

Transition Arrangements

1. Introduction

A set of principles and a process for converting courses from the existing qualifications structure to the Australian Qualifications Framework are outlined in this section. In the schools sector no conversion mechanisms for individual courses are necessary as, under the Framework, Senior Secondary Certificates of Education maintain their current titles and characteristics.

The principles set out below underlie the conversion process, setting parameters and assigning responsibility. The processes described allow course owners to decide whether to propose conversion of an existing course to a new qualification under the Framework. The processes provide for all courses accredited or reaccredited from 1 January 1995 to meet the requirements of the Framework. A conversion process is provided for existing courses. As a result of these arrangements all accredited courses should be consistent with the Framework by 31 December 1999.

The process also provides for graduates and currently enrolled students to receive a qualification from the Framework, as appropriate.

2. Principles

Principle One

Courses accredited or reaccredited from 1 January 1995 will meet the requirements of the Australian Qualifications Framework. In the vocational education and training sector existing courses accredited prior to NFROT must be reaccredited in order to issue qualifications under the Framework.

Principle Two

From 1 January 1995, owners of existing accredited courses (in the vocational education and training sector those accredited under NFROT) can convert to the Australian Qualifications Framework. This process of conversion must be completed in all sectors by 31 December 1999.

Principle Three

The qualifications eligible for conversion are those covered under:

- the Register of Australian Tertiary Education (RATE) – those from Certificate to Diploma,

and

- » Trade and Traineeship Certificates issued under separate industrial training legislation

whether they are offered by schools, vocational education and training (VET) or higher education providers. These programs can be converted to Certificate I to Advanced Diploma.

Principle Four

The conversion process will address the needs of graduates, continuing students, industry and the community.

Principle Five

The conversion process will be the responsibility of the body which accredited the course.

Principle Six

The conversion process will adhere to principles of equity, fairness and natural justice.

3. Process

The following process focuses on the intent of the principles.

It should be noted that in the schools sector no conversion mechanisms are necessary as, under the Framework, Senior Secondary Certificates of Education maintain their current titles and characteristics.

3.1 Scope of Eligible Courses

Only courses which are currently accredited will be eligible for conversion to the Framework.

Most of the programs eligible for conversion are those conducted in the vocational education and training sector. This includes the qualifications issued for Apprenticeships and Traineeships. Additionally, Associate Diploma and Diploma courses conducted in the higher education sector can be converted. The criteria for converting qualifications which are offered in both the vocational education and training and higher education sectors will need to be applied consistently under the Framework.

3.2 Responsibility

- a. Each accrediting body will be responsible for the operation of the conversion process in its jurisdiction for courses which they originally accredited. This will ensure that each course is converted by only one accrediting body. They will also be responsible for informing course owners of the conversion process and outlining the benefits and options available.

NOTE: In the vocational education and training sector the accrediting body will also be responsible for notifying the National Training Board of the changes in titles of courses on the National Register.

- b. The organisation which originally sought accreditation for the course will be responsible for evaluating the course against the agreed criteria (Step 2 below) and recommending a qualification level under the Framework to the accrediting body.

Course owners/providers will determine if and when they will conduct the conversion analysis, in line with resource and marketing requirements. Some owners may choose not to convert their courses but either wait until their accreditation expires or bring forward their reaccreditation timeline and submit their restructured or retitled courses through the accreditation process.

Course owners or their agents would be responsible for notifying:

- i. other providers of the course, and
- ii. those providers where credit transfer and articulation arrangements may be in place

of changes resulting from the conversion process.

Special conditions apply in the case of reciprocal accreditation in the vocational education and training sector. In the State/Territory where it is intended to apply for reciprocal accreditation for a course which is not converted, and where the conversion process has not been initiated, the local proponent may propose an AQF level as part of their reciprocal submission. This would need to be endorsed by the original accrediting body who would also adopt the AQF level.

3.3 Mechanism

Course owners should apply the following steps:

Step One: Broad Band

Applying a broad banding template, as set out in the table below, allows each course accredited under RATE Descriptions to be located within a range in the Australian Qualifications Framework. It should be stressed that this will only give an approximate idea of the new qualification level. It does not guarantee any particular outcome. Application of the Guidelines under Step Two below is the only way to complete the conversion accurately.

Existing Qualification Title			
Certificate	Advanced Certificate	Associate Diploma	Diploma
Australian Qualifications Framework Title			
Certificate I			
Certificate II			
Certificate III	Certificate III		
Certificate IV	Certificate IV	Certificate IV	
	Diploma	Diploma	Diploma
		Advanced Diploma	Advanced Diploma

Step Two: Criteria

The Guidelines provide criteria in terms of Authority for Learning Outcomes, Characteristics of Learning Outcomes and Distinguishing Features. The course owner needs to provide evidence that the course meets the criteria in the Guideline for the appropriate qualification level. Where there is reasonable doubt the course should not be submitted for conversion but be submitted for accreditation.

Step Three: Accrediting Body Decision

Each accrediting body will be responsible for deciding for a particular course whether to approve the conversion to a qualification under the Framework or to determine that a reaccredited accreditation process is necessary.

3.4 Provision for Graduates and Currently Enrolled Students

Graduates who received qualifications under the existing qualifications system will maintain that qualification. If individuals wish to convert that qualification to one under the Framework they may apply to do so through Recognition of Prior Learning. The body responsible for issuing a qualification may make available to graduates who completed a course prior to its conversion to the Framework a statement of equivalence between their qualification and the qualification under the Framework, on a fee-for-service basis as appropriate.

Individuals enrolled in an existing course when it converts to a qualification under the Framework will receive the qualification from the Framework upon satisfactorily completing the requirements for the qualification.

3.5 Resource Implications

There are resource implications for course owners and the accrediting bodies in carrying out the conversion process. Course owners will be able to make a market decision about when to change their courses to the Framework. Accrediting bodies have the right to charge a fee to cover costs of carrying out the conversion process.

3.6 Appeal Mechanism

As each accrediting body operates under separate legislation and other regulatory requirements, it would be difficult to have a single appeal process. However, accrediting bodies are encouraged to use established grievance or appeal mechanisms to give course owners a means to have decisions on the conversion of their courses reconsidered if they felt aggrieved in the conversion process.

4. Summary of Conversion Arrangements

4.1 Schools Sector

No conversion mechanisms are required as, under the Framework, Senior Secondary Certificates of Education maintain their current nomenclature and characteristics.

4.2 Vocational Education and Training Sector

All **new** courses will be accredited under the AQF from 1 January 1995.

Existing courses can be converted or reaccredited.

Conversion applies only to courses previously accredited under NFROT which are on the National Register of Courses.

The outcome of **conversion** is that the qualification has a new title in line with the Australian Qualifications Framework. No course details are changed. The period for which the qualifications are accredited remains unchanged.

The outcome of **reaccreditation** is that there will be a new qualification in line with the Australian Qualifications Framework. Course details may be significantly different. The course will then be accredited for five years from the date of the reaccreditation.

The choice of whether to apply for conversion or reaccreditation is with the course owner. Existing courses and their titles may continue to exist for the length of their current accreditation. There is no requirement to convert courses or to reaccredit them prior to the end of their current accreditation period.

4.3 Higher Education Sector

All **new** courses will be accredited under the AQF from 1 January 1995.

Existing courses can be converted or reaccredited under mechanisms set up by individual higher education institutions.