Australian Qualifications Framework

Implementation Handbook

Third Edition
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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 qualifications are awarded for 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.

Statement of Attainment is defined as follows:

An AQF Statement of Attainment is a record of recognised learning which, although falling short of an AQF qualification, may contribute towards a qualification outcome, either as partial completion of a course leading to a qualification, attainment of competencies within a Training Package, or completion of nationally accredited short course which may accumulate towards a qualification through RPL processes.

List of Acronyms

ACACA   Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Certification Authorities

ANTA   Australian National Training Authority

AQF   Australian Qualifications Framework

AQFAB   Australian Qualifications Framework Advisory Board

AQTF   Australian Quality Training Framework
                 formerly Australian Recognition Framework (ARF)

AST   Australian Scaling Test

AVCC   Australian Vice Chancellors' Committee

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 third edition of the AQF Implementation Handbook provides updated information for 2002, in particular revised AQF guidelines for the Bachelor, Masters and Doctoral degrees in the form of new descriptors for each qualification Guideline at section 3.2 'Characteristics' and section 5 'Pathways to the Qualification'.   It also includes new national policy guidelines on cross sector linkages agreed between the Australian Vice Chancellors' Committee and the Australian National Training Authority, to replace the original section on 'Articulation Arrangements'. There is a new definition of a Statement of Attainment and other editing also reflects the introduction of the Australian Quality Training Framework in the vocational sector.

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.

- **Qualification Guidelines**

   Information required to determine the level of a qualification.

- **National Guidelines on Cross-Sectoral Qualification Linkages**

- **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.

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

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 **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
		Doctoral Degree Masters Degree Graduate Diploma Graduate Certificate Bachelor Degree Advanced Diploma Diploma
Senior Secondary Certificate of Education	Advanced Diploma Diploma Certificate IV Certificate III Certificate II Certificate I	

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:

- Guidelines for cross-sectoral qualifications linkages;

- Principles for the issuance of qualifications and protection of titles, which include 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 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 meet individual, workplace 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, training package, course and curriculum developers, accrediting bodies and the wider public, including students, parents, and education and training bodies, to understand factors defining 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 Quality Training Framework and Training Packages.

The Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF) is a set of nationally agreed standards to ensure the quality of vocational education and training services throughout Australia. States and Territories apply the AQTF when:

- registering organisations to deliver training, assess competency and issue Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) qualifications;

- auditing registered training organisations (RTOs) to ensure they meet (and continue to meet) the requirements of the AQTF;

- applying mutual recognition of qualifications and statements of attainment; and

- accrediting courses.

The AQTF ensures that all RTOs and the qualifications they issue are recognised throughout Australia. The AQTF includes two sets of standards:

- Standards for Registered Training Organisations; and

- Standards for State and Territory Registering/Course Accrediting Bodies.

Training Packages are sets of nationally endorsed standards and qualifications for recognising and assessing people's skills.

A Training Package describes the skills and knowledge needed to perform effectively in the workplace. They do not prescribe how an individual should be trained. Teachers and trainers develop learning strategies depending on learners' needs, abilities and circumstances.

Training Packages are developed by industry through national Industry Training Advisory Bodies (ITABs), Recognised Bodies or by enterprises to meet the identified training needs of specific industries or industry sectors. To gain national endorsement, developers must provide evidence of extensive consultation and support within the industry area or enterprise.

Training Packages complete a quality assurance process and are then endorsed by the National Training Quality Council (NTQC). The responsible Ministers then agree to place the Training Package on the National Training Information Service (NTIS). Endorsed Training Packages are subject to periodic review.

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 qualifications. 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.

Characteristics

A descriptor of learning outcomes or competencies to be achieved for this particular qualification.

Distinguishing Features

The features that distinguish adjacent qualifications.

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

Senior Secondary Certificate of Education	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.
Certificate I **Certificate II** **Certificate III** **Certificate IV**	In the **vocational education and training sector**, 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 or accredited course. Authorisation of alignment of competency standards to AQF qualifications occurs as follows: • National Industry Training Advisory Bodies and other recognised bodies including relevant enterprises, through the process of developing Training Packages, determine the relevant qualification for each set of national competency standards in their respective Training Packages. This determination is subject to endorsement by the National Training Quality Council of ANTA. • State/Territory Course Accrediting Bodies, or Registered Training Organisations with delegated authority to self-manage accreditation, through the course accreditation process determine the relevant qualifications for 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 Course Accrediting Bodies, through the course accreditation process, determine the relevant qualification for other sets of competency standards developed by relevant industry, enterprise, community or professional bodies to meet an identified training need.

Diploma **Advanced Diploma**	In the **vocational education and training sector**, 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 or accredited course. Authorisation of alignment of competency standards to AQF qualifications occurs as follows: • National Industry Training Advisory Bodies and other recognised bodies including relevant enterprises, through the process of developing Training Packages, determine the relevant qualifications for each set of national competency standards in their respective Training Packages. This determination is subject to endorsement by the National Training Quality Council of ANTA. • State/Territory Course Accrediting Bodies, or Registered Training organisations with delegated authority to self-manage accreditation, through the course accreditation process determine the relevant qualifications for 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 Course Accrediting Bodies, through the course accreditation process, determine the relevant qualifications 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.
Bachelor Degree **Graduate Certificate** **Graduate Diploma** **Masters Degree** **Doctoral Degree**	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.

Table 3: Characteristics of Learning Outcomes

Senior Secondary Certificate of Education	Certificate I	Certificate II	Certificate III	Certificate IV	Diploma
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. 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..	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. 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.	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. Performance of a prescribed range of functions involving known routines and procedures and some accountability for the quality of outcomes. 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.	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. 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. Applications may involve some responsibility for others. Participation in teams including group or team co-ordination may be involved.	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. 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. Applications involve responsibility for, and limited organisation of, 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. 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. 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.

Advanced Diploma	Bachelor Degree	Graduate Certificate	Graduate Diploma	Masters Degree	Doctoral Degree
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. 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. 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.	The acquisition of a systematic and coherent body of knowledge, the underlying principles and concepts, and the associated communication and problem-solving skills. Development of the academic skills and attributes necessary to undertake research, comprehend and evaluate new information, concepts and evidence from a range of sources. Development of the ability to review, consolidate, extend and apply the knowledge and techniques learnt,including in a professional context A foundation for self-directed and lifelong learning Interpersonal and teamwork skills appropriate to employment and/or further study 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 and professional careers.	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.	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.	Mastery or overview of the relevant field of study or area of professional practice and the emphasis may range from the acquisition or enhancement of specific professional or vocational skills and knowledge, usually undertaken in a combination of coursework and research, through to the acquisition of in-depth understanding in a specific area of knowledge which is usually undertaken through research Provide appropriate evidence of advanced knowledge about a specialist body of theoretical and applied topics. Demonstrate a high order of skill in analysis, critical evaluation and/or professional application through the planning and execution of project work or a piece of scholarship or research. Demonstrate creativity and flexibility in the application of knowledge and skills to new situations, to solve complex problems and to think rigorously and independently.	A substantial original contribution to knowledge in the form of new knowledge or significant and original adaptation, application and interpretation of existing knowledge. A comprehensive and searching review of the literature, experimentation, creative work with exegesis or other systematic approach or an advanced, searching and expansive critical reflection on professional theory and practice. Undertake an original research project, or a project(s) addressing a matter of substance concerning practice in a profession at a high level of originality and quality Presentation of a substantial and well ordered dissertation, non-print thesis or portfolio, for submission to external examination against international standards.

Table 4: Distinguishing Features of Learning Outcomes

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

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, training package, course and 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, takes into account developments under the National Training Framework – the introduction of Training Packages and the implementation of the AQTF. Training Packages use competency standards to describe the skills and knowledge needed to perform effectively in the workplace. These competency standards are packaged into units of competency. Units of competency are components of AQF qualifications. It is a requirement of the AQTF that competency standards from 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 Course Accrediting Bodies 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 one or more Statements of Attainment.

The National Training Quality Council, 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, 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 or accredited course.

Authorisation of alignment of competency standards to AQF qualifications occurs as follows:

- National Industry Training Advisory Bodies and other recognised bodies including relevant enterprises, through the process of developing Training Packages, determine the relevant qualification for each set of national competency standards in their respective Training Packages. This determination is subject to endorsement by the National Training Quality Council of the Australian National Training Authority.

- State/Territory Course Accrediting Bodies, or Registered Training Organisations with delegated authority to self-manage accreditation, through the course accreditation process determine the relevant qualifications for 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 Course Accrediting Bodies, through the course accreditation process, determine the relevant qualification 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 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
Do the Competencies enable an individual with this qualification to:	**Do the Competencies enable an individual with this qualification to:**
demonstrate knowledge by recall in a narrow range of areas	demonstrate basic *operational knowledge* in a *moderate range* of areas
demonstrate basic practical skills such as the use of relevant tools	apply a *defined range of skills*
	apply known solutions to a limited range of predictable problems
perform a sequence of routine tasks given clear direction	perform a range of tasks where *choice between a limited range of options* is required
receive and pass on messages/information	*assess and record* information from varied sources
	take limited responsibility for own outputs in work and learning

Italicised words emphasise distinguishing features of the competencies between qualifications.

In order to assist determining the relevant 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.

Assessment is the responsibility of Registered Training Organisations. These bodies must comply with the Standards set in the AQTF *Standards for Registered Training Organisations* including Standard 8 Registered Training Organisations assessments and Standard 10 Issuing AQF qualifications and Statements of Attainment.

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. Nominal duration statements may appear in training programs which may be part of the non-endorsed Learning Strategies component of a Training Package. Nominal duration statements are also to be included in accreditation submissions 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.*

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 Registered Training Organisations or in some instances by a body authorised under statute. The AQTF provides nationally agreed Standards 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 (such as 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 (such as those in Training Packages).

The issuing body will be responsible for providing and maintaining records in relation to the above. See AQTF including *Standards for Registered Training Organisations*, Standard 4 Effective administrative and records management procedures.

Certificate II
Guideline

1.   Purpose

To assist employers, employees, professional associations, unions, training package, course and 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, takes into account developments under the National Training Framework – the introduction of Training Packages and the implementation of the AQTF. Training Packages use competency standards to describe the skills and knowledge needed to perform effectively in the workplace. These competency standards are packaged into units of competency. Units of competency are components of AQF qualifications. It is a requirement of the AQTF that competency standards from 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 Course Accrediting Bodies 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 one or more Statements of Attainment.

The National Training Quality Council, 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, 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 or accredited course.

Authorisation of alignment of competency standards to AQF qualifications occurs as follows:

- National Industry Training Advisory Bodies and other recognised bodies including relevant enterprises, through the process of developing Training Packages, determine the relevant qualification for each set of national competency standards in their respective Training Packages. This determination is subject to endorsement by the National Training Quality Council of the Australian National Training Authority.

- State/Territory Course Accrediting Bodies, or Registered Training Organisations with delegated authority to self-manage accreditation, through the course accreditation process determine the relevant qualifications for 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 Course Accrediting Bodies, through the course accreditation process, determine the relevant qualification 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 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
Do the Competencies enable an individual with this qualification to:	**Do the Competencies enable an individual with this qualification to:**	**Do the Competencies enable an individual with this qualification to:**
demonstrate knowledge by recall in a narrow range of areas	demonstrate *basic operational knowledge in a moderate range* of areas	demonstrate some *relevant theoretical knowledge*
demonstrate basic practical skills such as the use of relevant tools	apply a *defined range of skills*	apply a range of *well developed skills*
	apply known solutions to a *limited range of predictable problems*	apply known solutions to a *variety of predictable problems*
perform a sequence of routine tasks given clear direction	perform a range of tasks where *choice between a limited range of options* is required	perform processes that require *a range of well developed skills where some discretion and judgement is required*
receive and pass on messages/information	*assess and record* information from varied sources	interpret available information, using *discretion and judgement*
	take limited responsibility for own outputs in work and learning	take *responsibility for own outputs* in work and learning
		take *limited responsibility for the output of others*

Italicised words emphasise distinguishing features of the competencies between qualifications.

In order to assist determining the relevant 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.

Assessment is the responsibility of Registered Training Organisations. These bodies must comply with the Standards set in the AQTF Standards for Registered Training Organisations including Standard 8 Registered Training Organisations assessments and Standard 10 Issuing AQF qualifications and Statements of Attainment.

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. Nominal duration statements may appear in training programs which may be part of the non-endorsed Learning Strategies component of a Training Package. Nominal duration statements are also to be included in accreditation submissions 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.*

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 Registered Training Organisations or in some instances by a body authorised under statute.. The AQTF provides nationally agreed Standards 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 that identifies the units of competency that have been achieved when training is based on nationally endorsed competency standards (such as 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 (such as those in Training Packages).

The issuing body will be responsible for providing and maintaining records in relation to the above. See AQTF including *Standards for Registered Training Organisations*, Standard 4 Effective administrative and records management procedures.

Certificate III
Guideline

1. Purpose

To assist employers, employees, professional associations, unions, training package, course and 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, takes into account developments under the National Training Framework – the introduction of Training Packages and the implementation of the AQTF. Training Packages use competency standards to describe the skills and knowledge needed to perform effectively in the workplace. These competency standards are packaged into units of competency. Units of competency are components of AQF qualifications. It is a requirement of the AQTF that competency standards from 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 Course Accrediting Bodies 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 one or more Statements of Attainment.

The National Training Quality Council, 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, 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 or accredited course.

Authorisation of alignment of competency standards to AQF qualifications occurs as follows:

● National Industry Training Advisory Bodies and other recognised bodies including relevant enterprises, through the process of developing Training Packages, determine the relevant qualification for each set of national competency standards in their respective Training Packages. This determination is subject to endorsement by the National Training Quality Council of the Australian National Training Authority.

● State/Territory Course Accrediting Bodies, or Registered Training Organisations with delegated authority to self-manage accreditation, through the course accreditation process determine the relevant qualifications for 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 Course Accrediting Bodies, through the course accreditation process, determine the relevant qualification 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 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
Do the Competencies enable an individual with this qualification to:	**Do the Competencies enable an individual with this qualification to:**	**Do the Competencies enable an individual with this qualification to:**
demonstrate basic *operational knowledge* in a *moderate range* of areas	demonstrate some *relevant theoretical knowledge*	demonstrate understanding of a *broad knowledge base incorporating some theoretical concepts*
apply a *defined range of skills*	apply a range of *well developed skills*	
apply known solutions to a limited range of predictable problems	apply known solutions to a *variety of predictable problems*	apply solutions to a *defined range of unpredictable problems*
perform a range of tasks where *choice between a limited range of options* is required	perform processes that require *a range of well developed skills where some discretion and judgement is required*	*identify and apply skill and knowledge areas to a wide variety of contexts with depth in some areas*
assess and record information from varied sources	interpret available information, using *discretion and judgement*	*identify, analyse and evaluate information from a variety of sources*
take *limited responsibility* for own outputs in work and learning	take *responsibility for own outputs* in work and learning	*take responsibility for own outputs in relation to specified quality standards*
	take *limited responsibility* for the output of others	take *limited responsibility* for the *quantity and quality* of the output of others

Italicised words emphasise distinguishing features of the competencies between qualifications.

In order to assist determining the relevant 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.

Assessment is the responsibility of Registered Training Organisations. These bodies must comply with the Standards set in the AQTF Standards for Registered Training Organisations including Standard 8 Registered Training Organisations assessments and Standard 10 Issuing AQF qualifications and Statements of Attainment.

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. Nominal duration statements may appear in training programs which may be part of the non-endorsed Learning Strategies component of a Training Package. Nominal duration statements are also to be included in accreditation submissions 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.*

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 Registered Training Organisations or in some instances by a body authorised under statute. The AQTF provides nationally agreed Standards 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 (such as 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 (such as those in Training Packages).

The issuing body will be responsible for providing and maintaining records in relation to the above. See AQTF including *Standards for Registered Training Organisations*, Standard 4 Effective administrative and records management procedures.

Certificate IV
Guideline

1.   Purpose

To assist employers, employees, professional associations, unions, training package, course and 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, takes into account developments under the National Training Framework – the introduction of Training Packages and the implementation of the AQTF. Training Packages use competency standards to describe the skills and knowledge needed to perform effectively in the workplace. These competency standards are packaged into units of competency. Units of competency are components of AQF qualifications. It is a requirement of the AQTF that competency standards from 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 Course Accrediting Bodies 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 one or more Statements of Attainment.

The National Training Quality Council, 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, 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 or accredited course.

Authorisation of alignment of competency standards to AQF qualifications occurs as follows:

- National Industry Training Advisory Bodies and other recognised bodies including relevant enterprises, through the process of developing Training Packages, determine the relevant qualification for each set of national competency standards in their respective Training Packages. This determination is subject to endorsement by the National Training Quality Council of the Australian National Training Authority.

- State/Territory Course Accrediting Bodies, or Registered Training Organisations with delegated authority to self-manage accreditation, through the course accreditation process determine the relevant qualifications for 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 Course Accrediting Bodies, through the course accreditation process, determine the relevant qualification 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 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.

	Certificate III	Certificate IV	Diploma
Table 8: **Distinguishing Features: Certificates III, IV and Diploma**	**Do the Competencies enable an individual with this qualification to:**	**Do the Competencies enable an individual with this qualification to:**	**Do the Competencies or Learning Outcomes enable an individual with this qualification to:**
	demonstrate some *relevant theoretical knowledge*	demonstrate understanding of a *broad knowledge base incorporating some theoretical concepts*	demonstrate understanding of a broad knowledge base incorporating theoretical concepts, *with substantial depth in some areas*
	apply a range of well developed skills		
	apply known solutions to a *variety of predictable problems*	apply solutions to a *defined range of unpredictable problems*	*analyse and plan* approaches to *technical problems or management requirements*
	perform processes that require a *range of well developed skills where some discretion and judgement is required*	*identify and apply skill and knowledge areas to a wide variety of contexts with depth in some areas*	*transfer and apply theoretical concepts and/or technical or creative skills to a range of situations*
	interpret available information, using *discretion and judgement*	*identify, analyse and evaluate information from a variety of sources*	evaluate information using it to *forecast for planning or research* purposes
	take responsibility for own outputs in work and learning	take responsibility for own outputs *in relation to specified quality standards*	take responsibility for own outputs in relation to broad quantity and quality parameters
	take limited responsibility for the output of others	take *limited responsibility for the quantity and quality* of the output of others	take some responsibility for the *achievement of group outcomes*

Italicised words emphasise distinguishing features of the competencies between qualifications.

In order to assist determining the relevant 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.

Assessment is the responsibility of Registered Training Organisations. These bodies must comply with the Standards set in the AQTF Standards for Registered Training Organisations including Standard 8 Registered Training Organisations assessments and Standard 10 Issuing AQF qualifications and Statements of Attainment.

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. Nominal duration statements may appear in training programs which may be part of the non-endorsed Learning Strategies component of a Training Package. Nominal duration statements are also to be included in accreditation submissions 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

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 Registered Training Organisations or in some instances by a body authorised under statute. The AQTF provides nationally agreed Standards 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 (such as 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 (such as those in Training Packages).

The issuing body will be responsible for providing and maintaining records in relation to the above. See AQTF including *Standards for Registered Training Organisations*, Standard 4 Effective administrative and records management procedures

<u>Diploma</u>
Guideline

1.   Purpose

To assist employers, employees, professional associations, unions, training package, course and 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 Quality Training 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 AQTF. Training Packages use competency standards to describe the skills and knowledge needed to perform effectively in the workplace. These competency standards are packaged into units of competency. Units of competency are components of AQF qualifications. It is a requirement of the AQTF that competency standards from 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 Course Accrediting Bodies 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 one or more Statements of Attainment.

The National Training Quality Council, 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**, 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 or accredited course.

Authorisation of alignment of competency standards to AQF qualifications occurs as follows:

● National Industry Training Advisory Bodies and other recognised bodies including relevant enterprises, through the process of developing Training Packages, determine the relevant qualification for each set of national competency standards in their respective Training Packages. This determination is subject to endorsement by the National Training Quality Council of the Australian National Training Authority.

● State/Territory Course Accrediting Bodies, or Registered Training Organisations with delegated authority to self-manage accreditation, through the course accreditation process determine the relevant qualifications for 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 Course Accrediting Bodies, through the course accreditation process, determine the relevant qualification 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 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 Diploma

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

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

In order to assist determining the relevant 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.

Assessment is the responsibility of Registered Training Organisations. These bodies must comply with the Standards set in the AQTF *Standards for Registered Training Organisations* including Standard 8 Registered Training Organisations assessments and Standard 10 Issuing AQF qualifications and Statements of Attainment.

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. Nominal duration statements may appear in training programs which may be part of the non-endorsed Learning Strategies component of a Training Package. Nominal 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.

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 Registered Training Organisations or in some instances by a body authorised under statute. The AQTF provides nationally agreed Standards 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 (such as 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 (such as those in Training Packages).

The issuing body will be responsible for providing and maintaining records in relation to the above. See AQTF including *Standards for Registered Training Organisations*, Standard 4 Effective administrative and records management procedures

Advanced Diploma
Guideline

1.   Purpose

To assist employers, employees, professional associations, unions, training packages, course and 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 Quality Training 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 AQTF. Training Packages use competency standards to describe the skills and knowledge needed to perform effectively in the workplace. These competency standards are packaged into units of competency. Units of competency are components of AQF qualifications. It is a requirement of the AQTF that competency standards from 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 Course Accrediting Bodies 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 one or more Statements of Attainment.

The National Training Quality Council, 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**, 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 or accredited course.

Authorisation of alignment of competency standards to AQF qualifications occurs as follows:

- National Industry Training Advisory Bodies and other recognised bodies including relevant enterprises, through the process of developing Training Packages, determine the relevant qualification for each set of national competency standards in their respective Training Packages. This determination is subject to endorsement by the National Training Quality Council of the Australian National Training Authority.

- State/Territory Course Accrediting Bodies, or Registered Training Organisations with delegated authority to self-manage accreditation, through the course accreditation process determine the relevant qualification for 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 Course Accrediting Bodies, through the course accreditation process, determine the relevant qualification 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 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
Do the Competencies or Learning Outcomes enable an individual with this qualification to:	**Do the Competencies or Learning Outcomes enable an individual with this qualification to:**
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	*analyse, diagnose, design and execute judgements* across a broad range of technical or management functions
evaluate information using it to forecast for planning or research purposes	generate ideas through the *analysis of information and concepts at an abstract level*
transfer and apply theoretical concepts and/or technical or creative skills to a range of situations	demonstrate a command of *wide-ranging, highly specialised technical, creative or conceptual skills*
take responsibility for own outputs in relation to broad quantity parameters	demonstrate *accountability for personal outputs within broad parameters*
take limited responsibility for the achievement of group outcomes	demonstrate *accountability* for group outcomes within broad parameters

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

In order to assist determining the relevant 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.

Assessment is the responsibility of Registered Training Organisations. These bodies must comply with the Standards set in the AQTF Standards for Registered Training Organisations including Standard 8 Registered Training Organisations assessments and Standard 10 Issuing AQF qualifications and Statements of Attainment.

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. Nominal duration statements may appear in training programs which may be part of the non-endorsed Learning Strategies component of a Training Package. Nominal 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.

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 Registered Training Organisations or in some instances by a body authorised under statute. The AQTF provides nationally agreed Standards 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 (such as 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 (such as those in Training Packages).

The issuing body will be responsible for providing and maintaining records in relation to the above. See AQTF including *Standards for Registered Training Organisations*, Standard 4 Effective administrative and records management procedures.

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 communication and problem-solving skills;

- development of the academic skills and attributes necessary to undertake research, comprehend and evaluate new information, concepts and evidence from a range of sources;

- development of the ability to review, consolidate, extend and apply the knowledge and techniques learnt, including in a professional context;

- a foundation for self-directed and lifelong learning; and

- interpersonal and teamwork skills appropriate to employment and/or further study.

A course leading to this qualification also usually involves major studies in which a 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 and professional careers.

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 Senior Secondary Certificate of Education or its equivalent, including mature age or other special provisions for entry or bridging or foundation programs. Candidates may also enter from a Diploma or Advanced Diploma, which may involve articulation and credit transfer arrangements, or from another undergraduate degree.

There is a range of Bachelor degree programs, including the following:

- the three year degree;

- the three or four year (or longer) professional degree which equips students with the practical skills and techniques necessary to apply their skills effectively in a professional context;

- the combined or double degree program which allows students particular combinations of subjects from the two degrees and to graduate with both degrees in a shorter time than required to complete both degrees independently;

- the graduate entry degree, which is a minimum of two years in duration, is specifically designed on the assumption of graduate entry, sometimes in a specified discipline, often as a shorter alternative to the standard four year (or longer) degree for initial professional preparation;

- the Bachelor Honours degree which may be undertaken by students who demonstrate a high level of achievement at an earlier stage in the undergraduate degree program, and involves some research preparation. In the case of the three year degree, the Bachelor Honours degree requires the completion of an additional year or its equivalent. For degrees of four (or more) years, the Bachelor Honours degree is awarded on the basis of the level of performance in the degree as a whole.

A graduate of a Bachelor degree is eligible to apply for entry to a relevant Graduate Certifcate, Graduate Diploma and a Masters degree by coursework program. A graduate from a Bachelor Honours degree may also be eligible for entry to a Doctoral degree program, providing that the candidate has demonstrated potential to undertake work at this level. In some circumstances, a period of professional experience may be required for admission to these postgraduate programs.

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 Diploma 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 mastery or overview of the relevant field of study or area of professional practice and the emphasis may range from the acquisition or enhancement of specific professional or vocational skills and knowledge, usually undertaken in a combination of coursework and research, through to the acquisition of in-depth understanding in a specific area of knowledge which is usually undertaken through research.

A graduate of a Master's degree program is able to:

- provide appropriate evidence of advanced knowledge about a specialist body of theoretical and applied topics;

- demonstrate a high order of skill in analysis, critical evaluation and/or professional application through the planning and execution of project work or a piece of scholarship or research; and

- demonstrate creativity and flexibility in the application of knowledge and skills to new situations, to solve complex problems and to think rigorously and independently.

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

Entry to the Masters degree is based on evidence of a capacity to undertake higher degree studies in the proposed field. There is a wide range of entry pathways, varying according to the program methodology and the discipline involved. Predominantly research-based programs normally have a research pre-requisite whereas predominantly coursework-based programs may be accessed more broadly.

Typical programs and entry pathways:

● the typical *coursework* Masters degree program comprising coursework, project work and research in varying combinations, may be entered from a Bachelor degree, a Bachelor Honours degree or a Graduate Diploma. Coursework Masters degrees are often structured in a three to four semester nested arrangement with the Graduate Certificate (one semester), Graduate Diploma (a further semester), and Masters degree (a further two semesters);

● the typical *research* Masters degree program comprising at least two-thirds research with a substantial, often externally assessed thesis outcome, entered from a Bachelor Honours degree or Masters preliminary year, a research-based Graduate Diploma or equivalent research experience;

● a *professional* coursework Masters degree program, which may involve a work-based project, specifically designed for entry on the basis of a relevant qualification and professional experience or extensive relevant professional experience.

Because of the range of entry pathways and methodologies the duration of Masters degree programs varies. However, most Masters degrees require the equivalent of two years of study post the three year Bachelor degree or one year of study post the Bachelor Honours degree or four year (or longer) Bachelor degree.

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

Characteristics of learning outcomes at this level include a substantial original contribution to knowledge in the form of new knowledge or significant and original adaptation, application and interpretation of existing knowledge. These characteristics of learning outcomes may be based on a comprehensive and searching review of the literature, experimentation, creative work with exegesis or other systematic approach or may be based on advanced, searching and expansive critical reflection on professional theory and practice.

A graduate of a Doctoral degree program is able to:

- carry out an original research project, or a project(s) addressing a matter of substance concerning practice in a profession at a high level of originality and quality; and

- present a substantial and well ordered dissertation, non-print thesis or portfolio, for submission to external examination against international standards.

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 Bachelor Honours degree (First or Second Class, upper division) or equivalent and are expected to demonstrate potential to undertake work at this level in the proposed field of study. In some institutions, candidates may upgrade an in-progress Masters degree to a Doctoral degree where they have not yet taken out the Masters degree. For some doctoral programs, substantial professional experience will be an integral requirement.

There is a range of doctoral programs, in varying combinations of research and coursework and professional orientation, as follows:

● the *research* doctorate is usually entered from a research or part-research Masters degree or a Bachelor Honours degree (First or Second Class, upper division) and is primarily achieved through supervised research;

● the *professional* doctorate is usually entered from a combined research and coursework Masters degree, a Bachelor Honours degree (First or Second Class, upper division) or equivalent and requires significant professional practice either prior to and/or as part of the program, which may be undertaken through varying combinations of coursework and research.

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

There is a further type of doctoral degree, the *higher* doctorate, which is awarded to candidates usually possessing a doctoral degree on the basis of an internationally-recognised original contribution to knowledge rather than supervised candidature, often in the context of a substantial association with the conferring institution.

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.

National Guidelines on Cross-Sectoral Qualification Linkages

The following National Policy Guidelines have been jointly developed by the Australian Vice Chancellors' Committee and the Australian National Training Authority, February, 2002.

These Guidelines have been endorsed by the AQF Advisory Board and replace the guidelines on articulation and credit transfer included in the First and Second Editions of the *AQF Implementation Handbook*

1.   Preamble

An important aspect of the Australian Qualifications Framework is the development of closer connections between Vocational Education and Training (VET) and higher education. The development of structured arrangements to link qualifications across the sectors represents a key process in building closer inter-sectoral relationships.

Qualification linkages enable individual learners to move from one qualification to another in more efficient and effective learning pathways. Qualification linkages are also essential working tools for the operation of a meaningful and dynamic Australian Qualifications Framework. Qualification linkages also provide a mechanism for creating a more open, accessible and relevant post-compulsory education system and a vehicle for implementing lifelong learning.

The term 'cross-sector qualification linkage' is used deliberately to identify the scope of the Guidelines as any formal connection between qualifications issued within VET and higher education. These connections may be based on articulation and credit transfer arrangements but also extend to newer models of integrated cross-sector qualification linkages.

The Policy Guidelines support a diversity of organisational models for forging links from individual partnerships between institutions to state-wide VET partnerships with individual higher education institutions to consortia models and national arrangements between Industry Training Advisory Bodies and partner universities.

The Guidelines have been developed with particular attention to reforms in the VET sector involving the introduction of Training Packages and the Australian Quality Training Framework.

These Policy Guidelines relate to formal linkages between qualifications across sectors.

2.   Objectives of the Policy Guidelines

These Guidelines have been developed to provide the organisations involved in determining structured cross-sector qualification linkages with a framework to guide and facilitate these arrangements.

The Guidelines are also designed to provide students and other interested individuals and organisations with information about these processes to assist general understanding and to clarify pathways and outcomes.

The Guidelines are based on acceptance of and support for a diverse set of arrangements and models for linking qualifications across the sectors. Different models have different strengths and reflect differing needs and contexts. The intent is to encourage a diversity of approach.

Specific Objectives of the Policy Guidelines

These Guidelines have been developed to:-

- provide advice at the national level on developing cross-sector linkages between qualifications

- assist organisations involved in developing structured cross-sector qualification linkages by identifying key processes, models and approaches

- promote the continuing development of diverse structured cross-sector qualification linkages by organisations

- facilitate the establishment of diverse educational and training pathways for individuals participating in tertiary education

- give effect to lifelong learning.

3.   General Principles

3.1   The AQF provides an agreed framework for designing, developing and issuing recognised qualifications within Australia and for supporting linkages between these qualifications

3.2   Individual qualifications set the benchmarks for establishing linkages. In higher education, individual universities determine qualifications content and accredit their own courses. In VET, qualifications are based on competencies and established through industry defined Training Packages and/or through accredited courses developed by State Accreditation Authorities , Registered Training Organisations and other bodies.

3.3   Cross-sectoral qualification linkages are critical to the achievement of a more efficient, open, integrated and relevant education system that can meet the challenge of rapidly changing needs and priorities for knowledge and skill development, including continuous skilling and lifelong learning.

3.4   In addition to providing more efficient pathways between qualifications, cross-sector qualification linkages should seek to add value to the learning outcomes for students through development of different approaches to qualification structures.

3.5   Cross-sector qualification linkages can be established between any of the qualification titles in the AQF, not only between proximate qualifications such as the Advanced Diploma and Bachelor degree, and can take a variety of forms including sequential and concurrent studies. Appropriate care is to be exercised to avoid combinations of qualifications that are not justified.

3.6   Qualification linkages may be focused on a VET to higher education learning pathway or a higher education to VET learning pathway.

3.7   Qualification linkages should incorporate admission arrangements in a transparent way, as part of the agreed arrangements.

3.8 Where appropriate and relevant, linkages between qualifications should identify credit relationships between one qualification and another. Not all qualification linkages will involve granting credit for previous qualifications.

3.9 Where credit arrangements are established through a structured qualification linkage, the credit should be awarded to individuals who have evidence of achievement without the need for further assessment or demonstration of the relevant knowledge/skills.

3.10 The formal agreement of a qualification linkage is determined by the organisation issuing the end-point award.

3.11 The decision to develop qualification linkages is a matter for individual authorised organisations to determine in collaboration with each other.

3.12 Information about qualification linkages should be widely disseminated to students as part of enrolment information.

4.   Operational Advice

Developing linkages between qualifications

● The bodies authorised to develop and/or issue AQF qualifications should consider the development of cross-sector qualification linkages as part of their responsibilities under the AQF.

● Linkages should define transparent and coherent relationships between the qualifications.

● Linkages will generally be developed between qualifications involving the same, similar or complementary specialisations/fields of study.

● Arrangements reflecting linkages between general and specialised qualifications may also be developed, where appropriate.

● Linkages should reflect and recognise different education and training pathways for achievement.

Processes for developing qualification linkages

● Structured qualification linkages can be established through a number of processes. These include:

 – articulation of existing awards

 – credit transfer between components of existing awards

 – integrated dual-sector sequential awards

 – integrated dual sector-concurrent programs.

● Each of these processes is suited to different purposes and circumstances. Integrated dual-sector awards provide for linkages to be considered as part of the qualification development process, articulation provides a sequential pathway between qualifications whilst credit transfer provides a means of linking individual components of existing awards.

● Where credit transfer is applied, consideration needs to be given as to whether full or partial credit transfer is granted. This will depend on the field or area and the

relationship between the university subjects and the specific requirements of the competencies in the VET qualification.

● In a dual-sector award, credit arrangements should be identified as part of the agreed structure of the award.

Basis of determining the qualification linkage

● Linkages are generally based on a content relationship in which parts of one qualification are recognised as having equivalence with or are integrated into another qualification.

● Some linkages may also be based on acceptance of agreed relativities between different qualifications in the AQF. These linkages may also involve content interrelationships.

Content equivalence

● Linkages that are determined through a content relationship are established primarily through identification and assessment of same, similar or complementary knowledge and skill requirements across the linked qualifications.

● The instrument used to establish the content linkage is the relevant components of the Training Package, and/or accredited course curriculum (in qualifications recognised outside Training Packages), which are related to and assessed against the learning objectives and/or subject/unit descriptions of the relevant higher education qualifications.

Linkages using Training Package qualifications

● In Training Package derived qualifications, competencies should be used as the instruments to identify content equivalences with higher education qualifications. Training Package Support Materials, including the learning strategies and assessment materials, can also be used as additional tools to identify the linkage, where these materials will more clearly assist in identifying the relationships between the VET qualification and the higher education qualification.

● Where competencies are used directly as the linkage instrument, the whole content of the competency needs to be considered to ensure all knowledge and skills relevant to the linkage have been identified. A key aspect of the competency to be considered is the Evidence Guide.

● Where learning strategies are used as an additional instrument, the relationship between these materials and the competencies that define the qualification in the Training Package needs to be clearly evident.

Linkages using accredited courses

● Where the qualifications in VET are based on accredited courses, a content linkage should be determined by comparing the modules of the VET curriculum against the subject content of the higher education courses.

● All content-based linkages will be assisted by clear identification in the relevant higher education qualifications of expected learning outcomes and individual subject/unit descriptions.

Linkages based on agreed relativities between qualifications

- Linkages that incorporate an agreed connection and credit value between awards are suited to articulation and dual qualification arrangements that establish a sequential or concurrent pathway, particularly between Diploma level qualifications and Bachelor Degrees.

- These linkages are usually predicated on an accepted equivalence in content across a similar field or discipline between the linked awards.

Guide to credit levels

- The following linkage relationships are identified as a guide in developing articulation arrangements and dual award qualifications in the same fields between Diploma and Bachelor qualifications. Depending on the particular nature of the awards being linked actual credit levels may be greater or less than the recommended level.[1]

    - 50% credit for an Advanced Diploma when linked to a three year Bachelor degree

    - 37.5% credit for an Advanced Diploma when linked to a four year Bachelor degree

    - 33% credit for a Diploma when linked to a three year Bachelor degree

    - 25% credit for a Diploma when linked to a four year Bachelor degree.

Application of the linkage

- The specific organisation(s) involved in the linkage process will determine which process to use in determining a linkage.

- It is accepted that differing credit outcomes may be established to reflect the differing requirements of individual awards.

- Linkages only have application between the agreed parties.

Responsibility for developing qualification linkages

- Responsibility for developing qualification linkages, between VET and higher education and higher education and VET is the responsibility of universities in partnership with:

    - individual Registered Training Organisations

    - Training Package Developers

    - State Accreditation Authorities.

Responsibility for endorsement and maintenance

- The formal endorsement of a linkage should be given by the institution/authority responsible for issuing the destination qualification.

- Maintenance of the linkage is the responsibility of the partnership organisations.

- A Training Package Endorsement and/or Review and/or course accreditation in VET or a restructuring of the higher education qualification is the catalyst for review of linkage arrangements.

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1 The recommended levels of credit may be reviewed in the future following monitoring and analysis of the acutal levels of credit granted.

Credit outcomes

● Where Credit is an outcome of the formal linkage, it is standardised, that is, the quantum of credit is predetermined as part of the linkage process.

● The quantum of standardised credit in qualification linkages will vary with each linkage and is dependent upon the level of agreed overlap and equivalence and the agreed relationships between awards.

Factors impacting on credit

● Credit should not be conditional on students meeting other substituted requirements in order to make up a 'normal load'.

● Individuals who have completed part of the relevant previous award may be entitled to receive credit for the specific components they have achieved. Restraints on credit may be employed where there is a significant time elapse between achievement of the qualification/part qualification and an application for credit in the destination qualification.

● Full credit from higher education to VET may not be possible for all university units when related to competencies.

● Full credit from VET to higher education may not be possible for all competencies when related to university units.

Forms of credit

● Credit can be granted in different forms. These include specified credit, unspecified credit and block credit. The form of credit will depend on the circumstances and context. Variables may include:-

  – the linkage process

  – the qualifications being linked

  – the discipline areas.

● As a general guide:

  – specified credit is most relevant to credit transfer based linkages based on specific content linkages, ie module Y in VET is equivalent to unit X in higher education;

  – specified credit is also the most appropriate form for incomplete qualifications;

  – unspecified credit is most appropriate to articulation arrangements based on agreed relative value of awards being linked and/or linkages between generic qualifications;

  – unspecified credit taken as a block is most appropriate in dual and nested awards.

Provision of information to individuals

● Organisations involved in establishing structured qualification linkages, with or without credit, should disseminate information on their arrangements via Faculty Handbooks, Websites and through State/Territory Admissions Centres.

- Information about linkages should include advice that indicates the existence of a pathway/linkage between qualifications does not imply automatic entry into the destination qualification. However, if admission is part of the agreement, this should be clearly stated.

- 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.

- Information about linkages which involve the applicant incurring costs should indicate whether, and in what form, such costs will be recovered.

Appeal mechanisms

- An effective means of appeal should be established in each institution in relation to credit transfer/articulation decisions. In the VET sector, the Australian Quality Training Framework Standards For Registered Training Organisations provide for investigation of complaints.

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 issuance 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 AQTF requirements when intending to issue vocational education and training sector Australian Qualification Framework qualifications.

Vocational Education and Training Sector

While each State/Territory has legislative responsibility for authorising the issuance of the qualification, the AQTF provides nationally agreed principles for the registration of Registered Training Organisations (RTOs). RTOs may issue qualifications and these qualifications 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 VET qualifications they must conform to the Standards outlined in the AQTF.

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. Prior learning may include training and courses undertaken outside the AQF and informal learning gained through work or other life experience.

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 usually be an RTO.

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 qualifications** issued under the Framework will include the following elements:

- name, code 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 must also include the Nationally Recognised Training logo and may include the State/Territory Training Authority logo (see AQTF *Standards for Registered Training Organisations*, particularly Standards 10 and 11 and 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.

6. Suggested Form: Qualifications

NAME AND LOGO OF ISSUING BODY
(For VET sector name of RTO and RTO code.)

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 2001

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, code 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 competency;

- Training Package or Accredited Course;

- AQF qualification partly completed, competencies within a Training Package or name of the Nationally Accredited Course;

- 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'.

8. Suggested Form: Statement of Attainment

NAME AND LOGO OF ISSUING BODY
(For VET sector name of RTO and RTO code.)

This is a statement that

JANE SMITH

has been assessed as having fulfilled
the following requirements
[list units of competency]

in partial completion of the following qualification
[or completion of a nationally accredited short course]

Dated 30 September 2001

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.

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
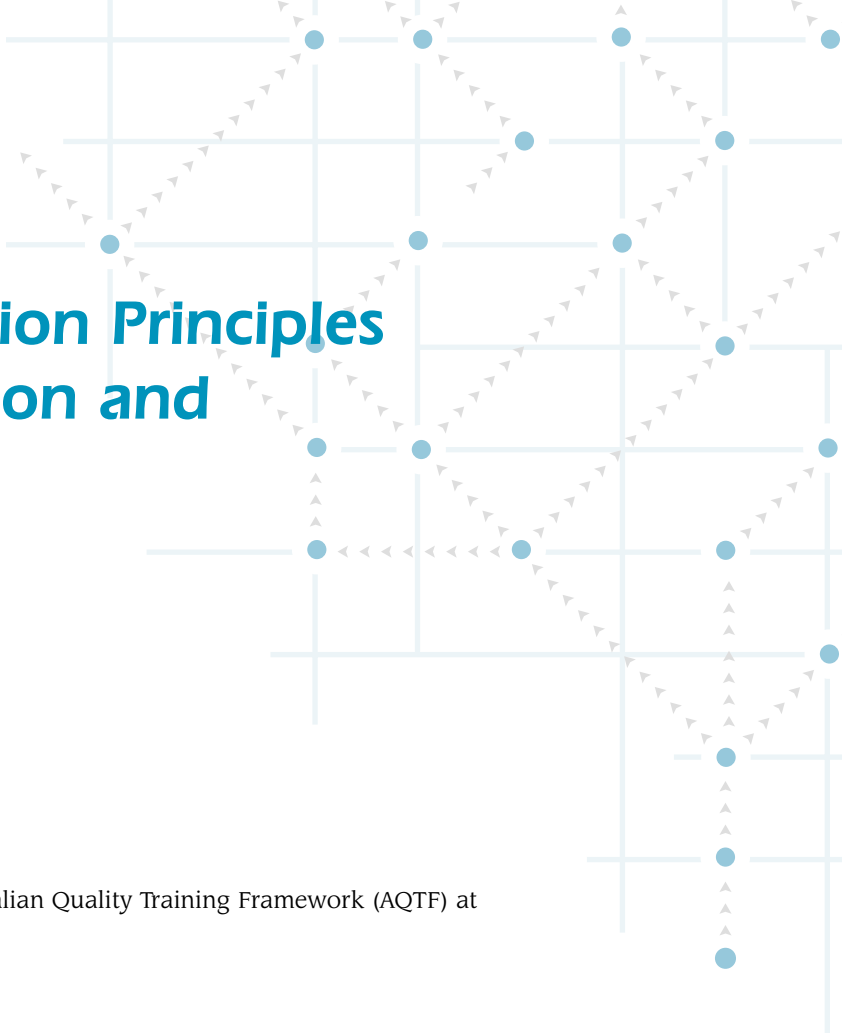# Training Reference Documents

- *Standards for Registered Training Origanisations*

- *Standards for State and Territory Registering/Course Accrediting Bodies*

- *Guide to Good Practice in AQTF Auditing*

- *Transition Guide for Registered Training Organisations*

- *AQTF Standards for Registered Training Organisations – An Evidence Guide*

- *AQTF Companion Guide for Registered Training Organisations*

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

Tel: (03) 9630 9800

Fax: (03) 9630 9888

www.anta.gov.au

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

See information on the Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF) at www.anta.gov.au