



# Strengthening TEQSA's Powers

The Australian Government will modernise and strengthen the powers of the Tertiary Education Quality Standards Agency (TEQSA) to ensure universities meet the standards that students, staff and the Australian community expect.

A better, stronger regulator will reinforce confidence in Australia's higher education sector. TEQSA will be able to act faster and in a more targeted way when serious risks and issues emerge at universities.

## How will it work?

The *Tertiary Education Quality Standards Agency Act 2011* (TEQSA Act) will be amended to give TEQSA stronger monitoring and enforcement powers, including directions to rectify breaches of conditions, significantly increased financial penalties, and amended principles of regulation.

Under the proposed changes, universities will face increased financial penalties for failures to comply with the Threshold Standards, and for failing to act on the directions of the regulator.

Amendments to the TEQSA Act will take effect following passage of legislation. The reforms will be reviewed after five years to ensure measures are effective and proportionate.

## Why is it important?

Universities and the higher education sector have evolved significantly, but TEQSA's powers have been relatively unchanged since it was established 15 years ago.

Persistent examples of poor governance, including inadequate responses to racism, have undermined public trust and the social licence of universities.

The Australian Government Response to the Special Envoy's Plan to Combat Antisemitism committed to strengthening the powers and penalties available to TEQSA to ensure it can step in and act when it is justified in the public interest.

The Australian Government, and the wider community, expects universities to be held accountable, and stronger regulatory tools will help achieve that.

## Who will benefit?

Students, staff and the community will benefit from a higher education regulator that better considers and protects their interests and safety. These changes will also underpin greater accountability and higher-quality university education.

## How much will it cost?

Costs will be recovered through TEQSA's cost recovery arrangements.