

Mind the Gap: Navigating TEQSA Compliance and the London Underground

Tom O'Connor

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*Stepping into the world of **TEQSA compliance** in Australian higher education can feel remarkably similar to descending into the **London Underground** at rush hour. Both systems are complex, meticulously mapped, and unforgiving if you take the wrong turn — yet both are designed to get you safely to your destination, provided you know how to read the signs.*

The regulatory framework

At first glance, the **TEQSA regulatory framework** resembles the Underground map itself: colourful, dense, and initially overwhelming. Each line represents a different **set of standards or obligations** — from the **Higher Education Standards Framework (HESF 2021)** to the **ESOS Act** and **National Code**. The “stations” along the way are the institutional checkpoints: governance, academic integrity, student wellbeing, risk management, and quality assurance. Miss one connection, and your institution might find itself stranded at “Non-Compliance Junction.”

Which line and direction

Like London’s commuters, compliance officers must know which “line” to take. The **Academic Governance Line (Blue Line)** requires strong leadership from the Academic Board, while the **Learning and Teaching Line (Green Line)** demands evidence of constructive alignment, student feedback loops, and assessment integrity. The **Corporate Governance Line (Red Line)** ensures financial and operational sustainability. Each intersects with others, much like Oxford Circus at peak hour — and one misplaced policy can cause a system-wide delay.

Mind the gap

Then there's the famous Underground warning: “**Mind the gap.**” In TEQSA terms, this means recognising the gap between *policy intent* and *actual practice*. A beautifully written Academic Integrity Policy means little if staff aren't trained to implement it. Similarly, the Student Support Framework must be lived, not laminated. Institutions that fail to “mind the gap” risk tumbling into compliance shortfalls — not from lack of good will, but from lack of operational follow-through.



However, just as the Underground's complexity hides an underlying logic, TEQSA's system is built for **continuous improvement**, not punishment. The signage is there — in guidance notes, exemplars, and feedback reports — to help providers travel safely. The secret is learning the routes, knowing where the interchanges are, and using data to time your journey.

Ultimately, navigating TEQSA compliance is not about avoiding inspectors; it's about ensuring that every student, like every London traveller, reaches their destination safely and efficiently. The best institutions aren't those that rush through the tunnels, but those that pause, check the map, and confidently say, "This way to quality."

Mind the gap — and you'll find compliance isn't a maze at all, but a map leading to educational excellence.

Associate Professor Tom O'Connor is currently Academic Director at the *Australian Guild of Education (Melbourne)*. He is a member of the *Musicum20 consortium* and recently attended a symposium in London.