



INDEPENDENT
HIGHER EDUCATION
AUSTRALIA

IHEA SUBMISSION

SENATE INQUIRY INTO THE QUALITY OF GOVERNANCE AT AUSTRALIAN HIGHER EDUCATION PROVIDERS

3 March 2025

IHEA Submission

Senate Inquiry into the Quality of Governance at Australian Higher Education Providers

Introduction

Independent Higher Education Australia (IHEA) welcomes the Senate Inquiry into Quality of Governance at Australian Higher Education Providers, for which submissions are due by 3 March 2025.

On 29 January 2025, under Standing Order 25(2)(a)(v), the Senate Education and Employment Legislation Committee agreed to inquire into governance at Australian higher education providers, specifically:

1. The adequacy of the powers available to the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency to perform its role in identifying and addressing corporate governance issues at Australian higher education providers, with particular reference to:
 - a. The composition of providers' governing bodies and the transparency, accountability and effectiveness of their functions and processes, including in relation to expenditure, risk management and conflicts of interest;
 - b. The standard and accuracy of providers' financial reporting, and the effectiveness of financial safeguards and controls;
 - c. Providers' compliance with legislative requirements, including compliance with workplace laws and regulations;
 - d. The impact of providers' employment practices, executive remuneration, and the use of external consultants, on staff, students and the quality of higher education offered; and
 - e. Any related matters.

TEQSA's Role

The primary function of the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) is to register providers, ensure their compliance through enforcing the Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2011 and identifying and addressing sectoral risks to the standards and provider integrity.

This affords TEQSA with a range of powers to regulate and assure the quality of higher education providers in Australia, including on matters of governance.

This allows TEQSA to undertake the following:

- Under Section 28 of the *Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011* (TEQSA Act), TEQSA can require a provider to provide information or documents relevant to its compliance with Threshold Standards. This may be in relation to:
 - Financial reports (if there are concerns about sustainability or mismanagement).
 - Staffing data (e.g., casualisation rates, staff qualifications, and workloads).
 - Governance policies (e.g., decision-making processes and risk management).
 - Academic integrity and misconduct reports.
 - Student outcome data (e.g., completion rates and student support services).
- Under Section 32 of the TEQSA Act, TEQSA can impose conditions on a provider's registration, although in practice this tends to be rare for publicly funded (public) universities. This may involve:
 - Additional reporting on financial stability, staffing, or governance.
 - Limiting student enrolments if resources (staffing, funding) are inadequate.
 - Mandating external audits or reviews of governance and employment practices.

- Restricting the introduction of new courses if academic quality is at risk.
- Under Section 59 of the TEQSA Act, TEQSA can undertake an investigation when there are concerns about compliance with the Threshold Standards. (However, TEQSA does not conduct criminal or financial misconduct investigations, which are referred to other agencies, for example the Australian Federal Police, Australian Securities and Investments Commission and Fair Work Ombudsman). Investigations may consider the following:
 - Academic misconduct (e.g., widespread cheating, research fraud).
 - Governance failures (e.g., mismanagement affecting academic standards).
 - Student welfare concerns (e.g., lack of support services, unsafe environments).

While TEQSA has a role in ensuring that the quality of education at higher education providers is maintained, it has limited direct power over employment, workplace relations and executive remuneration practices, unless they directly affect educational outcomes. However, there may be additional actions that TEQSA can take to address these issues.

IHEA recommends that issues that are identified through this Inquiry, and any recommendations that are made to address these issues, are not applied on a sector wide basis but are targeted to address the specific source of the concerns.

Additional work underway

TEQSA has stated on its website that it supports the implementation of priority action 5 from the Australian Universities Accord (The Review's Interim Report noted under this action to work with state and territory governments and universities to improve university governance), in particular:

- Ensuring universities are good employers.
- Enhancing student and staff safety.
- Reforming the membership of governing bodies to include individuals with expertise in university operations.

Following this, the Australian Government committed to implementing these recommendations. In response to Priority Action 5, the Government convened a working group with states and territories to advise on immediate actions to improve university governance. The working group focused on:

- Ensuring that universities are good employers providing supportive workplaces where staff can be confident they will not be underpaid.
- Making sure governing bodies have the right expertise, including in the business of running universities.
- Making sure universities are safe for both students and staff.

We understand that TEQSA is presently developing new guidance and reporting requirements regarding provider workplace obligations and is also engaging with work being led by the Department of Education, which has established the Expert Council on University Governance.

It is worth noting that the Expert Council on University Governance, comprises the following Government-nominated members:

- Ms. Melinda Cilento (Chair); Ms. Sharan Burrow AC; and Mr. Bruce Cowley.

This is supplemented by organisational representatives that each have a representative on the Council:

- University Chancellors Council
- Australian Institute of Company Directors
- Governance Institute of Australia

- Australian Indigenous Governance Institute
- Law Council of Australia
- Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency
- Universities Australia

The National Tertiary Education Union (NTEU) and the National Union of Students will each nominate an expert to participate in the Council's work, providing a bridge between the Council and the wider university community.

The Council's mandate specifically includes developing new 'University Governance Principles and Recommendations' focusing on enhancing accountability, transparency, engagement and representation within university governing bodies. Key areas of focus are ensuring universities are good employers; equipping governing bodies with appropriate expertise; and maintaining safe environments for students and staff.

If the remit of the Council is 'University Governance', and specifically public university governance, the membership of the Council appears to be comprehensive. However, if independent (private) universities and/or non-university higher education providers are subsequently brought into scope for any recommendations of the Council, representation from the independent higher education sector must be included now to ensure the diversity and different models of operation, outside of public universities, can be taken into account.

We look forward to considering updated guidance from TEQSA and any recommendations from the Council and recommend that the Senate Inquiry should await the completion of these activities before making any further recommendations. This will ensure a considered approach that does not lead to overlap and additional regulatory burden.

[The Senate inquiry](#)

However, as an already highly regulated sector, IHEA cautions against additional regulation of higher education providers. Over-regulation costs providers time and money, which can lead to finding savings elsewhere within the organisation. This may lead to redundancies and come at the cost of innovation and greater use of technology, which impacts students.

The Threshold Standards alone establish minimum standards for governance arrangements, including independent membership of corporate governing bodies and require the independent review of governance arrangements at least every seven years. For example, under 6.2.1 of the Threshold Standards *"the provider is able to demonstrate, and the corporate governing body assures itself, that the provider is operating effectively and sustainably, including: a) the governing body and the entity comply with the requirements of the legislation under which the provider is established, recognised or incorporated, any other legislative requirements and the entity's constitution or equivalent"*. Importantly, while TEQSA does not directly ensure compliance under other regulatory frameworks, for example workplace relations, under the Threshold Standards, providers are required to meet the requirements of other legislative frameworks.

This means that with respect to the Threshold Standards, TEQSA has the power to exercise oversight over broader legislative compliance on matters such as workplace relations and employment practices. TEQSA exercises this oversight, including seeking information from providers on matters including the risk of underpayment of staff and issues relating to sexual harassment and assault and related prevention strategies. TEQSA also has information sharing arrangements with a range of other agencies, such as the Fair Work Commission and the Australian Securities and Investments Commission Australia, the Department of Education, the Australian Taxation Office and the Commonwealth Ombudsman. However, there may be opportunities to enhance and streamline these interactions.

Some providers, which are publicly-listed on the Australian Securities Exchange (ASX), will be subject to additional governance requirements under the *Corporations Act 2001*, including transparency of operations and financial sustainability, which are reported quarterly and made public.

As such, and as outlined in this submission, IHEA believes that TEQSA has the frameworks and powers to adequately undertake its role. However, there may be opportunities for TEQSA to supplement this work with specific and fine-tuned actions on issues they have less direct control over, such as compliance with workplace relations laws.

This would be more appropriate and specific and effective action than recommending additional, blunt regulation for all provider types.

a) The composition of providers' governing bodies and the transparency, accountability and effectiveness of their functions and processes, including in relation to expenditure, risk management and conflicts of interest

TEQSA's Threshold Standards require governing bodies to include independent members and be competent in their roles. TEQSA is able to monitor the performance and behaviour of these bodies, including their expenditure, risk management, and handling of conflicts of interest. However, it is worth noting that TEQSA does not have direct power to dictate the composition of governing bodies, rather it ensures that governance standards align with the Threshold Standards.

In addition, TEQSA requires that all individuals who make significant decisions for the provider, including members of the governing body, meet the 'fit and proper person' criteria. This includes assessing their character, ability, and likelihood of complying with the TEQSA Act and the Threshold Standards. On its website, TEQSA states that:

- *In accordance with the TEQSA Act, the requirement to be a Fit and Proper Person applies to all people who make decisions that affect the whole, or a substantial part of, the provider's affairs, such as the Vice-Chancellor, Chancellor, senior executives and members of the governing body. In assessing whether a person is fit and proper, TEQSA considers the person's character and ability, as well as the likelihood that the person will comply with (or reasonably assist compliance with) the obligations under the TEQSA Act and the Higher Education Standards Framework.*

TEQSA also states that it is in the process of updating the Fit and Proper Person Determination to align with those that apply to the vocational education and training sector (i.e. whether a person has committed an offence or offences against foreign law/s; has been found not to be a fit and proper person for the purposes of any law of the Commonwealth or of a State or Territory; and whether the public is unlikely to have confidence in a relevant person's suitability to be a person who makes or participates in making decisions.

Specific actions and requirements of TEQSA

- **Regulatory Oversight and Monitoring**
 - Provider Registration and Re-Registration: TEQSA assesses providers' governance structures during the registration and renewal processes, ensuring compliance with governance and accountability standards.
 - Ongoing Compliance Reviews: TEQSA may conduct periodic or risk-based audits/compliance assessments of providers' governance arrangements, financial sustainability, and risk management frameworks.

- **Governance and Accountability Requirements**

Corporate governance is specifically detailed under Part A, Sections 6.1 (corporate governance) and 6.2 (corporate monitoring and accountability) of the Threshold Standards.

TEQSA states that the intent of the corporate governance Standards is to establish a corporate governing body that has certain specified characteristics, such as the inclusion of independent members (directors), and which is competent to undertake its governance roles.

- Board Composition Requirements: Providers must demonstrate that their governing bodies include members with sufficient expertise, independence, and financial acumen. TEQSA may require evidence of qualifications, experience, and external oversight mechanisms. However, TEQSA states on its website that regarding public universities, the act of establishment for each university sets out the requirements for its governing body.
- Transparency in Decision–Making: TEQSA can mandate public disclosure of governance structures, financial management policies and risk management strategies to enhance accountability.
- Periodic Reviews: In accordance with the Threshold Standards, governing bodies are required to conduct periodic independent reviews of their effectiveness at least every seven years.
- **Financial Oversight and Risk Management**
 - Expenditure and Financial Sustainability Checks: TEQSA requires providers to submit audited financial statements, business continuity plans and expenditure reports to ensure financial accountability and sustainability.
 - Risk Management and Internal Controls: TEQSA assesses whether providers have effective risk management policies in place, including frameworks for financial risk, academic risk and operational risk.
- **Conflicts of Interest and Ethical Conduct**
 - Code of Conduct and Disclosure Requirements: Providers must have policies to manage conflicts of interest, requiring governing body members to declare potential conflicts and recuse themselves when necessary. TEQSA may review policies and enforcement mechanisms.
 - Whistleblower Protections: TEQSA encourages providers to implement and enforce whistleblower policies that allow reporting of governance breaches without fear of retaliation.
- **Enforcement Actions and Sanctions**

TEQSA has the capacity to monitor the performance and governance practices of higher education providers to ensure they comply with the standards. This includes assessing the governing body's ability to oversee the provider's operations and maintain accountability. Where this is not occurring, they can:

 - Conditions on Registration: TEQSA can impose conditions requiring providers to improve governance practices, such as appointing independent directors or enhancing financial oversight.
 - Warnings and Directives: TEQSA may issue formal warnings or directives to rectify deficiencies in governance, financial management, or risk assessment frameworks.
 - Suspension or Cancellation of Registration: In severe cases of non–compliance, TEQSA has the authority to suspend or revoke a provider's registration, preventing them from operating in the higher education sector.
- **Periodic Reviews**
 - In accordance with the Threshold Standards, governing bodies are required to conduct periodic independent reviews of their effectiveness at least every seven years. These reviews help ensure that the governing body continues to meet the required standards and implement any necessary improvements.

Options for additional requirements

IHEA's view is that the tools and structures are already in place for TEQSA to manage the governance of higher education providers adequately and appropriately. Some issues for further consideration, include:

- Where issues of concern are identified with the governance of a higher education provider, TEQSA should work with the provider, as well as within the scope of Commonwealth, state and territory legislation, to review the adequacy and appropriate nature of the membership.

b) The standard and accuracy of providers' financial reporting, and the effectiveness of financial safeguards and controls

TEQSA requires higher education providers to demonstrate that they have adequate financial resources to maintain their operations and to meet their obligations. This is to ensure that the quality of education to students is not compromised by financial instability.

Actions and requirements of TEQSA

Higher education providers are required to submit to TEQSA their audited financial statements, business continuity plans, and expenditure reports to ensure financial accountability and sustainability. The purpose is to ensure that all higher education providers, regardless of their public or private status, maintain robust financial health and effective risk management practices.

TEQSA requires providers to submit audited annual financial statements to TEQSA, which include an indicator of a provider's 'Overall Risk to Financial Position'. Where ongoing or emerging risks exist, TEQSA may seek additional information or assurance in relation to a provider's financial position or the application of financial resources. For independent providers that are approved for FEE-HELP, they are also subject to annual financial assessments by the Department of Education. These are informed by the same set of audited financial documents. Potentially, there is an opportunity to streamline these reporting requirements.

However, TEQSA itself does not typically engage in in-depth auditing of financial statements or controls. TEQSA cannot directly address concerns, such as financial mismanagement or fraud unless they impact the institution's ability to meet the Threshold Standards. However, if significant financial mismanagement and misconduct threatens a provider's viability or student outcomes, TEQSA may require corrective actions or additional reporting, impose conditions on registration or take enforcement action. They can also refer the issue to one of a number of specialist agencies to directly address specific and significant issues:

- **Australian Federal Police (AFP)** – If there is suspected criminal activity, such as fraud or corruption.
- **Australian Securities and Investments Commission (ASIC)** – If the provider is a company and has breached corporate law.
- **Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC)** – If the provider is a registered charity and has engaged in financial misconduct.
- **Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC)** – If the provider has engaged in misleading or deceptive conduct regarding financial matters.
- **Commonwealth Department of Education** – If the provider receives government funding and is suspected of financial mismanagement.
- **State or Territory Police** – If the misconduct falls under state criminal law.
- **Australian Taxation Office (ATO)** – If tax fraud or financial irregularities are involved.

TEQSA undertakes Provider Risk Assessments (PRAs) of all higher education providers to identify risks in terms of how providers are tracking in meeting standards i.e. financial viability, student outcomes, academic integrity. If risks are identified, TEQSA uses the PRAs to prioritise any further action or intervention it may take it may take, for example, conducting further investigations, requesting additional information, or initiating compliance assessments to determine if the provider is breaching the standards.

As part of PRAs, it is recommended that TEQSA also consider the significant Australian Government funding public universities receive in terms of accountability of this expenditure. Funding sources include, Commonwealth Grant

Scheme, Higher Education Contribution Scheme – Higher Education Loan Payment and Research Block Grants, which totalled \$13.7 billion in 2022. This is significant funding that independent providers do not receive and should be considered in PRAs. While this would represent somewhat of a departure, given PRAs primarily focus on financial sustainability, student outcomes and compliance with the Threshold Standards, given the scope of this Senate Inquiry and the significant investment in public universities by the Australian Government, this would be an important step for TEQSA be able to take.

While PRAs are expected to be updated annually, feedback from some providers is that PRAs can be up to 15 to 20 months in arrears, which can be ineffective and misleading. Given TEQSA's PRAs are a part of its regulatory approach to allow TEQSA to determine the level of regulatory oversight a provider may need, it is imperative that these are accurate and current.

Options for additional requirements

Where TEQSA identifies issues of concern with financial statements, they could consider engaging a TEQSA-approved auditor to undertake further in-depth and forensic analysis.

TEQSA should also commit to maintaining current and up to date PRAs for all higher education providers, so that they are meaningful and relevant indicator of provider risk.

c) Providers' compliance with legislative requirements, including compliance with workplace laws and regulations

TEQSA requires institutions to meet legal obligations as part of their overall compliance with the Threshold Standards.

TEQSA's mandate includes ensuring that higher education providers comply with relevant legislative requirements, including workplace laws, for example, the *Fair Work Act 2009* and occupational health and safety laws). This is primarily to ensure that institutions maintain a positive and fair environment for both students and staff.

TEQSA can assess policies and procedures related to workplace laws (e.g., the fair treatment of staff and student welfare) during auditing processes. However, TEQSA does not directly regulate compliance with workplace laws or resolve workplace disputes; this responsibility falls under the jurisdiction of Fair Work Australia or Workplace Relations Ministers.

If TEQSA identifies that workplace law breaches are negatively affecting educational quality or student welfare, it may take corrective action, but its powers are limited to academic and institutional compliance, as opposed to industrial relations matters.

As such, while TEQSA is able to ensure that higher education providers meet the Threshold Standards compliance with workplace laws and regulations is primarily the responsibility of other regulatory bodies, as follows:

- **Fair Work Ombudsman (FWO):** The FWO is responsible for ensuring compliance with workplace laws, including fair work practices, wages, and conditions of employment. The FWO investigates wage theft and underpayment of wages, enforces compliance with the *Fair Work Act 2009* and Modern Awards and can take legal action against businesses that breach workplace laws.
- **Fair Work Commission (FWC):** The FWC resolves unfair dismissal claims.
- **Safe Work Australia:** This body sets national policy for work health and safety and workers' compensation. Individual state and territory regulators enforce these laws at the local level.
- **Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC):** The AHRC deals with issues related to discrimination and human rights in the workplace.

While TEQSA plays a role in overall governance and institutional quality, specific workplace compliance issues are generally managed by these dedicated agencies and TEQSA may be able to increase their interaction with these agencies to take a more joined-up approach.

Possible additional actions that could be undertaken

While compliance with legislation should be the responsibility of the various Government agencies that regulate the specific issues within their control, we believe that TEQSA should work closely with the Fair Work Ombudsman (FWO) and Australian Taxation Office (ATO) to ensure providers comply with workplace laws, fair pay, and superannuation requirements. Undertaking joint compliance audits for high-risk institutions would be a mechanism to address specific concerns with respect to providers' adherence to workplace laws. However, such action should be done in a streamlined and efficient way to not create unnecessary, additional burden for providers.

d) The impact of providers' employment practices, executive remuneration, and the use of external consultants, on staff, students and the quality of higher education offered

TEQSA indirectly monitors the impact of providers' employment practices if they are affecting the quality of education. For example, large numbers of staff turnover or insufficient academic staffing. However, TEQSA does not directly regulate employment conditions, or the use of external consultants. As the national regulator for higher education in Australia, its focus is understandably and appropriately on quality assurance, academic standards and compliance with higher education.

As such, if staffing issues or poor employment practices impact educational quality, student outcomes, or institutional governance, TEQSA can step in to address these issues indirectly. The agency has the power to intervene if a higher education provider's actions jeopardise compliance with the Threshold Standards. This would involve requesting information, undertaking an investigation and imposing conditions on registration.

Further, the use of external consultants would typically be reviewed if it's found that such practices impact educational quality, for example, if external consultants are replacing full-time academic staff en masse or undermining the integrity of the curriculum. The use of external contractors can be wide and varied. In other cases, it allows for a level of objectivity otherwise not available. For example, in smaller institutions outsourcing a range of services to external consultants can be a matter of necessity and important in delivering some business models.

Higher education providers must adhere to anti-discrimination and equal opportunity laws as part of their employment practices, which are subject to enforcement by the Fair Work Commission (with respect to the *Fair Work Act 2009*, which sets out minimum employment conditions, unfair dismissal, industrial action, enterprise bargaining, and workplace rights) and the Australian Human Rights Commission (which ensures the compliance with anti-discrimination laws (*Race (Racial Discrimination Act 1975)*); sex, gender identity and sexual orientation (*Sex Discrimination Act 1984*); disability (*Disability Discrimination Act 1992*); age (*Age Discrimination Act 2004*); and workplace rights and human rights (*Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986*)).

As mentioned above, TEQSA should work closely and in a connected way with FWC and AHRC in relation to issues raised with respect to these agencies' enforcement of their legislation. It is not recommended that TEQSA take on this role for AHRC and FWC as this will cause confusion and overlap but streamlined and coordinated activity would be beneficial.

In summary, while TEQSA does not regulate university employment practices directly, its focus on quality standards (Threshold Standards) in teaching, learning and governance means that universities must ensure their employment practices do not undermine these areas. If staffing issues or poor employment practices impact educational quality, student outcomes, or institutional governance, TEQSA can step in to address these issues indirectly. The agency has the power to intervene if a university's actions jeopardise compliance with the Threshold Standards.

e) Related Matters

IHEA's view is that TEQSA's regulatory framework is robust for addressing corporate governance in higher education with respect to its core mission, that is, promoting academic integrity, protecting student interests and ensuring the overall quality and reputation of Australia's higher education sector.

In terms of meeting the Threshold Standards, TEQSA has significant regulatory powers that allow it to monitor, assess, and enforce compliance to maintain the quality and integrity of Australia's higher education sector.

This is particularly the case with respect to independent higher education providers, who often come under greater scrutiny than their public counterparts. However, in performing their functions, TEQSA also needs to consider the issues such as the amount of Australian Government funding that providers receive, and the quality of the student experience. Importantly, on the latter, surveys of students as part of Quality Indicators for Learning and Teaching reinforce this mission, with independent higher education providers consistently rated the best providers by their students.

TEQSA maintains a strong focus on the governance of higher education providers, as outlined in its Compliance Report, 2023. In this report, TEQSA identifies Strengthening Corporate Governance as a compliance priority with a focus on issues that impede the delivery of quality higher education, including changes in ownership and cross ownership; insufficient expertise in higher education; inadequate risk management; and underpayment of staff. The report identifies TEQSA's strong action to investigate and impose conditions on providers with respect to corporate governance, highlighting that this continues to be a priority for the national regulator.

It should also be noted that in addition to this Senate inquiry, an Expert Council has been established to consider matters of 'University Governance', so it should not overlap with that work – which came out of the Accord – and this Inquiry. Furthermore, TEQSA is undertaking further work to address forward-looking guidance with respect to workplace relations.

If a higher education provider identifies as having financial mismanagement or governance issues that severely affect its ability to meet educational standards, TEQSA may issue compliance notices, impose conditions on registration or even deregister a provider. TEQSA can do this for all provider types, even though the more severe of these actions is unlikely to occur for public universities.

Issues such as employment practices, and the management of external consultants are largely outside TEQSA's direct regulatory scope, except where they impact compliance with the Threshold Standards. TEQSA's ability to address these issues is more indirect and tied to the broader question of whether such practices undermine academic quality, financial health, or compliance with educational standards. For many of the financial or workplace-related concerns, TEQSA relies on other regulatory bodies that specialise in areas such as workplace law and financial auditing.

As such, the Inquiry should be mindful of not recommending the imposition of sector-wide measures as a blunt response to any specific and potentially localised concerns. It should also take into consideration other work that is already underway, as well as opportunities for TEQSA to strengthen arrangements it has with other regulators and agencies who more appropriately are responsible for considering issues that don't relate to higher education, for example, FWO on matters relating to workplace relations.

Tertiary education is already a highly regulated sector in Australia and compared to global counterparts. Further regulation to address perceived gaps in TEQSA's remit is not the answer and will only result in over regulation and burden that will stymie innovation. Ultimately, this will have a deleterious impact on students.

Who We Are

Independent Higher Education Australia Ltd. (IHEA) is a peak body established in 2001 to represent Australian independent (private sector) higher education institutions. Our membership spans independent universities, university colleges and other institutes of higher education, all of which are registered higher education providers accredited by the national higher education regulator, TEQSA or associate members seeking registration.

Our Vision is that: students, domestic and international, have open and equitable access to world class independent higher education in Australia, built on the foundations of equity, choice, and diversity.

Our Mission is to represent independent higher education and promote recognition and respect of independent providers as they contribute to Australian education, the Australian economy, and to society in general. We achieve this by promoting continuous improvement of academic and quality standards within member institutions, by advocating equity for their staff and students, and by delivering services that further strengthen independent providers' reputations as innovative, sustainable, and responsive to the needs of industry and other relevant stakeholders in both higher education and VET. IHEA's commitment is to excellence, productivity and growth in independent higher education being delivered through a trusted Australian education system underpinned by equity, choice, and diversity.

IHEA members have different missions, scales, and course offerings across the full AQF range (Diplomas to Doctorates). IHEA has 86 members, comprised as follows:

- Five private universities (Bond University, Torrens University, University of Divinity, Avondale University and Australian University Theology).
- Six University Colleges (ACAP University College, Alphacrucis University College, Excelsia College, Moore Theological College, SAE University College and the Sydney College of Divinity).
- Six self-accrediting institutes of higher education (ACAP University College, Excelsia College, Griffith College, Kaplan Business School, Marcus Oldham College, and The College of Law, and the).
- Seventy one not-for-profit and for-profit institutions of higher education; and related corporate entities.

IHEA members teach approximately 74 percent of the students in the independent sector (i.e., more than 130,000 students) and educate students in a range of disciplines, including law, agricultural science, architecture, business, accounting, tourism and hospitality, education, health sciences, theology, creative arts, information technology, human services and social sciences.

IHEA holds a unique position in higher education as a representative peak body of higher education providers. Membership in IHEA is only open to providers registered , or seeking registration, with the Australian regulator – TEQSA. However, some IHEA members are dual and multi-sector providers who also deliver VET and/or English Language Intensive Courses for Overseas Students (ELICOS) courses.

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