



MEDIA RELEASE

Overseas students choose Australia for quality VET

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A growing number of overseas students are coming to Australia for vocational education and training (VET) and the national regulator is committed to ensuring quality learning experiences.

The Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) report on its strategic review into international education finds that overseas students have good experiences studying in Australia, however work is needed to ensure this continues to be the case.

ASQA's Chief Commissioner and CEO, Mark Paterson AO, said strong demand from overseas students has seen an increase in the number of registered providers delivering VET courses to overseas students and offering English Language Intensive Courses for Overseas Students (ELICOS), or delivering training offshore.

"Our latest report is a comprehensive response to risks identified in Australia's international VET and English language education markets," Mr Paterson explained.

"We have found that a very high number of overseas students are satisfied with their experience gaining qualifications in Australia, so we can be confident that the majority of providers are delivering quality training.

"However more work is needed to make sure providers meet their obligations, and to ensure we have the right data to monitor activity and eliminate poor behaviour.

"We are committed to working in partnership with other government and industry bodies and the regulated community to address the complex and dynamic issues facing this growing sector."

The report contains evidence that some VET providers are not meeting their obligations to ensure overseas students receive accurate information about their courses, meet the prerequisites for courses and participate in a minimum of 20 contact hours per week. It warns that providers failing to meet these obligations can cause significant harm to overseas students, undermine the community's confidence in the VET sector and the student visa program, and impact providers that deliver quality VET courses.

The report's recommendations include amending the National Code to make it explicit that overseas students are required to attend courses on a full-time basis, strengthening collaboration across agencies to ensure consistent access to data and intelligence and ensuring offshore students have the same protections as students in Australia.

ASQA will publish clear information for providers about expectations for delivering training to overseas students and continue work to identify and take action against providers not complying with their obligations.

The findings of the report will inform ASQA's ongoing risk-based regulatory focus.

The full report, *Protecting the quality of international VET and English language education*, is available online at www.asqa.gov.au. ENDS

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