



Australian Government

Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency

# Quality Assurance of Australian Online Higher Education

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## Overview

- The online learning landscape
- How is online learning perceived?
- Challenges of online learning
- Online learning – the regulatory issues
- How does TEQSA QA online learning?
- Guidance
- Capability building
- APEC QA project

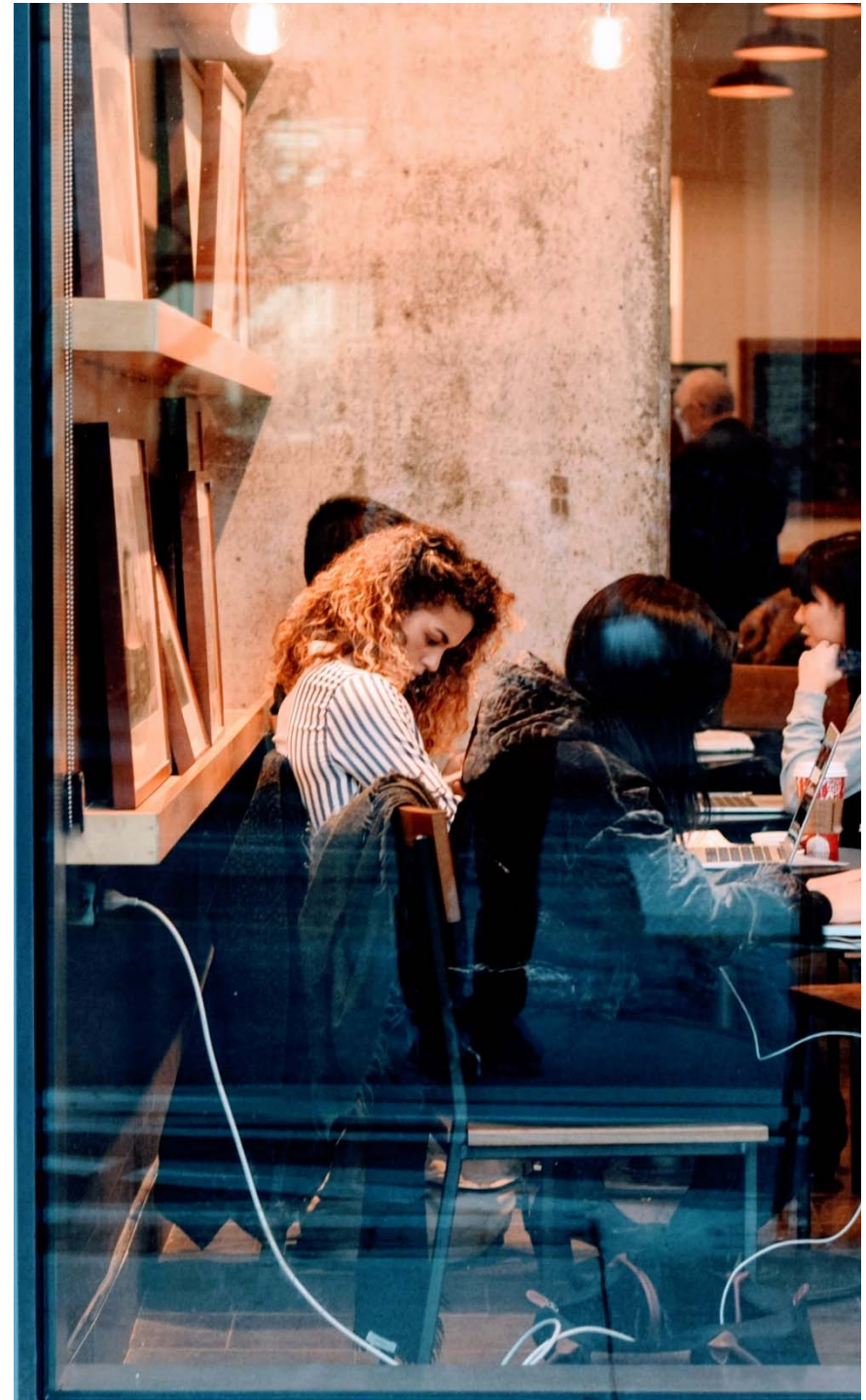
## The online learning landscape

**170,000+**

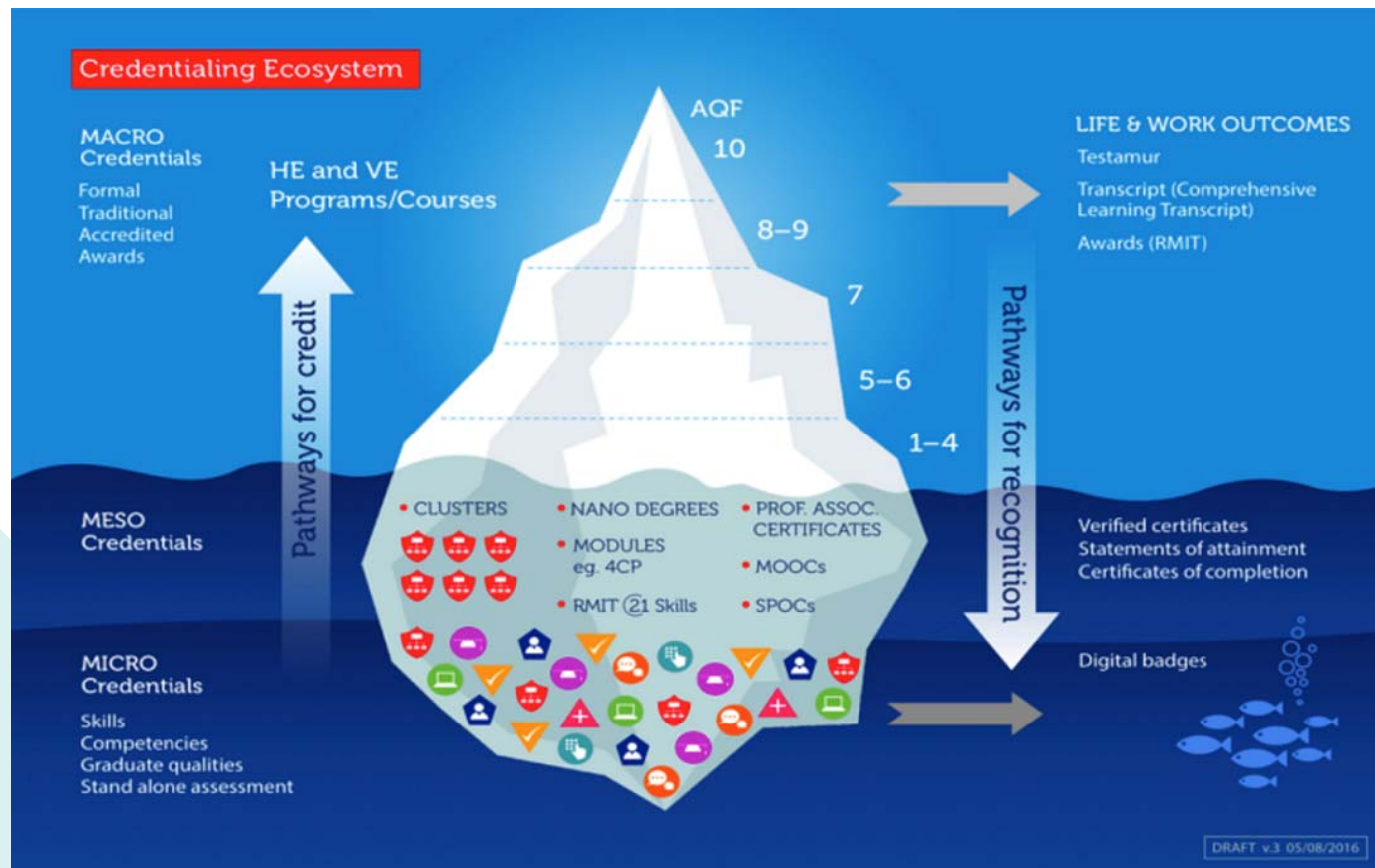
'multi-modal' students in 2018

**90% increase**

since 2011 in 'multi-modal' attendance  
at Australian universities



# RMIT University Australia Credentialing Ecosystem



Source: RMIT Deputy Vice Chancellor (Education) Presentation to TEQSA Learning Committee, September 2018

## How is online learning perceived?

EY report looked at whether higher education needs a new paradigm to serve Australia's needs in the Transformative Age

Of current students surveyed **22%** would prefer the **majority of their degree to be delivered online.**

That figure increased to **42%** when prospective students were asked the same question.



# Online learning and issues of quality assurance

Online learning when done well enables:

- Increased access
- Personalised learning
- Interactive learning experiences
- Enhanced assessment of skills and knowledge
- International collaboration
- Use of a range of media and platforms



Source: APEC Quality assurance of online learning discussion paper 2017

# Challenges of online learning

While online learning has introduced higher education to a broader group of students, it has not been without its issues...



**Equivalency** – learning / experience / outcomes

**Perception of quality** – low cost / low quality

**Threats to academic integrity** – cheating /  
who's actually completing the assessment?

**Retention rates** – particularly in MOOCs where  
**less than 10%** of enrolled students actually  
complete most courses

# Online learning – the regulatory issues

Regulators around the world are grappling with issues, such as:

- Disaggregation
- micro-credentialing
- limited data





# How does TEQSA QA online learning?

The Higher Education Standards Framework uses the same standards for online learning as other modes of delivery and requires that students have **equal opportunities** for success irrespective of study mode.

The following should be adapted for the online environment:

- Course design
- Interaction with students and student support
- Assessment of learning outcomes
- Staffing
- Controls to maintain academic integrity

*TEQSA's Guidance Note:  
Technology-Enhanced Learning*





## Guidance

TEQSA offers guidance on how to meet technology enhanced learning requirements of the Standards

The Standards ensure that TEL delivers high quality education, positive student experiences and credible qualifications, in the same way as other modes of delivery and participation.

# Capability building

Quality Enhancement Forum: Quality assurance of online higher education, December, 2019

- Australia has a long history of offering distance education.
- There is a greater demand for online offerings including micro credentials.
- Consideration of further quality enhancement activities to support the development of approaches to online learning.
- It is generally agreed there are enough standards (HES) in place to support the quality assurance of online delivery.
- TEQSA does not want regulation to stifle the growing emergence of online learning.
- Continue to work with our MOU partners internationally on issues regarding the quality assurance of online learning.



# APEC quality assurance project

Project undertaken on behalf of the Department of Education and Training for APEC economies

- Aims to:
  - Improve quality assurance of online learning
  - Promote student mobility by dealing with issues associated with online learning





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