

Assessing TEQSA's Risk and Regulatory Approach: Perception of Stakeholders

Mahsood Shah, CQUniversity



purpose of the research

To what extent is TEQSA's QA framework:

- innovative in the current context of tertiary education
- rigorously assessing academic standards and outcomes
- engaging various stakeholders
- rigorously monitoring transnational delivery
- building capacity for QA at national level
- assessing compliance against AQF



methodology and sample

- qualitative study: telephone survey
- 40 participants from universities
- 20 participants from private providers
- three student groups (NUS, CAPA, and CISA)
- focused on participants who have experienced the former AUQA audit and the current TEQSA re-registration
- progress todate: 25 participants from universities
- 25 participants ranged from DVC's, PVC's, Chairs of Academic Board, Directors, Managers, former AUQA auditors, and few TEQSA Experts > from 18 universities

researchers experience

- coordinated two AUQA audits (cycle 1 and 2) in universities
- led 1 AUQA audit in a private college and 2 in consultancy capacity
- TEQSA registration (1 University), and 3 private providers
- two brand new accreditation of private colleges
- HDR: Effectiveness of AUQA audits 2001-2011 (10 years)
- coordinated various national and international accreditations
- research strength in QA, higher education

is TEQSA's QA framework innovative?

- mixed view
- recognises university autonomy
- lighter touch compared to AUQA
- less work compared to AUQA
- ensuring minimum standards
- assessing performance against a set of standards
- no public information on 'pass' criteria for the standards
- shift from enhancements to compliance
- not well resourced to think beyond compliance

is TEQSA's QA framework innovative?

- more focus on processes rather than sustainable enhancements
- providers may risk compliance if they are too innovative
- diminishes mission specific goals
- compliance is based on documentation review only
- not comprehensive based on innovation in L&T pedagogy
- examples: joint degrees, enabling courses, transnational distance education

assessing academic standards and outcomes

- self-accrediting institutions have to demonstrate internal processes to monitor standards
- more focus on assessing processes
- risk based assessment – based on data
- expects institutions to meet standards > does not have expertise within to accurately assess every single standard
- AUQA process engaged carefully selected external peers – panel knew how institutions operated, knew what questions to ask
- institutions provide evidence on how standards are met - the capacity of TEQSA to drill further is questionable
- example: OUA > third party arrangement, transnational

stakeholder engagement

- trusts institutions to engage stakeholders – internal QA
- does not engage wider stakeholders as it should be
- top down approach – real weakness
- not like the progress made in Europe
- relies on documentation as evidence of stakeholder engagement
- good for University – not for the sector
- AUQA process was more comprehensive in engaging stakeholders
- lot of things happen at TEQSA behind the scene e.g. complaints
- reliance on paperwork means not seeing the whole picture

monitoring transnational delivery

- at least one transnational course is selected
- focus is on internal processes to monitor quality and standards
- use of comparative data
- relies on documentation provided, and local registration and QA
- visiting the site was critical to AUQA and the panel to assess quality and gain confidence
- no mechanism to assess transnational student experience and employment outcomes
- AUQA process prompted institutions to initiate internal review – many courses/partnerships were closed
- AUQA panel asked the right questions

building capacity for QA at national level

- guidance notes are helpful
- less capacity building
- information on TEQSA website is static and unhelpful
- lost good practice database > 225 entries (Uni and privates)
- annual national award > 6 years
- specific resources for private providers > 8
- workshops > more than 40, ongoing PD for auditors
- annual forum > 11 forums + 300 presentations + 5000 participants
- occasional publication based on themes > almost 40
- regional capacity building in Asia and Pacific

assessment of compliance against AQF

- institutional processes to map courses with AQF requirements
- potential weakness e.g. MBA (1 year, 2 years, 16 unit vs 12)
 - seems like bilateral agreement with institutions
- compliance against AQF is not rigorously assessed
- more reliance on institutional course development and approvals process

what has the university sector gained?

- culture of honesty and academic integrity
- light touch review
- sense of obligation as a University
- trusting autonomous institutions
- consistent use of standards across the sector
- cost effective

what has the university sector lost?

- quality assessment through site visits > based on risk
- cultural change in institutions > quality agenda
- building and nourishing a QA community
- stakeholder engagement > voice of students, staff engagement also
- public reports > QA in media – no one talks about QA
- carrick and ALTC funded many projects around QA
- critical self reflection
- good practice database and forums
- detailed assessment of institutions > mission is less acknowledged

annual risk assessment report

- Lack of clarity on when these report are issued –
 - when prompted by institutions
 - if there are red or orange flags
 - only received in the first year
 - if the risk profile had changed
 - if there are green flags, reports are not issued

risk to the sector

- assumption that self-accredited institutions can be trusted
- monitoring QA in fully online delivery – what would the standards look like?
- third party delivery, transnational distance education
- resourcing of TEQSA to manage brand new application and re-registration – case managers changed several times
- heavily based on institutional reputation > based on past performance
- over regulation could result in lack of innovation e.g. VET
- reliance on institutional data e.g. internal performance data



m.shah@cqu.edu.au

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