



Australian Government  
Australian Skills Quality Authority

# Australian Skills Quality Authority Corporate Plan 2016-20



## Contents

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>3</b>
Message from the Chief Commissioner and Chief Executive Officer	3
<b>PURPOSE 1: To protect the quality and reputation of the VET sector</b>	<b>4</b>
Activities	4
Performance	7
<b>PURPOSE 2: To regulate the VET sector utilising a contemporary risk-based and standards-based regulatory approach</b>	<b>8</b>
Activities	8
Performance	11
<b>PURPOSE 3: To facilitate access to accurate information about VET</b>	<b>12</b>
Activities	12
Performance	14
<b>Environment</b>	<b>15</b>
VET sector architecture and governance arrangements	15
Rapid change and evolving risks	15
Community and stakeholder expectations	16
<b>Capability</b>	<b>17</b>
ASQA's Workforce Plan 2016–2018	17
ASQA's Information and Communication Technology (ICT) system	19
<b>Risk oversight and management</b>	<b>20</b>
Risk appetite and tolerance	20
Risk hierarchy and strategic risks	21
Fraud	21

# Introduction

## Message from the Chief Commissioner and Chief Executive Officer

I, Christopher Robinson, as the accountable authority of the Australian Skills Quality Authority, present the *2016–20 ASQA Corporate Plan*, which covers the period 1 July 2016 to 30 June 2020, as required under paragraph 35(1) (b) of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act (PGPA) 2013*, the *National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Act 2011* and *Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000* (Cwlth) (ESOS Act).

This plan details the activities ASQA will undertake over the next four years to achieve its purposes, which are to:

- protect the quality and reputation of the vocational education training (VET) sector
- regulate the VET sector utilising a contemporary, risk-based and standards-based regulatory approach, and
- facilitate access to accurate information about VET.

Further, the plan sets out measures that will be used to gauge ASQA's performance in achieving its purposes.

Finally, the plan provides commentary on the environment in which the Authority operates and its capability, as well as its risk oversight and management.



**Christopher Robinson**

Chief Commissioner and  
Chief Executive Officer

August 2016



# PURPOSE 1: To protect the quality and reputation of the VET sector

ASQA works to protect the quality and reputation of the VET sector in a number of ways. The Authority:

- controls entry into the sector
- works to ensure that registered providers in the sector are compliant with the VET Quality Framework at all times
- takes decisive action where non-compliance with the VET Quality Framework is identified, and
- works to strengthen the impact of its regulation.

## Activities

In achieving Purpose 1, ASQA's primary focus over the term of the plan will be the efficient functioning of its core regulatory activities, which are to:

- manage provider registration
- respond proportionately to providers of concern, and
- take decisive action against those who consistently fail to fulfil their regulatory obligations.

ASQA intends to ensure that only providers fit to operate in the market are allowed to do so, and all providers' growth and or diversification of offering is effectively managed to protect the quality and reputation of the sector. That is, good providers are allowed to diversify, while those with poor compliance histories are required to demonstrate their readiness to deliver new products.

## Managing provider registration and change applications

The Authority has a dedicated Initial Assessment and Referral (IAR) Team that determines whether to allow a provider to:

- enter the market (registration application)
- stay in the market (renewal application)
- alter the scope of their offerings (change of scope application)
- change aspects of their business operations (change notification).

Using a risk methodology, the IAR team determines which applications and notifications can be processed on submission and which will be subject to further regulatory scrutiny.

On average, ASQA receives and completes some 6600 applications each year. In addition, ASQA processes around 1800 notifications of changes to providers' business operations annually that are considered to have some material impact on the provider's ability to comply with requirements. It is anticipated that this volume of applications will continue over the period of this plan; however, submissions can fluctuate throughout any year.

In line with the Australian Government's commitment to reduce regulatory burden, ASQA has implemented a policy for providing high-performing RTOs with a delegation to manage their own scope of registration. ASQA delegates have the ability to add training products to their scope of registration without applying to ASQA and paying an application fee. Throughout the period covered by this plan, ASQA will review the compliance history, governance and marketing information of providers to assess their eligibility for a delegation.

## Responding to concerns about providers

The Authority responds proportionately to:

- provider registration risks, and
- reports about providers.

ASQA has a range of escalating regulatory responses it can apply to test whether a provider is meeting the requirements of the VET Quality Framework. The response ASQA selects will be proportionate to the nature of the concern identified, the individual provider's profile and the circumstances of the case. In more serious cases, this may involve an audit or investigation.



Approximately 40 per cent of ASQA staff are auditors who work in the Authority's Regulatory Operations teams. In the broadest terms, audits are triggered by either:

- the receipt of an application that ASQA determines requires scrutiny (an 'application-based audit'), or
- some other risk factor or event, such as the receipt of a complaint, or as part of an evidence review (a 'compliance-based audit').

As ASQA has matured as a regulator, and its approach to risk-based regulation has become more sophisticated, more of its audit activity is being undertaken in response to risk-based triggers. See **Purpose 2** for more information on ASQA's risk-based approach to regulation.

ASQA has completed, on average, 1200 audits each year during its first five years of operation. The Authority expects to maintain this level of audit activity over the period of this plan. However, it is expected that the audit mix—that is, the proportions of application-based audits and compliance-based audits—will continue to change, particularly after ASQA's new audit model is implemented. The new model will see ASQA focus on the practices and behaviours of RTOs, as well as on checking the compliance of RTOs' systems and processes.

While audit is a key part of ASQA's range of regulatory responses, ASQA has also established an Enforcement and Investigations Team. Through the work of the Enforcement and Investigations Team, ASQA is able to apply additional tools (such as formal investigations and warrants) to identify provider non-compliance. Investigation and enforcement also broadens the scope of regulatory action ASQA can take in response to non-compliance to include, for example, the issuing of infringement notices.

ASQA has also established an external panel of auditors and investigators to complement these teams in times of peak demand.

## Taking decisive action

The Authority has a range of escalating actions it can apply to either:

- encourage providers to meet their obligations, or
- remove them from the market where they fail to demonstrate suitability to remain registered.

ASQA can take a range of regulatory actions, from providing written directions through to prosecution. The severity of the regulatory action ASQA takes is determined by the nature of the breach the profile of the provider and the circumstances of the case. These determinations are made at regulatory decisions meetings; ASQA holds approximately 100 of these meetings each year.

Over the last five years, ASQA has made, on average 300 adverse regulatory decisions<sup>1</sup> each year. While ASQA does not anticipate significant fluctuation in the numbers of such decisions over the period of this plan, this is difficult to predict given the dynamic nature of the VET sector and the broad range of regulatory tools ASQA has at its disposal (i.e. the Authority may determine that tools other than administrative sanctions would be best suited to addressing an emerging issue or threat).

Importantly, ASQA's decision-making capacity and flexibility will be enhanced over the term of this plan through the implementation of a delegations regime that will provide regulatory decision-making authority to more officers within the Authority.

---

<sup>1</sup> 'Adverse regulatory decisions include decisions to cancel registration, suspend registration, give written notice of intention to cancel/suspend registration, apply administrative sanction and reject initial/renewal application.'



## Strengthening regulation

ASQA, together with the Australian Government Department of Education and Training (DET), is progressing a range of strategies to strengthen the impact of its regulation of the VET system.

The strategies are designed to respond to areas of known and emerging risk. The following strategies have been identified for progression over the period of this plan:

1. Removing non-mandatory rectification periods from the audit process—this process change is designed to allow ASQA to act more quickly where it finds an RTO not compliant at audit.
2. Establishing bilateral working groups with state/territory VET funding bodies—this process will assist both organisations to more quickly identify RTOs of concern.
3. Publishing adverse regulatory decisions earlier—this process, which sees adverse regulatory decisions published as soon as practicable after the decision is made (rather than after all review periods are exhausted), will ensure VET stakeholders have access to information much earlier.
4. Investigating ways of improving the range and effectiveness of ASQA's enforcement tools—this will ensure ASQA has access to the appropriate tools to respond to a range of situations and seeks to ensure that processes to review the application of those tools are appropriate.
5. Developing metrics for student outcomes—consideration of metrics to gauge if students are achieving positive outcomes from their VET courses.

Reports on progress against each of these strategies will be provided over the first two reporting periods of this plan. ASQA and DET will also continue to work together to develop other strategies to improve the effectiveness of VET regulation.





## Performance

The performance measures below will be used to assess ASQA's effectiveness in relation to the activities it will undertake to achieve Purpose 1.

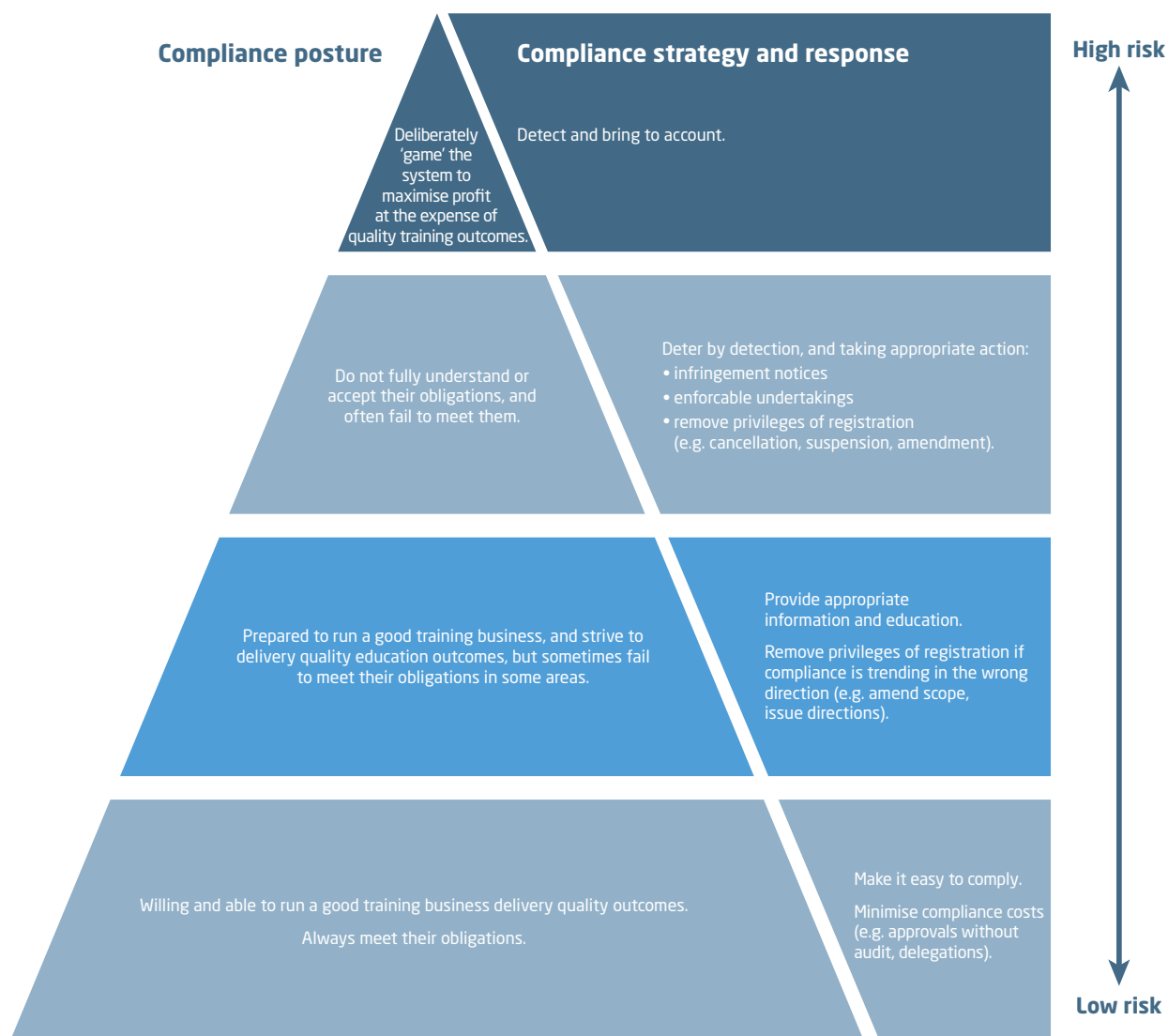
Performance indicator	Measure	RPF Measure	Period(s) in which measure will be reported			
			2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
Managing provider registration and change applications						
ASQA protects the quality of VET by refusing entry to the sector or rejecting renewal applications from existing providers that do not meet the requirements for registration	Number of initial and renewal applications completed and percent rejected (trend over time)	N	√	√	√	√
ASQA reduces the regulatory burden on costs to high-performing RTOs through delegations	Demonstrated reduction in costs to delegates	Y	√	√	√	√
ASQA's response times to initial registration applications, renewals and change submissions are within the target timeframes.	Percentage completed within timeframes specified in ASQA service standards	Y	√	√	√	√
Responding to concerns about providers						
ASQA undertakes audits of providers	Number of audits completed each year (trend over time)	N	√	√	√	√
ASQA regulatory processes are timely	Percentage and number of audits that are conducted within timeframes specified in ASQA Standards (trend over time)	N	√	√	√	√
Performance levels of provider compliance increases over time	Percentage and number of providers who are compliant (trend over time)	N	√	√	√	√
Taking decisive action						
ASQA uses a range of appropriate regulatory tools, proportionate to the seriousness of breaches: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>number of written directions made</li><li>number of civil penalty actions and infringement notices issued</li><li>number of suspensions</li><li>number of cancellations</li></ul>	Reported use of enforcement tools (trend over time)	Y	√	√	√	√
ASQA applies appropriate and proportional sanctions for non-compliant organisations within its jurisdiction	70 per cent positive feedback from stakeholders (excellent or good in annual survey)	N	√	√	√	√
Strengthening regulation						
ASQA progresses strategies to strengthen regulation.	Assessment of progress against, and/or effectiveness of, each strategy.	N	√	√		
Global metric—ASQA's contribution to quality						
Stakeholders indicate they believe ASQA is improving the quality of VET outcomes in Australia	70 per cent positive feedback from stakeholders (excellent or good in annual survey)	Y	√	√	√	√

## PURPOSE 2: To regulate the VET sector utilising a contemporary, risk-based and standards-based regulatory approach

ASQA adopts a contemporary risk-based and standards-based approach to its regulation. This approach allows the Authority to direct resources towards areas that pose the greatest threat to quality VET outcomes, while also minimising the regulatory burden on high-quality providers with a history of quality training and education and delivery.

By adopting an innovative approach to exercising its regulatory functions, ASQA is able to respond to emerging issues in a decisive manner.

### ASQA's risk-based approach to regulation



## Activities

In achieving Purpose 2, ASQA's primary focus over the term of the plan will be maturing its Regulatory Risk Framework. This includes ongoing environmental scanning to identify systemic risks in the sector; announcing priorities through its Regulatory Strategy; and implementing a range of systemic risk projects, including Strategic Reviews to address priority risks.



## Regulatory Risk Framework

ASQA has implemented a Regulatory Risk Framework to identify and evaluate risks to the quality of VET in Australia. There are two levels of risk:

1. Strategic (systemic risk)
2. Operational (provider risk).

Systemic risk is defined as any risk likely to exist across the sector or in a concerning proportion of providers. If left untreated, significant risks of this type can have a detrimental impact on the quality of training and assessment for individuals, industry and the wider community and may lead to loss of confidence in the sector.

Provider risk continues to be a key focus of ASQA's regulation. ASQA addresses this risk by using data and intelligence to identify and intervene with individual providers. ASQA primarily targets those providers that are exhibiting behaviours that pose significant risk to quality training and assessment.

The Regulatory Risk Framework helps ASQA to:

- respond in a proportionate but effective way to risks posed, and
- invest time and effort toward treating risks of a significant nature.

The use of data and intelligence to inform judgements about appropriate interventions is central to this regulatory approach. Appropriate interventions aim to promote compliance and improve confidence in the sector.

The Framework will continue to evolve over the course of this plan as ASQA's information technology capability improves and allows for greater use of information from external sources.

## Identifying risks in the sector

ASQA conducts an annual environmental scan (e-scan) to identify the risks it will prioritise and target through its annual Regulatory Strategy. ASQA also conducts monitoring scans to identify new and emerging systemic risks in the sector occurring outside the e-scan cycle.

ASQA's Risk Intelligence Team is responsible for conducting e-scans and monitoring scans. This process involves stakeholder consultation and extensive data analysis to identify priority risks.

## Priority risks announced in an annual Regulatory Strategy

ASQA's annual Regulatory Strategy will be informed by annual e-scans and by the systemic risks these identify.

Each strategy will also identify the areas posing the greatest risk to Australia's VET sector. Given that there may be several issues competing for ASQA's regulatory resources at any one time, the strategy will prioritise regulatory effort on the highest risk areas. Targeting risks in this way will maximise the positive impact of ASQA's regulatory resources.

ASQA's annual regulatory strategy will be made publicly available to communicate to the sector which strategic initiatives and target areas ASQA will prioritise. Outlining clear priorities in this way is integral to the operation of an effective risk-based regulator and ensures that resources are directed to the issues that have potential to undermine the credibility and reputation of the VET sector.

## Addressing priority risks

ASQA implements planned and coordinated activities aimed at responding to each priority risk identified in the annual Regulatory Strategy. ASQA employs a project-based approach to this, which can involve collaboration with other agencies and stakeholder groups.

Projects involving targeted regulatory work may be managed within ASQA's Regulatory Operations Teams. An example of this is the project to improve trainer and assessor capability, which is part of ASQA's 2016–17 Regulatory Strategy. Other priority risk projects are managed through ASQA's Strategic Reviews program.



## Strategic Reviews

ASQA has a dedicated Strategic Reviews Team that undertakes reviews into key elements of the VET system where ASQA has identified serious risks.

Strategic Reviews examine systemic poor practice and identify appropriate actions to address poor practice across the system—rather than just resolving issues with individual RTOs.

ASQA has completed seven Strategic Reviews, related to the following matters:

- Training for aged and community care in Australia (report released December 2013)
- Training for the white card for Australia's construction industry (report released December 2013)
- Marketing and advertising of Australia's registered training organisations (report released December 2013)
- Training for early childhood education and care in Australia (report released August 2015)
- Targeted audits of VET FEE-HELP providers (report released October 2015)
- Training in equine programs in Australia (report released December 2015)
- Training in security programs in Australia (report released January 2016).

ASQA intends to undertake between two and three Strategic Reviews each year over the period of the plan. The format of each review will be tailored to the sector risk the review addresses.

Two reviews are currently in progress and are expected to be completed by the end of 2016. These reviews relate to:

- course duration (documenting the impact on quality and the scale of short courses), and
- RTOs approved under the VET FEE-HELP scheme.



## Performance

The performance measures below will be used to assess ASQA's effectiveness in undertaking activities to achieve Purpose 2.

Performance indicator	Measure	RPF Measure	Period(s) in which measure will be reported			
			2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
Regulatory Risk Framework						
ASQA's implementation of the Regulatory Risk Framework is published and effectively communicated	Published framework and implementation updates	Y	√	√	√	√
Identifying risks in the sector						
ASQA's annual environmental scanning activities are published and effectively communicated	Summary of e-scan reported	Y	√	√	√	√
Priority risks announced in an annual Regulatory Strategy						
ASQA's announces Regulatory Strategy annually	Summary of annual Regulatory Strategy reported	N	√	√	√	√
Addressing priority risks						
ASQA addresses priority risks	Summary of responses to priority risks reported	N	√	√	√	√
Strategic Reviews						
ASQA undertakes Strategic Reviews of identified risk areas	Summary of Strategic Reviews and outcomes reported	Y	√	√	√	√
Global metric—risk-based regulation						
ASQA's risk model leads to a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of provider risk	Documented understanding of provider risk is developed	Y	√			
ASQA moves to a risk-based model of regulation	Trend over time of compliance-based audits undertaken compared to application-based audits	N	√	√	√	√

## PURPOSE 3: To facilitate access to accurate information about VET

ASQA recognises that the efficient and effective exchange of information can have profound effects across the VET sector by:

- informing and enhancing regulatory interventions and outcomes
- helping providers to achieve compliance and provide quality training, and
- facilitating informed decision making by students.

### Activities

In achieving Purpose 3, ASQA's primary focus over the term of the plan will be implementing information-sharing protocols with state and territory governments, undertaking provider information sessions and providing an Info Line service and up-to-date website.

#### Information-sharing protocols

While ASQA already has a number of arrangements in place for sharing information with other government entities and regulators (for example, through memoranda of understanding), the Authority is keen to enhance these arrangements.

As such, new bilateral communication protocols are being established between ASQA and each state and territory funding agency. The protocols will strengthen information-sharing arrangements.

The communication protocols signed by the Australian Government and by state and territory ministers commit ASQA and the funding agencies to exchange relevant and appropriate information and data. This exchange seeks to ensure that both national regulation and state administration of the VET system are efficient and effective.

The protocols establish a regime of regular, ongoing consultation, which provides opportunities to:

- identify matters of concern
- discuss which agency is best placed to deal with a matter, and
- determine where a joint response may be appropriate.

Joint responses will include establishing joint working groups and taskforces to share specialist knowledge and coordinate resources, plans and actions in order to address identified risks of mutual concern.

The agencies are committed to using the most efficient and effective information exchange processes, including future possible web-based access to respective databases.

It is anticipated that bilateral communication protocols will be in place in all jurisdictions by October 2016.

#### Provider information sessions

ASQA undertakes provider information sessions to:

- assist providers to meet their regulatory requirements, and
- better inform providers about issues in the VET sector.

The information sessions are conducted in states and territories and online and have been designed to provide an interactive forum in which ASQA can build a constructive rapport with providers (and ultimately lead to improved levels of compliance). The content of the sessions is informed by current and emerging issues in the VET sector.

It is anticipated that ASQA will continue to deliver nationwide provider information sessions each year over the period of this plan.



## Info Line

ASQA has a dedicated Service Delivery Team that operates the ASQA Info Line. The Info Line responds to calls and emails from students, providers and other stakeholders. The Info Line provides ASQA clients with a single source of information, and also provides ASQA with valuable intelligence regarding emerging trends in enquiry type/subject matter, to assist ASQA in developing information materials.

The Service Delivery Team works to continually refine and improve the service it provides. This includes reviewing Info Line information resources, implementing formal staff training and mentoring and a 'call quality' monitoring program.

ASQA anticipates that the Info Line team will handle some 40,000 telephone calls and respond to some 15,000 emails each year over the period of the plan, with many of these coming from students with queries relating to their studies.

## ASQA website

ASQA's website is the Authority's primary communication tool and includes:

- information on ASQA's role, functions and legislation
- detailed information on registration and course accreditation processes
- information on providers that have been the subject of an adverse regulatory decision
- detailed instructions on how to lodge a complaint about a provider or about ASQA
- fact sheets and guides on key topics and frequently asked questions, and
- ASQA's Performance Standards and corporate plans.

The ASQA website also includes a 'latest news' and publications page, updated regularly to communicate ASQA and VET sector developments.

ASQA anticipates that its website will receive around 400,000 unique visits and 2.5 million page views each year over the course of this plan.

ASQA updates its website frequently to ensure that content is current, accurate and useful, and anticipates that the site will be updated frequently over the course of this plan. The site will undergo significant development to introduce new content, features and functionality during the period covered by this plan.



# Performance

The performance measures below will be used to assess ASQA's effectiveness in relation to the activities it will undertake to achieve Purpose 3.

Performance indicator	Measure	RPF Measure	Period(s) in which measure will be reported			
			2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
Information-sharing protocols						
ASQA has information-sharing protocols with each state and territory	Protocols signed	N	√			
Provider information sessions						
Providers are satisfied with the following elements of ASQA's information sessions:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>range of topics covered</li><li>timeliness of information</li><li>usefulness of information</li><li>accuracy and clarity of information</li><li>knowledge of presenters</li></ul>	70 per cent positive feedback from providers (excellent or good in annual survey)	N	√	√	√	√
Info Line						
Providers are satisfied with the following aspects of ASQA's Info Line (calls):						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>speed of answering calls</li><li>completeness of answers provided</li><li>knowledge of staff answering</li><li>courtesy of staff answering</li></ul>	70 per cent positive feedback from providers (excellent or good in annual survey)	Y	√	√	√	√
Providers are satisfied with the following aspects of ASQA's Info Line (email):						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>speed of answering emails</li><li>completeness of answers provided</li><li>knowledge of staff answering</li><li>courtesy of staff answering</li></ul>	70 per cent positive feedback from providers (excellent or good in annual survey)	N	√	√	√	√
ASQA website						
Stakeholders are satisfied with the following aspects of ASQA's Website:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>navigation</li><li>search function</li><li>information/content</li><li>clarity of information</li><li>accuracy of information</li><li>currency of information</li></ul>	70 per cent positive feedback from stakeholders (excellent or good in annual survey)	Y	√	√	√	√
Global metric—ASQA engagement						
Providers and stakeholders indicate they are satisfied with ASQA's engagement with the regulated community	70 per cent positive feedback from providers and stakeholders (excellent or good in annual survey)	N	√	√	√	√



# Environment

ASQA's regulatory activities are planned and delivered to respond to the VET sector's complex structural, policy, economic and stakeholder environment.

These key environmental factors are outlined below.

## VET sector architecture and governance arrangements

Multiple government entities contribute to different aspects of the VET sector's architecture, governance and administration. ASQA works cooperatively with these various entities, enabling the Authority to inform and be informed about policy and administrative changes.

These entities and their functions include:

- the Council of Australian Governments Industry and Skills Council—which sets the standards against which ASQA regulates
- the Australian Industry and Skills Committee—which determines the contents of training packages against which ASQA audits delivery and assessment
- Australian and state and territory governments which:
  - determine policy and administrative arrangements around VET funding
  - set the requirements for occupational licensing eligibility, and
  - determine the policy and administrative arrangements around immigration eligibility, including skilled migration (Australian Government).
- other regulators who have jurisdiction over different aspects of a VET provider's operations, for example, the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission and the Australian Federal Police.

ASQA relies on a variety of formal and informal methods of communication and engagement to maintain relationships with these entities. This includes joint operations, information sharing, regular meetings, formal written submissions and issue-based liaison.

## Rapid change and evolving risks

The VET sector is a dynamic environment. Each year multiple providers enter and exit the marketplace. Learner demand is volatile, strongly influenced by funding changes and sentiment towards certain training. Training delivery and assessment takes place via different modes (face-to-face or online) and in diverse geographic locations. As such, risks to the sector, and the risk profile of different segments within the sector, are continually evolving.

ASQA conducts annual environmental scans (e-scans) to identify and prioritise risks to target through its annual regulatory strategy. ASQA also undertakes monitoring scans to identify new and emerging systemic risks in the sector occurring outside the e-scan cycle.

Further, ASQA addressed risks that may be driven by factors outside ASQA's regulatory authority through priority risk projects. Effectively addressing the causes of risk—and not just the symptoms—involves collaboration with other government and industry stakeholders.



## Community and stakeholder expectations

Community and stakeholder expectations in relation to the VET sector—and ASQA's regulation of it—are shaped by a number of factors. These can include:

- reporting in the media
- government policy and funding decisions
- attitudes toward the provision of training (public/private), and
- crises or major unexpected events.

In order to meet community and stakeholder expectations relating to its regulation, ASQA undertakes a number of activities. These include engaging with these groups (via roundtables, reference groups, information sessions etc.) to explain what the Authority is doing and why. ASQA also has a dedicated Industry Engagement team and function.

ASQA undertakes annual stakeholder and provider surveys to gauge the effectiveness of its engagement activities.



## Capability

The enabling activities discussed below will function to enhance ASQA's ability to perform its purposes.

### ASQA's Workforce Plan 2016-18

ASQA has developed a Workforce Plan that outlines the Authority's ongoing approach to proactively shaping and structuring its workforce. The plan will work to ensure that ASQA has sufficient and sustainable capability to deliver its organisational objectives—now and going forward.

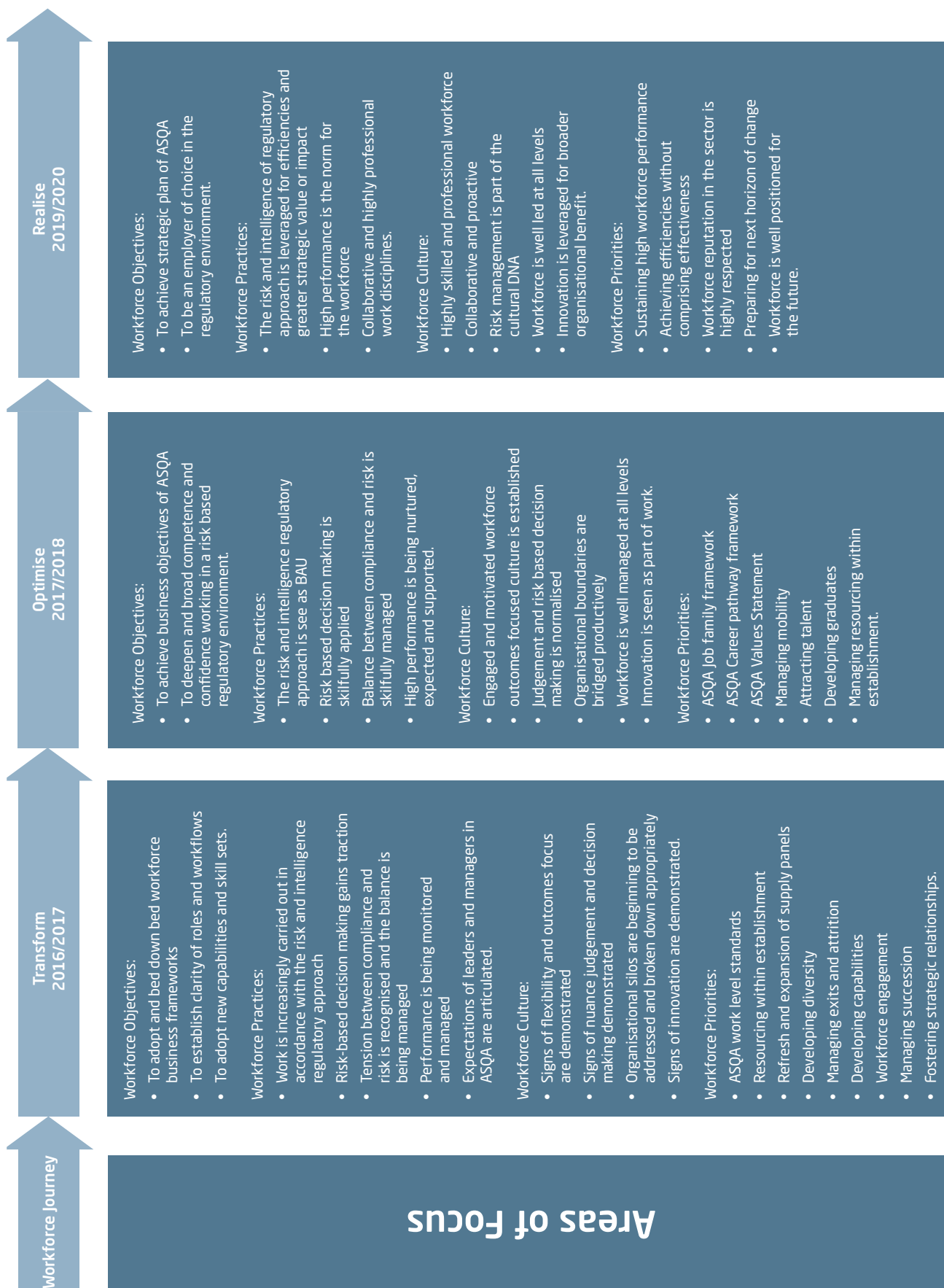
The Workforce Plan is a tool that will assist ASQA in planning for the future, anticipating change, managing its workforce and meeting business goals.

Further, the plan will facilitate the monitoring of ASQA's structure and assessment of the Authority's resourcing requirements against its budget, essential undertakings for a high performing and 'healthy' government agency. The plan is also critical to ASQA successfully utilising a contemporary risk-based approach to regulation.



The Workforce Plan will be rolled out over the next three reporting periods covered by this corporate plan, as detailed below.

## ASQA Workforce Map



## ASQA's Information and Communication Technology (ICT) system

ASQA is working to fully implement an enhanced ICT system that will benefit providers and improve the efficiency of its regulatory operations.

Since 2014 ASQA has progressively undertaken projects to bring the Authority's ICT systems into a single managed services environment. This has included the development of an ICT Strategic Plan and implementation of an Electronic Document and Records Management System (EDRMS) and Revenue Management System (RMS).

Over the period covered by this plan, ASQA will finalise the ICT enhancement through the following projects:

- Procuring and deploying a Core Business Workflow System—deploying a workflow system solution that integrates with ASQA's EDRMS, RMS, mail and desktop office systems.
- Re-establishing ASQA's Business Intelligence application—ASQA's business intelligence software will be recast against a new database structure created in the new workflow system and hosted in the new environment.



# Risk oversight and management

Effective risk management is integral to ASQA's good corporate governance and management practice; it also ensures the Authority understands which risks are acceptable and which are not.

## Risk appetite and tolerance

ASQA must engage with and manage risk to achieve its objectives. Engaging with risk means that some risks will be acceptable to ASQA and some not. ASQA's Chief Commissioner is responsible for determining how much risk the Authority is prepared to accept—this is ASQA's 'risk appetite'. ASQA's 'risk tolerance' is the level of risk taking that is acceptable in order to manage a category of risk, and this defines the limits that support ASQA's risk appetite.

ASQA determines whether a given risk is within the Authority's risk appetite using the risk management process described below. By determining the likelihood and consequences of the risk, its severity and acceptability can be judged.

### Risk assessment and evaluation

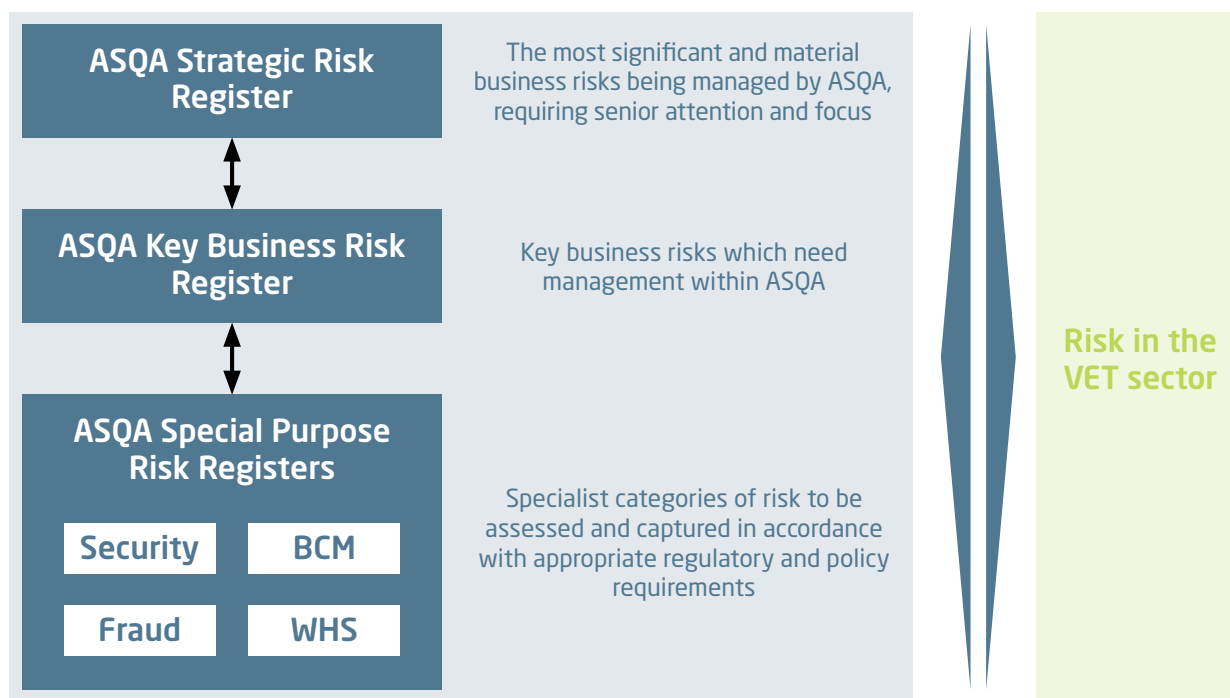




## Risk hierarchy and strategic risks

ASQA's structured approach to managing risk is based on the following broad hierarchy of plans and activities:

### Risk Corporate Management Hierarchy



Of most relevance to this plan is the ASQA Strategic Risk Register, through which ASQA manages the risks most directly related to the Authority achieving its purposes.

The identification and management of strategic risk is an integral part of ASQA's corporate planning cycle. The Strategic Risk Register is discussed by senior managers, used as a tool to help communicate ASQA's strategic priorities into the organisation, and updated as required. The Strategic Risk Register is reported to the ASQA Audit Committee and the Senior Management Group on a quarterly basis.

ASQA conducts strategic risk assessments annually, or more frequently where significant change has occurred. The primary purpose of the risk assessment is to identify risks to ASQA's strategic objectives and priorities. The outcome of the risk assessment is provided to the Audit Committee for review.

## Fraud

In line with the Commonwealth Fraud Control Framework under the PGPA Act, ASQA has a Fraud Control Plan and a Fraud Control Policy in place.

To manage its fraud control environment, ASQA has implemented a range of policies and procedures, under the umbrella of ASQA's Accountable Authority Instructions (formerly Chief Executive's Instructions-CEIs). These policies and procedures include ASQA compliance with the Commonwealth Procurement Rules and other Commonwealth policies to ensure ASQA's purchases are efficient, effective, economic, and ethical.

