directions	3.8
ASQA provides sufficient contact information so that I or my organisation can contact / recontact an ASQA staff member if necessary	3.4
ASQA minimises the effort to get an answer to a question	3.3

Providing timely information to the VET sector about changes is the only item in the survey to achieve a positive rating above 60% from RTOs. See chart below.

## RTO: Communication and consultation

% of respondents choosing a rating point, n=2581



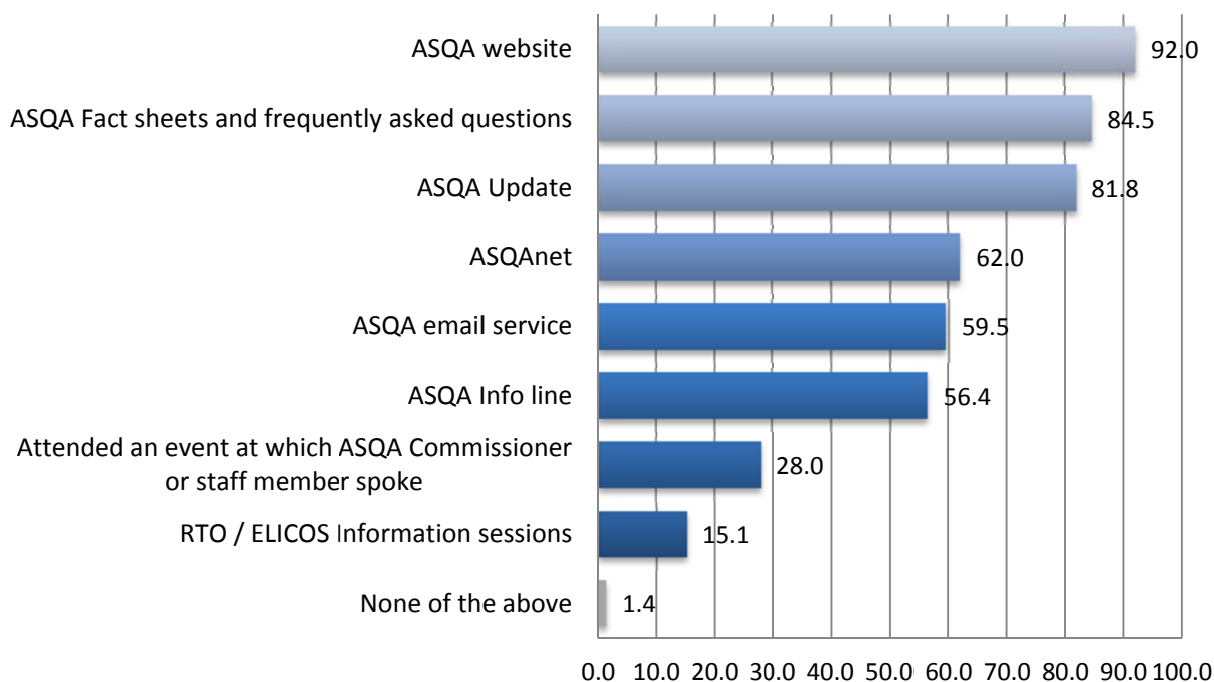
	Minimises the effort to get an answer to a question	Provides sufficient contact information so that my organisation can contact / recontact an ASQA staff member	Provides timely information to the VET sector about changes to regulations / general directions
■ Excellent	7.2	12.7	15.8
■ Good	41.5	41.2	55.1
■ Fair	24.1	19.9	19.1
■ Poor	10.7	11.0	3.7
■ Very poor	7.6	8.4	2.8
■ Don't know or NA or No answer	8.9	6.7	3.6

## RTO: Being informed by ASQA

Respondents were asked to indicate which of ASQA's channels of information they had used in the past 12 months. See chart below. Respondents were then asked to rate the performance of each source they had used.

### RTO: ASQA information channels used by RTOs

Multiple answers allowed; % based on n=2581



## RTO: ASQA's fact sheets and FAQs

A majority of respondents had used ASQA's fact sheets and FAQs (85%) in the previous 12 months. All items in the table below averaged around the *good* rating point and results follow a similar pattern to those observed in the stakeholder survey. Timeliness of written information such as fact sheets, FAQs and ASQA Update was rated highly when compared with timeliness of action and response from ASQA.

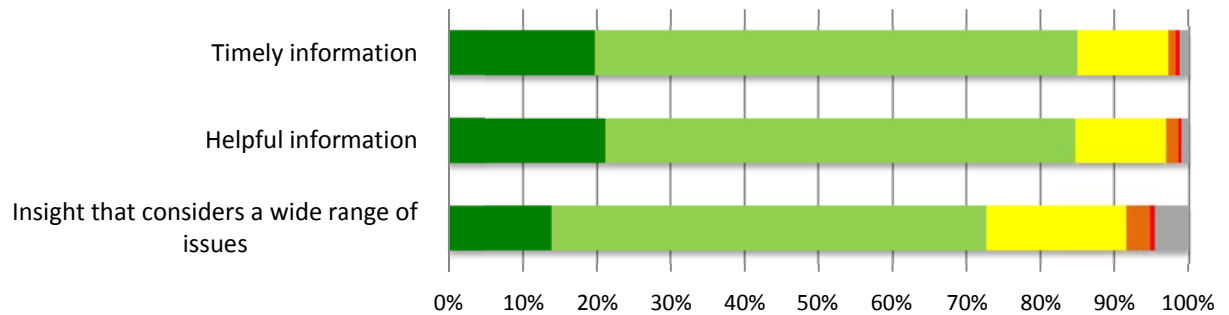
Mean based on rating scale of 5= excellent to 1=very poor. Don't know / no answer excluded.

RTO: ASQA FACT SHEETS AND FAQs n=2181		MEAN
Helpful information		4.0
Timely information		4.0
Insight that considers a wide range of issues		3.9

The frequency distribution chart below shows very few negative responses.

## RTO: ASQA fact sheets and FAQs

% of respondents choosing a rating point, n=2181



	Insight that considers a wide range of issues	Helpful information	Timely information
■ Excellent	13.8	21.1	19.7
■ Good	58.9	63.7	65.4
■ Fair	18.9	12.1	12.1
■ Poor	3.2	1.7	1.0
■ Very poor	.6	.4	.5
■ Don't know or NA or No answer	4.6	1.1	1.3

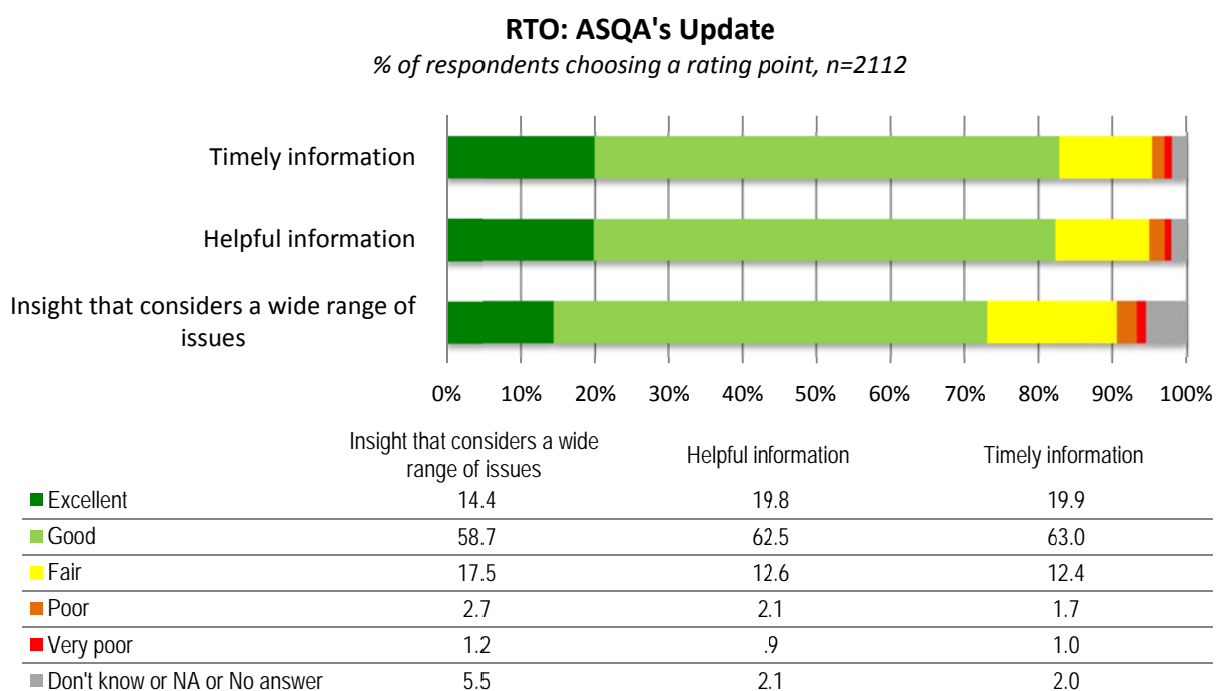
## RTO: ASQA Update

ASQA's Update was positively rated, with all items achieving an average *good* score.

Mean based on rating scale of 5= excellent to 1=very poor. Don't know / no answer excluded.

RTO: ASQA UPDATE n=2112	MEAN
Helpful information	4.0
Timely information	4.0
Insight that considers a wide range of issues	3.9

The frequency distribution chart below shows the strong positive response for this channel.

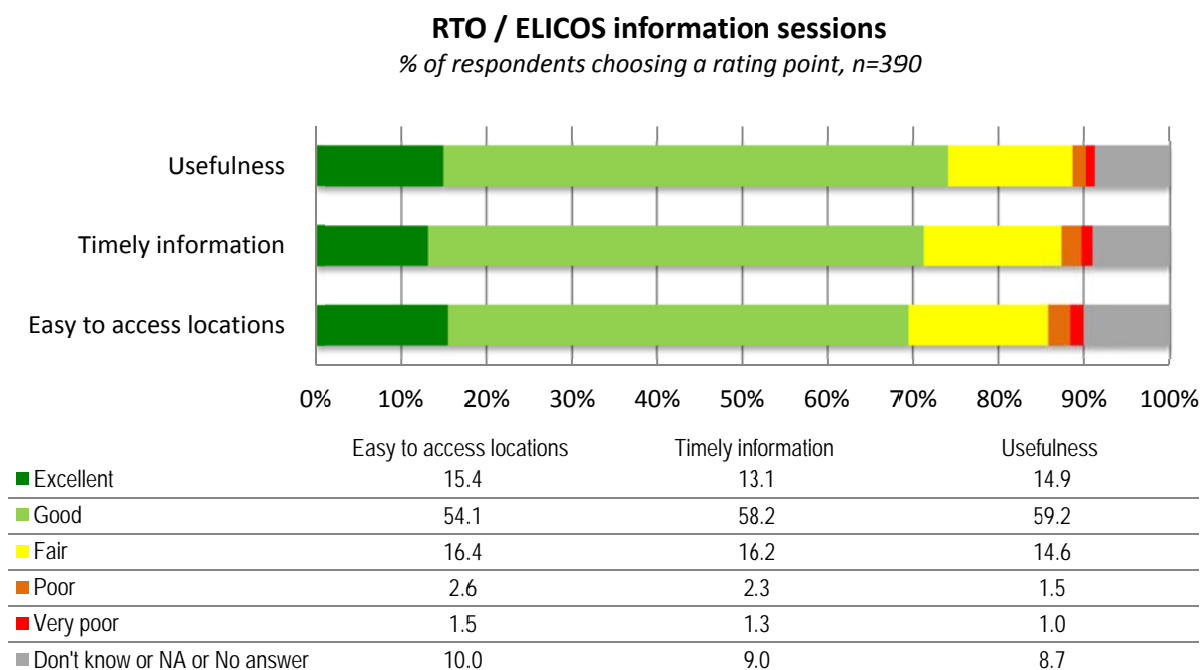


## ASQA's RTO/ELICOS information sessions

Mean scores for each item in this topic showed were very similar and all averaged around the *good* score.

Mean based on rating scale of 5= excellent to 1=very poor. Don't know / no answer excluded.

RTO/ELICOS information sessions n=390	MEAN
Easy access to locations	3.9
Timely information	3.9
Usefulness	3.9



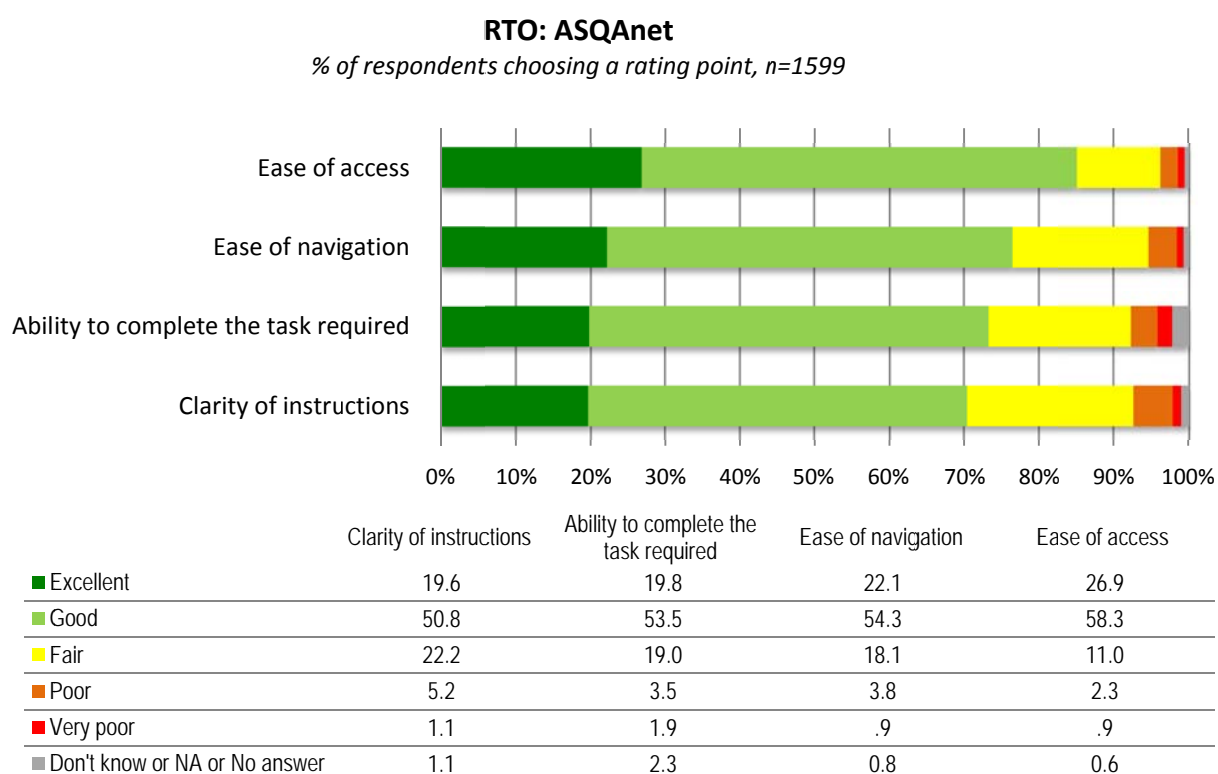
## RTO: ASQAnet

On average, ASQAnet was rated positively. Ease of access is the highest rated item in the RTO survey.

Mean based on rating scale of 5= excellent to 1=very poor. Don't know / no answer excluded.

RTO: ASQAnet n=1599	MEAN
Ease of access	4.1
Ease of navigation	3.9
Ability to complete the task require	3.9
Clarity of instructions	3.8

There are very few negative scores in the frequency distribution chart below.

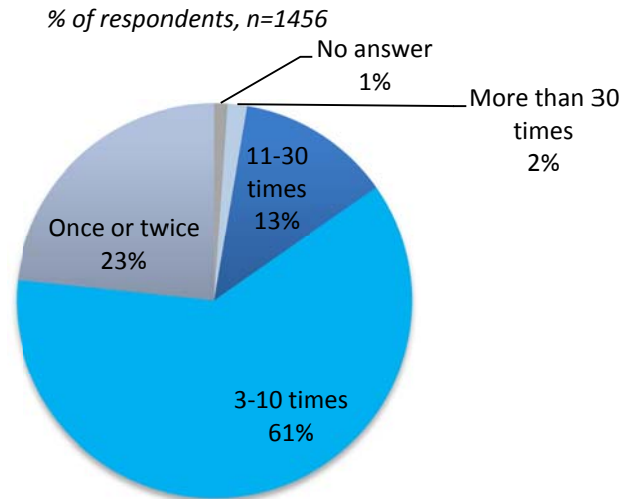




## RTO: ASQA Info line

Respondents were asked to indicate how many times they had used the Info line in the 2012/2013 financial year. See chart below.

### RTO: Number of times ASQA Info line was contacted in 2012/2013

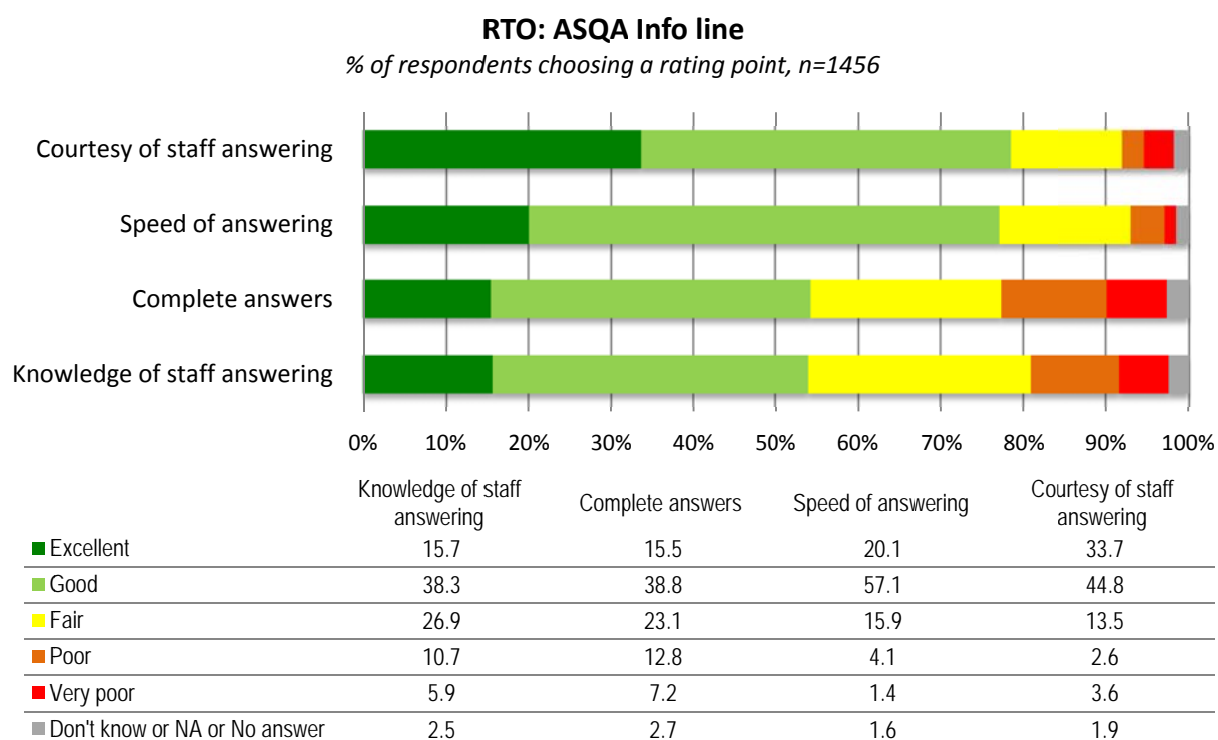


The table below demonstrates that courtesy of staff is the highest rated performance indicator.

Mean based on rating scale of 5= excellent to 1=very poor. Don't know / no answer excluded.

RTO: ASQA Info line n=1456	MEAN
Courtesy of staff answering	4.0
Speed of answering	3.9
Knowledge of staff answering	3.5
Complete answers	3.4

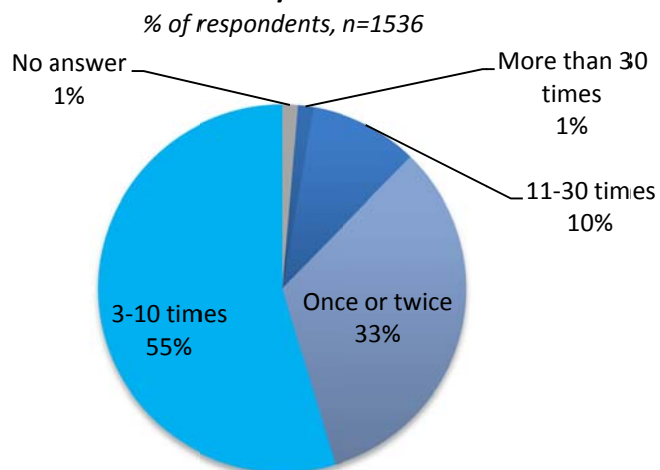
The results for the items *Complete answers* and *Knowledge of staff answering* were varied. They also had the highest proportion of negative responses for all information channels—20.0% and 16.6% respectively. See chart below.



## RTO: ASQA's email service

Most commonly (55%), RTOs used ASQA's email service 3-10 times in the last year

### RTO: Number of times ASQA email service was contacted in 2012/2013

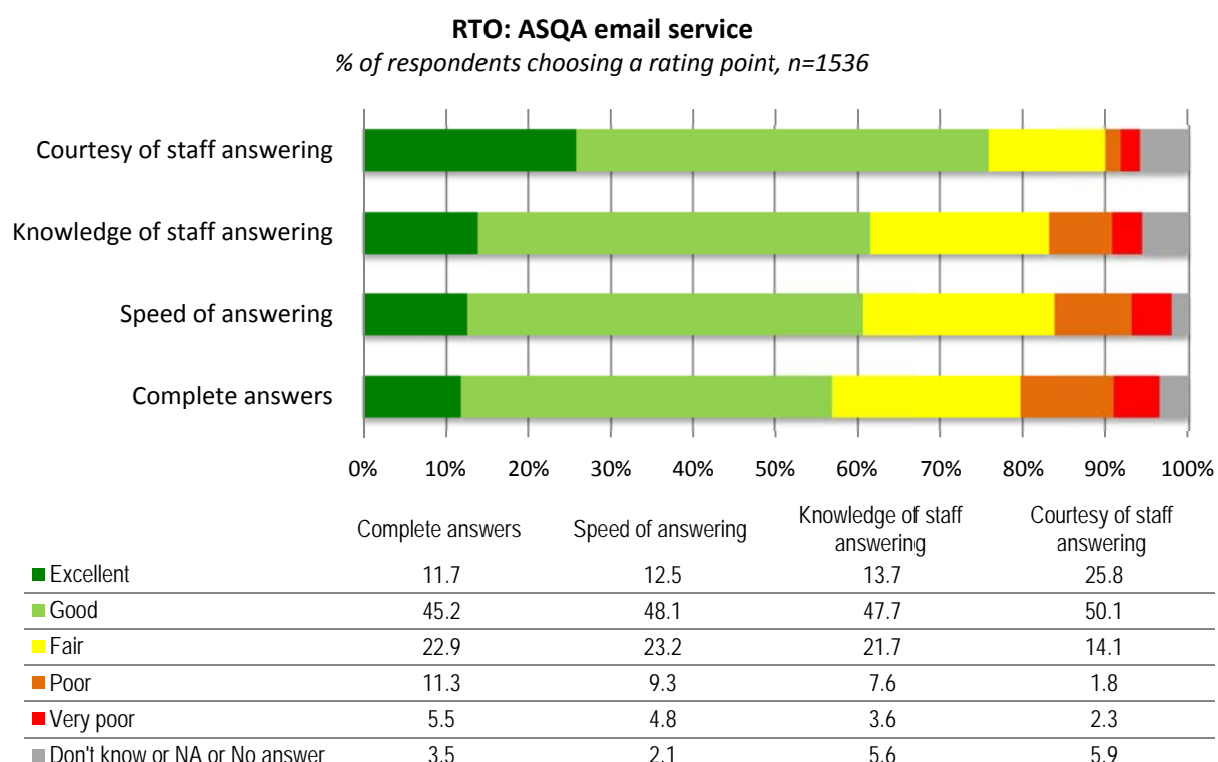


The mean scores for the email service follow the same pattern as the ASQA Info line. Means scores are presented below.

Mean based on rating scale of 5= excellent to 1=very poor. Don't know / no answer excluded.

RTO: ASQA's email service n=1536	MEAN
Courtesy of staff answering	4.0
Knowledge of staff answering	3.6
Speed of answering	3.6
Complete answers	3.5

The frequency distribution chart below demonstrates that *Knowledge of staff* received a higher positive rating for the email service (61% for *good* and *excellent* combined) compared with the Info line (54%).



### RTO: ASQA's website

ASQA's website was used by 92% of respondents and so it is the most commonly used information channel. Mean scores are presented below.

Mean based on rating scale of 5= excellent to 1=very poor. Don't know / no answer excluded.

RTO: ASQA's WEBSITE n=2375	MEAN
Current / up-to-date material	4.0
Accurate material	4.0
Timely material	3.9
Provides enough information	3.8
Easy to navigate	3.8
Easy to understand material	3.8
Clear material	3.8
Easy to search	3.7

## RTO: Speech or presentation by ASQA Commissioner or senior staff member

There is little variation in the mean scores for this topic—all averaged *good*.

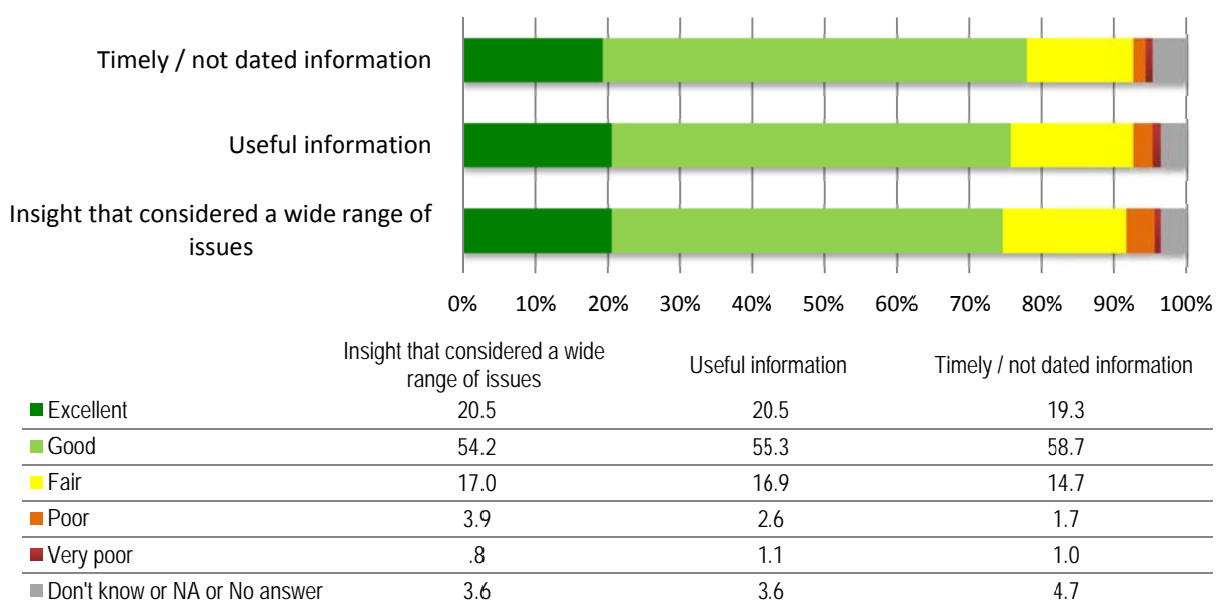
Mean based on rating scale of 5= excellent to 1=very poor. Don't know / no answer excluded.

RTO: SPEECH n=722	MEAN
Timely not outdated information	4.0
Useful information	3.9
Insight that considered a wide range of issues	3.9

All items in the frequency distribution chart below have a positive score of over 70%.

### RTO: Speech by ASQA Commissioner or senior staff member

% of respondents choosing a rating point, n=722



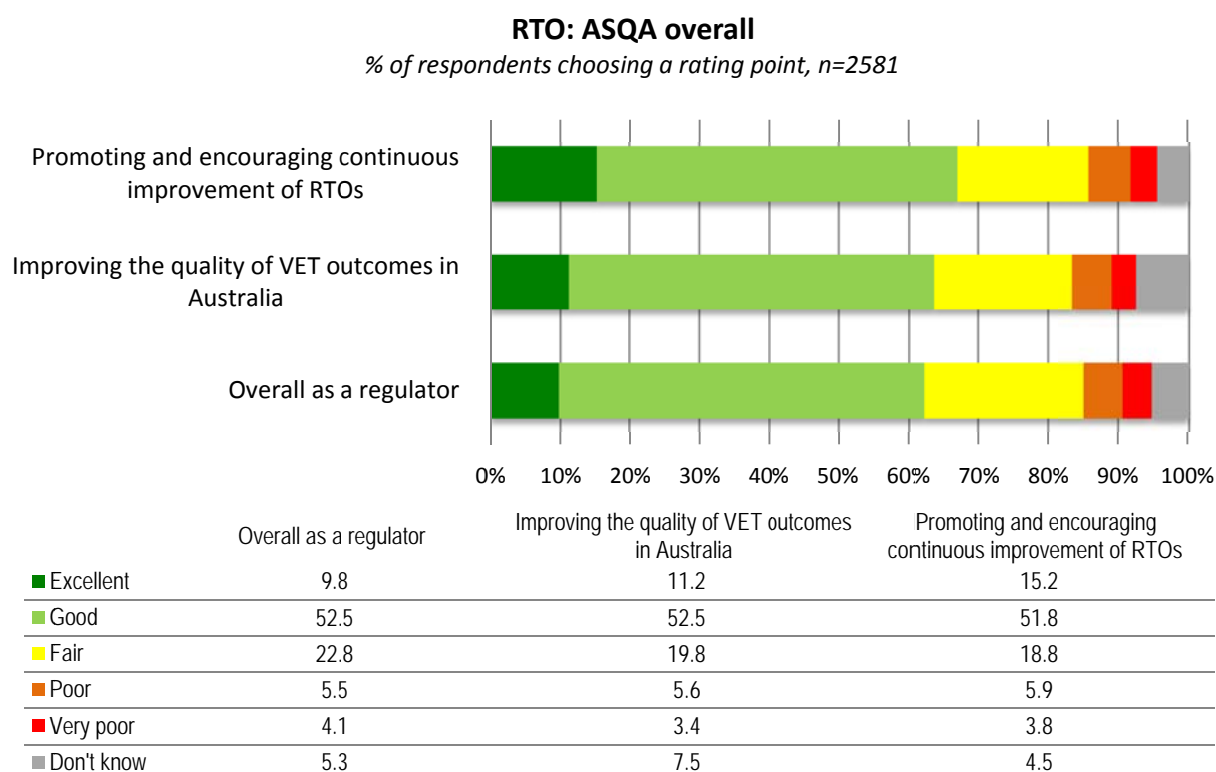
## RTO: ASQA Overall

Respondents were asked to rate ASQA as a regulator. For the three items in this topic, there was little variation in the scores and the results are similar to stakeholders' feedback.

Mean based on rating scale of 5= excellent to 1=very poor. Don't know / no answer excluded.

RTO: OVERALL n=2581	MEAN
Promoting and encouraging continuous improvement of RTOs	3.7
Improving the quality of VET outcomes in Australia	3.7
Overall as a regulator	3.6

The *Don't know* percentages in the chart below ranged from 4.5% to 7.5% and are considerably lower when compared with those obtained in the stakeholder survey where they ranged from 14.4% to 22.5%. While the positive score for all items below was above 60%, there is still some room for improvement across all items.



## Stakeholder key findings

This section outlines the key findings for the stakeholder survey by topic. For each item, the mean scores are presented along with the frequency distribution. Where an item was identical to the 2012 survey mean scores are presented in the same table as the 2013 results and any significant differences are discussed. Frequency distribution charts are sorted by the percentage of positive scores and tables of mean scores are sorted from high to low. Finally, the most common themes within free text comments are presented where relevant.

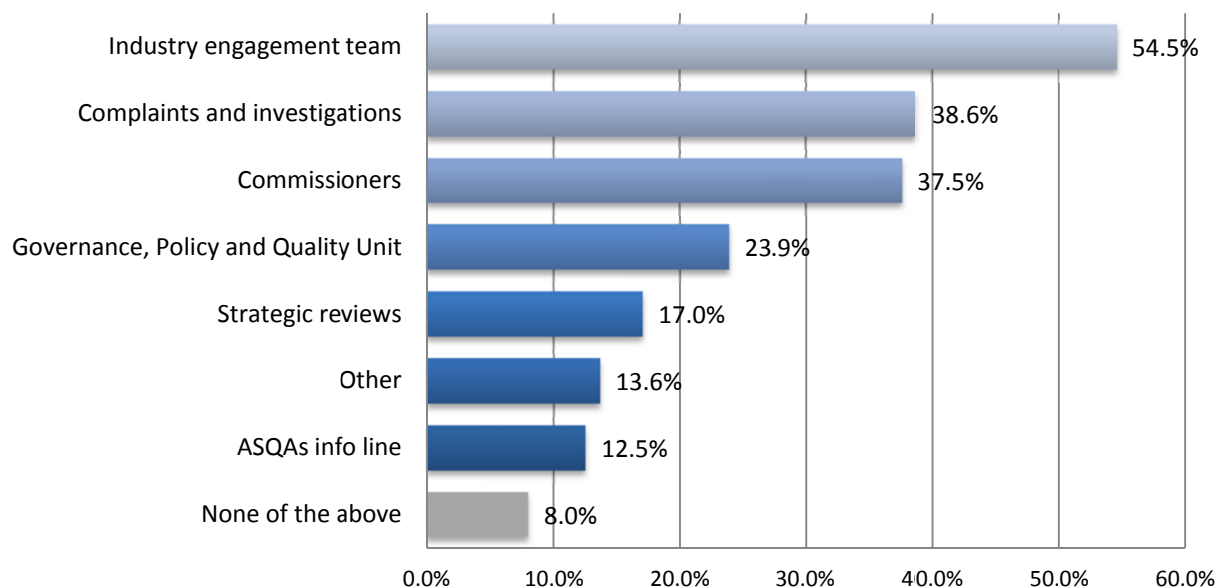
Overall, there was a majority of positive responses with 32 of 56 rated items achieving a positive score of 60% or more of (respondents who indicated an item was *excellent or good* on the rating scale.)

### Interacting with ASQA as a stakeholder

When asked to indicate which areas of ASQA respondents had dealt with in the last 12 months, over half had interacted with the Industry Engagement Team (55%). See chart below.

#### Stakeholders: Areas of ASQA dealt with in the last 12 months

*Multiple answers allowed; % based on n=88*



## Stakeholder: Demonstration of ASQA's values

Respondents were asked to rate how well ASQA staff demonstrated each of its values. Independence was the highest rated value (mean = 4.1 in 2013) as it was in 2012 but the mean score has decreased since 2012. Collaboration and transparency were the lowest rated values— the same pattern as in 2012. No scores were statistically significantly different between years. Mean scores presented below.

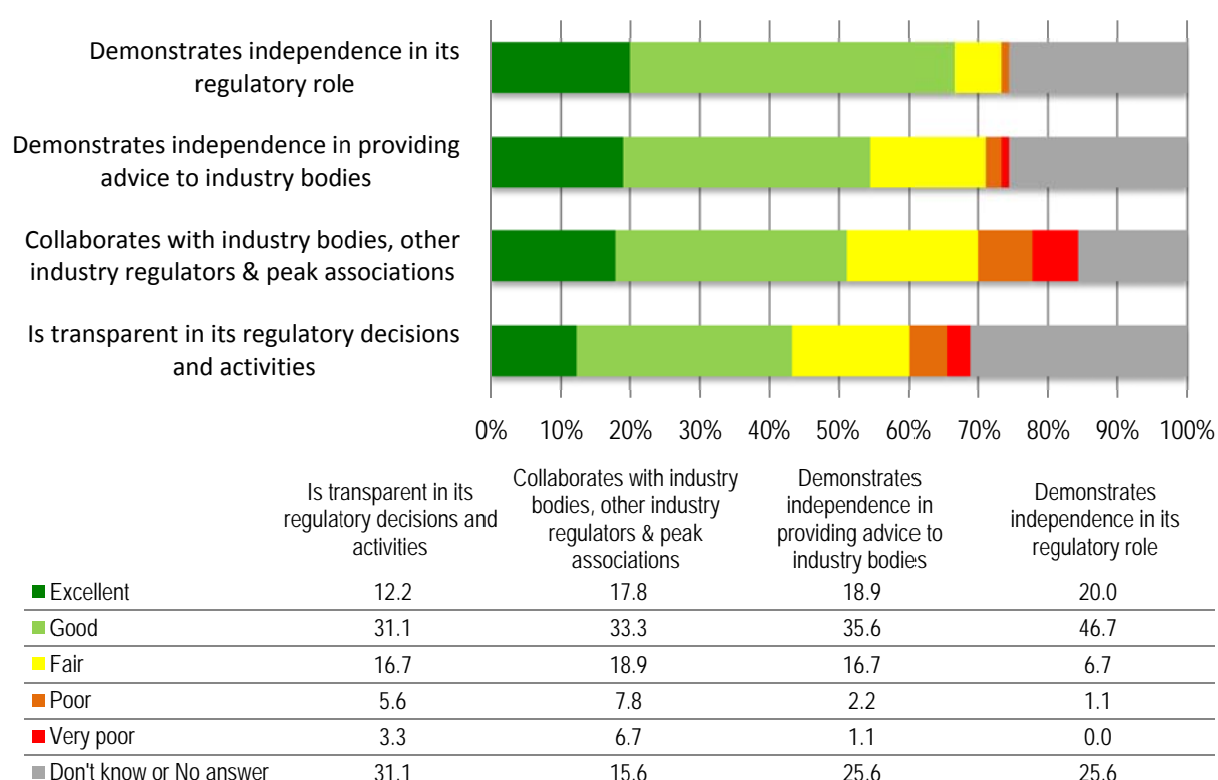
Mean based on rating scale of 5= excellent to 1=very poor. Don't know / no answer excluded.

Stakeholder: ASQA's VALUES – 2013 n=90	2013 MEAN	2012 MEAN
Demonstrates independence in its regulatory role	4.1	4.3
Demonstrates independence in providing advice to industry bodies such as industry skills councils, other regulators and peak associations	3.9	4.0
Is transparent in its regulatory decisions and activities	3.6	3.7
Collaborates with industry bodies, other industry regulators and peak associations	3.6	3.6

It is important to note the high proportion of *Don't know / no answer* answers in the chart below. For all four items in this topic over 15% of respondents have indicated they did not know or were not willing to answer the question.

### Stakeholders: ASQA's demonstration of its values

% of respondents choosing a rating point, n=90





## Stakeholder: Consultation and communication

Consultation and communication was one of the lowest scoring topics in the stakeholder survey as it was in 2012. See table below for mean scores. For this topic no items achieved a mean score of *good* on the rating scale. However, four of the five comparable items improved between survey periods.

*Mean based on rating scale of 5= excellent to 1=very poor. Don't know / no answer excluded.*

STAKEHOLDER: CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION – 2013 n=90 unless stated otherwise	MEAN 2013	MEAN 2012
Open to hearing concerns about the quality of VET outcomes	3.8	na
Provides timely information to the VET sector in general about changes to regulations / general directions	<b>3.7</b>	<b>3.3</b>
Effectively engages with stakeholders such as my organisation	3.7	3.5
Seeks feedback from stakeholders	3.6	na
Provides timely, quality advice about the VET sector to my organisation n=16	3.6	na
Provides sufficient contact information so that my organisation can contact / recontact an ASQA staff member if necessary n=16	3.5	3.3
Acts on stakeholder feedback	3.4	3.5
Acts on complaints received about training providers	3.4	na
Minimises the effort to get an answer to a question	3.2	3.1
Acts on complaints received about its own performance	3.1	na

**Bold and highlighted** indicates statistically significant difference between survey years.

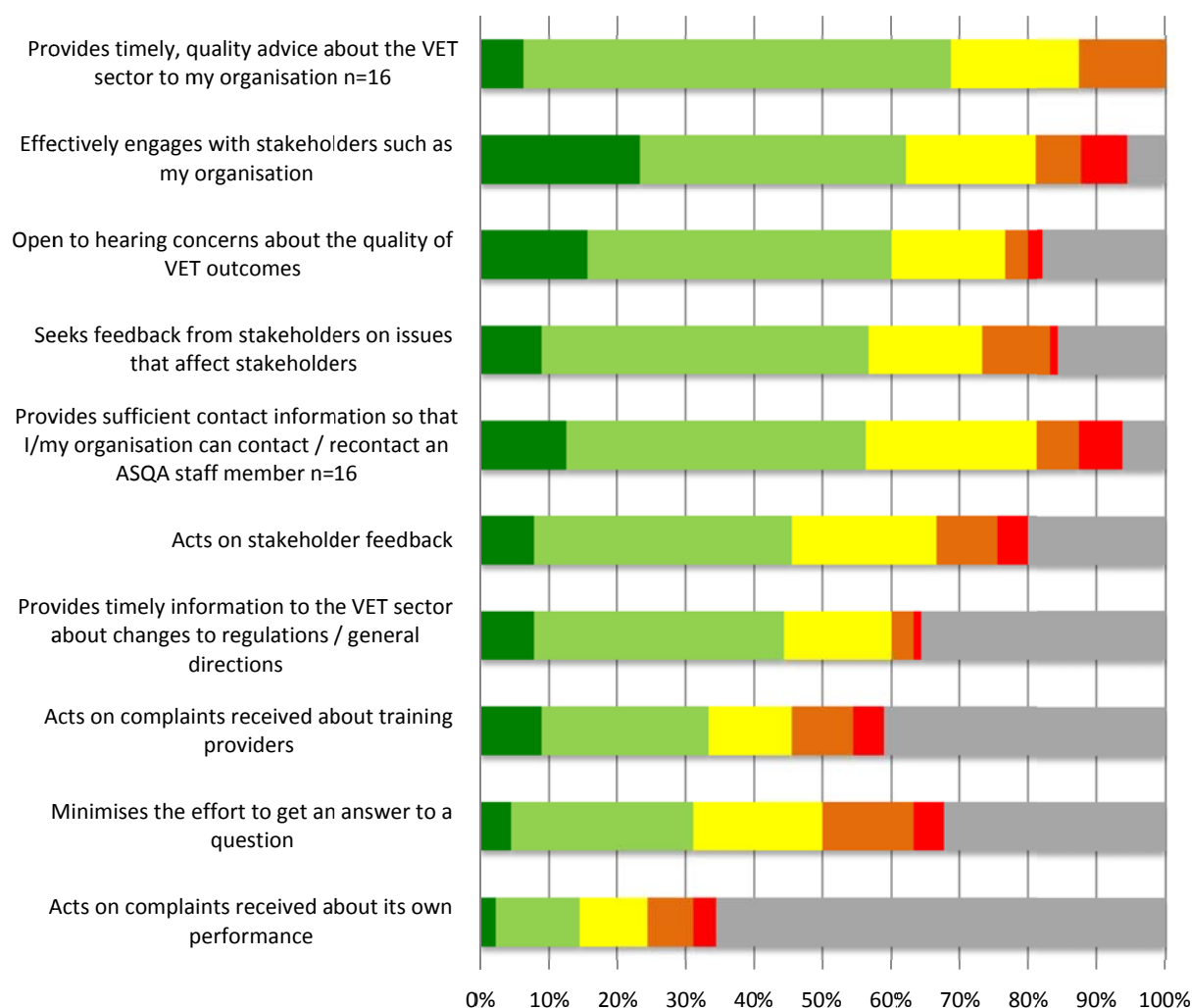
The chart below displays the frequency distribution for this topic. Views for individual items vary greatly and indicate that opinions are not homogenous for this topic. The proportion of respondents choosing Don't know or no answer varied for each item. They range from a low of none to a high of 65%.

No respondents indicated they didn't know about the item *Provides timely information to the VET sector in general about changes to regulations / general directions* and over 65% of respondents rated this item positively. It is one of only three items that achieved a *Don't know/no answer* score of zero in the entire stakeholder survey.

The item *Acts on complaints received about its own performance* has the highest proportion of *Don't know/ no answer* responses in the entire survey (66%). This may be attributed to a lack of transparency or communication on ASQA's behalf about their own complaints handling process and/or that stakeholders have not made complaints or have no knowledge of organisations that have.

## Stakeholder: Consultation and communication

% of respondents choosing a rating point, n=90 unless stated



	Acts on complaints received about its own performance	Minimises the effort to get an answer to a question	Acts on complaints received about training providers	Provides timely information to the VET sector about changes to regulations / general directions	Acts on stakeholder feedback	Provides sufficient contact information so that I/my organisation can contact / recontact an ASQA staff member n=16	Seeks feedback from stakeholders on issues that affect stakeholders	Open to hearing concerns about the quality of VET outcomes	Effectively engages with stakeholders such as my organisation	Provides timely, quality advice about the VET sector to my organisation n=16
■ Excellent	2.2	4.4	8.9	7.8	7.8	12.5	8.9	15.6	23.3	6.3
■ Good	12.2	26.7	24.4	36.7	37.8	43.8	47.8	44.4	38.9	62.5
■ Fair	10.0	18.9	12.2	15.6	21.1	25.0	16.7	16.7	18.9	18.8
■ Poor	6.7	13.3	8.9	3.3	8.9	6.3	10.0	3.3	6.7	12.5
■ Very poor	3.3	4.4	4.4	1.1	4.4	6.3	1.1	2.2	6.7	0.0
■ Don't know or No answer	65.6	32.2	41.1	35.6	20.0	6.3	15.6	17.8	5.6	0.0

## Stakeholder: Regulatory decisions

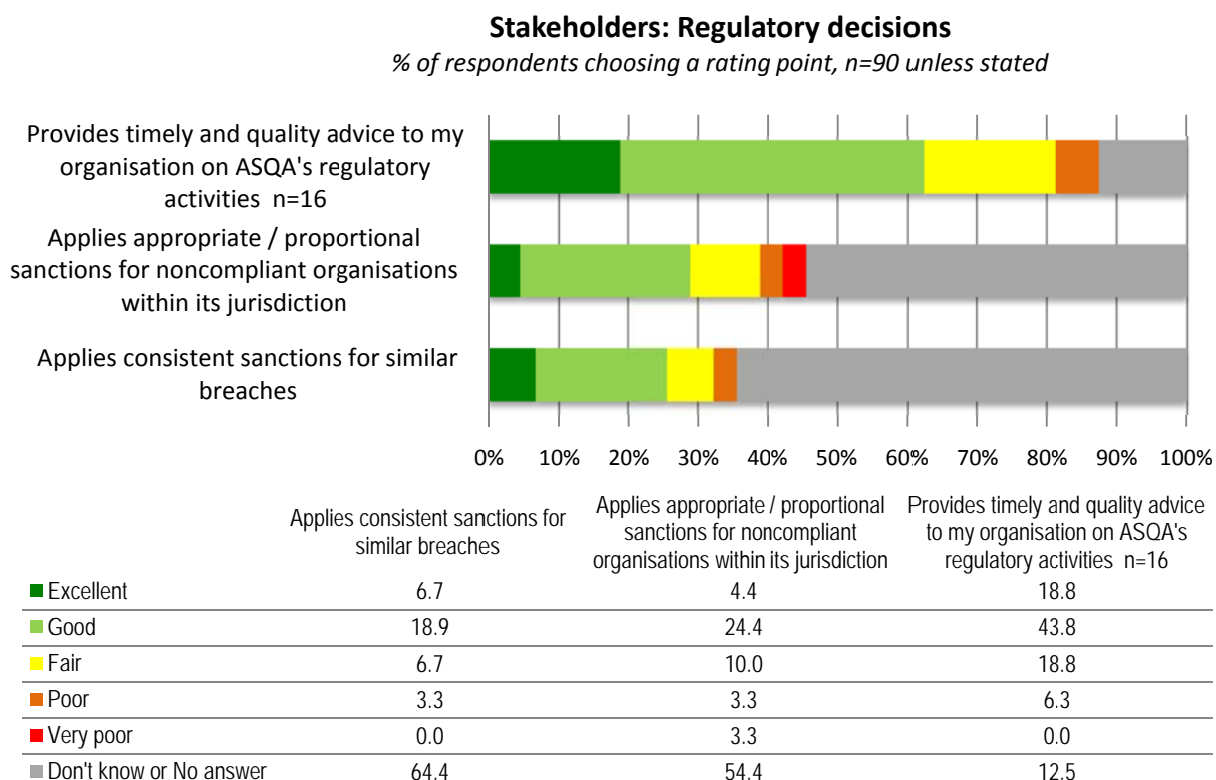
The topic, regulatory decisions, was rated fairly positively and the results follow a similar pattern to those observed in the 2012 survey. No items were statistically significantly different between years.

Mean based on rating scale of 5= excellent to 1=very poor. Don't know / no answer excluded.

STAKEHOLDER: REGULATORY DECISIONS n=90 unless stated otherwise	MEAN 2013	MEAN 2012
Provides timely and quality advice to my organisation on ASQA's regulatory activities n=16	3.9	na
Applies consistent sanctions for similar breaches	3.8	3.8
Applies appropriate / proportional sanctions for noncompliant organisations within its jurisdiction	3.5	3.7

The chart below displays the frequency distribution of ratings for items in this topic. There are relatively few negative (poor or very poor) responses in the chart below. .

The items *Applies consistent sanctions for similar breaches* and *Applies appropriate / proportional sanctions for noncompliant organisations within its jurisdiction* have a high proportion of *Don't know/ no answer* responses. Following advice received from the 2012 survey, a web link was included in the 2013 questionnaire directing respondents to the ASQA website sanctions page. Despite the inclusion to the link a high proportion of respondents still indicated they didn't know or had no view about sanctions.

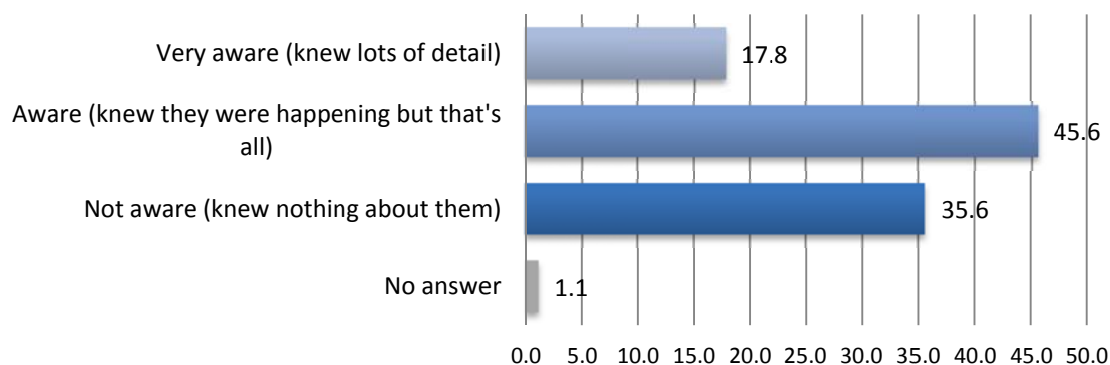


## Stakeholder: Awareness and support of strategic reviews

Respondents were asked if they were aware that ASQA was conducting three strategic reviews of industry sub-sectors within the VET system. A majority of respondents were aware or very aware of the reviews (63%) whereas 36% were not aware at all. See chart below.

### Stakeholder: Awareness of ASQA's strategic reviews

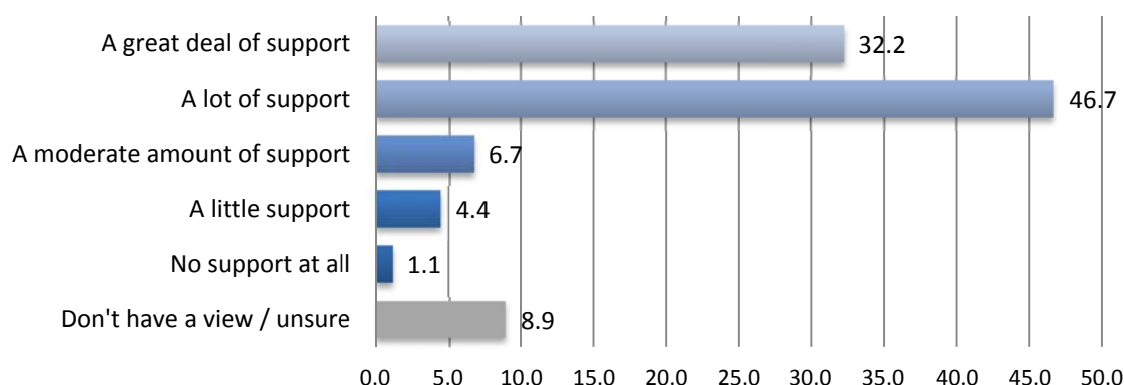
% of respondents, n=90



Respondents were then asked to indicate the level of support for ASQA's strategic reviews. The chart below demonstrates that most respondents (79%) had a lot or a great deal of support for ASQA's strategic reviews.

### Stakeholder: Support for ASQA's strategic reviews

% of respondents, n=90



## Stakeholder: ASQA staff

Nearly all mean scores for items in this topic indicated a positive opinion, ranging from 3.8 (close to *good*) to a high of 4.4 (part way between *good* and *excellent*). See table below.

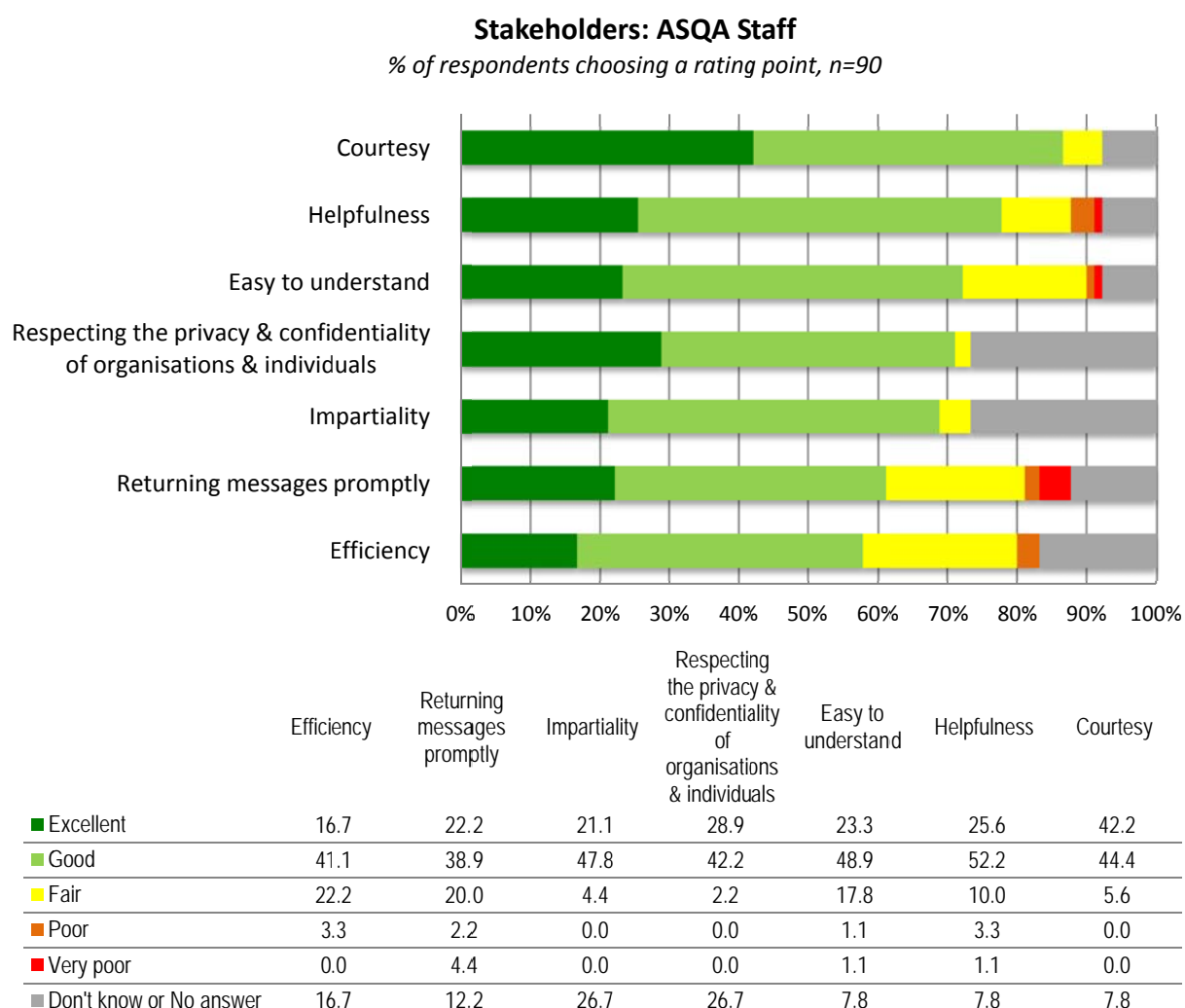
All items, except one, improved between survey periods, this is a good result. Returning messages promptly is the lowest scoring item in the topic however it has recorded statistically significant improvement between years. This improvement between mean scores is the largest increase in the entire survey, 0.4 of a rating point.

Mean based on rating scale of 5= excellent to 1=very poor. Don't know / no answer excluded.

STAKEHOLDER: ASQA STAFF – 2013 n=90	MEAN 2013	MEAN 2012
Courtesy	<b>4.4</b>	<b>4.2</b>
Respecting the privacy and confidentiality of organisations and individuals	<b>4.4</b>	<b>4.2</b>
Impartiality	4.2	4.2
Helpfulness	4.1	3.9
Easy to understand	<b>4.0</b>	<b>3.8</b>
Efficiency	3.9	3.7
Returning messages promptly	<b>3.8</b>	<b>3.4</b>

**Bold and highlighted** indicates statistically significant difference between survey years

The frequency distribution chart below shows a strong positive response to most items—negative scores are less than 7% for all items.

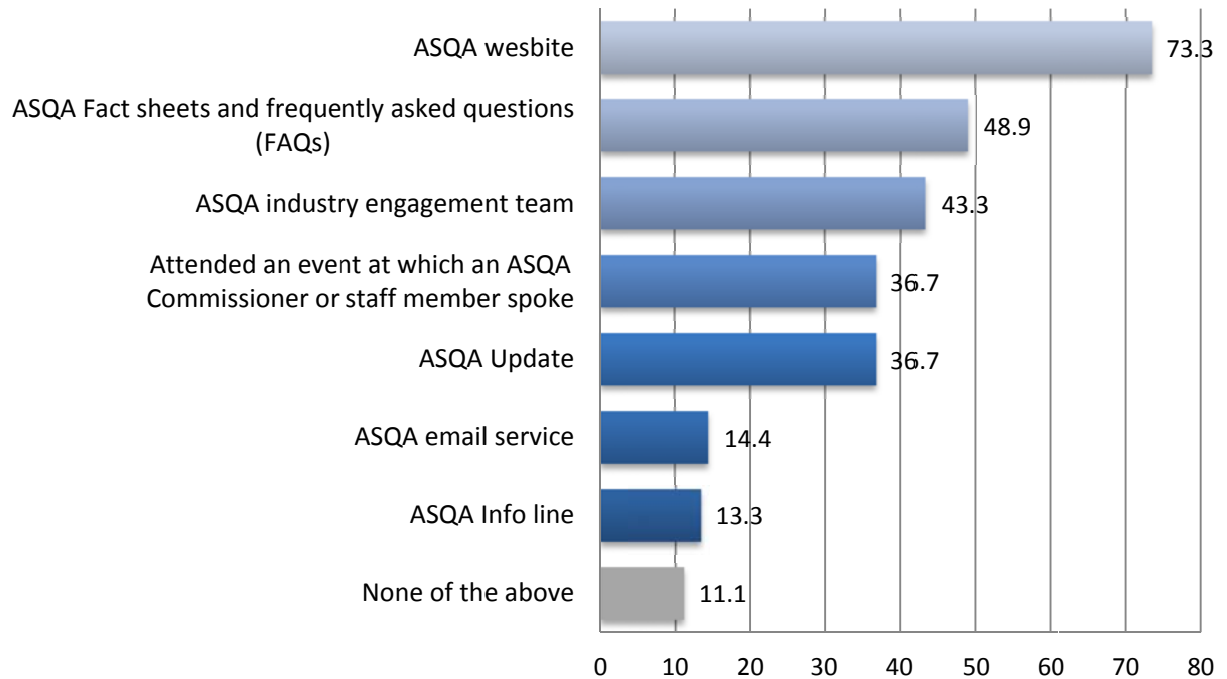


## Stakeholder: Being informed about ASQA

Respondents were asked to indicate which channels of information they had used in the 2012/2013 financial year. See chart below.

### Stakeholders: Channels of information used

*Multiple answers allowed % of respondents, n=90*



Respondents who indicated they used a particular method were given the opportunity to rate it. The following series of tables and charts display the results for each channel. These questions were not asked in 2012 so there are no year comparisons. The total counts vary for each channel and have been displayed accordingly.

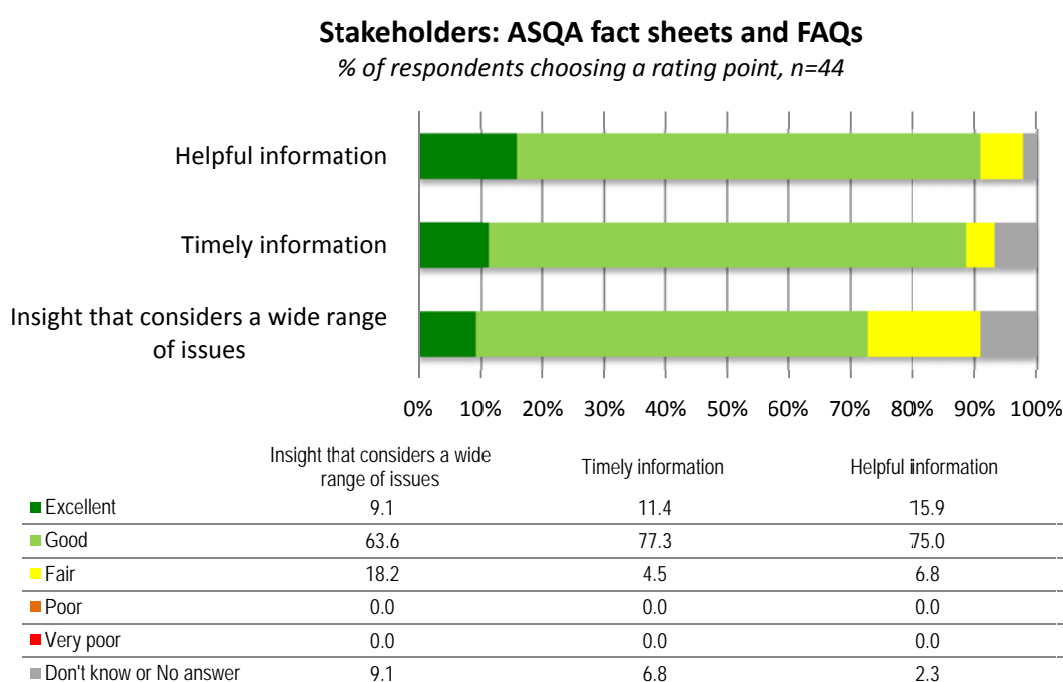
## Stakeholder: ASQA fact sheets and FAQs

The table below shows that means scores are positively rated with little variation between items.

Mean based on rating scale of 5= excellent to 1=very poor. Don't know / no answer excluded.

STAKEHOLDER: ASQA FACT SHEETS AND FAQs n=44	MEAN
Helpful information	4.1
Timely information	4.1
Insight that considers a wide range of issues	3.9

The frequency distribution below demonstrates a strongly positive response with no items receiving any poor or very poor ratings.



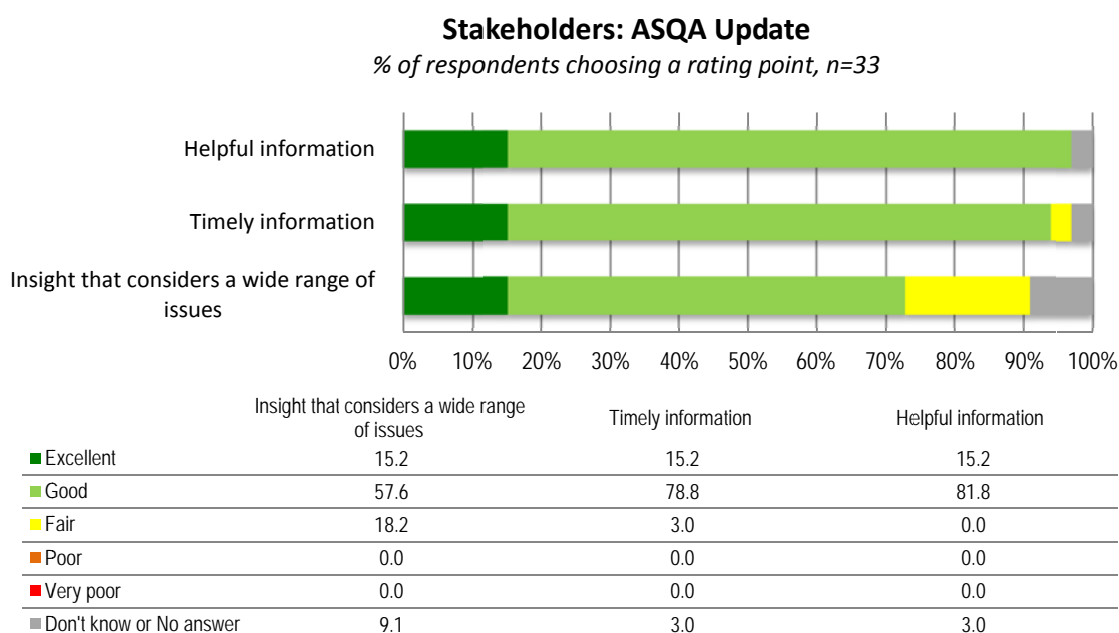
## Stakeholder: ASQA Update

ASQA Update was positively rated, with all items achieving a score of *good* on the rating scale.

Mean based on rating scale of 5= excellent to 1=very poor. Don't know / no answer excluded.

STAKEHOLDER: ASQA UPDATE n=33	MEAN
Helpful information	4.2
Timely information	4.1
Insight that considers a wide range of issues	4.0

All items in the chart below were considered positively. The item *Helpful information* had a 97% positive score (excellent or good, green cells in the chart).

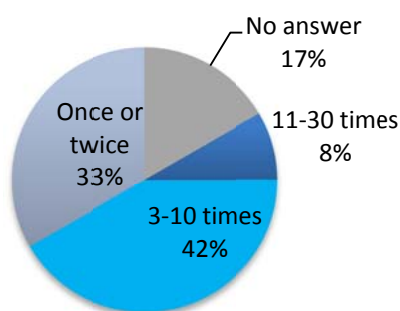


## Stakeholder: ASQA Info line

Respondents were asked to indicate how many times in the past financial year they had contacted the ASQA Info line.

### Stakeholders: Number of times ASQA Info line used in 2013/2013

% of respondents, n=12



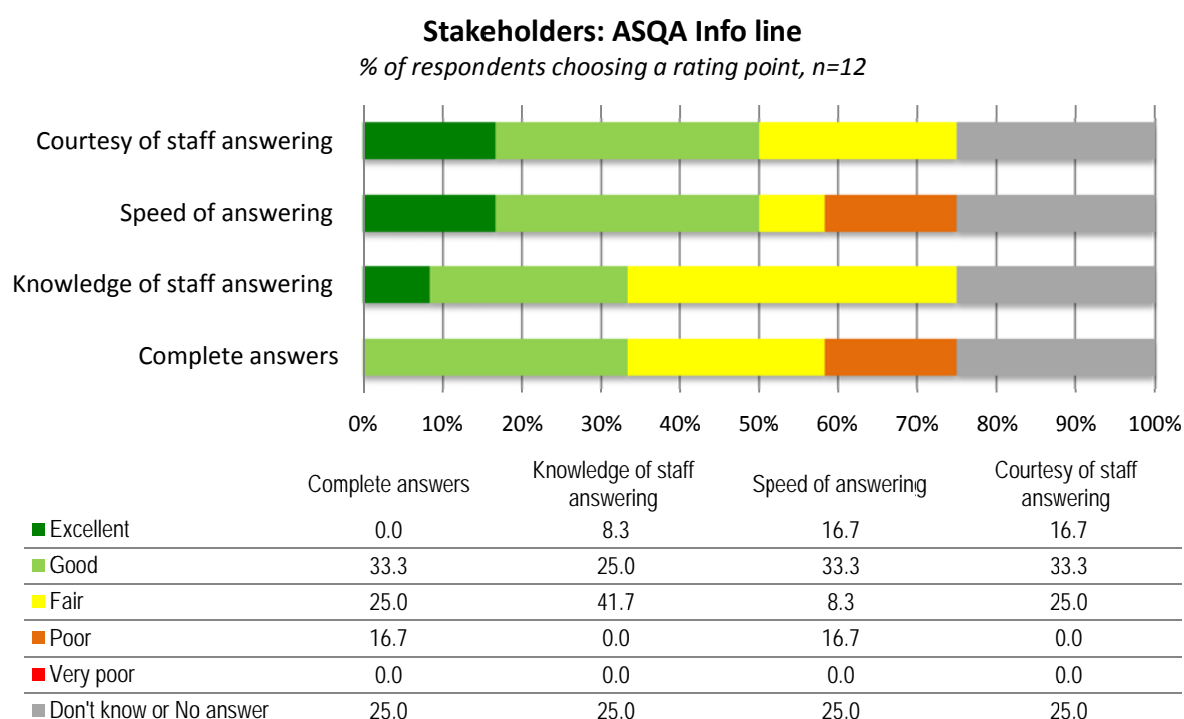


ASQA's Info line was the lowest rated channel of information in the stakeholder survey. See table below for mean scores. Scores for items in the topic ranged from a high of 3.9 (courtesy of staff) to a low of 3.2 (complete answers). So while staff may be courteous, it takes a lot of effort to receive a complete answer. This was a recurrent theme throughout the entire survey.

Mean based on rating scale of 5= excellent to 1=very poor. Don't know / no answer excluded.

STAKEHOLDER: ASQA INFO LINE n=12	MEAN
Courtesy of staff answering	3.9
Speed of answering	3.7
Knowledge of staff answering	3.6
Complete answers	3.2

The chart below displays the frequency distribution for this topic.

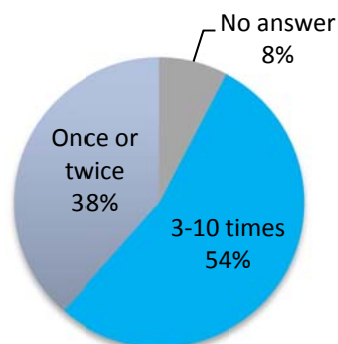


## Stakeholder: ASQA's email service

When asked about the number of times a respondent had used the ASQA email service, 54% indicated using it 3-10 times in the year.

### Stakeholders: Number of times ASQA email service used in 2013/2013

% of respondents, n=13



The table below displays the mean scores for this topic. Courtesy of staff was the highest rated item (mean of 4.1) and Complete answers was the lowest (mean of 3.4).

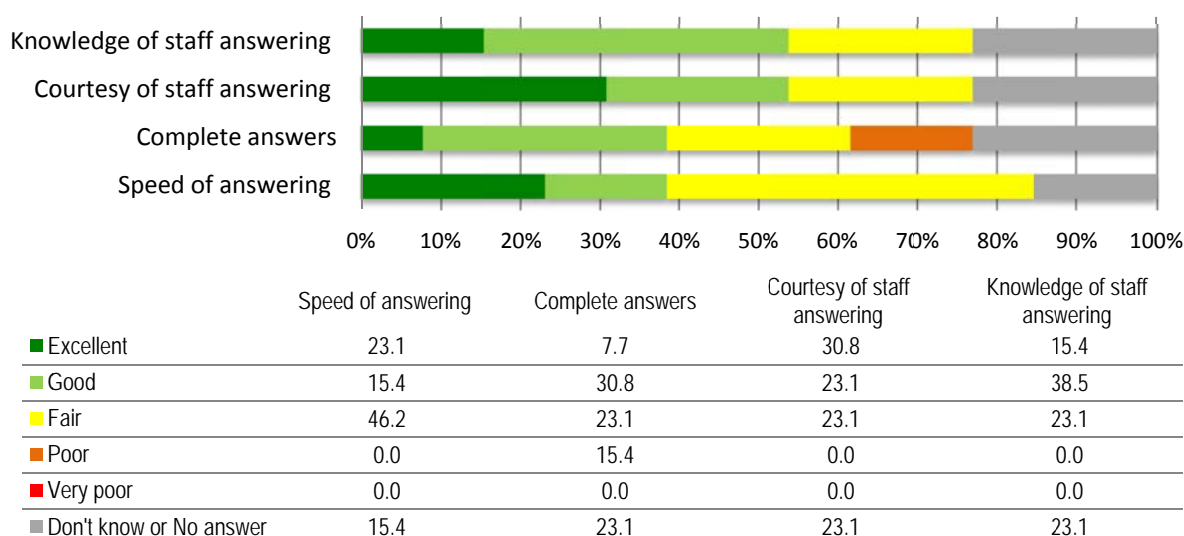
Mean based on rating scale of 5= excellent to 1=very poor. Don't know / no answer excluded.

STAKEHOLDER: ASQA EMAIL SERVICE n= 13	MEAN
Courtesy of staff answering	4.1
Knowledge of staff answering	3.9
Speed of answering	3.7
Complete answers	3.4

The chart below demonstrates the frequency distribution for this topic. When comparing ASQA's email service with its Info line, respondents have rated the knowledge of staff much higher for the email service (53.9% positive) than for the Info line (33.3% positive).

### Stakeholders: ASQA's email service

% of respondents choosing a rating point, n=13



## Stakeholder: ASQA website

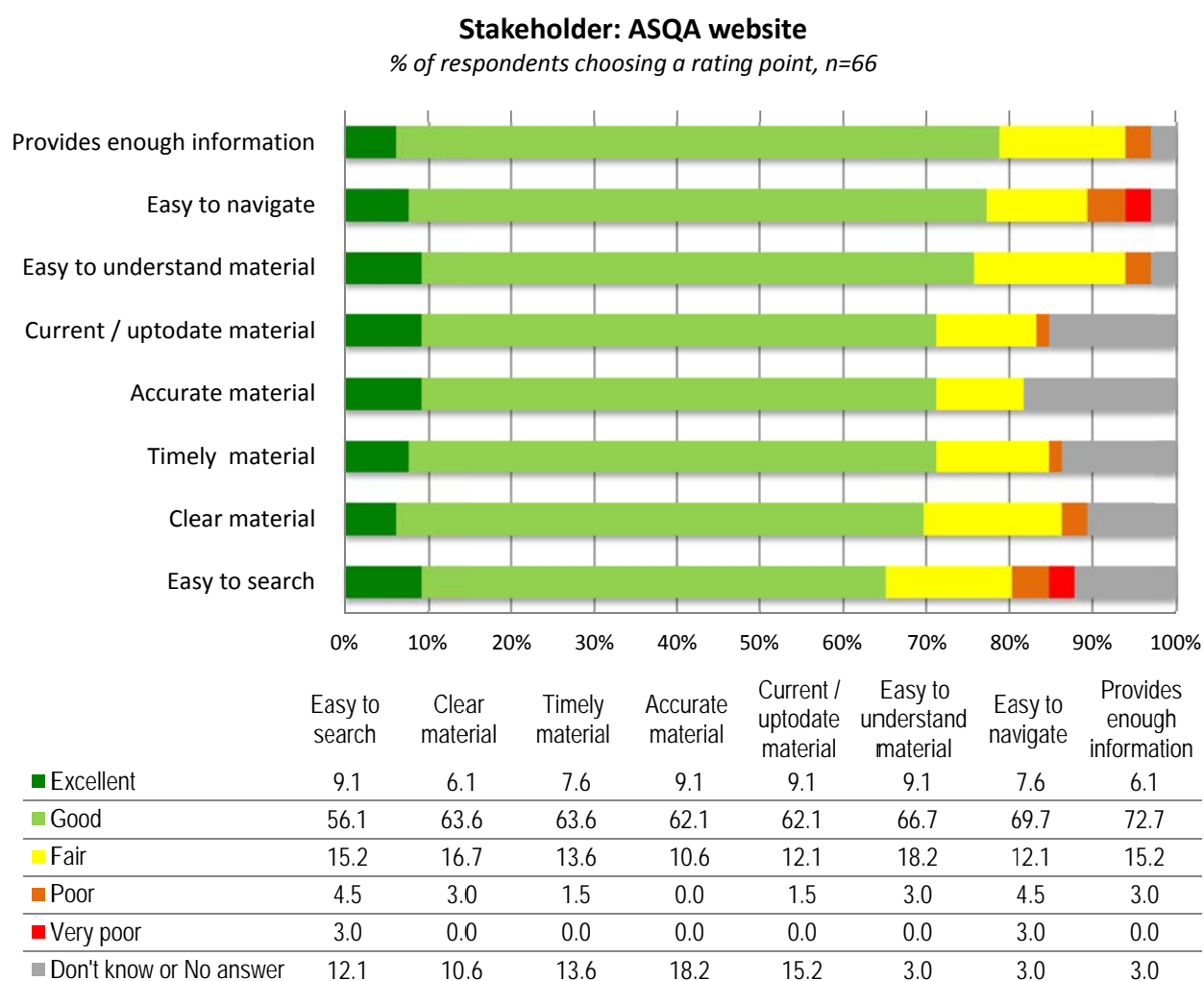
The ASQA website was the most commonly used channel of information and was the only channel that was included in the 2012 survey. The mean scores for this topic were rated fairly high with little variation. See table below.

Mean based on rating scale of 5= excellent to 1=very poor. Don't know / no answer excluded.

STAKEHODLER: ASQA WEBSITE n=66	MEAN	MEAN
	2013	2012
Accurate material	4.0	
Current / up to date material	3.9	
Timely material	3.9	
Easy to understand material	3.8	3.9
Provides enough information	<b>3.8</b>	<b>3.4</b>
Clear material	3.8	
Easy to navigate	3.8	3.6
Easy to search	3.7	3.6

**Bold and highlighted** indicates statistically significant difference between survey years.

From the chart it is evident that all items in the topic are mostly positively viewed.



## Stakeholder: Speech or presentation given by Commissioner or senior staff

This information channel was one of the highest rated in the stakeholder survey for 2013.

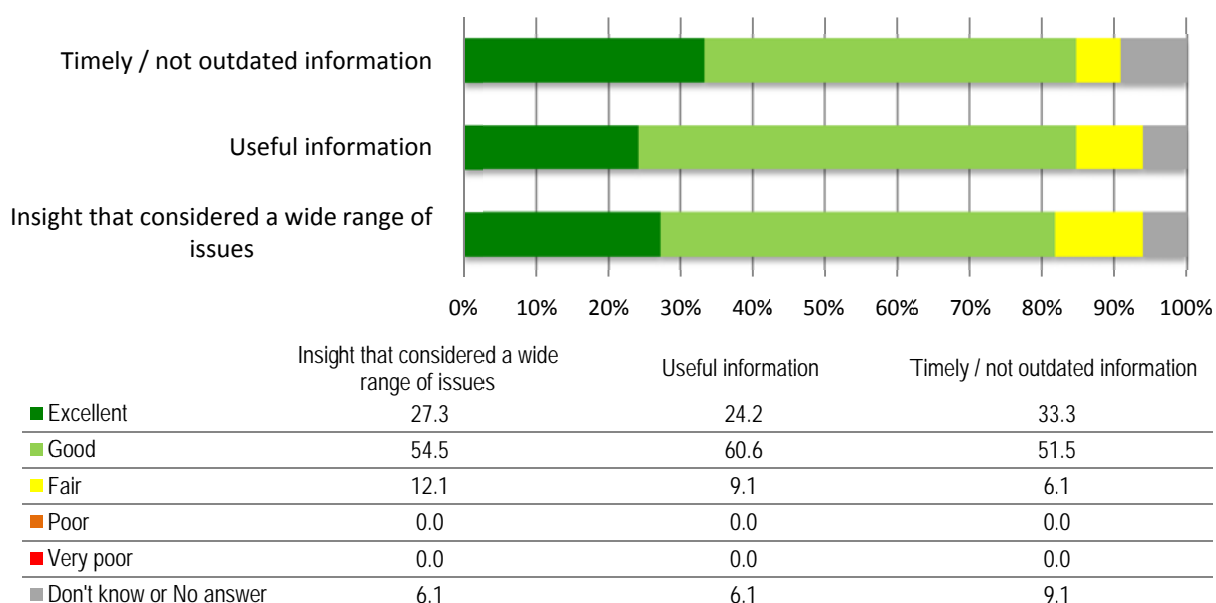
Mean based on rating scale of 5= excellent to 1=very poor. Don't know / no answer excluded.

STAKEHOLDER: SPEECH GIVEN BY COMMISSIONER OR SENIOR STAFF n=33	MEAN
Timely not out dated information	4.3
Insight that considered a wide range of issues	4.2
Useful information	4.2

All items in the chart below have over 80% positive ratings (green) and no negative ratings (red or orange). This is a good result.

### Stakeholder: Speech by Commissioner or senior staff

% of respondents choosing a rating point, n=33



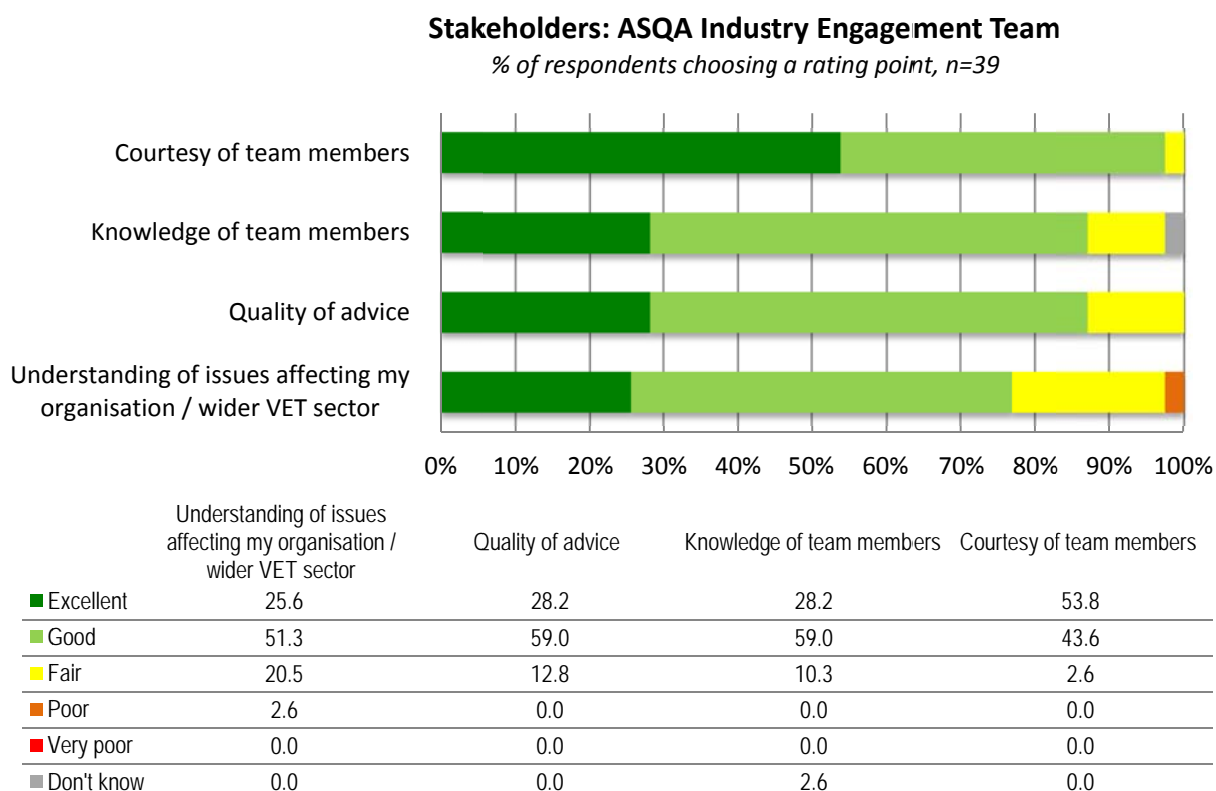
## Stakeholder: ASQA's Industry Engagement Team

All items in the table below are highly rated. Courtesy of team members in the Industry Engagement Team is the highest rated item in the entire Stakeholder Survey (mean =4.5).

Mean based on rating scale of 5= excellent to 1=very poor. Don't know / no answer excluded.

STAKEHOLDER: INDUSTRY ENGAGEMENT TEAM n=39	MEAN
Courtesy of team members	4.5
Knowledge of team members	4.2
Quality of advice	4.2
Understanding of issues affecting my organisation / wider VET sector	4.0

The chart below shows minimal negative ratings and very few *Don't know / no answer* ratings.



## Stakeholder: ASQA overall

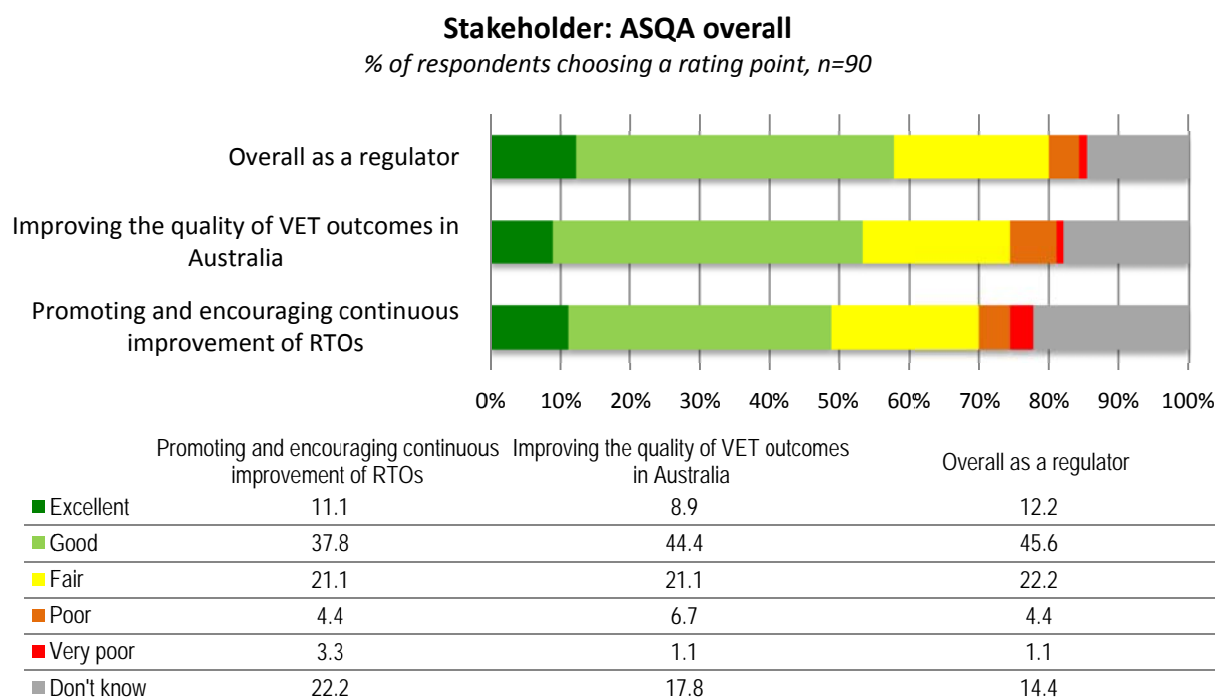
Respondents were asked three overall questions about ASQA's performance on the whole. The majority of respondents (57.8%) indicated that overall ASQA was a good regulator.

The scores in the table below decreased slightly since 2012; however this was not a statistically significant change.

*Mean based on rating scale of 5= excellent to 1=very poor. Don't know / no answer excluded.*

STAKEHODLER: ASQA OVERALL n=90	MEAN	MEAN
	2013	2012
Overall as a regulator	3.7	3.8
Improving the quality of VET outcomes in Australia	3.6	3.7
Promoting and encouraging continuous improvement of RTOs	3.6	3.7

There are very few negative scores in the frequency distribution chart below—less than 8% for any item. However the proportion of *Don't know* scores are quite high for these questions.



# Conclusions

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## *In general*

- Overall the results of this survey are fairly positive for ASQA. On average RTOs and stakeholders agreed that ASQA was an effective regulator. A majority of respondents agreed that ASQA was improving the quality of VET outcomes in Australia. However free text comments indicate that ASQA needs to focus on communicating this more if it wants RTO / stakeholder perceptions of it to improve.
- The RTO response sample achieved for this survey was remarkable in terms of the quality of information obtained and the ease with which it was gathered. It was easy to engage respondents in giving feedback and to make an effort above mandatory requirements—it was a voluntary survey. This willingness to engage could be interpreted a number of ways including that RTOs don't often get the opportunity to give ASQA feedback and they wanted to tell ASQA something or that when ASQA asks for anything, it needs to be responded to. RTOs willingness to provide feedback may be a valuable tool for identifying improvements.

## *ASQA's staff*

- The courtesy of ASQA's staff is a strength.
- Staff knowledge, particularly Info line staff, needs improvement. Respondents indicate that knowledge of staff is affected by the inability to talk to the same person more than once through the Info line.

## *Timeliness of action*

- Timeliness of action was by far the most commonly mentioned negative theme in the free text comments and was consistently rated poorly in numeric results. It is key area for improvement. ASQA's tardiness has significant negative impact on some RTOs.
- This is not to be confused with timeliness of written information such as ASQA's Update and factsheets. The distribution of ASQA's global information (not personal responses to enquiries or applications) is perceived positively.

## *Personalised / tailored service*

- Respondents want to be able to put a name to the voice at the other end of line and to be able to talk to the same person for the same issue. This service element has flow on effects to all other areas for improvement. In other words, an improvement here is also likely to improve perceptions of staff knowledge and ASQA's image.
- Where organisations have experience of Industry Engagement Teams they are viewed very positively—indicating that a personal approach has its rewards.

## *ASQA's image*

- Whilst not evident in the numeric results, qualitative analysis indicates that ASQA's client-focus is an area of concern. Respondents perceive ASQA as faceless and impersonal. This may be related to the way RTOs interact with ASQA and the way the Info line works. It appears that respondents would prefer to be able to have more personal contact with ASQA staff members in order to be able to develop working relationships. An account or case management approach is missing and wanted.
- Of concern is the large number of free text comments that mentioned that ASQA was perceived as a stick wielding enforcer rather than a regulatory body who is supportive of the industry that it regulates.

### *Interaction and applications with RTOs*

- Clear and easy to understand application forms are a key strength for ASQA. These were rated highly regardless of the interaction that respondents had.
- Timeliness of action was the lowest scoring area and would benefit from attention.
- There were few differences by number of students and no significant differences by state however. Units on scope had the most differences in scores. Indicating that location is not a determinant of view but the amount of interaction does.

### *Stakeholders point of view*

- While there were few statistically significant differences between stakeholders and RTOs, overall stakeholders tended to be more positive about ASQA. This may be due to the different types of interactions that stakeholders have compared with RTOs.
- The change in the proportion of don't know answer indicate that in the past year stakeholders have had more interaction with ASQA.



