

EXTERNAL ASSESSMENT PROCESSES REVIEW

TERMS OF REFERENCE 2018



OFFICE OF TASMANIAN
ASSESSMENT, STANDARDS
& CERTIFICATION

EXTERNAL ASSESSMENT PROCESSES REVIEW

TERMS OF REFERENCE

This document outlines the Terms of Reference for the Office of Tasmanian Assessment, Standards and Certification (TASC) External Assessment Processes Review 2018.

PURPOSE OF REVIEW

To undertake an independent review of the external assessment processes carried out by TASC in 2017 as identified in the Scope (see below). TASC is committed to continuous improvement and will appoint an independent reviewer to review concerns raised.

BACKGROUND

Every year TASC employs over 1500 sessional staff to assist with external assessment processes, including, for example, Markers and Examination Supervisors.

A 2016 TASC internal audit identified that TASC sessional staff were not being employed in accordance with the principles of the *State Service Act 2000*. It was imperative that TASC change its practices to ensure staff were recruited using the required merit-based selection process.

An independent review of TASC sessional staff, including types of staff and remuneration, was undertaken in March 2017. The review recommended updating the TASC Regulations to ensure that all categories of TASC sessional staff were accounted for, and could be legally employed and remunerated.

The Tasmanian Government updated the Office of Tasmanian Assessment, Standards and Certification Act Regulations (Fees) to add categories of fees to enable payment of sessional staff related to the setting, running and marking of external assessments, including exams.

The updated TASC Regulations were Gazetted on 19 August 2017 resulting in the required changes. Immediately following this in early September, the recruitment of external assessment sessional staff commenced, and was undertaken via a merit-based selection process that had not been employed previously.

CHALLENGES

The late Gazetting of the Regulations presented some challenges for TASC as it was not possible to commence the recruitment process for sessional staff until the Regulations had been changed.

The challenges included very tight timeframes to employ 1500 staff, with work for some starting from October.

The challenges resulted in concerns about TASC's external assessment processes being raised by stakeholders including the Australian Education Union (AEU) and the Independent Education Union (IEU), as well as the Tasmanian Association of State School Organisations (TASSO).

SCOPE

The scope of the independent review has been identified via consultation with key stakeholders including the AEU, IEU, TASSO, as well as school sector heads, the Framework Advisory Council (FAC) and Principals Reference Group (PRG).

It has been agreed the review will include:

- recruitment processes for sessional staff (including markers and examination supervisors)
- determination of what constitutes a 'marking load'
- payment rates for sessional staff
- operational logistics (catering, venue)
- timely communications.

STAKEHOLDERS

The following stakeholders will be involved in the consultation process.

- AEU
- IEU
- TASSO
- School sector heads
- FAC
- PRG
- Principals and staff of schools offering TASC accredited courses
- TASC staff
- Markers
- Examination Supervisor Coordinators

REQUEST FOR QUOTATION

TASC are seeking quotations from an independent and suitably qualified person/ organisation to undertake the External Assessment Processes Review.

REVIEW REQUIREMENTS

The review will include:

- development of review detail to ensure elements outlined in the scope are included
- development of consultation mechanisms and consultation with all TASC stakeholders
- feedback from stakeholders will guide any recommendations for future improvements and associated matters
- preparation of a report for TASC to provide to the Minister for Education and Training outlining the key findings and recommendations (including implications).

APPLICANT – INDEPENDENT REVIEWER – PROVISION OF INFORMATION

1. The applicant should provide evidence to the Executive Officer regarding the criteria below.

- Knowledge and experience of senior secondary external assessment processes.
- Experience in consultation with a diverse range of stakeholders.
- Proven ability to synthesise a broad range of views into key themes and develop a report which includes recommendations and implications based on stakeholder feedback.
- Proven ability to work within the scope outlined in detail above.

2. The applicant should provide a quotation to include the following information below.

- Detailed rate of services, other expected costs, and the total cost to complete the services.

TIMEFRAMES

It is essential that the TASC External Assessment Processes Review is undertaken as soon as possible to ensure that recommendations can be implemented in a timely manner.

TASC requires that the review report outlining the key findings and recommendations, including implications, must be provided to the Minister for Education and Training in June 2018.

SUBMISSION INFORMATION

Quotations are to be submitted to Katrina Beams, Executive Officer, TASC via email execofficer@tasc.tas.gov.au no later than 5:00 pm, Friday 27 April 2018.

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