Australian Qualifications Framework
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AQF Council

Australian Council of Deans of ICT
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The AQF is Australia’s national policy for regulated qualifications delivered in all education sectors.
Review of AQF
Objectives of the AQF

To provide a contemporary and flexible framework:
1. that accommodates the diversity of purposes of Australian education and training now and into the future
2. that contributes to national economic performance by supporting contemporary, relevant and nationally consistent qualification outcomes which build confidence in qualifications
3. 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 these sectors and the labour market
4. 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
5. underpins national regulatory and quality assurance arrangements for education and training
6. supports and enhances the national and international mobility of graduates and workers through increased recognition of the value and comparability of Australian qualifications
7. enables the alignment of the AQF with international qualifications frameworks
AQF is an integrated policy
Higher education qualifications located at levels 5-10

Level 7 – Graduates at this level will have broad and coherent knowledge and skills for professional work and/or further learning

Level 8 – Graduates at this level will have specialised knowledge and skills for professional/highly skilled work and/or further learning

Level 9 – Graduates at this level will have specialised knowledge and skills for research and/or professional practice and/or further learning
| Purpose | Qualifies individuals who apply an advanced body of knowledge in a range of contexts for professional practice or scholarship and as a pathway to further learning |
| Knowledge | Graduates 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 |
| Skills | Graduates 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 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 |
Masters Degree (Coursework) continued

| Application of knowledge and skills | Graduates 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 |
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<td>Volume of learning</td>
<td>The volume of learning in 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</td>
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AQF Qualification Type Specifications

Qualifications must be designed to ensure that graduates achieve the learning outcomes specified for both the level and qualification type.

Key points for design and accreditation:
- All knowledge, skills and application must be evident; some may have more emphasis due to purpose of qualification.
- Must be clear relationship between level, type and discipline.
- Must involve professions in developing content if it leads to professional outcome.
- Learning outcomes must be coherent and must be achievable.
- Volume of learning must be sufficient to enable graduates to achieve the learning outcomes at the level.
Level
- Summary
- Learning outcomes criteria

Qualification
- Learning outcomes
- Explicit generic learning outcomes
- Discipline content
- Volume of learning
- Correct title

Qualification type
- Learning outcomes descriptor
- Discipline free
- Volume of learning
The AQF in the lifecycle of an Australian qualification

1. Identification of need
   Organisation(s) identify a need for a qualification: industry, professions, government, education provider
   Use the AQF to explore possible level and type of qualification

2. Expert development
   Includes stakeholders
   Qualification development
   Organisation develops qualification
   Use the AQF specifications to determine level, type and title of qualification and pathways

3. Qualification accreditation
   1. Qualification submitted
   2. Qualification assessed against AQF standards and other accreditation rules
   3. Qualification accredited by accrediting authority
   Use the AQF specifications as the standard to inform the accreditation decision and feedback to developer

4. Qualification delivery and issuance
   Authorised issuing organisations deliver, assess and issue qualification
   Use the AQF specifications as the standard to inform delivery, assessment, issuance and pathways

5. Quality assurance
   Regulators and quality assurance agencies monitor issuing organisations delivery, assessment and issuance of AQF qualifications
   Use the AQF to make judgements about how well the specifications are met and any improvements needed

6. Internal oversight and quality assurance
   Use the AQF to inform decisions

7. Government/public oversight and quality assurance

The processes for ensuring confidence in an AQF qualification
How the AQF operates

The legal basis for the AQF is through Commonwealth and State Governments’ legislation

All AQF qualifications must be accredited by government authorised accrediting authorities (some providers have authority to self accredit)

Only government accredited providers can deliver, assess and issue AQF qualifications

Providers must meet minimum standards to be accredited and to retain accreditation; accrediting authorities monitor providers to ensure the quality of qualifications issued

Requirements of the revised AQF must be met by 1 Jan 2015
Delivery, assessment and issuance of AQF qualifications

The delivery of learning, assessment of individuals and the issuance of AQF qualifications is the responsibility of the providers authorised to do so through registration by one of the government accrediting authorities or by the universities that are self-accrediting.

Decisions on delivery and assessment methodologies reside with the providers – they may occur in the classroom, in the workplace, by distance education, be fast-tracked, or through recognition of prior learning.

An AQF qualification cannot be awarded until the graduate has demonstrated the learning outcomes.
AQF Governance

AQF is owned and funded by all governments

AQF Council established under authority of national ministers for education and employment

AQF Council’s role is to:
  - provide policy advice on qualifications
  - maintain, monitor and promote the AQF
  - support the users of the AQF

AQF Council members include independent chair, higher education, vocational education and training, senior secondary schools, employers, unions, governments, international observer
Contact AQF Council

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