English Australia Annual Conference 2016

ASQA Q&A

Commissioner Michael Lavarch

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Australian Government

Australian Skills Quality Authority

New audit model

Question: ASQA has recently released a new approach to auditing – can you discuss how its different to the current approach?

The new model:

- is an evolution of the current model

- supports ASQA's ongoing shift to risk-based regulation, and

- allows ASQA to direct resources towards providers that pose the greatest threat to sector quality.

Key features of the new audit model include:

- increased use of ASQA's risk intelligence to inform audits

- greater focus on student experience and providers' behaviours and practices

- customised depth and scope of audits, and

- increased student input through surveys and interviews.

New audit model

Question: The new audit model is based on the student journey – can you discuss the reason for this change?

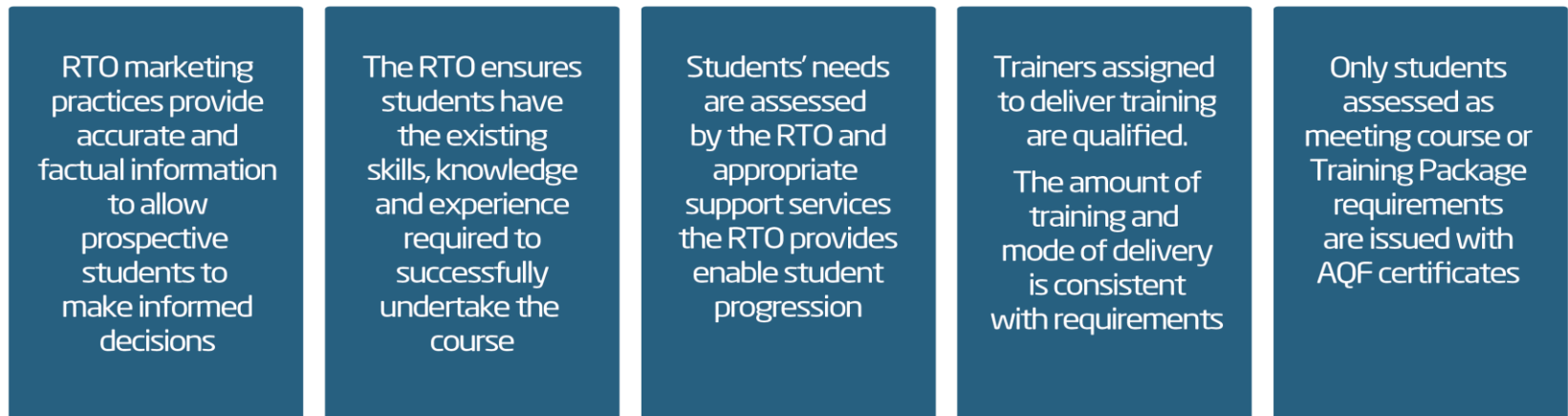The new focus on the student experience:

- addresses a concern there has been too much focus on compliance against systems and processes and not enough on student outcomes

- is more effective in correcting practices and behaviours that lead to poor quality student outcomes

- allows the audit to target particular areas – e.g. marketing and recruitment where there are concerns about a provider's use of VET FEE-HELP funding

- facilitates greater student input to the audit process via surveys and interviews

- seeks to recognise and redress harm to students caused by non-compliances.

ASQA's new audit model

Key phases of the student experience

Marketing and recruitment	Enrolment	Support and progression	Training and assessment	Completion
↓	↓	↓	↓	↓

Examples of RTO practices/behaviours

RTO marketing practices provide accurate and factual information to allow prospective students to make informed decisions	The RTO ensures students have the existing skills, knowledge and experience required to successfully undertake the course	Students' needs are assessed by the RTO and appropriate support services the RTO provides enable student progression	Trainers assigned to deliver training are qualified. The amount of training and mode of delivery is consistent with requirements	Only students assessed as meeting course or Training Package requirements are issued with AQF certificates

Primary *Standards for RTOs 2015*

4.1	5.1, 5.2, 5.3	1.3, 1.7	1.1-1.4, 1.8, 1.13 1.14, 1.16-20, 1.26, 3.5	3.1, 3.3

New audit model

Question: In the new audit process, if a college is determined by ASQA to be non-compliant in a certain area, are they given time to rectify the issue?

- Prior to August 2016, an audit triggered by a complaint or other data concerns had two rectification periods prior to a regulatory decision as opposed to an audit triggered by a provider application which had one rectification period.

- Since August 2016, a single opportunity to respond to non-compliance will be allowed for all audits by combining legislative procedural fairness requirements with an audit rectification period.

New audit model

Question continued…: In the new audit process, if a college is determined by ASQA to be non-compliant in a certain area, are they given time to rectify the issue?

- ASQA will respond to non-compliant audit findings by:
  - issuing a written direction for the provider to take certain action if the non-compliance is not considered serious
  - issuing a notice of intent to impose an administrative sanction if the audit identifies highly concerning non-compliances – the provider may then have a period of up to 20 working days to respond to the notice and submit evidence
  - in exceptional circumstances, imposing one or more sanctions without prior notice.

New audit model

Question: How will the new audit model impact on CRICOS registration?

- The first phase of implementation of the new audit model in 2016 is focusing on VET audits.

- A range of audit types are being tested including post initial, renewal of registration, change of scope and compliance monitoring.

- The new audit model will be implemented more widely in 2017 including for CRICOS providers.

- Evidence of practices and behaviours and student outcomes will be a key feature of all audit types.

- Audits for initial registration will still largely focus on systems and processes but include assessment of capabilities to delivery quality student outcomes.

CRICOS registration

Question: When will CRICOS registration be automated via the online application system?

- CRICOS is included in the new asqanet which will be released on 27 September 2016.

- The new asqanet will allow CRICOS providers to:
  - lodge new applications
  - make payments
  - notify ASQA of material changes or events
  - view all applications submitted by users on behalf of a provider
  - review and update provider details
  - authorise and manage users for each asqanet account.

CRICOS registration

Question continued..: When will CRICOS registration be automated via the online application system?

CRICOS providers will still need to use the Provider Registration and International Student Management system (PRISMS) to:

- Create Confirmations of Enrolments
- Reporting changes to students participations in courses
- Reporting students for not maintaining visa conditions
- Apply to increase course costs
- Apply to add a course to a location.

CRICOS registration

Question: One of the problems we face is the time it takes to get English courses registered or changed on CRICOS. The slow turnaround can mean that business is lost. Is there a way to fast track CRICOS registration?

- The ability for asqanet to take online applications and payments for CRICOS matters should reduce delays in processing CRICOS applications.

- Ensuring your application includes complete information and there are no payment issues can also reduce delays.

- Applications can take longer to process if the provider has an ongoing history of failing to meet regulatory obligations, as the matter may be referred to our Regulatory Operations Team for a desk review or site audit.

NEAS quality endorsement

Question: We have been advised that NEAS quality endorsement enables an easier journey for ELICOS providers to obtain and manage CRICOS registration, however we are not asked for evidence of this during ASQA processes. How does ASQA know which providers have NEAS quality endorsement?

- NEAS provides ASQA with an updated list of quality endorsed providers and the location of the delivery sites that have been endorsed quarterly. ASQA adds this information to a provider's profile.

- NEAS advises ASQA when a provider's quality endorsement has been revoked shortly after the decision has been made and ASQA adjusts the relevant provider's profile.

- Providers do not need to separately advise ASQA of obtaining NEAS quality endorsement, however you can always choose to include this as evidence to an application.

NEAS quality endorsement

Question: What things will be easier due to NEAS quality endorsement?

- NEAS quality endorsement is considered a positive factor in a provider's profile, alongside other risk factors.

- It is considered when deciding the level of regulatory scrutiny or action applied to:
  - ELICOS registration applications
  - complaints or intelligence reports about ELICOS matters
  - findings of non-compliance at audit.

- It is not considered a negative risk factor if an ELICOS provider does not hold a NEAS quality endorsement.

Academic progress

Question: What is best practice with regard to monitoring ELICOS student's academic progress? i.e. should colleges report students who have not proven the required academic progress after receiving two prior warnings?

- Standard 10 of the National Code outlines your obligations to monitor and report on student's course progress.

- Before reporting a student who has not met course progress requirements on PRISMS, you need to ensure that you have:

  o implemented your intervention strategy

  o notified the student in writing of your intention to report them, and

  o allowed the student 20 days to avail themselves of your complaints and appeals process.