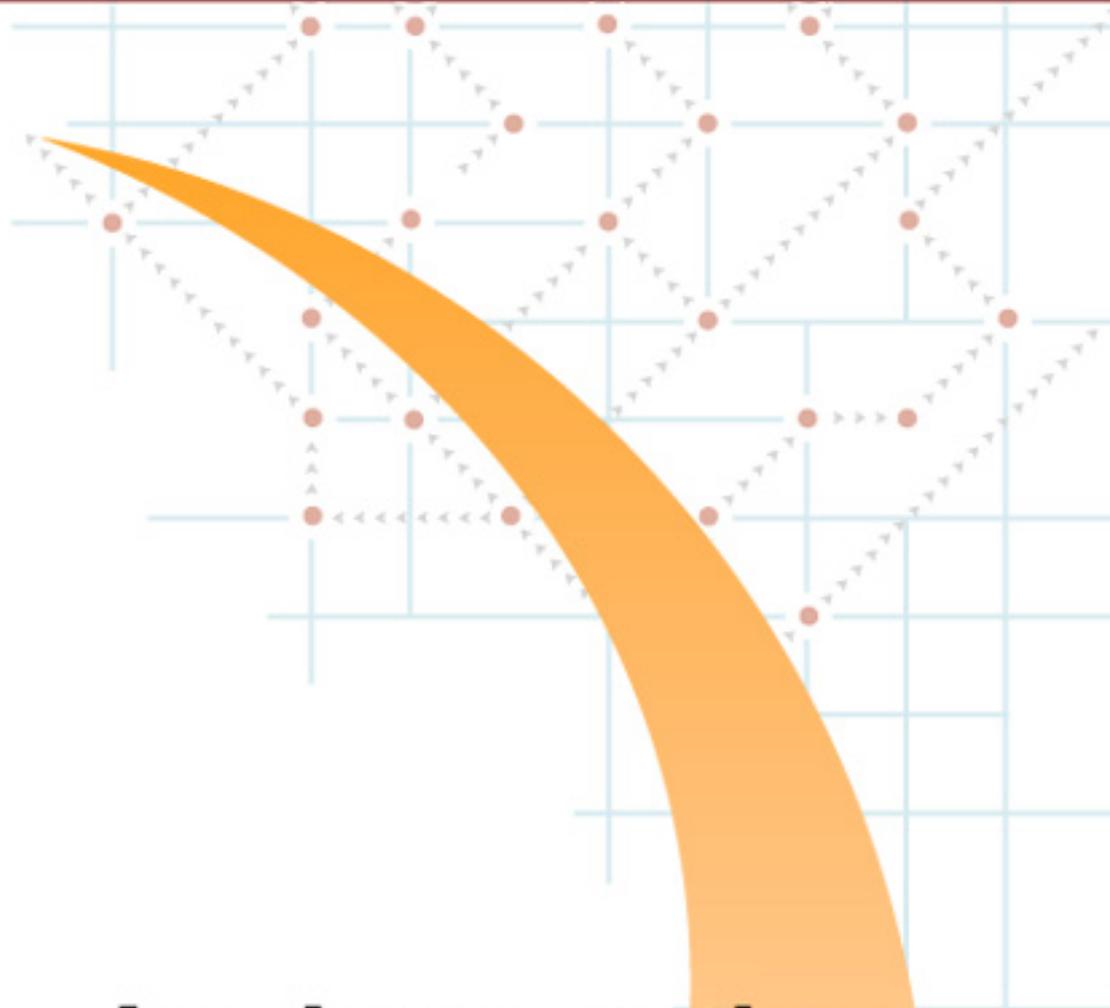


**Australian**

**Qualifications Framework**

# **Implementation Handbook**

**Second Edition  
1998**



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# Definition of Terms

**Qualification** is defined as follows:

*formal certification, issued by a relevant approved body, in recognition that a person has achieved learning outcomes or competencies relevant to identified individual, professional, industry or community needs.*

In the schooling sector these learning outcomes normally relate to general education and mark the completion of secondary schooling. They prepare students for initial entry into the workforce, for vocational education, and training and university studies.

In the vocational education and training sector these learning outcomes lead to the achievement of competencies.

For the purposes of qualifications, the vocational education and training sector defines 'competency' as the possession and application of both knowledge and skills to defined standards, expressed as outcomes, that correspond to relevant workplace requirements and other vocational needs.

It focuses on what is expected of the person in applying what they have learned and embodies the ability to transfer and apply skills and knowledge to new situations and environments.

University qualifications in Australia have derived in their standing from the degrees of the older universities which in the nineteenth century were modelled upon the British universities. Today, Australian universities, wherever their location and whatever their selected profile, must enable their graduates to operate anywhere, and in any sphere, at a level of 'professionalism' consistent with best international practice, and in ways that embody the highest ethical standards.

# List of Acronyms

ACACA	Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Certification Authorities
ANTA	Australian National Training Authority
ARF	Australian Recognition Framework
AST	Australian Scaling Test
AQF	Australian Qualifications Framework
AQFAB	Australian Qualifications Framework Advisory Board
ITAB	Industry Training Advisory Board
MCEETYA	Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs
NFROT	National Framework for the Recognition of Training
RATE	Register of Australian Tertiary Education
RTO	Registered Training Organisation
TAFE	Technical and Further Education
VET	Vocational Education and Training

# Introduction

This Handbook provides a detailed guide for the implementation of the Australian Qualifications Framework. It should be read in conjunction with documents issued by accrediting bodies.

The Handbook consists of six sections:

- **An Overview of the Australian Qualifications Framework**

A brief introduction to the Australian Qualifications Framework with a description of its key features.

- **Guidelines**

Information required to determine the level of a qualification.

- **Transition Arrangements**

Advice as to how to convert an existing qualification to a qualification under the Australian Qualifications Framework, together with advice as to the requirements that must be met.

- **Articulation Arrangements**

A set of principles to assist the establishment of connections between the qualifications.

- **Issuing a Qualification**

Advice regarding who issues a qualification, how and when.

- **Monitoring the Framework**

Details regarding the Australian Qualifications Framework Advisory Board which has been established to monitor implementation of the Framework.

The Handbook also includes an **Australian National Training Authority Supplement on Training Packages** included at the request of the Australian National Training Authority.

This text is also available for viewing and printout from the Australian Qualifications Framework Advisory Board Website at <<http://www.curriculum.edu.au/aqfab.htm>>.

# An Overview of the Australian Qualifications Framework

The Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) provides a comprehensive, nationally consistent yet flexible framework for all qualifications in post-compulsory education and training. The Framework was introduced Australia-wide on 1 January 1995.

The AQF recognises that the schools sector, vocational education and training sector and higher education sector each have different industry and institutional linkages. It connects these in a coherent single Framework incorporating qualification **levels, titles** and **guidelines**.

The twelve qualifications are shown below, grouped according to the sector in which they are most commonly issued. It should be noted that:

- there is rapidly increasing provision of vocational education and training in the schools sector, which may be recognised at the appropriate Certificate I–IV level and contribute towards a Senior Secondary Certificate of Education;
- increasing numbers of Graduate Certificates are being issued in the vocational education and training sector;
- some Certificate I–IV qualifications are issued in the higher education sector.

It should be also noted that there are no standardised rankings or equivalences between different qualifications issued in different sectors, as these qualifications recognise different types of learning reflecting the distinctive educational responsibilities of each sector. Where the same qualifications are issued in more than one sector but authorised differently by each sector (ie Diploma, Advanced Diploma) they are equivalent qualifications, although sector-differentiated.

**Table 1:**  
Qualifications  
According to  
Sector

Schools sector	Vocational education and training sector	Higher education sector
Senior Secondary Certificate of Education	Advanced Diploma Diploma Certificate IV Certificate III Certificate II Certificate I	Doctoral Degree Masters Degree Graduate Diploma Graduate Certificate Bachelor Degree Advanced Diploma Diploma

The **Guidelines** contain the main criteria for defining qualifications based on the general characteristics of education and training at each qualification level. These characteristics are expressed principally as learning outcomes. The Guidelines provide common ground for qualifications across the sectors. Differences in approach between the sectors are, in the main, related to the area of authority for learning outcomes, and these are reflected in the Guidelines.

To enable effective implementation, the Framework is supported by:

- Transition arrangements. New qualifications began to be issued in 1995. Provision has been made to convert courses to a qualification under the AQF and to allow qualifications that were available under the previous system to be offered until as late as 1999;
- Principles for articulation. The focus of these principles is to establish connections between the qualifications in the Framework;
- Principles for the issuance of qualifications and protection of titles. This includes provision for the issuance of 'Statements of Attainment' to verify the achievements of a person who has completed part of a qualification; and
- Arrangements for monitoring the implementation of the Framework, through the establishment of the Australian Qualifications Framework Advisory Board.

The AQF should:

- provide nationally consistent recognition of outcomes achieved in post-compulsory education;
- help with developing flexible pathways which assist people to move more easily between the education and training sectors and between those sectors and the labour market by providing the basis for recognition of prior learning, including credit transfer and experience;
- integrate and streamline the requirements of participating providers, employers and employees, individuals and interested organisations;
- offer flexibility to suit the diversity of purposes of education and training;
- encourage individuals to progress through the levels of education and training by improving access to qualifications, clearly defining avenues for achievement, and generally contributing to lifelong learning;
- encourage the provision of more and higher quality vocational education and training through qualifications that normally meet workplace requirements and vocational needs, thus contributing to national economic performance; and
- promote national and international recognition of qualifications offered in Australia.

# Guidelines

The Guidelines have been developed to assist employers, employees, professional associations, unions, curriculum developers, accrediting bodies and the wider public, including students, parents, and education and training bodies, to understand factors determining the level of a qualification available under the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF).

The introduction of the National Training Framework represented a landmark decision by the Commonwealth, State and Territory governments to simplify the vocational education and training system and to reduce the points of regulation. This decision has a number of implications for the AQF.

The National Training Framework is made up of two elements: the Australian Recognition Framework and Training Packages. It builds on many aspects of the National Framework for the Recognition of Training (NFROT) and is centred on the use of competency standards. The Guidelines should be of particular assistance to developers of Training Packages and courses of training in the assigning of appropriate AQF qualifications within a Training Package, or to a course to be submitted for accreditation.

Training Packages include three components which are endorsed by the Australian National Training Authority's National Training Framework Committee: competency standards, assessment guidelines and qualifications. Training Packages are flexible in design and developed through an extensive consultation process and, as a consequence, it is expected that in time the vast majority of qualifications in the vocational education and training sector will be included in Training Packages. The Australian Recognition Framework requires that relevant Training Packages be used where they exist.

Under the Australian Recognition Framework, registration of training organisations becomes the key critical quality assurance mechanism for the vocational education and training sector and the pivotal point of Mutual Recognition. The focus of registration will change significantly away from recognition related to the provision of accredited courses, to recognition for the provision of particular products and services primarily related to Training Packages.

Mutual Recognition is the core of the Australian Recognition Framework. The principles that underpin the Australian Recognition Framework establish that all AQF qualifications and Statements of Attainment issued by a Registered Training Organisation must be accepted and recognised by any other Registered Training Organisation.

Another significant aspect of the Australian Recognition Framework is the provision for Registered Training Organisations to receive delegations from State or Territory Recognition Authorities to self-manage certain recognition functions. This process is called

Quality Endorsement. Quality Endorsement enables a Registered Training Organisation within their scope of registration to expand into new Training Package areas and/or to self-accredit courses where there are no relevant Training Packages.

The Guidelines specify the characteristics of learning outcomes as well as explaining the responsibilities for assessment, issuance and certification. They are set out in a common format to enable comparisons and assist in distinguishing between levels. This common format covers the following areas:

### **Purpose**

The aim of the Guideline.

### **Context**

Why the Guideline is necessary.

### **Learning Outcomes**

#### **Authority**

The ultimate determinants of the qualification level.

#### **Characteristics**

A descriptor of learning outcomes at this particular level.

#### **Distinguishing Features**

The features that distinguish adjacent qualification levels.

### **Responsibility for Assessment**

Who is ultimately responsible for assessment.

### **Pathways to the Qualification**

How the qualification can be achieved.

### **Authority to Issue the Qualification**

Who issues the qualification.

### **Certification Issued**

When the qualification is issued and what is issued.

## Summary Tables of Qualifications: Key Features of Each Qualification



**Table 2: Authority for Learning Outcomes**

<p><b>Senior Secondary Certificate of Education</b></p>	<p>At a State/Territory level, requirements for Senior Secondary Certificates of Education are set by Statutory Boards which are responsible for the development and accreditation of courses of study, assessment and issuance of the qualification.</p>
<p><b>Certificate I</b> <b>Certificate II</b> <b>Certificate III</b> <b>Certificate IV</b></p>	<p>In the <b>vocational education and training sector</b>, all qualifications are based on nationally endorsed competency standards where they exist or on competency standards developed by relevant industry, enterprise, community or professional groups. The qualifications certify achievement of learning outcomes generally identified as sets of competencies for levels of workplace performance reflected in the characteristics and distinguishing features of each qualification. The focus in the vocational education and training sector is on the capacity to directly assess the performance criteria in the competencies specified within the Training Package. This will represent increasingly a shift away from the previous reliance on regulation through course accreditation with the assessment being against course learning outcomes.</p> <p>Authorisation of alignment of competency standards to AQF qualifications levels occurs as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•□ National Industry Training Advisory Bodies and other recognised bodies including relevant enterprises, through the process of developing Training Packages, determine the qualification levels for each set of national competency standards in their respective Training Packages. This determination is subject to endorsement by the National Training Framework Committee of ANTA.</li> <li>•□ State/Territory Recognition Authorities, or Registered Training Organisations with delegated authority to self-manage accreditation, through the course accreditation process determine the qualification levels of any combined sets of national competency standards for which there is a training need, derived either from more than one Training Package and/or other endorsed sets of competency standards. The title of the new qualification must be clearly distinct from those in the related Training Packages.</li> <li>•□ Where there is no relevant Training Package, State/Territory Recognition Authorities, through the course accreditation process, determine the qualification levels for other sets of competency standards developed by relevant industry, enterprise, community or professional bodies to meet an identified training need.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Diploma</b></p> <p><b>Advanced Diploma</b></p>	<p>In the <b>vocational education and training sector</b>, all qualifications are based on nationally endorsed competency standards where they exist or on competency standards developed by relevant industry, enterprise, community or professional groups. The qualifications certify achievement of learning outcomes generally identified as sets of competencies for levels of workplace performance reflected in the characteristics and distinguishing features of each qualification. The focus in the vocational education and training sector is on the capacity to directly assess the performance criteria in the competencies specified within the Training Package. This will represent increasingly a shift away from the previous reliance on regulation through course accreditation with the assessment being against course learning outcomes.</p> <p>Authorisation of alignment of competency standards to AQF qualifications levels occurs as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•□ National Industry Training Advisory Bodies and other recognised bodies including relevant enterprises, through the process of developing Training Packages, determine the qualification levels for each set of national competency standards in their respective Training Packages. This determination is subject to endorsement by the National Training Framework Committee of ANTA.</li> <li>•□ State/Territory Recognition Authorities, or Registered Training organisations with delegated authority to self-manage accreditation, through the course accreditation process determine the qualification levels of any combined sets of national competency standards for which there is a training need, derived either from more than one Training Package and/or other endorsed sets of competency standards. The title of the new qualification must be clearly distinct from those in the related Training Packages.</li> <li>•□ Where there is no relevant Training Package, State/Territory Recognition Authorities, through the course accreditation process, determine the qualification levels for other sets of competency standards developed by relevant industry, enterprise, community or professional bodies to meet an identified training need.</li> </ul> <p>In the <b>higher education sector</b>, objectives and academic requirements of courses are set by universities having regard for requirements set by peer review and the requirements of relevant professional bodies and employer groups. Universities may establish course advisory committees comprising a range of interested parties including practitioners, employers, community representatives and academic staff from other institutions to facilitate ongoing review of content and relevance.</p>
<p><b>Bachelor Degree</b></p> <p><b>Graduate Certificate</b></p> <p><b>Graduate Diploma</b></p> <p><b>Masters Degree</b></p> <p><b>Doctoral Degree</b></p>	<p>In the <b>higher education sector</b>, objectives and academic requirements of courses are set by universities having regard for requirements set by peer review and the requirements of relevant professional bodies and employer groups. Universities may establish course advisory committees comprising a range of interested parties including practitioners, employers, community representatives and academic staff from other institutions to facilitate ongoing review of content and relevance.</p>

**Table 3: Characteristics of Learning Outcomes**

Senior Secondary Certificate of Education	Certificate I	Certificate II	Certificate III	Certificate IV	Diploma
<p>Studies ranging from traditional academic disciplines taken to more vocational and semi-vocational courses taken to prepare students to enter the workforce directly or to enter formal training programs.</p> <p>A mix of directed classroom studies, extensive written assessments, formal examinations and/or common assessment tasks. Other studies may require application of skills, understandings, performance and project work, group work and field-work activities.</p> <p>The balance between breadth and depth of knowledge and skills, and between academic disciplines and applied and work-related courses may vary depending on the needs of the student.</p> <p>Outcomes include both generic and subject-specific knowledge and skills..</p>	<p>Breadth, depth and complexity of knowledge and skills would prepare a person to perform a defined range of activities most of which may be routine and predictable.</p> <p>Applications may include a variety of employment-related skills including preparatory access and participation skills, broad-based induction skills and/or specific workplace skills. They may also include participation in a team or work group.</p>	<p>Breadth, depth and complexity of knowledge and skills would prepare a person to perform in a range of varied activities or knowledge application where there is a clearly defined range of contexts in which the choice of actions required is usually clear and there is limited complexity in the range of options to be applied.</p> <p>Performance of a prescribed range of functions involving known routines and procedures and some accountability for the quality of outcomes.</p> <p>Applications may include some complex or non-routine activities involving individual responsibility or autonomy and/or collaboration with others as part of a group or team.</p>	<p>Breadth, depth and complexity of knowledge and competencies would cover selecting, adapting and transferring skills and knowledge to new environments and providing technical advice and some leadership in resolution of specific problems. This would be applied across a range of roles in a variety of contexts with some complexity in the extent and choice of options available.</p> <p>Performance of a defined range of skilled operations, usually within a range of broader related activities involving known routines, methods and procedures, where some discretion and judgement is required in the selection of equipment, services or contingency measures and within known time constraints.</p> <p>Applications may involve some responsibility for others. Participation in teams including group or team co-ordination may be involved.</p>	<p>Breadth, depth and complexity of knowledge and competencies would cover a broad range of varied activities or application in a wider variety of contexts most of which are complex and non-routine. Leadership and guidance are involved when organising activities of self and others as well as contributing to technical solutions of a non-routine or contingency nature.</p> <p>Performance of a broad range of skilled applications including requirements to evaluate and analyse current practices, develop new criteria and procedures for performing current practices and provision of some leadership and guidance to others in the application and planning of the skills.</p> <p>Applications involve responsibility for, and limited organisation of, others.</p>	<p>Breadth, depth and complexity covering planning and initiation of alternative approaches to skills or knowledge applications across a broad range of technical and/or management requirements, evaluation and co-ordination.</p> <p>The self-directed application of knowledge and skills, with substantial depth in some areas where judgement is required in planning and selecting appropriate equipment, services and techniques for self and others.</p> <p>Applications involve participation in development of strategic initiatives, as well as personal responsibility and autonomy in performing complex technical operations or organising others. It may include participation in teams including teams concerned with planning and evaluation functions. Group or team co-ordination may be involved.</p> <p>The degree of emphasis on breadth as against depth of knowledge and skills may vary between qualifications granted at this level.</p>



Advanced Diploma	Bachelor Degree	Graduate Certificate	Graduate Diploma	Masters Degree	Doctoral Degree
<p>Breadth, depth and complexity involving analysis, diagnosis, design, planning, execution and evaluation across a broad range of technical and/or management functions including development of new criteria or applications or knowledge or procedures.</p> <p>The application of a significant range of fundamental principles and complex techniques across a wide and often unpredictable variety of contexts in relation to either varied or highly specific functions. Contribution to the development of a broad plan, budget or strategy is involved and accountability and responsibility for self and others in achieving the outcomes is involved.</p> <p>Applications involve significant judgement in planning, design, technical or leadership/guidance functions related to products, services, operations or procedures.</p> <p>The degree of emphasis on breadth as against depth of knowledge and skills may vary between qualifications granted at this level.</p>	<p>The acquisition of a systematic and coherent body of knowledge, the underlying principles and concepts, and the associated problem-solving techniques.</p> <p>Development of the academic skills and attitudes necessary to comprehend and evaluate new information, concepts and evidence from a range of sources.</p> <p>Development of the ability to review, consolidate, extend and apply the knowledge and techniques learnt.</p> <p>A course leading to this qualification also usually involves major studies in which significant literature is available. Course content is taken to a significant depth and progressively developed to a high level which provides a basis for postgraduate study.</p>	<p>The qualification may involve broadening skills of individuals already gained in an undergraduate program, or developing vocational knowledge and skills in a new professional area.</p>	<p>Broadening skills of individuals either already gained in an undergraduate program, or developing vocational knowledge and skills in a new professional area and/or further specialisation within a systematic and coherent body of knowledge.</p>	<p>The enhancement of specific professional or vocational skills which may be undertaken by directed coursework and/or research, and the acquisition of in-depth understanding in a specific area of knowledge which is usually undertaken through research.</p>	<p>A searching review of the literature, experimentation or other systematic approach to the relevant body of knowledge.</p> <p>The undertaking of an original research project resulting in a significant contribution to knowledge and understanding and/or the application of knowledge within a discipline or field of study.</p> <p>The preparation of a substantial and well ordered thesis, demonstrating the relationship of the research to the broader framework of the discipline or field of study. Application of knowledge within a discipline or field of study.</p>

**Table 4: Distinguishing Features of Learning Outcomes**

Certificate I	Certificate II	Certificate III	Certificate IV	Diploma	Advanced Diploma
<b>Do the Competencies enable an individual with this qualification to:</b>	<b>Do the Competencies enable an individual with this qualification to:</b>	<b>Do the Competencies enable an individual with this qualification to:</b>	<b>Do the Competencies enable an individual with this qualification to:</b>	<b>Do the Competencies or Learning Outcomes enable an individual with this qualification to:</b>	<b>Do the Competencies or Learning Outcomes enable an individual with this qualification to:</b>
demonstrate knowledge by recall in a narrow range of areas	demonstrate basic <i>operational knowledge</i> in a <i>moderate range</i> of areas	demonstrate some <i>relevant theoretical knowledge</i>	demonstrate understanding of a <i>broad knowledge base incorporating some theoretical concepts</i>	demonstrate understanding of a broad knowledge base incorporating theoretical concepts, with <i>substantial depth in some areas</i>	demonstrate understanding of <i>specialised knowledge</i> with depth in some areas
demonstrate basic practical skills such as the use of relevant tools	apply a <i>defined range of skills</i>	apply a range of <i>well developed skills</i>			
	<i>apply known solutions to a limited range of predictable problems</i>	apply known solutions to a <i>variety of predictable problems</i>	apply solutions to a <i>defined range of unpredictable problems</i>	<i>analyse and plan approaches to technical problems or management requirements</i>	<i>analyse, diagnose, design and execute judgements</i> across a broad range of technical or management functions
perform a sequence of routine tasks given clear direction	perform a range of tasks where <i>choice between a limited range of options</i> is required	perform processes that require a <i>range of well developed skills where some discretion and judgement is required</i>	<i>identify and apply skill and knowledge areas to a wide variety of contexts with depth in some areas</i>	<i>transfer and apply theoretical concepts and/or technical or creative skills to a range of situations</i>	demonstrate a command of <i>wide-ranging, highly specialised technical, creative or conceptual skills</i>
receive and pass on messages/information	<i>assess and record information</i> from varied sources	interpret available information, using <i>discretion and judgement</i>	<i>identify, analyse and evaluate information</i> from a <i>variety of sources</i>	evaluate information using it to <i>forecast for planning or research purposes</i>	generate ideas through the <i>analysis of information and concepts at an abstract level</i>
	<i>take limited responsibility for own outputs</i> in work and learning	take <i>responsibility for own outputs</i> in work and learning	take responsibility for own outputs in <i>relation to specified quality standards</i>	take responsibility for own outputs in <i>relation to broad quantity and quality parameters</i>	demonstrate <i>accountability</i> for <i>personal outputs within broad parameters</i>
		take limited responsibility for the output of others	take limited responsibility for the <i>quantity and quality</i> of the output of others	take limited responsibility for the <i>achievement of group outcomes</i>	demonstrate <i>accountability</i> for group outcomes within broad parameters

# Senior Secondary Certificate of Education Guideline

## 1. Purpose

To assist employers, employees, professional associations, unions, curriculum developers, accrediting bodies and the wider public, including students, parents, and education and training bodies, to understand factors determining the level of the qualification.

## 2. Context

The Senior Secondary Certificate of Education (local titles are used at State/Territory level) is normally the only certificate available within the schooling sector in each State and Territory to indicate completion of secondary education.

## 3. Learning Outcomes

### 3.1 Authority

At a State/Territory level, requirements for the Senior Secondary Certificate of Education are set by Statutory Boards which are responsible for the development and accreditation of courses of study, assessment and issuance of the qualification.

### 3.2 Characteristics

This level indicates:

- studies ranging from traditional academic disciplines taken to prepare students for university entry to more vocational and semi-vocational courses taken to prepare students to enter the workforce directly or to enter formal training programs; and
- a mix of directed classroom studies, extensive written assessments, formal examinations and/or common assessment tasks. Other studies may require application of skills, understandings, performance and project work, group work and field work activities.

The balance between breadth and depth of knowledge and skills, and between academic disciplines and applied and work-related courses may vary depending on the needs of the student.

Outcomes include both generic and subject-specific knowledge and skills.

## 4. Responsibility for Assessment

In each State/Territory, Statutory Bodies are responsible for determining assessment requirements and ensuring that their quality is maintained through various forms of moderation, including public (State/Territory-wide) examinations, moderation of school-based assessments by statistical and verification procedures and through common core skills or the Australian Scaling Test (AST) testing.

## 5. Pathways to the Qualification

**5.1 Access** to the qualification could be through:

- accredited course(s) of study delivered by a recognised provider;

**or**

- a combination of an accredited course of study and/or recognition of prior learning, including credit transfer and/or experience.

**5.2 Time** taken to gain the qualification will vary according to the pathway taken.

Courses at this level normally require students to have attained the equivalent of Year 10 level upon entry and the qualification normally requires two years of full-time study (normally Years 11 and 12). Longer part-time programs are available in some States. Adult students may undertake the qualification without necessarily having completed Year 10 and in most States/Territories may receive recognition for prior learning.

**5.3 Examples** of possible pathways:

- Full-Time School Study  
A two-year post Year 10 Senior Secondary School Certificate of Education program.
- Schools/TAFE Programs  
A Senior Secondary School Certificate of Education program incorporating units from a Certificate I course.

**NOTE:** These examples suggest only some of a wide range of possible pathways. They are not intended to be prescriptive, nor are they limited to this particular qualification level.

## 6. Authority to Issue the Qualification

Each State/Territory has legislative responsibility for authorising the issuance of the relevant Senior Secondary School Certificate of Education. These qualifications are issued by Statutory Boards.

## 7. Certification Issued

A qualification is:

*formal certification, issued by a relevant approved body, in recognition that a person has achieved learning outcomes relevant to identified individual, professional, industry or community needs.*

Each State/Territory has legislative responsibility for authorising the issue of the Certificate. These qualifications may be referred to using a number of local titles at State/Territory level.

Individuals who complete some of the requirements for the Certificate will receive a Statement of Attainment.

The State/Territory Statutory Boards are responsible for providing and maintaining records in relation to the above.

# **Certificate I**

## **Guideline**

### **1. Purpose**

To assist employers, employees, professional associations, unions, curriculum developers, accrediting bodies and the wider public, including students, parents, and education and training bodies, to understand factors determining the level of the qualification. Also, to assist developers of Training Packages and courses of training to assign appropriate AQF qualifications within a Training Package, or to a course to be submitted for accreditation.

### **2. Context**

These Guidelines replace the RATE Descriptions which have previously been used to provide guidance on qualification levels. The Guideline for the Certificate I qualification, which is authorised by the vocational education and training sector, has been revised to take into account developments under the National Training Framework – the introduction of Training Packages and the implementation of the Australian Recognition Framework. One of the core components of Training Packages is competency standards. Competency standards were central to the National Framework for the Recognition of Training and their importance has been carried through to Training Packages. It is a requirement of the Australian Recognition Framework that relevant Training Packages be used where they exist.

Qualifications developed outside Training Packages must not duplicate qualifications contained in Training Packages. Registered Training Organisations and/or State/Territory Recognition Authorities will need to be satisfied that any qualification proposed outside a Training Package cannot be achieved by the customisation and flexibility offered within a Training Package or by the issuance of a Training Package qualification together with a Statement of Attainment.

The National Training Framework Committee, the body responsible for the endorsement of Training Packages, also has responsibility for the endorsement of national competency standards that are not part of Training Packages. These Guidelines apply equally to qualifications based on these competency standards.

In the vocational education and training sector there are a number of useful reference documents which are listed in Appendix 1.

### **3. Learning Outcomes**

#### **3.1 Authority**

In the vocational education and training sector, all qualifications are based on nationally endorsed competency standards where they exist or on competency standards developed by relevant industry, enterprise, community or professional groups. The qualifications certify achievement of learning outcomes generally identified as sets of competencies for

levels of workplace performance reflected in the characteristics and distinguishing features of each qualification. The focus in the vocational education and training sector is on the capacity to assess directly the performance criteria in the competencies specified within the Training Package. This will represent increasingly a shift away from the previous reliance on regulation through course accreditation with the assessment being against course learning outcomes.

Authorisation of alignment of competency standards to AQF qualification levels occurs as follows:

- National Industry Training Advisory Bodies and other recognised bodies including relevant enterprises, through the process of developing Training Packages, determine the qualification levels for each set of national competency standards in their respective Training Packages. This determination is subject to endorsement by the National Training Framework Committee of the Australian National Training Authority.
- State/Territory Recognition Authorities, or Registered Training Organisations with delegated authority to self-manage accreditation, through the course accreditation process determine the qualification levels of any combined sets of national competency standards for which there is a training need, derived either from more than one Training Package and/or other endorsed sets of competency standards. The title of the new qualification must be clearly distinct from those in the related Training Packages.
- Where there is no relevant Training Package, State/Territory Recognition Authorities, through the course accreditation process, determine the qualification levels for other sets of competency standards developed by relevant industry, enterprise, community or professional bodies to meet an identified training need.

### **3.2 Characteristics**

Characteristics of competencies at this level include:

- breadth, depth and complexity of knowledge and skills would prepare a person to perform a defined range of activities most of which may be routine and predictable; and
- applications may include a variety of employment-related skills including preparatory access and participation skills, broad-based induction skills and/or specific workplace skills. They may also include participation in a team or work group.

### **3.3 Distinguishing Features**

Where additional information is required to assist in determining the qualification level, the following chart could be used to help determine the most compatible match. It is emphasised that the chart is not intended to be used as a checklist which all Certificate I qualifications must include, or to replace the authority statement above.

**Table 5:  
Distinguishing  
Features:  
Certificates I  
and II**

Certificate I	Certificate II
<p><b>Do the Competencies enable an individual with this qualification to:</b></p> <p>demonstrate knowledge by recall in a narrow range of areas</p> <p>demonstrate basic practical skills such as the use of relevant tools</p> <p>perform a sequence of routine tasks given clear direction</p> <p>receive and pass on messages/information</p>	<p><b>Do the Competencies enable an individual with this qualification to:</b></p> <p>demonstrate basic <i>operational knowledge</i> in a <i>moderate range</i> of areas</p> <p>apply a <i>defined range of skills</i></p> <p><i>apply known solutions to a limited range of predictable problems</i></p> <p>perform a range of tasks where <i>choice between a limited range of options</i> is required</p> <p><i>assess and record</i> information from varied sources</p> <p><i>take limited responsibility for own outputs</i> in work and learning</p>

Italicised words emphasise distinguishing features of the competencies between levels.

In order to assist determining the level of a qualification, the most compatible set of features should be selected. Not all features will necessarily apply.

#### 4. Responsibility for Assessment

Qualifications issued in the vocational education and training sector certify the achievement of competency.

The body responsible for the issuance of the qualification (Registered Training Organisations are usually the bodies responsible as State/Territory Recognition Authorities would normally delegate this function) is responsible for the assessment of individuals relevant to the achievement of the qualification. It is ultimately responsible for the quality of assessment regardless of who actually does the assessing, the point of delivery, or the assessment method used.

The body responsible for the issuance of the qualification is also responsible for ensuring the quality of the assessment strategies, ie that they are flexible, valid, reliable and provide for the recognition of prior learning. Where the qualification is part of a Training Package this body is also responsible for ensuring that assessment has been carried out in accordance with the assessment guidelines endorsed by the National Training Framework Committee. Where accredited courses are based on endorsed competency standards the assessment methods must be consistent with the requirements of the standards [please refer to the National Accreditation Principles (VET sector), Appendix 2].

## 5. Pathways to the Qualification

**5.1 Access** to the qualification could be through:

- a training program meeting the requirements of an endorsed Training Package or a training program meeting the requirements of an accredited course(s) delivered by a Registered Training Organisation;

**or**

- a combination of a training program meeting the requirements of an endorsed Training Package or a training program meeting the requirements of an accredited course delivered by a Registered Training Organisation, plus recognition of prior learning including credit transfer and/or experience;

**or**

- the recognition of prior learning that provides evidence of the achievement of the competencies for the qualification.

**5.2 Time** taken to gain the qualification will vary according to the pathway taken and factors related to the particular industry or work area. Structured training at this level may be broad-based induction skills for work in a large and diverse industry area and therefore involve more hours than others that focus on more specific workplace skills. Notional duration statements may appear in training programs which may be part of the non-endorsed Learning Strategies component of a Training Package. Notional duration statements are also to be included in accreditation submissions for planning purposes but will not be used to determine the level of a qualification.

**5.3 Examples** of possible pathways include:

- Work-Based Training and Assessment
- Institution-Based Education and Training and Assessment (including schools)
- Part Institution-Based Education and Training and Assessment (including schools)/Part Work-Based Training and Assessment
- Recognition of Prior Learning
- Recognition of Prior Learning combined with Further Training as required
- Accumulation of a Variety of Short Courses/Training Programs

**NOTE:** These examples suggest only some of a wide range of possible pathways. They are not intended to be prescriptive, nor are they limited to this particular qualification level.

## 6. Authority to Issue the Qualification

In the vocational education and training sector, each State/Territory has legislative responsibility for authorising the issuance of the qualification. This responsibility is carried out by a State/Territory Statutory Authority or delegated to others. Additionally, the Australian Recognition Framework provides nationally agreed principles and processes for Registered Training Organisations to issue qualifications.

## 7. Certification Issued

A qualification is:

*formal certification, issued by a relevant approved body, in recognition that a person has achieved competencies relevant to identified individual, professional, industry or community needs.*

Individuals issued with the qualification, ie Certificate I, will also receive documentation that identifies the units of competency that have been achieved when training is based on nationally endorsed competency standards (including those in Training Packages).

Individuals who complete only some of the requirements for the qualification will receive a Statement of Attainment. The Statement of Attainment will include, either on the Statement itself or as an attachment, the whole units of competency that have been achieved when training is based on nationally endorsed competency standards (including those in Training Packages).

The issuing body will be responsible for providing and maintaining records in relation to the above.

# **Certificate II** **Guideline**

## **1. Purpose**

To assist employers, employees, professional associations, unions, curriculum developers, accrediting bodies and the wider public, including students, parents, and education and training bodies, to understand factors determining the level of the qualification. Also, to assist developers of Training Packages and courses of training to assign appropriate AQF qualifications within a Training Package, or to a course to be submitted for accreditation.

## **2. Context**

These Guidelines replace the RATE Descriptions which have previously been used to provide guidance on qualification levels. The Guideline for the Certificate II qualification, which is authorised by the vocational education and training sector, has been revised to take into account developments under the National Training Framework – the introduction of Training Packages and the implementation of the Australian Recognition Framework. One of the core components of Training Packages is competency standards. Competency standards were central to the National Framework for the Recognition of Training and their importance has been carried through to Training Packages. It is a requirement of the Australian Recognition Framework that relevant Training Packages be used where they exist.

Qualifications developed outside Training Packages must not duplicate qualifications contained in Training Packages. Registered Training Organisations and/or State/Territory Recognition Authorities will need to be satisfied that any qualification proposed outside a Training Package cannot be achieved by the customisation and flexibility offered within a Training Package or by the issuance of a Training Package qualification together with a Statement of Attainment.

The National Training Framework Committee, the body responsible for the endorsement of Training Packages, also has responsibility for the endorsement of national competency standards that are not part of Training Packages. These Guidelines apply equally to qualifications based on these competency standards.

In the vocational education and training sector there are a number of useful reference documents which are listed in Appendix 1.

## **3. Learning Outcomes**

### **3.1 Authority**

In the vocational education and training sector, all qualifications are based on nationally endorsed competency standards where they exist or on competency standards developed by relevant industry, enterprise, community or professional groups. The qualifications

certify achievement of learning outcomes generally identified as sets of competencies for levels of workplace performance reflected in the characteristics and distinguishing features of each qualification. The focus in the vocational education and training sector is on the capacity to assess directly the performance criteria in the competencies specified within the Training Package. This will represent increasingly a shift away from the previous reliance on regulation through course accreditation with the assessment being against course learning outcomes.

Authorisation of alignment of competency standards to AQF qualification levels occurs as follows:

- National Industry Training Advisory Bodies and other recognised bodies including relevant enterprises, through the process of developing Training Packages, determine the qualification levels for each set of national competency standards in their respective Training Packages. This determination is subject to endorsement by the National Training Framework Committee of the Australian National Training Authority.
- State/Territory Recognition Authorities, or Registered Training Organisations with delegated authority to self-manage accreditation, through the course accreditation process determine the qualification levels of any combined sets of national competency standards for which there is a training need, derived either from more than one Training Package and/or other endorsed sets of competency standards. The title of the new qualification must be clearly distinct from those in the related Training Packages.
- Where there is no relevant Training Package, State/Territory Recognition Authorities, through the course accreditation process, determine the qualification levels for other sets of competency standards developed by relevant industry, enterprise, community or professional bodies to meet an identified training need.

### **3.2 Characteristics**

Characteristics of competencies at this level include:

- performance of a prescribed range of functions involving known routines and procedures and some accountability for the quality of outcomes;
- breadth, depth and complexity of knowledge and skills would prepare a person to perform in a range of varied activities or knowledge applications where there is a clearly defined range of contexts in which the choice of actions required is usually clear and there is limited complexity in the range of options to be applied; and
- applications may include some complex or non-routine activities involving individual responsibility or autonomy and/or collaboration with others as part of a group or team.

### **3.3 Distinguishing Features**

Where additional information is required to assist in determining the qualification level, the following chart could be used to help determine the most compatible match.

It is emphasised that the chart is not intended to be used as a checklist which all Certificate II qualifications must include, or to replace the authority statement above.

**Table 6:**  
Distinguishing  
Features:  
Certificates I, II  
and III

Certificate I	Certificate II	Certificate III
<b>Do the Competencies enable an individual with this qualification to:</b>	<b>Do the Competencies enable an individual with this qualification to:</b>	<b>Do the Competencies enable an individual with this qualification to:</b>
demonstrate knowledge by recall in a narrow range of areas	demonstrate <i>basic operational knowledge in a moderate range</i> of areas	demonstrate some <i>relevant theoretical knowledge</i>
demonstrate basic practical skills such as the use of relevant tools	apply a <i>defined range of skills</i>	apply a range of <i>well developed skills</i>
perform a sequence of routine tasks given clear direction	apply known solutions to a <i>limited range of predictable problems</i>	apply known solutions to a <i>variety of predictable problems</i>
receive and pass on messages/information	perform a range of tasks where <i>choice between a limited range of options</i> is required	perform processes that require a <i>range of well developed skills where some discretion and judgement is required</i>
	<i>assess and record information from varied sources</i>	interpret available information, using <i>discretion and judgement</i>
	<i>take limited responsibility for own outputs in work and learning</i>	take <i>responsibility for own outputs in work and learning</i>
		take <i>limited responsibility for the output of others</i>

Italicised words emphasise distinguishing features of the competencies between levels.

In order to assist determining the level of a qualification, the most compatible set of features should be selected. Not all features will necessarily apply.

#### 4. Responsibility for Assessment

Qualifications issued in the vocational education and training sector certify the achievement of competency.

The body responsible for the issuance of the qualification (Registered Training Organisations are usually the bodies responsible as State/Territory Recognition Authorities would normally delegate this function) is responsible for the assessment of individuals relevant to the achievement of the qualification. It is ultimately responsible for the quality

of assessment regardless of who actually does the assessing, the point of delivery, or the assessment method used.

The body responsible for the issuance of the qualification is also responsible for ensuring the quality of the assessment strategies, ie that they are flexible, valid, reliable and provide for the recognition of prior learning. Where the qualification is part of a Training Package this body is also responsible for ensuring that assessment has been carried out in accordance with the assessment guidelines endorsed by the National Training Framework Committee. Where accredited courses are based on endorsed competency standards the assessment methods must be consistent with the requirements of the standards [please refer to the National Accreditation Principles (VET sector), Appendix 2].

## 5. Pathways to the Qualification

**5.1 Access** to the qualification could be through:

- a training program meeting the requirements of an endorsed Training Package or a training program meeting the requirements of an accredited course(s) delivered by a Registered Training Organisation;

**or**

- a combination of a training program meeting the requirements of an endorsed Training Package or a training program meeting the requirements of an accredited course delivered by a Registered Training Organisation, plus recognition of prior learning including credit transfer and/or experience;

**or**

- the recognition of prior learning that provides evidence of the achievement of the competencies or learning outcomes for the qualification.

**5.2 Time** taken to gain the qualification will vary according to the pathway taken and factors related to the particular industry or work area. Structured training at this level may be broad-based induction skills for work in a large and diverse industry area and therefore involve more hours than others that focus on more specific workplace skills. Notional duration statements may appear in training programs which may be part of the non-endorsed Learning Strategies component of a Training Package. Notional duration statements are also to be included in accreditation submissions for planning purposes but will not be used to determine the level of a qualification.

**5.3 Examples** of possible pathways include:

- Work-Based Training and Assessment
- Institution-Based Education and Training and Assessment (including schools)
- Part Institution-Based Education and Training and Assessment (including schools)/Part Work-Based Training and Assessment
- Recognition of Prior Learning
- Recognition of Prior Learning combined with Further Training as required
- Accumulation of a Variety of Short Courses/Training Programs

**NOTE:** These examples suggest only some of a wide range of possible pathways. They are not intended to be prescriptive, nor are they limited to this particular qualification level.

## 6. Authority to Issue the Qualification

In the vocational education and training sector, each State/Territory has legislative responsibility for authorising the issuance of the qualification. This responsibility is carried out by a State/Territory Statutory Authority or delegated to others. Additionally, the Australian Recognition Framework provides nationally agreed principles and processes for Registered Training Organisations to issue qualifications.

## 7. Certification Issued

A qualification is:

*formal certification, issued by a relevant approved body, in recognition that a person has achieved competencies relevant to identified individual, professional, industry or community needs.*

Individuals issued with the qualification, ie Certificate II, will also receive documentation which identifies the units of competency that have been achieved when training is based on nationally endorsed competency standards (including those in Training Packages).

Individuals who complete only some of the requirements for the qualification will receive a Statement of Attainment. The Statement of Attainment will include, either on the Statement itself or as an attachment, the whole units of competency that have been achieved when training is based on nationally endorsed competency standards (including those in Training Packages).

The issuing body will be responsible for providing and maintaining records in relation to the above.

# **Certificate III**

## **Guideline**

### **1. Purpose**

To assist employers, employees, professional associations, unions, curriculum developers, accrediting bodies and the wider public, including students, parents, and education and training bodies, to understand factors determining the level of the qualification. Also, to assist developers of Training Packages and courses of training to assign appropriate AQF qualifications within a Training Package, or to a course to be submitted for accreditation.

### **2. Context**

These Guidelines replace the RATE Descriptions which have previously been used to provide guidance on qualification levels. The Guideline for the Certificate III qualification, which is authorised by the vocational education and training sector, has been revised to take into account developments under the National Training Framework – the introduction of Training Packages and the implementation of the Australian Recognition Framework. One of the core components of Training Packages is competency standards. Competency standards were central to the National Framework for the Recognition of Training and their importance has been carried through to Training Packages. It is a requirement of the Australian Recognition Framework that relevant Training Packages be used where they exist.

Qualifications developed outside Training Packages must not duplicate qualifications contained in Training Packages. Registered Training Organisations and/or State/Territory Recognition Authorities will need to be satisfied that any qualification proposed outside a Training Package cannot be achieved by the customisation and flexibility offered within a Training Package or by the issuance of a Training Package qualification together with a Statement of Attainment.

The National Training Framework Committee, the body responsible for the endorsement of Training Packages, also has responsibility for the endorsement of national competency standards that are not part of Training Packages. These Guidelines apply equally to qualifications based on these competency standards.

In the vocational education and training sector there are a number of useful reference documents which are listed in Appendix 1.

### **3. Learning Outcomes**

#### **3.1 Authority**

In the vocational education and training sector, all qualifications are based on nationally endorsed competency standards where they exist or on competency standards developed by relevant industry, enterprise, community or professional groups. The qualifications certify achievement of learning outcomes generally identified as sets of competencies for

levels of workplace performance reflected in the characteristics and distinguishing features of each qualification. The focus in the vocational education and training sector is on the capacity to assess directly the performance criteria in the competencies specified within the Training Package. This will represent increasingly a shift away from the previous reliance on regulation through course accreditation with the assessment being against course learning outcomes.

Authorisation of alignment of competency standards to AQF qualification levels occurs as follows:

- National Industry Training Advisory Bodies and other recognised bodies including relevant enterprises, through the process of developing Training Packages, determine the qualification levels for each set of national competency standards in their respective Training Packages. This determination is subject to endorsement by the National Training Framework Committee of the Australian National Training Authority.
- State/Territory Recognition Authorities, or Registered Training Organisations with delegated authority to self-manage accreditation, through the course accreditation process determine the qualification levels of any combined sets of national competency standards for which there is a training need, derived either from more than one Training Package and/or other endorsed sets of competency standards. The title of the new qualification must be clearly distinct from those in the related Training Packages.
- Where there is no relevant Training Package, State/Territory Recognition Authorities, through the course accreditation process, determine the qualification levels for other sets of competency standards developed by relevant industry, enterprise, community or professional bodies to meet an identified training need.

### **3.2 Characteristics**

Characteristics of competencies at this level include:

- performance of a defined range of skilled operations, usually within a range of broader related activities involving known routines, methods and procedures, where some discretion and judgement is required in the selection of equipment, services or contingency measures and within known time constraints;
- breadth, depth and complexity of knowledge and competencies would cover selecting, adapting and transferring skills and knowledge to new environments and providing technical advice and some leadership in resolution of specific problems. This would be applied across a range of roles in a variety of contexts with some complexity in the extent and choice of options available; and
- applications may involve some responsibility for others. Participation in teams including group or team co-ordination may be involved.

### **3.3 Distinguishing Features**

Where additional information is required to assist in determining the qualification level, the following chart could be used to help determine the most compatible match.

It is emphasised that the chart is not intended to be used as a checklist which all Certificate III qualifications must include, or to replace the authority statement above.

**Table 7:**  
Distinguishing  
Features:  
Certificates II, III  
and IV

Certificate II	Certificate III	Certificate IV
<p><b>Do the Competencies enable an individual with this qualification to:</b></p> <p>demonstrate basic <i>operational knowledge</i> in a <i>moderate range</i> of areas</p> <p>apply a <i>defined range of skills</i></p> <p>apply known solutions to a <i>limited range of predictable problems</i></p> <p>perform a range of tasks where <i>choice between a limited range of options</i> is required</p> <p><i>assess and record</i> information from varied sources</p> <p>take <i>limited responsibility</i> for own outputs in work and learning</p>	<p><b>Do the Competencies enable an individual with this qualification to:</b></p> <p>demonstrate some <i>relevant theoretical knowledge</i></p> <p>apply a range of <i>well developed skills</i></p> <p>apply known solutions to a <i>variety of predictable problems</i></p> <p>perform processes that require a <i>range of well developed skills where some discretion and judgement is required</i></p> <p>interpret available information, using <i>discretion and judgement</i></p> <p>take <i>responsibility for own outputs</i> in work and learning</p> <p>take <i>limited responsibility</i> for the output of others</p>	<p><b>Do the Competencies enable an individual with this qualification to:</b></p> <p>demonstrate understanding of a <i>broad knowledge base incorporating some theoretical concepts</i></p> <p>apply solutions to a <i>defined range of unpredictable problems</i></p> <p><i>identify and apply skill and knowledge areas</i> to a <i>wide variety of contexts with depth in some areas</i></p> <p><i>identify, analyse and evaluate information</i> from a <i>variety of sources</i></p> <p>take <i>responsibility for own outputs in relation to specified quality standards</i></p> <p>take <i>limited responsibility</i> for the <i>quantity and quality</i> of the output of others</p>

Italicised words emphasise distinguishing features of the competencies between levels.

In order to assist determining the level of a qualification, the most compatible set of features should be selected. Not all features will necessarily apply.

#### 4. Responsibility for Assessment

Qualifications issued in the vocational education and training sector certify the achievement of competency.

The body responsible for the issuance of the qualification (Registered Training Organisations) are usually the bodies responsible as State/Territory Recognition Authorities

would normally delegate this function) is responsible for the assessment of individuals relevant to the achievement of the qualification. It is ultimately responsible for the quality of assessment regardless of who actually does the assessing, the point of delivery, or the assessment method used.

The body responsible for the issuance of the qualification is also responsible for ensuring the quality of the assessment strategies, ie that they are flexible, valid, reliable and provide for the recognition of prior learning. Where the qualification is part of a Training Package this body is also responsible for ensuring that assessment has been carried out in accordance with the assessment guidelines endorsed by the National Training Framework Committee. Where accredited courses are based on endorsed competency standards the assessment methods must be consistent with the requirements of the standards [please refer to the National Accreditation Principles (VET sector) Appendix 2].

## 5. Pathways to the Qualification

**5.1 Access** to the qualification could be through:

- a training program meeting the requirements of an endorsed Training Package or a training program meeting the requirements of an accredited course(s) delivered by a Registered Training Organisation;

**or**

- a combination of a training program meeting the requirements of an endorsed Training Package or a training program meeting the requirements of an accredited course delivered by a Registered Training Organisation, plus recognition of prior learning including credit transfer and/or experience;

**or**

- the recognition of prior learning that provides evidence of the achievement of the competencies or learning outcomes for the qualification.

**5.2 Time** taken to gain the qualification will vary according to the pathway taken and factors related to the particular industry or work area. Notional duration statements may appear in training programs which may be part of the non-endorsed Learning Strategies component of a Training Package. Notional duration statements are also to be included in accreditation submissions for planning purposes but will not be used to determine the level of a qualification.

**5.3 Examples** of possible pathways include:

- Work-Based Training and Assessment
- Institution-Based Education and Training and Assessment (including schools)
- Part Institution-Based Education and Training and Assessment (including schools)/Part Work-Based Training and Assessment
- Recognition of Prior Learning
- Recognition of Prior Learning combined with Further Training as required
- Accumulation of a Variety of Short Courses/Training Programs

**NOTE:** These examples suggest only some of a wide range of possible pathways. They are not intended to be prescriptive, nor are they limited to this particular qualification level.

## 6. Authority to Issue the Qualification

In the vocational education and training sector, each State/Territory has legislative responsibility for authorising the issuance of the qualification. This responsibility is carried out by a State/Territory Statutory Authority or delegated to others. Additionally, the Australian Recognition Framework provides nationally agreed principles and processes for Registered Training Organisations to issue qualifications.

## 7. Certification Issued

A qualification is:

*formal certification, issued by a relevant approved body, in recognition that a person has achieved competencies relevant to identified individual, professional, industry or community needs.*

Individuals issued with the qualification, ie Certificate III, will also receive documentation that identifies the units of competency that have been achieved when training is based on nationally endorsed competency standards (including those in Training Packages).

Individuals who complete only some of the requirements for the qualification will receive a Statement of Attainment. The Statement of Attainment will include, either on the Statement itself or as an attachment, the whole units of competency that have been achieved when training is based on nationally endorsed competency standards (including those in Training Packages).

The issuing body will be responsible for providing and maintaining records in relation to the above.

# **Certificate IV**

## **Guideline**

### **1. Purpose**

To assist employers, employees, professional associations, unions, curriculum developers, accrediting bodies and the wider public, including students, parents, and education and training bodies, to understand factors determining the level of the qualification. Also, to assist developers of Training Packages and courses of training to assign appropriate AQF qualifications within a Training Package, or to a course to be submitted for accreditation.

### **2. Context**

These Guidelines replace the RATE Descriptions which have previously been used to provide guidance on qualification levels. The Guideline for the Certificate IV qualification, which is authorised by the vocational education and training sector, has been revised to take into account developments under the National Training Framework – the introduction of Training Packages and the implementation of the Australian Recognition Framework. One of the core components of Training Packages is competency standards. Competency standards were central to the National Framework for the Recognition of Training and their importance has been carried through to Training Packages. It is a requirement of the Australian Recognition Framework that relevant Training Packages be used where they exist.

Qualifications developed outside Training Packages must not duplicate qualifications contained in Training Packages. Registered Training Organisations and/or State/Territory Recognition Authorities will need to be satisfied that any qualification proposed outside a Training Package cannot be achieved by the customisation and flexibility offered within a Training Package or by the issuance of a Training Package qualification together with a Statement of Attainment.

The National Training Framework Committee, the body responsible for the endorsement of Training Packages, also has responsibility for the endorsement of national competency standards that are not part of Training Packages. These Guidelines apply equally to qualifications based on these competency standards.

In the vocational education and training sector there are a number of useful reference documents which are listed in Appendix 1.

### **3. Learning Outcomes**

#### **3.1 Authority**

In the vocational education and training sector, all qualifications are based on nationally endorsed competency standards where they exist or on competency standards developed by relevant industry, enterprise, community or professional groups. The qualifications

certify achievement of learning outcomes generally identified as sets of competencies for levels of workplace performance reflected in the characteristics and distinguishing features of each qualification. The focus in the vocational education and training sector is on the capacity to assess directly the performance criteria in the competencies specified within the Training Package. This will represent increasingly a shift away from the previous reliance on regulation through course accreditation with the assessment being against course learning outcomes.

Authorisation of alignment of competency standards to AQF qualification levels occurs as follows:

- National Industry Training Advisory Bodies and other recognised bodies including relevant enterprises, through the process of developing Training Packages, determine the qualification levels for each set of national competency standards in their respective Training Packages. This determination is subject to endorsement by the National Training Framework Committee of the Australian National Training Authority.
- State/Territory Recognition Authorities, or Registered Training Organisations with delegated authority to self-manage accreditation, through the course accreditation process determine the qualification levels of any combined sets of national competency standards for which there is a training need, derived either from more than one Training Package and/or other endorsed sets of competency standards. The title of the new qualification must be clearly distinct from those in the related Training Packages.
- Where there is no relevant Training Package, State/Territory Recognition Authorities, through the course accreditation process, determine the qualification levels for other sets of competency standards developed by relevant industry, enterprise, community or professional bodies to meet an identified training need.

### **3.2 Characteristics**

Characteristics of learning outcomes/competencies at this level include:

- performance of a broad range of skilled applications including requirements to evaluate and analyse current practices, develop new criteria and procedures for performing current practices, and provision of some leadership and guidance to others in the application and planning of the skills;
- breadth, depth and complexity of knowledge and competencies would cover a broad range of varied activities or applications in a wider variety of contexts most of which are complex and non-routine. Leadership and guidance are involved when organising activities of self and others as well as contributing to technical solutions of a non-routine or contingency nature; and
- applications involve responsibility for, and limited organisation of, others.

### **3.3 Distinguishing Features**

Where additional information is required to assist in determining the qualification level, the following chart could be used to help determine the most compatible match.

It is emphasised that the chart is not intended to be used as a checklist which all Certificate IV qualifications must include, or to replace the authority statement above.

**Table 8:**  
Distinguishing  
Features:  
Certificates III,  
IV and  
Diploma

Certificate III	Certificate IV	Diploma
<b>Do the Competencies enable an individual with this qualification to:</b>	<b>Do the Competencies enable an individual with this qualification to:</b>	<b>Do the Competencies or Learning Outcomes enable an individual with this qualification to:</b>
demonstrate some <i>relevant theoretical knowledge</i>	demonstrate understanding of a <i>broad knowledge base incorporating some theoretical concepts</i>	demonstrate understanding of a broad knowledge base incorporating theoretical concepts, <i>with substantial depth in some areas</i>
apply a range of well developed skills		
apply known solutions to a <i>variety of predictable problems</i>	apply solutions to a <i>defined range of unpredictable problems</i>	<i>analyse and plan approaches to technical problems or management requirements</i>
perform processes that require a <i>range of well developed skills where some discretion and judgement is required</i>	<i>identify and apply skill and knowledge areas to a wide variety of contexts with depth in some areas</i>	<i>transfer and apply theoretical concepts and/or technical or creative skills to a range of situations</i>
interpret available information, using <i>discretion and judgement</i>	<i>identify, analyse and evaluate information from a variety of sources</i>	evaluate information using it to <i>forecast for planning or research purposes</i>
take responsibility for own outputs in work and learning	take responsibility for own outputs <i>in relation to specified quality standards</i>	take responsibility for own outputs in relation to broad quantity and quality parameters
take limited responsibility for the output of others	take <i>limited responsibility for the quantity and quality</i> of the output of others	take some responsibility for the <i>achievement of group outcomes</i>

Italicised words emphasise distinguishing features of the competencies between levels.

In order to assist determining the level of a qualification, the most compatible set of features should be selected. Not all features will necessarily apply.

## 4. Responsibility for Assessment

Qualifications issued in the vocational education and training sector certify the achievement of competency.

The body responsible for the issuance of the qualification (Registered Training Organisations are usually the bodies responsible as State/Territory Recognition Authorities would normally delegate this function) is responsible for the assessment of individuals relevant to the achievement of the qualification. It is ultimately responsible for the quality of assessment regardless of who actually does the assessing, the point of delivery, or the assessment method used.

The body responsible for the issuance of the qualification is also responsible for ensuring the quality of the assessment strategies, ie that they are flexible, valid, reliable and provide for the recognition of prior learning. Where the qualification is part of a Training Package this body is also responsible for ensuring that assessment has been carried out in accordance with the assessment guidelines endorsed by the National Training Framework Committee. Where accredited courses are based on endorsed competency standards the assessment methods must be consistent with the requirements of the standards [please refer to the National Accreditation Principles (VET sector), Appendix 2].

## 5. Pathways to the Qualification

**5.1 Access** to the qualification could be through:

- a training program meeting the requirements of an endorsed Training Package or a training program meeting the requirements of an accredited course(s) delivered by a Registered Training Organisation;

**or**

- a combination of a training program meeting the requirements of an endorsed Training Package or a training program meeting the requirements of an accredited course delivered by a Registered Training Organisation, plus recognition of prior learning including credit transfer and/or experience;

**or**

- the recognition of prior learning that provides evidence of the achievement of the competencies or learning outcomes for the qualification.

**5.2 Time** taken to gain the qualification will vary according to the pathway taken and factors related to the particular industry or work area. Notional duration statements may appear in training programs which may be part of the non-endorsed Learning Strategies component of a Training Package. Notional duration statements are also to be included in accreditation submissions for planning purposes but will not be used to determine the level of a qualification. A Certificate IV could be part of a set of nested programs, eg a Certificate IV and a Diploma. An individual may complete the requirements for a Certificate IV only or may go on to gain a Diploma.

**5.3 Examples** of possible pathways include:

- Work-Based Training and Assessment
- Institution-Based Education and Training and Assessment (including schools)

- Part Institution-Based Education and Training and Assessment (including schools)/ Part Work-Based Training and Assessment
- Recognition of Prior Learning
- Recognition of Prior Learning combined with Further Training as required
- Accumulation of a Variety of Short Courses/Training Programs

**NOTE:** These examples suggest only some of a wide range of possible pathways. They are not intended to be prescriptive, nor are they limited to this particular qualification level.

## 6. Authority to Issue the Qualification

In the vocational education and training sector, each State/Territory has legislative responsibility for authorising the issuance of the qualification. This responsibility is carried out by a State/Territory Statutory Authority or delegated to others. Additionally, the Australian Recognition Framework provides nationally agreed principles and processes for Registered Training Organisations to issue qualifications.

## 7. Certification Issued

A qualification is:

*formal certification, issued by a relevant approved body, in recognition that a person has achieved competencies relevant to identified individual, professional, industry or community needs.*

Individuals issued with the qualification, ie Certificate IV, will also receive documentation that identifies the units of competency that have been achieved when training is based on nationally endorsed competency standards (including those in Training Packages).

Individuals who complete only some of the requirements for the qualification will receive a Statement of Attainment. The Statement of Attainment will include, either on the Statement itself or as an attachment, the whole units of competency that have been achieved when training is based on nationally endorsed competency standards (including those in Training Packages).

The issuing body will be responsible for providing and maintaining records in relation to the above.

# Diploma Guideline

## 1. Purpose

To assist employers, employees, professional associations, unions, curriculum developers, accrediting bodies and the wider public, including students, parents, and education and training bodies, to understand factors determining the level of the qualification. Also, to assist developers of Training Packages and courses of training to assign appropriate AQF qualifications within a Training Package, or to a course to be submitted for accreditation.

## 2. Context

These Guidelines replace the RATE Descriptions which have previously been used to provide guidance on qualification levels. The Diploma qualification is authorised differently in the vocational education and training sector and the higher education sector. However, providers from either sector may offer a Diploma within a Training Package, and this entails meeting the requirements of the Australian Recognition Framework.

The Guideline for the Diploma qualification issued in the **vocational education and training sector** has been revised to take into account developments under the National Training Framework – the introduction of Training Packages and the implementation of the Australian Recognition Framework. One of the core components of Training Packages is competency standards. Competency standards were central to the National Framework for the Recognition of Training and their importance has been carried through to Training Packages. It is a requirement of the Australian Recognition Framework that relevant Training Packages be used where they exist.

Qualifications developed outside Training Packages must not duplicate qualifications contained in Training Packages. Registered Training Organisations and/or State/Territory Recognition Authorities will need to be satisfied that any qualification proposed outside a Training Package cannot be achieved by the customisation and flexibility offered within a Training Package or by the issuance of a Training Package qualification together with a Statement of Attainment.

The National Training Framework Committee, the body responsible for the endorsement of Training Packages, also has responsibility for the endorsement of national competency standards that are not part of Training Packages. These Guidelines apply equally to qualifications based on these competency standards.

In the vocational education and training sector there are a number of useful reference documents which are listed in Appendix 1.

## 3. Learning Outcomes

### 3.1 Authority

In the **vocational education and training sector**, all qualifications are based on nationally endorsed competency standards where they exist or on competency standards

developed by relevant industry, enterprise, community or professional groups. The qualifications certify achievement of learning outcomes generally identified as sets of competencies for levels of workplace performance reflected in the characteristics and distinguishing features of each qualification. The focus in the vocational education and training sector is on the capacity to assess directly the performance criteria in the competencies specified within the Training Package. This will represent increasingly a shift away from the previous reliance on regulation through course accreditation with the assessment being against course learning outcomes.

Authorisation of alignment of competency standards to AQF qualification levels occurs as follows:

- National Industry Training Advisory Bodies and other recognised bodies including relevant enterprises, through the process of developing Training Packages, determine the qualification levels for each set of national competency standards in their respective Training Packages. This determination is subject to endorsement by the National Training Framework Committee of the Australian National Training Authority.
- State/Territory Recognition Authorities, or Registered Training Organisations with delegated authority to self-manage accreditation, through the course accreditation process determine the qualification levels of any combined sets of national competency standards for which there is a training need, derived either from more than one Training Package and/or other endorsed sets of competency standards. The title of the new qualification must be clearly distinct from those in the related Training Packages.
- Where there is no relevant Training Package, State/Territory Recognition Authorities, through the course accreditation process, determine the qualification levels for other sets of competency standards developed by relevant industry, enterprise, community or professional bodies to meet an identified training need.

In the **higher education sector**, objectives and academic requirements of courses are set by universities having regard for requirements set by peer review and the requirements of relevant professional bodies and employer groups. Universities may establish course advisory committees comprising a range of interested parties including practitioners, employers, community representatives and academic staff from other institutions to facilitate ongoing review of content and relevance.

### 3.2 Characteristics

Characteristics of competencies or learning outcomes at this level include:

- the self-directed application of knowledge and skills, with substantial depth in some areas where judgement is required in planning and selecting appropriate equipment, services and techniques for self and others;
- breadth, depth and complexity covering planning and initiation of alternative approaches to skills or knowledge applications across a broad range of technical and/or management requirements, evaluation and co-ordination; and
- applications involve participation in development of strategic initiatives, as well as personal responsibility and autonomy in performing complex technical operations or organising others. It may include participation in teams including teams concerned with planning and evaluation functions. Group or team co-ordination may be involved.

The degree of emphasis on breadth as against depth of knowledge and skills may vary between qualifications granted at this level.

### 3.3 Distinguishing Features

Where additional information is required to assist in determining the qualification level, the following chart could be used to help determine the most compatible match.

It is emphasised that the chart is not intended to be used as a checklist which all Diploma qualifications must include, or to replace the authority statement above.

**Table 9:**  
Distinguishing  
Features:  
Certificate IV,  
Diploma and  
Advanced

Certificate IV	Diploma	Advanced Diploma
<b>Do the Competencies or Learning Outcomes enable an individual with this qualification to:</b>	<b>Do the Competencies or Learning Outcomes enable an individual with this qualification to:</b>	<b>Do the Competencies or Learning Outcomes enable an individual with this qualification to:</b>
demonstrate understanding of a broad knowledge base incorporating some theoretical concepts	demonstrate understanding of a broad knowledge base incorporating theoretical concepts, <i>with substantial depth in some areas</i>	demonstrate understanding of <i>specialised knowledge</i> with depth in some areas
apply solutions to a <i>defined range of unpredictable problems</i>	<i>analyse and plan approaches to technical problems or management requirements</i>	<i>analyse, diagnose, design and execute judgements</i> across a broad range of technical or management functions
<i>identify, analyse and evaluate information from a variety of sources</i>	evaluate information using it to <i>forecast for planning or research purposes</i>	generate ideas through the <i>analysis of information and concepts</i> at an abstract level
<i>identify and apply skill and knowledge areas to a wide variety of contexts with depth in some areas</i>	<i>transfer and apply theoretical concepts and/or technical or creative skills to a range of situations</i>	demonstrate a command of <i>wide-ranging, highly specialised technical, creative or conceptual skills</i>
take responsibility for own outputs in relation to <i>specified quality standards</i>	take responsibility for own outputs in relation to <i>broad quantity and quality parameters</i>	demonstrate <i>accountability</i> for personal outputs within broad parameters
take <i>limited responsibility</i> for the <i>quantity and quality</i> of the output of others	take limited responsibility for the <i>achievement of group outcomes</i>	demonstrate <i>accountability</i> for personal and <i>group outcomes</i> within broad parameters

Italicised words emphasise distinguishing features of the competencies or learning outcomes between levels.

In order to assist determining the level of a qualification, the most compatible set of features should be selected. Not all features will necessarily apply.

## 4. Responsibility for Assessment

Qualifications issued in the **vocational education and training sector** certify the achievement of competency. The body responsible for the issuance of the qualification (Registered Training Organisations are usually the bodies responsible as State/Territory Recognition Authorities would normally delegate this function) is responsible for the assessment of individuals relevant to the achievement of the qualification. It is ultimately responsible for the quality of assessment regardless of who actually does the assessing, the point of delivery, or the assessment method used.

The body responsible for the issuance of the qualification is also responsible for ensuring the quality of the assessment strategies, ie that they are flexible, valid, reliable and provide for the recognition of prior learning. Where the qualification is part of a Training Package this body is also responsible for ensuring that assessment has been carried out in accordance with the assessment guidelines endorsed by the National Training Framework Committee. Where accredited courses are based on endorsed competency standards the assessment methods must be consistent with the requirements of the standards [please refer to the National Accreditation Principles (VET sector), Appendix 2].

In the **higher education sector**, the university or other recognised higher education provider responsible for the issuance of the qualification is responsible for the assessment of individuals relevant to the achievement of the qualification. It is ultimately responsible for the quality of assessment regardless of who actually does the assessing, the point of delivery or the assessment method used.

It is also responsible for ensuring the quality of the assessment strategies, ie that they are flexible, valid, reliable and provide for the recognition of prior learning.

## 5. Pathways to the Qualification

**5.1 Access** to the qualification in the **vocational education and training sector** could be through:

- a training program meeting the requirements of an endorsed Training Package or a training program meeting the requirements of an accredited course(s) delivered by a Registered Training Organisation;

**or**

- a combination of a training program meeting the requirements of an endorsed Training Package or a training program meeting the requirements of an accredited course delivered by a Registered Training Organisation, plus recognition of prior learning including credit transfer and/or experience;

**or**

- the recognition of prior learning that provides evidence of the achievement of the competencies or learning outcomes for the qualification.

**5.2 Time** taken to gain the qualification will vary according to the pathway taken and factors related to the particular industry or work area. Notional duration statements may appear in training programs which may be part of the non-endorsed Learning Strategies component of a Training Package. Notional duration statements are also to

be included in accreditation submissions for planning purposes but will not be used to determine the level of a qualification. A Diploma could be part of a set of nested programs, eg a Diploma and an Advanced Diploma. An individual may complete the requirements for a Diploma only or may go on to gain an Advanced Diploma.

**5.3 Access** to the qualification in the **higher education sector** follows:

- satisfactory completion of the requirements set by a university or other recognised higher education provider; and
- recognition of prior learning, including credit transfer.

**5.4 Examples** of possible pathways include:

- Work-Based Training and Assessment
- Institution-Based Education and Training and Assessment
- Part Institution-Based Education and Training and Assessment/Part Work-Based Training and Assessment
- Recognition of Prior Learning
- Recognition of Prior Learning combined with Further Training as required
- Accumulation of a Variety of Short Courses/Training Programs

**NOTE:**

- In the **higher education sector**, an example of Institution-Based Education and Training could involve full-time study at a university or other recognised higher education provider. This could be expected to involve the equivalent of two years of full-time study after the completion of a Senior Secondary Certificate of Education.
- These examples suggest only some of a wide range of possible pathways. They are not intended to be prescriptive, nor are they limited to this particular qualification level.

## 6. Authority to Issue the Qualification

In the **vocational education and training sector**, each State/Territory has legislative responsibility for authorising the issuance of the qualification. This responsibility is carried out by a State/Territory Statutory Authority or delegated to others. Additionally, the Australian Recognition Framework provides nationally agreed principles and processes for Registered Training Organisations to issue qualifications.

In the **higher education sector**, universities are empowered by governments to accredit their own courses and issue qualifications. Additionally, some States and Territories have established processes to facilitate the accreditation of courses and issuance of qualifications by other recognised higher education providers.

## 7. Certification Issued

A qualification is:

*formal certification, issued by a relevant approved body, in recognition that a person has achieved learning outcomes or competencies relevant to identified individual, professional, industry or community needs.*

In the **vocational education and training sector**, individuals issued with the qualification, ie Diploma, will also receive documentation that identifies the units of competency that have been achieved when training is based on nationally endorsed competency standards (including those in Training Packages).

In **both sectors**, individuals who complete only some of the requirements for the qualification will receive a Statement of Attainment.

In the **vocational education and training sector**, the Statement of Attainment will include, either on the Statement itself or as an attachment, the whole units of competency that have been achieved when training is based on nationally endorsed competency standards (including those in Training Packages).

The issuing body will be responsible for providing and maintaining records in relation to the above.

# Advanced Diploma Guideline

## 1. Purpose

To assist employers, employees, professional associations, unions, curriculum developers, accrediting bodies and the wider public, including students, parents, and education and training bodies, to understand factors determining the level of the qualification. Also, to assist developers of Training Packages and courses of training to assign appropriate AQF qualifications within a Training Package, or to a course to be submitted for accreditation.

## 2. Context

These Guidelines replace the RATE Descriptions which have previously been used to provide guidance on qualification levels. Advanced Diploma qualifications are authorised differently in the vocational education and training sector and the higher education sector. However, providers from either sector may offer an Advanced Diploma within a Training Package, and this entails meeting the requirements of the Australian Recognition Framework.

The Guideline for the Advanced Diploma qualification issued in the **vocational education and training sector** has been revised to take into account developments under the National Training Framework – the introduction of Training Packages and the implementation of the Australian Recognition Framework. One of the core components of Training Packages is competency standards. Competency standards were central to the National Framework for the Recognition of Training and their importance has been carried through to Training Packages. It is a requirement of the Australian Recognition Framework that relevant Training Packages be used where they exist.

Qualifications developed outside Training Packages must not duplicate qualifications contained in Training Packages. Registered Training Organisations and/or State/Territory Recognition Authorities will need to be satisfied that any qualification proposed outside a Training Package cannot be achieved by the customisation and flexibility offered within a Training Package or by the issuance of a Training Package qualification together with a Statement of Attainment.

The National Training Framework Committee, the body responsible for the endorsement of Training Packages, also has responsibility for the endorsement of national competency standards that are not part of Training Packages. These Guidelines apply equally to qualifications based on these competency standards.

In the vocational education and training sector there are a number of useful reference documents which are listed in Appendix 1.

### 3. Learning Outcomes

#### 3.1 Authority

In the **vocational education and training sector**, all qualifications are based on nationally endorsed competency standards where they exist or on competency standards developed by relevant industry, enterprise, community or professional groups. The qualifications certify achievement of learning outcomes generally identified as sets of competencies for levels of workplace performance reflected in the characteristics and distinguishing features of each qualification. The focus in the vocational education and training sector is on the capacity to assess directly the performance criteria in the competencies specified within the Training Package. This will represent increasingly a shift away from the previous reliance on regulation through course accreditation with the assessment being against course learning outcomes.

Authorisation of alignment of competency standards to AQF qualification levels occurs as follows:

- National Industry Training Advisory Bodies and other recognised bodies including relevant enterprises, through the process of developing Training Packages, determine the qualification levels for each set of national competency standards in their respective Training Packages. This determination is subject to endorsement by the National Training Framework Committee of the Australian National Training Authority.
- State/Territory Recognition Authorities, or Registered Training Organisations with delegated authority to self-manage accreditation, through the course accreditation process determine the qualification levels of any combined sets of national competency standards for which there is a training need, derived either from more than one Training Package and/or other endorsed sets of competency standards. The title of the new qualification must be clearly distinct from those in the related Training Packages.
- Where there is no relevant Training Package, State/Territory Recognition Authorities, through the course accreditation process, determine the qualification levels for other sets of competency standards developed by relevant industry, enterprise, community or professional bodies to meet an identified training need.

In the **higher education sector**, objectives and academic requirements of courses are set by universities having regard for requirements set by peer review and the requirements of relevant professional bodies and employer groups. Universities may establish course advisory committees comprising a range of interested parties including practitioners, employers, community representatives and academic staff from other institutions to facilitate ongoing review of content and relevance.

#### 3.2 Characteristics

Characteristics of competencies or learning outcomes at this level include:

- the application of a significant range of fundamental principles and complex techniques across a wide and often unpredictable variety of contexts in relation to either varied or highly specific functions. Contribution to the development of a broad plan, budget or strategy is involved and accountability and responsibility for self and others in achieving the outcomes is involved;

- breadth, depth and complexity involving analysis, diagnosis, design, planning, execution and evaluation across a broad range of technical and/or management functions including development of new criteria or applications or knowledge or procedures; and
- applications involve significant judgement in planning, design, technical or leadership/guidance functions related to products, services, operations or procedures.

The degree of emphasis on breadth as against depth of knowledge and skills may vary between qualifications granted at this level.

### 3.3 Distinguishing Features

Where additional information is required to assist in determining the qualification level the following chart could be used to help determine the most compatible match.

It is emphasised that the chart is not intended to be used as a checklist which all Advanced Diploma qualifications must include, or to replace the authority statement above.

**Table 10:**  
**Distinguishing**  
**Features:**  
**Diploma and**  
**Advanced**  
**Diploma**

Diploma	Advanced Diploma
<b>Do the Competencies or Learning Outcomes enable an individual with this qualification to:</b>	<b>Do the Competencies or Learning Outcomes enable an individual with this qualification to:</b>
demonstrate understanding of a broad knowledge base incorporating theoretical concepts, with substantial depth in some areas	demonstrate understanding of specialised knowledge with depth in some areas
analyse and plan approaches to technical problems or management requirements	<i>analyse, diagnose, design and execute judgements</i> across a broad range of technical or management functions
evaluate information using it to forecast for planning or research purposes	generate ideas through the <i>analysis of information and concepts at an abstract level</i>
<i>transfer and apply theoretical concepts and/or technical or creative skills to a range of situations</i>	demonstrate a command of <i>wide-ranging, highly specialised technical, creative or conceptual skills</i>
take responsibility for own outputs in relation to broad quantity parameters	demonstrate <i>accountability for personal outputs within broad parameters</i>
take limited responsibility for the achievement of group outcomes	demonstrate <i>accountability</i> for group outcomes within broad parameters

Italicised words emphasise distinguishing features of the competencies or learning outcomes between levels.

In order to assist determining the level of a qualification, the most compatible set of features should be selected. Not all features will necessarily apply.

## 4. Responsibility for Assessment

Qualifications issued in the **vocational education and training sector** certify the achievement of competency.

The body responsible for the issuance of the qualification (Registered Training Organisations are usually the bodies responsible as State/Territory Recognition Authorities would normally delegate this function) is responsible for the assessment of individuals relevant to the achievement of the qualification. It is ultimately responsible for the quality of assessment regardless of who actually does the assessing, the point of delivery, or the assessment method used.

The body responsible for the issuance of the qualification is also responsible for ensuring the quality of the assessment strategies, ie that they are flexible, valid, reliable and provide for the recognition of prior learning. Where the qualification is part of a Training Package this body is also responsible for ensuring that assessment has been carried out in accordance with the assessment guidelines endorsed by the National Training Framework Committee. Where accredited courses are based on endorsed competency standards the assessment methods must be consistent with the requirements of the standards [please refer to the National Accreditation Principles (VET sector), Appendix 2].

In the **higher education sector**, the university or other recognised higher education provider responsible for the issuance of the qualification is responsible for the assessment of individuals relevant to the achievement of the qualification. It is ultimately responsible for the quality of assessment regardless of who actually does the assessing, the point of delivery or the assessment method used.

## 5. Pathways to the Qualification

**5.1 Access** to the qualification in the **vocational education and training sector** could be through:

- a training program meeting the requirements of an endorsed Training Package or a training program meeting the requirements of an accredited course(s) delivered by a Registered Training Organisation;

**or**

- a combination of a training program meeting the requirements of an endorsed Training Package or a training program meeting the requirements of an accredited course delivered by a Registered Training Organisation, plus recognition of prior learning including credit transfer and/or experience;

**or**

- the recognition of prior learning that provides evidence of the achievement of the competencies or learning outcomes for the qualification.

**5.2 Time** taken to gain the qualification will vary according to the pathway taken and factors related to the particular industry or work area. Notional duration statements may appear in training programs which may be part of the non-endorsed Learning Strategies component of a Training Package. Notional duration statements are also to be included in accreditation submissions for planning purposes but will not be used to determine the level of a qualification. An Advanced Diploma could be part of a set

of nested programs, eg a Diploma and an Advanced Diploma. An individual may complete the requirements for a Diploma only or may go on to gain an Advanced Diploma.

**5.3 Access** to the qualification in the **higher education sector** follows:

- satisfactory completion of the requirements set by a university or other recognised higher education provider; and
- recognition of prior learning, including credit transfer.

**5.4 Examples** of possible pathways include:

- Work-Based Training and Assessment
- Institution-Based Education and Training and Assessment
- Part Institution-Based Education and Training and Assessment/Part Work-Based Training and Assessment
- Recognition of Prior Learning
- Recognition of Prior Learning combined with Further Training as required
- Accumulation of a Variety of Short Courses/Training Programs

**NOTE:**

- In the **higher education sector**, an example of Institution-Based Education and Training could involve full-time study at a university or other recognised higher education provider. This could be expected to involve the equivalent of three years of full-time study after the completion of a Senior Secondary Certificate of Education.
- These examples suggest only some of a wide range of possible pathways. They are not intended to be prescriptive, nor are they limited to this particular qualification level.

## 6. Authority to Issue the Qualification

In the **vocational education and training sector**, each State/Territory has legislative responsibility for authorising the issuance of the qualification. This responsibility is carried out by a State/Territory Statutory Authority or delegated to others. Additionally, the Australian Recognition Framework provides nationally agreed principles and processes for Registered Training Organisations to issue qualifications.

In the **higher education sector**, universities are empowered by governments to accredit their own courses and issue qualifications. Additionally, some States and Territories have established processes to facilitate the accreditation of courses and issuance of qualifications by other recognised higher education providers.

## 7. Certification Issued

A qualification is:

*formal certification, issued by a relevant approved body, in recognition that a person has achieved learning outcomes or competencies relevant to identified individual, professional, industry or community needs.*

In the **vocational education and training sector**, individuals issued with the qualification, ie Advanced Diploma, will also receive documentation that identifies the units of competency that have been achieved when training is based on nationally endorsed competency standards (including those in Training Packages).

In **both sectors**, individuals who complete only some of the requirements for the qualification will receive a Statement of Attainment.

In the **vocational education and training sector**, the Statement of Attainment will include, either on the Statement itself or as an attachment, the whole units of competency that have been achieved when training is based on nationally endorsed competency standards (including those in Training Packages).

The issuing body will be responsible for providing and maintaining records in relation to the above.

# **Bachelor Degree** **Guideline**

## **1. Purpose**

To assist employers, professional associations, curriculum developers, accrediting bodies and the wider public, including students, parents, and education and training bodies, to understand factors determining the level of the qualification.

## **2. Context**

These Guidelines replace the RATE Descriptions which have previously been used to provide guidance on qualification levels.

## **3. Learning Outcomes**

### **3.1 Authority**

Objectives and academic requirements of courses are set by universities having regard for requirements set by peer review and the requirements of relevant professional bodies and employer groups. Universities may establish course advisory committees comprising a range of interested parties including practitioners, employers, community representatives and academic staff from other institutions to facilitate ongoing review of content and relevance.

### **3.2 Characteristics**

Characteristics of learning outcomes at this level include:

- the acquisition of a systematic and coherent body of knowledge, the underlying principles and concepts, and the associated problem-solving techniques;
- development of the academic skills and attitudes necessary to comprehend and evaluate new information, concepts and evidence from a range of sources; and
- development of the ability to review, consolidate, extend and apply the knowledge and techniques learnt.

A course leading to this qualification also usually involves major studies in which significant literature is available. Course content is taken to a significant depth and progressively developed to a high level which provides a basis for postgraduate study.

## **4. Responsibility for Assessment**

Responsibility for assessment lies with the institution that issues the Degree.

## 5. Pathways to the Qualification

Candidates on entry typically hold the equivalent of satisfactory completion of Year 12 in an Australian school system and are expected to demonstrate potential to undertake work at this level. In some circumstances relevant prior work can be recognised, particularly where appropriate work of an advanced nature has been undertaken.

Because candidates hold a range of relevant skills and knowledge, the duration of programs varies. A typical Bachelor Degree program would be expected to require the equivalent of three years of full-time study. Many Degree courses equip students with the practical skills and techniques necessary to apply their knowledge effectively in a professional context, and such courses may be longer in duration.

In the case of the award of an Honours Degree, additional work is undertaken by students who demonstrate outstanding achievement from an early stage in the Degree program. The length of the basic Degree course is a determining factor in the duration of the Honours Degree. In the case of Degree courses of three years' duration, the award of an Honours Degree normally requires the completion of an additional year of full-time study, or its equivalent. For Degree courses of four or more years, an Honours Degree may be awarded to students who have recorded outstanding achievement in the program.

An individual who enters a course at this level with some prior related experience or a qualification at the same or higher level may be assessed for recognition of prior learning and credit transfer and expect to gain the qualification in a shorter time.

## 6. Authority to Issue the Qualification

Universities are empowered by governments to accredit their own courses and issue qualifications. Additionally, some States and Territories have established processes to facilitate the accreditation of courses and issuance of qualifications by other recognised higher education providers.

## 7. Certification Issued

A qualification is:

*formal certification, issued by a relevant approved body, in recognition that a person has achieved learning outcomes relevant to identified individual, professional, industry or community needs.*

Individuals will be able to obtain a Statement of Attainment where they have partially completed the requirements of the qualification.

The issuing body will be responsible for providing and maintaining records in relation to the above.

# **Graduate Certificate** **Guideline**

## **1. Purpose**

To assist employers, professional associations, curriculum developers, accrediting bodies and the wider public, including students, parents, and education and training bodies, to understand factors determining the level of the qualification.

## **2. Context**

These Guidelines replace the RATE Descriptions which have previously been used to provide guidance on qualification levels.

## **3. Learning Outcomes**

### **3.1 Authority**

Objectives and academic requirements of courses are set by universities having regard for requirements set by peer review and the requirements of relevant professional bodies and employer groups. Universities may establish course advisory committees comprising a range of interested parties including practitioners, employers, community representatives and academic staff from other institutions to facilitate ongoing review of content and relevance.

### **3.2 Characteristics**

Characteristics of learning outcomes at this level include the broadening of skills already gained in an undergraduate program, or developing vocational knowledge and skills in a new professional area.

## **4. Responsibility for Assessment**

Responsibility for assessment lies with the body that issues the Graduate Certificate. It is responsible for ensuring the quality of the assessment strategies, ie that they are flexible, valid, reliable and provide for the recognition of prior learning. It is also responsible for providing and maintaining records of achievement.

## **5. Pathways to the Qualification**

Candidates typically hold the equivalent of a Bachelor Degree or an Advanced Diploma and are expected to demonstrate potential to undertake work at this level. In some circumstances relevant prior work can be recognised, particularly where relevant professional practice has been undertaken. Although the duration of programs may vary, courses at this level typically require six months of full-time study.

Issuance of the qualification follows satisfactory completion of the requirements set by the university or other recognised provider.

## 6. Authority to Issue the Qualification

Universities are empowered by governments to accredit their own courses and issue qualifications. As such they are responsible for decisions relevant to the certification of their own Graduate Certificate programs. Additionally, some States and Territories have established processes to facilitate the accreditation of courses and issuance of qualifications by other recognised providers.

## 7. Certification Issued

A qualification is:

*formal certification, issued by a relevant approved body, in recognition that a person has achieved learning outcomes relevant to identified individual, professional, industry or community needs.*

Issuance of the qualification follows satisfactory completion of the requirements set by a university or other recognised provider.

Individuals will be able to obtain a Statement of Attainment where they have partially completed the requirements of the qualification.

# **Graduate Diploma** **Guideline**

## **1. Purpose**

To assist employers, professional associations, curriculum developers, accrediting bodies and the wider public, including students, parents, and education and training bodies, to understand factors determining the level of the qualification.

## **2. Context**

These Guidelines replace the RATE Descriptions which have previously been used to provide guidance on qualification levels.

## **3. Learning Outcomes**

### **3.1 Authority**

Objectives and academic requirements of courses are set by universities having regard for requirements set by peer review and the requirements of relevant professional bodies and employer groups. Universities may establish course advisory committees comprising a range of interested parties including practitioners, employers, community representatives and academic staff from other institutions to facilitate ongoing review of content and relevance.

### **3.2 Characteristics**

Characteristics of learning outcomes at this level include the broadening of skills already gained in a undergraduate program, further specialisation within a systematic and coherent body of knowledge, or developing vocational knowledge and skills in a new professional area.

## **4. Responsibility for Assessment**

Responsibility for assessment lies with the body that issues the Graduate Diploma. It is responsible for ensuring the quality of the assessment strategies, ie that they are flexible, valid, reliable and provide for the recognition of prior learning. It is also responsible for providing and maintaining records of achievement.

## **5. Pathways to the Qualification**

Candidates typically hold the equivalent of a Bachelor Degree or an Advanced Diploma and are expected to demonstrate potential to undertake work at this level. In some circumstances relevant prior work can be recognised, particularly where relevant professional practice has been undertaken. Although the duration of programs vary, courses at this level typically require one year of full-time study.

Issuance of the qualification follows satisfactory completion of the requirements set by the university or other recognised provider.

## **6. Authority to Issue the Qualification**

Universities are empowered by governments to accredit their own courses and issue qualifications. As such they are responsible for decisions relevant to the certification of their own Graduate Certificate programs. Additionally, some States and Territories have established processes to facilitate the accreditation of courses and issuance of qualifications by other recognised providers.

## **7. Certification Issued**

A qualification is:

*formal certification, issued by a relevant approved body, in recognition that a person has achieved learning outcomes relevant to identified individual, professional, industry or community needs.*

Issuance of the qualification follows satisfactory completion of the requirements set by a university or other recognised provider.

Individuals will be able to obtain a Statement of Attainment where they have partially completed the requirements of the qualification.

# **Masters Degree** **Guideline**

## **1. Purpose**

To assist employers, professional associations, curriculum developers, accrediting bodies and the wider public, including students, parents, and education and training bodies, to understand factors determining the level of the qualification.

## **2. Context**

These Guidelines replace the RATE Descriptions which have previously been used to provide guidance on qualification levels.

## **3. Learning Outcomes**

### **3.1 Authority**

Objectives and academic requirements of courses are set by universities having regard for requirements set by peer review and the requirements of relevant professional bodies and employer groups. Universities may establish course advisory committees comprising a range of interested parties including practitioners, employers, community representatives and academic staff from other institutions to facilitate ongoing review of content and relevance.

### **3.2 Characteristics**

Characteristics of learning outcomes at this level include the enhancement of specific professional or vocational skills which may be undertaken by directed coursework and/or research, and the acquisition of in-depth understanding in a specific area of knowledge which is usually undertaken through research.

## **4. Responsibility for Assessment**

Responsibility for assessment lies with the body that issues the Masters Degree. It is responsible for ensuring the quality of the assessment strategies, ie that they are flexible, valid, reliable and provide for the recognition of prior learning. It is also responsible for providing and maintaining records of achievement.

## **5. Pathways to the Qualification**

Candidates typically hold an honours Bachelor Degree, a qualifying year of study or equivalent and are expected to demonstrate potential to undertake work at this level. In some circumstances relevant prior work can be recognised, particularly where high-level performance in graduate studies or relevant professional practice has been undertaken. The Masters Degree by coursework is normally entered into after a period of employment and has a professional orientation, allowing entry from a pass Bachelor Degree.

Because candidates hold a range of relevant skills and knowledge, the duration of programs varies. A typical Masters Degree by research program would be expected to require the equivalent of one year of full-time work, while a typical Masters Degree by coursework would be expected to require the equivalent of two years of full-time work.

## **6. Authority to Issue the Qualification**

Universities are empowered by governments to accredit their own courses and issue qualifications. As such they are responsible for decisions relevant to the certification of their own Masters Degree programs.

## **7. Certification Issued**

A qualification is:

*formal certification, issued by a relevant approved body, in recognition that a person has achieved learning outcomes relevant to identified individual, professional, industry or community needs.*

Issuance of the qualification follows satisfactory completion of the requirements set by a university.

If it is the view of the assessors and examiners that the work undertaken does not satisfy the requirements for a Masters Degree, it may be, in some circumstances, that the work undertaken will satisfy requirements for a Graduate Certificate or a Graduate Diploma which may be awarded in place of the Masters Degree.

Statements of Attainment relating to any coursework components of a Masters Degree program can be provided.

# **Doctoral Degree** **Guideline**

## **1. Purpose**

To assist employers, professional associations, curriculum developers, accrediting bodies and the wider public, including students, parents, and education and training bodies, to understand factors determining the level of the qualification.

## **2. Context**

These Guidelines replace the RATE Descriptions which have previously been used to provide guidance on qualification levels.

## **3. Learning Outcomes**

### **3.1 Authority**

Objectives and academic requirements of courses are set by universities having regard for requirements set by peer review and the requirements of relevant professional bodies and employer groups. Universities may establish course advisory committees comprising a range of interested parties including practitioners, employers, community representatives and academic staff from other institutions to facilitate ongoing review of content and relevance.

### **3.2 Characteristics**

At this level, undertaking of a research project will include:

- a searching review of the literature, experimentation or other systematic approach to the relevant body of knowledge;
- the undertaking of an original research project resulting in a significant contribution to knowledge and understanding and/or the application of knowledge within a discipline or field of study; and
- the preparation of a substantial and well ordered thesis, demonstrating the relationship of the research to the broader framework of the discipline or field of study.

## **4. Responsibility for Assessment**

Responsibility for assessment lies with the university that issues the Doctoral Degree.

The body responsible for the issuance of the qualification is also responsible for ensuring the quality of the assessment strategies. The provider of the program will also be responsible for providing and maintaining records of achievement where applicable.

## 5. Pathways to the Qualification

Candidates typically hold a Masters Degree or a first degree with honours or equivalent and are expected to demonstrate potential to undertake work at this level. In some circumstances relevant prior work, particularly work undertaken for a Masters Degree by research, can be recognised as forming part of the requirement for the qualification.

Because candidates hold a range of relevant skills and knowledge, the duration of programs varies. A typical Doctoral program would be expected to require the equivalent of three years of full-time work.

## 6. Authority to Issue the Qualification

Universities are empowered by governments to accredit their own courses. As such they are responsible for decisions relevant to the certification of their own Doctoral Degree programs.

## 7. Certification Issued

A qualification is:

*formal certification, issued by a relevant approved body, in recognition that a person has achieved learning outcomes relevant to identified individual, professional, industry or community needs.*

Issuance of the qualification follows satisfactory completion of the requirements set by a university.

If it is the view of the assessors and examiners that the work undertaken does not satisfy the requirements for a Doctoral Degree, it may be, in some circumstances, that the work undertaken does satisfy requirements for a Masters Degree which may be awarded in place of the Doctoral Degree. If there are coursework components to the Doctoral program, Statements of Attainment relating to those components can be provided.

# Transition Arrangements

## 1. Introduction

Two sets of transition arrangements:

- course accreditation processes
- Training Packages processes

This section has been supplemented by advice on transition arrangements for Training Packages being introduced in the vocational education and training sector from 1998. Transition from the Register of Australian Tertiary Education (RATE) and other trade qualifications to the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) qualifications issued under Training Packages will not involve a formal course accreditation process, which has been the previous basis for transition management. There will also be a need for transition from many current AQF qualifications to relevant AQF qualifications being progressively endorsed through Training Packages over the next few years. This transition will also not require a formal course accreditation process.

However, many AQF qualifications will continue to be authorised through course accreditation and the original principles and process will continue to apply for transition to these qualifications, as set out in Item 2 below.

Item 3 below sets out transition arrangements under Training Packages.

## 2. Transition through Course Accreditation

### 2.1 Introduction

A set of principles and a process for converting courses from the RATE 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 RATE accredited courses to a new qualification under the Framework. All courses that have been accredited or re-accredited from 1 January 1995 should meet the requirements of the Framework. A conversion process is provided for RATE accredited courses. All RATE 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.

## 2.2 Principles

### Principle One

Courses accredited or re-accredited from 1 January 1995 will meet the requirements of the Australian Qualifications Framework. In the vocational education and training sector conversion applies only to courses previously accredited under the National Framework for the Recognition of Training (NFROT) which are on the National Training Information Service.

### Principle Two

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, those from Certificate to Diploma; and
- Trade and Traineeship Certificates issued under separate industrial training legislation

whether they are offered by schools, or vocational education and training or higher education providers. These programs can be converted to the 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 that originally accredited the course. In the vocational education and training sector, the outcome of the process will be monitored by the National Training Framework Committee to ensure consistency and compatibility with Training Packages.

### Principle Six

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

## 2.3 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.

### 2.3.1 Scope of Eligible Courses

Only courses which were accredited prior to the introduction of the Framework on 1 January 1995 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 that are offered in both the vocational education and training and higher education sectors will need to be applied consistently under the Framework.

### 2.3.2 Responsibility

- a. Each accrediting body will be responsible for the operation of the conversion process in its jurisdiction for courses that 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 Information Service of the changes in titles of courses.

- b. The organisation that originally sought accreditation for the course will be responsible for evaluating the course against the agreed criteria (Step Two 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 re-accreditation 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.

The introduction on 1 January 1998 of the Australian Recognition Framework ensures that the decisions of one State/Territory Recognition, or Registered Training Organisation with delegation, are recognised by all other State/Territory Recognition Authorities and Registered Training Organisations.

This simplifies the conversion process as conversion in one jurisdiction is automatically accepted in all others.

### 2.3.3 Mechanism

Course owners should apply the following steps:

#### *Step One: Broad Band*

Applying a broad-banding template, as set out in Table 11, 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.

**Table 11:  
Broad-Banding  
Template**

<b>Existing Qualification Title</b>			
Certificate	Advanced Certificate	Associate Diploma	Diploma
<b>Australian Qualifications Framework Title</b>			
Certificate I Certificate II Certificate III Certificate IV	Certificate III Certificate IV Diploma	Certificate IV Diploma Advanced Diploma	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 re-accreditation process is necessary.

**2.3.4 Provision for Graduates and Currently Enrolled Students**

Graduates who received qualifications under the previous (RATE) 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.

**2.3.5 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.

**2.3.6 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.

## **2.4 Summary of Transition Arrangements Managed through Course Accreditation**

### **2.4.1 Schools Sector**

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

### **2.4.2 Vocational Education and Training Sector**

All courses accredited after 1 January 1995 will comply with the AQF.

**Existing** courses can be converted or re-accredited.

Conversion applies only to courses previously accredited under NFROT that are on the National Training Information Service.

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

The outcome of **re-accreditation** is that there will be a new qualification in line with the AQF. Course details may be significantly different. The course will then be accredited for five years from the date of the re-accreditation.

The choice of whether to apply for conversion or for re-accreditation 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 re-accredit them prior to the end of their current accreditation period.

### **2.4.3 Higher Education Sector**

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

**Existing** courses can be converted or re-accredited under mechanisms set up by individual higher education institutions.

## **3. Transition under Training Packages**

### **3.1 Introduction**

Training Packages and the Australian Recognition Framework (ARF) are the major components of the National Training Framework.

Training Packages will form the foundation of vocational education and training across a wide range of industries. They are being introduced from 1 January 1998. Training Packages provide comprehensive national resources including competency standards, assessment guidelines and associated qualifications and, over time, will largely replace the accreditation of course curriculum. They will underpin the delivery and assessment of training. Accredited courses will continue to be offered in areas where no relevant Training Package exists.

The ARF, also being implemented from 1 January 1998, provides new training provider registration arrangements in the vocational education and training sector. The quality

assurance provided by the ARF facilitates the shift away from recognition related to the provision of accredited courses to recognition for the provision of particular products and services primarily related to Training Packages, within the defined scope of the Registered Training Organisations.

As Training Packages will progressively replace the current mix of competency standards and accredited courses as well as the related vocational education and training qualifications the following advice has been developed to assist in the transition.

### **3.2 Process**

From 1 January 1998 qualifications may be:

- defined in Training Packages, which are endorsed by the National Training Framework Committee; or
- accredited by State/Territory Training Authorities or Registered Training Organisations delegated to self-manage accreditation.

All qualifications defined through these means will meet the requirements of the AQF.

There are two categories of transition involved in the introduction of Training Packages:

- transition from RATE and other trade qualifications to relevant AQF qualifications issued under Training Packages; and
- transition from pre-Package AQF qualifications to relevant AQF qualifications issued under Training Packages.

State/Territory Recognition Authorities will be responsible for the overall operation of the transition process to AQF qualifications under Training Packages within their jurisdiction. These Authorities will encourage Registered Training Organisations to use relevant AQF qualifications issued under Training Packages where the Training Package covers the same area as the accredited course. It is expected that movement to the Training Package will usually be within two years of the endorsement of the package.

The use of RATE accredited course material in training programs for qualifications defined in Training Packages is decided by the Registered Training Organisation. Conversion of an accredited RATE course to an AQF qualification under a Training Package qualification is not necessary. (Where no Training Package exists, conversion principles for RATE to AQF qualifications apply.)

Where a Registered Training Organisation intends to use a previously accredited course as a training program to deliver the competencies contained in a Training Package, the Registered Training Organisation must ensure that the outcomes of the training undertaken lead to the achievement of the competencies specified in the Training Package.

This process will not be separately approved by State/Territory Training Authorities but will form part of the audit of Registered Training Organisations.

### **3.3 Provision for Graduates and Currently Enrolled Students**

#### **Graduates**

Graduates holding RATE, other trade qualifications or current AQF qualifications may maintain that qualification or convert to an AQF qualification issued under a relevant

Training Package through Recognition of Prior Learning and/or additional training as required.

There may be significant variations in the competencies to be achieved between an AQF qualification under a Training Package and a pre-Training Package qualification, which would impact on the conversion process.

#### Currently Enrolled Students

State/Territory Training Authorities will encourage Registered Training Organisations to adopt the Training Package qualification for all training undertaken in that area from the time of endorsement. This means that continuing students will transfer to the new qualification and, on the successful completion of the competencies, will receive the AQF qualification under the Training Package.

Where possible, individuals will have the choice between continuing the accredited course or moving to the training program meeting the requirements of the Training Package. In some instances an individual may need to change Registered Training Organisation, to pursue their preferred option.

#### **3.4 Appeal**

The ARF requires Registered Training Organisations to show evidence of appeals processes as part of their client services prior to registration. State/Territory Training Authorities have established appeal mechanisms where course/qualification owners can appeal decisions on processes.

# Articulation Arrangements

## 1. Introduction

Some general principles and operational advice to assist in the establishment of articulation arrangements between the qualifications in the Australian Qualifications Framework are set out in this section of the Handbook.

The focus of articulation is to establish connections between the qualifications in the Framework. These connections should maximise the opportunities for persons to undertake further education and training. Connections need to be established both within and across relevant fields of specialisation or sectors of post-compulsory education and training. The establishment of articulation arrangements which connect a variety of education and training pathways, including work-based pathways, is crucial to a workable and useful qualifications framework.

Connections between qualifications should allow for credit to be granted. Institutions or organisations are encouraged to develop formal agreements on the credit transfer value of specific courses and programs.

General principles and operational advice are outlined below to guide further discussion in and between the sectors of post-compulsory education and training. Sectors and institutions are encouraged to consider the following advice when determining articulation arrangements between the qualifications.

This advice has been supplemented by the following guidance on articulation arrangements under Training Packages.

## 2. Articulation Arrangements under Training Packages

The AQF general principles and operational advice, although assuming a course accreditation process underpinning articulation, are also applicable to AQF qualifications authorised through Training Packages in which sets of national competency standards themselves, rather than a course, are the basis for articulation and credit transfer arrangements.

The main elements of articulation under Training Packages are as follows:

- Training Packages link qualifications directly to competency outcomes which enable more efficient learning pathways and transparent articulation.
- Training packages specify linkages between qualifications at different levels within the Training Package and may include linkages to related Training Packages by identifying competency standards common with other Packages.

- Where competencies are combined from more than one Training Package to create a new qualification, the qualification developer will specify articulation of the qualification with other qualifications.
- Developers of courses leading to qualifications not defined by Training Packages will specify articulation arrangements between other qualifications (including those defined in Training Packages) in the accreditation documentation.
- Articulation and credit transfer arrangements between qualifications across sectors are the responsibility of Registered Training Organisations, in consultation with Training Package developers.

### 3. General Principles

- 3.1** Opportunities for articulation should be maximised.
- 3.2** Articulation is an integral part of the Framework as it provides pathways for an individual to achieve the goal of a qualification.
- 3.3** An individual wishing to move towards the goal of a qualification should be provided with access to efficient education and training pathways in order to achieve that goal. These pathways should include identified articulation linkages between qualifications.
- 3.4** Qualifications bearing the same title, and with broadly comparable learning outcomes/competencies, should, for the purposes of articulation, be regarded as equivalent, irrespective of the provider of the education/training.
- 3.5** Information about articulation arrangements should be widely disseminated to students so that they can plan their further education and training.

### 4. Operational Advice

The following statements are offered as operational advice for the determination of articulation arrangements.

- 4.1** To the maximum extent possible qualifications in the Framework should either provide or allow for the development of linkages that connect one qualification with another.
- 4.2** Linkages between qualifications should be formally endorsed by the authorities (or their delegates), who determine required outcomes for the qualifications.
- While linkages will typically be negotiated between two or more providers/authorities, the formal endorsement of a linkage should be given by the provider/authority responsible for the course in which recognition is being sought.
- 4.3** Where feasible and appropriate, linkages between qualifications should allow for credit to be granted (whether for prior formal or informal learning or both), in order to minimise the time taken and costs incurred in attaining the subsequent qualifications.
- 4.4** Credit should be granted for learning outcomes/competencies achieved in attaining a qualification, where these outcomes also form part of the requirement for another qualification. If it is necessary for an applicant to demonstrate that the

knowledge/skills learned have remained relevant and/or current, this opportunity should be made available through appropriate means which result in a saving of time, cost or effort for the applicant and the providers.

- 4.5** Credit should be given in a form that most effectively reduces the time and cost of negotiating credit transfer and subsequently attaining a qualification. Credit should not be conditional on students meeting other substituted requirements in order to make up a 'normal load'.

Where possible, 'block' credit (eg involving credit for a group of modules/semester/year) of a qualification is preferred. Where 'block' credit is not possible, other forms of credit, such as specified credit (identifying specific competencies/subjects/modules/course components that the student is not required to undertake) or unspecified credit (in the form of course credit points, or some other similar measure) should be used.

- 4.6** Information on linkages should clearly indicate, where appropriate, whether the meeting of additional requirements (such as bridging courses) designed to provide prerequisite knowledge or skills not included in the original qualification is a condition of the pathway/linkage.
- 4.7** Linkages should be developed not only between qualifications involving the same or similar specialisations, but also to allow students to change specialisation, or to move from a more general to a more specialised qualification, or vice versa.
- 4.8** The development and review of courses, and the accreditation and re-accreditation of courses, should ensure that articulation within and/or among sectors is maximised, while ensuring that the integrity of each qualification is maintained.
- 4.9** Where the relevant learning outcomes/competencies have been met in a previous but incomplete qualification, appropriate credit should be granted towards a subsequent qualification.

Where feasible, collaborative course development may assist the achievement of this goal.

- 4.10** Agreements about articulation practices should be on a systemic basis rather than through local arrangements, where possible.
- 4.11** Information about articulation possibilities and arrangements should include advice that the existence of a pathway/linkage between qualifications does not imply that any applicant will automatically be granted a place in any course or training program. However, if the granting of a place is automatic following successful course outcomes, then this should be clearly stated.
- 4.12** Providers of education/training leading to a qualification should ensure that an effective means of appeal is established against credit transfer decisions made under articulation arrangements. In the vocational education and training sector, the Australian Recognition Framework Principles provide for investigation of complaints.
- 4.13** Information about articulation possibilities and arrangements which involve the applicant in incurring costs (such as for the assessment of prior learning) should indicate whether, and in what form, such costs will be recovered from applicants.

## 5. Summary

The Australian Qualifications Framework recognises that the schools sector, vocational education and training sector and higher education sector each have different industry and institutional linkages. It connects these in a coherent single framework incorporating a statement of qualification levels, titles and descriptors.

This single set of qualifications will enable further development of linkages through specific course articulation and more general credit transfer arrangements.

# Issuing a Qualification

## 1. Introduction

This section sets out:

- mechanisms for the protection of the titles of the qualifications in the Australian Qualifications Framework;
- guidelines relating to responsibility for, and conditions under which, the qualifications may be issued; and
- a protocol defining the form of the qualification to be issued.

The Framework is based on a set of principles and specific objectives. The first principle is expressed as follows:

*should provide nationally consistent recognition of outcomes achieved in post-compulsory education and training.*

State/Territory legislation provides some form of protection for the titles in the Framework and it assigns responsibility for issuance of the qualifications.

However, the most significant contribution to nationally consistent recognition of outcomes achieved will come from endorsement of Training Packages, accreditation of courses and issuance of qualifications in a consistent form. Accordingly, elements for inclusion in the format of qualifications issued under the Framework are outlined below.

## 2. Protection of Titles

The most significant protection of titles of the qualifications in the Framework will come from registration of training organisations, endorsement of Training Packages, accreditation, issuance of the qualifications in a consistent format, and an effective and continuing publicity campaign.

Training Package endorsement or course accreditation is important, as evidence of quality and credibility. Registration of training organisations establishes the quality and credibility of the qualification issued.

The protocol for the form of qualifications to be issued under the Australian Qualifications Framework will assist in the protection of the titles.

### 3. Issuance of the Qualifications

#### 3.1 Responsibility

##### Schools Sector

Each State/Territory has legislative responsibility for authorising the issue of the relevant Senior Secondary Certificate of Education. These qualifications are issued by Statutory Boards. The schools sector authorities will liaise with the relevant State/Territory Training Authority and will operate within the Australian Recognition Framework requirements when intending to issue vocational education and training sector Australian Qualification Framework qualifications.

##### Vocational Education and Training Sector

Each State/Territory has legislative responsibility for authorising the issue of the qualification. This responsibility is carried out by a State/Territory Authority or delegated to others (including schools). The Australian Recognition Framework provides nationally agreed principles for the registration of Registered Training Organisations (RTOs). RTOs may issue qualifications and these are issued under the authority of the Primary Recognition Authority (the Authority which is responsible for registering an RTO operating in other States and Territories through Mutual Recognition) and are 'nationally recognised'.

##### Higher Education Sector

In the higher education sector, universities are empowered by legislation to accredit their own courses and issue qualifications. Additionally, some States/Territories have established processes to facilitate the accreditation of courses and issuance of qualifications conducted by other recognised higher education providers. Where higher education providers issue a qualification within a Training Package, this entails meeting the requirements of the Australian Recognition Framework.

#### 3.2 Principles

The Framework provides for a range of pathways to the qualifications, particularly in the vocational education and training sector. For example, in that sector a qualification may be gained as a result of work-based training, work- and institution-based training, institution-based training, recognition of prior learning and further training as necessary. Recognition of prior learning arrangements should provide for the accumulation of the outcomes of short courses to lead to the issuance of a qualification.

In all circumstances:

- a single qualification should be issued [this does not preclude dual certification in certain circumstances, (eg schools and vocational education and training), in agreement with the Australian Qualifications Framework Advisory Board];
- a Statement of Attainment should be issued to provide evidence of partial completion of a qualification; and
- the body responsible for issuing the qualification or Statement of Attainment will be determined by the relevant State/Territory Authority.

## 4. Protocol Defining the Form of the Qualifications

(See also Item 7 Certification Issued under the relevant qualification in the Guidelines section of this Handbook.)

All **vocational education and training qualification** issued under the Framework will include the following elements:

- name and logo of issuing body;
- name of person receiving the qualification;
- nomenclature as in the Framework, eg Certificate I, Diploma;
- date issued;
- authorised signatory.

Additionally, in the **vocational education and training sector** the following elements should be included:

- industry descriptor, eg Engineering;
- occupational or functional stream, in brackets, eg (Fabrication);
- the words, 'the qualification certified herein is recognised within the Australian Qualifications Framework'; and
- where appropriate, include the words, 'achieved through New Apprenticeship arrangements'.

The qualification may also include the Nationally Recognised Training logo and the State/Territory Training Authority logo (see note following Protocol for defining the form of Statements of Attainment).

The level of consistency in the format required nationally is restricted to the name of the qualification being indicated first, followed by the word 'in' (for Certificates I–IV and Graduate Certificate) or the word 'of' (for Diploma, Advanced Diploma and Graduate Diploma) followed by the title. In the case of a general category and a more specific category the title should be written as the example below:

Certificate III in General Category (specific if required)

An example of the form of the qualification can be found on the following page.

## 5. Summary: Issuing the Qualification

- A single qualification, except in special circumstances (see previous page).
- A Statement of Attainment for partial completion.
- Relevant State/Territory Authority determines who issues the qualification and/or Statement of Attainment.
- A standard protocol for the form of the qualification itself.

## 6. Suggested Form: Qualifications

**NAME AND LOGO OF ISSUING BODY** (*RTO for VET sector*)

**This is to certify that**

**JANE SMITH**

**has fulfilled the requirements for**

**CERTIFICATE IV**

**in**

**INDUSTRY DESCRIPTOR**  
**e.g. METALS AND ENGINEERING**

**(OCCUPATION STREAM)**  
**(e.g. FABRICATION)**

**Dated 30 September 1997**

**Authorised Signatory**

**Issuing Body**

**Nationally Recognised Training logo** (*for VET sector*)

**State/Territory Training Authority logo** (*for VET sector*)

**achieved through New Apprenticeship arrangements** (*as relevant*)

**State/Territory Statutory Authority logo** (*for schools sector*)

**Higher Education Institution logo** (*for HE sector*)

**State/Territory Higher Education Authority logo** (*as relevant*)

**The qualification certified herein is recognised within the  
Australian Qualifications Framework**

## 7. Protocol for Defining the Form of Statements of Attainment

All Statements of Attainment issued in the **vocational education and training sector** and issued by Registered Training Organisations will include the following features:

- name of the issuing RTO;
- name of the person who achieved the competencies or modules;
- date issued;
- a list (and/or attached list) of competencies (or modules where no competencies exist) including the national code for each unit of competence;
- Training Package or Accredited Course;
- AQF qualification partly completed (if more than one, the most relevant may be chosen);
- authorised signatory;
- contact details for enquiries relating to the Statement of Attainment;
- the Statement of Attainment may also include the Nationally Recognised Training logo and the State/Territory Training Authority logo;
- the words 'This Statement of Attainment is recognised within the Australian Qualifications Framework'.

**NOTE:** The Operational Protocol for the Marketing of Recognised Training within the Australian Recognition Framework provides that Registered Training Organisations registered with a particular State/Territory may use the logo of the State/Territory Training Authority on any relevant qualifications or Statements of Attainment in accordance with the State Training/Recognition Authority's conditions of use.

## 8. Suggested Form: Statement of Attainment

**NAME AND LOGO OF ISSUING BODY** (*RTO for VET sector*)

**This is a statement that**

**JANE SMITH**

**has been assessed as having fulfilled  
the following requirements**

**in partial completion of the following qualification**

**Dated 30 September 1997**

**Authorised Signatory**

**Issuing Body**

**Nationally Recognised Training logo** (*for VET sector*)

**State/Territory Training Authority logo** (*for VET sector*)

**achieved through New Apprenticeship arrangements** (*as relevant*)

**State/Territory Statutory Authority logo** (*for schools sector*)

**Higher Education Institution logo** (*for HE sector*)

**State/Territory Higher Education Authority logo** (*as relevant*)

**This Statement of Attainment is recognised within the  
Australian Qualifications Framework**

# Monitoring the Framework

## 1. Introduction

An Australian Qualifications Framework Advisory Board (AQFAB) which reports to the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA) has been established. This Board replaces the Register of Australian Tertiary Education (RATE) Advisory Committee and is the means of facilitating and monitoring the Australian Qualifications Framework. The nature of the Board's membership and its functions are outlined below.

## 2. Australian Qualifications Framework Advisory Board

### 2.1 Role

The new national body referred to as AQFAB complements the operations of school sector accreditation agencies, university authorities, State recognition authorities and the Australian National Training Authority (ANTA) which is responsible for advising the ANTA Ministerial Council on resource allocation and other national policy matters and undertaking national strategic planning for vocational education and training.

AQFAB reports directly to MCEETYA. Through a small staff it provides 'hands on' input into the implementation and monitoring of the Framework.

### 2.2 Membership

AQFAB is small, reflects the range of stakeholders, and brings the necessary expertise to advise on the implementation and monitoring of the Framework. Accordingly, AQFAB includes:

- two representatives of each of the education and training sectors (schools, vocational education and training, higher education);
- three community representatives (one industry, one union and one representing equity groups);
- a representative of the Commonwealth Government;
- a representative of the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Certification Authorities, the national peak body comprising schools recognition authorities;
- an observer representing the New Zealand Qualifications Authority; and
- an independent Chair.

### 2.3 Reporting Relationships

AQFAB liaises closely with the universities, the schools sector, the vocational education and training sector and, especially, accrediting bodies. In order to monitor implementation and the general progress of the development of the Framework effectively, a system of reporting by all such bodies will be put in place on a regular basis and as requested. AQFAB has an evaluation role and is an agent of change, in particular recommending action to achieve the goals of the Framework.

AQFAB reports publicly and to MCEETYA annually, or more frequently as required. It will be reviewed upon completion of the five-year period of transition to the AQF 1995–99.

### 2.4 Functions

AQFAB has the following functions:

- to facilitate the implementation and monitor the operation of the Framework and give priority to:
  - facilitating the registration of the title 'Australian Qualifications Framework'
  - the establishment of a 'mapping exercise' to collate examples of courses accredited against the Framework and notional duration statements matched against qualification levels
  - establishing a register of all bodies with authority to issue qualifications (so that, for example, members of the public can check the bona fides of qualifications through one source);
- to encourage and promote consistency and quality, on a national basis, in the standards of courses leading to qualifications in post-compulsory education and training;
- to provide, especially during the transition phase, an advisory service for curriculum developers and accrediting bodies in determining appropriate qualification levels and their articulation and to provide information and guidance to other interested parties;
- to monitor recognition of prior learning arrangements, including in relation to the issuance of qualifications on the basis of the accumulation of short courses;
- to establish and maintain liaison with school education accrediting bodies, higher education accrediting bodies, State recognition bodies, training bodies and providers as well as industry, enterprises, the community and professional organisations;
- to keep a national register of authorities empowered to accredit post-compulsory education and training courses; and
- to advise MCEETYA on the operation of the AQF, including compliance, and, in particular, recommend any appropriate changes to the Framework and its operations.

# Appendix 1: Vocational Education and Training Reference Documents

- *The Australian Recognition Framework*, ANTA
- *Guidelines for Training Package Developers*, ANTA
- *Standards Best Practice Manual*, ANTA
- *National Competency Standards, Policy and Guidelines*, ANTA
- *Customisation Guidelines*, ANTA (to be available later in 1998)

The reference documents listed above may be obtained by contacting the Australian National Training Authority.

Tel: (03) 9630 9800

Fax: (03) 9630 9888

Email: [publications@anta.gov.au](mailto:publications@anta.gov.au)

# Appendix 2: National Accreditation Principles (Vocational Education and Training Sector)

## 1. Identify Industry, Enterprise or Community Training need

Accredited courses shall:

- not duplicate qualifications contained within relevant Training Packages;
- have relevance to industry, enterprise or community needs;
- identify occupational or educational outcomes and enable the achievement of national competency standards where these have been established.

Where there are no existing national competency standards, course proponents will need to ensure that competencies are defined:

- in accordance with the *Standards Best Practice Manual* or further advice as endorsed by the National Training Framework Committee;
- with the involvement and validation of the appropriate industry, enterprise, community and/or professional group;
- to integrate key competencies.

For areas of general education, learning outcomes and assessment criteria may be defined in accordance with the *Users Guide to Course Design for Competency-Based Curriculum*, 2nd edition.

## 2. Qualifications

Accredited courses shall comply with all requirements of the Australian Qualifications Framework. Where courses are less than required for a qualification they should comply with Principle 1 of the National Accreditation Principles.

## 3. Access and Pathways

Accredited courses shall contain no implicit limitations based on age, gender, or social or educational background and shall justify the necessity for any explicit limitation to access, participation, entry points, exit points or pathways through the course, including recognition of prior learning and/or off-the-job learning and/or workplace-based learning.

## 4. Flexible Learning

Accredited courses shall contain no implicit limitations and shall justify the necessity for any explicit limitations to modes of delivery.

## **5. Articulation and Credit Transfer**

Accredited courses shall, where appropriate, provide information on the relationship of the course to Training Packages and/or other courses with Australian Qualifications Framework qualification outcomes. Arrangements for credit transfer should be identified.

## **6. Customisation of Courses**

Where no relevant Training Package exists, accredited courses will comply with the National Training Framework Committee Guidelines for the Customisation of Courses.

## **7. Assessment**

Where accredited courses are based on endorsed competency standards, the assessment methods will be consistent with the requirements of the standards.

All assessments will be consistent with the National Assessment Principles.

## **8. Ongoing Monitoring and Evaluation**

Accredited courses shall identify monitoring and evaluation processes to be used for the course.

# Australian National Training Authority Supplement: Training Packages



The following Guide outlines the way in which qualifications in the vocational education and training sector are now defined. It is intended that this information supports and supplements the guidance provided in the AQF Implementation Handbook. This additional advice is included with the Handbook at the request of the National Training Framework Committee, a committee of the Australian National Training Authority.

## **Qualifications in the Vocational Education and Training Sector**

The Australian Qualifications Framework is intended to be a flexible structure and this capacity is clearly demonstrated in the vocational education and training sector. The introduction of the Australian Recognition Framework in January 1998 allows qualifications in this sector to be developed through a number of different methods.

Given the flexibility inherent in the ARF and the extensive consultations undertaken during the development of Training Packages, it is envisaged that most qualifications in the vocational education and training sector will in the future be defined in Training Packages.

### **Training Packages**

In Training Packages, qualifications are defined by packaging national competency standards into combinations meaningful to the industry or enterprise and aligning these to an AQF level and recommended title. The Training Packages are endorsed by the National Training Framework Committee. This means of defining qualifications is generally only available to national Industry Training Advisory Boards, other recognised bodies and enterprises approved by the National Training Framework Committee.

A Training Package may cover the area of many previously course-based qualifications. This is because the Training Package will allow considerable flexibility. This will include:

- the capacity within limits specified by the Training Package to adjust units of competency to add enterprise or sector-specific language, applications and context;
- the capacity to develop and vary learning strategies, curriculum and assessment instruments without external accreditation;
- in most cases there will be the opportunity to select from a range of optional units in creating a qualification; and
- in most cases there will be the capacity in creating a qualification to use units from other Training Packages either as a substitute for other units within the Training Package or as part of the range of options.

Customisation advice within the Training Package should set out the industry advice and guidelines on the boundaries of flexibility within the qualifications. Notwithstanding this,

where industry or enterprises identify a need for a qualification where no relevant Training Packages exist it is possible to develop an appropriate qualification. In these instances, providers need to satisfy draft National Accreditation Principle 1: Identify industry, enterprise or community training need (included in Appendix 2).

New apprenticeship (including traineeship) pathways must be part of an endorsed Training Package, or have been accredited by a State/Territory Recognition Authority or delegated organisation.

### **Combining Competency Standards from Different Training Packages**

Qualifications may be defined by combining competency standards drawn from different Training Packages, or groups of endorsed national competency standards. Competencies are combined in such a way that the new qualification meets industry/enterprise needs not covered by existing Training Packages. Courses leading to these qualifications are accredited by State/Territory Recognition Authorities or by Quality Endorsed Registered Training Organisations delegated to self-manage this function. Qualifications may then be awarded on the same basis as for Training Packages.

Training Packages will include industry advice on how certain units of competency may be combined. In developing new qualifications developers must follow this advice when they select competency units from a Training Package or set of competencies. This includes guidance on the:

- appropriate use of individual units including prerequisite or co-requisite units;
- minimum groupings of units to form the essential base to achieve a particular functional outcome (this may include core units);
- limits on the customisation of units; and
- underpinning knowledge and skills.

In any Training Packages there are units of competency that relate to key functions within the industry or enterprise covered. The Training Package will generally allow the use of such units in a qualification at an AQF level or a range of AQF levels. Such units should not generally be included in a new qualification at a lower AQF level.

The title of the new qualification must meet the requirements set out in the section Issuing a Qualification in this Handbook. In addition, new qualification developers wishing to use an industry descriptor in the qualification title must consult with the relevant industry.

Qualifications developed outside Training Packages must not duplicate qualifications contained in Training Packages. Registered Training Organisations and/or State/Territory Recognition Authorities will need to be satisfied that the qualification proposed cannot be achieved by the customisation and flexibility offered within a Training Package or by the issuance of a Training Package qualification together with an additional Statement of Attainment.

New qualifications should meet a demonstrated workplace need.

A Training Package may also include advice on how the units of competency in a Training Package could be used in other Training Packages or in new qualifications. This advice should be followed by those developing qualifications based on combining units of competency from more than one Training Package.

### **Courses not Based on Training Packages**

Qualifications may be defined through course accreditation. These qualifications are developed where no relevant Training Packages exist, but where a training need has been identified. Courses leading to these qualifications must be based on competencies, where these competencies have been established. (See draft National Accreditation Principles, Appendix 2.) Courses leading to these qualifications are accredited by State/Territory Recognition Authorities, or by Registered Training Organisations delegated to self-manage.

Courses leading to these qualifications can be developed and presented to the State/Territory Recognition Authority by Registered Training Organisations or other course developers, for external accreditation against the AQF, or accredited by those Quality Endorsed Registered Training Organisations delegated to self-manage this function.

State/Territory Recognition Authorities and Quality Endorsed Registered Training Organisations with delegation apply the National Accreditation Principles to course accreditation. (The draft National Accreditation Principles are included in Appendix 2.)

### **Assignment of the AQF Level**

The following points are provided to guide assignment of the AQF level of a new qualification not defined in a Training Package:

- After combining competencies drawn from different sources it is necessary to align this new package of competencies to the AQF, which may result in the new qualification being at a lower level than that from which some of the competencies were drawn. It is the package of units of competency which is aligned to the AQF. An individual unit of competency is not assigned an AQF alignment.
- Higher levels of qualification are not achieved by simply adding more competencies.
- It is possible that the new qualification will have fewer units than the qualifications from which they have been drawn.
- The qualification level for the new package of units should be consistent with the levels of other qualifications in that workplace context. For example, a limited depth of technical knowledge and skills may be offset by the range of applications across industries and greater accountability and autonomy. See Item 3.3 Distinguishing Features under the relevant qualification in the Guidelines section of this Handbook for more information.
- The qualification should meet requirements in terms of underpinning knowledge and skills and support continuous skill formation in a logical progression through levels.
- The qualifications should be able to accommodate recognised credit transfer arrangements.
- The qualification titling will need to be clearly differentiated from those used in endorsed Training Packages.