

ISANA Professional Development – Zoom Chat Q&A

Topic: *Responding to and eliminating gender-based violence in higher education*

Question: How do these standards apply to WIL providers (if at all)?

Answer, Kylie Smith (she/her): In response to your question about application to of the National Code:

The Universities Accord (National Higher Education Code to Prevent and Respond to Gender-based Violence) Act 2025 and the National Higher Education Code to Prevent and Respond to Gender-based Violence (National Code) applies to Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) registered higher education providers.

The National Code applies to Table A and Table B providers under the Higher Education Support Act 2003 (Cth) from 1 January 2026, and to other providers registered under the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011 (Cth) (TEQSA Act) from 1 January 2027.

Kylie Smith (she/her): So if the WIL provider is registered under the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011 (Cth) (TEQSA Act) from 1 January 2027, they need to comply with the National Code.

Question: Will there be best practice examples shared at all? Specially, what is satisfactory to the regulator and what is exemplary (noting we all want to strive for exemplary)? The examples could be de-identified and would be such a useful benchmark for providers especially smaller institutes.

Answer, Kylie Smith (she/her): Thanks, we have developed guidance

<https://www.education.gov.au/highereducationgbvregulator/resources/regulatory-guidance-national-higher-education-code-prevent-and-respond-genderbased-violence>

There are a host of other resources to support providers understand the National Code on the website - <https://www.education.gov.au/highereducationgbvregulator>

Question: Thank you, Kylie — I was thinking more about how this translates in practice. Specifically, what you would expect to see reflected in institutional policies and processes, including how data is reported and used in a meaningful way, how the reporting flows through governance structures, and how institutions demonstrate that insights are acted on and the loop is effectively closed. The examples Eve is providing and how those incidents were dealt with are really helpful and have answered a number of queries I had. I do hope you are able to hold another one of these webinars- so important.

Answer, Kylie Smith (she/her): Further to that last question, here is some information about application of the National Code to incidents off campus:

Under the National Code, providers must take proportionate and safe actions to support students or staff who experience gender-based violence, regardless of where it occurs. For example, a student who experiences violence off campus may receive academic support or safety measures from their university. In another example, if someone who is not a member of the university community reported that a senior staff member had used gender-based violence, the university would need consider any potential risk to staff or students and take action to mitigate this.

Providers must also address the factors that drive and contribute to gender-based violence across their communities to prevent violence from happening in the first place.

*Kylie Smith (she/her) is Assistant Director, Education and Engagement, Higher Education Gender-based Violence Regulator Programs & Student Experience Division, Australian Government Department of Education.