ASQA RTO Survey 2017

Overview of results
October 2017

ASR
AUSTRALIAN SURVEY RESEARCH
GROUP PTY LTD

Headlines

Good **representative sample** of RTOs: 2353 respondents, resulting in 60% response rate and ±1.3% confidence interval.

Overall, **positive results** for RTOs

- Most rated items (89%) had 66% or more of respondents select **good or excellent** as their answer to any question;
- 75% of rated items had 77% or more respondents giving positive ratings
- Positive ratings increased for around a quarter of items; around half stayed the same; and a quarter declined
- Overall performance as a regulator remained identical
- Aspects of CRICOS and initial course applications increased, while declines were notable with many, but not all, aspects of timeliness of response, clarity of a form and ASQAnet.

Key strengths

- All communication channels
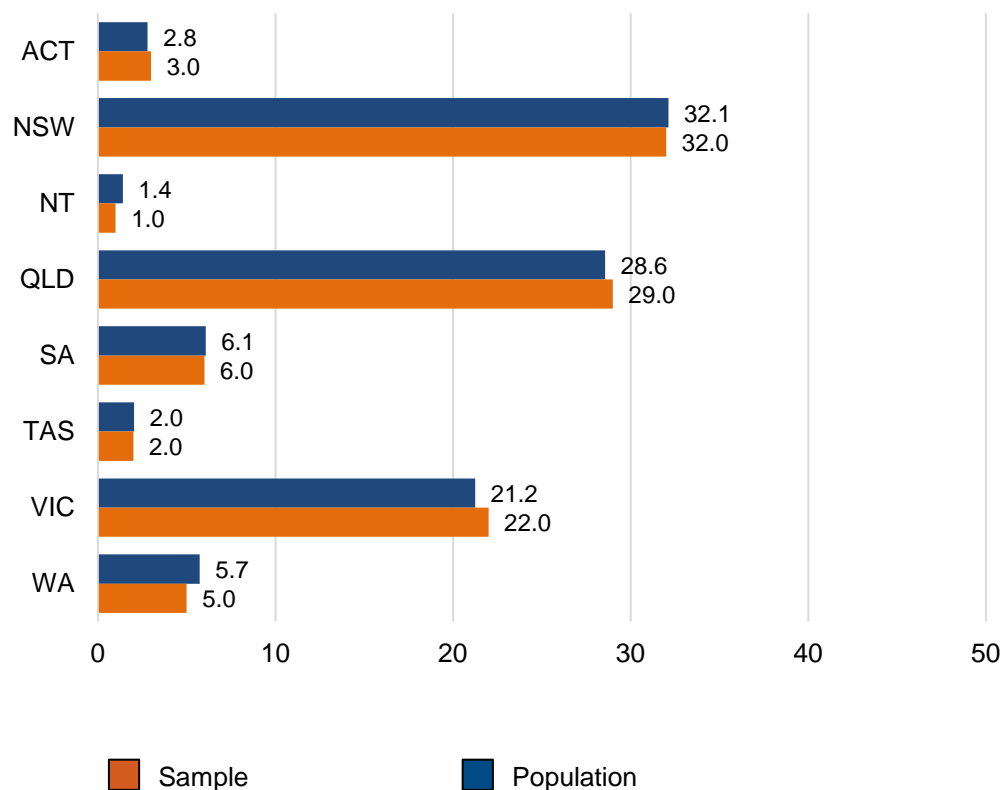- Making payments.

Possible improvements

- Speed of response to emails
- More complete answers from email and Info line interactions
- Style of interaction – be more flexible, transparent and supportive
- Ratings for ASQA as a regulator unchanged since 2016. However, consistent with previous years, RTOs would like stronger and faster regulation of low quality RTOs.

RTO sample was representative

- 60% of RTOs responded
- Very similar population and sample profiles across states
- Results are representative of the population and numeric results have a ±1.3% confidence interval (at 95% confidence level)

RTO: State
% breakdown by population and sample

State	Population	Sample
ACT	2.8	3.0
NSW	32.1	32.0
NT	1.4	1.0
QLD	28.6	29.0
SA	6.1	6.0
TAS	2.0	2.0
VIC	21.2	22.0
WA	5.7	5.0

Sample   Population

Highest scoring items – top 10

ASQA's communication channels rated highly

Items	% +VE*
ASQA *Update* - Accuracy of the information n=1688	94.7
ASQA fact sheets - Accuracy of the information n=1908	94.3
ASQA General Directions - Accuracy of the information n=1156	93.9
ASQA fact sheets - Timeliness of the information n=1919	92.9
ASQA General Directions - Timeliness of the information n=1167	92.9
ASQA fact sheets - Helpfulness of the information n=1931	92.5
Paying a fee or charge - Ease of making a payment n=1892	92.3
ASQA General Directions - Helpfulness of the information n=1173	92.2
ASQA's webinars - Accuracy of the information n=599	92.2
ASQA *Update* - Helpfulness of the information n=1724	91.9

% positive calculation excludes don't know / no answers from base

Lower scoring items – bottom 10

- RTOs rated items about ASQA reconsidering decisions the lowest. This is not surprising considering applications for a reconsideration of a decision follow an adverse decision.
- Note: very small 'n' counts for all items in this table

Items	% +VE*
Reconsideration application - Follow-up assistance that was required n=67	29.9
Reconsideration application - Helpfulness of information about making these types of applications on ASQA's website n=79	32.9
Reconsideration application - Time ASQA took to act on the application n=84	34.5
Initial CRICOS registration - Time ASQA took to act on the application n=73	52.1
Initial RTO Registration - Time ASQA took to act on the application n=124	58.9
Course amendment - Information provided about the progress of application processing n=55	60.0
Initial Course Accreditation - Time ASQA took to act on the application n=98	61.2
Course amendment - Helpfulness of information about making applications on ASQA's website n=56	62.5
Other applications - Time ASQA took to act on the application n=66	63.6
Course amendment - Any follow-up assistance that was required n=50	64.0

% positive calculation excludes don't know / no answers from base

Most improved items – top 10

- RTO's perception of ASQA's performance improved for a quarter of items, stayed the same for half and deteriorated for a quarter
- Speed of response (timeliness) improved for particular interactions so timeliness is beginning to be addressed in some areas
- Largest improvements were all relevent to application processing

Items	n	2017 % +VE*	2016 % +VE	± %
Renewing CRICOS registration - Time ASQA took to act on the application	53	69.8	51.5	18.3
Change scope CRICOS - Time ASQA took to act on the application	170	64.7	53.7	11.0
Renewing course accreditation - Information provided about the progress of application processing	105	71.4	61.5	10.0
Renewing course accreditation - Time ASQA took to act on the application	106	67.0	57.1	9.8
Change scope CRICOS - Clarity and ease of understanding of ASQA's application form	173	83.8	74.8	9.0
Initial Course Accreditation - Time ASQA took to act on the application	98	61.2	52.4	8.8
Change scope CRICOS - Helpfulness of information about making applications on ASQA's website	171	81.3	73.0	8.3
Renewing course accreditation - Helpfulness of information about making applications on ASQA's website	110	73.6	67.0	6.6
Initial Course Accreditation - Information provided about the progress of application processing	94	64.9	61.2	3.7
Initial RTO Registration - Helpfulness of information about making applications on ASQA's website	123	80.5	76.9	3.6

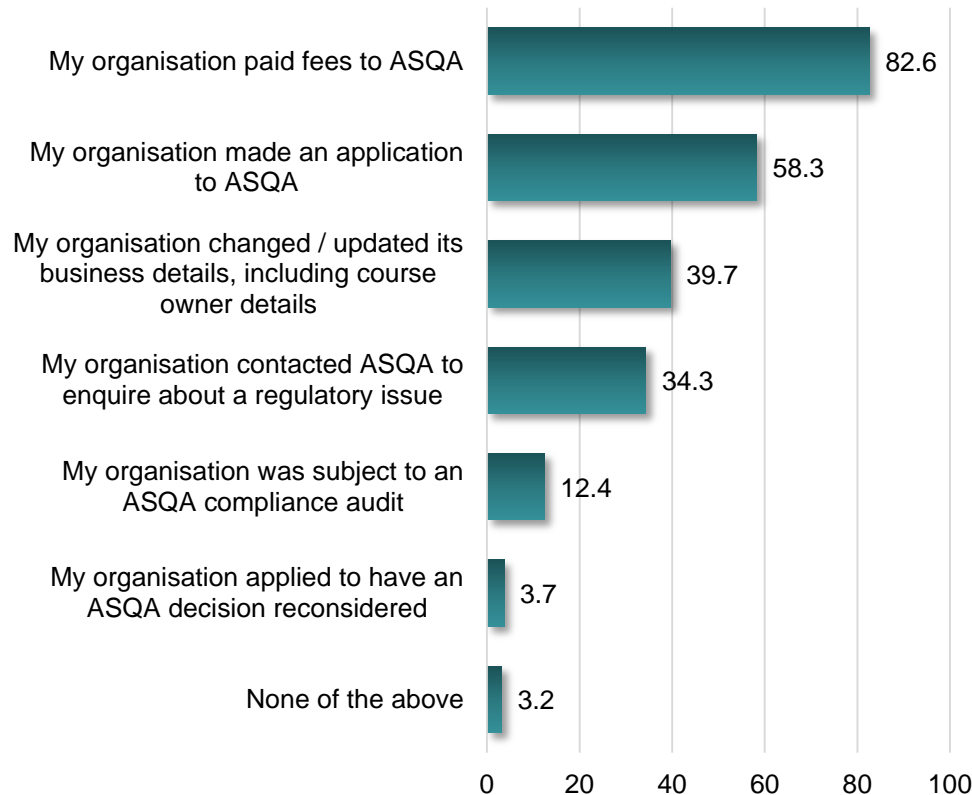*% positive calculation excludes don't know / no answers from base*

Types of interactions

- Most common interactions with ASQA were paying fees and making applications
- Within applications, changing scope was the most common activity, followed by renewal of RTO registration – same as previous years

Types of interactions with ASQA in 2016/2017 about regulatory issues
Multiple answers allowed so total >100%; % based on n=2353

Interaction	%
My organisation paid fees to ASQA	82.6
My organisation made an application to ASQA	58.3
My organisation changed / updated its business details, including course owner details	39.7
My organisation contacted ASQA to enquire about a regulatory issue	34.3
My organisation was subject to an ASQA compliance audit	12.4
My organisation applied to have an ASQA decision reconsidered	3.7
None of the above	3.2

Types of applications made to ASQA in 2016/2017
Multiple answers allowed so total >100%; % based on n=1371

Application	%
Change of scope of RTO registration	74.5
Renewal of RTO registration	33.0
Change of scope of CRICOS registration	12.8
Initial RTO registration	9.2
Renewal of course accreditation	8.5
Initial course accreditation	7.4
Initial CRICOS registration	5.5
Other	5.0
Accredited course amendment	4.5
Renewal of CRICOS registration	4.0
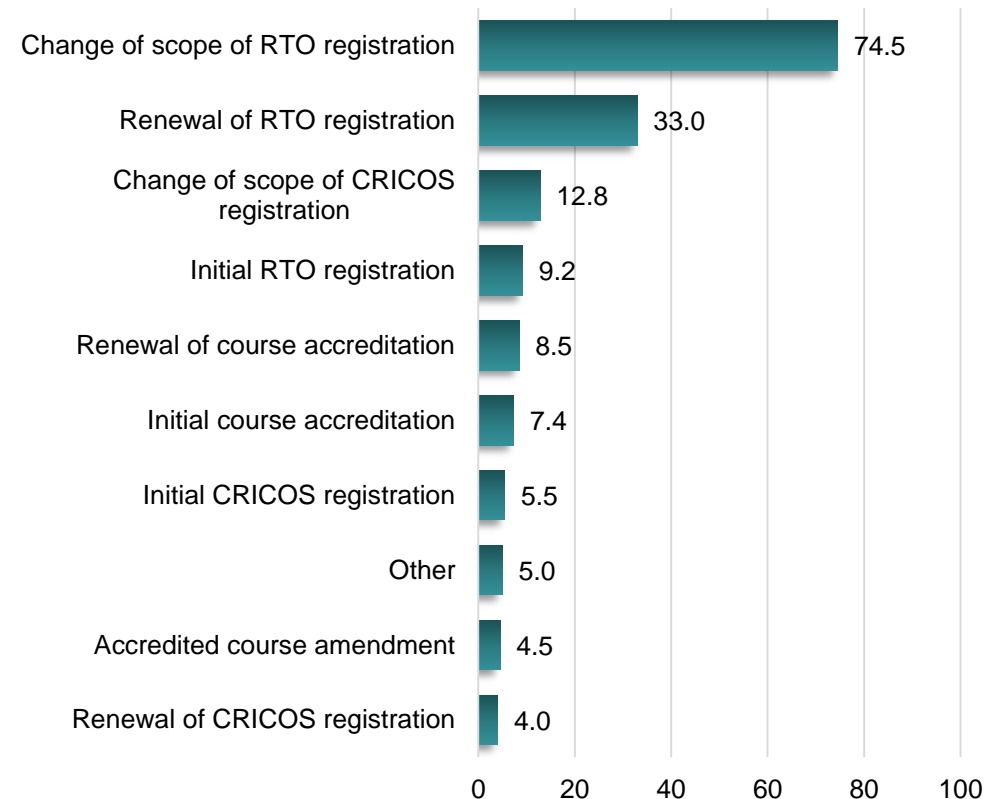
Applications made to ASQA

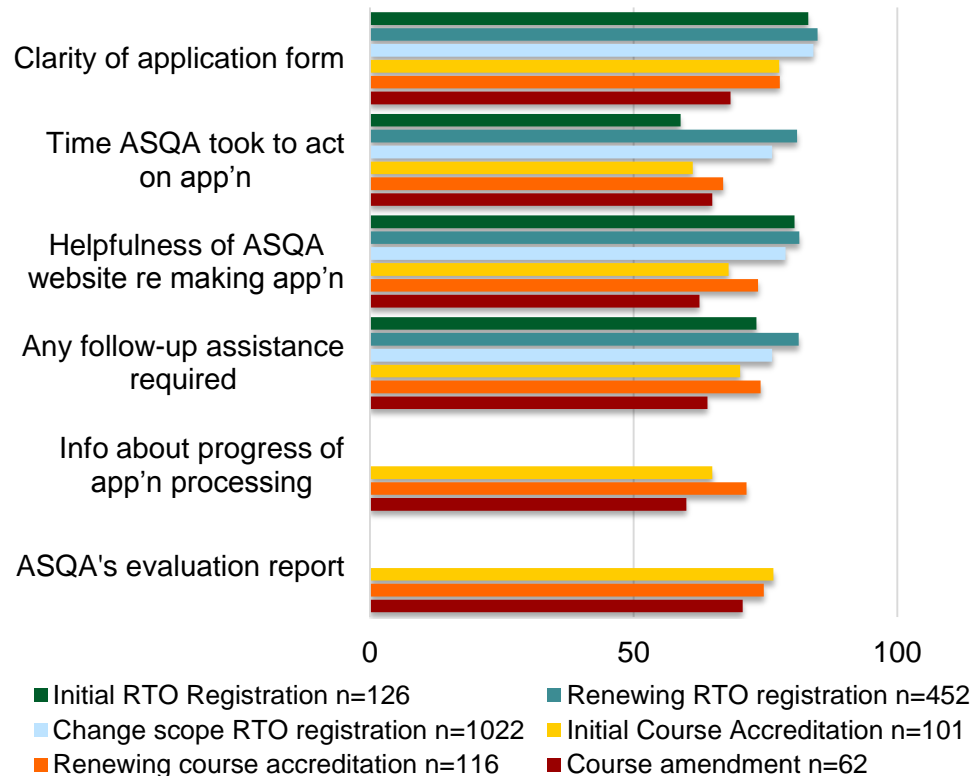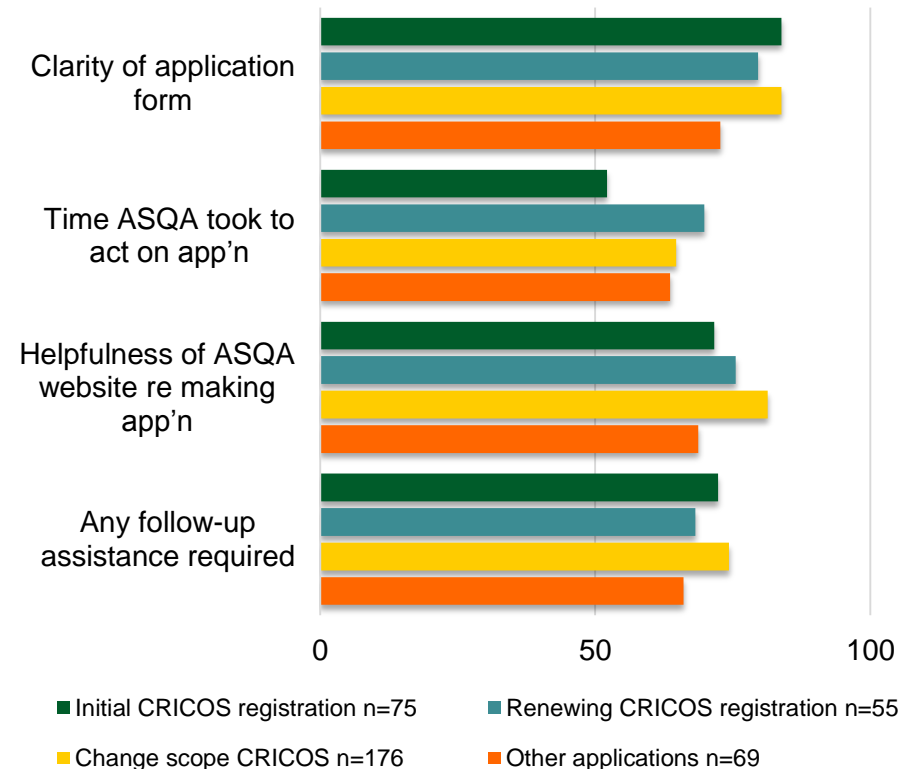- Clarity of forms and helpfulness of website (for some) and evaluation report scored well – same as 2016
- Initial RTO registration tended to rate lower on most dimensions than renewing or changing scope
- RTO registration ratings higher than course accreditation ratings
- Note small n counts on most applications except change of scope and renewing registration

Service dimensions of RTO and accreditation applications
% positive scores

Categories (left chart):
- Clarity of application form
- Time ASQA took to act on app'n
- Helpfulness of ASQA website re making app'n
- Any follow-up assistance required
- Info about progress of app'n processing
- ASQA's evaluation report

Legend:
- Initial RTO Registration n=126
- Renewing RTO registration n=452
- Change scope RTO registration n=1022
- Initial Course Accreditation n=101
- Renewing course accreditation n=116
- Course amendment n=62

Service dimensions of CRICOS and other applications
% positive scores

Categories (right chart):
- Clarity of application form
- Time ASQA took to act on app'n
- Helpfulness of ASQA website re making app'n
- Any follow-up assistance required

Legend:
- Initial CRICOS registration n=75
- Renewing CRICOS registration n=55
- Change scope CRICOS n=176
- Other applications n=69
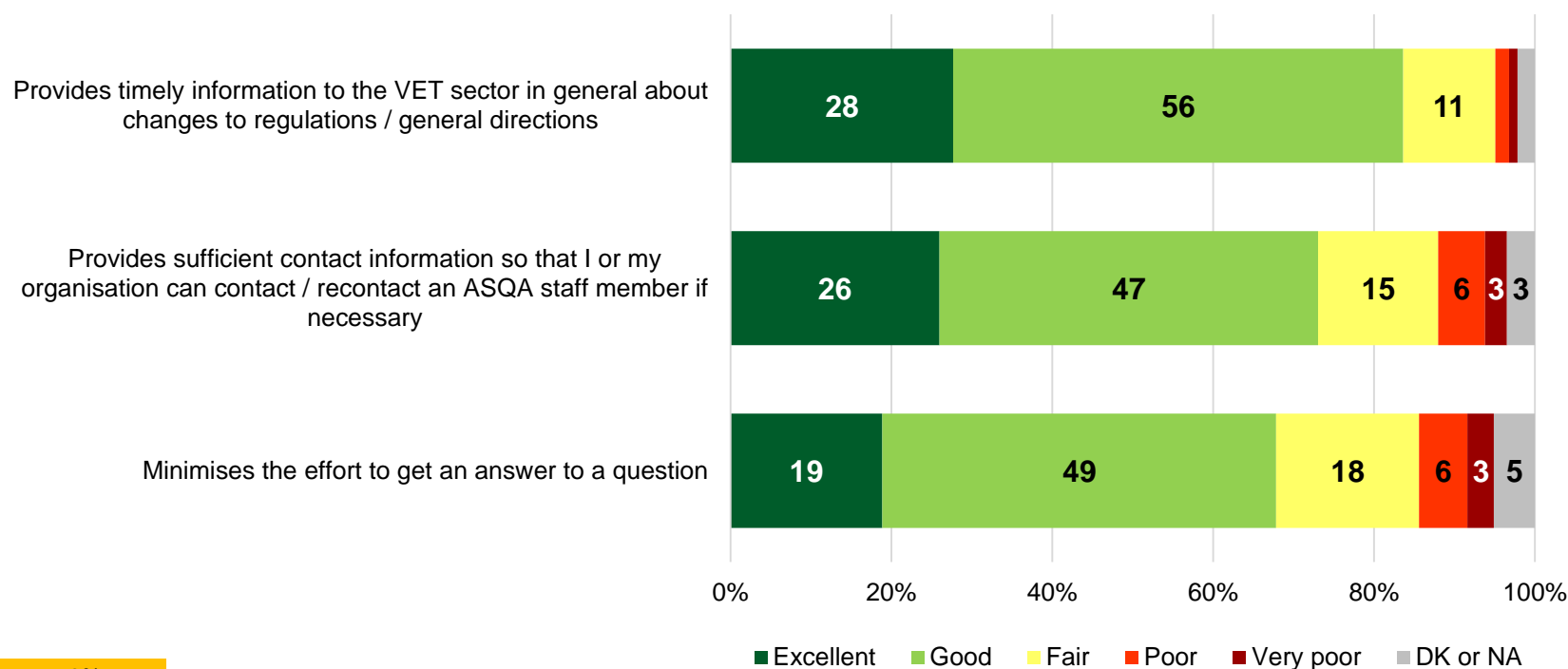
Consultation and communication

- ASQA recognised for providing timely information and this was supported by open-ended comments
- All scores for this category remained very similar to 2016
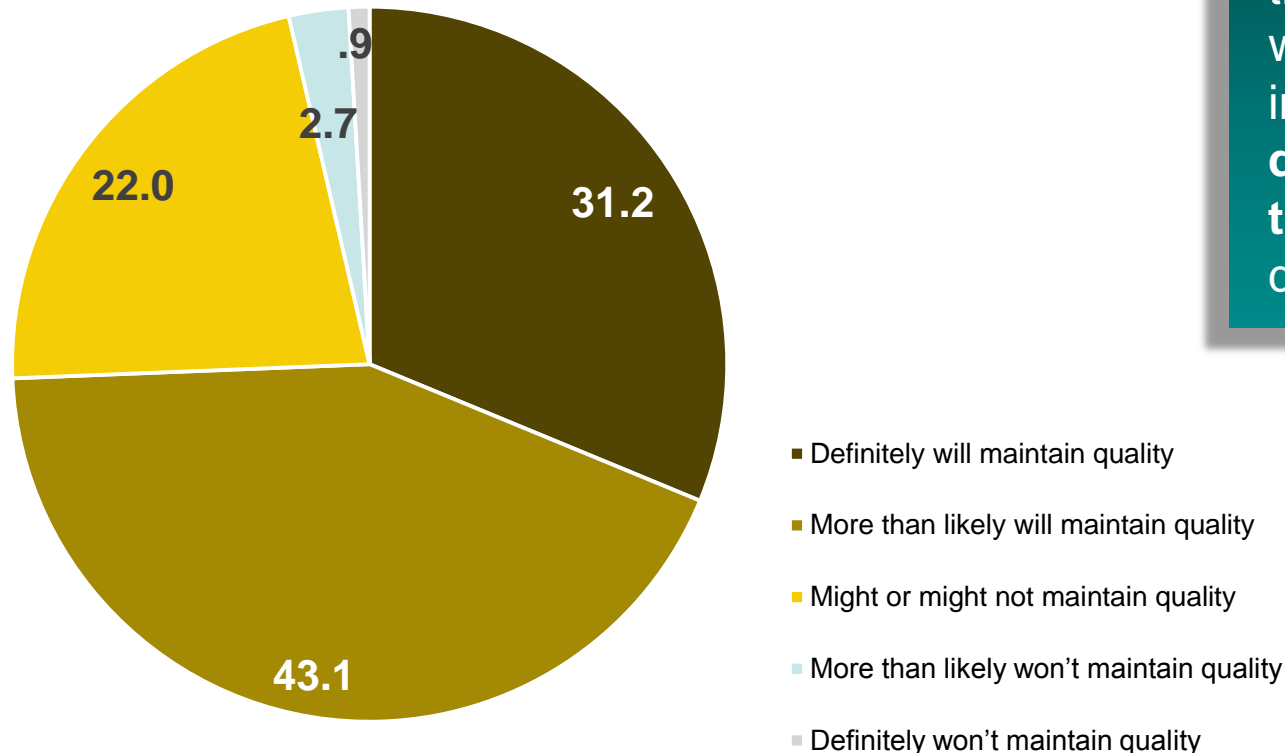
Consultation and communication
% of respondents choosing a rating point, n=2352

Question	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Very poor	DK or NA
Provides timely information to the VET sector in general about changes to regulations / general directions	28	56	11			
Provides sufficient contact information so that I or my organisation can contact / recontact an ASQA staff member if necessary	26	47	15	6	3	3
Minimises the effort to get an answer to a question	19	49	18	6	3	5

Legend: ■ Excellent ■ Good ■ Fair ■ Poor ■ Very poor ■ DK or NA

Only amounts ≥3% are labelled in charts

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Student-centred audit approach

RTO: Extent to which ASQA's student-centred audit approach will help maintain the quality of VET sector outcomes
% of respondents choosing a rating point, n=2337

Pie chart values: .9, 2.7, 22.0, 31.2, 43.1

- Definitely will maintain quality
- More than likely will maintain quality
- Might or might not maintain quality
- More than likely won't maintain quality
- Definitely won't maintain quality

Strong support for the new approach with over 74% indicating that it will **definitely** or **more than likely** maintain quality
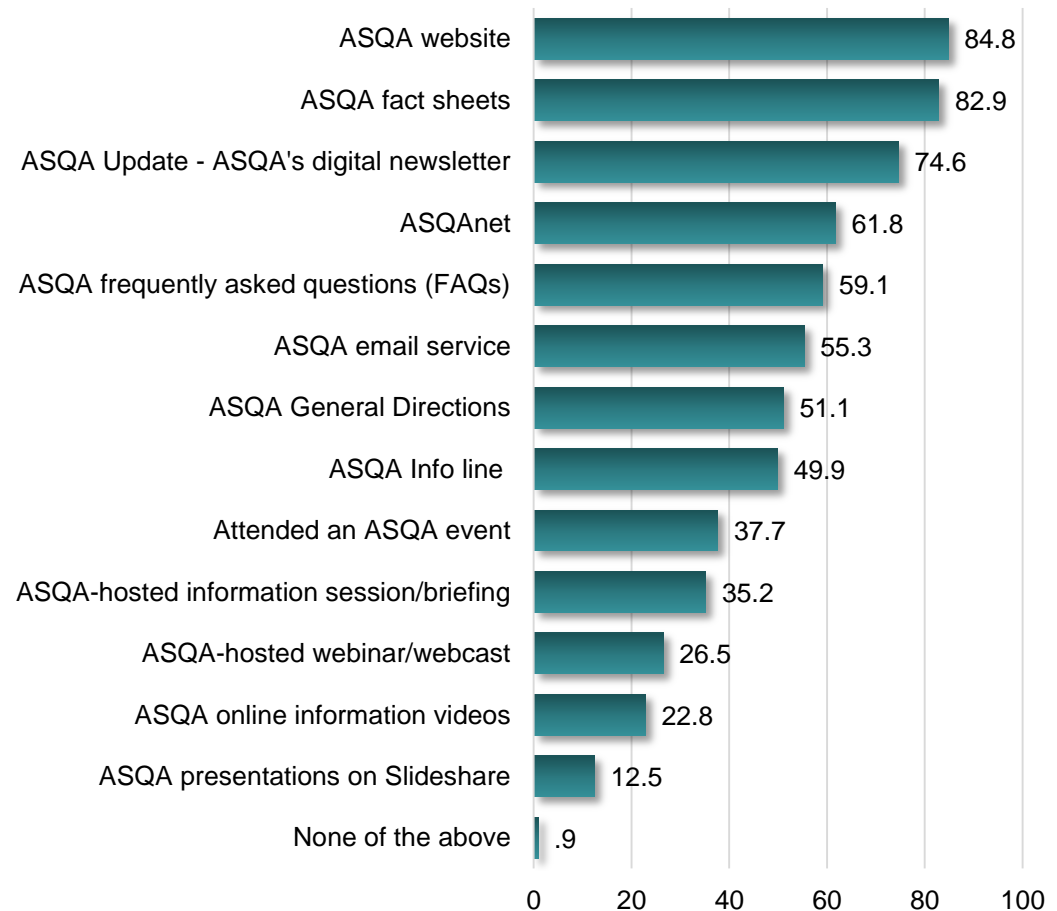
Results consistent with 2016:

- Website, fact sheets, and ASQA *Update* heavily used
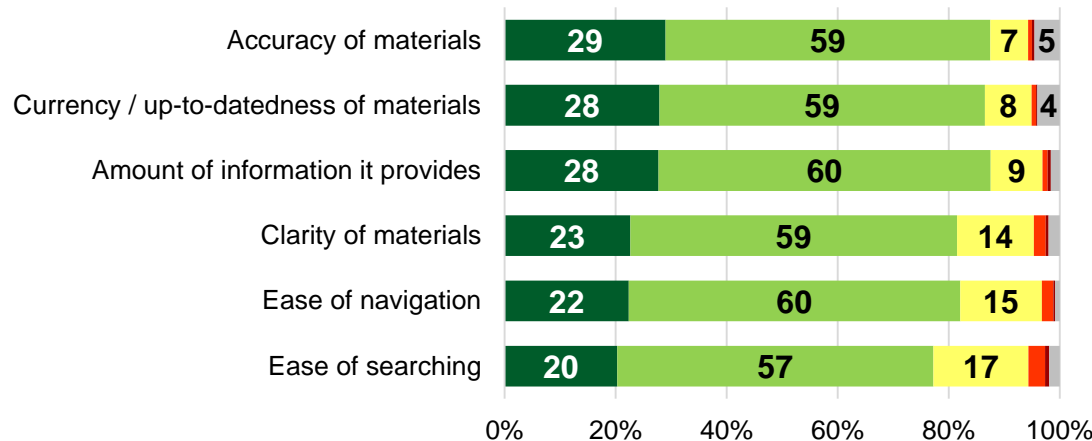- Internet channels (webinar, videos, Slideshare) have relatively low RTO usage

ASQA information channels used by RTOs
Multiple answers allowed so total >100%; % based on n=2351

Channel	%
ASQA website	84.8
ASQA fact sheets	82.9
ASQA Update - ASQA's digital newsletter	74.6
ASQAnet	61.8
ASQA frequently asked questions (FAQs)	59.1
ASQA email service	55.3
ASQA General Directions	51.1
ASQA Info line	49.9
Attended an ASQA event	37.7
ASQA-hosted information session/briefing	35.2
ASQA-hosted webinar/webcast	26.5
ASQA online information videos	22.8
ASQA presentations on Slideshare	12.5
None of the above	.9

Website and ASQAnet

RTO: ASQA website
% of respondents choosing a rating point, n=1993

Accuracy of materials	29 / 59 / 7 / 5
Currency / up-to-datedness of materials	28 / 59 / 8 / 4
Amount of information it provides	28 / 60 / 9
Clarity of materials	23 / 59 / 14
Ease of navigation	22 / 60 / 15
Ease of searching	20 / 57 / 17

0% 20% 40% 60% 80% 100%

RTO: ASQAnet
% of respondents choosing a rating point, n=1452

|	
Ease of access	28 / 55 / 11 / 3
Reliability	22 / 52 / 15 / 5 / 5
Ease of navigation	22 / 50 / 20 / 6
Ability to complete the task required	20 / 50 / 19 / 6
Clarity of instructions	20 / 50 / 20 / 6

0% 20% 40% 60% 80% 100%

- Website provides accurate and current materials
- Across website very small changes since 2016 on all items so this is now a stable platform.
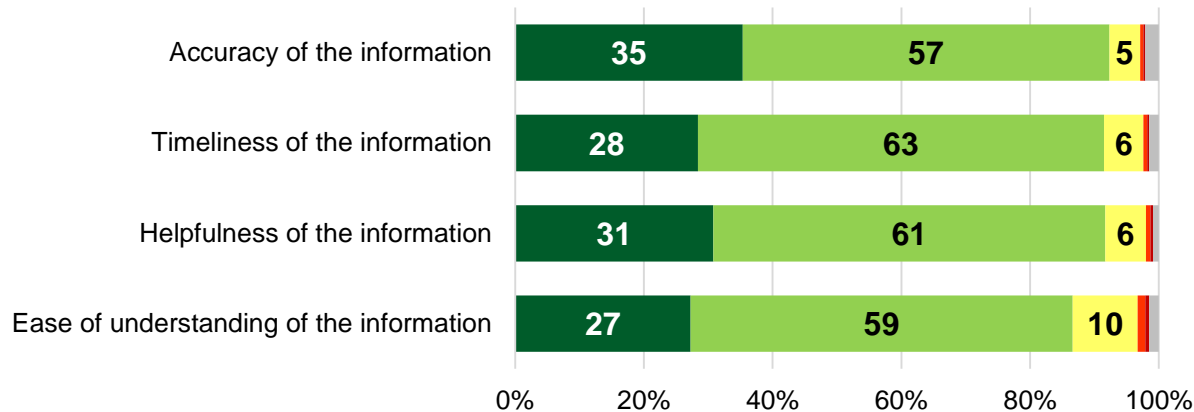- Suggested key improvement was around making searching easier (but many were positive about the website)
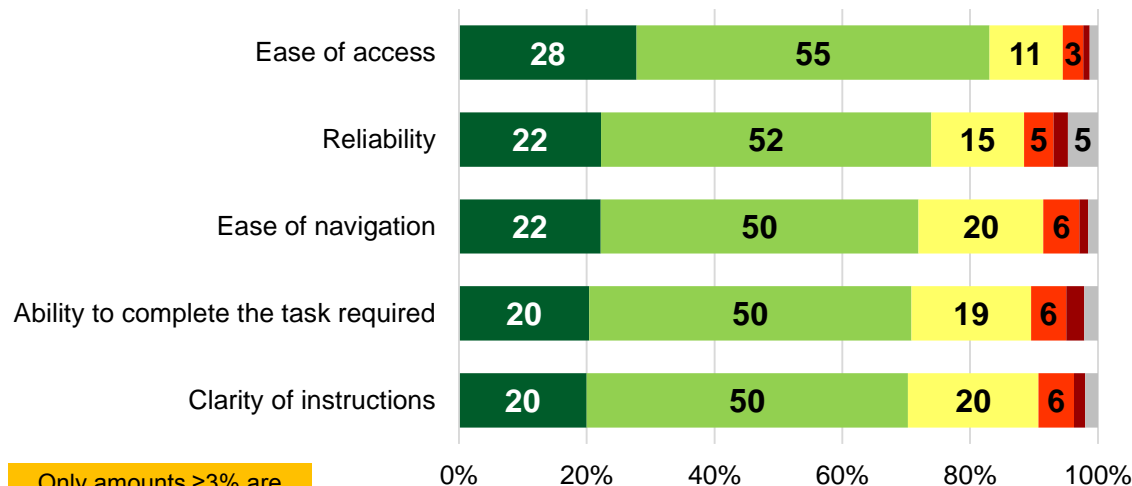
While % positive scores remain relatively high for all aspects of ASQAnet, all items declined since 2016. This can be attributed to teething problems following the relaunch of ASQAnet following a major redevelopment in late-2016.
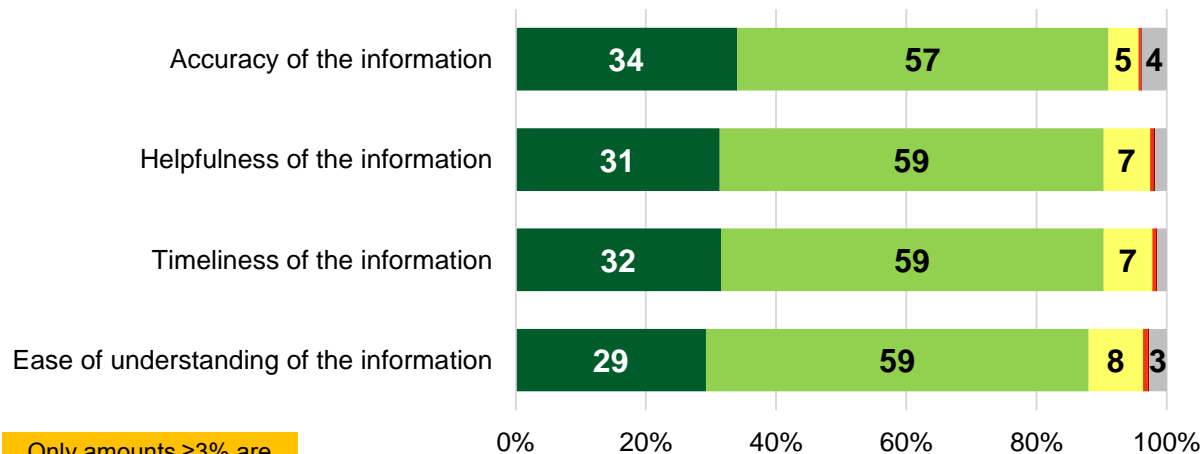
Only amounts ≥3% are labelled in charts

Fact sheets and ASQA *Update*

RTO: ASQA fact sheets
% of respondents choosing a rating point, n=1949

	Excellent	Good	Fair
Accuracy of the information	35	57	5
Timeliness of the information	28	63	6
Helpfulness of the information	31	61	6
Ease of understanding of the information	27	59	10

RTO: ASQA *Update*
% of respondents choosing a rating point, n=1755

	Excellent	Good	Fair	DK or No answer
Accuracy of the information	34	57	5	4
Helpfulness of the information	31	59	7	
Timeliness of the information	32	59	7	
Ease of understanding of the information	29	59	8	3

- Two of the most used information channels for RTOs
- Both positively rated by RTOs and the result was reinforced in comments
- Results have remained very consistent since 2015
- Improvement suggestions around providing more examples

Only amounts ≥3% are labelled in charts

■Excellent ■Good ■Fair ■Poor ■Very poor ■DK or No answer
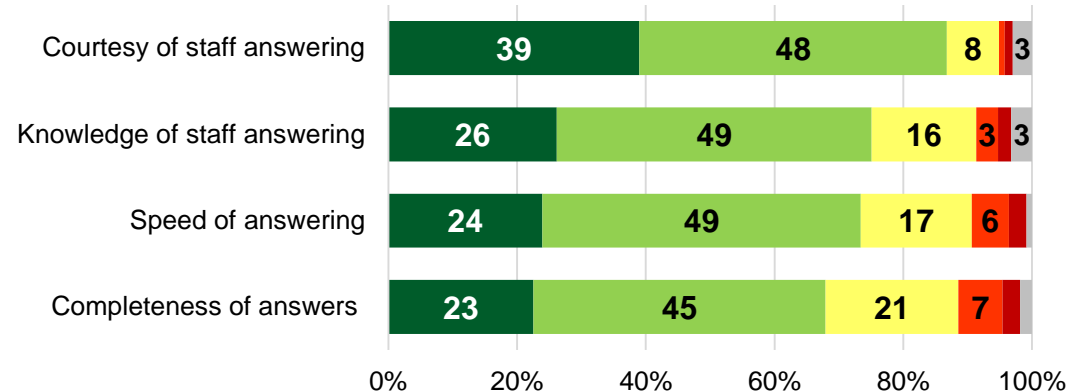
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ASQA's email service and Info line

- Majority used both channels 3 to 10 times in the 2016/2017 financial year
- Staff courtesy rated well for both channels
- Completeness of answers is lowest scoring item for both channels
- All items have remained at a very similar level over the previous few years
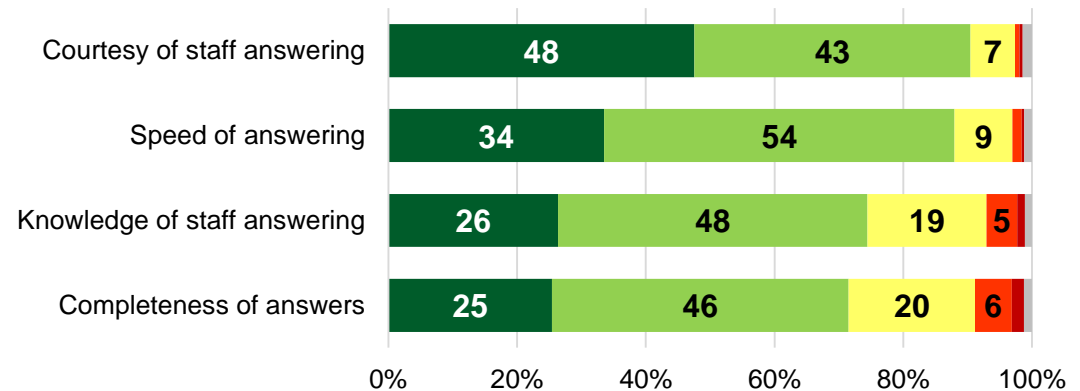- RTOs suggested improvements to response time by email and to staff knowledge for Info line staff

ASQA email service
% of respondents choosing a rating point, n=1300

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Very poor	DK or No answer
Courtesy of staff answering	39	48	8		3	
Knowledge of staff answering	26	49	16	3	3	
Speed of answering	24	49	17	6		
Completeness of answers	23	45	21	7		

ASQA Info line
% of respondents choosing a rating point, n=1172

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Very poor
Courtesy of staff answering	48	43	7		
Speed of answering	34	54	9		
Knowledge of staff answering	26	48	19	5	
Completeness of answers	25	46	20	6	

Only amounts ≥3% are labelled in charts

Legend: Excellent · Good · Fair · Poor · Very poor · DK or No answer

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ASQA overall

RTO: ASQA overall
% of respondents choosing a rating point, n=2351

Category	Values
Promoting and encouraging continuous improvement of RTOs	25 / 53 / 14 / 3
Contributing to the quality of Australia VET and ELICOS providers	15 / 43 / 12 / 3 / 26
Improving the quality of VET outcomes in Australia	20 / 52 / 16 / 4 / 7
Overall as a regulator	18 / 57 / 16 / 4 / 3
Engaging with the regulated community	18 / 50 / 18 / 5 / 7
Applying appropriate / proportional sanctions for non-compliant organisations within its jurisdiction	12 / 36 / 12 / 4 / 33
Applying consistent sanctions for similar breaches	10 / 33 / 11 / 4 / 39

- ASQA is viewed as an effective regulator by 77% of RTOs (who provided a valid answer)
- Overall results have remained stable since 2015

Free text comments indicate that RTOs want ASQA to:

- Enforce more strongly and rapidly remove low quality RTOs
- Improve speed of response to queries and complaints
- Change style of interaction

Open-ended comments

ASQA strengths

- Good, helpful, timely information
- Improved as a regulator
- Regulation (getting rid of cowboys)
- Useful publications (like *Update*, fact sheets, user guides, FAQs)

ASQA improvements

- Enforce more strongly / remove 'cowboys' faster
- Improve response times even more
- Change style of interaction
- Clearer / less confusing information
- ASQAnet (but may have been addressed)

Year comparisons

- Around a quarter of items **improved** in the last 12 months. There were notable positive shifts for:
  - Time ASQA took to act on the application when renewing CRICOS registration
  - Renewing course accreditation
  - Changing the scope for CRICOS and the initial course accreditation
  - Information provided about the progress of application processing when renewing course accreditation.
- A similar number of items **declined** significantly, most noticeably:
  - All items relating to ASQAnet
  - Some items relating to paying a fee or charge
  - Changing or updating details.
- Around half of the surveyed items **remained similar.**

Conclusions about the RTO survey ...

- 2017 results were mixed: there were some positive increases, many items stayed at a similar level and some areas, notably ASQAnet, declined.

- Communication channel improvements were maintained.

- ASQA's website was highly rated.

- Increased face-to-face contact with ASQA staff is appreciated and RTOs continue to think highly of most staff.

- Many RTOs acknowledge ASQA's effort in improving its interactions with them.

- Customer service is still a recurring theme for improvement—most notably speed of response, and, in some cases, simply a response; the knowledge of some staff and the desire for ASQA to provide case managers or a single reference point for providers.

- ASQA's risk approach and student-centred audit approach were positively acknowledged.

- Overall perceptions of ASQA as a regulator remained stable since 2016

- Many RTOs are supportive of ASQA's compliance actions but also want ASQA to take further action against the "cowboys" bringing down the reputation of the sector.

ASQA Stakeholder Survey 2017

- At the same time as conducting the RTO survey, ASQA conducted a survey of 179 stakeholders drawn from:
  - State and federal government agencies including regulatory decision makers
  - Industry associations and skills councils
  - Peak training bodies
  - Industry and training-related regulators
  - Nominated industry experts involved in strategic review management committees

- 55 stakeholders responded (response rate 31%) which generated a confidence interval of ±11%. This means that results should be interpreted as indicative only. In addition, ASR believes that from one year to the next there may also be much less stability in the stakeholder group compared with RTOs. It is likely that more different people with possibly different issues are answering the stakeholder survey each year, making historical comparisons somewhat meaningless. The small sample also contributes to greater yearly variance.

- Given that the response sample was **indicative** only, any conclusions drawn from results should also be qualified.

- Stakeholders were **positive** about information channels including ASQA *Update*, fact sheets, FAQs, ASQA's General Directions and face-to-face information sessions.

- ASQA's risk approach and student-centred audit approach were positively acknowledged.

- They were not so positive about ASQA's **consultation and engagement** with them as co-regulators or industry advisors.

- Common themes in suggested improvements were for ASQA to act on poor performers in the VET sector as well as to engage with the industry more—recurring themes from previous surveys.