

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Academic governance - a subset of the overall governance of an education organisation which deals with the framework that regulates academic decisions and academic quality assurance within the organisation. Academic governance includes the policies, processes, definitions of roles, relationships, systems, strategies, and resources that ensure academic standards and continuous improvement in academic activities and is concerned with the integrity and quality of the core higher education activities of teaching, research, and scholarship.

Academic standards - an agreed specification (such as a defined benchmark or indicator) that is used as a definition of a level of performance or achievement, rule, or guideline. Standards may apply to academic outcomes, such as student or graduate achievement of core discipline knowledge and core discipline skills (known as learning outcomes), or to academic processes such as student selection, teaching, research supervision, and assessment.

Academic staff - a member of staff of a higher education provider who is appointed wholly or principally to undertake a teaching and/or research function.

Admission pathway - any option available to prospective higher education students that will enable them to meet the entry requirements of their chosen courses.

Adjusted Attrition - takes account of students moving between higher education providers and graduating in the new institution.

Adjustment factors - referred to previously as “bonus points”, these are additional points that may be used in combination with an applicant’s Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR) to derive a person’s course Selection Rank. Adjustments do not change applicants’ ATARs but change their Selection Rank for a particular course or courses.

Advanced standing - a form of credit for any previous learning.

Applicant and prospective student - used by tertiary admission centres and higher education institution to describe people at different stages of their application processes. An **applicant** is generally taken to be a person who has already lodged an application to study a specific course. A **prospective student** is generally taken to be a person who is thinking about lodging an application to study a particular course but has not yet done so.

Articulation arrangements - are formal negotiated agreements within and between issuing organisations or accrediting authorities and are about student entitlement to credit. They may also be formal arrangements made between issuing organisations and students. Credit can be given in the form of block, specified or unspecified credit.

Assessment - a process to determine a student’s achievement of identified learning outcomes and may include a range of written and oral methods and practice or demonstration.

ATAR - the Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR) is a ranking from 30 (lowest) to 99.95 (highest) agreed by COAG as a nationally equivalent measure of a person’s relative academic ranking within their complete age cohort in the year they graduated from senior secondary school. (This includes students who did not complete Year 12, completed but did not qualify for an ATAR, or had already previously left school, who account for around 30% of the age cohort.) The ATAR is derived from the scaled scores achieved for senior secondary school subjects. The specific calculation used is different in each state and territory, but the result is designed to be nationally equivalent.

Attrition - the proportion of students commencing a course of study in a given year who neither complete nor return in the following year. It does not identify those students who defer their study or transfer to another institution (refer also to ‘student attrition rates’ below).

Australian Higher Education Graduation Statement (AHEGS) – a supplementary statement to a testamur and record of results that provides additional information to enhance understanding of the qualification by students, employers, industry, professional associations and internationally.

Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) – the national regulator for Australia’s vocational education and training sector. The AQF incorporates the quality assured qualifications from each education and training sector into a single comprehensive national qualification framework.

Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) - Australia’s national policy for regulated qualifications. The AQF encompasses higher education, vocational education and training and school education. It provides for national recognition and a consistent understanding of what defines each qualification type.

AQF award course - a course leading to a qualification or an award covered by the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF).

Bridging course – a course which assists students to gain knowledge in specialist areas that are a core component of the course. If a course requires a prerequisite in an area that students have not studied or worked with before, a bridging course will help students to bridge the gap in that knowledge and gain admission.

Benchmarking – a means by which an entity can: demonstrate accountability to stakeholders; improve networking and collaborative relationships; generate management information; develop an increased understanding of practice, process, or performance; and garner insights into how improvements might be made. For example, in the context of course accreditation, benchmarking involves comparing performance outcomes and/or processes of similar courses of study delivered by other providers. ‘Internal benchmarking’ against other relevant courses offered by the provider may also be undertaken.

Campus – the physical location from where a course of study is being delivered. This location may or may not be owned by the higher education provider which enrolls the student. For e-learning (online) or other distance education courses this would be the location at where the electronic course material is maintained.

Casual staff – staff who are engaged and paid on an hourly or sessional basis, and who have no entitlement to paid annual leave, paid sick leave, or paid long service leave.

Census date - the final day for withdrawal from a course or subject without incurring academic penalty.

Commencement date – the ‘actual start date’ field as recorded in PRISMS.

Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students (CRICOS) - the official Australian Government website that lists all Australian education providers offering courses to people studying in Australia on student visas and the courses offered. CRICOS is a searchable database managed by the Department of Education, Skills and Employment (DESE) under the Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) legislative framework. It provides details of those Australian education institutions approved to recruit, enrol, and deliver education and training services to overseas students and details of the courses that they deliver.

Compassionate or compelling circumstances are generally those **beyond the control of the student** and which have an impact upon the student’s course progress or wellbeing. These could include, but are not limited to:

- serious illness or injury, where a medical certificate states that the student was unable to attend classes
- bereavement of close family members such as parents or grandparents
- major political upheaval or natural disaster in the home country requiring emergency travel when this has impacted on the student’s studies; or
- a traumatic experience which could include:
 - involvement in, or witnessing of a serious accident
 - witnessing or being the victim of a serious crime, and this has impacted on the overseas student (these cases should be supported by police or psychologists’ reports).

- where the registered provider was unable to offer a pre-requisite subject.

Course - a program of study leading to a formal qualification.

Course Fees - the sum of the tuition and non-tuition fees.

Course completion – the successful completion of all the academic requirements of a course of study which includes any required attendance, assignments, examinations, assessments, dissertations, practical experience, and work experience in industry. Where a combined course automatically leads to two separate awards, a course completion only occurs when the requirements of both awards have been satisfied.

Credit transfer– a process that provides students with agreed and consistent credit outcomes for components of a qualification based on identified equivalence in content and learning outcomes between matched qualifications.

Data Provision Requirements 2011 – a legislative instrument that outlines the requirements for providers to capture and provided data to ASQA.

Defer/Deferment – a temporary delay or postponement of commencement of studies.

Department of Education, Skills and Employment (DESE) - the Australian Government department with responsibility for administering funding under the Higher Education Support Act 2003 and for developing and administering higher education policy and programs.

Direct application – an application made to a higher education provider rather than through a tertiary admission centre.

Early offer - where an offer of enrolment is made to a recent secondary school student prior to release of ATARs or equivalent (e.g. OP in Queensland, IB). Such offers are generally conditional on other requirements being met, such as successful completion of a Senior Secondary Certificate of Education or achievement of a specified minimum ATAR.

Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) - the Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) Act 2000 (the ESOS Act) and the associated legislation form the legal framework governing delivery of education to overseas students studying in Australia on a student visa. The framework sets out clear roles and responsibilities for providers of education and training to international students and complements Australia's student visa laws.

e-learning – involves electronically designed use of any digital technology or resources to deliver and support specific teaching and learning aims and outcomes. Also referred to as 'online learning'.

EFTSL – one Equivalent Full-Time Student Load is a measure of the study load, for a year, of a student undertaking a course of study on a full-time basis.

Enabling Course – a course designed to provide students with the skills needed for success in further study, to assist in the transition to tertiary education – for example study techniques or English language skills. Successful completion helps prepare a person to be admitted to a course that leads to a higher education award.

English Language Intensive Courses for Overseas Students (ELICOS) - courses offered to students studying in Australia on student visas. 'Intensive' denotes full-time study comprising a minimum of 20 scheduled course contact hours per week of face-to-face classes of English language instruction.

English language proficiency – the ability of students to use the English language to make and communicate meaning in spoken and written contexts while completing their course of study.

Experience based entry scheme - selection method used by higher education providers to assess and select students who may not have educational qualifications sufficient for an offer of admission to a course but who have other relevant work and life skills and experience that make them a suitable candidate.

Field of Education – as defined by the Australian Standard Classification of Education (ASCED), which is a classification of courses, specialisations, and subjects, with the same or similar vocational emphasis or principal subject matter in the course of study.

Financial viability – where there are financial resources and financial management capacity to sustain higher education provision consistent with the requirements of the Provider Registration Standards.

FTE – full-time equivalence.

Grade distributions – set by each higher education provider and involve analysing the aggregation of final grades using data by subject, course of study, student cohort or other grouping. Grade distributions may be determined using norm-referencing methods, criterion-referencing methods, or a combination of both. Criterion-referencing requires a focus on identified learning outcomes and provides transparency for students.

Graduate attributes – generic learning outcomes that refer to transferable, non-discipline specific skills that a graduate may achieve through learning that have application in study, work and life contexts.

Higher Education Information Management System (HEIMS) - the electronic information system that stores all higher education and VET FEE-HELP data reported to the Department of Education, Skills Employment.

Higher education award – means:

- a) a Diploma, Advanced Diploma, Associate degree, Bachelor degree, Graduate Certificate, Graduate Diploma, Masters degree or Doctoral degree; or
- b) a qualification covered by level 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 or 10 of the Australian Qualifications Framework; or
- c) an award of a similar kind, or represented as being of a similar kind, to any of the above awards, other than an award offered or conferred for the completion of a vocational education and training course

Higher education services – includes functions such as: delivery of teaching and learning services (including student assessment); student learning support (such as access to library materials, academic learning support, and English language support); personal student support services (such as career services, advocacy, counselling, accommodation services, health and welfare services); marketing, advertising and promotion of course(s) of study; student recruitment; maintenance of and/or access to electronic resources and/or websites to support higher education operations; maintaining student records and data; student admission services; provision of teaching and learning or research facilities; student complaint management; and research supervision.

Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021 – comprise:

Part A: Standards for Higher Education

These Standards represent the minimum acceptable requirements for the provision of higher education in or from Australia by higher education providers registered under the TEQSA Act.

Part B: Criteria for Higher Education Providers

These criteria enable categorisation of different types of higher education providers according to certain characteristics; and whether a provider is responsible for self-accreditation of a course(s) of study it delivers.

Higher Education Support Act 2003 (HESA) - provides for the Commonwealth to give financial support for higher education and certain vocational education and training through:

- a) grants and other payments made largely to higher education providers; and
- b) financial assistance to students (usually in the form of loans).

Industry or Work Placement - a subject or unit of study involving approved work and study in industry over one trimester. It is considered an academic subject conducted off campus in the workplace.

Institute of Higher Education – a higher education provider registered in this category offers an Australian higher education qualification and/or an overseas higher education qualification.

1. The higher education provider meets the requirements of Part A, has a clearly articulated higher education purpose that includes a commitment to free intellectual inquiry, and offers at least one accredited course of study.
2. The higher education provider's academic and teaching staff are active in scholarship that informs their teaching, and active in research when engaged in research student supervision, supported by the provider.
3. The higher education provider features its TEQSA Provider Identification and provider category on relevant public material.

International Baccalaureate (IB) - an international educational foundation founded in 1968 and headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland. The IB Diploma program is a senior secondary education curriculum and assessment framework offered by some schools as an alternative to the Australian National Curriculum and overseen by state and territory curriculum and assessment authorities. Australian tertiary admission centres convert IB scores to a notional ATAR or QTAC Selection Rank (not an OP), enabling IB students to be ranked for tertiary entrance alongside their peers.

Key personnel – includes senior executive officers such as: the Principal/Chief Executive Officer, Academic Director (or other senior executive officer with primary responsibility for academic operations), and others who will:

- make decisions about the governance, management, or direction of the academic and corporate operations of a higher education provider, or
- exercise a notable degree of control or influence over the decision making about the governance, management or direction of the academic and corporate operations of a higher education provider.

Learning outcomes – the expression of the set of knowledge, skills and the application of the knowledge and skills a person has acquired and is able to demonstrate as a result of learning.

Material Change - Under section 29(1) of the TEQSA Act, a registered higher education provider is required to notify TEQSA if any of the following events occur or are likely to occur:

- an event that will significantly affect the provider's ability to meet the Threshold Standards; or
- an event that will require the National Register to be updated in respect to the provider.
- Material changes to an accredited course of study or to the operations of a higher education provider may lead TEQSA to take regulatory action. Any action by TEQSA will be mindful of not discouraging change, innovation, and continuous improvement.

Moderation of assessment – quality assurance, control processes and activities such as peer review that aim to assure consistency or comparability, appropriateness, and fairness of assessment judgments; and the validity and reliability of assessment tasks, criteria, and standards. Moderation of assessment processes establish comparability of standards of student performance across, for example, different markers, locations, subjects, providers and/or courses of study.

Mode of study – covers the range of options for study that are available to students. Examples include attendance face-to-face in a classroom; supervised study on a higher education provider's campus; e-learning (online learning); distance or independent learning; work-integrated learning; fast track; intensive delivery; block release; and mixed (or blended) delivery.

National Code 2018 - The National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018 (National Code 2018) provides nationally consistent standards for the conduct of registered providers and the registration of their courses. These standards set out specifications and procedures to ensure that registered providers of education and training courses can clearly understand and comply with their obligations under the National Code 2018.

Nested courses – course of study leading to higher education awards that include articulation arrangements from a lower-level higher education award into a higher-level higher education award to enable multiple entry and exit points.

Non-AQF award course – means a course leading to a qualification or an award not covered by the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF). Registered higher education providers can apply to TEQSA for accreditation of a non-AQF course where the award or qualification is similar to a qualification covered by level 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 or 10 of the AQF; other than an award offered or conferred for the completion of a vocational education and training course. In line with this, non-award short courses, for example, do not fall within TEQSA's regulatory functions under the TEQSA Act as they would not be regarded as similar. Non-AQF qualifications or awards must not use AQF nomenclature.

Non-Award subject – where a student enrolls in a single subject and is not enrolled in an award course.

Non-tuition fees – includes, but is not limited, to:

- enrolment fee – for international students only;
- late re-enrolment fee;
- variation to enrolment after re-enrolment date;
- fees for deferrals and withdrawals after the census date;
- tuition invoice late payment fee;
- administrative services fees; and
- library loans – penalty fees.

Offer round/s - refers to the series of dates on which offers of higher education places are issued to applicants throughout the year, whether through a tertiary admission centre or directly by a higher education provider.

Overall Position (OP) - refers to a Queensland student's position in a state-wide tertiary entrance rank order based on their overall achievement in senior secondary subjects. It indicates how well a student has done compared to all other OP-eligible students in Queensland. Students are placed in one of 25 OP bands from OP1 (highest) to OP25 (lowest). Queensland students seeking admission to higher education in other states can have their OP converted to an ATAR. Interstate students looking to study in Queensland can have their ATAR converted to a Queensland Tertiary Admissions Centre (QTAC) Selection Rank. Queensland will adopt the ATAR instead of the OP for students who commence Year 11 in 2019 and beyond.

Package program - a program that includes multiple courses, which may or may not be wholly provided by the provider.

Pathway – allow students to move through AQF qualification levels with full or partial recognition for the completed course of study and/or learning outcomes they already have.

Principle course - the final course providing the highest qualification in a student's sequenced package of courses.

Provider Case Manager - employed in the provider assessment and evaluation area of TEQSA who manage activities relating to a higher education provider.

Provider Registration and International Student Management System (PRISMS) - a secure system for providers to:

- issue 'Confirmations of Enrolment' to overseas students intending to study in Australia (the Department of Home Affairs requires these to issue a student visa), and
- report changes in course enrolment.

National Register - refers to the National Register of Higher Education Providers. The Register was established and is maintained under section 198 of the TEQSA Act.

Recognition of prior learning (RPL) - a process used to assess an individual's relevant prior learning (including formal, informal, and non-formal learning) to determine the credit that may be granted towards completion of a qualification.

Record of results – a record of all learning leading to an AQF qualification or an accredited subject in which a student is enrolled. This may be called a 'transcript of results', 'academic transcript', 'record of achievement', or 'statement of result'.

Registered Training Organisation – a training organisation that is listed as a Registered Training Organisation on the National Register referred to in section 216 of the National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Act 2011.

Regulatory risk - in the context of TEQSA's regulatory operations, regulatory risk refers to actual or potential risk events (regarding a provider's operations and performance) which indicate that the provider may not meet the Threshold Standards (either currently or in the future).

Risk Assessment Framework - describes TEQSA's regulatory risk management policy and processes. It enables TEQSA to give effect to the principle of reflecting risk in its regulatory activities, as required under the TEQSA Act.

Risk assessment - captures the overall process of risk identification, risk analysis and risk evaluation.

Selection Rank - the ranking that tertiary admission centres and most universities actually use to assess admission to a course. A person's course Selection Rank can include their ATAR, any adjustments they are eligible for, such as equity or subject adjustments, other contributions calculated on the basis of work experience or previous non-secondary study, portfolio assessments, results of the Special Tertiary Admissions Test, other supplementary tests, etc.

School recommendation - from a school or other secondary education provider describing the abilities of a student.

Statement of Attainment – an official and certified document identifying that the student named on the document has successfully completed a specified number of subjects as named on the statement.

Student attrition rates - show the 'drop out' rate from institutions and represent one dimension of the effectiveness of the delivery of educational services. They are expressed as a percentage of the total number of students who have enrolled and commenced in the course of study between 1 January and 31 December but do not return to study in the course of study in the following year, less those students that completed the course of study.

Student cohort – all students commencing in a course of study in a particular year with a higher education provider. Student cohorts may be classified by entry pathway, mode of study, place of study or other groupings.

Student Completion Letter – an official and certified document identifying that the student named on the document has successfully completed the award named on the letter.

Student completion rates – measure the rate of completion for a cohort of students completing in minimum time.

Completion rates are defined as the number of completions of students in a course as a proportion of the total number of students who commenced in a course in a given year. The rate may be defined as completing in minimum time or minimum time plus one year. For a three-year bachelor degree for students undertaking the course full-time the calculation would be:

- Number of completing students in year N+3 (2010)/Base students in Year N (2008)
- Where based students are the number of students commencing a course in 2008

$$CR = \frac{\text{Completing Student in } N + 3}{\text{Numer of Students in Cohort } N}$$

Student contact hours – time spent by students in timetabled teaching and learning activities, such as: face-to-face lectures; tutorials; supervised study; field trips; work-integrated learning activities; clinical and other placements.

Student progress rates – provide a measure of educational achievement and the effectiveness of educational delivery. The student progress rate measures successful student subject load.

Subject – a discrete unit of study and a combination of subjects make up a course of study.

Support staff – a member of staff of a higher education provider without an academic staff classification and who provide support functions for teaching and/ or research activities. Examples of 'support functions' include management; academic learning support; English language support; student counselling; librarian; IT support; laboratory assistance; technical assistance; general administrative functions; and student administration functions such as provision of student advice, student admissions, student enrolments and student graduations.

TAC application - application made through a tertiary admission centre, namely QTAC, UAC, VTAC, SATAC, TISC and University of Tasmania, in relation to applications to study in that state.

Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) - Australia's independent national regulator of the higher education sector, responsible for assessing applications for inclusion on the CRICOS and for approving the registration of a provider on CRICOS.

Testamur – an official and certified document identifying that the student named on the document has successfully completed the award named on the testamur.

Third party, agent, or partner arrangements – where a higher education provider has, or intends to have, any aspect of its higher education services in relation to its course(s) of study carried out on its behalf through a partner, agent, or third-party arrangement. A third party, agent or partner arrangement may include, for example: partnerships with other institutions, higher education providers, or entities; the formation of joint ventures or special purpose companies; sub-contracting of services; or franchising arrangements.

Transcript – an official and certified document detailing a student's enrolment record at Ikon.

Tuition Fees – as defined by Section 7 of the ESOS Act 2000:

Fees a provider receives, directly or indirectly, from:

- (a) an overseas student or intending overseas student; or
- (b) another person who pays the fees on behalf of an overseas student or intending overseas student;

that are directly related to the provision of a course that the provider is providing, or offering to provide, to the student.

Unit – a discrete unit of study and a combination of subjects make up a course of study.

VET – Vocational education and training

VET Quality Framework – a set of standards and conditions used by ASQA to assess whether a registered training organisation meets the requirements for registration.

These terms have been substantially derived from the [TEQSA Glossary of Terms - the Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000 and amendments](#), [Australian Qualifications Framework Glossary of Terminology](#), and [ASQA Glossary](#).