



MEDIA RELEASE

VET regulator welcomes ACCC action against training provider

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The Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) has welcomed action taken by the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) against training provider Unique International College (Unique).

The ACCC has instituted proceedings in the Federal Court against Unique for allegedly making false or misleading representations and engaging in misleading or deceptive and unconscionable conduct, in breach of the Australian Consumer Law (ACL), when enrolling students into VET FEE-HELP funded courses between July 2014 and September 2015 in New South Wales.

ASQA – the national vocational education and training (VET) regulator – announced last week that it had cancelled Unique’s registration as a provider of vocational education and training and educational services, including to overseas students.

The training provider is able to seek a review of ASQA’s decision by the Administrative Appeals Tribunal.

ASQA Chief Commissioner Chris Robinson said the Authority had been working closely with the ACCC and other Australian consumer law regulators in an effort to respond to allegations that registered training organisations (RTOs) were engaging in unethical and inappropriate behaviour, especially involving the VET FEE-HELP scheme.

“Last week ASQA released the findings of its targeted audits of VET FEE-HELP providers, which indicated varying levels of compliance with the required national Standards that all RTOs must meet,” Mr Robinson said.

“As a result of this work, ASQA decided to cancel Unique’s registration and impose certain conditions on a number of other VET FEE-HELP-approved training providers.

“This action by the ACCC – following a joint investigation with New South Wales Fair Trading – is being taken under Australian Consumer Law, which RTOs must meet.”

ASQA’s recent report emphasised the importance of a holistic approach by each responsible agency in the VET FEE-HELP program namely the Department of Education and Training in program design and administration, ASQA in relation to the VET Quality Framework and Consumer Law regulators in relation to student recruitment and marketing.

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