

Australian Qualifications *Framework*

AQF COUNCIL

AQF Qualification Issuance Policy and Protocols

Final draft for consultation

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Australian Qualifications Framework Council

A Committee of the Ministerial Council for
Tertiary Education and Employment

Table of contents

1	Introduction.....	3
1.1	Intent and purpose of the policy and protocols.....	3
1.2	Scope of the policy and protocols.....	3
1.3	Users of the policy and protocols.....	3
1.4	Definitions of key terms in the policy and protocol.....	3
2	Policy and Protocols.....	4
2.1	Issuance Policy.....	4
2.2	Protection of qualifications.....	5
2.3	Responsibility for issuing, authenticating and verifying qualifications.....	5
2.4	Use of the AQF logo protocols.....	6
2.5	Certification documentation protocols.....	6
2.5.1	Qualification certification document form and content.....	6
2.5.2	Statement of attainment form and content.....	7
2.5.3	Replacement certification documentation.....	7
2.6	Supporting documentation protocols.....	8
2.6.1	Academic transcript required form and content...8	
2.6.2	Australian Graduation Statement.....	8
2.7	Qualifications titles, abbreviations and post nominals protocols.....	9
2.7.1	Post nominals.....	10
2.8	Honorary awards.....	10

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Intent and purpose of the policy and protocols

The purpose of the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) issuance policy and its associated protocols is to protect AQF qualifications and ensure they are recognised in Australia and internationally.

The issuance of AQF qualifications under one policy provides clarity and consistency nationally across the various education and training sectors.

The issuance policy forms part of the AQF and includes:

- Key terms
- Responsibility to issue certification documentation
- Protocols for the form and content of certification documentation
- Protocols for supporting documentation
- The form of qualification titles and post nominals.

1.2. Scope of the policy and protocols

The AQF qualification issuance policy and protocols cover all AQF qualifications regardless of where they are delivered (onshore, offshore or virtually). The policy and protocols cover all education and training sectors that offer AQF qualifications.

1.3. Users of the policy and protocols

The primary users of the policy and protocols are the authorised issuing organisations and the accrediting authorities in each education and training sector. Under devolved governance arrangements for each sector, different accrediting authorities are responsible for the implementation and monitoring of these policies and protocols.

Students, employers, industry, professional associations, licensing and regulatory bodies, other countries and other interested parties may use the policy and protocols to identify authentic Australian qualifications.

1.4. Definitions of key terms in the policy and protocols

An **academic transcript** is a progressive record of all studies enrolled in at an institution, whether complete or incomplete, and can be issued at any time during the program of study leading to the qualification, as well as on graduation.

An **accrediting authority** is a statutory authority authorised under State, Territory or Commonwealth legislation to accredit AQF qualifications and register providers to issue AQF qualifications.

An **Australian graduation statement** is a supplement to qualification certification documentation that provides factual information to enhance understanding of the qualification by students, employers, industry, professional associations and other countries. A graduation statement is issued only on completion of a qualification.

An **authorised issuing organisation** is authorised through State, Territory or Commonwealth legislation to issue AQF qualifications.

Certification is the verification and authentication of an individual's entitlement to a qualification.

A **certification document** is the official document that confirms that a qualification has been achieved. In Australia this document may be called a 'parchment', 'testamur' or 'certificate'.

A **double-badged certification document** is issued to a graduate who has undertaken a qualification in more than one institution under a formal agreement between the institutions.

A **double qualification certification document** is issued when the requirements of two qualifications of the same type are achieved concurrently and in less time than is required to complete each qualification separately. A certification document is issued for each of the two qualifications completed in the double qualification enrolment.

Post nominals are the abbreviated form of the qualification type and field, usually listed following an individual's name.

A **qualification** is formal certification, issued by an authorised issuing organisation, in recognition that the graduate has achieved the specified learning outcomes of a qualification.

A **statement of attainment** confirms that one or more units of competency, modules, subjects or courses of study leading to an accredited qualification have been achieved.

2. POLICY and PROTOCOLS

2.1. Issuance Policy

On achieving a qualification, a graduate will receive the following certification documentation:

- A certification document
- An academic transcript, and
- An Australian graduation statement.

Graduates are entitled to be issued with full set of certification documentation once they have met the requirements of the qualification.

Graduates are entitled to retain the certification documentation once it has been issued regardless of their progression to a higher level qualification that builds on the first.

Students who complete only some of the requirements for a qualification are entitled to receive a statement of attainment and an academic transcript.

AQF qualifications will normally be delivered and assessed at a level of English language proficiency appropriate to the context of delivery and intended use of the qualification. This does not preclude the use of languages other than English to support delivery and assessment. However if the majority of the qualification has been delivered and assessed in a language other than English, then a

statement that this have occurred must be included on the qualification certification document, the academic transcript and the Australian graduation statement.

2.2. Protection of qualifications

The most significant means by which qualifications in the AQF are protected comes from:

- State, Territory or Commonwealth legislation that provides for the accreditation of qualifications and registration of providers by accrediting authorities, including organisations that are empowered to self-accredit
- approval of authorised issuing organisations to issue qualifications
- the use of consistent format and content for certification documentation, and
- the consistent use of qualification titles.

Adherence to the AQF policy and protocols on issuing qualifications enhances the integrity and authenticity of qualifications across the education and training sectors.

The following protocols are designed to reduce fraud and the misrepresentation of qualifications.

2.3. Responsibility for issuing, authenticating and verifying qualifications

AQF qualifications can be issued only by organisations authorised by State, Territory or Commonwealth legislation to do so.

The issuance arrangements for AQF qualifications currently in place are summarised as follows:

- Government authorised statutory bodies in each State and Territory are responsible for issuing the *Senior Secondary Certificate of Education* in their own State and Territory.
- State and Territory accrediting authorities for *vocational education and training* are responsible for the registration and monitoring of registered training organisations (RTOs) registered to issue AQF qualifications nationally.
- State and Territory accrediting authorities for *higher education* are responsible for accrediting and monitoring higher education providers in their own State and Territory to issue AQF qualifications nationally.
- Universities are empowered by State, Territory or Commonwealth legislation to accredit and issue higher education AQF qualifications.

Protection of the qualifications also requires any authorised issuing organisation delivering, assessing or issuing AQF qualifications to adhere to the regulatory and quality assurance arrangements and issuance requirements for each qualification type..

Detailed information on regulatory and quality assurance arrangements for the training and education sectors in Australia is available on www.aqf.edu.au.

Authentication and verification of an individual's certification documentation lies with the authorised issuing organisation.

The national register of all AQF qualifications and providers enhances the ability of national and international stakeholders to authenticate and verify the existence of qualifications and their providers.

2.4. Use of the AQF logo protocols

The AQF logo will be used on the certification document and Australian graduation statements for all AQF qualifications issued by all authorised issuing organisations.

Use of the AQF logo means that:

- the issuing organisation is authorised through a State, Territory or Commonwealth authorised accrediting authority or statutory authority or is an authorised self-accrediting provider
- the issuing organisation is authorised to deliver, assess and issue the relevant qualification
- the delivery and assessment leads to a recognised AQF qualification
- the authorised issuing organisation complies with the relevant regulatory and quality assurance requirements for accreditation and registration.

The AQF logo specifications provide the conditions and requirements for the use of the AQF logo by authorised issuing organisations and are available at the time of authorisation. [The conditions and requirements for use are not yet available.]

2.5. Certification documentation protocols

2.5.1. Qualification certification document form and content

AQF qualification certification documents issued will include the following required elements:

- legal name, registration code and logo of the authorised issuing organisation
- full name of the person being issued the qualification
- correct qualification title, and if relevant, the qualification field and in brackets an occupational or functional stream
- qualification code issued at the time of accreditation
- unique issuance number
- date issued
- signature, name and title of the person in the organisation authorised to issue the document
- AQF logo and the statement ... *This qualification is recognised within the Australian Qualifications Framework*
- if relevant, ... *This qualification has been delivered and assessed <insert fully or partially (include proportion)> in <insert language>.*

In addition, certification documentation may include the following elements:

- accrediting authority / statutory authority logo
- statement ... *Issued under authority of (relevant legislation)*
- authorised issuing organisation's seal or other mode of uniqueness such as a watermark

- legal name, registration code and logo of a partnering institution where a formal arrangement is in place for the co-delivery of a qualification; primacy must be given to the lead authorised issuing organisation
- national training logo for vocational education and training.

The certification document will be limited to one page.

2.5.2. Statement of attainment form and content

A statement of attainment can be issued to recognise achievement of part of a qualification such as:

- one or multiple units of competency, modules, subjects or courses of study
- a skill set identified in a Training Package for vocational education and training which meets:
 - a licensing or regulatory requirement, or
 - an identified industry need.

Statements of attainment will include the following required elements:

- legal name, registration code and logo of the authorised issuing organisation
- statement ... *This is a statement that <full name of the person being issued the Statement> has attained < list of units of competency, modules, subjects or courses of study including the code for each>*
- unique issuance number
- date issued
- signature, name and title of the person in the organisation authorised to issue the document
- AQF logo and the statement ... *This statement of attainment is recognised within the Australian Qualifications Framework*
- The statement ... *A statement of attainment is issued by an authorised issuing organisation when an individual has completed one or more units of competency, modules, subjects or courses of study which comprise part of an AQF qualification*
- If relevant, ... *The units of competency, modules, subjects or courses of study has been delivered and assessed <insert fully or partially (include proportion)> in <insert language>.*

Statements of attainment may include the following elements:

- accrediting authority / statutory authority logo
- statement ... *Issued under authority of (relevant legislation)*
- authorised issuing organisation's seal or other mode of uniqueness such as a watermark
- national training logo for vocational education and training.

2.5.3. Replacement certification documentation

All authorised issuing organisations will have a policy which permits the replacement of certification documentation.

Any replacement certification documentation will include:

- all the required elements listed above for a qualification certification document or statement of attainment
- a statement that the document is a replacement of an original, the date on which the replacement is issued
- the signature, name and title of the person in the organisation authorised to issue the replacement.

2.6. Supporting documentation protocols

2.6.1. Academic transcript required form and content

An academic transcript will include the following features:

- legal name, registration code and logo of authorised issuing organisation
- term ... *Academic Transcript*
- full name of the person receiving the academic transcript
- date issued
- full qualification title and code in which the individual is enrolled
- statement indicating full or partial completion of the qualification; the qualification certification document number issued will be included for completed qualifications
- list of units of competency, modules, subjects or courses of study including the code for each, the results (grade or mark) for each, and each identified by the semester and year of study
- signature, name and title of the person in the organisation authorised to issue the document
- AQF logo
- If relevant, ... *This qualification has been delivered and assessed <insert fully or partially (include proportion)> in <insert language>.*

2.6.2. Australian Graduation Statement

The Australian graduation statement is a supplement to each qualification issued that provides factual information to enhance understanding of the qualification by students, employers, industry, professional associations and other countries. A graduation statement is only issued on completion of each qualification.

The Australian Graduation Statement will contain the following information:

Section	Descriptor
1. the graduate	Personal details (name, student number)
2. the qualification	Name of qualification, summary details, features, pathway to further study, course accreditation, use of languages other than English for delivery or assessment
3. the awarding organisation	Brief description of awarding organisation, including type (public/private) – the name and details of the institution, such as year of establishment, accreditation/registration number if appropriate, web address
4. the graduate's academic achievement	Academic transcript, details about any additional course requirements, study abroad,

	professional training placements, graduate employability skills, special achievements or awards
5. description of the Australian education and training system	Description of the context in which the qualification has been awarded including details regarding admission, quality arrangements and the AQF

The Australian graduation statement will be presented in a uniform sequence by all authorised issuing organisations as detailed above.

The following purpose statement will be used on all Australian graduation statements by authorised issuing organisations:

The Australian Graduation Statement is provided by education and training organisations to graduating students on completion of the requirements for a particular qualification. It provides a description of the nature, level, context and status of the studies that were pursued by the individual named. Its purpose is to assist in both national and international recognition of Australian qualifications and to promote international mobility and professional recognition of graduates.

Detailed information about the Australian Higher Education Graduation Statement is available at http://www.dest.gov.au/NR/rdonlyres/672CD1FE-FEDD-47A8-9EB2-5E7DC0B77836/25861/Updated_Guidelines_GS.pdf

[NOTE: This information will be updated to cover AQF qualifications in all education and training sectors and changes to the AQF.]

2.7. Qualification titles, abbreviations and post nominals protocols

The first letter of each word of all qualification titles will be capitalised and all numbers will be in the form of roman numerals. For example: Certificate III in Metal Fabrication.

AQF qualification titles and abbreviations for current AQF qualification types will be used as follows:

Qualification type	Qualification Title	Abbreviation
Senior Secondary Certificate of Education	Various according to state or territory	
Certificates I – IV	Certificate in...(field of study)	Cert...(field abbreviated)
Diploma	Diploma of...(field of study)	Dip...(field abbreviated)
Advanced Diploma	Advanced Diploma of...(field of study)	AdvDip...(field abbreviated)
Associate Degree	Associate Degree of...(field of study)	AssocD...(field abbreviated)
Bachelor Degree	Bachelor of...(field of study)	B...(field abbreviated)
Vocational Graduate Certificate	Vocational Graduate Certificate in...(field of study)	VocGradCert...(field abbreviated)
Vocational Graduate Diploma	Vocational Graduate Diploma of...(field of study)	VocGradDip...(field abbreviated)
Graduate Certificate	Graduate Certificate in...(field of study)	GradCert...(field abbreviated)
Graduate Diploma	Graduate Diploma of...(field of study)	GradDip...(field abbreviated)
Masters Degree	Master of...(field of study)	M...(field abbreviated)
Doctoral Degree	Doctor of Philosophy	PhD

2.7.1. Post nominals

Post nominals use the abbreviation for the qualification type and field of study of the qualification. Examples are provided below.

- CertIIBus for Certificate II in Business
- CertIVHosp for Certificate IV in Hospitality
- AdvDipBldDes for Advanced Diploma of Building Design
- AssocDEng for Associate Degree of Engineering
- GradCertIT for Graduate Certificate in Information Technology
- BSc for Bachelor of Science
- MAppPM for Master of Applied Project Management

Post nominals are usually placed immediately following the graduate's title and name.

2.8. Honorary awards

An honorary award is not an AQF qualification. It is usually awarded by an education and training organisation to recognise a person's public service or service to the organisation, or in recognition of distinguished contribution by the person in a field of academic endeavour.



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