Transnational Higher Education (TNE)

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HEPP-QN National Forum

17 November 2025

Why TNE?

- Internationalisation develops mutual understanding between people
- The world is a bigger market with fewer capacity issues
- Expand access to higher education through alternative entry points
- Delivery in another language can meet the demand for bilingual professionals
- Caps are likely to limit the number of international students studying in Australia but there is a TNE exemption

Risks

- Engagement with students – induction, pastoral care, academic support
- Student and staff safety and wellbeing
- Equivalence of delivery, learning outcomes and award recognition in-country
- Assessment security – academic integrity and learner authentication
- Cyber security risks – interoperability of systems, access to online material, privacy of offshore student data
- Compliance with local laws and regulations – application of policies and procedures in jurisdictions outside Australia
- Concerns about institutional autonomy and academic freedom
- Business arrangements – transferring funds, staff travel, communication

CABF survey

- The survey asked respondents about their level of interest in TNE, their stage of development and quality assurance

- The survey was circulated to members of the CABF in September 2025

- The survey attracted 24 responses

Highlights

- 25% established, 30% exploring, 46% not involved in TNE
- Twinning/articulation, franchise with local partner and online delivery are the most common types
- Oversight by a Joint Management Committee reporting to the CEO is most common
- Academic Board usually receives an annual report on the program and a semester report on student outcomes
- Academic Board is not usually involved in negotiating quality assurance and improvement

Equivalence

- Student policies are those of the home institution but may have local variations

- Admission criteria, curriculum mapping and assessment moderation are the main tools for assurance

- Academic staff appointments are usually approved by the home institution

- Students use the home institution learning management system

- Student complaints and misconduct are usually referred to the home institution (or closely monitored)

Engagement

- Validation visits by senior staff are used to audit quality and promote engagement with offshore students and staff

- Some mentioned newsletters, social media, combined student events, alumni activities

Next steps

- Develop a shared TNE quality assurance and improvement checklist aligned with risk 'hot spots' based on the TEQSA TNE Toolkit

- Consider protocols for various types of institutions – pathway colleges, twinning arrangements

- Promote benchmarking with a Risk, Quality and Standards Framework for transnational education

- Professional development for key people involved in offshore auditing

- Onsite or zoom-based training in quality procedures for staff at the overseas location

Quality assurance checklist (sample)

- Aligned access to and use of artificial intelligence tools in learning and assessment validated by
    - training for students and staff
    - protocols for ethical use
    - measures for assessing student work which is not aided by artificial intelligence
- Teaching staff quality validated by
    - review of qualifications and experience
    - performance monitoring from student feedback and peer assessment
    - professional development

References

- Chairs of Academic Boards Forum, "Transnational higher education from Australia" (November 2025) https://cabfnuhep.wixsite.com/cabf

- TEQSA, TNE Toolkit (November 2022) https://www.teqsa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2023-07/TNE-toolkit.pdf

- TEQSA guidance note: Delivery with other parties (7 July 2023) https://www.teqsa.gov.au/guides-resources/resources/guidance-notes/guidance-note-delivery-other-parties