
EDUCATION AGENTS POLICY

Purpose

This policy outlines SERO's Education Agent Management process in alignment with 'A Best Practice Guide for the Queensland VET Sector' publication by the Queensland Government Department of Education and Training. This ensures SERO's compliance with Standard 4 of the National Code 2007.

Scope

This policy applies to all staff involved in RTO marketing and information dissemination for or on behalf of SERO Institute, and international students.

Policy Statement

SERO Institute will implement the 5 activities involved in agent management, which are:

1. Identifying agents
2. Appointing agents
3. Ongoing agent management
4. Review of agents
5. Exit strategies

1. Identifying Agents

Marketing staff will be allocated specific markets and they will actively target agents (on-shore and off-shore) that are recruiting students from these areas. As market trends change, staff will add niche markets and apply appropriate strategies for those markets. Marketing activities will include special prices/promotions, emails, phone calls, face-to-face meetings and campus tours.

2. Appointing Agents

SERO Institute's agent application process involves the agent completing an application form, attaching a company profile and providing contact details of two referees.

SERO will exercise due diligence by researching the company on-line, reviewing the company profile and contacting the referees. SERO will also question the agent to determine if they have completed the PIER on-line Education Agent Training Course, what type of services they offer potential students and their current market knowledge. Once SERO is satisfied that the agent is above-board, an agreement will be drawn up,

two copies printed and forwarded to the agent for signature. The agent is to sign both copies and return to SERO. The PEO will sign both copies, place one in the agent's file and send the other with a Statement of Representation and some marketing material.

3. Ongoing Agent Management

SERO staff will regularly communicate with the agents via face-to-face meetings, phone calls and emails to build a rapport and to determine the professionalism of the agency. They will also ensure that the agent has enough current marketing material to disseminate to prospective students.

4. Review of Agents

SERO has processes in place to monitor and review all agents who have agreements to refer international students to SERO. These include:

- Annual Check – SERO examines the performance of the agent after one year of an agreement being in place, as well as the number and quality of students that they have referred to SERO.
- Evaluation Form – Every three months, after an agreement is in place, SERO performs the same examinations as the annual checks. This is to ensure that if there are any issues with the agent, they can be identified and addressed earlier.
- Spot Check – This is an unscheduled visit to the agents' office to check the professionalism of the agent, the condition of the premises and to ensure that the agent has current and sufficient marketing material to disseminate to prospective students. Observations will also be made at educational fairs.
- Survey – SERO will survey students to obtain their feedback on the quality of service they are/have received from the agent.

5. Exit Strategies

SERO's agent agreement covers corrective action, termination of the agreement and dispute resolution. SERO may decide at its discretion to engage in corrective action with the Agent which may include training the agent or requiring them to complete the PIER online Agent Training Course. If at any point during the term of the agreement, SERO believes or reasonably suspects that the Agent is negligent, careless or incompetent or is engaged in false, misleading or unethical advertising or recruitment practices, the Agreement may be terminated. In the event of any grievance or disputed decision, the Agent is able to access SERO's Complaints and Appeals Policy, and if the matter cannot be resolved, both parties will submit to the jurisdiction of the courts of the State of Queensland.