Australian **Qualifications** Framework

First Edition July 2011

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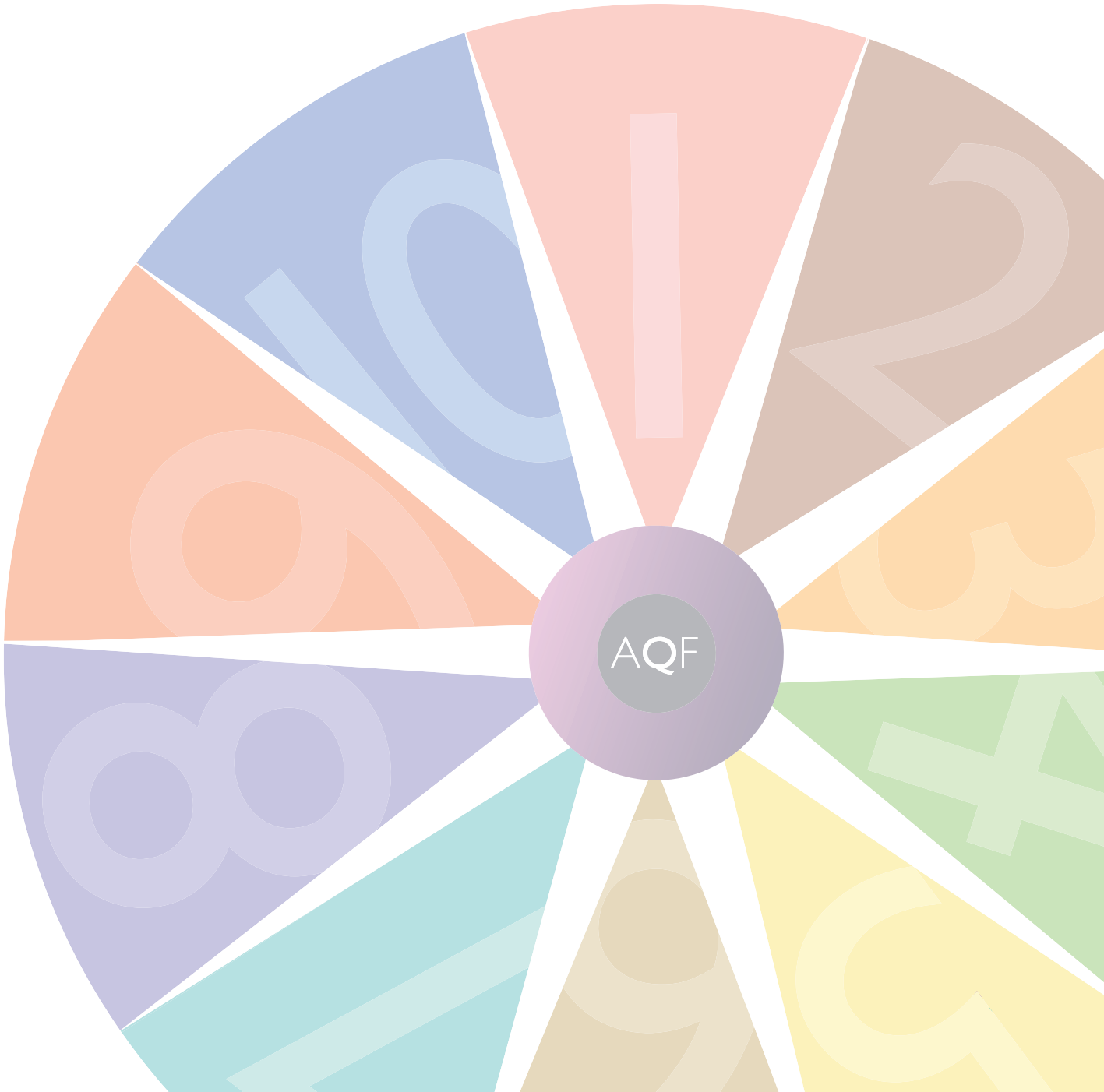

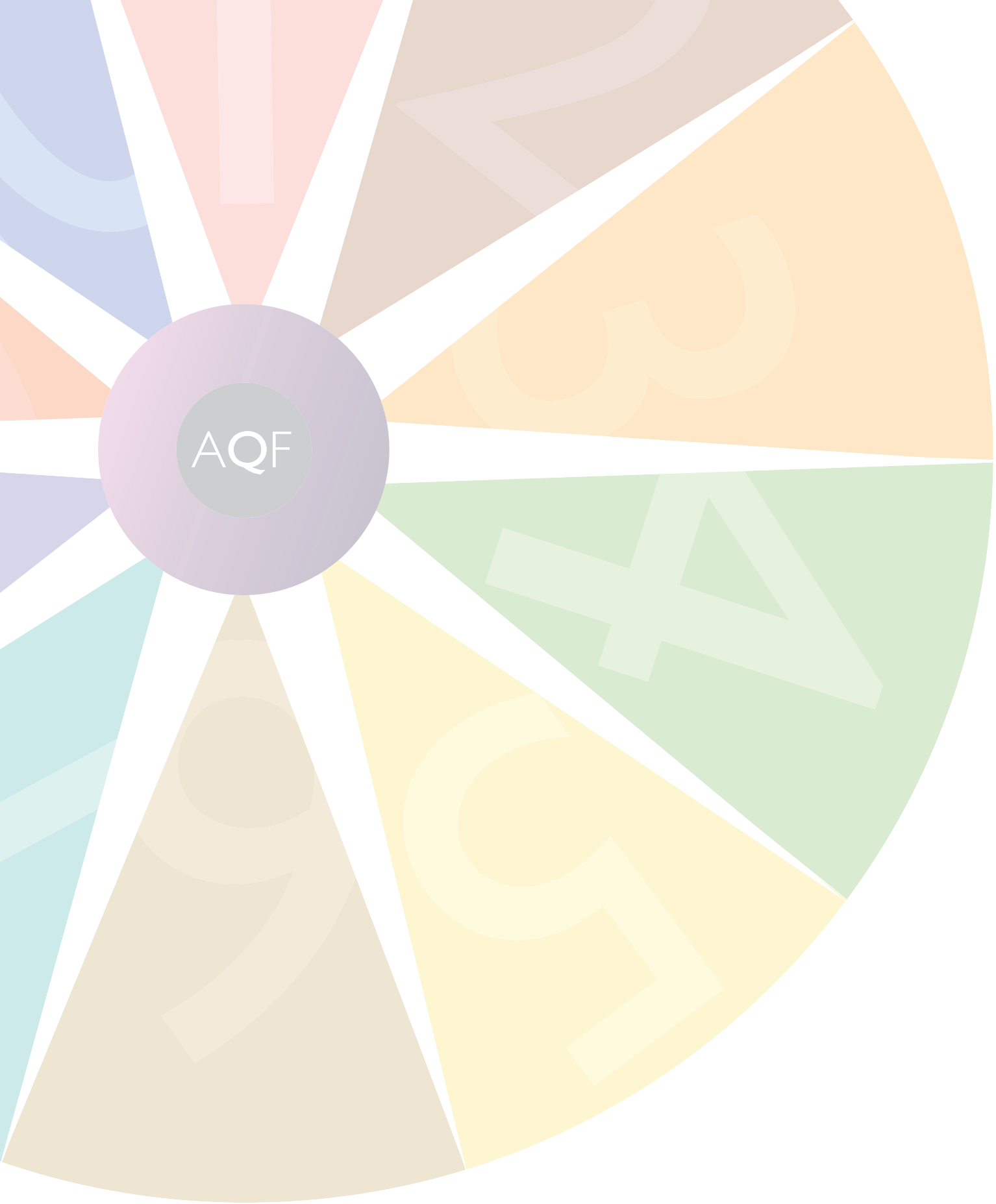
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Introduction

Introduction

This publication provides the complete set of AQF policies and objectives and information about the governing and monitoring arrangements for the AQF.

The primary audiences for the publication are organisations that develop qualifications and those that are authorised through government legislation in Australia to accredit and/or issue AQF qualifications and must use the AQF for these purposes.

For these uses, the publication should be read in conjunction with the guiding resources provided by the AQF Council. These are available on the AQF website.

Other AQF stakeholders will use this document for information about Australian qualifications. AQF Council resources that provide introductory information about the AQF are also available on the AQF website.

The publication may be copied and printed, in full or part, if used for its intended purposes. The publication can be obtained from the AQF website in print ready format.

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AQF website **www.aqf.edu.au**

Objectives of the AQF

The objectives of the AQF are to provide a contemporary and flexible framework that:

- accommodates the diversity of purposes of Australian education and training now and into the future
- contributes to national economic performance by supporting contemporary, relevant and nationally consistent qualification outcomes which build confidence in qualifications
- supports the development and maintenance of pathways which provide access to qualifications and assist people to move easily and readily between different education and training sectors and between those sectors and the labour market
- supports individuals' lifelong learning goals by providing the basis for individuals to progress through education and training and gain recognition for their prior learning and experiences
- underpins national regulatory and quality assurance arrangements for education and training
- supports and enhances the national and international mobility of graduates and workers through increased recognition of the value and comparability of Australian qualifications
- enables the alignment of the AQF with international qualifications frameworks.

Australian Qualifications Framework

The Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) is the national policy for regulated qualifications in Australian education and training. It incorporates the qualifications from each education and training sector into a single comprehensive national qualifications framework.

The AQF was first introduced in 1995 to underpin the national system of qualifications in Australia encompassing higher education, vocational education and training and schools.

The users of the AQF span each education and training sector: schools, vocational education and training and higher education and include the accrediting authorities and institutions providing education and training. The many AQF stakeholders include industry and its representative bodies, unions, professional associations and licensing authorities and governments. Ultimately students, graduates and employers, both Australian and international, benefit from the quality qualifications that are built on the requirements of the AQF.

In Australia, education and training is a shared responsibility of all Commonwealth, State and Territory governments. Education, training and employment ministers collectively own and are responsible for the AQF.

In 2011, under the leadership of the AQF Council, the AQF was revised to ensure that qualification outcomes remain relevant and nationally consistent, continue to support flexible qualifications linkages and pathways and enable national and international portability and comparability of qualifications.

At this time, education, training and employment ministers approved the revisions to the AQF and re-confirmed that it is Australia's national qualifications policy and its importance in underpinning confidence in Australia's education and training system.

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The AQF provides the standards for Australian qualifications. It is an integrated policy that comprises:

- The learning outcomes for each AQF level and qualification type
- The specifications for the application of the AQF in the accreditation and development of qualifications
- The policy requirements for issuing AQF qualifications
- The policy requirements for qualification linkages and student pathways
- The policy requirements for the registers of:
  - organisations authorised to accredit AQF qualifications
  - organisations authorised to issue AQF qualifications
  - AQF qualifications and qualification pathways
- The policy requirements for the addition or removal of qualification types in the AQF, and
- The definitions of the terminology used in the policy.

The accreditation of AQF qualifications, the authorisation of organisations to issue them and the ongoing quality assurance of qualifications and issuing organisations is legislated within Australian jurisdictions.

Verification of AQF qualifications and the organisations authorised to issue them is through the AQF Register.

AQF Levels Criteria and AQF Qualification Type Descriptors

AQF Levels Criteria and AQF Qualification Type Descriptors

The organising framework for the AQF is a taxonomic structure of levels and qualification types each of which is defined by a taxonomy of learning outcomes. The taxonomic approach is designed to enable consistency in the way in which qualifications are described as well as clarity about the differences and relationships between qualification types.

The AQF levels define the relative complexity and depth of achievement and the autonomy required of graduates to demonstrate that achievement. In the AQF there are 10 levels with level 1 having the lowest complexity and AQF level 10 the highest complexity. The levels are defined by criteria expressed as learning outcomes.

AQF qualification type is the nomenclature used in the AQF to describe each discipline-free category of AQF qualifications. Each qualification type is defined by a descriptor expressed as learning outcomes. There are 16 AQF qualification types from across all education and training sectors and each, with the exception of the Senior Secondary Certificate of Education, is located at one of the 10 levels.

The learning outcomes are constructed as a taxonomy of what graduates are expected to know, understand and be able to do as a result of learning. They are expressed in terms of the dimensions of knowledge, skills and the application of knowledge and skills.

Knowledge is what a graduate knows and understands. It is described in terms of depth, breadth, kinds of knowledge and complexity, as follows:

- depth of knowledge can be general or specialised
- breadth of knowledge can range from a single topic to multi-disciplinary area of knowledge
- kinds of knowledge range from concrete to abstract, from segmented to cumulative
- complexity of knowledge refers to the combination of kinds, depth and breadth of knowledge.

Skills are what a graduate can do. Skills are described in terms of the kinds and complexity of skills and include:

- cognitive and creative skills involving the use of intuitive, logical and critical thinking
- technical skills involving dexterity and the use of methods, materials, tools and instruments
- communication skills involving written, oral, literacy and numeracy skills
- interpersonal skills and generic skills.

Application of knowledge and skills is the context in which a graduate applies knowledge and skills. Specifically:

- application is expressed in terms of autonomy, responsibility and accountability
- the context may range from the predictable to the unpredictable, and the known to the unknown, while tasks may range from routine to non routine.

The criteria for each level and the descriptor for each qualification type include the three dimensions of the learning outcomes. The levels criteria are expressed broadly to allow for more than one qualification type to be located at the same level. The descriptor for each qualification type is more specific to underpin consistency in graduate outcomes for the qualification type regardless of the discipline.

A volume of learning is included as an integral part of the descriptor for each qualification type. The volume of learning is a dimension of the complexity of the qualification type. It identifies the notional duration of all activities required for the achievement of the learning outcomes specified for a particular AQF qualification type. It is expressed in equivalent full-time years.

Generic learning outcomes are incorporated into qualifications in the development process and their application is specific to the education or training sector. Generic learning outcomes are the transferrable, non discipline specific skills a graduate may achieve through learning that have application in study, work and life contexts. The four broad categories of generic learning outcomes recognised in the AQF are:

- fundamental skills, such as literacy and numeracy appropriate to the level and qualification type
- people skills, such as working with others and communication skills
- thinking skills, such as learning to learn, decision making and problem solving
- personal skills, such as self direction and acting with integrity.

AQF levels summaries and learning outcomes criteria

Level	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
Summary	Graduates at this level will have knowledge and skills for initial work, community involvement and/or further learning	Graduates at this level will have knowledge and skills for work in a defined context and/or further learning	Graduates at this level will have theoretical and practical knowledge and skills for work and/or further learning	Graduates at this level will have theoretical and practical knowledge and skills for specialised/ and/or skilled work and/or further learning	Graduates at this level will have specialised knowledge and skills for skilled/paraprofessional work and/or further learning
Knowledge	Graduates at this level will have foundational knowledge for everyday life, further learning and preparation for initial work	Graduates at this level will have basic factual, technical and procedural knowledge of a defined area of work and learning	Graduates at this level will have factual, technical, procedural and some theoretical knowledge of a specific area of work and learning	Graduates at this level will have broad factual, technical and some theoretical knowledge of a specific area or a broad field of work and learning	Graduates at this level will have technical and theoretical knowledge in a specific area or a broad field of work and learning
Skills	Graduates at this level will have foundational cognitive, technical and communication skills to: • undertake defined routine activities • identify and report simple issues and problems	Graduates at this level will have basic cognitive, technical and communication skills to apply appropriate methods, tools, materials and readily available information to: • undertake defined activities • provide solutions to a limited range of predictable problems	Graduates at this level will have a range of cognitive, technical and communication skills to select and apply a specialised range of methods, tools, materials and information to: • complete routine activities • provide and transmit solutions to predictable and sometimes unpredictable problems	Graduates at this level will have a broad range of cognitive, technical and communication skills to select and apply a range of methods, tools, materials and information to: • complete routine and non-routine activities • provide and transmit solutions to a variety of predictable and sometimes unpredictable problems	Graduates at this level will have a broad range of cognitive, technical and communication skills to select and apply methods and technologies to: • analyse information to complete a range of activities • provide and transmit solutions to sometimes complex problems • transmit information and skills to others
Application of knowledge and skills	Graduates at this level will apply knowledge and skills to demonstrate autonomy in highly structured and stable contexts and within narrow parameters	Graduates at this level will apply knowledge and skills to demonstrate autonomy and limited judgement in structured and stable contexts and within narrow parameters	Graduates at this level will apply knowledge and skills to demonstrate autonomy and judgement and to take limited responsibility in known and stable contexts within established parameters	Graduates at this level will apply knowledge and skills to demonstrate autonomy, judgement and limited responsibility in known or changing contexts and within established parameters	Graduates at this level will apply knowledge and skills to demonstrate autonomy, judgement and defined responsibility in known or changing contexts and within broad but established parameters

AQF levels summaries and learning outcomes criteria

Level	Level 6	Level 7	Level 8	Level 9	Level 10
Summary	Graduates at this level will have broad knowledge and skills for paraprofessional/highly skilled work and/or further learning	Graduates at this level will have broad and coherent knowledge and skills for professional work and/or further learning	Graduates at this level will have advanced knowledge and skills for professional/highly skilled work and/or further learning	Graduates at this level will have specialised knowledge and skills for research, and/or professional practice and/or further learning	Graduates at this level will have systematic and critical understanding of a complex field of learning and specialised research skills for the advancement of learning and/or for professional practice
Knowledge	Graduates at this level will have broad theoretical and technical knowledge of a specific area or a broad field of work and learning	Graduates at this level will have broad and coherent theoretical and technical knowledge with depth in one or more disciplines or areas of practice	Graduates at this level will have advanced theoretical and technical knowledge in one or more disciplines or areas of practice	Graduates at this level will have advanced and integrated understanding of a complex body of knowledge in one or more disciplines or areas of practice	Graduates at this level will have systemic and critical understanding of a substantial and complex body of knowledge at the frontier of a discipline or area of professional practice
Skills	Graduates at this level will have a broad range of cognitive, technical and communication skills to select and apply methods and technologies to: • analyse information to complete a range of activities • interpret and transmit solutions to unpredictable and sometimes complex problems • transmit information and skills to others	Graduates at this level will have well-developed cognitive, technical and communication skills to select and apply methods and technologies to: • analyse and evaluate information to complete a range of activities • analyse, generate and transmit solutions to unpredictable and sometimes complex problems • transmit knowledge, skills and ideas to others	Graduates at this level will have advanced cognitive, technical and communication skills to select and apply methods and technologies to: • analyse critically, evaluate and transform information to complete a range of activities • analyse, generate and transmit solutions to complex problems • transmit knowledge, skills and ideas to others	Graduates at this level will have expert, specialised cognitive and technical skills in a body of knowledge or practice to independently: • analyse critically, reflect on and synthesise complex information, problems, concepts and theories • research and apply established theories to a body of knowledge or practice • interpret and transmit knowledge, skills and ideas to specialist and non-specialist audiences	Graduates at this level will have expert, specialised cognitive, technical and research skills in a discipline area to independently and systematically: • engage in critical reflection, synthesis and evaluation • develop, adapt and implement research methodologies to extend and redefine existing knowledge or professional practice • disseminate and promote new insights to peers and the community • generate original knowledge and understanding to make a substantial contribution to a discipline or area of professional practice
Application of knowledge and skills	Graduates at this level will apply knowledge and skills to demonstrate autonomy, judgement and defined responsibility: • in contexts that are subject to change • within broad parameters to provide specialist advice and functions	Graduates at this level will apply knowledge and skills to demonstrate autonomy, well-developed judgement and responsibility: • in contexts that require self-directed work and learning • within broad parameters to provide specialist advice and functions	Graduates at this level will apply knowledge and skills to demonstrate autonomy, well-developed judgement, adaptability and responsibility as a practitioner or learner	Graduates at this level will apply knowledge and skills to demonstrate autonomy, expert judgement, adaptability and responsibility as a practitioner or learner	Graduates at this level will apply knowledge and skills to demonstrate autonomy, authoritative judgement, adaptability and responsibility as an expert and leading practitioner or scholar

AQF qualification type learning outcomes descriptors

Qualification type	Senior Secondary Certificate of Education	Certificate I	Certificate II	Certificate III
Level		**Level 1**	**Level 2**	**Level 3**
Purpose	The Senior Secondary Certificate of Education qualifies individuals with knowledge, skills and values for diverse pathways to further learning, work and effective participation in civic life	The Certificate I qualifies individuals with basic functional knowledge and skills to undertake work, further learning and community involvement	The Certificate II qualifies individuals to undertake mainly routine work and as a pathway to further learning	The Certificate III qualifies individuals who apply a broad range of knowledge and skills in varied contexts to undertake skilled work and as a pathway for further learning
Knowledge	Graduates of a Senior Secondary Certificate of Education will have foundational knowledge across a range of learning areas and some specialist discipline or technical knowledge	Graduates of a Certificate I will have basic fundamental knowledge and understanding in a narrow area of work and learning	Graduates of a Certificate II will have basic factual, technical and procedural knowledge in a defined area of work and learning	Graduates of a Certificate III will have factual, technical, procedural and theoretical knowledge in an area of work and learning
Skills	Graduates of a Senior Secondary Certificate of Education will have: • literacy, numeracy and communication skills and use information communication technologies skills to present knowledge and ideas to others • cognitive skills to access, record and act on information from varied sources appropriate to subject disciplines and to move across subject disciplines to develop new expertise • cognitive, technical, communication and creative skills for particular disciplines and to integrate disciplines to solve problems, to underpin flexible and analytical thinking and to work with others	Graduates of a Certificate I will have: • basic skills to participate in everyday life and further learning • cognitive and communication skills to receive, pass on and recall information in a narrow range of areas • technical skills involving the use of tools appropriate to the activity and use of basic communication technologies	Graduates of a Certificate II will have: • cognitive skills to access, record and act on a defined range of information from a range of sources • cognitive and communication skills to apply and communicate known solutions to a limited range of predictable problems • technical skills to use a limited range of equipment to complete tasks involving known routines and procedures with a limited range of options	Graduates of a Certificate III will have: • cognitive, technical and communication skills to interpret and act on available information • cognitive and communication skills to apply and communicate known solutions to a variety of predictable problems and to deal with unforseen contingencies using known solutions • technical and communication skills to provide technical information to a variety of specialist and non-specialist audiences • technical skills to undertake routine and some non-routine tasks in a range of skilled operations
Application of knowledge and skills	Graduates of a Senior Secondary Certificate of Education will demonstrate the application of knowledge and skills: • with depth in some areas to tasks or functions in known or changing contexts • in particular contexts within civic life, work and lifelong learning as successful learners, confident individuals and team members and active and informed citizens • in contexts that include taking individual responsibility with some direction and some accountability for the quality of outcomes	Graduates of a Certificate I will demonstrate the application of knowledge and skills: • with some autonomy in defined contexts and within established parameters • in contexts that may include preparation for further learning, life activities and/or a variety of initial routine and predictable work-related activities including participation in a team or work group	Graduates of a Certificate II will demonstrate the application of knowledge and skills: • with some accountability for the quality of own outcomes and some responsibility for own outputs in work and learning • with limited autonomy and judgement in the completion of own defined and routine tasks in known and stable contexts • with limited autonomy and judgement to complete routine but variable tasks in collaboration with others in a team environment	Graduates of a Certificate III will demonstrate the application of knowledge and skills: • with discretion and judgement in the selection of equipment, services or contingency measures • to adapt and transfer skills and knowledge within known routines, methods, procedures and time constraints • in contexts that include taking responsibility for own outputs in work and learning including participation in teams and taking limited responsibility for the output of others within established parameters
Volume of learning	The volume of learning of a Senior Secondary Certificate of Education is typically 2 years	The volume of learning of a Certificate I is typically 0.5 – 1 year	The volume of learning of a Certificate II is typically 0.5 – 1 year	The volume of learning of a Certificate III is typically 1 - 2 years. Up to 4 years may be required to achieve the learning outcomes through a program of indentured training/employment

AQF qualification type learning outcomes descriptors

Qualification type	Certificate IV	Diploma	Advanced Diploma	Associate Degree
Level	**Level 4**	**Level 5**	**Level 6**	**Level 6**
Purpose	The Certificate IV qualifies individuals who apply a broad range of specialised knowledge and skills in varied contexts to undertake skilled work and as a pathway for further learning	The Diploma qualifies individuals who apply integrated technical and theoretical concepts in a broad range of contexts to undertake advanced skilled or paraprofessional work and as a pathway for further learning	The Advanced Diploma qualifies individuals who apply specialised knowledge in a range of contexts to undertake advanced skilled or paraprofessional work and as a pathway for further learning	The Associate Degree qualifies individuals who apply underpinning technical and theoretical knowledge in a range of contexts to undertake paraprofessional work and as a pathway for further learning
Knowledge	Graduates of a Certificate IV will have broad factual, technical and theoretical knowledge in a specialised field of work and learning	Graduates of a Diploma will have technical and theoretical knowledge and concepts, with depth in some areas within a field of work and learning	Graduates of an Advanced Diploma will have specialised and integrated technical and theoretical knowledge with depth within one or more fields of work and learning	Graduates of an Associate Degree will have broad theoretical and technical knowledge with some depth in the underlying principles and concepts in one or more disciplines
Skills	Graduates of a Certificate IV will have: • cognitive skills to identify, analyse, compare and act on information from a range of sources • cognitive, technical and communication skills to apply and communicate technical solutions of a non-routine or contingency nature to a defined range of predictable and unpredictable problems • specialist technical skills to complete routine and non-routine tasks and functions • communication skills to guide activities and provide technical advice in the area of work and learning	Graduates of a Diploma will have: • cognitive and communication skills to identify, analyse, synthesise and act on information from a range of sources • cognitive, technical and communication skills to analyse, plan, design and evaluate approaches to unpredictable problems and/or management requirements • specialist technical and creative skills to express ideas and perspectives • communication skills to transfer knowledge and specialised skills to others and demonstrate understanding of knowledge	Graduates of an Advanced Diploma will have: • cognitive and communication skills to identify, analyse, synthesise and act on information from a range of sources • cognitive and communication skills to transfer knowledge and skills to others and to demonstrate understanding of specialised knowledge with depth in some areas • cognitive and communication skills to formulate responses to complex problems • wide-ranging specialised technical, creative or conceptual skills to express ideas and perspectives	Graduates of an Associate Degree will have: • cognitive skills to identify, analyse and evaluate information and concepts from a range of sources • cognitive, technical and creative thinking skills to demonstrate a broad understanding of knowledge and ideas with some depth in a discipline • cognitive, communication and analytical skills to interpret and transmit responses to sometimes complex problems • communication skills to make a clear and coherent presentation of knowledge and ideas with some intellectual independence
Application of knowledge and skills	Graduates of a Certificate IV will demonstrate the application of knowledge and skills: • to specialised tasks or functions in known or changing contexts • with responsibility for own functions and outputs, and may have limited responsibility for organisation of others • with limited responsibility for the quantity and quality of the output of others in a team within limited parameters	Graduates of a Diploma will demonstrate the application of knowledge and skills: • with depth in some areas of specialisation, in known or changing contexts • to transfer and apply theoretical concepts and/or technical and/or creative skills in a range of situations • with personal responsibility and autonomy in performing complex technical operations with responsibility for own outputs in relation to broad parameters for quantity and quality • with initiative and judgement to organise the work of self and others and plan, coordinate and evaluate the work of teams within broad but generally well-defined parameters	Graduates of an Advanced Diploma will demonstrate the application of knowledge and skills: • with depth in areas of specialisation, in contexts subject to change • with initiative and judgment in planning, design, technical or management functions with some direction • to adapt a range of fundamental principles and complex techniques to known and unknown situations • across a broad range of technical or management functions with accountability for personal outputs and personal and team outcomes within broad parameters	Graduates of an Associate Degree will demonstrate the application of knowledge and skills: • with initiative and judgement in planning, problem solving and decision making in paraprofessional practice • to adapt knowledge and skills in a range of contexts and/or for further studies in one or more disciplines • to adapt fundamental principles, concepts and techniques to known and unknown situations • with responsibility and accountability for own learning and work and in collaboration with others within broad parameters
Volume of learning	The volume of learning of a Certificate IV is typically 0.5 – 2 years. There may be variations between short duration specialist qualifications that build on knowledge and skills already acquired and longer duration qualifications that are designed as entry level requirements for work	The volume of learning of a Diploma is typically 1 – 2 years	The volume of learning of an Advanced Diploma is typically 1.5 – 2 years	The volume of learning of an Associate Degree is typically 2 years

AQF qualification type learning outcomes descriptors

Qualification type	Bachelor Degree	Bachelor Honours Degree	Graduate Certificate Vocational Graduate Certificate	Graduate Diploma Vocational Graduate Diploma
Level	**Level 7**	**Level 8**	**Level 8**	**Level 8**
Purpose	The Bachelor Degree qualifies individuals who apply a broad and coherent body of knowledge in a range of contexts to undertake professional work and as a pathway for further learning	The Bachelor Honours Degree qualifies individuals who apply a body of knowledge in a specific context to undertake professional work and as a pathway for research and further learning	The Graduate Certificate/ Vocational Graduate Certificate qualifies individuals who apply a body of knowledge in a range of contexts to undertake professional /highly skilled work and as a pathway for further learning	The Graduate Diploma/Vocational Graduate Diploma qualifies individuals who apply a body of knowledge in a range of contexts to undertake professional /highly skilled work and as a pathway for further learning
Knowledge	Graduates of a Bachelor Degree will have a broad and coherent body of knowledge, with depth in the underlying principles and concepts in one or more disciplines as a basis for independent lifelong learning	Graduates of a Bachelor Honours Degree will have coherent and advanced knowledge of the underlying principles and concepts in one or more disciplines and knowledge of research principles and methods	Graduates of a Graduate Certificate/Vocational Graduate Certificate will have specialised knowledge within a systematic and coherent body of knowledge that may include the acquisition and application of knowledge and skills in a new or existing discipline or professional area	Graduates of a Graduate Diploma/Vocational Graduate Diploma will have advanced knowledge within a systematic and coherent body of knowledge that may include the acquisition and application of knowledge and skills in a new or existing discipline or professional area
Skills	Graduates of a Bachelor Degree will have: • cognitive skills to review critically, analyse, consolidate and synthesise knowledge • cognitive and technical skills to demonstrate a broad understanding of knowledge with depth in some areas • cognitive and creative skills to exercise critical thinking and judgement in identifying and solving problems with intellectual independence • communication skills to present a clear, coherent and independent exposition of knowledge and ideas	Graduates of a Bachelor Honours Degree will have: • cognitive skills to review, analyse, consolidate and synthesise knowledge to identify and provide solutions to complex problems with intellectual independence • cognitive and technical skills to demonstrate a broad understanding of a body of knowledge and theoretical concepts with advanced understanding in some areas • cognitive skills to exercise critical thinking and judgement in developing new understanding • technical skills to design and use research in a project • communication skills to present a clear and coherent exposition of knowledge and ideas to a variety of audiences	Graduates of a Graduate Certificate/Vocational Graduate Certificate will have: • cognitive skills to review, analyse, consolidate and synthesise knowledge and identify and provide solutions to complex problems • cognitive skills to think critically and to generate and evaluate complex ideas • specialised technical and creative skills in a field of highly skilled and/or professional practice • communication skills to demonstrate an understanding of theoretical concepts • communication skills to transfer complex knowledge and ideas to a variety of audiences	Graduates of a Graduate Diploma/Vocational Graduate Diploma will have: • cognitive skills to review, analyse, consolidate and synthesise knowledge and identify and provide solutions to complex problems • cognitive skills to think critically and to generate and evaluate complex ideas • specialised technical and creative skills in a field of highly skilled and/or professional practice • communication skills to demonstrate an understanding of theoretical concepts • communication skills to transfer complex knowledge and ideas to a variety of audiences
Application of knowledge and skills	Graduates of a Bachelor Degree will demonstrate the application of knowledge and skills: • with initiative and judgement in planning, problem solving and decision making in professional practice and/or scholarship • to adapt knowledge and skills in diverse contexts • with responsibility and accountability for own learning and professional practice and in collaboration with others within broad parameters	Graduates of a Bachelor Honours Degree will demonstrate the application of knowledge and skills: • with initiative and judgement in professional practice and/or scholarship • to adapt knowledge and skills in diverse contexts • with responsibility and accountability for own learning and practice and in collaboration with others within broad parameters • to plan and execute project work and/or a piece of research and scholarship with some independence	Graduates of a Graduate Certificate/Vocational Graduate Certificate will demonstrate the application of knowledge and skills: • to make high level, independent judgements in a range of technical or management functions in varied specialised contexts • to initiate, plan, implement and evaluate broad functions within varied specialised technical and/or creative contexts • with responsibility and accountability for personal outputs and all aspects of the work or function of others within broad parameters	Graduates of a Graduate Diploma/Vocational Graduate Diploma will demonstrate the application of knowledge and skills: • to make high level, independent judgements in a range of technical or management functions in varied specialised contexts • to initiate, plan, implement and evaluate broad functions within varied specialised technical and/or creative contexts • with responsibility and accountability for personal outputs and all aspects of the work or function of others within broad parameters
Volume of learning	The volume of learning of a Degree is typically 3 – 4 years	The volume of learning of a Bachelor Honours Degree is typically 1 year following a Bachelor Degree. A Bachelor Honours Degree may also be embedded in a Bachelor Degree, typically as an additional year	The volume of learning of a Graduate Certificate/ Vocational Graduate Certificate is typically 0.5 – 1 year	The volume of learning of a Graduate Diploma/Vocational Graduate Diploma is typically 1 – 2 years

AQF qualification type learning outcomes descriptors

Qualification type	Masters Degree (Research)	Masters Degree (Coursework)	Masters Degree (Extended)	Doctoral Degree
Level	**Level 9**	**Level 9**	**Level 9**	**Level 10**
Purpose	The Masters Degree (Research) qualifies individuals who apply an advanced body of knowledge in a range of contexts for research and scholarship and as a pathway for further learning	The Masters Degree (Coursework) qualifies individuals who apply an advanced body of knowledge in a range of contexts for professional practice or scholarship and as a pathway for further learning	The Masters Degree (Extended) qualifies individuals who apply an advanced body of knowledge in a range of contexts for professional practice and as a pathway for further learning	The Doctoral Degree qualifies individuals who apply a substantial body of knowledge to research, investigate and develop new knowledge, in one or more fields of investigation, scholarship or professional practice
Knowledge	Graduates of a Masters Degree (Research) will have: • a body of knowledge that includes the understanding of recent developments in one or more disciplines • advanced knowledge of research principles and methods applicable to the field of work or learning	Graduates of a Masters Degree (Coursework) will have: • a body of knowledge that includes the understanding of recent developments in a discipline and/or area of professional practice • knowledge of research principles and methods applicable to a field of work and or learning	Graduates of a Masters Degree (Extended) will have: • a body of knowledge that includes the extended understanding of recent developments in a discipline and its professional practice • knowledge of research principles and methods applicable to the discipline and its professional practice	Graduates of a Doctoral Degree will have: • a substantial body of knowledge at the frontier of a field of work or learning, including knowledge that constitutes an original contribution • substantial knowledge of research principles and methods applicable to the field of work or learning
Skills	Graduates of a Masters Degree (Research) will have: • cognitive skills to demonstrate mastery of theoretical knowledge and to reflect critically on theory and its application • cognitive, technical and creative skills to investigate, analyse and synthesise complex information, problems, concepts and theories and to apply established theories to different bodies of knowledge or practice • cognitive, technical and creative skills to generate and evaluate complex ideas and concepts at an abstract level • cognitive and technical skills to design, use and evaluate research and research methods • communication and technical skills to present a coherent and sustained argument and to disseminate research results to specialist and non-specialist audiences • technical and communication skills to design, evaluate, implement, analyse, theorise and disseminate research that makes a contribution to knowledge	Graduates of a Masters Degree (Coursework) will have: • cognitive skills to demonstrate mastery of theoretical knowledge and to reflect critically on theory and professional practice or scholarship • cognitive, technical and creative skills to investigate, analyse and synthesise complex information, problems, concepts and theories and to apply established theories to different bodies of knowledge or practice • cognitive, technical and creative skills to generate and evaluate complex ideas and concepts at an abstract level • communication and technical research skills to justify and interpret theoretical propositions, methodologies, conclusions and professional decisions to specialist and non-specialist audiences • technical and communication skills to design, evaluate, implement, analyse and theorise about developments that contribute to professional practice or scholarship	Graduates of a Masters Degree (Extended) will have: • cognitive skills to demonstrate mastery of theoretical knowledge and to reflect critically on theory and professional practice • cognitive, technical and creative skills to investigate, analyse and synthesise complex information, problems, concepts and theories and to apply established theories to different bodies of knowledge or practice • cognitive, technical and creative skills to generate and evaluate complex ideas and concepts at an abstract level • communication and technical research skills to justify and interpret theoretical propositions, methodologies, conclusions and professional decisions to specialist and non-specialist audiences • technical and communication skills to design, evaluate, implement, analyse and theorise about developments that contribute to professional practice	Graduates of a Doctoral Degree will have: • cognitive skills to demonstrate expert understanding of theoretical knowledge and to reflect critically on that theory and practice • cognitive skills and use of intellectual independence to think critically, evaluate existing knowledge and ideas, undertake systematic investigation and reflect on theory and practice to generate original knowledge • expert technical and creative skills applicable to the field of work or learning • communication skills to explain and critique theoretical propositions, methodologies and conclusions • communication skills to present cogently a complex investigation of originality or original research for external examination against international standards and to communicate results to peers and the community • expert skills to design, implement, analyse, theorise and communicate research that makes a significant and original contribution to knowledge and/or professional practice
Application of knowledge and skills	Graduates of a Masters Degree (Research) will demonstrate the application of knowledge & skills: • with creativity and initiative to new situations and/or for further learning • with high level personal autonomy and accountability • to plan and execute a substantial piece of research	Graduates of a Masters Degree (Coursework) will demonstrate the application of knowledge & skills: • with creativity and initiative to new situations in professional practice and/or for further learning • with high level personal autonomy and accountability • to plan and execute a substantial research-based project, capstone experience and/or piece of scholarship	Graduates of a Masters Degree (Extended) will demonstrate the application of knowledge and skills: • with creativity and initiative to new situations in professional practice and/or for further learning • with high level personal autonomy and accountability • to plan and execute a substantial research-based project, capstone experience and/or professionally focused project	Graduates of a Doctoral Degree will demonstrate the application of knowledge and skills: • with intellectual independence • with initiative and creativity in new situations &/or for further learning • with full responsibility and accountability for personal outputs • to plan and execute original research • with the ongoing capacity to generate new knowledge, including in the context of professional practice
Volume of learning	The volume of learning of a Masters Degree (Research) is typically 1 – 2 years; in the same discipline 1.5 years following a level 7 qualification or 1 year following a level 8 qualification; in a different discipline 2 years following a level 7 qualification or 1.5 years following a level 8 qualification	The volume of learning of a Masters Degree (Coursework) is typically 1 – 2 years; in the same discipline 1.5 years following a level 7 qualification or 1 year following a level 8 qualification; in a different discipline 2 years following a level 7 qualification or 1.5 years following a level 8 qualification	The volume of learning of a Masters Degree (Extended) is typically 3 – 4 years following completion of a minimum of a 3 year level 7 qualification	The volume of learning of a Doctoral Degree is typically 3 – 4 years

Location of AQF qualification types in the levels structure

Level	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
Summary	Graduates at this level will have knowledge and skills for initial work, community involvement and/or further learning	Graduates at this level will have knowledge and skills for work in a defined context and/or further learning	Graduates at this level will have theoretical and practical knowledge and skills for work and/or further learning	Graduates at this level will have theoretical and practical knowledge and skills for specialised and/or skilled work and/or further learning	Graduates at this level will have specialised knowledge and skills for skilled/paraprofessional work and/or further learning
Qualification Type	Certificate I	Certificate II	Certificate III	Certificate IV	Diploma

Level	Level 6	Level 7	Level 8	Level 9	Level 10
Summary	Graduates at this level will have broad knowledge and skills for paraprofessional/highly skilled work and/or further learning	Graduates at this level will have broad and coherent knowledge and skills for professional work and/or further learning	Graduates at this level will have advanced knowledge and skills for professional highly skilled work and/or further learning	Graduates at this level will have specialised knowledge and skills for research, and/or professional practice and/or further learning	Graduates at this level will have systematic and critical understanding of a complex field of learning and specialised research skills for the advancement of learning and/or for professional practice
Qualification Type	Advanced Diploma Associate Degree	Bachelor Degree	Bachelor Honours Degree Graduate and Vocational Graduate Certificate Graduate and Vocational Graduate Diploma	Masters Degree	Doctoral Degree

Location of AQF qualification types in the levels structure

AQF Qualification Type Specifications

AQF Qualification Type Specifications

Purpose

The purpose of the *AQF Qualification Type Specifications* is to provide the requirements for the construction of AQF qualifications.

Scope

The *Specifications* cover all education and training sectors that issue AQF qualifications.

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

Users

The principal users of the *AQF Qualification Type Specifications* are the accrediting authorities in each education and training sector which are responsible for the accreditation of AQF qualifications and the developers of AQF qualifications in each education and training sector.

The accrediting authorities, currently (2011) in place are:

- State and territory government authorised statutory bodies responsible for the *Senior Secondary Certificate of Education* in their own state or territory.
- State and territory government accrediting authorities for *vocational education and training* responsible for accrediting AQF qualifications and for authorising registered training organisations (RTOs) to issue AQF qualifications. The National Quality Council (NQC), a committee of the Ministerial Council for Tertiary Education and Employment (MCTEE), is responsible for the endorsement of AQF qualifications in national Training Packages.
- State and territory government accrediting authorities for *higher education* responsible for accrediting AQF qualifications and authorising non-self-accrediting higher education institutions to issue them.
- Universities and other self-accrediting higher education institutions responsible for accrediting and issuing their own AQF qualifications.

The developers of AQF qualifications for accreditation currently (2011) are:

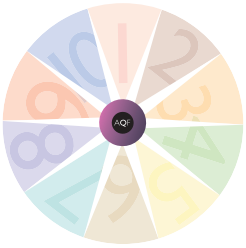
- State and territory government authorised statutory bodies responsible for the *Senior Secondary Certificate of Education* in their own state or territory.
- Industry Skills Councils in the *vocational education and training* sector responsible for developing AQF qualifications in national Training Packages. RTOs and other stakeholder groups responsible for developing AQF qualifications for accreditation for their own use.
- Higher education institutions in the *higher education* sector responsible for developing AQF qualifications for accreditation for their own use.
- Universities and other self-accrediting higher education institutions responsible for developing and accrediting AQF qualifications for their own use.

The other users of the *Specifications* are the authorised issuing organisations[1], industry and professional bodies, licensing and regulatory bodies, students, graduates and employers.

Monitoring

The accrediting authorities in each education and training sector are responsible for the implementation and monitoring of the use of these *Specifications.*

[1] In the specifications the term 'authorised issuing organisation' is abbreviated to 'issuing organisation'.



AQF specification for the Senior Secondary Certificate of Education

This *Specification* informs the design and accreditation of Senior Secondary Certificate of Education qualifications.

The principal users of the *AQF Qualification Type Specifications* are the accrediting authorities in each education and training sector which are responsible for the accreditation of AQF qualifications and the developers of AQF qualifications in each education and training sector.

The other users of the *Specifications* are the authorised issuing organisations, industry and professional bodies, licensing and regulatory bodies, students, graduates and employers.

The purpose of the Senior Secondary Certificate of Education qualification type is to qualify individuals with knowledge, skills and values for diverse pathways to further learning, work and effective participation in civic life.

Senior Secondary Certificate of Education qualifications are not located at a particular level in the Australian Qualifications Framework.

Senior Secondary Certificate of Education qualifications must be designed and accredited to enable graduates to demonstrate the learning outcomes expressed as knowledge, skills and the application of knowledge and skills specified in the Senior Secondary Certificate of Education descriptor.

Senior Secondary Certificate of Education qualification type descriptor	
Purpose	The Senior Secondary Certificate of Education qualifies individuals with knowledge, skills and values for diverse pathways to further learning, work and effective participation in civic life
Knowledge	Graduates of a Senior Secondary Certificate of Education will have foundational knowledge across a range of learning areas and some specialist discipline or technical knowledge
Skills	Graduates of a Senior Secondary Certificate of Education will have: • literacy, numeracy and communication skills and use information communication technologies skills to present knowledge and ideas to others • cognitive skills to access, record and act on information from varied sources appropriate to subject disciplines and to move across subject disciplines to develop new expertise • cognitive, technical, communication and creative skills for particular disciplines and to integrate disciplines to solve problems, to underpin flexible and analytical thinking and to work with others
Application of knowledge and skills	Graduates of a Senior Secondary Certificate of Education will demonstrate the application of knowledge and skills: • with depth in some areas to tasks or functions in known or changing contexts • in particular contexts within civic life, work and lifelong learning as successful learners, confident individuals and team members and active and informed citizens • in contexts that include taking individual responsibility with some direction and some accountability for the quality of outcomes
Volume of learning	The volume of learning of a Senior Secondary Certificate of Education is typically 2 years

AQF specification for the Senior Secondary Certificate of Education

Qualification nomenclature

The title used for the Senior Secondary Certificate of Education must be consistent with the *AQF Qualifications Issuance Policy.*

Pathways

Each qualification accredited as a Senior Secondary Certificate of Education will include documented pathways consistent with the *AQF Qualifications Pathways Policy.*

Issuing organisations offering a Senior Secondary Certificate of Education qualification must meet the requirements of the *AQF Qualifications Pathways Policy.*

Responsibility for accreditation and development

Accrediting authorities and those developing qualifications for accreditation must adhere to the AQF specification for this qualification type and any government accreditation standards for schools when accrediting a Senior Secondary Certificate of Education qualification.

Accrediting authorities are responsible for monitoring the quality of issuing organisations against any government regulatory and quality assurance arrangements.

When accrediting Senior Secondary Certificate of Education qualifications accrediting authorities must ensure that:

- Graduates of a Senior Secondary Certificate of Education qualification will achieve the learning outcomes of the qualification type descriptor.
- All the learning outcomes (knowledge, skills and the application of knowledge and skills) of the Senior Secondary Certificate of Education qualification type are evident in each qualification accredited as this type. Some may have more emphasis than others in different Senior Secondary Certificate of Education qualifications depending on their purpose.
- Generic learning outcomes are explicitly identified in the qualification and align with the qualification type, the purpose of the qualification and the discipline. Generic learning outcomes fall into four broad categories: fundamental skills; people skills; thinking skills; and personal skills.
- The relationship between the learning outcomes in the qualification type descriptor and the various disciplines is clear.
- The design of the components of the qualification will provide coherent learning outcomes for the qualification type and will enable graduates to demonstrate them.
- The volume of learning is sufficient for graduates to achieve the learning outcomes for a qualification of this type.

Once a qualification is accredited it must be placed on the AQF Register in a form consistent with the *AQF Qualifications Register Policy.*

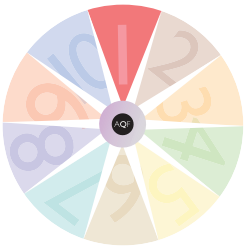
Authority to issue the qualification

A Senior Secondary Certificate of Education qualification may only be issued by an organisation that is authorised for that purpose by the relevant government and meets any government standards for the sector.

Assessment leading to the award of the qualification lies with the issuing organisation. The issuing organisation is responsible for ensuring the quality of the learning outcomes and that the graduate has satisfactorily completed any requirements for the awarding of the qualification.

Issuing organisations must issue qualifications consistent with the *AQF Qualifications Issuance Policy.*

Issuing organisations will maintain a register of the AQF qualifications they have issued consistent with the *AQF Qualifications Register Policy.*



AQF specification for the Certificate I

This *Specification* informs the design and accreditation of Certificate I qualifications.

The principal users of the *AQF Qualification Type Specifications* are the accrediting authorities in each education and training sector which are responsible for the accreditation of AQF qualifications and the developers of AQF qualifications in each education and training sector.

The other users of the *Specifications* are the authorised issuing organisations, industry and professional bodies, licensing and regulatory bodies, students, graduates and employers.

The purpose of the Certificate I qualification type is to qualify individuals with basic functional knowledge and skills to undertake work, further learning and community involvement.

Certificate I qualifications are located at level 1 of the Australian Qualifications Framework.

Certificate I qualifications must be designed and accredited to enable graduates to demonstrate the learning outcomes expressed as knowledge, skills and the application of knowledge and skills specified in the level 1 criteria and the Certificate I descriptor.

AQF level I criteria	
Summary	Graduates at this level will have knowledge and skills for initial work, community involvement and/or further learning
Knowledge	Graduates at this level will have foundational knowledge for everyday life, further learning and preparation for initial work
Skills	Graduates at this level will have foundational cognitive, technical and communication skills to: • undertake defined routine activities • identify and report simple issues and problems
Application of knowledge and skills	Graduates at this level will apply knowledge and skills to demonstrate autonomy in highly structured and stable contexts and within narrow parameters

AQF specification for the Certificate I

Certificate I qualification type descriptor	
Purpose	The Certificate I qualifies individuals with basic functional knowledge and skills to undertake work, further learning and community involvement
Knowledge	Graduates of a Certificate I will have basic fundamental knowledge and understanding in a narrow area of work and learning
Skills	Graduates of a Certificate I will have: • basic skills to participate in everyday life and further learning • cognitive and communication skills to receive, pass on and recall information in a narrow range of areas • technical skills involving the use of tools appropriate to the activity and use of basic communication technologies
Application of knowledge and skills	Graduates of a Certificate I will demonstrate the application of knowledge and skills: • with some autonomy in defined contexts and within established parameters • in contexts that may include preparation for further learning, life activities and/or a variety of initial routine and predictable work-related activities including participation in a team or work group
Volume of learning	The volume of learning of a Certificate I is typically 0.5 – 1 year

Qualification nomenclature

The title used for the Certificate I must be consistent with the *AQF Qualifications Issuance Policy.*

Pathways

Each qualification accredited as a Certificate I will include documented pathways consistent with the *AQF Qualifications Pathways Policy.*

Issuing organisations offering a Certificate I qualification must meet the requirements of the *AQF Qualifications Pathways Policy.*

Responsibility for accreditation and development

Accrediting authorities and those developing qualifications for accreditation must adhere to the AQF specification for this qualification type and any government accreditation standards for vocational education and training when accrediting a Certificate I qualification.

Accrediting authorities are responsible for monitoring the quality of issuing organisations against any government regulatory and quality assurance arrangements.

AQF specification for the Certificate I

When accrediting Certificate I qualifications accrediting authorities must ensure that:

- Graduates of a Certificate I qualification will achieve learning outcomes at level 1.
- All the learning outcomes (knowledge, skills and the application of knowledge and skills) of the Certificate I qualification type are evident in each qualification accredited as this type. Some may have more emphasis than others in different Certificate I qualifications depending on their purpose.
- Generic learning outcomes are explicitly identified in the qualification and align with the level of the qualification type, the purpose of the qualification and the discipline. Generic learning outcomes fall into four broad categories: fundamental skills; people skills; thinking skills; and personal skills. In the vocational education and training sector they are expressed as employability skills as defined by the National Quality Council (2008).
- The relationship between the learning outcomes in the level 1 criteria, the qualification type descriptor, and the discipline is clear.
- The design of the components of the qualification will provide coherent learning outcomes for the level and qualification type and will enable graduates to demonstrate them.
- The volume of learning is sufficient for graduates to achieve the learning outcomes for a qualification of this level and type.

Once a qualification is accredited it must be placed on the AQF Register in a form consistent with the *AQF Qualifications Register Policy.*

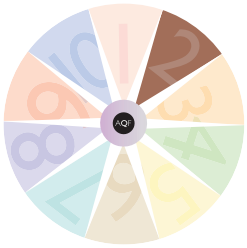
Authority to issue the qualification

A Certificate I qualification may only be issued by organisations that are authorised by an accrediting authority to do so, and meets any government standards for the sector.

Assessment leading to the award of the qualification lies with the issuing organisation. The issuing organisation is responsible for ensuring the quality of the learning outcomes and that the graduate has satisfactorily completed any requirements for the awarding of the qualification.

Organisations authorised to issue AQF qualifications must do so consistent with the *AQF Qualifications Issuance Policy.*

Organisations authorised to issue AQF qualifications will maintain a register of the AQF qualifications they have issued consistent with the *AQF Qualifications Register Policy.*



AQF specification for the Certificate II

This *Specification* informs the design and accreditation of Certificate II qualifications.

The principal users of the *AQF Qualification Type Specifications* are the accrediting authorities in each education and training sector which are responsible for the accreditation of AQF qualifications and the developers of AQF qualifications in each education and training sector.

The other users of the *Specifications* are the authorised issuing organisations, industry and professional bodies, licensing and regulatory bodies, students, graduates and employers.

The purpose of the Certificate II qualification type is to qualify individuals to undertake mainly routine work and as a pathway to further learning.

Certificate II qualifications are located at level 2 of the Australian Qualifications Framework.

Certificate II qualifications must be designed and accredited to enable graduates to demonstrate the learning outcomes expressed as knowledge, skills and the application of knowledge and skills Specified in the level 2 criteria and the Certificate II descriptor.

AQF level 2 criteria	
Summary	Graduates at this level will have knowledge and skills for work in a defined context and/or further learning
Knowledge	Graduates at this level will have basic factual, technical and procedural knowledge of a defined area of work and learning
Skills	Graduates at this level will have basic cognitive, technical and communication skills to apply appropriate methods, tools, materials and readily available information to: • undertake defined activities • provide solutions to a limited range of predictable problems
Application of knowledge and skills	Graduates at this level will apply knowledge and skills to demonstrate autonomy and limited judgement in structured and stable contexts and within narrow parameters

AQF specification for the Certificate II

Certificate II qualification type descriptor	
Purpose	The Certificate II qualifies individuals to undertake mainly routine work and as a pathway to further learning
Knowledge	Graduates of a Certificate II will have basic factual, technical and procedural knowledge in a defined area of work and learning
Skills	Graduates of a Certificate II will have: • cognitive skills to access, record and act on a defined range of information from a range of sources • cognitive and communication skills to apply and communicate known solutions to a limited range of predictable problems • technical skills to use a limited range of equipment to complete tasks involving known routines and procedures with a limited range of options
Application of knowledge and skills	Graduates of a Certificate II will demonstrate the application of knowledge and skills: • with some accountability for the quality of own outcomes and some responsibility for own outputs in work and learning • with limited autonomy and judgement in the completion of own defined and routine tasks in known and stable contexts • with limited autonomy and judgement to complete routine but variable tasks in collaboration with others in a team environment
Volume of learning	The volume of learning of a Certificate II is typically 0.5 – 1 year

Qualification nomenclature

The title used for the Certificate II must be consistent with the *AQF Qualifications Issuance Policy.*

Pathways

Each qualification accredited as a Certificate II will include documented pathways consistent with *AQF Qualifications Pathways Policy.*

Issuing organisations offering a Certificate II qualification must meet the requirements of the *AQF Qualifications Issuance Policy.*

Responsibility for accreditation and development

Accrediting authorities and those developing qualifications for accreditation must adhere to the AQF Specification for this qualification type and any government accreditation standards for vocational education and training when accrediting a Certificate II qualification.

Accrediting authorities are responsible for monitoring the quality of issuing organisations against any government regulatory and quality assurance arrangements.

AQF specification for the Certificate II

When accrediting AQF Certificate II qualifications accrediting authorities must ensure that:

- Graduates of a Certificate II qualification will achieve learning outcomes at level 2.
- All the learning outcomes (knowledge, skills and the application of knowledge and skills) of the Certificate II qualification type are evident in each qualification accredited as this type. Some may have more emphasis than others in different Certificate II qualifications depending on their purpose.
- Generic learning outcomes are explicitly identified in the qualification and align with the level of the qualification type, the purpose of the qualification and the discipline. Generic learning outcomes fall into four broad categories: fundamental skills; people skills; thinking skills; and personal skills. In the vocational education and training sector they are expressed as employability skills as defined by the National Quality Council (2008).
- The relationship between the learning outcomes in the level 2 criteria, the qualification type descriptor, and the discipline is clear.
- The design of the components of the qualification will provide coherent learning outcomes for the level and qualification type and will enable graduates to demonstrate them.
- The volume of learning is sufficient for graduates to achieve the learning outcomes for a qualification of this level and type. Learning outcomes for Certificate II qualifications may be achieved through a program of indentured training/employment or a program of learning in an institution which may include work placements.

Once a qualification is accredited it must be placed on the AQF Register in a form consistent with the *AQF Qualifications Register Policy.*

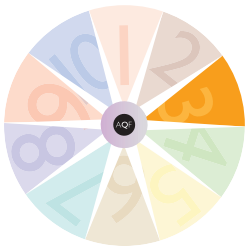
Authority to issue the qualification

A Certificate II qualification may only be issued by an organisation that is authorised by an accrediting authority to do so, and meets any government standards for the sector.

Assessment leading to the award of the qualification lies with the issuing organisation. The issuing organisation is responsible for ensuring the quality of the learning outcomes and that the graduate has satisfactorily completed any requirements for the awarding of the qualification.

Issuing organisations must issue qualifications consistent with the *AQF Qualifications Issuance Policy.*

Issuing organisations will maintain a register of the AQF qualifications they have issued consistent with the *AQF Qualifications Register Policy.*



AQF specification for the Certificate III

This *Specification* informs the design and accreditation of Certificate III qualifications.

The principal users of the *AQF Qualification Type Specifications* are the accrediting authorities in each education and training sector which are responsible for the accreditation of AQF qualifications and the developers of AQF qualifications in each education and training sector.

The other users of the *Specifications* are the authorised issuing organisations, industry and professional bodies, licensing and regulatory bodies, students, graduates and employers.

The purpose of the Certificate III qualification type is to qualify individuals who apply a broad range of knowledge and skills in varied contexts to undertake skilled work and as a pathway for further learning.

Certificate III qualifications are located at level 3 of the Australian Qualifications Framework.

Certificate III qualifications must be designed and accredited to enable graduates to demonstrate the learning outcomes expressed as knowledge, skills and the application of knowledge and skills specified in the level 3 criteria and the Certificate III descriptor.

AQF level 3 criteria	
Summary	Graduates at this level will have theoretical and practical knowledge and skills for work and/or further learning
Knowledge	Graduates at this level will have factual, technical, procedural and some theoretical knowledge of a specific area of work and learning
Skills	Graduates at this level will have a range of cognitive, technical and communication skills to select and apply a specialised range of methods, tools, materials and information to: • complete routine activities • provide and transmit solutions to predictable and sometimes unpredictable problems
Application of knowledge and skills	Graduates at this level will apply knowledge and skills to demonstrate autonomy and judgement and to take limited responsibility in known and stable contexts within established parameters

AQF specification for the Certificate III

Certificate III qualification type descriptor	
Purpose	The Certificate III qualifies individuals who apply a broad range of knowledge and skills in varied contexts to undertake skilled work and as a pathway for further learning
Knowledge	Graduates of a Certificate III will have factual, technical, procedural and theoretical knowledge in an area of work and learning
Skills	Graduates of a Certificate III will have: • cognitive, technical and communication skills to interpret and act on available information • cognitive and communication skills to apply and communicate known solutions to a variety of predictable problems and to deal with unforseen contingencies using known solutions • technical and communication skills to provide technical information to a variety of specialist and non-specialist audiences • technical skills to undertake routine and some non-routine tasks in a range of skilled operations
Application of knowledge and skills	Graduates of a Certificate III will demonstrate the application of knowledge and skills: • with discretion and judgement in the selection of equipment, services or contingency measures • to adapt and transfer skills and knowledge within known routines, methods, procedures and time constraints • in contexts that include taking responsibility for own outputs in work and learning including participation in teams and taking limited responsibility for the output of others within established parameters
Volume of learning	The volume of learning of a Certificate III is typically 1 – 2 years. Up to 4 years may be required to achieve the learning outcomes through a program of indentured training/employment

Qualification nomenclature

The title used for the Certificate III must be consistent with the *AQF Qualifications Issuance Policy.*

Pathways

Each qualification accredited as a Certificate III will include documented pathways consistent with the *AQF Qualifications Pathways Policy.*

Issuing organisations offering a Certificate III qualification must meet the requirements of the *AQF Qualifications Pathways Policy.*

Responsibility for accreditation and development

Accrediting authorities and those developing qualifications for accreditation must adhere to the AQF Specification for this qualification type and any government accreditation standards for vocational education and training when accrediting a Certificate III qualification.

Accrediting authorities are responsible for monitoring the quality of issuing organisations against any government regulatory and quality assurance arrangements.

AQF specification for the Certificate III

When accrediting Certificate III qualifications accrediting authorities must ensure that:

- Graduates of a Certificate III qualification will achieve learning outcomes at level 3.
- All the learning outcomes (knowledge, skills and the application of knowledge and skills) of the Certificate III qualification type are evident in each qualification accredited as this type. Some may have more emphasis than others in different Certificate III qualifications depending on their purpose.
- Generic learning outcomes are explicitly identified in the qualification and align with the level of the qualification type, the purpose of the qualification and the discipline. Generic learning outcomes fall into four broad categories: fundamental skills; people skills; thinking skills; and personal skills. In the vocational education and training sector they are expressed as employability skills as defined by the National Quality Council (2008).
- The relationship between the learning outcomes in the level 3 criteria, the qualification type descriptor, and the discipline is clear.
- The design of the components of qualification will provide coherent learning outcomes for the level and qualification type and will enable graduates to demonstrate them.
- The volume of learning is sufficient for graduates to achieve the learning outcomes for a qualification of this level and type. Learning outcomes for Certificate III qualifications may be achieved through a program of indentured training/employment or a program of learning in an institution which may include work placements.

Once a qualification is accredited it must be placed on the AQF Register in a form consistent with the *AQF Qualifications Register Policy.*

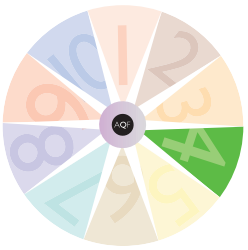
Authority to issue the qualification

A Certificate III qualification may only be issued by an organisation that is authorised by an accrediting authority to do so, and meets any government standards for the sector.

Assessment leading to the award of the qualification lies with the issuing organisation. The issuing organisation is responsible for ensuring the quality of the learning outcomes and that the graduate has satisfactorily completed any requirements for the awarding of the qualification.

Issuing organisations must issue qualifications consistent with the *AQF Qualifications Issuance Policy.*

Issuing organisations will maintain a register of the AQF qualifications they have issued consistent with the *AQF Qualifications Register Policy.*



AQF specification for the Certificate IV

This *Specification* informs the design and accreditation of Certificate IV qualifications.

The principal users of the *AQF Qualification Type Specifications* are the accrediting authorities in each education and training sector which are responsible for the accreditation of AQF qualifications and the developers of AQF qualifications in each education and training sector.

The other users of the *Specifications* are the authorised issuing organisations, industry and professional bodies, licensing and regulatory bodies, students, graduates and employers.

The purpose of the Certificate IV qualification type is to qualify individuals who apply a broad range of specialised knowledge and skills in varied contexts to undertake skilled work and as a pathway for further learning.

Certificate IV qualifications are located at level 4 of the Australian Qualifications Framework.

Certificate IV qualifications must be designed and accredited to enable graduates to demonstrate the learning outcomes expressed as knowledge, skills and the application of knowledge and skills specified in the level 4 criteria and the Certificate IV descriptor.

AQF level 4 criteria	
Summary	Graduates at this level will have theoretical and practical knowledge and skills for specialised/skilled work and/or further learning
Knowledge	Graduates at this level will have broad factual, technical and some theoretical knowledge of a specific area or a broad field of work and learning
Skills	Graduates at this level will have a broad range of cognitive, technical and communication skills to select and apply a range of methods, tools, materials and information to: • complete routine and non-routine activities • provide and transmit solutions to a variety of predictable and sometimes unpredictable problems
Application of knowledge and skills	Graduates at this level will apply knowledge and skills to demonstrate autonomy, judgement and limited responsibility in known or changing contexts and within established parameters

AQF specification for the Certificate IV

Certificate IV qualification type descriptor	
Purpose	The Certificate IV qualifies individuals who apply a broad range of specialised knowledge and skills in varied contexts to undertake skilled work and as a pathway for further learning
Knowledge	Graduates of a Certificate IV will have broad factual, technical and theoretical knowledge in a specialised field of work and learning
Skills	Graduates of a Certificate IV will have: • cognitive skills to identify, analyse, compare and act on information from a range of sources • cognitive, technical and communication skills to apply and communicate technical solutions of a non-routine or contingency nature to a defined range of predictable and unpredictable problems • specialist technical skills to complete routine and non-routine tasks and functions • communication skills to guide activities and provide technical advice in the area of work and learning
Application of knowledge and skills	Graduates of a Certificate IV will demonstrate the application of knowledge and skills: • to specialised tasks or functions in known or changing contexts • with responsibility for own functions and outputs, and may have limited responsibility for organisation of others • with limited responsibility for the quantity and quality of the output of others in a team within limited parameters
Volume of learning	The volume of learning of a Certificate IV is typically 0.5 – 2 years. There may be variations between short duration specialist qualifications that build on knowledge and skills already acquired and longer duration qualifications that are designed as entry level requirements for work

Qualification nomenclature

The title used for the Certificate IV must be consistent with the *AQF Qualifications Issuance Policy.*

Pathways

Each qualification accredited as a Certificate IV will include documented pathways consistent with *AQF Qualifications Pathways Policy.*

Issuing organisations offering a Certificate IV qualification must meet the requirements of the *AQF Qualifications Pathways Policy.*

Responsibility for accreditation and development

Accrediting authorities and those developing qualifications for accreditation must adhere to the AQF specification for this qualification type and any government accreditation standards for vocational education and training when accrediting a Certificate IV qualification.

Accrediting authorities are responsible for monitoring the quality of issuing organisations against any government regulatory and quality assurance arrangements.

AQF specification for the Certificate IV

When accrediting Certificate IV qualifications accrediting authorities must ensure that:

- Graduates of a Certificate IV qualification will achieve learning outcomes at level 4.
- All the learning outcomes (knowledge, skills and the application of knowledge and skills) of the Certificate IV qualification type are evident in each qualification accredited as this type. Some may have more emphasis than others in different Certificate IV qualifications depending on their purpose.
- Generic learning outcomes are explicitly identified in the qualification and align with the level of the qualification type, the purpose of the qualification and the discipline. Generic learning outcomes fall into four broad categories: fundamental skills; people skills; thinking skills; and personal skills. In the vocational education and training sector they are expressed as employability skills as defined by the National Quality Council (2008).
- The relationship between the learning outcomes in the level 4 criteria, the qualification type descriptor, and the discipline is clear.
- The design of the components of the qualification will provide coherent learning outcomes for the level and qualification type and will enable graduates to demonstrate them.
- The volume of learning is sufficient for graduates to achieve the learning outcomes for a qualification of this level and type. Learning outcomes for Certificate IV qualifications may be achieved through a program of indentured training/employment or a program of learning in an institution which may include work placements.

Once a qualification is accredited it must be placed on the AQF Register in a form consistent with the *AQF Qualifications Register Policy.*

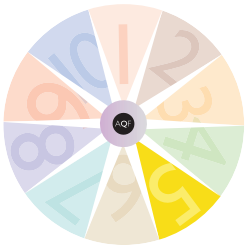
Authority to issue the qualification

A Certificate IV qualification may only be issued by an organisation that is authorised by an accrediting authority to do so, and meets any government standards for the sector.

Assessment leading to the award of the qualification lies with the issuing organisation. The issuing organisation is responsible for ensuring the quality of the learning outcomes and that the graduate has satisfactorily completed any requirements for the awarding of the qualification.

Issuing organisations must issue qualifications consistent with the *AQF Qualifications Issuance Policy.*

Issuing organisations will maintain a register of the AQF qualifications they have issued consistent with the *AQF Qualifications Register Policy.*



AQF specification for the Diploma

This *Specification* informs the design and accreditation of Diploma qualifications.

The principal users of the *AQF Qualification Type Specifications* are the accrediting authorities in each education and training sector which are responsible for the accreditation of AQF qualifications and the developers of AQF qualifications in each education and training sector.

The other users of the *Specifications* are the authorised issuing organisations, industry and professional bodies, licensing and regulatory bodies, students, graduates and employers.

The purpose of the Diploma qualification type is to qualify individuals who apply integrated technical and theoretical concepts in a broad range of contexts to undertake advanced skilled or paraprofessional work and as a pathway for further learning.

Diploma qualifications are located at level 5 of the Australian Qualifications Framework.

Diploma qualifications must be designed and accredited to enable graduates to demonstrate the learning outcomes expressed as knowledge, skills and the application of knowledge and skills specified in the level 5 criteria and the Diploma descriptor.

AQF level 5 criteria

Summary	Graduates at this level will have specialised knowledge and skills for skilled/paraprofessional work and/or further learning
Knowledge	Graduates at this level will have technical and theoretical knowledge in a specific area or a broad field of work and learning
Skills	Graduates at this level will have a broad range of cognitive, technical and communication skills to select and apply methods and technologies to: • analyse information to complete a range of activities • provide and transmit solutions to sometimes complex problems • transmit information and skills to others
Application knowledge and skills	Graduates at this level will apply knowledge and skills to demonstrate autonomy, judgement and defined responsibility in known or changing contexts and within broad but established parameters

AQF specification for the Diploma

Diploma qualification type descriptor	
Purpose	The Diploma qualifies individuals who apply integrated technical and theoretical concepts in a broad range of contexts to undertake advanced skilled or paraprofessional work and as a pathway for further learning
Knowledge	Graduates of a Diploma will have technical and theoretical knowledge and concepts, with depth in some areas within a field of work and learning
Skills	Graduates of a Diploma will have: • cognitive and communication skills to identify, analyse, synthesise and act on information from a range of sources • cognitive, technical and communication skills to analyse, plan, design and evaluate approaches to unpredictable problems and/or management requirements • specialist technical and creative skills to express ideas and perspectives • communication skills to transfer knowledge and specialised skills to others and demonstrate understanding of knowledge
Application of knowledge and skills	Graduates of a Diploma will demonstrate the application of knowledge and skills: • with depth in some areas of specialisation, in known or changing contexts • to transfer and apply theoretical concepts and/or technical and/or creative skills in a range of situations • with personal responsibility and autonomy in performing complex technical operations with responsibility for own outputs in relation to broad parameters for quantity and quality • with initiative and judgement to organise the work of self and others and plan, coordinate and evaluate the work of teams within broad but generally well-defined parameters
Volume of learning	The volume of learning of a Diploma is typically 1 – 2 years

Qualification nomenclature

The title used for the Diploma must be consistent with the *AQF Qualifications Issuance Policy.*

Pathways

Each qualification accredited as a Diploma will include documented pathways consistent with *AQF Qualifications Pathways Policy.*

Issuing organisations offering a Diploma qualification must meet the requirements of the *AQF Qualifications Pathways Policy.*

Responsibility for accreditation and development

Accrediting authorities and those developing qualifications for accreditation must adhere to the AQF specification for this qualification type and any government accreditation standards for vocational education and training or higher education when accrediting a Diploma qualification.

Accrediting authorities are responsible for monitoring the quality of issuing organisations against any government regulatory and quality assurance arrangements. Issuing organisations that are self-accrediting are expected to monitor the quality of their qualifications. The Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA) is responsible for the external monitoring of the quality of issuing organisations that are self-accrediting.

AQF specification for the Diploma

When accrediting AQF Diploma qualifications accrediting authorities must ensure that:

- Graduates of a Diploma qualification will achieve learning outcomes at level 5.
- All the learning outcomes (knowledge, skills and the application of knowledge and skills) of the Diploma qualification type are evident in each qualification accredited as this type. Some may have more emphasis than others in different Diploma qualifications depending on their purpose.
- Generic learning outcomes are explicitly identified in the qualification and align with the level of the qualification type, the purpose of the qualification and the discipline. Generic learning outcomes fall into four broad categories: fundamental skills; people skills; thinking skills; and personal skills. In the vocational education and training sector they are expressed as employability skills as defined by the National Quality Council (2008). In the higher education sector they are generally known as graduate attributes and are defined by each higher education institution.
- The relationship between the learning outcomes in the level 5 criteria, the qualification type descriptor, and the discipline is clear.
- The design of the components of the qualification will provide coherent learning outcomes for the level and qualification type and will enable graduates to demonstrate them.
- The volume of learning is sufficient for graduates to achieve the learning outcomes for a qualification of this level and type.

Once a qualification is accredited it must be placed on the AQF Register in a form consistent with the *AQF Qualifications Register Policy.*

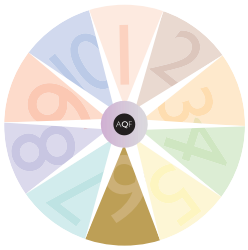
Authority to issue the qualification

A Diploma qualification may only be issued by an organisation that is authorised by an accrediting authority to do so, and meets any government standards for the sector.

Assessment leading to the award of the qualification lies with the issuing organisation. The issuing organisation is responsible for ensuring the quality of the learning outcomes and that the graduate has satisfactorily completed any requirements for the awarding of the qualification.

Issuing organisations must issue qualifications consistent with the *AQF Qualifications Issuance Policy.*

Issuing organisations will maintain a register of the AQF qualifications they have issued consistent with the *AQF Qualifications Register Policy.*



AQF specification for the Advanced Diploma

This *Specification* informs the design and accreditation of Advanced Diploma qualifications.

The principal users of the *AQF Qualification Type Specifications* are the accrediting authorities in each education and training sector which are responsible for the accreditation of AQF qualifications and the developers of AQF qualifications in each education and training sector.

The other users of the *Specifications* are the authorised issuing organisations, industry and professional bodies, licensing and regulatory bodies, students, graduates and employers.

The purpose of the Advanced Diploma qualification type is to qualify individuals who apply specialised knowledge in a range of contexts to undertake advanced skilled or paraprofessional work and as a pathway for further learning.

Advanced Diploma qualifications are located at level 6 of the Australian Qualifications Framework.

Advanced Diploma qualifications must be designed and accredited to enable graduates to demonstrate the learning outcomes expressed as knowledge, skills and the application of knowledge and skills specified in the level 6 criteria and the Advanced Diploma descriptor.

AQF level 6 criteria	
Summary	Graduates at this level will have broad knowledge and skills for paraprofessional/highly skilled work and/or further learning
Knowledge	Graduates at this level will have broad theoretical and technical knowledge of a specific area or a broad field of work and learning
Skills	Graduates at this level will have a broad range of cognitive, technical and communication skills to select and apply methods and technologies to: • analyse information to complete a range of activities • interpret and transmit solutions to unpredictable and sometimes complex problems • transmit information and skills to others
Application knowledge and skills	Graduates at this level will apply knowledge and skills to demonstrate autonomy, judgement and defined responsibility: • in contexts that are subject to change • within broad parameters to provide specialist advice and functions

AQF specification for the Advanced Diploma

Advanced Diploma qualification type descriptor	
Purpose	The Advanced Diploma qualifies individuals who apply specialised knowledge in a range of contexts to undertake advanced skilled or paraprofessional work and as a pathway for further learning
Knowledge	Graduates of an Advanced Diploma will have specialised and integrated technical and theoretical knowledge with depth within one or more fields of work and learning
Skills	Graduates of an Advanced Diploma will have: • cognitive and communication skills to identify, analyse, synthesise and act on information from a range of sources • cognitive and communication skills to transfer knowledge and skills to others and to demonstrate understanding of specialised knowledge with depth in some areas • cognitive and communication skills to formulate responses to complex problems • wide-ranging specialised technical, creative or conceptual skills to express ideas and perspectives
Application of knowledge and skills	Graduates of an Advanced Diploma will demonstrate the application of knowledge and skills: • with depth in areas of specialisation, in contexts subject to change • with initiative and judgment in planning, design, technical or management functions with some direction • to adapt a range of fundamental principles and complex techniques to known and unknown situations • across a broad range of technical or management functions with accountability for personal outputs and personal and team outcomes within broad parameters
Volume of learning	The volume of learning of an Advanced Diploma is typically 1.5 – 2 years

Qualification nomenclature

The title used for the Advanced Diploma must be consistent with the *AQF Qualifications Issuance Policy*.

Pathways

Each qualification accredited as an Advanced Diploma will include documented pathways consistent with *AQF Qualifications Pathways Policy.*

Issuing organisations offering an Advanced Diploma qualification must meet the requirements of the *AQF Qualifications Pathways Policy.*

Responsibility for accreditation and development

Accrediting authorities and those developing qualifications for accreditation must adhere to the AQF specification for this qualification type and any government accreditation standards for vocational education and training or higher education when accrediting an Advanced Diploma qualification.

Accrediting authorities are responsible for monitoring the quality of issuing organisations against any government regulatory and quality assurance arrangements. Issuing organisations that are self-accrediting are expected to monitor the quality of their qualifications. The Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA) is responsible for the external monitoring of the quality of issuing organisations that are self-accrediting.

AQF specification for the Advanced Diploma

When accrediting AQF Advanced Diploma qualifications accrediting authorities must ensure that:

- Graduates of an Advanced Diploma qualification will achieve learning outcomes at level 6.
- All the learning outcomes (knowledge, skills and the application of knowledge and skills) of the Advanced Diploma qualification type are evident in each qualification accredited as this type. Some may have more emphasis than others in different Advanced Diploma qualifications depending on their purpose.
- Generic learning outcomes are explicitly identified in the qualification and align with the level of the qualification type, the purpose of the qualification and the discipline. Generic learning outcomes fall into four broad categories: fundamental skills; people skills; thinking skills; and personal skills. In the vocational education and training sector they are expressed as employability skills as defined by the National Quality Council (2008). In the higher education sector they are generally known as graduate attributes and are defined by each higher education institution.
- The relationship between the learning outcomes in the level 6 criteria, the qualification type descriptor, and the discipline is clear.
- The design of the components of the qualification will provide coherent learning outcomes for the level and qualification type and will enable graduates to demonstrate them.
- The volume of learning is sufficient for graduates to achieve the learning outcomes for a qualification of this level and type.

Once a qualification is accredited it must be placed on the AQF Register in a form consistent with the *AQF Qualifications Register Policy.*

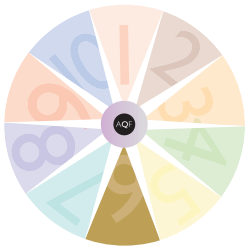
Authority to issue the qualification

An Advanced Diploma qualification may only be issued by an organisation that is authorised by an accrediting authority to do so, and meets any government standards for the sector.

Assessment leading to the award of the qualification lies with the issuing organisation. The issuing organisation is responsible for ensuring the quality of the learning outcomes and that the graduate has satisfactorily completed any requirements for the awarding of the qualification.

Issuing organisations must issue qualifications consistent with the *AQF Qualifications Issuance Policy.*

Issuing organisations will maintain a register of the AQF qualifications they have issued consistent with the *AQF Qualifications Register Policy.*



AQF specification for the Associate Degree

This *Specification* informs the design and accreditation of Associate Degree qualifications.

The principal users of the *AQF Qualification Type Specifications* are the accrediting authorities in each education and training sector which are responsible for the accreditation of AQF qualifications and the developers of AQF qualifications in each education and training sector.

The other users of the *Specifications* are the authorised issuing organisations, industry and professional bodies, licensing and regulatory bodies, students, graduates and employers.

The purpose of the Associate Degree qualification type is to qualify individuals who apply underpinning technical and theoretical knowledge in a range of contexts to undertake paraprofessional work and as a pathway for further learning.

Associate Degree qualifications are located at level 6 of the Australian Qualifications Framework.

Associate Degree qualifications must be designed and accredited to enable graduates to demonstrate the learning outcomes expressed as knowledge, skills and the application of knowledge and skills specified in the level 6 criteria and the Associate Degree descriptor.

AQF level 6 criteria	
Summary	Graduates at this level will have broad knowledge and skills for paraprofessional/highly skilled work and/or further learning
Knowledge	Graduates at this level will have broad theoretical and technical knowledge of a specific area or a broad field of work and learning
Skills	Graduates at this level will have a broad range of cognitive, technical and communication skills to select and apply methods and technologies to: • analyse information to complete a range of activities • interpret and transmit solutions to unpredictable and sometimes complex problems • transmit information and skills to others
Application knowledge and skills	Graduates at this level will apply knowledge and skills to demonstrate autonomy, judgement and defined responsibility: • in contexts that are subject to change • within broad parameters to provide specialist advice and functions

AQF specification for the Associate Degree

Associate Degree qualification type descriptor	
Purpose	The Associate Degree qualifies individuals who apply underpinning technical and theoretical knowledge in a range of contexts to undertake paraprofessional work and as a pathway for further learning
Knowledge	Graduates of an Associate Degree will have broad theoretical and technical knowledge with some depth in the underlying principles and concepts in one or more disciplines
Skills	Graduates of an Associate Degree will have: • cognitive skills to identify, analyse and evaluate information and concepts from a range of sources • cognitive, technical and creative thinking skills to demonstrate a broad understanding of knowledge and ideas with some depth in a discipline • cognitive, communication and analytical skills to interpret and transmit responses to sometimes complex problems • communication skills to make a clear and coherent presentation of knowledge and ideas with some intellectual independence
Application of knowledge and skills	Graduates of an Associate Degree will demonstrate the application of knowledge and skills: • with initiative and judgement in planning, problem solving and decision making in paraprofessional practice • to adapt knowledge and skills in a range of contexts and/or for further studies in one or more disciplines • to adapt fundamental principles, concepts and techniques to known and unknown situations • with responsibility and accountability for own learning and work and in collaboration with others within broad parameters
Volume of learning	The volume of learning of an Associate Degree is typically 2 years

Qualification nomenclature

The title used for the Associate Degree must be consistent with the *AQF Qualifications Issuance Policy.*

Pathways

Each qualification accredited as an Associate Degree will include documented pathways consistent with *AQF Qualifications Pathways Policy.*

Issuing organisations offering an Associate Degree qualification must meet the requirements of the *AQF Qualifications Pathways Policy.*

Responsibility for accreditation and development

Accrediting authorities and those developing qualifications for accreditation must adhere to the AQF specification for this qualification type and any government accreditation standards for higher education when accrediting an Associate Degree qualification.

Accrediting authorities are responsible for monitoring the quality of issuing organisations against any government regulatory and quality assurance arrangements. Issuing organisations that are self-accrediting are expected to monitor the quality of their qualifications. The Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA) is responsible for the external monitoring of the quality of issuing organisations that are self-accrediting.

AQF specification for the Associate Degree

When accrediting AQF Associate Degree qualifications accrediting authorities must ensure that:

- Graduates of an Associate Degree qualification will achieve learning outcomes at level 6.
- All the learning outcomes (knowledge, skills and the application of knowledge and skills) of the Associate Degree qualification type are evident in each qualification accredited as this type. Some may have more emphasis than others in different Associate Degree qualifications depending on their purpose.
- Generic learning outcomes are explicitly identified in the qualification and align with the level of the qualification type, the purpose of the qualification and the discipline. Generic learning outcomes fall into four broad categories: fundamental skills; people skills; thinking skills; and personal skills. In the higher education sector they are generally known as graduate attributes and are defined by each higher education institution.
- The relationship between the learning outcomes in the level 6 criteria, the qualification type descriptor, and the discipline is clear.
- The design of the components of the qualification will provide coherent learning outcomes for the level and qualification type and will enable graduates to demonstrate them.
- The volume of learning is sufficient for graduates to achieve the learning outcomes for a qualification of this level and type.

Once a qualification is accredited it must be placed on the AQF Register in a form consistent with the *AQF Qualifications Register Policy.*

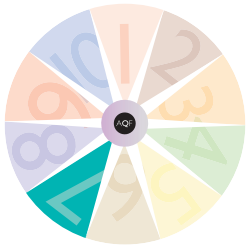
Authority to issue the qualification

An Associate Degree qualification may only be issued by an organisation that is authorised by an accrediting authority to do so, and meets any government standards for the sector.

Assessment leading to the award of the qualification lies with the issuing organisation. The issuing organisation is responsible for ensuring the quality of the learning outcomes and that the graduate has satisfactorily completed any requirements for the awarding of the qualification.

Issuing organisations must issue qualifications consistent with the *AQF Qualifications Issuance Policy.*

Issuing organisations will maintain a register of the AQF qualifications they have issued consistent with the *AQF Qualifications Register Policy.*



AQF specification for the Bachelor Degree

This *Specification* informs the design and accreditation of Bachelor Degree qualifications.

The principal users of the *AQF Qualification Type Specifications* are the accrediting authorities in each education and training sector which are responsible for the accreditation of AQF qualifications and the developers of AQF qualifications in each education and training sector.

The other users of the *Specifications* are the authorised issuing organisations, industry and professional bodies, licensing and regulatory bodies, students, graduates and employers.

The purpose of the Bachelor Degree qualification type is to qualify individuals who apply a broad and coherent body of knowledge in a range of contexts to undertake professional work and as a pathway for further learning.

Bachelor Degree qualifications are located at level 7 of the Australian Qualifications Framework.

Bachelor Degree qualifications must be designed and accredited to enable graduates to demonstrate the learning outcomes expressed as knowledge, skills and the application of knowledge and skills specified in the level 7 criteria and the Bachelor Degree descriptor.

AQF level 7 criteria	
Summary	Graduates at this level will have broad and coherent knowledge and skills for professional work and/or further learning
Knowledge	Graduates at this level will have broad and coherent theoretical and technical knowledge with depth in one or more disciplines or areas of practice
Skills	Graduates at this level will have well-developed cognitive, technical and communication skills to select and apply methods and technologies to: • analyse and evaluate information to complete a range of activities • analyse, generate and transmit solutions to unpredictable and sometimes complex problems • transmit knowledge, skills and ideas to others
Application of knowledge and skills	Graduates at this level will apply knowledge and skills to demonstrate autonomy, well-developed judgement and responsibility: • in contexts that require self-directed work and learning • within broad parameters to provide specialist advice and functions

AQF specification for the Bachelor Degree

Bachelor Degree qualification type descriptor	
Purpose	The Bachelor Degree qualifies individuals who apply a broad and coherent body of knowledge in a range of contexts to undertake professional work and as a pathway for further learning
Knowledge	Graduates of a Bachelor Degree will have a broad and coherent body of knowledge, with depth in the underlying principles and concepts in one or more disciplines as a basis for independent lifelong learning
Skills	Graduates of a Bachelor Degree will have: • cognitive skills to review critically, analyse, consolidate and synthesise knowledge • cognitive and technical skills to demonstrate a broad understanding of knowledge with depth in some areas • cognitive and creative skills to exercise critical thinking and judgement in identifying and solving problems with intellectual independence • communication skills to present a clear, coherent and independent exposition of knowledge and ideas
Application of knowledge and skills	Graduates of a Bachelor Degree will demonstrate the application of knowledge and skills: • with initiative and judgement in planning, problem solving and decision making in professional practice and/or scholarship • to adapt knowledge and skills in diverse contexts • with responsibility and accountability for own learning and professional practice and in collaboration with others within broad parameters
Volume of learning	The volume of learning of a Bachelor Degree is typically 3 – 4 years

Qualification nomenclature

The title used for the Bachelor Degree must be consistent with the *AQF Qualifications Issuance Policy.*

Pathways

Each qualification accredited as a Bachelor Degree will include documented pathways consistent with *AQF Qualifications Pathways Policy.*

Issuing organisations offering a Bachelor Degree qualification must meet the requirements of the *AQF Qualifications Pathways Policy.*

Responsibility for accreditation and development

Accrediting authorities and those developing qualifications for accreditation must adhere to the AQF specification for this qualification type and any government accreditation standards for higher education when accrediting a Bachelor Degree qualification.

Accrediting authorities are responsible for monitoring the quality of issuing organisations against any government regulatory and quality assurance arrangements. Issuing organisations that are self-accrediting are expected to monitor the quality of their qualifications. The Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA) is responsible for the external monitoring of the quality of issuing organisations that are self-accrediting.

AQF specification for the Bachelor Degree

When accrediting AQF Bachelor Degree qualifications accrediting authorities must ensure that:

- Graduates of a Bachelor Degree qualification will achieve learning outcomes at level 7.
- All the learning outcomes (knowledge, skills and the application of knowledge and skills) of the Bachelor Degree qualification type are evident in each qualification accredited as this type. Some may have more emphasis than others in different Bachelor Degree qualifications depending on their purpose.
- Generic learning outcomes are explicitly identified in the qualification and align with the level of the qualification type, the purpose of the qualification and the discipline. Generic learning outcomes fall into four broad categories: fundamental skills; people skills; thinking skills; and personal skills. In the higher education sector they are generally known as graduate attributes and are defined by each higher education institution.
- The relationship between the learning outcomes in the level 7 criteria, the qualification type descriptor, and the discipline is clear.
- The design of the components of the qualification will provide coherent learning outcomes for the level and qualification type and will enable graduates to demonstrate them.
- The volume of learning is sufficient for graduates to achieve the learning outcomes for a qualification of this level and type.

Once a qualification is accredited it must be placed on the AQF Register in a form consistent with the *AQF Qualifications Register Policy.*

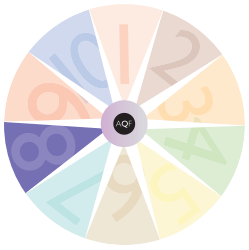
Authority to issue the qualification

A Bachelor Degree qualification may only be issued by an organisation that is authorised by an accrediting authority to do so, and meets any government standards for the sector.

Assessment leading to the award of the qualification lies with the issuing organisation. The issuing organisation is responsible for ensuring the quality of the learning outcomes and that the graduate has satisfactorily completed any requirements for the awarding of the qualification.

Issuing organisations must issue qualifications consistent with the *AQF Qualifications Issuance Policy.*

Issuing organisations will maintain a register of the AQF qualifications they have issued consistent with the *AQF Qualifications Register Policy.*



AQF specification for the Bachelor Honours Degree

This *Specification* informs the design and accreditation of Bachelor Honours Degree qualifications.

The principal users of the *AQF Qualification Type Specifications* are the accrediting authorities in each education and training sector which are responsible for the accreditation of AQF qualifications and the developers of AQF qualifications in each education and training sector.

The other users of the *Specifications* are the authorised issuing organisations, industry and professional bodies, licensing and regulatory bodies, students, graduates and employers.

The purpose of the Bachelor Honours Degree qualification type is to qualify individuals who apply a body of knowledge in a specific context to undertake professional work and as a pathway for research and further learning.

Bachelor Honours Degree qualifications are located at level 8 of the Australian Qualifications Framework.

Bachelor Honours Degree qualifications must be designed and accredited to enable graduates to demonstrate the learning outcomes expressed as knowledge, skills and the application of knowledge and skills specified in the level 8 criteria and the Bachelor Degree descriptor.

AQF level 8 criteria	
Summary	Graduates at this level will have advanced knowledge and skills for professional or highly skilled work and/or further learning
Knowledge	Graduates at this level will have advanced theoretical and technical knowledge in one or more disciplines or areas of practice
Skills	Graduates at this level will have advanced cognitive, technical and communication skills to select and apply methods and technologies to: • analyse critically, evaluate and transform information to complete a range of activities • analyse, generate and transmit solutions to complex problems • transmit knowledge, skills and ideas to others
Application knowledge and skills	Graduates at this level will apply knowledge and skills to demonstrate autonomy, well-developed judgement, adaptability and responsibility as a practitioner or learner

AQF specification for the Bachelor Honours Degree

Bachelor Honours Degree qualification type descriptor	
Purpose	The Bachelor Honours Degree qualifies individuals who apply a body of knowledge in a specific context to undertake professional work and as a pathway for research and further learning
Knowledge	Graduates of a Bachelor Honours Degree will have coherent and advanced knowledge of the underlying principles and concepts in one or more disciplines and knowledge of research principles and methods
Skills	Graduates of a Bachelor Honours Degree will have: • cognitive skills to review, analyse, consolidate and synthesise knowledge to identify and provide solutions to complex problems with intellectual independence • cognitive and technical skills to demonstrate a broad understanding of a body of knowledge and theoretical concepts with advanced understanding in some areas • cognitive skills to exercise critical thinking and judgement in developing new understanding • technical skills to design and use research in a project • communication skills to present a clear and coherent exposition of knowledge and ideas to a variety of audiences
Application of knowledge and skills	Graduates of a Bachelor Honours Degree will demonstrate the application of knowledge and skills: • with initiative and judgement in professional practice and/or scholarship • to adapt knowledge and skills in diverse contexts • with responsibility and accountability for own learning and practice and in collaboration with others within broad parameters • to plan and execute project work and/or a piece of research and scholarship with some independence
Volume of learning	The volume of learning of a Bachelor Honours Degree is typically 1 year following a Bachelor Degree. A Bachelor Honours Degree may also be embedded in a Bachelor Degree, typically as an additional year

Qualification nomenclature

The title used for the Bachelor Honours Degree must be consistent with the *AQF Qualifications Issuance Policy.*

Pathways

Each qualification accredited as a Bachelor Honours Degree will include documented pathways consistent with *AQF Qualifications Pathways Policy.*

Issuing organisations offering a Bachelor Honours Degree qualification must meet the requirements of the *AQF Qualifications Pathways Policy.*

Responsibility for accreditation and development

Accrediting authorities and those developing qualifications for accreditation must adhere to the AQF specification for this qualification type and any government accreditation standards for higher education when accrediting a Bachelor Honours Degree qualification.

Accrediting authorities are responsible for monitoring the quality of issuing organisations against any government regulatory and quality assurance arrangements. Issuing organisations that are self-accrediting are expected to monitor the quality of their qualifications. The Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA) is responsible for the external monitoring of the quality of issuing organisations that are self-accrediting.

AQF specification for the Bachelor Honours Degree

When accrediting AQF Bachelor Honours Degree qualifications accrediting authorities must ensure that:

- Graduates of a Bachelor Honours Degree qualification will achieve learning outcomes at level 8.
- All the learning outcomes (knowledge, skills and the application of knowledge and skills) of the Bachelor Honours Degree qualification type are evident in each qualification accredited as this type. Some may have more emphasis than others in different Bachelor Honours Degree qualifications depending on their purpose.
- Generic learning outcomes are explicitly identified in the qualification and align with the level of the qualification type, the purpose of the qualification and the discipline. Generic learning outcomes fall into four broad categories: fundamental skills; people skills; thinking skills; and personal skills. In the higher education sector they are generally known as graduate attributes and are defined by each higher education institution.
- The relationship between the learning outcomes in the level 8 criteria, the qualification type descriptor, and the discipline is clear.
- The design of the components of the qualification will provide coherent learning outcomes for the level and qualification type and will enable graduates to demonstrate them.
- The volume of learning is sufficient for graduates to achieve the learning outcomes for a qualification of this level and type.

Once a qualification is accredited it must be placed on the AQF Register in a form consistent with the *AQF Qualifications Register Policy.*

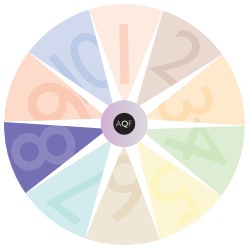
Authority to issue the qualification

A Bachelor Honours Degree qualification may only be issued by an organisation that is authorised by an accrediting authority to do so, and meets any government standards for the sector.

Assessment leading to the award of the qualification lies with the issuing organisation. The issuing organisation is responsible for ensuring the quality of the learning outcomes and that the graduate has satisfactorily completed any requirements for the awarding of the qualification.

Issuing organisations must issue qualifications consistent with the *AQF Qualifications Issuance Policy.*

Issuing organisations will maintain a register of the AQF qualifications they have issued consistent with the *AQF Qualifications Register Policy.*



AQF specification for the Graduate Certificate and Vocational Graduate Certificate

This *Specification* informs the design and accreditation of Graduate Certificate and Vocational Graduate Certificate qualifications.

The principal users of the *AQF Qualification Type Specifications* are the accrediting authorities in each education and training sector which are responsible for the accreditation of AQF qualifications and the developers of AQF qualifications in each education and training sector.

The other users of the *Specifications* are the authorised issuing organisations, industry and professional bodies, licensing and regulatory bodies, students, graduates and employers.

The purpose of the Graduate Certificate and Vocational Graduate Certificate qualification types is to qualify individuals who apply a body of knowledge in a range of contexts to undertake professional or highly skilled work and as a pathway for further learning.

Graduate Certificate and Vocational Graduate Certificate qualifications are located at level 8 of the Australian Qualifications Framework.

Qualifications accredited as Graduate Certificate or Vocational Graduate Certificate qualifications must be designed and accredited to enable graduates to demonstrate the learning outcomes expressed as knowledge, skills and the application of knowledge and skills specified in the level 8 criteria and the Graduate Certificate or Vocational Graduate Certificate descriptor.

AQF level 8 criteria	
Summary	Graduates at this level will have advanced knowledge and skills for professional or highly skilled work and/or further learning
Knowledge	Graduates at this level will have advanced theoretical and technical knowledge in one or more disciplines or areas of practice
Skills	Graduates at this level will have advanced cognitive, technical and communication skills to select and apply methods and technologies to: • analyse critically, evaluate and transform information to complete a range of activities • analyse, generate and transmit solutions to complex problems • transmit knowledge, skills and ideas to others
Application of knowledge and skills	Graduates at this level will apply knowledge and skills to demonstrate autonomy, well-developed judgement, adaptability and responsibility as a practitioner or learner

AQF specification for the Graduate Certificate and Vocational Graduate Certificate

Graduate Certificate and Vocational Graduate Certificate qualification type descriptors	
Purpose	The Graduate Certificate/Vocational Graduate Certificate qualifies individuals who apply a body of knowledge in a range of contexts to undertake professional or highly skilled work and as a pathway for further learning
Knowledge	Graduates of a Graduate Certificate/Vocational Graduate Certificate will have specialised knowledge within a systematic and coherent body of knowledge that may include the acquisition and application of knowledge and skills in a new or existing discipline or professional area
Skills	Graduates of a Graduate Certificate/Vocational Graduate Certificate will have: • cognitive skills to review, analyse, consolidate and synthesise knowledge and identify and provide solutions to complex problems • cognitive skills to think critically and to generate and evaluate complex ideas • specialised technical and creative skills in a field of highly skilled and/or professional practice • communication skills to demonstrate an understanding of theoretical concepts • communication skills to transfer complex knowledge and ideas to a variety of audiences
Application of knowledge and skills	Graduates of a Graduate Certificate/Vocational Graduate Certificate will demonstrate the application of knowledge and skills: • to make high level, independent judgements in a range of technical or management functions in varied specialised contexts • to initiate, plan, implement and evaluate broad functions within varied specialised technical and/or creative contexts • with responsibility and accountability for personal outputs and all aspects of the work or function of others within broad parameters
Volume of learning	The volume of learning of a Graduate Certificate/Vocational Graduate Certificate is typically 0.5 – 1 year

Qualification nomenclature

The title used for a Graduate Certificate or a Vocational Graduate Certificate must be consistent with the *AQF Qualifications Issuance Policy.*

Pathways

Each qualification accredited as a Graduate Certificate or a Vocational Graduate Certificate will include documented pathways consistent with *AQF Qualifications Pathways Policy.*

Issuing organisations offering a Graduate Certificate or Vocational Graduate Certificate qualification must meet the requirements of the *AQF Qualifications Pathways Policy.*

Responsibility for accreditation and development

Accrediting authorities and those developing qualifications for accreditation must adhere to the AQF specification for this qualification type and any government accreditation standards for higher education when accrediting a Graduate Certificate qualification or for vocational education and training when accrediting a Vocational Graduate Certificate qualification.

Accrediting authorities are responsible for monitoring the quality of issuing organisations against any government regulatory and quality assurance arrangements. Issuing organisations that are self-accrediting are expected to monitor the quality of their qualifications. The Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA) is responsible for the external monitoring of the quality of issuing organisations that are self-accrediting.

AQF specification for the Graduate Certificate and Vocational Graduate Certificate

When accrediting AQF Graduate Certificate or Vocational Graduate Certificate qualifications accrediting authorities must ensure that:

- Graduates of a Graduate Certificate or a Vocational Graduate Certificate qualification will achieve learning outcomes at level 8.
- All the learning outcomes (knowledge, skills and the application of knowledge and skills) of the Graduate Certificate or Vocational Graduate Certificate qualification type are evident in each qualification accredited as this type. Some may have more emphasis than others in different Graduate Certificate or Vocational Graduate Certificate qualifications depending on their purpose.
- Generic learning outcomes are explicitly identified in the qualification and align with the level of the qualification type, the purpose of the qualification and the discipline. Generic learning outcomes fall into four broad categories: fundamental skills; people skills; thinking skills; and personal skills. In the vocational education and training sector they are expressed as employability skills as defined by the National Quality Council (2008). In the higher education sector they are generally known as graduate attributes and are defined by each higher education institution.
- The relationship between the learning outcomes in the level 8 criteria, the qualification type descriptor, and the discipline is clear.
- The design of the components of the qualification will provide coherent learning outcomes for the level and qualification type and will enable graduates to demonstrate them.
- The volume of learning is sufficient for graduates to achieve the learning outcomes for a qualification of this level and type.

Once a qualification is accredited it must be placed on the AQF Register in a form consistent with the *AQF Qualifications Register Policy.*

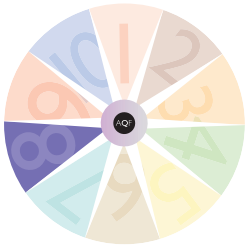
Authority to issue the qualification

A Graduate Certificate or Vocational Graduate Certificate qualification may only be issued by an organisation that is authorised by an accrediting authority to do so, and meets any government standards for the sector.

Assessment leading to the award of the qualification lies with the issuing organisation. The issuing organisation is responsible for ensuring the quality of the learning outcomes and that the graduate has satisfactorily completed any requirements for the awarding of the qualification.

Issuing organisations must issue qualifications consistent with the *AQF Qualifications Issuance Policy.*

Issuing organisations will maintain a register of the AQF qualifications they have issued consistent with the *AQF Qualifications Register Policy.*



AQF specification for the Graduate Diploma and Vocational Graduate Diploma

This *Specification* informs the design and accreditation of Graduate Diploma and Vocational Graduate Diploma qualifications.

The principal users of the *AQF Qualification Type Specifications* are the accrediting authorities in each education and training sector which are responsible for the accreditation of AQF qualifications and the developers of AQF qualifications in each education and training sector.

The other users of the *Specifications* are the authorised issuing organisations, industry and professional bodies, licensing and regulatory bodies, students, graduates and employers.

The purpose of the Graduate Diploma and Vocational Graduate Diploma qualification types is to qualify individuals who apply a body of knowledge in a range of contexts to undertake professional or highly skilled work and as a pathway for further learning.

Graduate Diploma and Vocational Graduate Diploma qualifications are located at level 8 of the Australian Qualifications Framework.

Graduate Diploma and Vocational Graduate Diploma qualifications must be designed and accredited to enable graduates to demonstrate the learning outcomes expressed as knowledge, skills and the application of knowledge and skills specified in the level 8 criteria and the Graduate Diploma and Vocational Graduate Diploma descriptor.

AQF level 8 criteria	
Summary	Graduates at this level will have advanced knowledge and skills for professional or highly skilled work and/or further learning
Knowledge	Graduates at this level will have advanced theoretical and technical knowledge in one or more disciplines or areas of practice
Skills	Graduates at this level will have advanced cognitive, technical and communication skills to select and apply methods and technologies to: • analyse critically, evaluate and transform information to complete a range of activities • analyse, generate and transmit solutions to complex problems • transmit knowledge, skills and ideas to others
Application of knowledge and skills	Graduates at this level will apply knowledge and skills to demonstrate autonomy, well-developed judgement, adaptability and responsibility as a practitioner or learner

AQF specification for the Graduate Diploma and Vocational Graduate Diploma

Graduate Certificate and Vocational Graduate Certificate qualification type descriptors	
Purpose	The Graduate Diploma/Vocational Graduate Diploma qualifies individuals who apply a body of knowledge in a range of contexts to undertake professional or highly skilled work and as a pathway for further learning
Knowledge	Graduates of a Graduate Diploma/Vocational Graduate Diploma will have advanced knowledge within a systematic and coherent body of knowledge that may include the acquisition and application of knowledge and skills in a new or existing discipline or professional area
Skills	Graduates of a Graduate Diploma/Vocational Graduate Diploma will have: • cognitive skills to review, analyse, consolidate and synthesise knowledge and identify and provide solutions to complex problems • cognitive skills to think critically and to generate and evaluate complex ideas • specialised technical and creative skills in a field of highly skilled and/or professional practice • communication skills to demonstrate an understanding of theoretical concepts • communication skills to transfer complex knowledge and ideas to a variety of audiences
Application of knowledge and skills	Graduates of a Graduate Diploma/Vocational Graduate Diploma will demonstrate the application of knowledge and skills: • to make high level, independent judgements in a range of technical or management functions in varied specialised contexts. • to initiate, plan, implement and evaluate broad functions within varied specialised technical and/or creative contexts • with responsibility and accountability for personal outputs and all aspects of the work or function of others within broad parameters
Volume of learning	The volume of learning of a Graduate Diploma/Vocational Graduate Diploma is typically 1 – 2 years

Qualification nomenclature

The title used for a Graduate Diploma or a Vocational Graduate Diploma must be consistent with the *AQF Qualifications Issuance Policy.*

Pathways

Each qualification accredited as a Graduate Diploma or a Vocational Graduate Diploma will include documented pathways consistent with *AQF Qualifications Pathways Policy.*

Issuing organisations offering a Graduate Diploma or Vocational Graduate Diploma qualification must meet the requirements of the *AQF Qualifications Pathways Policy.*

Responsibility for accreditation and development

Accrediting authorities and those developing qualifications for accreditation must adhere to the AQF specification for this qualification type and any government accreditation standards for higher education when accrediting a Graduate Diploma qualification or for vocational education and training when accrediting a Vocational Graduate Diploma qualification.

Accrediting authorities are responsible for monitoring the quality of issuing organisations against any government regulatory and quality assurance arrangements. Issuing organisations that are self-accrediting are expected to monitor the quality of their qualifications. The Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA) is responsible for the external monitoring of the quality of issuing organisations that are self-accrediting.

AQF specification for the Graduate Diploma and Vocational Graduate Diploma

When accrediting AQF Graduate Diploma or Vocational Graduate Diploma qualifications accrediting authorities must ensure that:

- Graduates of a Graduate Diploma or a Vocational Graduate Diploma qualification will achieve learning outcomes at level 8.
- All the learning outcomes (knowledge, skills and the application of knowledge and skills) of the Graduate Diploma or the Vocational Graduate Diploma qualification type are evident in each qualification accredited as this type. Some may have more emphasis than others in different Graduate Diploma or Vocational Graduate Diploma qualifications depending on their purpose.
- Generic learning outcomes are explicitly identified in the qualification and align with the level of the qualification type, the purpose of the qualification and the discipline. Generic learning outcomes fall into four broad categories: fundamental skills; people skills; thinking skills; and personal skills. In the vocational education and training sector they are expressed as employability skills as defined by the National Quality Council (2008). In the higher education sector they are generally known as graduate attributes and are defined by each higher education institution.
- The relationship between the learning outcomes in the level 8 criteria, the qualification type descriptor, and the discipline is clear.
- The design of the components of the qualification will provide coherent learning outcomes for the level and qualification type and will enable graduates to demonstrate them.
- The volume of learning is sufficient for graduates to achieve the learning outcomes for a qualification of this level and type.

Once a qualification is accredited it must be placed on the AQF Register in a form consistent with the *AQF Qualifications Register Policy.*

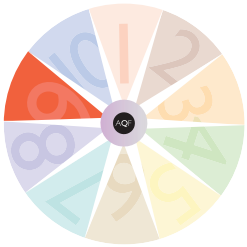
Authority to issue the qualification

A Graduate Diploma or a Vocational Graduate Diploma qualification may only be issued by an organisation that is authorised by an accrediting authority to do so, and meets any government standards for the sector.

Assessment leading to the award of the qualification lies with the issuing organisation. The issuing organisation is responsible for ensuring the quality of the learning outcomes and that the graduate has satisfactorily completed any requirements for the awarding of the qualification.

Issuing organisations must issue qualifications consistent with the *AQF Qualifications Issuance Policy.*

Issuing organisations will maintain a register of the AQF qualifications they have issued consistent with the *AQF Qualifications Register Policy.*



AQF specification for the Masters Degree

This *Specification* informs the design and accreditation of Masters Degree qualifications.

The principal users of the *AQF Qualification Type Specifications* are the accrediting authorities in each education and training sector which are responsible for the accreditation of AQF qualifications and the developers of AQF qualifications in each education and training sector.

The other users of the *Specifications* are the authorised issuing organisations, industry and professional bodies, licensing and regulatory bodies, students, graduates and employers.

There are three main forms of Masters Degrees within the Masters Degree qualification type: the Masters Degree (Research), the Masters Degree (Coursework) and the Masters Degree (Extended).

The purpose of the Masters Degree (Research) is to qualify individuals who apply an advanced body of knowledge in a range of contexts for research and scholarship and as a pathway for further learning.

The purpose of the Masters Degree (Coursework) is to qualify individuals who apply an advanced body of knowledge in a range of contexts for professional practice or scholarship and as a pathway for further learning.

The purpose of the Masters Degree (Extended) is to qualify individuals who apply an advanced body of knowledge in a range of contexts for professional practice and as a pathway for further learning.

Masters Degree qualifications are located at level 9 of the Australian Qualifications Framework.

Masters Degree qualifications must be designed and accredited to enable graduates to demonstrate the learning outcomes specified in the level 9 criteria and either the Masters Degree (Research) descriptor, the Masters Degree (Coursework) descriptor or the Masters Degree (Extended) descriptor.

AQF level 9 criteria	
Summary	Graduates at this level will have specialised knowledge and skills for research, and/or professional practice and/or further learning
Knowledge	Graduates at this level will have advanced and integrated understanding of a complex body of knowledge in one or more disciplines or areas of practice
Skills	Graduates at this level will have expert, specialised cognitive and technical skills in a body of knowledge or practice to independently: • analyse critically, reflect on and synthesise complex information, problems, concepts and theories • research and apply established theories to a body of knowledge or practice • interpret and transmit knowledge, skills and ideas to specialist and non-specialist audiences
Application of knowledge and skills	Graduates at this level will apply knowledge and skills to demonstrate autonomy, expert judgement, adaptability and responsibility as a practitioner or learner

AQF specification for the Masters Degree

Masters Degree qualification type descriptors

	Masters Degree (Research)	Masters Degree (Coursework)	Masters Degree (Extended)
Summary	The Masters Degree (Research) qualifies individuals who apply an advanced body of knowledge in a range of contexts for research and scholarship and as a pathway for further learning	The Masters Degree (Coursework) qualifies individuals who apply an advanced body of knowledge in a range of contexts for professional practice or scholarship and as a pathway for further learning	The Masters Degree (Extended) qualifies individuals who apply an advanced body of knowledge in a range of contexts for professional practice and as a pathway for further learning
Knowledge	Graduates of a Masters Degree (Research) will have: • a body of knowledge that includes the understanding of recent developments in one or more disciplines • advanced knowledge of research principles and methods applicable to the field of work or learning	Graduates of a Masters Degree (Coursework) will have: • a body of knowledge that includes the understanding of recent developments in a discipline and/or area of professional practice • knowledge of research principles and methods applicable to a field of work and or learning	Graduates of a Masters Degree (Extended) will have: • a body of knowledge that includes the extended understanding of recent developments in a discipline and its professional practice • knowledge of research principles and methods applicable to the discipline and its professional practice
Skills	Graduates of a Masters Degree (Research) will have: • cognitive skills to demonstrate mastery of theoretical knowledge and to reflect critically on theory and its application • cognitive, technical and creative skills to investigate, analyse and synthesise complex information, problems, concepts and theories and to apply established theories to different bodies of knowledge or practice • cognitive, technical and creative skills to generate and evaluate complex ideas and concepts at an abstract level • cognitive and technical skills to design, use and evaluate research and research methods • communication and technical skills to present a coherent and sustained argument and to disseminate research results to specialist and non-specialist audiences • technical and communication skills to design, evaluate, implement, analyse, theorise and disseminate research that makes a contribution to knowledge	Graduates of a Masters Degree (Coursework) will have: • cognitive skills to demonstrate mastery of theoretical knowledge and to reflect critically on theory and professional practice or scholarship • cognitive, technical and creative skills to investigate, analyse and synthesise complex information, problems, concepts and theories and to apply established theories to different bodies of knowledge or practice • cognitive, technical and creative skills to generate and evaluate complex ideas and concepts at an abstract level • communication and technical research skills to justify and interpret theoretical propositions, methodologies, conclusions and professional decisions to specialist and non-specialist audiences • technical and communication skills to design, evaluate, implement, analyse and theorise about developments that contribute to professional practice or scholarship	Graduates of a Masters Degree (Extended) will have: • cognitive skills to demonstrate mastery of theoretical knowledge and to reflect critically on theory and professional practice • cognitive, technical and creative skills to investigate, analyse and synthesise complex information, problems, concepts and theories and to apply established theories to different bodies of knowledge or practice • cognitive, technical and creative skills to generate and evaluate complex ideas and concepts at an abstract level • communication and technical research skills to justify and interpret theoretical propositions, methodologies, conclusions and professional decisions to specialist and non-specialist audiences • technical and communication skills to design, evaluate, implement, analyse and theorise about developments that contribute to professional practice
Application of knowledge and skills	Graduates of a Masters Degree (Research) will demonstrate the application of knowledge and skills: • with creativity and initiative to new situations and/or for further learning • with high level personal autonomy and accountability • to plan and execute a substantial piece of research	Graduates of a Masters Degree (Coursework) will demonstrate the application of knowledge and skills: • with creativity and initiative to new situations in professional practice and/or for further learning • with high level personal autonomy and accountability • to plan and execute a substantial research-based project, capstone experience and/or piece of scholarship	Graduates of a Masters Degree (Extended) will demonstrate the application of knowledge and skills: • with creativity and initiative to new situations in professional practice and/or for further learning • with high level personal autonomy and accountability • to plan and execute a substantial research-based project, capstone experience and/or professionally focused project
Volume of learning	The volume of learning of a Masters Degree (Research) is typically 1 – 2 years; in the same discipline 1.5 years following a level 7 qualification or 1 year following a level 8 qualification; in a different discipline 2 years following a level 7 qualification or 1.5 years following a level 8 qualification	The volume of learning of a Masters Degree (Coursework) is typically 1 – 2 years; in the same discipline 1.5 years following a level 7 qualification or 1 year following a level 8 qualification; in a different discipline 2 years following a level 7 qualification or 1.5 years following a level 8 qualification	The volume of learning of a Masters Degree (Extended) is typically 3 – 4 years following completion of a minimum of a 3 year level 7 qualification

AQF specification for the Masters Degree

Qualification nomenclature

The title used for Masters Degree (Research, Coursework or Extended) qualifications must be consistent with the *AQF Qualifications Issuance Policy.*

The title 'Master of …' is the title used for the Masters Degree. Exceptions may be permitted in accordance with the *AQF Qualifications Issuance Policy.*

For exceptions:

- The qualification title and a statement that the qualification is an 'AQF level 9 Masters Degree' will appear on relevant certification documents, on any national, state/territory or institutional registers of qualifications, and in institutional information and promotional materials.

- The qualification may not be referred to as a Doctoral Degree in any written, oral or electronic information.

Pathways

Each qualification accredited as a Masters Degree will include documented pathways consistent with the *AQF Qualifications Pathways Policy.*

Issuing organisations offering a Masters Degree qualification must meet the requirements of the *AQF Qualifications Pathways Policy.*

Responsibility for accreditation and development

Accrediting authorities and those developing qualifications for accreditation must adhere to the AQF specification for this qualification type and any government accreditation standards for higher education when accrediting a Masters Degree qualification.

Accrediting authorities are responsible for monitoring the quality of issuing organisations against any government regulatory and quality assurance arrangements. Issuing organisations that are self-accrediting are expected to monitor the quality of their qualifications. The Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA) is responsible for the external monitoring of the quality of issuing organisations that are self-accrediting.

When accrediting AQF Masters Degree qualifications accrediting authorities must ensure that:

- Graduates of a Masters Degree qualification will achieve learning outcomes at level 9.

- All the learning outcomes (knowledge, skills and the application of knowledge and skills) of the Masters Degree qualification type (either Research, Coursework or Extended) are evident in each qualification accredited as this type. Some may have more emphasis than others in different Masters Degree qualifications depending on their purpose.

- The Masters Degree (Research) is designed so that graduates will have undertaken supervised study and research of which two thirds will be devoted to research, research training and independent study.

- The Masters Degree (Coursework) is designed so that graduates will have undertaken a program of structured learning with some independent research and project work or practice-related learning. If this qualification is to prepare graduates for a profession a significant component of structured learning will be developed in collaboration with a relevant professional, statutory or regulatory body.

- The Masters Degree (Extended) is designed so that graduates will have undertaken a program of structured learning with some independent research and a significant proportion of practice-related learning. As this qualification is designed to prepare graduates to engage in a profession the practice-related learning must be developed in collaboration with a relevant professional, statutory or regulatory body.

AQF specification for the Masters Degree

- Generic learning outcomes are explicitly identified in the qualification and align with the level of the qualification type, the purpose of the qualification and the discipline. Generic learning outcomes fall into four broad categories: fundamental skills; people skills; thinking skills; and personal skills. In the higher education sector they are generally known as graduate attributes and are defined by each higher education institution.
- The relationship between the learning outcomes in the level 9 criteria, the qualification type descriptor, and the discipline is clear.
- The design of the components of the qualification will provide coherent learning outcomes for the level and qualification type and will enable graduates to demonstrate them.
- The volume of learning is sufficient for graduates to achieve the learning outcomes for a qualification of this level and type.

Once a qualification is accredited it must be placed on the AQF Register in a form consistent with the *AQF Qualifications Register Policy.*

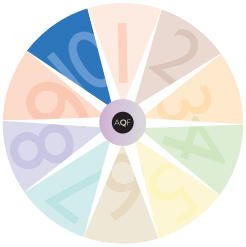
Authority to issue the qualification

A Masters Degree qualification may only be issued by an organisation that is authorised by an accrediting authority to do so, and meets any government standards for the sector.

Assessment leading to the award of the qualification lies with the issuing organisation. The issuing organisation is responsible for ensuring the quality of the learning outcomes and that the graduate has satisfactorily completed any requirements for the awarding of the qualification.

Issuing organisations must issue qualifications consistent with the *AQF Qualifications Issuance Policy.*

Issuing organisations will maintain a register of the AQF qualifications they have issued consistent with the *AQF Qualifications Register Policy.*



AQF specification for the Doctoral Degree

This *Specification* informs the design and accreditation of Doctoral Degree qualifications.

The principal users of the *AQF Qualification Type Specifications* are the accrediting authorities in each education and training sector which are responsible for the accreditation of AQF qualifications and the developers of AQF qualifications in each education and training sector.

The other users of the *Specifications* are the authorised issuing organisations, industry and professional bodies, licensing and regulatory bodies, students, graduates and employers.

The purpose of the Doctoral Degree is to qualify individuals who apply a substantial body of knowledge to research, investigate and develop new knowledge, in one or more fields of investigation, scholarship or professional practice.

Doctoral Degree qualifications are located at level 10 of the Australian Qualifications Framework.

There are two forms of Doctoral Degree with the same descriptor within the Doctoral Degree qualification type: the Doctoral Degree (Research) and the Doctoral Degree (Professional).

Research is the defining characteristic of all Doctoral Degree qualifications. The research Doctoral Degree (typically referred to as a Doctor of Philosophy) makes a significant and original contribution to knowledge; the professional Doctoral Degree (typically titled Doctor of [field of study]) makes a significant and original contribution to knowledge in the context of professional practice. The emphasis in the learning outcomes and research may differ between the different forms of Doctoral Degree qualifications but all graduates will demonstrate knowledge, skills and the application of the knowledge and skills at AQF level 10.

Doctoral Degree qualifications must be designed and accredited to enable graduates to demonstrate the learning outcomes specified in the level 10 criteria and the Doctoral Degree.

AQF level 10 criteria	
Summary	Graduates at this level will have systematic and critical understanding of a complex field of learning and specialised research skills for the advancement of learning and/or for professional practice
Knowledge	Graduates at this level will have systemic and critical understanding of a substantial and complex body of knowledge at the frontier of a discipline or area of professional practice
Skills	Graduates at this level will have expert, specialised cognitive, technical and research skills in a discipline area to independently and systematically: • engage in critical reflection, synthesis and evaluation • develop, adapt and implement research methodologies to extend and redefine existing knowledge or professional practice • disseminate and promote new insights to peers and the community • generate original knowledge and understanding to make a substantial contribution to a discipline or area of professional practice
Application of knowledge and skills	Graduates at this level will apply knowledge and skills to demonstrate autonomy, authoritative judgement, adaptability and responsibility as an expert and leading practitioner or scholar

AQF specification for the Doctoral Degree

Doctoral Degree qualification type descriptor	
Purpose	The Doctoral Degree qualifies individuals who apply a substantial body of knowledge to research, investigate and develop new knowledge, in one or more fields of investigation, scholarship or professional practice
Knowledge	Graduates of a Doctoral Degree will have: • a substantial body of knowledge at the frontier of a field of work or learning, including knowledge that constitutes an original contribution • substantial knowledge of research principles and methods applicable to the field of work or learning
Skills	Graduates of a Doctoral Degree will have: • cognitive skills to demonstrate expert understanding of theoretical knowledge and to reflect critically on that theory and practice • cognitive skills and use of intellectual independence to think critically, evaluate existing knowledge and ideas, undertake systematic investigation and reflect on theory and practice to generate original knowledge • expert technical and creative skills applicable to the field of work or learning • communication skills to explain and critique theoretical propositions, methodologies and conclusions • communication skills to present cogently a complex investigation of originality or original research for external examination against international standards and to communicate results to peers and the community • expert skills to design, implement, analyse, theorise and communicate research that makes a significant and original contribution to knowledge and/or professional practice
Application of knowledge and skills	Graduates of a Doctoral Degree will demonstrate the application of knowledge and skills: • with intellectual independence • with initiative and creativity in new situations and/or for further learning • with full responsibility and accountability for personal outputs • to plan and execute original research • with the ongoing capacity to generate new knowledge, including in the context of professional practice
Volume of learning	The volume of learning of a Doctoral Degree is typically 3 – 4 years

An additional kind of Doctoral Degree, the Higher Doctorate, may be awarded by an issuing organisation on the basis of an internationally recognised original contribution to knowledge rather than through the process of supervised independent study.

Qualification nomenclature

The title used for Doctoral Degree qualifications must be consistent with the *AQF Qualifications Issuance Policy.*

Pathways

Each qualification accredited as a Doctoral Degree will include documented pathways consistent with the *AQF Qualifications Pathways Policy.*

Issuing organisations offering a Doctoral Degree qualification must meet the requirements of the *AQF Qualifications Pathways Policy.*

AQF specification for the Doctoral Degree

Responsibility for accreditation and development

Accrediting authorities and those developing qualifications for accreditation must adhere to the AQF specification for this qualification type[2] and any government accreditation standards for higher education when accrediting a Doctoral Degree qualification.

Accrediting authorities are responsible for monitoring the quality of issuing organisations against any government regulatory and quality assurance arrangements. Issuing organisations that are self-accrediting are expected to monitor the quality of their qualifications. The Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA) is responsible for the external monitoring of the quality of issuing organisations that are self accrediting.

When accrediting Doctoral Degree qualifications accrediting authorities must ensure that:

- Graduates of a Doctoral Degree qualification will achieve learning outcomes at level 10.
- All the learning outcomes (knowledge, skills and the application of knowledge and skills) of the Doctoral Degree qualification type are evident in each qualification accredited as this type. Some may have more emphasis than others in different Doctoral Degree qualifications depending on their purpose.
- Research is the defining characteristic of the Doctoral Degree qualification.
- The Doctoral Degree (Research) qualification (leading to the award of a Doctor of Philosophy) is designed so that graduates will have undertaken a program of independent supervised study that produces significant and original research outcomes culminating in a thesis, dissertation, exegesis or equivalent for independent examination by at least two external expert examiners of international standing.

  Research in the program of learning will be for at least two years and typically two-thirds or more of the qualification. The program of learning may also include advanced coursework to enhance the student's capacity to make a significant contribution to knowledge in the discipline (or cross-disciplinary field). The advanced coursework may support but not replace the research outcomes.
- The Doctoral Degree (Professional) qualification is designed so that graduates will have undertaken a program of structured learning and independent supervised study that produces significant and original research outcomes culminating in a thesis, dissertation, exegesis or equivalent for independent examination by at least two external expert examiners of international standing.

  Research in the program of learning will be typically for at least two years of the qualification. The program of structured learning typically will include advanced coursework designed to enhance the student's capacity to make a significant contribution to original knowledge in the discipline (or cross-disciplinary field) and/or research-integrated practice developed in collaboration with a relevant professional, statutory or regulatory body. The advanced coursework and research-integrated practice will support the research outcomes.
- Generic learning outcomes are explicitly identified in the qualification and align with the level of the qualification type, the purpose of the qualification and the discipline. Generic learning outcomes fall into four broad categories: fundamental skills; people skills; thinking skills; and personal skills. In the higher education sector they are generally known as graduate attributes and are defined by each higher education institution.

[2] Guidance provided by the Council of Australian Deans and Directors of Graduate Studies (DDoGS) should be considered when accrediting a Doctoral Degree qualification. www.ddogs.edu.au

AQF specification for the Doctoral Degree

- The relationship between the learning outcomes in the level 10 criteria, the qualification type descriptor, and the discipline is clear.
- The design of the components of the qualification will provide coherent learning outcomes for the level and qualification type and will enable graduates to demonstrate them.
- The volume of learning is sufficient for graduates to achieve the learning outcomes for a qualification of this level and type.

Once a qualification is accredited it must be placed on the AQF Register in a form consistent with the *AQF Qualifications Register Policy.*

Authority to issue the qualification

A Doctoral Degree qualification may only be issued by an organisation that is authorised by an accrediting authority to do so, and meets any government standards for the sector.

Assessment leading to the award of the qualification lies with the issuing organisation. The issuing organisation is responsible for ensuring the quality of the learning outcomes and that the graduate has satisfactorily completed any requirements for the awarding of the qualification.

Issuing organisations must issue qualifications consistent with the *AQF Qualifications Issuance Policy.*

Issuing organisations will maintain a register of the AQF qualifications they have issued consistent with the *AQF Qualifications Register Policy.*

AQF

AQF Qualifications Issuance Policy

AQF Qualifications Issuance Policy

1 INTRODUCTION

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

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

1.1 Purpose

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

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

1.2 Scope

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

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

1.3 Users

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

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

1.4 Monitoring

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

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[1] The accrediting authorities, currently (2011) in place are:
- State and territory government authorised statutory bodies responsible for the *Senior Secondary Certificate of Education* in their own state or territory.
- State and territory government accrediting authorities for *vocational education and training* responsible for accrediting AQF qualifications and for authorising registered training organisations (RTOs) to issue AQF qualifications. The National Quality Council, a committee of the Ministerial Council for Tertiary Education and Employment, is responsible for the endorsement of AQF qualifications in national Training Packages.
- State and territory government accrediting authorities for *higher education* responsible for accrediting AQF qualifications and authorising non-self-accrediting higher education institutions to issue them.
- Universities and other self-accrediting higher education institutions responsible for accrediting and issuing their own AQF qualifications.

[2] In this policy the term 'authorised issuing organisation' is abbreviated to 'issuing organisation'.

AQF Qualifications Issuance Policy

2 POLICY

2.1 Issuing AQF qualifications

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The testamur will contain sufficient information to identify correctly the:

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

[3] The Australian Higher Education Graduation Statement is currently (2011) implemented in the higher education sector.

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

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

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

2.2 Responsibility for issuing and authenticating AQF qualifications

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

[5] The authorised issuing organisations for AQF qualifications currently (2011) in place are:
- State and territory government authorised statutory bodies responsible for issuing the *Senior Secondary Certificate of Education* in their own state or territory.
- State and territory government accrediting authorities for *vocational education and training* responsible for authorising registered training organisations (RTOs) to issue AQF qualifications.
- State and territory government accrediting authorities for *higher education* responsible for authorising non-self- accrediting higher education institutions to issue AQF qualifications.
- Universities and other self-accrediting higher education institutions responsible for issuing their own AQF qualifications.

AQF Qualifications Issuance Policy

2.3 AQF qualification titles

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

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

*Exceptions:[6]

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

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

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

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

For exceptions:

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

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

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

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

2.4 Use of titles by graduates

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

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

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

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

2.5 Issuing statements of attainment

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

AQF Qualifications Issuance Policy

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

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

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

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

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

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

AQF Qualifications Pathways Policy

AQF Qualifications Pathways Policy

1 INTRODUCTION

The *AQF Qualifications Pathways Policy* builds into the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) the capacity to genuinely support students' lifelong learning. It is Australia's national policy on qualifications pathways.

1.1 Purpose

The purpose of the policy is to maximise the credit that students can gain for learning already undertaken. It aims to:

- enhance student progression into and between AQF qualifications
- recognise the multiple pathways that students take to gain AQF qualifications and that learning can be formal, non-formal or informal, and
- support the development of pathways in qualifications design.

1.2 Scope

This policy covers all education and training sectors that issue AQF qualifications and the responsibilities for making qualification pathways accessible to students.

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

1.3 Users

The principal users of this policy are the authorised issuing organisations[1], accrediting authorities including self-accrediting organisations, students and graduates in each education and training sector.

The other users of this policy are employers, industry and professional bodies, and licensing and regulatory bodies who may use this policy as a guide to the role of credit in developing learning pathways and achieving learning outcomes.

1.4 Monitoring

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

[1] In this policy the term 'authorised issuing organisation' is abbreviated to 'issuing organisation'.

AQF Qualifications Pathways Policy

2 POLICY

This policy is underpinned by the principles that pathways:

- are clear and transparent to students
- are systemic and systematic
- enable flexible qualification pathways
- may be horizontal across AQF qualifications at the same level as well as vertical between qualifications at different levels
- can facilitate credit for entry into, as well as credit towards, AQF qualifications, and
- eliminate unfair or unnecessary barriers for student access to AQF qualifications.

2.1 Responsibilities of issuing organisations

2.1.1 All issuing organisations[2] will have clear, accessible and transparent policies and processes to provide qualifications pathways and credit arrangements for students.[3]

2.1.2 These policies and processes will:

- ensure that pathways into and between qualifications are available to all students for all relevant qualifications
- be made publicly available, widely promoted and easily accessible to all prospective and existing students to enable them to:
  - make well-informed choices between alternative pathways
  - take into account the credit that may be available to them, and
- be regularly reviewed to maximise applicability to new and updated qualifications and to student and industry needs.

2.1.3 Issuing organisations' decisions regarding the giving of credit into or towards AQF qualifications will:

- be evidence-based, equitable and transparent
- be applied consistently and fairly with decisions subject to appeal and review
- recognise learning regardless of how, when and where it was acquired, provided that the learning is relevant and current and has a relationship to the learning outcomes of the qualification
- be academically defensible and take into account the students' ability to meet the learning outcomes of the qualification successfully
- be decided in a timely way so that students' access to qualifications is not unnecessarily inhibited
- allow for credit outcomes to be used to meet prerequisites or other specified requirements for entry into a program of study leading to a qualification or for the partial fulfillment of the requirements of a qualification, and
- be formally documented for the student including any reasons for not giving credit.

2.1.4 Giving credit into or towards an AQF qualification should not impinge upon:

- the integrity of qualification outcomes and discipline requirements, or
- the responsibility of issuing organisations to make decisions on admission, prerequisites or programs of study, and the students' likely successful completion of the qualification.

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[2] The authorised issuing organisations for AQF qualifications currently (2011) in place are:
- State and territory government authorised statutory bodies responsible for issuing the *Senior Secondary Certificate of Education* in their own state or territory.
- State and territory government accrediting authorities for *vocational education and training* responsible for authorising registered training organisations (RTOs) to issue AQF qualifications.
- State and territory government accrediting authorities for higher education responsible for authorising non-self- accrediting higher education institutions to issue AQF qualifications.
- Universities and other self-accrediting *higher education* institutions responsible for issuing their own AQF qualifications.

[3] AQF guidelines are available to support issuing organisations with developing their organisational policies and processes.

AQF Qualifications Pathways Policy

2.1.5 Credit will be given on the basis of formal individual negotiations between students and issuing organisations or formal negotiated agreements between issuing organisations.

2.1.6 Recognition of prior learning or advanced standing for relevant and current informal or non-formal learning will be available for students and may be used for entry requirements or credit towards an AQF qualification.

2.1.7 Credit can be given to students in the form of block, specified or unspecified credit.

2.1.8 Issuing organisations will systematically negotiate credit agreements with other issuing organisations for any AQF qualifications to maximise the credit available to eligible students for both entry into and credit towards AQF qualifications.

2.1.9 Credit agreements negotiated between issuing organisations for credit for students towards AQF qualifications at any level, vertical or horizontal, will take into account the comparability and equivalence of the:

- Learning outcomes
- Volume of learning
- Program of study, including content, and
- Learning and assessment approaches.

2.1.10 Credit agreements negotiated between issuing organisations for credit for students towards higher level AQF qualifications in the same or a related discipline, having taken into account 2.1.9, should use the following as the basis of negotiations:

- 50% credit for an Advanced Diploma or Associate Degree linked to a 3 year Bachelor Degree
- 37.5% credit for an Advanced Diploma or Associate Degree linked to a 4 year Bachelor Degree
- 33% credit for a Diploma linked to a 3 year Bachelor Degree
- 25% credit for a Diploma linked to a 4 year Bachelor Degree.

2.1.11 These agreements do not preclude any further institutional or individual student negotiations for additional credit.

AQF Qualifications Pathways Policy

2.2 Responsibilities of accrediting authorities and qualification developers

2.2.1 Accrediting authorities[4] and organisations developing qualifications[5] will have policies and processes that facilitate and promote qualification pathways and these policies and processes will be publicly available.

2.2.2 Accrediting authorities and organisations developing qualifications will identify, negotiate and document effective articulation arrangements between AQF qualifications.

2.2.3 Specific attention will be given to identifying, developing and documenting qualification pathways:

- between access qualifications such as Certificate I and Certificate II to Certificate III qualifications
- from Diploma, Advanced Diploma and Associate Degree to Bachelor Degree in the same discipline to provide 'Diploma to Degree pathways' taking into account the percentages in 2.1.10, and
- to create integrated qualifications at different AQF levels.

2.3 Registers

2.3.1 Issuing organisations will maintain publicly available registers of their credit transfer agreements linked to the AQF Register.

2.3.2 Accrediting authorities will maintain publicly available registers of articulation arrangements incorporated into qualifications linked to the AQF Register

2.3.3 These registers will link to any future national registers of articulation and credit transfer arrangements.

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[4] The accrediting authorities, currently (2011) in place are:
- State and territory government authorised statutory bodies responsible for the *Senior Secondary Certificate of Education* in their own state or territory.
- State and territory government accrediting authorities for *vocational education and training* responsible for accrediting AQF qualifications and for authorising registered training organisations (RTOs) to issue AQF qualifications. The National Quality Council, a committee of the Ministerial Council for Tertiary Education and Employment, is responsible for the endorsement of AQF qualifications in national Training Packages.
- State and territory government accrediting authorities for *higher education* responsible for accrediting AQF qualifications and authorising non-self-accrediting higher education institutions to issue them.
- Universities and other self-accrediting higher education institutions responsible for accrediting and issuing their own AQF qualifications.

[5] The developers of AQF qualifications for accreditation currently (2011) are:
- State and territory government authorised statutory bodies responsible for the *Senior Secondary Certificate of Education* in their own state or territory.
- Industry Skills Councils in the *vocational education and training* sector responsible for developing AQF qualifications in national Training Packages.
- Registered training organisations (RTOs) and other stakeholder groups responsible for developing AQF qualifications for accreditation for their own use.
- Higher education institutions in the *higher education* sector responsible for developing AQF qualifications for accreditation for their own use.
- Universities and other self-accrediting higher education institutions responsible for developing and accrediting AQF qualifications for their own use.

AQF Qualifications Register Policy

AQF Qualifications Register Policy

1 INTRODUCTION

Registers facilitate the public identification and verification of Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) qualifications and contribute to the protection of AQF qualifications.

1.1 Purpose

The purpose of the *AQF Qualifications Register Policy* is to:

- ensure that information about AQF qualifications and authorised issuing organisations[1] is publicly available
- ensure that a clear distinction is made between AQF and non-AQF qualifications
- ensure that any publicly available registers, databases and other information based on data derived from the AQF Register, or purporting to be about AQF qualifications and the organisations authorised to issue them, accurately represents the AQF
- facilitate the comparison of AQF qualifications and authorised issuing organisations to enable consumers of AQF qualifications to make informed choices, and
- ensure records of AQF qualifications issued are kept.

1.2 Scope

The policy covers all education and training sectors that issue AQF qualifications and the responsibilities for the provision and management of registers of AQF qualifications and the organisations that issue them.

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

1.3 Users

The principal users of the policy are the AQF Council, accrediting authorities including self-accrediting organisations and issuing organisations that have responsibility for maintaining parts of the AQF register.

The other users are those who utilise the AQF register to gain information about AQF qualifications and qualification pathways, accrediting authorities and issuing organisations such as students and prospective students, graduates, employers, industry and professional bodies, licensing and regulatory bodies, migrants and migration advisors, qualifications developers, researchers, international education agencies and the general public.

1.4 Monitoring

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

[1] In this policy the term 'authorised issuing organisation' is abbreviated to 'issuing organisation'.

AQF Qualifications Register Policy

2 POLICY

2.1 AQF Register

2.1.1 The AQF Register[2] is the official national public record of all AQF qualifications and qualification pathways, accrediting authorities, organisations authorised to issue AQF qualifications, and all AQF qualifications issued.

2.1.2 The AQF Council is responsible for providing a web-based portal for entry to any registers that are part of the AQF Register.[3]

2.1.3 The registers that comprise the AQF Register are the:

- Register of accrediting authorities
- Registers of AQF qualifications and authorised issuing organisations
- Registers of issued AQF qualifications.

2.1.4 Any register that comprises part of the AQF Register will contain accurate, current and verifiable information. It will enable easy access for all types of users to gain information about AQF qualifications and issuing organisations.

2.2 Register of accrediting authorities[4]

2.2.1 The AQF Council will maintain a publicly accessible and web-based register of all authorities that:

- accredit qualifications including those responsible for self-accrediting their own qualifications, and/or
- authorise organisations to issue qualifications.

2.2.2 The register will contain the:

- name and contact details of each authority, and
- legislative base for each authority and the scope of its authority.

2.2.3 The register will provide archival details of accrediting authorities that are no longer active.

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[2] The AQF Register is accessed at www.aqf.edu.au

[3] The registers that currently (2011) make up the AQF Register are:
- State and territory registers of the Senior Secondary Certificate of Education qualifications.
- The National Training Information Service – a national register of all endorsed AQF qualifications in national Training Package and qualifications accredited by state and territory accrediting authorities; and registered training organisations (RTOs) and the qualifications they are authorised to issue.
- State and territory accrediting authority registers of non-self-accrediting higher education institutions and the qualifications they are authorised to issue.
- Universities and other self-accrediting higher education institutions' registers of AQF qualifications they have accredited.

[4] The accrediting authorities currently (2011) in place are:
- State and territory government authorised statutory bodies responsible for the *Senior Secondary Certificate of Education* in their own state or territory.
- State and territory government accrediting authorities for *vocational education and training* responsible for accrediting AQF qualifications and for authorising registered training organisations (RTOs) to issue AQF qualifications. The National Quality Council, a committee of the Ministerial Council for Tertiary Education and Employment, is responsible for the endorsement of AQF qualifications in national Training Packages.
- State and territory government accrediting authorities for *higher education* responsible for accrediting AQF qualifications and authorising non-self-accrediting higher education institutions to issue them.
- Universities and other self-accrediting higher education institutions responsible for accrediting and issuing their own AQF qualifications.

AQF Qualifications Register Policy

2.3 Registers of AQF qualifications and authorised issuing organisations

2.3.1 All accrediting authorities will maintain a register of organisations they have authorised to issue AQF qualifications and the qualifications they are authorised to issue. Self-accrediting issuing organisations will maintain a register of the AQF qualifications they are authorised to issue. These registers will clearly distinguish AQF qualifications from non-AQF qualifications.

2.3.2 The registers will contain sufficient information to identify correctly the:

- authorised issuing organisation
- responsible person or persons and contact details of the organisation, including contact details for public enquiries, and
- AQF qualifications the organisation is authorised to issue, including the full and correct AQF qualification title, the accreditation period, and any caveats.

2.3.3 The registers will provide archival details of issuing organisations that are no longer active and of the qualifications they were authorised to issue.

2.4 Registers of issued AQF qualifications

2.4.1 All issuing organisations[5] will maintain an auditable-quality register of the AQF qualifications that they have issued.

2.4.2 The registers will contain sufficient information to identify correctly the:

- holder of the qualification
- AQF qualification by its full title, and
- date of issue/award/conferral.

[5] The authorised issuing organisations for AQF qualifications currently (2011) in place are:
- State and territory government authorised statutory bodies responsible for issuing the *Senior Secondary Certificate of Education* in their own state or territory.
- State and territory government accrediting authorities for *vocational education and training* responsible for authorising registered training organisations (RTOs) to issue AQF qualifications.
- State and territory government accrediting authorities for *higher education* responsible for authorising non-self- accrediting higher education institutions to issue AQF qualifications.
- Universities and other self-accrediting higher education institutions responsible for issuing their own AQF qualifications.

AQF Qualification Type Addition and Removal Policy

AQF Qualification Type Addition and Removal Policy

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose

The purpose of the *AQF Qualification Type Addition and Removal Policy* is to ensure that:

- the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) has the flexibility to respond to Australia's changing education and training needs, and
- changes to AQF structure do not compromise the stability or integrity of the AQF.

This policy sets out the requirements for the addition and the removal of qualification types from the AQF. It also includes the requirements for the addition of qualification titles.

1.2 Scope

The policy covers all education and training sectors that issue AQF qualifications.

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

1.3 Users

The principal user of the policy is the AQF Council.

The other users of the policy are accrediting authorities including self-accrediting organisations, authorised issuing organisations, students, graduates, employers, industry and professional bodies, and licensing and regulatory bodies.

1.4 Monitoring

The AQF Council is responsible for the implementation and ongoing use of this policy.

AQF Qualification Type Addition and Removal Policy

2 POLICY

2.1 Addition of qualification types

Qualification types can be added to the AQF by the AQF Council if there is a clear industry, professional or community need and a sound educational rationale.

2.1.1 To be included in the AQF a new qualifications type will:

- be able to be quality-assured by government approved standards
- be able to be accredited by an authority authorised under legislation to accredit AQF qualifications
- be described according to the AQF taxonomy of learning outcomes (knowledge, skills, the application of knowledge and skills and generic learning outcomes)
- be able to be located at an existing AQF level, and
- have clear pathways within the AQF

2.1.2 Any organisation may put forward a request for inclusion of a new qualification type, in writing, to the AQF Council following comprehensive consultation with and support from the relevant industry, professional, provider and government stakeholders.

2.1.3 The AQF Council will make a decision about the addition of a new qualification type based on robust evidence that there is a sound educational reason for its addition and the new qualification type:

- does not duplicate an existing AQF qualification type, and
- meets a defined industry, professional or community need.

2.2 Removal of qualification types

Qualification types can be removed from the AQF by the AQF Council if there is a clear industry, professional or community need and a sound educational rationale.

2.2.1 Any organisation may put forward a request for removal of an existing qualification type, in writing, to the AQF Council following comprehensive consultation with and support from the relevant industry, professional, provider and government stakeholders.

2.2.2 The AQF Council will make a decision to remove an existing qualification type based on robust evidence that:

- the qualification type is redundant
- there is agreement from the relevant education and training sector(s)
- transition arrangements and pathways have been developed for any students who may still be enrolled as the qualification type is phased out, and
- an equivalence with a remaining AQF qualification type is agreed.

2.2.3 The AQF Council will retain the qualification type descriptor and Specification for any qualification type removed from the AQF to allow for ongoing recognition of any qualifications of this type awarded to graduates

AQF Qualification Type Addition and Removal Policy

2.3 Addition of alternative qualification titles for level 9 Masters Degree (Extended)

The use of the qualification title 'Doctor of …' is permitted for level 9 Masters Degree (Extended) qualifications if there is a clear industry, professional or community need and a sound educational rationale.

2.3.1 Any organisation may put forward a request for the addition of a profession/discipline for which the alternative title 'Doctor of …' may be used for a level 9 Masters Degree (Extended) qualification, in writing, to the AQF Council following comprehensive consultation with and support from the relevant industry, professional, provider and government stakeholders.

2.3.2 The AQF Council will make a decision about the addition of the alternative title based on robust evidence that:

- the qualification for which the title will be applied meets the AQF specifications for the level 9 Masters Degree (Extended)
- the use of the title is justified against demonstrated and reputable practice for the profession in Australia and/or internationally and it is in the best interest of graduates
- there is defined industry, professional or community need, and
- there is a sound educational reason for the addition.

AQF Glossary of Terminology

AQF Glossary of Terminology

The Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) includes qualifications across the different education and training sectors and in a broad range of fields of study/disciplines.

The terms used in the AQF are not sector specific and do not preclude sector-specific terms being used in the different education and training sectors provided that there is consistency in application of the concept.

To maximise consistency in understanding and interpretation of the terminology used in the AQF, the terminology is defined in this glossary. The terminology is an essential component of the levels criteria, qualification type descriptors and policies which cannot be correctly used without the use of the definitions in the glossary.

All of the terms in the glossary are defined in the context of their use in AQF policies. Only those words or phrases that occur in the AQF levels criteria, qualification type specifications or policies are included in the glossary.

A

Term	AQF definition
Academic transcript	See record of results
Accountability in the application of knowledge and/or skills	Accountability in the application of knowledge and/or skills refers to the degree that a person is required to account for their own conduct in work or learning contexts appropriate for the level of the qualification
Accredited unit	An accredited unit is a single component of a qualification, or a stand-alone unit, that has been accredited by the same process as for a whole AQF qualification. In Australia an accredited unit may be called a 'module', 'subject', 'unit of competency' or 'unit'
Accredited short course	An accredited short course is a program of learning that comprises one or more components (e.g. units of competency, modules or subjects) that has been accredited by an accrediting authority
Accreditation	Accreditation is the process for approval by an accrediting authority of a program of learning leading to an AQF qualification using the quality assurance standards for the relevant education and training sector
Accrediting authority	An accrediting authority is either authorised under legislation or has been given responsibility to accredit programs of learning leading to AQF qualifications and/or to register institutions to issue AQF qualifications[1]
Advanced knowledge and/or skills	Advanced knowledge and skills are those that have been developed beyond the attainment of a previous level

[1] The accrediting authorities currently (2011) in place are:
- State and territory government authorised statutory bodies responsible for the *Senior Secondary Certificate of Education* in their own state or territory.
- State and territory government accrediting authorities for *vocational education and training* responsible for accrediting AQF qualifications and for authorising registered training organisations (RTOs) to issue AQF qualifications. The National Quality Council, a committee of the Ministerial Council for Tertiary Education and Employment, is responsible for the endorsement of AQF qualifications in national Training Packages.
- State and territory government accrediting authorities for *higher education* responsible for accrediting AQF qualifications and authorising non-self-accrediting higher education institutions to issue them.
- Universities and other self-accrediting higher education institutions responsible for accrediting and issuing their own AQF qualifications.

AQF Glossary of Terminology

A

Term	AQF definition
Advanced standing	Advanced standing is a form of credit for any previous learning. See also articulation arrangements, credit transfer, recognition of prior learning
Application of knowledge and/or skills	Application of knowledge and/or skills refers to how a graduate applies knowledge and skills in context and in terms of autonomy, responsibility and accountability
AQF qualification	An AQF qualification is the result of an accredited complete program of learning that leads to formal certification that a graduate has achieved learning outcomes as described in the AQF
AQF register	The AQF register is the official national public record of Australian accrediting authorities, AQF qualifications accredited and organisations authorised to issue qualifications
Area of learning or work	Area of learning or work is a sub-category of a field of learning or work
Articulation arrangements	Articulation arrangements enable students to progress from a completed qualification to another with admission and/or credit in a defined qualification pathway. See also credit transfer
Assessment	Assessment is a process to determine a student's achievement of expected learning outcomes and may include a range of written and oral methods and practice or demonstration
Authorised issuing organisation	An authorised issuing organisation either is authorised through Commonwealth, state or territory legislation to issue AQF qualifications or has been given responsibility to issue its own AQF qualifications[2]
Authoritative judgement	Authoritative judgement is the highest degree of judgement exercised by graduates of level 10 qualifications
Autonomy in the application of knowledge and/or skills	Autonomy in the application of knowledge and/or skills is the ability to apply knowledge and/or skills with an appropriate degree of independence for the level of the qualification
Award of a qualification	Award of a qualification occurs when a student has met the requirements of the qualification and the qualification is certified through the provision of a testamur. The term 'conferral' may also be used to describe this process

[2] The authorised issuing organisations for AQF qualifications currently (2011) in place are:
- State and territory government authorised statutory bodies responsible for issuing the *Senior Secondary Certificate of Education* in their own state or territory.
- State and territory government accrediting authorities for *vocational education and training* responsible for authorising registered training organisations (RTOs) to issue AQF qualifications.
- State and territory government accrediting authorities for *higher education* responsible for authorising non-self- accrediting higher education institutions to issue AQF qualifications.
- Universities and other self-accrediting higher education institutions responsible for issuing their own AQF qualifications.

AQF Glossary of Terminology

B

Term	AQF definition
Basic knowledge and/or skills	Basic knowledge and/or skills include those that form a starting point or basis for development of learning and work
Block credit	Block credit is credit granted towards whole stages or components of a program of learning leading to a qualification
Body of knowledge	A body of knowledge refers to the complete set of concepts, terms and activities that make up a field of study
Broad knowledge and/or skills	Broad knowledge and/or skills describe a general or extensive area of learning or work

C

Term	AQF definition
Certification	Certification is the verification and authentication of a student's entitlement to a qualification
Certification documentation	Certification documentation is the set of official documents that confirms that a qualification has been completed and awarded to an individual
Cognitive skills	Cognitive skills include the mental skills that are used in the process of acquiring and applying knowledge and include reasoning, perception and intuition
Coherent knowledge and/or skills	Coherent knowledge and/or skills include those that are logically ordered, sound and/or integrated
Communication skills	Communication skills are the skills that enable a person to convey information so that it is received and understood and include written and oral skills appropriate for the level of the qualification
Complex/complexity	Complex/complexity describes information, problems, situations and theories that are made up of complicated and inter-related parts
Components of a qualification	Components of a qualification include modules, subjects, units of competency or units, the completion of which leads to an AQF qualification
Comprehensive knowledge and/or skills	Comprehensive knowledge and/or skills are knowledge or skills that cover a complete area or field of work or learning
Context of learning and/or work	The context of learning and/or work is the circumstance within which a graduate applies knowledge and skills
Course	See program of learning, accredited unit and accredited short course
Coursework	Coursework is a method of teaching and learning that leads to the acquisition of skills and knowledge that does not include a major research component

AQF Glossary of Terminology

C

Term	AQF definition
Creative skills	Creative skills are those that may lead to innovative, imaginative and artistic outputs
Credit	Credit is the value assigned for the recognition of equivalence in content and learning outcomes between different types of learning and/or qualifications. Credit reduces the amount of learning required to achieve a qualification and may be through credit transfer, articulation, recognition of prior learning or advanced standing
Credit arrangements	Credit arrangements are formal negotiated arrangements within and between issuing organisations or accrediting authorities and are about student entitlement to credit. They may also be formal arrangements made between issuing organisations and students
Credit outcomes	Credit outcomes are the results of a process of determining a student's application for credit or credit transfer
Credit transfer	Credit transfer is a process that provides students with agreed and consistent credit outcomes for components of a qualification based on identified equivalence in content and learning outcomes between matched qualifications

D

Term	AQF definition
Depth of knowledge/skills	Depth of knowledge/skills indicates an advanced degree of difficulty or complexity
Defined activities and/or contexts	Defined activities and/or contexts refer to definite and clear activities and/or contexts within distinct boundaries
Discipline	Discipline refers to a defined branch of study or learning. See also field of study, work and/or learning

E

Term	AQF definition
Employability skills	See generic learning outcomes
Expert knowledge and/or skills	Expert knowledge and/or skills are the highest level of skills underpinned by extensive knowledge or ability based on research, experience or occupation in a particular area of study
External examiner	An external examiner for higher research degrees is one who is not connected to the university or student's research

AQF Glossary of Terminology

F

Term	AQF definition
Field of study, work and/or learning	A field of study, work and/or learning refers to the main focus of work activities and/or a learning program. See also discipline
Formal learning	Formal learning is the learning that takes place through a structured program of learning that leads to the full or partial achievement of an officially accredited qualification. See also informal and non-formal learning
Foundational knowledge and skills	Foundational knowledge and skills are initial or introductory knowledge and skills upon which further development can be built

G

Term	AQF definition
General capabilities	See generic learning outcomes
Generic learning outcomes	Generic learning outcomes refer to transferable, non-discipline specific skills a graduate may achieve through learning that have application in study, work and life contexts. The four broad categories in the AQF are: fundamental skills; people skills; thinking skills and personal skills
Graduate	A graduate is a person who has been awarded a qualification by an authorised issuing organisation
Graduate attributes/capabilities	See generic learning outcomes
Graduation statement	A graduation statement is a supplementary statement to the testamur and record of results that provides additional information to enhance understanding of the qualification by students, employers, industry, professional associations and internationally

H

Term	AQF definition
Higher education institution	A higher education institution is a body that is established or recognised by the Commonwealth or a state or territory government to issue qualifications in the higher education sector. It may be a university, self-accrediting institution or non-self-accrediting institution

AQF Glossary of Terminology

I

Term	AQF definition
Informal learning	Informal learning is learning gained through work, social, family, hobby or leisure activities and experiences. Unlike formal or non-formal learning, informal learning is not organised or externally structured in terms of objectives, time or learning support. See also formal and non-formal learning
Integrated knowledge	Integrated knowledge combines two or more kinds of knowledge and concepts (e.g. technical and theoretical)
Integrated qualification	Integrated qualifications are purposely designed qualifications that enable explicit articulation pathways and encompass more than one AQF level and/or qualification type and/or education and training sector. See also nested qualifications
Issuing organisation	See authorised issuing organisation

J

Term	AQF definition
Judgment in the application of knowledge and/or skills	Judgement in the application of knowledge and skills includes the ability to apply knowledge to form opinions or to evaluate work and/or learning activities appropriate for the level of the qualification

K

Term	AQF definition
Knowledge	Knowledge refers to what a graduate knows and understands and it can be described in terms of depth, breadth, kinds of knowledge and complexity

AQF Glossary of Terminology

L

Term	AQF definition
Leading practitioner and/or scholar	A leading practitioner and/or scholar is a person at the forefront of a field of work and/or learning
Learner	See student
Learning	Learning is a process by which a person assimilates information, ideas, actions and values and thus acquires knowledge, skills and/or the application of the knowledge and skills
Learning outcomes	Learning outcomes are the expression of the set of knowledge, skills and the application of the knowledge and skills a person has acquired and is able to demonstrate as a result of learning
Levels	AQF levels are an indication of the relative complexity and/or depth of achievement and the autonomy required to demonstrate that achievement. AQF level 1 has the lowest complexity and AQF level 10 has the highest complexity
Levels criteria	AQF levels criteria describe the relative complexity and/or depth of achievement and the autonomy required to demonstrate that achievement for each AQF level from 1 – 10
Levels summaries	AQF levels summaries are statements of the typical achievement of graduates who have been awarded a qualification at a certain level in the AQF
Lifelong learning	Lifelong learning is the term used to describe any learning activities that are undertaken throughout life to acquire knowledge, skills and the application of knowledge and skills within personal, civic, social and/or employment-related contexts

M

Term	AQF definition
Mastery of knowledge	Mastery of knowledge refers to the attributes of a graduate who demonstrates comprehensive knowledge and understanding of a field of work or learning

AQF Glossary of Terminology

N

Term	AQF definition
Nested qualifications	Nested qualifications are qualifications that include articulated arrangements from a lower level qualification into a higher level qualification to enable multiple entry and exit points. See also integrated qualifications
Non-formal learning	Non-formal learning refers to learning that takes place through a structured program of learning but does not lead to an officially accredited qualification. See also formal and informal learning
Non-self-accrediting institution	A non-self-accrediting institution is a higher education institution that does not have responsibility for accrediting its own qualifications

O

Term	AQF Definition
Outcomes	See learning outcomes

P

Term	AQF definition
Parameters	Parameters refers to the boundaries that define the context of learning and/or work
Paraprofessional work and/or learning	Paraprofessional work and/or learning are work contexts that generally support professional practice
Pathways	Pathways allow students to move through qualification levels with full or partial recognition for the qualifications and/or learning outcomes they already have. See also credit, credit transfer and articulation
Postnominals	Postnominals are the abbreviated forms of an AQF qualification type and field of study/discipline used by graduates to identify their qualification
Practical knowledge and skills	Practical knowledge and skills are concrete or hands-on knowledge and skills
Professional work and/or learning	Professional work and/or learning are contexts requiring specialised knowledge, advanced learning, responsibility and autonomy, and require intensive preparation through learning
Program of learning	A program of learning is a course, curriculum, training package, units of study, or structured workplace learning that leads to the award of a qualification

AQF Glossary of Terminology

Q

Term	AQF definition
Qualification	See AQF qualification
Qualification title	Qualification title is the nomenclature used for an AQF qualification that denotes the type, level and field of study/discipline of the qualification
Qualification type	Qualification type refers to the broad discipline-free nomenclature used in the AQF to describe each category of AQF qualification
Qualification type descriptor	A qualification type descriptor is the set of statements that describes the learning outcomes of each of the AQF qualification types in terms of knowledge, skills and the application of knowledge and skills
Qualification type specification	An AQF qualification type specification is a detailed statement of the requirements for development and accreditation of a qualification of a particular AQF type

R

Term	AQF definition
Range	Range is the area between the limits of variation as in a narrow or a broad or limited range of knowledge/skills
Record of results	A record of results is a record of all learning leading to an AQF qualification or an accredited unit in which a student is enrolled and is issued by an authorised issuing organisation. In Australia this may be called a 'transcript of results', 'academic transcript', 'record of achievement' or 'statement of results'
Recognition of prior learning (RPL)	Recognition of prior learning is an assessment process that involves assessment of an individual's relevant prior learning (including formal, informal and non-formal learning) to determine the credit outcomes of an individual application for credit (National Quality Council Training Packages glossary)
Register	See AQF register
Registered training organisation (RTO)	A registered training organisation is a vocational education and training organisation registered by a state or territory registering body in accordance with the Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF) Essential Standards for Registration within a defined scope of registration (National Quality Council Training Packages glossary)
Registering authority	See accrediting authority

AQF Glossary of Terminology

R

Term	AQF definition
Research	Research comprises systematic experimental and theoretical work, application and/or development that results in an increase in the dimensions of knowledge
Responsible person	A responsible person is an individual in an organisation who has the responsibility, or delegated responsibility, to act officially on behalf of the organisation
Responsibility in the application of knowledge and/or skills	Responsibility in the application of knowledge and/or skills refers to the degree of accountability in applying knowledge and/or skills in work and/or learning contexts appropriate for the level of the qualification

S

Term	AQF definition
Self-accrediting institution	A self-accrediting institution is one which has been given responsibility to accredit its own qualifications
Skilled work	Skilled work is an outcome that requires specific sets of knowledge and skills and specialised training
Skills	Skills refer to what a graduate can do. They can be described in terms of kinds and complexity and include cognitive skills, technical skills, communication skills, creative skills, interpersonal skills and generic skills
Specialised knowledge and/or skills	Specialised knowledge and/or skills refers to the depth and specificity of knowledge and/or skills required at a particular AQF level
Specialised qualification	A specialised qualification is one of short duration that builds on the knowledge and skills already acquired
Specified credit	Specified credit is credit granted towards particular or specific components of a qualification or program of learning
Statement of attainment	A statement of attainment recognises that one or more accredited units has been achieved
Student	A student is a person enrolled in a formal program of learning in an educational institution and/or a workplace setting
Substantial body of knowledge Substantial original contribution	A substantial body of knowledge and/or a substantial original contribution is the extensive and significant knowledge and outputs at the highest level of the AQF and characteristic of graduates of a level 10 qualification
Systematic knowledge and/or skills	Systematic knowledge and/or skills are those that are coherent and well-ordered

AQF Glossary of Terminology

T

Term	AQF definition
Taxonomy	A taxonomy refers to the system of classification of learning outcomes in a qualifications framework
Technical skills	Technical skills are the operational skills necessary to perform certain work and learning activities
Testamur	A testamur is an official certification document that confirms that a qualification has been awarded to an individual. In Australia this may be called an 'award', 'parchment' , 'laureate' or 'certificate'
Theoretical knowledge and concepts	Theoretical knowledge and concepts are those knowledge requirements relating to or having the character of theory rather than practical application

U-Z

Term	AQF definition
Unit	See accredited unit and program of learning
University	A university is a higher education institution that is established by the Commonwealth or a state or territory government as a university
Unspecified credit	Unspecified credit is credit granted towards elective components of a qualification or program of learning
Volume of learning	The volume of learning is a dimension of the complexity of a qualification. It is used with the level criteria and qualification type descriptor to determine the depth and breadth of the learning outcomes of a qualification. The volume of learning identifies the notional duration of all activities required for the achievement of the learning outcomes specified for a particular AQF qualification type. It is expressed in equivalent full-time years

Implementation Arrangements

Implementation Arrangements

The AQF is a revision of the AQF originally implemented in 1995. The revisions were approved by the national ministerial council in 2011 with the following implementation arrangements.

1 Implementation of the AQF commences on 1 July 2011.

For the higher education sector, use of the AQF commences from the date of commencement of the regulatory functions of the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency. Prior to this, implementation may commence voluntarily.

For the vocational education and training sector, use of the AQF commences from 1 July 2011.

For the school sector, use of the AQF in the school sector may commence voluntarily prior to 1 January 2015.

2 All requirements of the AQF will be met from 1 January 2015.

3 From 1 January 2015, all new enrolments will be in qualifications that meet the requirements of the AQF. From this date, students already enrolled in qualifications may complete the qualification in which they enrolled or may transfer without disadvantage to an equivalent qualification that meets the requirements of the AQF. Authorised issuing organisations will have publicly available policies or procedures to assist with this transition.

4 Accrediting authorities and developers of AQF qualifications will have in place policies and processes in sufficient time to ensure that the implementation arrangements are met.

Guidance resources to support accrediting authorities, issuing organisations and qualification developers with implementing the AQF are available on the AQF website.

Copies of the previous editions of the *AQF Implementation Handbook* (1995 – 2007) are available on the AQF website for reference during implementation.

AQF website **www.aqf.edu.au**

Governing and Monitoring the AQF

Governing and Monitoring the AQF

The Australian Qualifications Framework Council was established to govern and monitor the AQF.

The AQF Council is a council of the national ministerial council responsible for education, training and employment and is established under its authority.

The AQF Council is responsible to its ministerial council for providing strategic and authoritative advice on the AQF to ensure it is nationally and internationally robust and supports flexible cross-sectoral linkages and pathways. The AQF Council has delegated authority to monitor and maintain the AQF, support its users and promote AQF qualifications to the community.

The AQF Council was initially established in 2008 and its terms of reference were revised in 2011 as part of the revision to the AQF. The AQF Council Object and Terms of Reference are available on the AQF website.

The AQF Council is comprised of members with expertise and experience in the following sectors: higher education, vocational education and training, schools, employers, unions and governments. Membership is non-representative with an independent chair to ensure that its advice benefits Australia's education system as a whole. Details of AQF Council membership are available on the AQF website.

AQF website **www.aqf.edu.au**

Principles and Processes for the Alignment of the AQF with International Qualifications Frameworks

Principles and Processes for the Alignment of the AQF with International Qualifications Frameworks

Background

The AQF Council's first term of reference requires it to provide policy advice to the Ministerial Council for Tertiary Education and Employment on 'national and international recognition and comparability of qualification standards and alignment of qualification standards / frameworks' and on 'strategic strengthening of the AQF required to meet identified needs such as improving national consistency and contemporary relevance, including national and international portability'.

International comparability of qualifications and alignment with other qualifications frameworks are important national objectives. The international mobility of graduates and workers is significant. To support this mobility, recognition of the relationship of qualifications in the national qualifications frameworks of other countries or regions with the AQF may be beneficial. The AQF Council has developed principles and processes for guiding discussions about alignment of the AQF with other national qualifications frameworks.

Benefits of alignment of the AQF

The benefits of alignment between the AQF and national or regional qualifications frameworks are at several levels. These range from economic benefits at a national or regional level to benefits for individuals.

The benefits of alignment include:

- providing a systematic basis for improving mutual trust and the recognition of qualifications between nations or regions
- facilitating transparency and reliability of information about qualifications and the qualifications framework in each nation or region
- increasing international understanding, comparability, confidence and recognition of qualifications for both study and employment
- contributing to the credibility and robustness of each nation's or region's qualifications systems, including knowledge and understanding of the various quality assurance systems and processes supporting the qualifications frameworks
- assisting the international mobility of students and skilled workers by increasing confidence that their qualifications will be understood and recognised in Australia and other countries
- improving employers' understanding of qualifications to assist with skills supply, and
- providing a comparative benchmark for the AQF.

Principles for alignment of the AQF

The overarching principles are core considerations for Australia in any alignment process. The general alignment principles set out the expectations for each nation or region (including Australia) in the alignment process.

Overarching principles:

- Alignment of the AQF with other nations' or regions' qualifications frameworks will be undertaken only where there is a demonstrable benefit to Australia.
- Alignment between the AQF and national or regional qualifications frameworks should enhance any existing relationships and arrangements between these nations or regions.
- The AQF will not be adapted to suit another nation's or region's requirements.
- Alignment of national or regional qualifications frameworks with the AQF will not result in the automatic recognition of the nation's or region's qualifications as AQF qualifications.
- Alignment will usually be between the AQF and another national or regional qualifications framework. However if the nation or region does not yet have a formal national or regional qualifications framework, the national or regional qualifications system may be used for alignment of qualifications.

Principles and Processes for the Alignment of the AQF with International Qualifications Frameworks

General alignment principles:

- The legitimacy and responsibilities of all relevant national or regional and Australian bodies involved in the alignment process are clearly determined and transparent.
- The Australian, national or regional quality assurance system for education and training are integral to the qualifications framework and is consistent with international quality assurance principles.
- There is a clear and demonstrable link between the qualifications levels in the AQF and the levels in the national or regional qualifications framework.
- The national or regional qualifications framework and its qualifications are based on the principles and objectives of learning outcomes that are comparable to the learning outcomes in the AQF.
- The procedures for inclusion of qualifications in the Australian, national or regional qualifications framework and/or describing the place of qualifications in the qualifications system are transparent.
- National or regional policies for the validation of all learning, and credit systems where these exist, are an integral component of the national or regional qualifications frameworks.
- The alignment process includes the stated agreement of the relevant accrediting and/or quality assurance bodies for each nation or region.
- The alignment process involves international experts to support and assist the development of trusted outcomes.
- One comprehensive report, setting out the alignment and the evidence supporting it is jointly published by the relevant national authorities in each nation or region and addresses separately each of the principles.

Processes for alignment of the AQF

In Australia international alignment of the AQF with other national or regional qualifications frameworks will be undertaken by the following bodies with specified responsibilities.

Australian Government

The alignment of qualifications frameworks is a negotiated agreement with other nations or regions for which the Australian Government is the lead agent. The Australia Government is responsible for:

- Signing any multilateral or bilateral agreements to commence alignment.
- Agreeing to formal commencement of the alignment.
- Leading the negotiation process using the expert and technical advice of the AQF Council.
- Signing the final alignment agreement.

Australian Qualifications Framework Council

As the national body with the delegated responsibility to maintain, monitor and promote the AQF and provide advice on international alignment, the AQF Council is responsible for:

- Recommending potential alignment opportunities.
- Managing the development of expert and technical advice on alignment, through the AQF International Alignment Committee and its projects, and providing this advice to the Australian Government as part of its negotiation process.
- Coordinating the involvement of an international expert to validate the technical advice.
- Publishing and disseminating the final alignment report.
- Maintaining the register of final reports and arrangements.
- Providing guidance on the use of the resulting arrangements by education and training institutions such as facilitating inclusion of relevant information in graduation statements.

Principles and Processes for the Alignment of the AQF with International Qualifications Frameworks

AQF International Alignment Committee

The AQF International Alignment Committee is a representative committee established to undertake the technical alignment of the AQF with other nations or regions with which the Australian Government has signed an agreement. It is responsible for:

- Undertaking the activities required to align the AQF with the qualifications framework of another nation or region under the guidance of the AQF Council using agreed and transparent processes.
- Ensuring participation of people with an interest in the alignment through a comprehensive communication strategy to ensure widespread and open consultation and dissemination of the final report.
- Coordinating alignment project teams and/or consultants.

Membership of the AQF International Alignment Committee includes representation from the following bodies:

- AQF Council
- Department of Education Employment and Workplace Relations
- Education experts from the relevant various education and training sector(s) including qualification developers, providers and their peak bodies, and students and their peak bodies
- Social partners including employer representative bodies, unions, industry and professional representative bodies and occupational licensing bodies
- Relevant government agencies including Australian Education International-NOOSR
- Regulatory and quality assurance authorities
- International expert
- Country expert (as required).

Overview of Qualifications Frameworks in Australia

Overview of Qualifications Frameworks in Australia

Australia has a long history of qualification standards.

The AQF was developed in the early 1990s building on previous qualifications standards and implementation commenced in 1995. During 2009 and 2010, the AQF Council worked with AQF users and stakeholders to update the AQF. The revisions were approved in 2011. Details of the process for strengthening the AQF are available on the AQF website.

The predecessors of the AQF were the:

- Australian Council on Awards in Advanced Education *Nomenclature and Guidelines for Awards in Advanced Education* (1972-1985)
- Australian Council on Tertiary Awards *Guidelines for the National Registration of Awards* (1986-1990)
- Australian Education Council *Register of Australian Tertiary Education* (1991-1994).

The Australian Council on Awards in Advanced Education (ACAAE) *Nomenclature and Guidelines for Awards in Advanced Education* was implemented in 1972 to promote consistency in the nomenclature of qualifications in the advanced education sector and to assist in the development of meaningful relationships between levels of qualifications. The following categories of awards were defined: Master's Degree, Graduate Diploma, Bachelor's Degree, Diploma and Associate Diploma. Named Australian qualifications were included on the national Register of Awards in Advanced Education. The number of named qualifications was expanded in 1983 and 1984.

This was replaced by the Australian Council on Tertiary Awards (ACTA) *Guidelines for the National Registration of Awards* which was implemented in 1986. The ACAAE award nomenclature was retained by ACTA. In 1987 ACTA added the Certificate, Advanced Certificate, Associate Diploma and Graduate Diploma awards. ACTA guidelines for the Doctor of Philosophy Degree and a course assessment policy were included in 1989.

The Australian Education Council *Register of Australian Tertiary Education* (RATE) was established in January 1990. It was a single national register of authorities (including institutions) empowered by the jurisdictions to accredit tertiary education qualifications. The qualification types included in RATE were: Certificate, Advanced Certificate, Associate Diploma, Diploma, Bachelor Degree, Graduate Certificate, Graduate Diploma, Masters Degree and Doctoral Degree. The Honours Degree and Degree with Honours were included in RATE.

The Australian Qualifications Framework created a national system of cross sectoral qualifications capable of supporting the increasingly diverse needs of the workforce and students in education and training. It was introduced in 1995 and fully implemented from 2000. The AQF included guidelines for each qualification type and protocols for issuing qualifications. National guidelines for cross-sector linkages, developed jointly with the Australian Vice-Chancellors Committee and the Australian National Training Authority, were included in 2002 and national principles and operational guidelines for recognition of prior learning were added in 2002-2003. Four editions of the *AQF Implementation Handbook* were published between 1995 and 2007.

The qualifications included in the AQF in 1995 were: Certificate I, Certificate II, Certificate III, Certificate IV, Diploma, Advanced Diploma, Bachelor Degree (including Bachelor Honours Degree), Graduate Certificate, Graduate Diploma, Masters Degree and Doctoral Degree. The Associate Degree was added in 2004 and the Vocational Graduate Certificate and Vocational Graduate Diploma in 2005.

AQF website **www.aqf.edu.au**

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