

Australian Qualifications *Framework*

AQF COUNCIL

STRENGTHENING THE AQF:

An Architecture for
Australia's Qualifications

CONSULTATION PAPER

September 2009

Preface

The Australian Qualification Framework Council valued the responses to *Strengthening the AQF: a Proposal* released in May 2009. The enthusiastic input from stakeholders into the discussion about the future of the Australian Qualifications Framework has helped shape the next stage of the AQF Council's work.

The Council's proposed revised structure for the AQF has taken into account stakeholder views, as well as findings in the extensive national and international literature on the theory and practice of national qualifications frameworks. Importantly the revisions build on the existing AQF and the reputation and performance of the three education and training sectors since the implementation of the AQF in 1995.

A strong AQF will build confidence in qualification outcomes, improve student pathways both within and between the education sectors and the workplace, enhance the mobility of graduates through increased recognition of the value of Australian qualifications and enable Australian qualifications to be mapped against those of other countries. The proposed revisions to the AQF underpin these outcomes.

The revisions are set out in *Strengthening the AQF: An Architecture for Australia's Qualifications*. The AQF Council is now seeking your views on the proposed revised structure.

Written responses are required by 16 October 2009. They can be sent to the AQF Council at aqfc@saugov.sa.gov.au or GPO Box 320, Adelaide, SA, 5001.

John Dawkins, AO
Chair
Australian Qualifications Framework Council

Introduction

The AQF Council developed a proposal for strengthening of the AQF and in May 2009 asked stakeholders to provide their responses to the Council's consultation paper, *Strengthening the AQF: a Proposal*.

The *Proposal* focused on creating a more contemporary architecture for the AQF. The AQF Council proposed that the structure or architecture of the AQF be revised to provide clear contemporary criteria for qualification types expressed as learning outcomes, better expression of levels of achievement and a measurement of the effort or value of learning achievement.

There was strong stakeholder support for the proposed revised AQF architecture. The feedback and suggestions received in response to the initial *Proposal* has provided the direction for the next stages of the project. The report, *Strengthening the AQF: a Proposal – Analysis of Submissions*, is available on the AQF website www.aqf.edu.au

The Council has now developed a strengthened AQF architecture for consideration. It features:

- A levels structure with ten levels expressed as learning outcomes (Table 1: AQF levels attributes and criteria)
- Revised qualification type descriptors for each of the existing qualification types expressed as learning outcomes (Table 2: AQF qualification types descriptors)
- A measurement of the notional duration of learning for each qualification type (Table 2: AQF qualification types descriptors)
- An integrated set of qualification types positioned on the levels structure (Table 3: Proposed placement of qualification types at a level).

Architecture of a strengthened AQF

Australian qualifications have multiple purposes. They prepare graduates with skills and knowledge for work as well as further study and develop attributes that contribute to graduates' workforce mobility and lifelong learning.

The architecture of a strengthened AQF that follows is designed to facilitate these multiple purposes.

The taxonomy of learning outcomes

The taxonomy of learning outcomes provides the organising framework within which qualification types are able to be described and located. It enables greater consistency in the way qualifications are described as well as clarity about the differences and relationships or connectivities between qualification types.

Learning outcomes are clear statements of what a graduate is expected to know, understand and be able to do as a result of learning. They are expressed in terms of knowledge and skills, the application of knowledge and skills, and generic skills.

The AQF levels criteria and the AQF qualification type descriptors are both designed using an explicit taxonomy of learning outcomes.

A more explicit taxonomy of learning outcomes for the AQF:

- assists the consistent development and accreditation of qualifications, facilitating more accurate decision making regarding the location of qualifications within the levels-based structure
- shifts the focus from the providers to the users (employers and students) by describing what graduates are expected to know, understand and be able to do at the completion of a qualification
- facilitates more consistent and rigorous recognition of learning and application of credit through the use of common language for qualifications across the education and training sectors
- improves the ability for Australian qualifications to be compared with those of other countries through the improved descriptions of the content and relativities of the qualification types.

The taxonomy of learning outcomes for the AQF uses three dimensions: knowledge, skills and application of knowledge and skills. Generic skills are embedded in these dimensions. Generic skills are the key transferrable skills a graduate may achieve through learning that have application in study, work and life contexts. Each education sector describes generic skills differently: the school sector as general capabilities, the vocational education and training sector as employability skills and the higher education sector as graduate attributes.

The three dimensions of learning outcomes are defined as follows:

1. **Knowledge** is what a graduate¹ knows and understands. Knowledge can be described in terms of depth, breadth, kinds of knowledge and complexity, as follows:

- depth of knowledge can be described as 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 a combination of kinds, depth and breadth of knowledge.

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

- cognitive skills involving the use of logical, critical, intuitive and creative 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 information communication technology skills.

3. **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 range from routine to non routine.

AQF levels

The AQF levels structure is based on ten levels that identify the relativities between qualification types in terms of the demand of learning, the complexity and/or depth of achievement and the autonomy required to demonstrate that achievement.

The levels structure provides a hierarchy of relative complexity for qualification types and adds clarity to the relationships between the different qualification types. This directly benefits users (primarily employers and students) by defining qualification outcomes more accurately and contributing to the development of pathways and credit arrangements between qualification types.

The levels structure also assists greater consistency of qualification types and facilitates alignment of the AQF with other qualifications frameworks.

1. A graduate is an individual who has completed a qualification in an educational institution and/or a workplace setting.

Levels attributes and criteria

Two key components describe each of the AQF levels: level attributes and level criteria.

The levels *attributes* are the key characteristics of a level, with each level building on the previous level.

The levels *criteria* describe the characteristics and context of learning at each level in terms of dimensions of knowledge, skills and the application of knowledge and skills, including generic skills. The levels criteria facilitate understanding of the outcomes expected at each level and comparisons of the outcomes between each level.

It is the particular combination of all three dimensions that makes each level unique.

Together the levels attributes and criteria act as external reference points for those developing and accrediting qualifications and provide a mechanism for the accurate placement of qualification types at a level. They also can be used to inform the construction of pathways by providing an explicit continuum of learning outcomes within the AQF.

Correctly applying the levels criteria ensures that there are clear distinctions between qualification types at different levels and clear similarities between qualification types at the same level. Table 1 provides the levels attributes and criteria

QUESTIONS

1. How well does each levels attribute express the level?
2. How well do the levels criteria explain the relativities between levels?
Do the levels criteria provide appropriate differentiation in terms of increasing complexity between the levels?
3. Please provide any suggestions for refinement.

Qualification types descriptors

The qualification types descriptors are constructed as sets of learning outcomes expressed by the three dimensions and describe the learning achieved by a graduate at the end point of a qualification type.

Correctly applying the taxonomy of learning outcomes ensures consistency in qualifications of the same type and shows the relationship with other qualification types.

Descriptors have been developed for the fifteen qualification types that are currently in the AQF. The existing descriptors were used as the basis for development of the revised descriptors. The revised descriptors are provided in Table 2: AQF qualification type descriptors.

Ultimately information about pathways will be included in qualification specifications. These are yet to be developed.

QUESTIONS

4. Please comment on the qualification types descriptors and provide any suggestions for refinement.
5. Will more explicit qualification types descriptors resolve concerns with AQF qualifications, for example the diversity within qualification types such as the Certificate III and the Masters Degrees?
6. It is proposed that the Senior Secondary Certificate of Education is placed at level 3. Does the qualification type descriptor adequately reflect this level?
7. Is there a case for qualifications leading to a trade outcome to be identified as a different qualification type?
8. Is there a case for only one kind of the Graduate Certificate and the Graduate Diploma qualification types?

Notional duration of student² learning

A measurement of the volume of learning is used to augment the learning outcomes descriptors of qualification types to further clarify the relative complexity and value of a qualification type and to support the differentiation of qualification types.

Application of a measure for the volume of learning leads to greater consistency in and between qualification types by indicating how long it takes a student, on average, to achieve the requirements of a qualification. This is expressed as the notional duration of student learning.

The application of the notional duration of student learning will be a judgement made by those developing and accrediting qualifications. Activities included in the notional duration of student learning include:

- structured learning, for example, classes, seminars, assignments, self-directed study, structured on and off the job training and tutoring/coaching
- practical work and practice to gain and refine skills and knowledge, for example, laboratory work, private study, work placements
- all forms of assessment including the demonstration of practical skills and preparation for assessment.

A notional duration of student learning range has been developed for each qualification type and is stated in full-time equivalent years or parts of years at the bottom of Table 2: AQF qualification type descriptors.

2. A student is an individual who is undertaking a program of learning in an education institution and/or a workplace setting.

The proposed ranges of notional duration of student learning in Table 2, particularly at Levels 3 and 4, take into account:

- differences in delivery such as full-time institutionally based study compared with trade training involving both on and off the job structured learning
- the variations between short duration specialist qualifications that build on skills already acquired and longer duration qualifications that are designed as entry level requirements for work.

QUESTION

9. Is the notional duration of student learning a sufficient measure for each qualification type?

Placement of qualification types at a level

Using the new descriptors developed for the 15 existing qualification types, each qualification type has been located at a level. The existing qualification types retain their relativity with each other.

In the process of locating qualification types to levels, the current descriptors for six existing qualification types were identified as inadequate for the proposed location of these qualification types in the new levels-based structure. To remedy this, the qualification type descriptors for these qualification types were written to better reflect the criteria for the proposed level.

The six qualification types are: Associate Degree, Advanced Diploma, Graduate Certificate, Vocational Graduate Certificate, Graduate Diploma and Vocational Graduate Diploma.

The proposed location of the qualification types in the AQF is illustrated in Table 3: Proposed placement of qualification types at a level.

QUESTIONS

10. Does the location of each qualification type in Table 3 reflect coherence between the qualification type and the level?
11. Do the descriptors for the six qualifications types listed reflect their proposed level location? Or is there a case for any of the six to be located at a different level?

Applying the architecture to developing and accrediting qualifications

A key outcome of a strengthened AQF is increased consistency in the outcomes of the development and accreditation of qualifications.

Qualification developers and accrediting authorities will use the learning outcomes taxonomy to describe qualifications. Qualifications will:

- Include each of the three dimensions (including generic skills specific to the sector).
- Include the varying proportions of learning in each of the three dimensions depending upon the intended outcomes of the qualification.
- Be positioned on a level confirming the qualification type.
- Include a notional duration of student learning.
- Specify pathways between it and other qualifications.

The accreditation process will confirm these decisions by developers.

This application may result in qualifications of the same type appearing different. The two examples below illustrate this:

One kind of Certificate III may be described using a higher ratio of the skills dimension than a less skills based qualification which may have a higher theoretical component. It may be determined that a greater notional duration of student learning is required to develop the application of the learning outcomes in the work context for a qualification with a high skills outcome compared to a more theoretically based qualification. However, the levels of autonomy required are similar. Pathways for both kinds of Certificate III have been identified to Certificate IV and Diploma qualifications. Applying the levels criteria in both cases will show that while the qualifications may 'look' different and may have a different notional duration of student learning, they are similar in terms of the complexity of the overall learning outcomes and are appropriately the same qualification type.

Similarly, a higher education Diploma may have more theoretical learning than a vocational education and training Diploma which may have a higher skills component. Pathways for both Diplomas have been identified to Advanced Diplomas and Bachelor Degrees. Applying the levels criteria in both cases will show that while the qualifications may 'look' different and may have a different notional duration of student learning, they are similar in terms of the complexity of the overall learning outcomes and are appropriately the same qualification type.

QUESTION

12. What mechanisms are needed to assist the consistent application of the qualification requirements in the development and accreditation processes?

Addition and removal of AQF qualification types

The Australian Qualifications Framework currently consists of 15 qualification types. Three qualification types have been added since 1995: the Associate Degree in 2003 and the Vocational Graduate Certificate and Vocational Graduate Diploma in 2005.

Changing educational or industry needs may lead to the need to add or remove qualification types in the future. To enable this to occur a policy will be developed based on the following principles.

Principles for adding qualification types

The proposed qualification type must:

- be able to be quality assured by government approved standards
- be able to be accredited by an accrediting authority empowered by State, Territory or Commonwealth legislation
- be able to be described according to the AQF taxonomy of learning outcomes for qualification type descriptors
- be able to be located in the AQF levels based structure
- have clear pathways within the AQF.

Consultation must have occurred with the relevant industry, provider and government stakeholders and be documented as support.

Only accrediting authorities as defined above may put forward a recommendation for inclusion of a new qualification type to the AQF Council or the AQF Council may itself authorise a new qualification type.

Principles for removing qualification types

Consultation must have occurred with the industry, provider and government stakeholders and be documented as support.

Only accrediting authorities as above may put forward a recommendation for the removal of a qualification type to the AQF Council or the AQF Council may itself authorise removal provided consultation has occurred.

QUESTION

13. Are there other considerations for adding or removing qualification types from the AQF?

Questions

Levels attributes and criteria

1. How well does each levels attribute express the level?
2. How well do the levels criteria explain the relativities between levels? Do the levels criteria provide appropriate differentiation in terms of increasing complexity between the levels?
3. Please provide any suggestions for refinement.

Qualification types descriptors

4. Please comment on the qualification types descriptors and provide any suggestions for refinement.
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7. Is there a case for qualifications leading to a trade outcome to be identified as a different qualification type?
8. Is there a case for only one kind of the Graduate Certificate and the Graduate Diploma qualifications types?

Notional duration of student learning

9. Is the notional duration of student learning a sufficient measure for each qualification type?

Placement of qualification types at a level

10. Does the location of each qualification type in Table 3 reflect coherence between the qualification type and the level?
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Applying the architecture to developing and accrediting qualifications

12. What mechanisms are needed to assist the consistent application of the qualification requirements in the development and accreditation processes?

Addition and removal of AQF qualifications

13. Are there other considerations for adding or removing qualification types from the AQF?

Responses

AQF stakeholders are invited to provide comment on the proposed architecture of the AQF.

The consultation period will conclude on Friday 16 October 2009.

Responses can be sent by email to aqfc@saugov.sa.gov.au

Or by post to:

AQF Council

GPO Box 320

Adelaide, South Australia, 5001

Telephone enquiries can be made to 08 8226 2775

Tables 1 - 3

Table 1: AQF levels attributes and criteria

| LEVELS | LEVEL 1 | LEVEL 2 | LEVEL 3 | LEVEL 4 | LEVEL 5 |
|--|---|--|--|---|---|
| LEVEL ATTRIBUTES Graduates at this level will have.... | Knowledge and skills that prepare for further learning and initial employment | Knowledge and skills for further learning and semiskilled employment | Knowledge and skills for further higher education and training and/or skilled employment | Theoretical and practical knowledge and skills for specialised and further learning and/or skilled employment | Self directed application of specialised knowledge and skills for further learning and/or skilled/ paraprofessional employment |
| LEVEL CRITERIA | | | | | |
| LEARNING OUTCOMES KNOWLEDGE | Basic functional knowledge for life, further learning and preparation for work | Fundamental factual, technical and procedural knowledge relating to a defined area of learning and work | Factual, technical, procedural and underpinning theoretical knowledge of an area of work and learning | Broad and integrated factual, technical and theoretical knowledge of a specialised area or a broad field of work and learning | Technical knowledge integrating theoretical concepts in a field of work and learning, with depth in specialised areas and broad knowledge of related fields of work and learning |
| LEARNING OUTCOMES SKILLS | Basic cognitive, technical and communication skills for life, further learning and work preparation | Cognitive, technical and communication skills to apply basic methods, tools, materials and information to complete defined routine tasks and solve a limited range of predictable problems | Cognitive, technical and communication skills to select and apply a range of methods, tools, materials and information to complete routine tasks and functions and solve a variety of predictable problems | Cognitive, technical and communication skills to select and apply a range of methods, tools, materials and information to complete routine and non-routine tasks and functions and solve predictable problems | Cognitive and technical skills to select and apply methods and technologies and to synthesise information to complete a range of functions as well as solve unpredictable problems; communication skills to transmit knowledge and skills to others |
| LEARNING OUTCOMES APPLICATION OF KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS | Autonomy in particular contexts and within established parameters | Autonomy and judgement in known and stable contexts and within established parameters | Autonomy and judgement in known and stable contexts and within established parameters | Autonomy and judgement in a known or changing context; can be responsible for others within established parameters | Autonomy and judgement in known or changing contexts; can be responsible for planning, organising and supervising routine work and learning of a team within broad but generally well-defined parameters |

| LEVELS | LEVEL 6 | LEVEL 7 | LEVEL 8 | LEVEL 9 | LEVEL 10 |
|--|--|---|---|---|--|
| LEVEL ATTRIBUTES Graduates at this level will have.... | Wide ranging, highly specialised knowledge and skills for further learning and paraprofessional employment | Systematic and coherent body of knowledge, principles and concepts and higher order learning skills for further learning and professional employment | Broad and/or specialised knowledge and skills for further learning and professional or highly skilled employment | Mastery of a complex specialised field of learning or an area of professional practice | Substantial original contribution to knowledge in a field of learning or professional practice |
| LEVEL CRITERIA | | | | | |
| LEARNING OUTCOMES KNOWLEDGE | Integrated technical and theoretical knowledge in a broad area of learning or a specialised field of work | Broad and integrated theoretical and technical knowledge of an area of learning and work | In depth theoretical and technical knowledge in an area of learning and/or work | A body of knowledge that provides new perspectives on current knowledge and/or for professional practices | A body of knowledge at the frontier of a field of work or learning that makes a distinct contribution to that field |
| LEARNING OUTCOMES SKILLS | Cognitive and technical skills to analyse, interpret, generate and communicate solutions to complex problems and functions to specialist and non-specialist audiences | Cognitive and technical skills to interpret issues and propose solutions to defined problems and communicate information and ideas to specialist and non-specialist audiences | Cognitive and technical skills to interpret issues and propose solutions to defined problems and communicate information and ideas to specialist and non-specialist audiences | Cognitive and technical skills to critically analyse and interpret complex information, problems, concepts and theories to provide modified constructs; communicate perspectives to specialist and non-specialist audiences | Exercise expert and specialised cognitive and technical skills in research including the design of concepts and research methodologies: the skills to investigate, synthesise, evaluate and undertake independent critical reflection and skills to communicate results to peers and the community |
| LEARNING OUTCOMES APPLICATION OF KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS | Autonomy and judgement in contexts that are subject to change; some responsibility for management, evaluation and improvement of work and learning of others within broad parameters | Autonomy and judgement in often complex and unpredictable contexts that require self-directed work and learning within broad parameters | Broad autonomy and judgement in often complex and unpredictable contexts that require self-directed work and learning within broad parameters | Autonomy, responsibility, and authority as a leading practitioner or scholar | Autonomy, responsibility, and authority as an expert practitioner or scholar |

Table 2: AQF qualification type descriptors

| QUALIFICATION TYPES | Certificate I | Certificate II | Senior Secondary Certificate of Education | Certificate III | Certificate IV | Diploma |
|--|--|---|--|--|---|--|
| LEVELS | 1 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| PURPOSE Graduates of the qualification type will have.... | <p>Initial qualification providing basic functional knowledge and skills for further learning and work</p> <p>Breadth, depth and complexity of knowledge and skills to prepare a person to perform a defined range of activities most of which may be routine and predictable.</p> | <p>To prepare individuals for mainly routine work and as a pathway to further learning</p> <p>Breadth, depth and complexity of knowledge and skills to prepare a person to perform in a range of varied activities or knowledge application where there is a clearly defined range of contexts in which the choice of actions required is usually clear and there is limited complexity in the range of options to be applied.</p> | <p>The completion of secondary schooling providing a pathway for further learning, work and participation in civic life</p> | <p>To prepare individuals as skilled operators who apply a broad range of knowledge and skills in varied work contexts and/or as a pathway for further learning</p> <p>Breadth, depth and complexity of knowledge and competence including selecting, adapting and transferring skills and knowledge to new environments and providing technical solutions in the resolution of specific problems.</p> | <p>To prepare individuals for skilled employment, who apply a broad range of knowledge and skills in varied work contexts and/or as a pathway for further learning</p> <p>Breadth, depth and complexity of knowledge and competencies across a broad range of varied activities or application in a wide variety of contexts most of which are known or changing.</p> | <p>To prepare individuals for advanced skilled or paraprofessional work who apply integrated technical and theoretical concepts in a broad range of contexts and/or as a pathway for further learning</p> <p>Breadth, depth and complexity covering planning and initiation of alternative approaches to skills or knowledge applications across a broad range of technical and/or management requirements, evaluation and coordination.</p> |
| KNOWLEDGE | Basic fundamental knowledge and understanding in a narrow area of learning and work | Basic factual, technical and procedural knowledge defined areas of learning and work | A foundation in general knowledge and some specialist knowledge with a range of breadth and depth in knowledge and understandings, both generic and discipline-specific that may include technical and/or theoretical knowledge | Factual, technical, procedural and underpinning theoretical knowledge in an area of learning and work | Broad and integrated factual, technical and theoretical knowledge in a specialised field of work and learning | Technical knowledge integrating theoretical concepts, with depth in some areas within a field and a broad knowledge of related fields of work and learning |
| SKILLS | <p>Basic skills to participate in life and further learning.</p> <p>Cognitive and communication skills to receive, pass on and recall information in a narrow range of areas</p> <p>Technical skills involving the use of tools appropriate to the activity and use of basic communication technologies</p> | <p>A defined range of:</p> <p>Cognitive skills to access, record and act on information from varied sources</p> <p>Cognitive and communication skills to apply and communicate known solutions to a limited range of predictable problems including in a team</p> <p>Technical skills to use a limited range of equipment to complete tasks involving known routines and procedures with a limited range of options</p> | <p>General cognitive capabilities that underpin flexible and analytical thinking, a capacity to work with others and an ability to move across subject disciplines to develop new expertise</p> | <p>Well developed:</p> <p>Cognitive, technical and communication skills to interpret and act on available information</p> <p>Cognitive and communication skills to apply and communicate known solutions to a variety of predictable problems</p> <p>Technical and communication skills to provide technical information</p> <p>Technical skills to undertake routine and non-routine tasks in a defined range of skilled operations</p> | <p>Cognitive skills to identify, analyse, compare and act on information from a variety of sources</p> <p>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</p> <p>Specialist technical skills to complete routine and non-routine tasks and functions</p> <p>Communication skills to transmit knowledge and skills to others and demonstrate understanding of knowledge</p> <p>Communication skills to guide specialised activities and provide technical advice in the area of work and learning</p> | <p>Cognitive and communication skills to identify, analyse, synthesise and act on information from a variety of sources</p> <p>Cognitive skills to plan, organise and evaluate work and learning</p> <p>Technical and creative skills to express ideas and perspectives</p> <p>Technical and communication skills to analyse, plan, design and communicate approaches to unpredictable problems and/or management requirements</p> <p>Communication skills to transmit knowledge and skills to others and demonstrate understanding of knowledge</p> |
| APPLICATION OF KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS | <p>Application of knowledge and skills with autonomy in particular contexts and within established parameters</p> <p>Contexts may include preparation for further learning, life opportunities and/or a variety of initial routine and predictable employment-related contexts including participation in a team or work group</p> | <p>Application of knowledge and skills with accountability for the quality of own outcomes and responsibility for own outputs in work and learning</p> <p>Application of knowledge and skills with autonomy and judgement to complete own defined and routine tasks in known and stable contexts and completion of less routine and more variable tasks in collaboration with others</p> <p>Application of knowledge and skills in a team environment</p> | <p>Applications of knowledge and skills in particular contexts within civic life, work and lifelong learning as successful learners, confident individuals and active and informed citizens.</p> <p>Contexts include individual responsibility with some direction and some accountability for the quality of outcomes</p> | <p>Application of knowledge and skills to provide discretion and judgement in the selection of equipment, services or contingency measures and adapting and transferring skills and knowledge within known routines, methods, procedures and time constraints</p> <p>Application of knowledge and skills to take responsibility for own outputs in work and learning including participation in teams in known contexts</p> | <p>Self-directed:</p> <p>Application of knowledge and skills to specialised tasks or functions in known or changing contexts</p> <p>Application of knowledge and skills with responsibility for own functions, and can have limited organisation of others.</p> <p>Application of knowledge and skills to take full responsibility for own outputs and limited responsibility for the quantity and quality of the output of others in a team within limited parameters</p> | <p>Self-directed:</p> <p>Application of knowledge and skills, with depth in some areas, in known or changing contexts.</p> <p>Application of knowledge and skills to transfer and apply theoretical concepts and/or technical and/or creative skills in a range of situations, applying initiative and judgement in planning and selection of appropriate equipment, services and techniques for self and others</p> <p>Application of knowledge and skills to participate in management initiatives with personal responsibility and autonomy in performing complex technical operations with responsibility for own outputs in relation to broad quantity and quality parameters</p> <p>Application of knowledge and skills to organise the work of others, plan, coordinate and evaluate the work of teams within broad but generally well-defined parameters</p> |
| Notional duration of student learning | 3 – 6 months | 0.5 – 1 year | 2 years | 1 – 2 years Note: there may be variations at this level based on fulltime institutionally based study compared with trade training involving both on and off the job structured learning. | 0.5 – 2 years Note: there may be variations between short duration specialist qualifications that build on skills already acquired and longer duration qualifications that are designed as entry level requirements for work. | 1.5 – 2 years |

| QUALIFICATION TYPES | Advanced Diploma | Associate Degree | Bachelor Degree | Graduate Certificate Vocational Graduate Certificate | Graduate Diploma Vocational Graduate Diploma | Masters degree | Doctoral degree |
|--|---|--|--|---|---|---|--|
| LEVELS | 6 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| PURPOSE Graduates of the qualification type will have.... | To prepare individuals for advanced skilled or paraprofessional or work who apply specialised knowledge in a range of contexts and/or as a pathway for further learning Breadth, depth and complexity involving analysis, diagnosis, design, planning, execution and evaluation across a broad range of technical and/or paraprofessional functions. | To prepare individuals for paraprofessional work who apply underpinning technical and theoretical knowledge in a range of contexts and/or as a pathway for further learning The underpinnings of one or more disciplines, including understanding and interpretation of key concepts and theories and how they are evolving within the relevant scientific, technical, social and cultural contexts. | To prepare individuals for professional work who apply a body of knowledge in a range of contexts and/or as a pathway for further learning A systematic and coherent body of knowledge, the underlying principles and concepts in one or more disciplines to prepare individuals to enter professional practice, to prepare for advanced learning and to engage in civic life. | To prepare individuals for professional work who apply a body of knowledge in a range of contexts and/or as a pathway for further learning Breadth, depth and complexity of knowledge at a level of study including the acquisition and application of knowledge and skills in a new or existing discipline or professional area, which may involve extending knowledge and skills gained in an undergraduate program or relevant prior work or study. | To prepare individuals for professional work who apply a body of knowledge in a range of contexts and/or as a pathway for further learning Breadth, depth and complexity of specialised knowledge at a level of study including the acquisition and critical application of knowledge and skills in a field of existing new or existing field or professional area, which may involve extending knowledge and skills gained in an undergraduate program or relevant prior work or study. | To prepare individuals to research and apply a body of knowledge in a range of contexts and/or as a pathway for further learning Breadth, depth and complexity of a field of study or area of professional practice where emphasis may range from the acquisition or enhancement of specific professional or vocational skills and knowledge, usually undertaken in a combination of coursework and research. | To prepare individuals to research, investigate and develop new knowledge, with or without specific practical application Breadth, depth and complexity of knowledge at a high level of advanced study to make a substantial original contribution to a field of learning through research |
| KNOWLEDGE | Specialised technical and theoretical knowledge with depth within a field of work and learning | Technical and theoretical knowledge that underpins one or more disciplines | A systematic and coherent body of knowledge, the underlying principles and concepts in one or more disciplines | Specialised knowledge within a systematic and coherent body of knowledge that may include the acquisition and application of knowledge and skills in a new discipline or professional area | Advanced knowledge within a systematic and coherent body of knowledge that may include the acquisition and application of knowledge and skills in a new discipline or professional area | A body of knowledge that provides new perspectives and/or for professional practices | A body of knowledge at the frontier of a field of work or learning that makes a distinct contribution |
| SKILLS | Cognitive and communication skills to generate, communicate and implement ideas and actions through the identification, analysis and evaluation of information in a field of work and learning Cognitive and communication skills to transmit knowledge and skills to others and to demonstrate understanding of specialised knowledge with depth in some areas Cognitive and communication skills where applicable to a field of complex problems Command of wide-ranging, highly specialised technical, creative or conceptual skills to express ideas and perspectives | Cognitive skills to identify, synthesise and evaluate information and concepts from a range of sources Cognitive skills that demonstrate understanding of knowledge with depth in some areas Cognitive and communication skills to formulate responses to defined problems and generate and communicate ideas using intellectual independence Technical and creative skills where applicable to a field of work and learning Communication skills to present knowledge and ideas | Cognitive skills to critically review, analyse, consolidate and synthesise knowledge Cognitive skills that demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of knowledge with depth in some areas Cognitive skills to identify and solve defined problems using intellectual independence Technical and creative skills where applicable to a field of professional practice Communication skills to present a systematic exposition of knowledge and ideas | Cognitive skills to critically review, analyse, consolidate and synthesise knowledge and identify and provide solutions to defined problems Cognitive and communication skills to generate and evaluate complex ideas demonstrating an understanding of theoretical concepts using intellectual independence Specialised technical and creative skills where applicable to a field of highly skilled and/or professional practice Communication skills to present knowledge and ideas to a range of audiences | Cognitive skills to critically review, analyse, consolidate and synthesise knowledge and identify and provide solutions to defined problems Cognitive and communication skills to generate and evaluate complex ideas demonstrating an understanding of theoretical concepts using intellectual independence Specialised technical and creative skills where applicable to a field of highly skilled and/or professional practice Communication skills to present knowledge and ideas to a range of audiences | Cognitive and technical skills to critically investigate, analyse and interpret complex information, problems, concepts and theories to provide modified constructs Cognitive skills to demonstrate mastery of theoretical knowledge and to critically reflect on professional theory and practice Cognitive and technical skills to generate and evaluate complex ideas and concepts at an abstract level Technical skills to design, use and evaluate research Specialised technical and creative skills where applicable to the field Communication skills to justify theoretical propositions, methodologies and conclusions Communication skills to present a well ordered dissertation, nonprint thesis or portfolio, for submission to external examination and to disseminate research results to specialist and non-specialist audiences | Cognitive skills to demonstrate mastery of theoretical knowledge and to critically reflect on professional theory and practice Cognitive skills using intellectual independence to think critically, evaluate existing knowledge and ideas, undertake systematic investigation and reflection on professional theory and practice to develop original knowledge Technical skills to design, implement, analyse, theorise and write research that makes a significant and original contribution to knowledge Specialised technical and creative skills where applicable to the field Communication skills to justify theoretical propositions, methodologies and conclusions Communication skills include the ability to present a substantial and well ordered dissertation, non-print thesis or portfolio, for submission to external examination against international standards and to communicate research results to peers and the community |
| APPLICATION OF KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS | Self-directed: Application of knowledge and skills, with depth in some areas, in contexts subject to change Application of knowledge and skills to apply a range of fundamental principles and complex techniques Application of knowledge and skills to apply initiative and judgment in planning, design, technical or management functions related to products, services, operations or procedures Application of knowledge and skills across a broad range of technical or management functions with accountability for personal outputs and personal and team outcomes within broad parameters | Self-directed: Application of knowledge and skills to provide a basis for further learning Application of knowledge and skills to adapt knowledge and skills in a range of contexts, taking responsibility and accountability for own learning and work and collaboration with others within broad parameters | Self-directed: Application of knowledge and skills to apply judgement and initiative in professional work and learning Application of knowledge and skills to adapt knowledge and skills in a range of contexts, taking responsibility and accountability for own learning and work and collaboration with others within broad parameters | Self directed: Application of knowledge and skills to make significant high level, independent judgements in a range of technical or management functions in varied specialised contexts. Application of knowledge and skills to initiate, plan, implement and evaluate broad functions within varied specialised technical and/or creative contexts Application of knowledge and skills to demonstrate responsibility and accountability for personal outputs and all aspects of the work or function of others within broad parameters | Self directed: Application of knowledge and skills to make significant high level, independent judgements in a range of technical or management functions in varied specialised contexts. Application of knowledge and skills to initiate, plan, implement and evaluate broad functions within varied specialised technical and/or creative contexts Application of knowledge and skills to demonstrate responsibility and accountability for personal outputs and all aspects of the work or function of others within broad parameters | Self-directed: Application of knowledge and skills to demonstrate creativity and initiative in the application of knowledge and skills to new situations and/or for further learning Application of knowledge and skills in the planning and execution of project work or a piece of scholarship or research Application of knowledge and skills to demonstrate personal autonomy and accountability | Self-directed: Application of knowledge and skills to demonstrate creativity and initiative in the application of knowledge and skills to new situations and/or for further learning Application of knowledge and skills in the planning and execution of project work or a piece of scholarship or research Application of knowledge and skills to demonstrate full responsibility and accountability for personal outputs |
| Notional duration of student learning | 1.5 – 2 years | 2 years | 3 – 4 years | 0.5 years | 1 – 2 years | 1.5 – 2 years | 3 – 5 years |

Table 3: Proposed placement of qualification types at a level

| LEVELS | Level 1 | Level 2 | Level 3 | Level 4 | Level 5 | Level 6 | Level 7 | Level 8 | Level 9 | Level 10 |
|---|---|--|--|---|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| LEVELS ATTRIBUTES Graduates at this level will have.... | Knowledge and skills that prepare for further learning and initial employment | Knowledge and skills for further learning and semiskilled employment | Knowledge and skills for further higher education and training and/or skilled employment | Theoretical and practical knowledge and skills for specialised and further learning and/or skilled employment | Self directed application of specialised knowledge and skills for further learning and/or skilled/ paraprofessional employment | Wide ranging, highly specialised knowledge and skills for further learning and paraprofessional employment | Systematic and coherent body of knowledge, principles and concepts and higher order learning skills for further learning and professional employment | Broad and/or specialised knowledge and skills for further learning and professional or highly skilled employment | Mastery of a complex specialised field of learning or an area of professional practice | Substantial original contribution to knowledge in a field of learning or professional practice |
| QUALIFICATION TYPES | Certificate I | Certificate II | Senior Secondary Certificate of Education Certificate III | Certificate IV | Diploma | Advanced Diploma Associate Degree | Bachelor Degree | Graduate Certificate Vocational Graduate Certificate Graduate Diploma Vocational Graduate Diploma | Masters Degree | Doctoral Degree |



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