



The Australian Council on Tertiary Awards



GUIDELINES FOR THE NATIONAL REGISTRATION OF AWARDS

1989

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I. ESTABLISHMENT AND ROLE OF ACTA

Establishment

The Australian Council on Tertiary Awards (ACTA) was set up in January 1985 by the Australian Education Council (AEC), which consists of the Ministers with responsibility for education in the States, the Northern Territory and the Commonwealth.

ACTA took over the work of the Australian Council on Awards in Advanced Education (ACAAE) in October 1985.

Functions

ACTA has the following functions:

1. to promote consistency throughout Australia in the nomenclature used for tertiary awards and in the standards of courses leading to those awards;
2. to encourage the development of consistent relationships between courses and their associated awards;
3. to establish and maintain liaison with the authorised bodies nominated by the State, Northern Territory and the Commonwealth Ministers with responsibility for education, and with other relevant bodies;
4. to provide an information service at a national level in connection with the courses and awards registered;
5. to establish, maintain and publish a National Register of Tertiary Awards;
6. to issue guidelines on the information to be contained in the Register, the nomenclature of awards and standards of courses for various awards, their registration and periodic reregistration, and the general conditions under which awards attaching to accredited courses may be included in the Register;
7. to monitor adherence to these guidelines.

Powers

The AEC has agreed that to carry out these functions ACTA should have the power to satisfy itself that the conditions and procedures used by the State, Northern Territory and Commonwealth authorised bodies in the assessment of courses are such as to merit national registration of associated awards.

Consideration of applications

ACTA will consider only applications for registration submitted by bodies authorised to do so by the relevant State/Territory/Commonwealth Minister member of the AEC.

Membership

Mr D J Little, AO, FIEAust, FTS, Consulting Engineer and former Director-General of Public Works in Victoria, was first appointed as Chairman of ACTA by the Australian Education Council in May 1985. His current term of appointment ends in May 1990.

There are two members of ACTA for each State, the Northern Territory and the Commonwealth. One member has a background of knowledge and experience of higher education and the other of technical and further education.

The membership of ACTA at 1 December 1988 is set out at Appendix 5.

The seventeen-member Council meets three or four times a year.

The Functions, Powers and Methods of Operation Statement of ACTA, as agreed by the AEC, is set out in Appendix 1.

II. INTRODUCTION TO THE GUIDELINES

1. The purpose of these guidelines is to provide information on the policies and procedures adopted by ACTA in carrying out those functions set for it by the Ministers which relate to the system of awards approved for national use in tertiary education.
2. ACTA has formulated guidelines for awards in consultation with authorised bodies (see Appendix 6). During 1988 ACTA reviewed the offering of honours degrees and degrees with honours and framed guidelines for the graduate certificate award and for doctoral awards.
3. The guidelines deal with nomenclature of awards and the general conditions under which ACTA will accept these awards for inclusion in the National Register. The principles set down should assist the various authorised bodies and institutions to maintain a consistent national pattern of awards.

III. CATEGORIES AND NOMENCLATURE OF AWARDS

4. For the purpose of registering awards, the AEC has adopted nine categories as follows:

Certificate
Advanced Certificate
Associate Diploma
Diploma
Bachelor Degree
Graduate Certificate
Graduate Diploma
Master Degree
Doctor of Philosophy Degree

5. Courses leading to each of these awards though essentially designed as entities in themselves could also serve as components in courses leading to other awards. Some courses might be designed to facilitate transfer from one institution to another with maximum credit. Such arrangements might arise from transitions of the following kinds:

- Certificate or Advanced Certificate to Associate Diploma or Diploma
- Associate Diploma to Diploma or Bachelor Degree
- Diploma to Bachelor Degree

In other cases advanced standing may be awarded to students successfully completing one award who wish to proceed to a higher level award in that field. Advanced standing is generally dealt with on a course by course basis. In some instances a course in its entirety rather than individual units may be considered — eg. an associate diploma could give up to two years' standing towards a related diploma or one year's standing towards a related degree.

6. The Council has adopted standard nomenclature and will enter, as ACTA awards in the National Register, courses whose titles follow the nomenclature pattern set out below.

For certificate, advanced certificate, and graduate certificate awards provision has been made for titles of a specific nature.

Certificate in . . . (specific disciplinary area)
Cert . . . (area abbreviated)

Advanced Certificate in . . . (specific disciplinary area)
Adv Cert . . . (area abbreviated)

Graduate Certificate in . . . (specific disciplinary area)
Grad Cert . . . (area abbreviated)

Doctoral degrees are designated as Doctor of Philosophy (PhD).

For the other categories of awards, ten generic titles have been adopted as set out in the table below. 'Health Science' and 'Social Science' were added in 1987.

ACTA applied generic titles to associate diplomas and graduate diplomas with effect from 1 January 1987.

The Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission *Field of Study Classification of Higher Education Courses*, AGPS, Canberra, 1986, is to be used to determine the appropriate generic title. Courses in Agriculture, Veterinary Science, Building, Surveying and Science would usually be registered under the generic title 'Applied Science'.

The Council would prefer that courses in health related fields be registered under the title 'Health Science', but will continue to register these courses under 'Applied Science' if requested to do so by the authorised body. Because of long standing practice, ACTA will continue to register the undergraduate Diploma in 'Education' under the title Diploma of Teaching as well as Diploma of Education. It commends the use of the title Diploma of Education to institutions and authorised bodies.

The following table shows the ten generic titles and sets out ACTA's approved abbreviations for awards.

Generic Titles	Associate Diploma of	Diploma of	Bachelor of	Graduate Diploma of	Master of
Applied Science	Assoc Dip App Sc	Dip App Sc	B App Sc	Grad Dip App Sc	M App Sc
Architecture	Assoc Dip Arch	Dip Arch	B Arch	Grad Dip Arch	M Arch
Arts	Assoc Dip A	Dip A	B A	Grad Dip A	M A
Business	Assoc Dip Bus	Dip Bus	B Bus	Grad Dip Bus	M Bus
Education	Assoc Dip Ed	Dip Ed or Dip Teach	B Ed	Grad Dip Ed	M Ed
Engineering	Assoc Dip Eng	Dip Eng	B Eng	Grad Dip Eng	M Eng
Health Science	Assoc Dip Hlth Sc	Dip Hlth Sc	B Hlth Sc	Grad Dip Hlth Sc	M Hlth Sc
Law	Assoc Dip Law	Dip Law	LL B	Grad Dip Law	LL M
Music	Assoc Dip Mus	Dip Mus	B Mus	Grad Dip Mus	M Mus
Social Science	Assoc Dip Soc Sc	Dip Soc Sc	B Soc Sc	Grad Dip Soc Sc	M Soc Sc

The National Register shows the generic title of an award and the course emphasis.

The registered title of the award may include the specific subject area, either in brackets or in the form 'in . . . (subject area)'. Examples are:

Bachelor of Applied Science (Surveying)
Bachelor of Applied Science in Surveying

The ACTA-approved abbreviation would be B App Sc in each case.

Where institutions or authorised bodies use titles for awards other than those set out in these *Guidelines*, these local titles will be shown in the National Register as a footnote only.

7. ACTA recognises that an award for a course in the TAFE national classification system might have added to it one or more *Endorsements* for successful completion of courses offered by TAFE subsequent to the initial course. Also, ACTA recognises the issue of a *Statement of Attainment* in similar circumstances, but where the initial award was not an accredited course in the TAFE classification system.

An overview of the TAFE stream classifications in the national classification system adopted by the AEC is provided in Appendix 2, for the information of authorised bodies and educational institutions.

IV. GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR REGISTRATION OF AWARDS

- 8.** Courses in the bachelor degree, diploma and associate diploma categories normally require as the level of entry satisfactory completion of Year 12 in an Australian secondary school system or equivalent. In all cases, decisions on course entry may take into account maturity and work experience.
- 9.** Minimum entry requirements for certificate and advanced certificate courses vary extensively depending on the educational objectives of each course and the background of the students entering the course. In addition to traditional entry direct from secondary school, opportunities to enter courses are provided for students with a mix of school, work experience and post-school education backgrounds. Certificate and advanced certificate courses with similar educational objectives often proceed along different educational paths reflecting local employment and legal requirements in the various States and Territories.
- 10.** A course may be submitted for national registration by a State, Northern Territory or Commonwealth authorised body. It will be accepted for national registration only if it has been accredited in accordance with ACTA-endorsed accreditation procedures and meets both the national nomenclature requirements and the ACTA definition for the award proposed.
- 11.** ACTA may register awards submitted by the authorised body in the name of one or more individual institutions; in the name of the course providing agency only; or in the name of the course providing agency together with that of one or more institutions.
- 11.1** When awards are registered in the name of the course providing agency, it will be on the understanding that the authorised body may agree, in accordance with its accepted accreditation procedures, to the presentation of the course at an institution or institutions nominated by the course providing agency. ACTA is to be advised when the authorised body agrees to the presentation of the course at an institution which was not included in the original application for registration.
- 11.2** Where an award is registered in the name of a providing agency, or one or more specific institutions, ACTA will expect the authorised body to be satisfied that the staff and other resources available at the institutions, at the time of request for registration, are appropriate.
- 12.** Before registering an award, ACTA needs to be assured by the authorised body concerned that appropriate consideration has been given to the following:
 - 12.1** the general educational practices and standards of the institution(s) or system;
 - 12.2** the objectives of the particular course and the methods adopted to achieve these objectives;
 - 12.3** admission requirements to the course;
 - 12.4** the duration of the course, having regard to entry requirements and course objectives;
 - 12.5** the breadth, depth and balance in the course material involved and the intellectual effort required; the procedures for approval of research projects where appropriate;
 - 12.6** the methods of assessment of student progress, including the use of external examiners for higher degrees;
 - 12.7** the relative emphasis on the teaching of skills in relation to the study of the discipline;
 - 12.8** any arrangements for practical training and experience as part of the course;
 - 12.9** the teaching staff conducting the course, including numbers, professional qualifications and experience, educational expertise and ability to service the particular mode(s) of offering the course;
 - 12.10** the accommodation and facilities including equipment, library, laboratories, workshops and other instructional or research resources, as necessary for the particular course;
 - 12.11** transfer arrangements between the course and other courses.

V. GUIDELINES FOR REGISTRATION WITHIN AWARD CATEGORIES

Certificate Awards

- 13.** Courses leading to this award develop
(a) basic education or employment skills, or the knowledge and skills needed to undertake further education
OR
(b) the skills and associated knowledge for the performance of a limited range of skilled operations
OR
(c) the knowledge and skills required to work in a specific vocation, recognised trade or craft requiring a high degree of skill usually in a range of related activities, performed with a minimum of direction and supervision.

The entry level for certificate courses is often not specified, but some courses may require satisfactory completion of Year 10 in an Australian secondary school system or equivalent. Complementary work experience may be required. Certificate courses vary in length from very short courses to 1.5 years full-time or part-time equivalent study.

Advanced Certificate Awards

- 14.** Courses leading to this award develop knowledge and skills beyond the normal level of relevant skilled occupations and/or prepare students to work in first-level supervisory/administrative and management positions. Courses normally develop the abilities of students to identify, analyse and resolve problems typically found in work situations, to interact with individuals and small groups, to assure quality and productivity, and to communicate orally and in writing at a standard appropriate to this level of employment. Students may enter from completion of a certificate course or from completion of compulsory schooling, generally Year 10 in an Australian school system or equivalent.

Advanced certificates designed for entry from a certificate should extend the skills and knowledge provided in the pre-requisite certificate course. Such courses usually require study over two years part-time or equivalent.

Advanced certificates designed for direct entry from compulsory schooling are programs which generally embrace both basic and advanced skills and knowledge relating to an advanced vocational outcome. These courses usually require from one to two years full-time study or the equivalent.

Relevant work experience concurrent with study for the advanced certificate may be required.

Associate Diploma Awards

- 15.** ACTA recognises two types of courses within this category:

- (a) Courses which place considerable emphasis on the development of skills or knowledge of a specific area. These courses will normally be associated with employment in a designated occupation or vocation, either independently or in support of professional or other paraprofessional staff. They may give eligibility for membership of a paraprofessional association.
- (b) Courses which treat a number of subject areas at a level appropriate to a general understanding of a field of knowledge and with emphasis on breadth rather than study in depth in one specific area.

ACTA would expect that students will be considered for admission to such courses after completion of a full secondary education, but recognises that institutions will consider other factors such as practical experience, maturity and motivation relating to likely success.

Courses in this category normally require as the level of entry satisfactory completion of Year 12 in an Australian school system or equivalent. Students who have not completed Year 12 would be expected to complete bridging/supplementary studies which ensure an adequate preparation to achieve the educational objectives of the course. This supplementary work would normally take one year of full-time study or equivalent.

These courses will normally require two years full-time or equivalent study. However, the Council is willing to consider for national registration within this category courses of less than two years' duration if a condition of entry to such courses is previous experience relevant to the course of study being undertaken.

An associate diploma course should be designed as a complete educational program and should not be planned solely as a component of a degree or a diploma course, although transfer with appropriate credit through cooperative arrangements between institutions is envisaged.

Diploma Awards

16. ACTA recognises two types of courses in this category

- (a) Courses which are designed to cover a specific field of activity, combining the acquisition of skills and knowledge in an integrated program leading to a basic qualification for some professions, usually prior to employment in the field. These courses will thus provide for development of basic professional competence and understanding of the problems of the profession sufficient to meet the registration requirements of specific professional bodies and the needs of major employers in those professional areas. This will usually involve significant periods of practical experience in developing professional skills, supported by the employers and the professions.
- (b) Courses not directly related to professional qualifications, broadly treating a number of subjects.

Council would expect that students will be considered for admission to such courses after satisfactory completion of a full secondary education, but recognises that institutions will consider other factors such as practical experience, maturity and motivation relating to likely success.

Courses in this category normally require as the level of entry satisfactory completion of Year 12 in an Australian school system or equivalent.

The achievement of the accepted educational objectives for these courses will normally require three years of full-time (or equivalent) study. However the Council is willing to consider for national registration within this category courses less than three years in duration which give credit for previous relevant formal training.

Bachelor Degree Awards

17. Courses leading to awards in this category provide students with a systematic and coherent introduction to a body of knowledge, the underlying principles and concepts, and the associated problem-solving techniques. Students are expected to develop the academic skills and attitudes needed to comprehend and evaluate new information, concepts and evidence from a range of sources, so that after completion of a degree, they can continue to review, consolidate, extend and apply the knowledge gained in their undergraduate studies. A bachelor degree course usually includes the provision of major studies in which a significant literature is available, course content is taken to a significant depth and knowledge is progressively developed to a high level which provides a basis for postgraduate study.

Courses in this category normally require as the level of entry satisfactory completion of Year 12 in an Australian school system or equivalent.

The Council considers that a minimum of three years of full-time or equivalent study is required.

Many degree courses equip students with the practical skills and techniques needed to apply their knowledge effectively in a professional context. Such courses will be longer in duration, by at least a semester of full-time or equivalent study, and often by a full year.

Conversion of Diploma to Degree

18. Conversion of a diploma to a degree should recognise the essential features of such diplomas as defined by ACTA. Since a diploma is expected to have substantial time given to the acquisition of practical skills and techniques in preparation for a specific professional field, ACTA considers that at least one year of full-time academic study is necessary to extend the knowledge base to that of a three-year degree. This may be associated with or may post-date a period of professional experience.

Honours Degrees and Degrees with Honours

19. As from June 1988 ACTA has decided to register honours degrees and degrees with honours. ACTA's approach is similar to that adopted by the universities, which determine the conditions for honours awards according to the length of the basic degree course.

In the case of degree courses of three years' duration, the award of an honours degree would require the completion of an additional year of full-time study, or its equivalent, by students who had a record of outstanding achievement from an early stage in the basic degree. The additional year would be spent predominantly on a research project. ACTA does not consider that a program comprising predominantly course work should qualify for an honours degree; it believes that such programs should lead to the award of a graduate diploma.

Because the program undertaken by students proceeding to an honours degree under these circumstances would be significantly different from that for the pass degree, ACTA will register the honours degree separately from the pass degree.

In the case of degree courses of four or more years (for example courses preparing students for professional practice in a field such as engineering), a degree with honours may be awarded to students who have recorded outstanding achievement in the four-year program, provided that the students have been identified for their meritorious performance no later than the end of

the third year of the program and provided that a more demanding program is required of them in the later stages of the course. This additional requirement may or may not involve additional contact hours, but the nature of the higher level of expectation should be clearly documented on the application for registration. In this case, ACTA will not register the honours award as a separate degree, but will note in the register that the degree is available 'with honours'.

A degree with honours will not be registered for programs of less than four years duration.

ACTA would prefer to see honours degrees and degrees with honours graded as either first class or second class, believing that to delineate further is to negate the concept of excellence on which the notion of honours is founded. It nevertheless appreciates that institutions may, for reasons associated with study allowances, feel obliged to divide the second class into two sub-classes, in which case ACTA will note this on the register. ACTA will not register a third class honours grade.

ACTA wishes to ensure a consistency in the offering of honours awards. It commends to institutions the adoption of guidelines set out in the Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee document *Code of Good Practice for Maintaining and Monitoring Academic Quality and Standards*, AVCC, Canberra, 1987.

Graduate Awards

20. There is, in higher education, a coherent system of graduate awards within which each institution would be expected to frame its graduate course offerings. These courses should be designed to recognise the needs and aspirations of the participants and build upon their previous academic, professional and vocational experience. Such course offerings would typically include:

- (a) graduate certificate and graduate diploma courses which aim to develop, or to build upon, in academic breadth, skills and knowledge from previous undergraduate studies. They will be taught at a level appropriate to a graduate intake: that is, students who have satisfactorily completed a degree or diploma.
- (b) graduate diploma, master degree courses and doctoral programs which aim to extend in depth, skills and knowledge developed in previous undergraduate or postgraduate studies.

Graduate Certificate Awards

21. Graduate certificate courses will be designed for specific vocational purposes. They will broaden or develop professional knowledge and skills either already gained in an undergraduate program, or in a new area. Examples are Graduate Certificate in Information Technology following a Bachelor of Engineering or Graduate Certificate in Management following a degree in a field other than Business.

Graduate Certificate courses will generally require a minimum of half a year full-time or a full year of part-time study following the satisfactory completion of a degree or diploma course or its equivalent. Subject to the approval of the Minister in whose State/Territory the award is provided, graduate certificates may be offered by a range of providers, including TAFE.

The above paragraph replaces paragraph 21, page 15 of the *Guidelines For The National Registration of Awards*, AGPS, Canberra, 1989 as agreed by the Australian Council on Tertiary Awards (ACTA) at its seventeenth meeting on 14-15 June 1989.

or a qualification in another subject area, or

- extend skills and knowledge in a professional area previously studied; for example a specialised course in a certain aspect of engineering for graduates with an appropriate undergraduate degree in engineering or in a specialised area of teaching for fully qualified teachers.

Graduate diploma courses will normally require one year of full-time study or the part-time equivalent, generally following the satisfactory completion of a degree or diploma course or its equivalent.

Master Degree Awards

23. Master degree courses are intended to provide for intensive study in a particular field, usually focusing on professional development. They differ from other graduate courses in both length and objectives.

Candidates will have shown above average performance in studies for a bachelor degree, or have demonstrated in their professional activity potential to undertake master degree studies. Candidates who have performed at a high level in graduate studies which take to greater depth the field of previous undergraduate study may be considered to have completed part of the requirement for a master degree. They will pursue their subject area at a significantly higher level than that expected in a bachelor degree.

Graduate Certificate Awards

21. Graduate certificate courses will be provided in higher education institutions and will be designed for specific vocational purposes. They will broaden or develop professional knowledge and skills either already gained in an undergraduate program, or in a new area. Examples are Graduate Certificate in Information Technology following a Bachelor of Engineering or Graduate Certificate in Management following a degree in a field other than Business.

Graduate certificate courses will generally require a minimum of half a year full-time or a full year of part-time study following the satisfactory completion of a degree or diploma course or its equivalent.

Graduate Diploma Awards

22. Graduate diploma courses will either:

- develop a new academic, professional or vocational area; for example a course designed to provide a basic qualification in fields such as teaching or librarianship for those who have satisfactorily completed an acceptable qualification in another subject area, or
- extend skills and knowledge in a professional area previously studied; for example a specialised course in a certain aspect of engineering for graduates with an appropriate undergraduate degree in engineering or in a specialised area of teaching for fully qualified teachers.

Graduate diploma courses will normally require one year of full-time study or the part-time equivalent, generally following the satisfactory completion of a degree or diploma course or its equivalent.

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- (a) graduate certificate and graduate diploma courses which aim to develop, or to build upon, in academic breadth, skills and knowledge from previous undergraduate studies. They will be taught at a level appropriate to a graduate intake: that is, students who have satisfactorily completed a degree or diploma.
- (b) graduate diploma, master degree courses and doctoral programs which aim to extend in depth, skills and knowledge developed in previous undergraduate or postgraduate studies.

For candidates with a pass degree, the duration of study will normally be two years of full-time study or the part-time equivalent. In the case of candidates with an honours degree or where exceptional circumstances exist relating to previous study, the minimum time would be one calendar year of full-time study.

Master degrees may be awarded either for fully research-based activity or for courses of study combining research, project and course work in varying proportions, with the research or project work determined on an individual basis.

At least in cases where the major proportion of the course is by thesis, two examiners should be appointed. The supervisor should not be an examiner, and at least one of the two should be external to the institution. One guarantee of the standing of a program with a significant research component is the quality of the examiners.

Doctoral Awards

24. ACTA recognises that doctoral research awards serve a variety of purposes — those of the individual concerned, the academic institution and the agency which may be sponsoring the research. As the award is not confined to young researchers beginning an academic or research career, a traditional model of research program and supervision primarily on campus may not always be appropriate.

Accordingly, the Council wishes to encourage a variety of approaches to the selection of topics and supervisors. Topics could include multi-disciplinary problems suggested by bodies external to the institution, eg industry, government and commerce, with joint supervisors appointed from both academic and outside environments. The doctoral work could be undertaken either full-time or part-time and either on-campus or at an off-campus location approved by the academic institution. Doctoral programs may include, on a case by case basis, some coursework in support of the conduct of the research and preparation of the thesis but this should not involve a significant proportion of time and the assessment for the doctoral award will essentially be based on the thesis.

In framing the following guidelines, the Council takes it as axiomatic that the standards of attainment and examination required for doctoral awards shall be fully comparable with those existing in Australian universities. Academic institutions are expected to establish appropriate procedures and regulations to this end.

Doctoral degrees may be conferred on those who have undertaken an original research project resulting in a significant contribution to knowledge or understanding and/or the application of knowledge within the field of study.

The work generally includes a searching review of the literature, some experimentation or other systematic approach to the acquisition of knowledge and the preparation of a substantial and well-ordered thesis demonstrating a thorough understanding of the state of knowledge in the field of enquiry and the relationship of the research to the broader framework of the discipline.

Candidates will hold a master degree, or first degree with honours or equivalent, and will have demonstrated potential, in study and/or professional performance, to undertake doctoral work.

The duration of the work for full-time candidates will normally be three years.

At least two external examiners shall be appointed. The supervisor should not be an examiner.

Period of Registration of Awards

25. The period of registration of an award submitted for initial registration or renewal of registration will be decided by the Council.

The maximum period of initial registration for awards in all categories is five years from 1 January in the year in which the course commenced. Initial registration for up to five years will be in line with the accreditation period agreed by the authorised body. After this period it will be necessary for a further application to be made for renewal of registration of an award.

The maximum period for renewal of registration is seven years from the expiry of the previous registration. Authorised bodies may submit applications for renewal for a shorter period; in such cases the renewal of registration will match the reaccreditation period. Where the previous registration of an award has been extended, the period of renewal of registration may be reduced by the period of the extension of the previous registration.

Registration of an award in respect of a course which has undergone a major change during the period of registration will also need to be reviewed by ACTA at the time of the change. It will be left to authorised bodies to determine when a 'major' change takes place. The addition of a new major study to a course is an example of a major change.

Provisional Registration

26. Provisional registration of awards will be allowed where State or Territory procedures require courses to be accredited and registered before they commence. The maximum period of provisional registration is one year. The registration will be confirmed when the authorised body advises ACTA that the course has commenced.

APPENDIX 1

Retrospective Registration

27. Retrospective registration will be limited to two years before the year in which the application is submitted. The combined retrospective/forward registration period should not exceed the normal five or seven year period of registration. Exceptions may be allowed on the basis of extenuating circumstances.

Grading of Awards

28. A number of advantages accrue from a procedure which recognises excellence in student scholarship. However, in the interests of promoting consistency in such a classification system throughout Australia, only outstanding students should be so recognised. Awards for such students may be graded by using the term 'distinction'. For example, awards for those with outstanding performance throughout the course would be graded 'Certificate with distinction', 'Bachelor of Arts with distinction' or 'Graduate Diploma of Education with distinction'.

THE FUNCTIONS, POWERS AND METHODS OF OPERATION OF THE AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL ON TERTIARY AWARDS

(As approved by the Australian Education Council)

I ESTABLISHMENT

The Council was created in 1985 by agreement of the State, Northern Territory and Commonwealth Ministers with responsibility for education. It took over the functions of the Australian Council on Awards in Advanced Education in October 1985; accordingly:

There shall be a national body, to be known as the 'Australian Council on Tertiary Awards', established by the six States, the Northern Territory, and the Commonwealth acting jointly, which shall be responsible for registering tertiary awards in higher education and in Technical and Further Education (TAFE).

II FUNCTIONS

1. By consultation with and advice to State, Northern Territory and Commonwealth authorised bodies the Council shall:
 - (a) promote consistency throughout Australia in the nomenclature used for tertiary awards and in the standards of courses leading to those awards;
 - (b) encourage the development of consistent relationships between courses and their associated awards.
2. In order to promote wider understanding and appreciation of the higher education and TAFE sectors of tertiary education, the Council shall:
 - (a) establish and maintain liaison with the authorised bodies nominated by the State, Northern Territory and Commonwealth Ministers with responsibility for education, and with other relevant bodies;
 - (b) provide an information service at a national level in connection with the courses and the awards registered.
3. The Council shall establish, maintain and publish a National Register of Tertiary Awards.
4. The Council shall adopt and issue to the authorised bodies guidelines on:
 - (a) nomenclature of awards and standards of courses for various awards, their registration and periodic reregistration, and the general conditions

under which awards attaching to accredited courses may be included in the Register;

- (b) the information to be contained in the Register regarding each award.
5. The Council shall monitor adherence to these guidelines.
6. The Council shall report to the Ministers on its work in the first quarter of each calendar year and present a financial statement and a forward budget estimate for the following financial year including an assessment of resources needed to match forecast activity levels.

III POWERS

1. The Council shall:
 - (a) satisfy itself that the conditions and procedures used by the authorised bodies in the assessment of courses are such as to merit national registration of the associated awards;
 - (b) from time to time, review its own registration procedures and the accreditation procedures used by the authorised bodies;
 - (c) consider applications for the registration of awards only from a body authorised by the responsible Minister;
 - (d) enter an award in the Register on the certification by the authorised body that the course has been assessed and the award accredited; except that, after its own consideration of the submission, the Council may refer the request back to the authorised body for further consideration in the light of the guidelines issued by the Council and the accreditation procedures of the authorised body;
 - (e) if requested to do so, by a State, Northern Territory or Commonwealth authorised body, make arrangements for a course to be assessed on behalf of that body by another recognised authorised body. On receipt of a request for registration in respect of a course so assessed, the Council shall deal with the application under the conditions set out in (d).

IV METHODS OF OPERATION

1. **Coordination of national registration arrangements**
 - (a) In discharging its functions the Council shall maintain effective relationships with the authorised bodies nominated by the responsible Ministers;
 - (b) The Council may in cooperation with authorised bodies from time to time review its guidelines and nomenclature for awards.
2. **Publication of information on registrations**
 - (a) The Council shall notify an authorised body in writing of courses submitted by that body which have been accepted and entered in the National Register of Tertiary Awards. This information may then be published by the authorised body or the institution offering the course.
 - (b) The National Register of Tertiary Awards will be available for public inspection at the office of the Council.
 - (c) The Council will publish lists of registered tertiary awards from time to time.
3. **Membership (as determined by the Australian Education Council)**
 - (a) The Ministers responsible for education shall nominate two persons from their respective State, the Northern Territory or the Commonwealth as members of the Council, one of whom must have a background of knowledge and experience of TAFE and one of whom must have a background of knowledge and experience of higher education.
 - (b) The Chair of the Council shall be a person not involved in the teaching, organisation or administration of TAFE or higher education, and shall be appointed for an initial period of three years by the Chair of the Australian Education Council after consultation with members. Further terms of appointment may be made.
 - (c) Of the two representatives initially appointed for each State, the Northern Territory or the Commonwealth, one shall be appointed for a term of two years and one for a term of three years; all subsequent appointments shall be for a term of three years.
 - (d) Alternate members with full voting rights may be appointed by Ministers as necessary. The alternate members may be appointed for a fixed period or from time to time.
 - (e) The attendance and authority of observers at meetings shall be at the discretion of the Council.

APPENDIX 2

4. Secretariat arrangements

- (a) The Council shall have a Secretariat which will be located within the staff of the Commonwealth Department of Employment, Education and Training.
- (b) The Council may, within the budget, negotiate with the Commonwealth for the provision of necessary staffing resources.

5. Arrangements for meetings

The procedure for calling meetings of the Council, for the conduct of business at meetings and the meeting venues shall be determined by the Council.

6. Costs of operation

- (a) The costs of operation of the Council as approved annually will be contributed by each Minister on an equal-share basis.
- (b) The responsibility for requests for payment and for handling Council moneys will rest with officers of the ACTA secretariat.
- (c) Contributions will be sought in two equal six-monthly instalments in advance. The first instalment for each financial year is due on 1 July and the second instalment on 1 January. Acquittal of the budget will take place annually with any necessary adjustments effected in the following year's contributions.
- (d) The Ministers will meet the travel and associated costs of their own representatives: the costs of the Chairman and the secretariat will be met on an equal-share basis as part of the budget agreed annually.
- (e) The costs associated with meetings will be met by the host authorised bodies of the State and Territory in which the meeting is held.
- (f) The Chairman shall authorise appropriate expenditure from the budget agreed annually on costs of invited guests at Council functions, meetings and consultations.

7. Institutions to be considered

- (a) It shall be a matter for each Government to decide whether the operations of its authorised bodies are to be confined to institutions which are publicly financed or whether other institutions operating at tertiary level may apply for accreditation by the State, Territory or Commonwealth authorised body concerned. The Council will consider for registration awards in any type of institution if referred to it by the relevant authorised body.

Approved October 1985. Revised June 1986, February 1988 and September 1988.
The September 1988 revisions included replacement of references to advanced education with references to higher education.

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR CLASSIFICATION OF TAFE COURSES

A national classification system has been agreed by the AEC and is set out below. Courses in streams 2000 and 3000 are considered for national registration.

The AEC also agreed on a national nomenclature system for TAFE educational awards and established a fixed relationship between classification stream categories and the nomenclature of the award to be granted to courses in that category which meet national registration guidelines. 'Certificate' is the award for courses in streams 2000, 3100 and 3200, 'Advanced Certificate' for courses in stream 3300, 'Associate Diploma' for courses in streams 3400 and 3500 and 'Diploma' for courses in stream 3600. Courses in streams 1000 and 4000 are not put forward for national registration. A 'Statement of Attainment' or 'Endorsement' may be issued by an authorised body for courses in stream 4000.

A stream is a category of TAFE courses having a common purpose in terms of vocational or educational outcomes. At the broadest level, four major categories of streams are distinguished to provide a limited number of groups describing in broad terms the overall picture of TAFE course provision. The major stream categories are subdivided into sub-categories or minor streams which provide for more detailed description and analysis. Each major and minor stream is allocated a number for reference purposes.

The structure of major and minor streams is as follows:

APPENDIX 3

STREAM 1000:	COURSES FOR RECREATION, LEISURE AND PERSONAL ENRICHMENT
STREAM 2000:	COURSES FOR ENTRY TO EMPLOYMENT OR FURTHER EDUCATION
2100	Basic education and basic employment skills
2200	Educational preparation
STREAM 3000:	INITIAL VOCATIONAL COURSES
3100	Operatives
3200	Skilled
	3210 Courses for recognised trades
	3211 Courses which grant partial exemption in recognised trade courses
	3212 Complete trade courses
	3220 Other skills courses
	3221 Courses which grant partial exemption in other skills courses
	3222 Complete other skills courses
3300	Lower middle level Trade technician/trade supervisory/or equivalent
3400	Upper Paraprofessional/technician
3500	middle level Paraprofessional/higher technician
3600	Professional
STREAM 4000:	COURSES SUBSEQUENT TO AN INITIAL VOCATIONAL COURSE
4100	At an operative level
4200	At a skilled level
4300	At a trade technician/trade supervisory/or equivalent level
4400	At a paraprofessional/technician level
4500	At a paraprofessional/higher technician level or higher

This classification of TAFE courses has been adopted by the Australian Conference of TAFE Directors for national use. The procedures used for the classification of courses are set out in the *Classification Procedures Manual for TAFE Courses* authorised by the Australian Conference of TAFE Directors.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS USED

Accreditation	Accreditation provides certification that the standards of a course are appropriate to the award to which it leads and that the course and the methods adopted in delivering it are likely to achieve the purpose for which the course was or will be introduced.
Accrediting Authority	An authority empowered by a State/Territory or the Commonwealth to accredit courses.
Assessment Panel/Committee	A Panel or Committee appointed to assess a course on behalf of an Accrediting Authority. An Assessment Panel/Committee may be appointed by an Accrediting Authority in consultation with the institution concerned or, where responsibility for course assessment has been delegated, by the institution itself. A majority of members of Assessment Panels/Committees are expected to be from outside the institution which offers the course.
Authorised Body	A body in a State/Territory or the Commonwealth authorised by the relevant Minister member of the AEC to submit applications for registration to ACTA.
Award	Certification given in recognition of achievement in a course.
Awarding Authority	An authority that has the statutory power to grant an award to a student. In higher education the awarding authority is usually the Council of the institution offering the course. In the case of TAFE awards the awarding authority is generally a State Department of TAFE.
Award Nomenclature	The nationally accepted system of titles for awards used by ACTA.
Course	An approved program of study and, where appropriate, practical experience, based on stated admission criteria.
Course Assessment	The process by which the educational standard and appropriateness of a course is evaluated for accreditation purposes.
Course Emphasis	The major area of study within a course (eg Accountancy, Tourism).
Course Providing Agency	An education system or institution which has been approved by the State/Territory/Commonwealth accrediting authority to conduct a specific course.
Credit	The amount of advanced standing towards another award granted to a student on the basis of previous study or relevant work experience.

APPENDIX 4

COURSE ASSESSMENT POLICY

INTRODUCTION

ACTA will consider for national registration applications forwarded by authorised bodies which have been approved for this purpose by the Minister members of the Australian Education Council. In most States these bodies have responsibility for the accreditation of courses. In some States, however, the functions of authorisation and accreditation are separated. The terms authorised body and accrediting body are used as appropriate.

Since 1980 authorised bodies have devolved in varying degrees responsibility to institutions for the assessment of their own courses. In some cases, following a wide-ranging review, institutions have been delegated the responsibility to carry out the total course accreditation process. In such cases institutions are subject to monitoring and periodic review. In most States the accrediting power still rests with the authorised body or the State Minister with responsibility for education.

PURPOSE

ACTA's policies on the assessment of courses as advised to authorised bodies during 1987 are as follows.

MEMBERSHIP OF ASSESSMENT COMMITTEES/PANELS

Definition

An assessment committee or panel is appointed to assess a course on behalf of an accrediting authority or an institution. The committee/panel may be appointed by an accrediting authority in consultation with the institution concerned or by the institution itself where responsibility for course assessment has been delegated.

Chairperson

ACTA would prefer the person chairing the assessment committee to be external to the provider.

Categories to be involved

Assessors from at least three categories should be involved: academics (or those with specialised knowledge of the subject matter), employer groups, and professional bodies and other interests as applicable.

Proportion to be external

Courses submitted for registration must have been subjected to independent scrutiny by persons who have not been involved in the development, teaching or management of the course. At least half of the members of an assessment committee for a course submitted for registration should be external to the agency providing the course being assessed.

Membership from course advisory committees

To facilitate integration between the two key committees contributing to the review and accreditation processes, one or two members of the relevant course advisory committee may be included as members of the course assessment committee. Otherwise members of an assessment committee will generally not have been directly involved in the development of the course being assessed.

Men and women to be appointed

Both men and women should be included on assessment committees as in most fields suitably qualified men and women are available for appointment.

Appropriate qualifications and special experience

The majority of assessment committee members should have academic qualifications and/or experience appropriate to the level and field of study of the course. Others may be appointed for their special expertise, for example, in external studies.

Assessment committees for associate diploma, diploma, bachelor and master degree courses should include at least one academic external to the course provider.

For certificate and advanced certificate courses there may be occasions where no external academic is available. In such cases institutions/accrediting bodies should consider appointing someone with formal qualifications in education, eg an officer from the State Department of Education or a high school principal, to the panel.

Exceptions should be justified by the authorised body putting forward the applications.

Assessment of all major studies

A major study is a component, say one third of a course, taken to final year level. An assessment committee should contain members who are qualified to assess all major studies offered in the course under review.

APPENDIX 5

MEMBERSHIP OF ACTA AS AT 9 MARCH 1989

CHAIRMAN: Mr Don Little, AO, FIEAust, FTS, Consulting Engineer

MEMBERS:

New South Wales

Mr Ron Parry, AM, Director, Office of Higher Education,
New South Wales

Mr David Rumsey, Director, Studies, New South Wales Department
of TAFE

Victoria

Dr David Smith, Chairman, Victorian Post-Secondary Education
Accreditation Board

Mr John Rudolph, Assistant Director, Program Development,
State Training Board, Victoria

Queensland

Dr Peter Botsman, Chairman, Board of Advanced Education,
Queensland and Special Adviser on Post-Compulsory Education

Mr John Swan, General Manager (Vocational Education and Training),
Department of Employment, Vocational Education and Training,
Queensland

Western Australia

Dr Bill Pullman, Chairman, Western Australian Post Secondary
Education Commission

Mr Mike Cross, Executive Director, Office of TAFE,
Ministry of Education, Western Australia

South Australia

Dr Fred Ebbeck, Director, Office of Tertiary Education,
South Australia

Mr Barry Grear, AM Deputy Director-General of Technical and Further
Education, South Australia

Adding a major study to a 'parent' award is considered a major change and would require assessment for accreditation. Typically the assessment is carried out by a smaller assessment committee than would be required for the whole course. This small assessment committee concentrates on the additional major study/studies. Accreditation is then granted to the end of the period of accreditation of the 'parent' award. At the time of the next review, all major studies are reaccredited at the one time.

Consultants

Consultants may be asked to assist in the assessment of courses. These are used in a variety of ways: to assess specialised areas of the course; to give an opinion on the course documentation without participating in the meeting of the panel or visiting the institution offering the course; or to assess an aspect of the course after the panel has presented its report. The purpose for which a consultant was used should be documented on the application for registration.

External mode

Where a course is offered in the external mode at least one member with experience of external mode offering should be appointed to the assessment committee.

Membership from other sectors

ACTA considers that there would be benefits for both the higher education and the TAFE sectors if, where appropriate, each sought representation from the other sector on course assessment committees. Such arrangements should enhance understanding between the two sectors. ACTA has suggested to authorised bodies that they encourage institutions to adopt this practice where appropriate.

ASSESSMENT OF COURSE AGAINST CURRENT GUIDELINES

The Council will not automatically re-register awards. Where awards which were first registered against an earlier set of guidelines come to ACTA for reregistration, the Council would expect that the necessary adjustments had been made in order that the course meets the current guidelines.

APPENDIX 6

ACTA

Tasmania

Dr Coleman O'Flaherty, Director, Tasmanian State Institute of Technology

Mr John Phillips, Director (TAFE Operations), Education Department of Tasmania

Northern Territory

Mrs Nan Giese, Former Chairman, Northern Territory Council of Advanced Education

Ms Kath Phelan, Acting Deputy Secretary, TAFE, Department of Education, Northern Territory

Commonwealth

Dr Gregor Ramsey, Chairman, Higher Education Council, National Board of Employment, Education and Training

Mr Des Fooks, First Assistant Secretary, TAFE and Skills Formation Division, Department of Employment, Education and Training

SECRETARIAT

Executive Officer: Mrs Sue Grahame

Secretary: Miss Helen Jackson

ADDRESSES OF AUTHORISED BODIES AT 9 MARCH 1989

NEW SOUTH WALES
Office of Higher Education, NSW
5th Floor, ADC House
189 Kent Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000
Telephone: (02) 237 6500

Department of TAFE, NSW
323 Castlereagh Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000
PO Box K638
HAYMARKET NSW 2000
Telephone: (02) 289 7777

VICTORIA
Victorian Post-Secondary
Education Commission
21 Coppin Grove
HAWTHORN VIC 3122
PO Box 346
HAWTHORN VIC 3122
Telephone: (03) 819 1511

State Training Board, Victoria
Ministry of Education
3rd level, South Tower
Rialto Towers
525 Collins Street
MELBOURNE VIC 3004
GPO Box 266D
MELBOURNE VIC 3004
Telephone: (03) 628 2333

QUEENSLAND
Board of Advanced Education,
Queensland
15 Lissner Street
TOOWONG QLD 4066
PO Box 336
TOOWONG QLD 4066
Telephone: (07) 371 3822

Department of Employment,
Vocational Education
and Training
Education House
30 Mary Street
BRISBANE QLD 4000
PMB 3
SOUTH BRISBANE QLD 4101
Telephone: (07) 237 1335

WESTERN AUSTRALIA
Western Australian Council on
Tertiary Awards
16-18 Stirling Highway
NEDLANDS WA 6009
PO Box 135
NEDLANDS WA 6009
Telephone: (09) 389 0200

SOUTH AUSTRALIA
Office of Tertiary Education, SA
1st Floor, 31 Flinders Street
ADELAIDE SA 5000
GPO Box 2564
ADELAIDE SA 5001
Telephone: (08) 226 1720

TASMANIA
Tasmanian Council of Advanced
Education
Newnham Drive
NEWNHAM TAS 7248
PO Box 1214
LAUNCESTON TAS 7250
Telephone: (003) 26 0531

Executive Director (TAFE)
Division of TAFE
Education Department of Tasmania
116 Bathurst Street
HOBART TAS 7001
GPO Box 169B
HOBART TAS 7001
Telephone: (002) 30 6671

NORTHERN TERRITORY
TAFE Advisory Council, NT
Department of Education, NT
69 Smith Street
DARWIN NT 5794
GPO Box 4821
DARWIN NT 5794
Telephone: (089) 89 5511

COMMONWEALTH
Commonwealth Committee for the
Accreditation of Tertiary Awards*
PO Box 158
CANBERRA ACT 2601
Telephone: (062) 75 8111

* Responsible for accreditation of advanced education and TAFE courses in the Australian Capital Territory and at Commonwealth institutions such as the Australian Maritime College and the Australian Film, Television and Radio School.