AQF Qualifications Issuance Policy

1 INTRODUCTION

The integrity of Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) qualifications is protected by:

- legislation that provides for the accreditation of qualifications and organisations authorised to issue qualifications by accrediting authorities[1]
- quality assurance arrangements for qualifications and authorised issuing organisations[2]
- nationally consistent use of certification documentation, and
- nationally consistent and correct use of AQF qualification titles.

1.1 Purpose

The purpose of the *AQF Qualifications Issuance Policy* is to ensure that:

- graduates receive the certification documentation to which they are entitled
- AQF qualifications are correctly identified in certification documentation
- AQF qualifications are protected against fraudulent issuance
- a clear distinction can be made between AQF qualifications and non-AQF qualifications
- certification documentation is used consistently across the education and training sectors, and
- graduates and others are confident that the qualifications they have been awarded are part of Australia's national qualifications framework – the AQF.

1.2 Scope

The policy covers all education and training sectors that issue AQF qualifications. It covers all AQF qualifications and, through the issuance of a statement of attainment, accredited units regardless of where and how they are delivered (for example onshore, off shore, on the job, in the classroom, through formal study or assessment).

The terminology used in the AQF policies is not sector-specific. To support consistency of understanding and interpretation, definitions of the terminology are provided in the *AQF Glossary of Terminology.*

1.3 Users

The principal users of the policy are the issuing organisations and the accrediting authorities for each education and training sector.

The other users are students, graduates, employers, industry and professional bodies, and licensing and regulatory bodies. Other countries may use the policy to authenticate AQF qualifications.

1.4 Monitoring

The accrediting authorities in each education and training sector are responsible for the implementation and monitoring of the use of this policy.

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[1] The accrediting authorities are listed on page 21
[2] In this policy the term 'authorised issuing organisation' is abbreviated to 'issuing organisation'.

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2 POLICY

2.1 Issuing AQF qualifications

2.1.1 All graduates who have completed a program of learning that leads to the award of an AQF qualification are entitled to receive the following certification documentation on award of the qualification:

- a testamur, *and*
- a record of results.

A graduation statement will also be issued as its usage is adopted across the education and training sectors.[3]

2.1.2 Students who complete part of the requirements of an AQF qualification in which they are enrolled are entitled to receive a record of results.

2.1.3 Graduates are entitled to retain testamurs and records of results once they have been issued unless the:

- AQF qualification builds on a lower level qualification in the same discipline at the same issuing organisation and it has a policy regarding the surrender of certification documentation, or
- AQF qualification is revoked under the terms of the issuing organisation's policy.

2.1.4 If any part of the qualification has been delivered and/or assessed in a language other than English, a statement that this has occurred will be included on the testamur, the record of results or the graduation statement.[4] This does not preclude the use of languages other than English for the delivery and/or assessment of a program of learning leading to a qualification provided that the level of English language proficiency is appropriate for the intended use of the qualification.

2.1.5 The testamur or graduation statement for all AQF qualifications issued will identify the qualification as an AQF qualification either by the words 'The qualification is recognised within the Australian Qualifications Framework' or the use of any AQF logo authorised by the AQF Council. The AQF logo or these words must not be used on certification documentation for non-AQF qualifications.

2.1.6 Sufficient information must be provided on a testamur, record of results and graduation statement to ensure that the documentation is able to be authenticated and to reduce fraudulent use.

The testamur will contain sufficient information to identify correctly the:

- issuing organisation
- graduate who is entitled to receive the AQF qualification
- awarded AQF qualification by its full title
- date of issue/award/conferral
- person(s) in the organisation authorised to issue the documentation, and
- authenticity of the document, in a form to reduce fraud such as the issuing organisation's seal, corporate identifier or unique watermark.

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[3]   The Australian Higher Education Graduation Statement is currently (2013) implemented in the higher education sector.

[4]   This does not include the use of another language to develop proficiency in that language.

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The graduation statement will contain sufficient information about the issuing organisation, the qualification, the graduate and the graduate's academic achievement and relevant other activities; a description of the Australian Qualifications Framework and any AQF logo authorised by the AQF Council; and a description of the Australian education and training system. It may include details about delivery and assessment methodologies, any industry or professional accreditation and any negotiated equivalences with international qualifications.

2.1.7 Accrediting authorities may require issuing organisations to include additional information on the certification documentation. Accrediting authorities will be responsible for developing policies for this, making them available to issuing organisations and monitoring the use of the policies.

2.2 Responsibility for issuing and authenticating AQF qualifications

2.2.1 AQF qualifications will only be issued by organisations authorised by legislation to do so.[5]

2.2.2 The protection of AQF qualifications requires that any issuing organisation delivering, assessing and issuing AQF qualifications adheres to any government regulatory and quality assurance arrangements for each qualification type and compliance is monitored by the relevant accrediting authority.

2.2.3 The issuing organisation is responsible for authentication and verification of a graduate's certification documentation. The issuing organisation is responsible for ensuring that it has in place mechanisms to reduce fraudulent reproduction and use of the AQF qualifications it issues.

2.2.4 The issuing organisation will have a policy that permits the replacement of certification documentation. The issuing organisation is responsible for authentication and verification of any replacement certification documentation.

2.2.5 Registers of AQF qualifications enhance the ability of national and international stakeholders to authenticate and verify the legitimacy of AQF qualifications and the organisations authorised to issue them.

In accordance with the *AQF Qualifications Register Policy*, issuing organisations will:

- maintain a register of all AQF qualifications they are authorised to issue, and
- maintain a register of all AQF qualifications they issue to graduates.

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[5] The authorised issuing organisations for AQF qualifications are listed on page 22

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2.3 AQF qualification titles

Titles of AQF qualifications are the representation of the qualification type, level and field of study/discipline of the qualification and provide the basis for national and international recognition. AQF qualifications will have titles that unambiguously identify the qualification type, level and field of study/discipline as follows:

AQF level	Qualification Type	Qualification Title
	Senior Secondary Certificate of Education	Titles will vary across jurisdictions; the use of the titles will be accompanied by the statement: '(Certificate Title) is a Senior Secondary Certificate of Education within the Australian Qualifications Framework.'
1	Certificate I	Certificate I (Field of study/discipline)
2	Certificate II	Certificate II (Field of study/discipline)
3	Certificate III	Certificate III (Field of study/discipline)
4	Certificate IV	Certificate IV (Field of study/discipline)
5	Diploma	Diploma (Field of study/discipline)
6	Advanced Diploma	Advanced Diploma (Field of study/discipline)
6	Associate Degree	Associate Degree (Field of study/discipline)
7	Bachelor Degree	Bachelor (Field of study/discipline)
8	Bachelor Honours Degree	Bachelor (Field of study/discipline) (Honours)
8	Graduate Certificate	Graduate Certificate (Field of study/discipline)
8	Graduate Diploma	Graduate Diploma (Field of study/discipline)
9	Masters Degree (Research)	Master (Field of study/discipline)
9	Masters Degree (Coursework)	Master (Field of study/discipline)
9	Masters Degree (Extended)	Master (Field of study/discipline) For exceptions that may be used, see below*
10	Doctoral Degree	Doctor (Field of study/discipline)
10	Higher Doctoral Degree	Doctor (Field of study/discipline)

*Exceptions:[6]

i   The use of the qualification title 'Juris Doctor' is permitted for a Masters Degree (Extended) for legal practice.

ii   The use of the qualification title 'Doctor of …' is permitted for a Masters Degree (Extended) for five professions: medical practice; physiotherapy; dentistry; optometry and veterinary practice.

iii Further exceptions may be permitted in accordance with the *AQF Qualification Type Addition and Removal Policy*.

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[6]   Ministerial Council for Tertiary Education and Employment (MCTEE), 19 November 2010.

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For exceptions:

- The qualification title and a statement that the qualification is an 'AQF level 9 Masters Degree' will appear on relevant certification documents, on any national, state/territory or institutional registers of qualifications, and in institutional information and promotional materials.
- The qualification may not be referred to as a Doctoral Degree in any written, oral or electronic information.

While it is common to list the qualification title before the field of study/discipline, the reverse order may be used. The field of study/discipline may be expressed broadly or explicitly and may also include sub-categories.

The order and form of the title used for more than one qualification of the same or a different type offered simultaneously will unambiguously represent what the graduate has achieved.

In the higher education sector qualifications titles may indicate if the qualification has been achieved through research or coursework.

2.4 Use of titles by graduates

2.4.1 Postnominals use the abbreviation for the qualification type and field of study/discipline of the qualification. They are usually placed immediately following the graduate's title and name.

2.4.2 Individuals who have been awarded a Doctoral Degree at Level 10 on the AQF are entitled to use the title 'Doctor'. The title 'Doctor' will not be used by those who hold an honorary award.

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

As such any certification documentation issued to an honorary award recipient will specify that the award is honorary.

2.5 Issuing statements of attainment

The issuance of a statement of attainment recognises that students do not always study a whole AQF qualification. They may choose to complete only a unit or units of competence or study from an accredited qualification or an accredited short course.

Through the use of the statement of attainment, the AQF acknowledges that completion of accredited units[7] contributes to the progression towards achievement of an individual's lifelong learning goals.

2.5.1 Students who have completed an accredited unit(s) in these circumstances are entitled to receive a statement of attainment.[8] A record of results may also be issued.

2.5.2 Statements of attainment will only be issued by organisations authorised by legislation to do so.[9]

2.5.3 Any issuing organisation issuing statements of attainment for accredited units is required to adhere to any government regulatory and quality assurance arrangements and compliance is monitored by the relevant accrediting authority.

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[7] Accreditation must follow the same process as for an AQF qualification.

[8] In the vocational education and training sector issuance of a statement of attainment in these circumstances is considered mandatory.

[9] Authorisation of organisations to issue statements of attainment must follow the same process as for an AQF qualification.

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2.5.4 The statement of attainment must correctly identify the person entitled to receive the statement of attainment, the accredited units by their full title and the date issued. Accrediting authorities may require issuing organisations to include additional information on the statement of attainment. Accrediting authorities will be responsible for developing, providing information and monitoring policies for this.

2.5.5 The statement of attainment must be in a form that ensures it cannot be mistaken for a testamur for a full AQF qualification. It must include the statement 'A statement of attainment is issued when an individual has completed one or more accredited units'.

2.5.6 Students are entitled to retain the statement of attainment once it has been issued unless it is revoked under the terms of an issuing organisation's policy.

2.5.7 If any of the accredited units has been delivered and/or assessed in a language other than English, a statement that this has occurred will be included on the statement of attainment.[10] This does not preclude the use of languages other than English for the delivery and/or assessment of accredited units provided that the level of English language proficiency is appropriate for the intended use of the units.

2.5.8 The issuing organisation is responsible for authentication and verification of a student's statement of attainment. The issuing organisation is responsible for ensuring that it has in place mechanisms to reduce fraudulent reproduction and use of the statements of attainment it issues.

2.5.9 The issuing organisation will have a policy that permits the replacement of a statement of attainment. The issuing organisation is responsible for authentication and verification of any replacement certification documentation.

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[10]   This does not include the use of another language to develop proficiency in that language.