



THE HON KAREN ANDREWS MP

Assistant Minister for Vocational Education and Skills
Federal Member for McPherson

MARK PATERSON

Chief Commissioner, Australian Skills Quality Authority

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ASQA's student centred audit approach receives widespread support

An independent evaluation of the Australian Skills Quality Authority's (ASQA) new audit approach has found widespread support among providers and other stakeholders in the vocational education and training sector.

Assistant Minister for Vocational Education and Skills, Karen Andrews, said the evaluation endorsed all key features of ASQA's new approach which places a greater focus on the student experience.

"ASQA has developed a suite of strategies to strengthen its risk-based approach to regulation," Ms Andrews said.

"ASQA's new approach to audit builds on innovative regulatory practices in Australia and internationally. It shifts the focus from compliance of systems and procedures to quality outcomes with greater emphasis on students.

"The initial implementation of the new approach has now been independently evaluated and found more effective in taking action against poor quality training providers. The evaluation has recommended it be used for all future audits and said it was ready to roll out. "

Key features endorsed in the evaluation include:

- a focus on the student experience in scoping the audit and reporting outcomes;
- a focus on practices and behaviours of providers, rather than systems and processes;
- improved use of risk intelligence including a risk dashboard and profile;
- increased student input to audits through surveys, interviews and focus groups;
- more customised audit scope based on provider profile;
- providers more accountable for remedying the impact of non-compliances on students; and
- more timely and efficient regulatory actions.

"The Government is determined to ensure Australia's VET sector delivers the highest possible quality training and assessment so students and employers can have confidence in qualifications that are issued," Ms Andrews said.

“That is why it has supported ASQA’s move to a more risk-based approach to regulation and new and improved approaches to audit to ensure it can identify and act against poor quality providers in an effective and efficient way.”

ASQA Chief Commissioner Mark Paterson said ASQA would continue to refine the audit approach including introducing enhancements to audit tools and building capability among its team of auditors.

“ASQA’s experience has been that the overwhelming majority of RTOs have a genuine desire to provide high-quality training and assessment so their students get the skills they need to be a productive member of the workforce,” Mr Paterson said.

“And it’s those providers that are welcoming of ASQA’s new approach – focusing on the student experience is what providers and our auditors see as most valuable.”

The key findings and recommendations from the evaluation can be view on the ASQA website – www.asqa.gov.au.

Minister Andrews’ media contact:

Matt Dunstan 0411 535 072

ASQA media contact:

Scott Chandler 0408 472 893

Department Media: media@education.gov.au