



Australian Council of Deans of ICT

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ACDICT Submission to Consultation Paper: Strengthening the AQF

ACDICT role

The Australian Council of Deans of Information and Communications Technology is the peak body for university-level ICT education. ACDICT welcomes the systematic approach that the proposed qualifications framework will bring to articulating the broad expectations of the various levels of education.

Request for clarification concerning conversion masters

The clarification we seek concerns the apparent omission of conversion masters from the proposed AQF framework. A conversion masters is where a student has obtained the generic professional, communication, interpersonal, analytic and lifelong learning skills through prior undergraduate study and (possibly) work experience at level 7 or 8, and then wishes to change disciplines. Such conversion masters not only meet the needs of an increasing number of students who seek to change career projection after completing their undergraduate award, but are an important component in addressing serious workforce skills issues for instance in a number of areas of ICT. Such a change in career direction could apparently occur through a Masters Degree (Coursework), and that is where we are seeking the clarification, as there is no explicit mention in the Consultation Paper of changing discipline through this route.

The Consultation Paper notes that: "The purpose of the Masters Degree (Coursework) is to qualify individuals who apply an advanced body of knowledge..." (p37). It is unclear if this application of an *advanced body of knowledge* applies to the entry or exit of the Masters degree. The conversion degree would build on the skills and knowledge obtained from one degree and develop the advanced body of knowledge in another discipline during the coursework. Is that purpose intended in the description of the Masters Degree (Coursework)?

Concerning professional accreditation, the paragraphs on p39 of the Consultation Paper state:

A Masters Degree (Coursework) may be designed for entry to a 'regulated' profession and may include a significant component of structured work-integrated, or practice related learning developed in collaboration with a relevant professional, statutory or regulatory body.

In the development and accreditation of a Masters Degree qualification developers and accrediting authorities must ensure that, overall, the majority of learning outcomes of the qualification are at AQF level 9.

The implication is that accreditation by the Australian Computer Society (well established ICT professional accrediting body) of a conversion degree to that standard would satisfy the requirements of an ICT Masters Degree (Coursework). Is that a correct interpretation?

The ACDICT Executive would be willing to elaborate on further details of this request for clarification should you desire it. We are also amenable to this request being published on the AQF website.

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