



**Australian**

**Qualifications *Framework***

**Strengthening the AQF:  
A framework for Australia's  
qualifications**

**AQF Council Consultation  
July 2010**



# *Today's program*

- Purpose of presentation
- Background to strengthening the AQF
- The strengthened AQF
  - ✓ The structure of the AQF
  - ✓ AQF Policies
- What's next
- Questions



## *What is the AQF?*

- AQF is the key *national policy mechanism* bringing together all of Australia's regulated qualifications into one comprehensive framework
- AQF introduced in 1995
- Replaced earlier qualifications frameworks, including RATE



# ***One nation: one qualifications framework***

- ✓ **It is *national* and *tri-sectoral* framework**
- ✓ **It includes all qualifications in:**
  - **Senior secondary schooling (public and private schools)**
  - **Vocational education and training (TAFE and private providers)**
  - **Higher education (public Universities and private providers)**
- ✓ **It is owned, funded and governed by all 9 governments**

# *How the AQF operates*

- Legal basis for AQF is through state & territory legislation
- All AQF qualifications must be accredited by government authorised accrediting authorities
- Australian universities are self-accrediting
- Only government accredited providers in VET and HE can issue AQF qualifications
- Senior Secondary Certificate is issued only by the ACACA agencies
- Providers must meet government standards to be accredited and to retain accreditation
- Accrediting authorities monitor providers to ensure quality of qualifications issued

# *Quality is important*

- The AQF underpins the quality of Australian qualifications
- Quality is fundamental to the national education and training system
- Quality is part of the national brand
- It is important nationally and important for our international student market

# *National Qualifications Frameworks*

- AQF has been a fundamental part of Australian education system for the past decade and half and is important for educational pathways and career development
- AQF is also important to the labour market. For example AQF qualifications are embedded in industrial awards; required for occupational licensing; required for entry to the professions; is basis for census data for skills of the population
- Regulated qualifications are important to the economy; eg recognise skills for the economy, support global movement of workers and students
- Qualification Frameworks are rapidly emerging throughout the world for above reasons



# *Why Strengthen the AQF?*

AQF Council's term of reference is to provide policy advice to MCTEE on:

- Strengthening the AQF to improve national consistency, contemporary relevance and national & international portability of qualifications
- Improving flexible qualification linkages and pathways within and across all education sectors, including recognition of non-formal & informal learning
- Relevant national & international issues & implications for national qualifications policy
- National & international recognition and comparability of qualification standards and alignment of qualification standards & frameworks



## *What do stakeholders want from a national framework?*

- ✓ Internationally recognised Framework
- ✓ Strong, simple, flexible Framework
- ✓ Blurring of edges between education sectors
- ✓ Stronger pathways and linkages to support lifelong learning
- ✓ More recognition of informal and non-formal learning
- ✓ Ongoing involvement of industry and employers
- ✓ Verification of bona fides of providers and qualifications
- ✓ International recognition of AQF qualifications
- ✓ Recognition of qualifications gained overseas



# A Contemporary Framework

- ✓ *Improved confidence in qualification outcomes*
- ✓ *Enhanced mobility of students and graduates / workers using qualifications*
- ✓ *Increased uptake of skill recognition – turning learning into qualifications*
- ✓ *Clear pathways within & between sectors & between sectors & workplace*
- ✓ *Verification of bona fides of qualifications through national record system*
- ✓ *Improved regulatory arrangements*
- ✓ *Contemporary qualifications mapped against qualifications of other countries*



# *Strengthening the AQF*

- Commenced Strengthening the AQF Project in late 2008 with funding support
- Three phases – design, build, implement
- Extensive consultation and involvement of stakeholders in development
- Detailed consideration of Qualifications Frameworks in other countries
- Changes intended to ensure AQF meets current and future needs of qualifications for the global economy & Australia retains its leadership in qualifications frameworks



## *The current AQF*

Comprised of:

- ✓ National guidelines for each AQF qualification type
- ✓ Policies and guidelines:
  - Articulation, credit transfer and RPL
  - Protocols for issuing qualifications
- ✓ Registers:
  - Authorities who accredit qualifications
  - Institutions authorised to issue qualifications



# *The strengthened AQF*

Comprised of:

- ✓ A new levels structure
- ✓ Revised qualification type descriptors
- ✓ Revised qualification specifications
- ✓ Revised and new policies

# *Responding to consultation paper*

- Written comments to [aqfc@sa.gov.au](mailto:aqfc@sa.gov.au)
- Closing date Wednesday 4 August 2010
- Responses will be published on AQF website unless requested otherwise



# *A New Structure*

- The structure of the AQF
  - ✓ Based on a taxonomy of levels and qualification types
  - ✓ Expressed as learning outcomes – knowledge, skills and application of knowledge and skills
  - ✓ 10 levels of increasing complexity
  - ✓ Qualification types constructed as learning outcomes with embedded generic skills
  - ✓ Notional duration of student learning for each qualification type

# A New Structure

## Levels

1	2	3	4	5
Certificate I	Certificate II	Certificate III SSCE	Certificate IV	Diploma
6	7	8	9	10
Advanced Diploma  Associate Degree	Bachelor Degree	Bachelor Honours Degree  Graduate Cert/Dip	Masters Degree	Doctoral Degree



# *A New Structure*

## ➤ **Levels criteria include:**

- ✓ Summary of the level
- ✓ Knowledge
- ✓ Skills
- ✓ Application of knowledge and skills
- ✓ Generic skills embedded in the learning outcomes



# *A New Structure*

- **Example – Level 3:**
- **Graduates at this level will have...**
- **Level summary** - Knowledge and skills for skilled work and for further learning
- **Knowledge** - Factual, technical, procedural and some theoretical knowledge of a specific area of work and learning
- **Skills** - A range of cognitive, technical and communication skills to select and apply a specialised range of methods, tools, materials and information to:
  - complete routine activities
  - provide and transmit solutions to predictable and sometimes unpredictable problems
- **Application of knowledge and skills** - Autonomy and judgement in known and stable contexts and within established parameters



# *A New Structure*

- **Qualification type descriptors include:**
  - ✓ Purpose of qualification type
  - ✓ Knowledge
  - ✓ Skills
  - ✓ Application of knowledge and skills
  - ✓ Notional duration of student learning



# *A New Structure*

- **Example – Bachelor Degree descriptor:**
- **Level – level 7**
- ✓ **Purpose** - To qualify individuals who apply a broad and coherent body of knowledge in a range of contexts to enter professional work and as a pathway for further learning
- **Graduates of the qualification type will have...**
- ✓ **Knowledge** – A broad and coherent and advanced knowledge, with depth in the underlying principles and concepts in one or more disciplines as a basis for independent lifelong learning



# *A New Structure*

- **Example – Bachelor Degree descriptor (cont):**
- **Graduates of the qualification type will have...**
- ✓ **Skills:**
  - Cognitive skills to critically review, analyse, consolidate and synthesise knowledge
  - Cognitive and technical skills to demonstrate a broad understanding of knowledge with depth in some areas
  - Cognitive and creative skills to exercise critical thinking and judgement in identifying and solving problems with intellectual independence
  - Communication skills to present a clear, coherent and independent exposition of knowledge and ideas



# *A New Structure*

- **Example – Bachelor Degree descriptor (cont):**
- **Graduates of the qualification type will ...**
- ✓ Apply knowledge and skills:
  - using judgement and using initiative in professional practice and/or scholarship
  - to adapt knowledge and skills in diverse contexts
  - to take responsibility and accountability for own learning and professional practice and collaboration with others within broad parameters
- ✓ Notional duration of student learning:  
3-4 years
- Embedded generic skills



## *What's new about the qualification types?*

- SSCE descriptor
- Bachelor Honours is new type
- Graduate Certificate and Diploma descriptors are the same
- Masters Degree type – different kinds
- Doctoral Degree type – two kinds



# *Specifications*

- Used for development and accreditation of qualifications
- Include:
  1. Introduction
  2. AQF levels criteria
  3. AQF qualification type descriptor
  4. Generic learning outcomes
  5. Notional duration of student learning



# *Specifications (cont)*

➤ Include (cont):

6. Qualification nomenclature
7. Responsibility for accreditation
8. Pathways and linkages
9. Applying the specifications
10. Authority to issue the qualification



# *Policies*

- Draft policies
  1. AQF generic skills policy (new)
  2. AQF qualifications issuance policy
  3. AQF qualifications pathways and linkages policy
  4. AQF register policy
  5. Addition or removal of qualification types policy (new)
  6. Glossary of AQF terminology (new)



# *AQF generic skills policy*

- Generic skills are embedded in the taxonomy of learning outcomes
- Identified in all sectors
- What does the AQF mean by ‘generic skills’?
- Policy includes:
  - ✓ definition of generic skills
  - ✓ categories of generic skills
  - ✓ statement regarding generic skills in qualifications



# *AQF qualifications issuance policy*

- Key policy for the AQF
- Improved issuance policy:
  - ✓ Improved information for users
  - ✓ Testamur, graduation statement
  - ✓ Record of results, statement of attainment
  - ✓ AQF titles, abbreviations and postnominals
  - ✓ Policy to be consistently applied across the sectors



# AQF qualifications issuance policy

## ➤ **Testamurs must:**

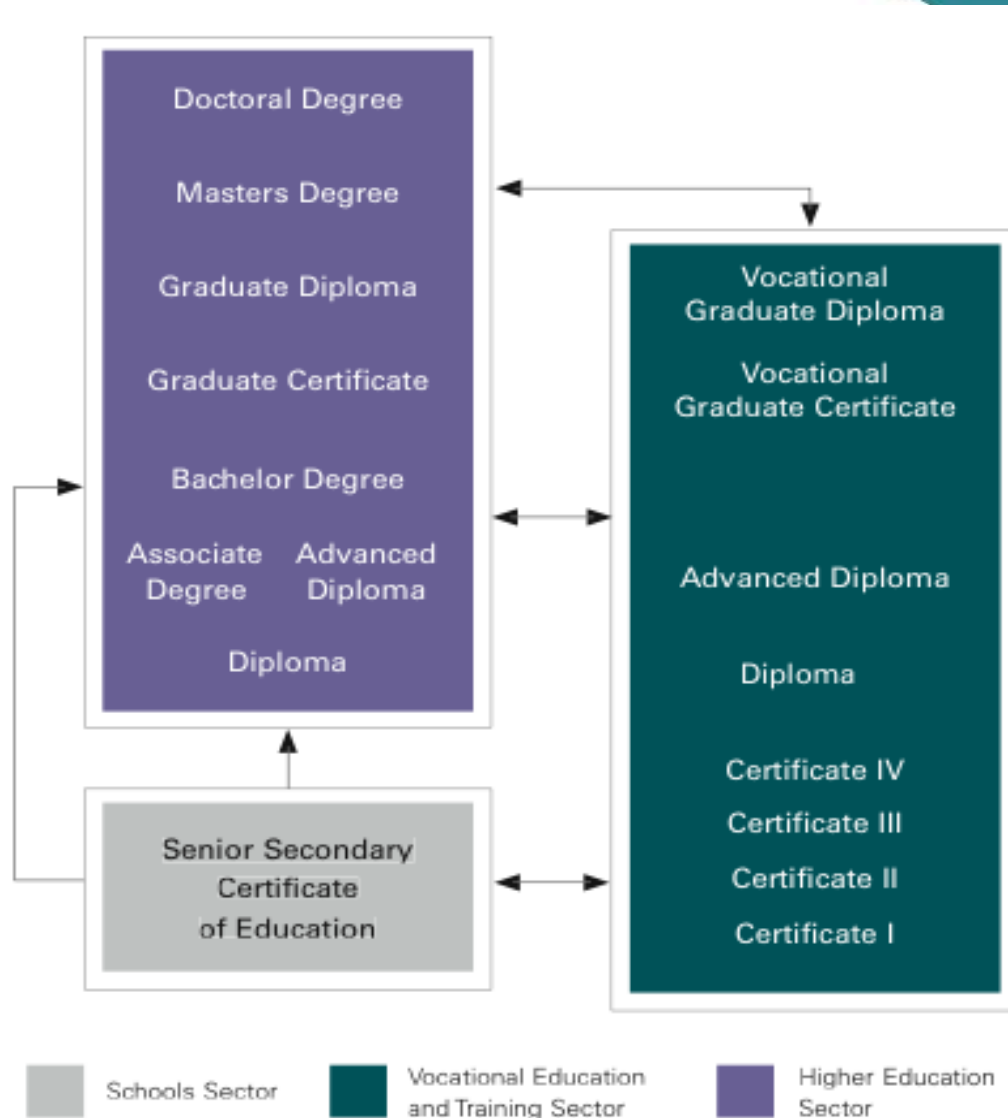
- *Correctly identify the authorised issuing organisation*
- *Uniquely identify the graduate entitled to qualification*
- *Correctly identify the qualification by its full title specified in AQF*
- *Date issued/awarded*
- *Identify the person(s) who are authorised to issue the qualification*
- *Provide a means to ensure authenticity*

## ➤ **Accrediting authorities may specify other mandatory information**

## ➤ **Statements of attainment must be in a different form to a testamur**

## ➤ **Graduation statement can include additional information**

# Qualification Pathways and Linkages





# *AQF qualifications pathways and linkages policy*

- Policy includes:
  - ✓ principles
  - ✓ identifies base levels of credit
  - ✓ articulation and credit needs to be identified when qualifications are developed and accredited
  - ✓ register of articulation and credit arrangements to be maintained by organisations issuing AQF qualifications



## *AQF register policy*

- Purpose is to ensure the accuracy and consistency of information about AQF qualifications and issuing organisations
- Improve existing register
- Provide better check for bona fides of qualifications and providers
- Register of issued AQF qualifications



## *Addition or removal of qualification types policy*

- Purpose is to ensure that the AQF has flexibility and is responsive to changing education and training needs
- Policy includes criteria and processes for both addition and removal of qualification types



# *Glossary of AQF terminology*

- Glossary recognises the need for consistency in understanding of the terminology used in the AQF
- Terms include those used in the:
  - ✓ levels criteria
  - ✓ qualification type descriptors
  - ✓ policies



## *What's next?*

- Phase 3 – develop implementation arrangements
- Including transition arrangements and resources to support implementation all AQF users



*Questions*

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