

Application of the AQF within the Vocational Education and Training (VET) sector

Under the revised AQF, accrediting bodies and developers of AQF qualifications are required to have in place policies and processes to ensure that the implementation arrangements are met. The AQF Qualifications Issuance Policy recognises the NQC as an accrediting body within its role of endorsing AQF qualifications in national Training Packages. Accordingly, the NQC has reviewed the currency of information provided within the *AQF Implementation Handbook* (4th edition 2007) and updated it where appropriate in consultation with the AQFC Secretariat to ensure consistency of advice and that it is aligned with the revised AQF (2011).

The Special Bulletin outlines the policy requirements of the National Quality Council (NQC) which support the *AQF Qualifications Issuance Policy*. These are applicable to the development, accreditation and issuance of qualifications and Statements of Attainment within the vocational education and training (VET) sector.

The Special Bulletin comprises:

- A listing of VET qualifications as defined within the *AQF Qualification Type Specifications*;
- Identification of the Standards and policies that apply to the protection of AQF titles in support of the AQF Qualifications Issuance Policy, to the accreditation of qualifications (including those within Training Packages) and to the issuance of VET qualifications; and
- Principles, protocols and suggested forms for the issue of qualifications or statements of attainment.

The Special Bulletin intends to provide continuity for Registering Bodies and RTOs during the period of transition which lies ahead. Further changes as they apply to the application of the AQF – as in relation to the *AQF Pathways Policy* - will be notified as they occur.

1. Vocational Education and Training Qualifications

As defined within the *AQF Qualification Type Specifications* (2011), vocational education and training qualifications include:

- Certificate I
- Certificate II
- Certificate III
- Certificate IV
- Diploma
- Advanced Diploma
- Vocational Graduate Certificate
- Vocational Graduate Diploma

2. Protection of AQF titles

AQF titles are protected by the *AQF Qualifications Issuance Policy*, supported by a range of standards and policies that apply to vocational education and training qualifications. These include:

- The AQTF *Standards for Accredited Courses*. From 1 July 2011, the *Standards for VET Accredited Courses*, contained within the VET Quality Framework, will also apply;
- NQC policies and requirements that apply to qualifications accredited within Training Packages as documented within the Training Package Development Handbook;
- The AQTF *Essential Conditions and Standards for Initial and Continuing Registration*. From 1 July 2011, the VET Quality Framework will apply to RTOs registered with the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA); and
- Protocols defining the form of the qualifications.

3. Standards that apply to the accreditation and development of vocational education and training qualifications

The *AQF Qualification Type Specifications* (2011) specify that accrediting bodies and those developing qualifications for accreditation must adhere to the AQF specification *and any government accreditation standards for vocational education and training* when accrediting vocational education and training qualifications.

Implementation arrangements for AQF include the requirement that 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 are enrolled or may transfer without disadvantage to an equivalent qualification that meets the requirements of the AQF.

Standards that apply to the accreditation of vocational education and training qualifications include:

- AQTF *Standards for Accredited Courses*. From 1 July 2011, the *Standards for VET Accredited Courses*, contained within the VET Quality Framework, will also apply;
- NQC policies and requirements that apply to qualifications accredited within Training Packages as documented within the Training Package Development Handbook. This provides detailed policy requirements for the development of Training Packages including units of competency, qualification frameworks and assessment guidelines.

Accrediting bodies

- The *AQF Qualifications Issuance Policy* recognises the NQC as an accrediting body within its role of endorsing AQF qualifications in national Training Packages
- National, State and Territory Course Accrediting Bodies.

The term 'accrediting authority' is used within the revised AQF to cover the body authorised by legislation to accredit courses and to register providers.

Accrediting bodies are responsible for the implementation of the *AQF Qualification Type Specifications* when accrediting qualifications.

4. Authority to issue vocational education and training qualifications recognised under the AQF

The *AQF Qualification Type Specifications* indicate that vocational education and training qualifications may only be issued by an organisation that is authorised by an accrediting body to do so, and which meets any government standards for the sector.

The **standards** that must be met are the AQTF *Essential Conditions and Standards for Initial/ Continuing Registration*. The AQTF identifies conditions and standards that apply to the registration of Registered Training Organisations (RTOs). RTOs may issue qualifications which are on their scope of registration. From 1 July 2011, RTOs registered with ASQA must be compliant with the VET Quality Framework.

Registering Bodies have the authority under legislation to register RTOs, to approve them to issue nationally recognised qualifications and to monitor implementation of the AQF *Qualifications Issuance Policy* and the AQTF within the vocational education and training sector.

As a committee of the Ministerial Council for Tertiary Education and Employment, the NQC oversees quality assurance and ensures national consistency in the application of the AQTF standards for the audit and registration of training providers. It reports to the Ministerial Council on the operation of the National Skills Framework, which includes Training Packages, the AQTF standards and other quality assurance arrangements.

5. Issuing qualifications in the VET sector

In accordance with the AQF *Qualifications Issuance Policy*, **Registering Bodies** will ensure that AQF qualifications will only be issued by issuing organisations authorised by legislation to do so.

Within the VET sector, issuing organisations are **RTOs** compliant with the AQTF *Essential Conditions and Standards for Initial/ Continuing Registration*. From 1 July 2011 RTOs registered with ASQA must be compliant with the VET Quality Framework in order to issue AQF qualifications.

Registering Bodies monitor RTO compliance with regulatory and quality assurance arrangements in the delivery, assessment and issuance of AQF qualifications, including that each RTO:

- maintains registers of
 - ❖ all AQF qualifications it is authorised to issue;
 - ❖ all AQF qualifications and statements of attainment issued to graduates;
- retains records of qualifications issued for a period of 30 years;
- provides returns of its client records of attainment of units of competency/ modules and qualifications to its registering body on a regular basis, as determined by the registering body in compliance with the AQTF or with the VET Quality Framework as applicable;
- has current and readily available policies and procedures that detail its procedures for compliance with the AQF *Qualifications Issuance Policy*;
- issues certification which provides information in compliance with the AQF *Qualifications Issuance Policy*, the AQTF *Essential Conditions and Standards for Initial/ Continuing Registration* or with the VET Quality Framework as applicable, and with current NQC policy requirements.

RTOs have policies and procedures in place that are compliant with the AQF *Qualifications Issuance Policy*, the AQTF *Essential Conditions and Standards for Initial/ Continuing Registration* or with the VET Quality Framework as applicable, and with NQC and Registering Body requirements in the delivery, assessment and issuance of AQF qualifications.

6. Issuing Statements of Attainment in the VET sector

Issue date: 2 August 2011

In accordance with the AQF *Qualifications Issuance Policy*, **Registering Bodies** will ensure that Statements of Attainment will only be issued by issuing organisations authorised by legislation to do so.

Within the VET sector, issuing organisations are **RTOs** compliant with the *AQTF Essential Conditions and Standards for Initial/ Continuing Registration* or with the VET Quality Framework as applicable.

Statements of attainment will be issued to students who have completed **accredited units/modules or skills sets** within AQF qualifications **or a short course accredited by a course accrediting body, which does not meet the requirements of a full AQF qualification.**

Registering bodies will ensure that the **RTO**

- issues certification which provides information in compliance with:
 - ❖ the AQF *Qualifications Issuance Policy* as it applies to Statements of Attainment;
 - ❖ the requirements of the *AQTF Essential Conditions and Standards for Initial/ Continuing Registration* or with the VET Quality Framework as applicable, and with current NQC policy requirements;
- maintains registers of all Statements of Attainments issued to graduates;
- retains records of Statements of Attainment issued for a period of 30 years; and
- provides returns of its client records of Statements of Attainment to its registering body on a regular basis, as determined by the registering body in compliance with the AQTF or with the VET Quality Framework as applicable.

7. Issuance of the Qualifications

The AQF provides for a range of pathways to the qualifications in the vocational education and training sector. For example, a qualification may be gained as a result of work-based training, work- and institution-based training, institution-based training, recognition of prior learning and further training as necessary. Prior learning may include training and courses undertaken outside the AQF and informal learning gained through work or other life experience.

In all circumstances a single qualification should be issued (this does not preclude dual certification in certain circumstances, e.g. schools and vocational education and training. AQF qualifications and Statements of Attainment must be delivered and assessed at a level of English language proficiency appropriate to the context of delivery). This does not preclude the use of Languages Other Than English (LOTE) to support training delivery and/or assessment for some or all of the qualification.

Where the majority of units of competency or the majority of the qualification have been delivered and assessed in a LOTE, then the language of delivery and assessment should be noted on the qualification or Statement of Attainment. Qualifications and Statements of Attainment are to be in English. Official translations may (optionally) be included on the reverse of the document.

8. Protocol Defining the Form of a qualification testamur

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

All vocational education and training qualifications include the following elements:

- name, code and logo of the issuing body;
- name of person receiving the qualification;
- awarded AQF qualification by its code and full title;
- date issued;
- authorised signatory;
- the AQF logo *or* the words, *The qualification is recognised within the Australian Qualifications Framework*;
- the Nationally Recognised Training (NRT) logo
- the State/Territory Training Authority logo (only where use of the logo is directed by State/ Territory Training Authorities, e.g. within User Choice contracts); and
- the issuing organisation's seal/ watermark or corporate identifier.

A record of results will be issued together with the qualification.

The following elements are included as applicable:

- industry descriptor, e.g. Engineering;
- occupational or functional stream, in brackets, e.g. (Fabrication);
- where relevant, the words, 'achieved through Australian Apprenticeship arrangements' and
- where relevant, the words, 'has been delivered and assessed in <insert language>;
- where the qualification is from a Training Package, include the words, 'A summary of the employability skills developed through this qualification can be downloaded from <http://employabilityskills.training.com.au>'.

The level of consistency in the format required nationally is restricted to the name of the qualification being indicated first, followed by the word 'in' (for Certificates I–IV and Vocational Graduate Certificate) or the word 'of' (for Diploma, Advanced Diploma and Vocational Graduate Diploma) followed by the title. In the case of a general category and a more specific category the title should be written as the example below:

[Code] Certificate III in General Category (specific if required)

An example of the form of the qualification testamur can be found on the following page.

9. Suggested Form: Vocational Education and Training Qualifications testamur

NAME AND LOGO OF ISSUING BODY (name of RTO and RTO code.)

This is to certify that

JANE SMITH

has fulfilled the requirements for

**[Code] CERTIFICATE IV
in**

INDUSTRY DESCRIPTOR e.g. METALS AND ENGINEERING

(OCCUPATION STREAM) (e.g. FABRICATION)

Dated (insert date)

**Authorised Signatory
Issuing Body**

Nationally Recognised Training logo

AQF logo or the words *The qualification is recognised within the Australian Qualifications Framework*

State/Territory Training Authority logo (only where use of the logo is directed by State/
Territory Training Authorities, e.g within User Choice contracts)

achieved through Australian Apprenticeship arrangements (*where relevant*)

The qualification has been delivered and assessed in [insert language] (*where relevant*)

**A summary of the employability skills developed through this qualification can be
downloaded from <http://employabilityskills.training.com.au>**

Issuing organisation's seal/ watermark or corporate identifier

10. Protocol for Defining the Form of Statements of Attainment

Statements of Attainment are issued in the vocational education and training sector by Registered Training Organisations to students who have completed *accredited units or skills sets* within AQF qualifications *or a short course accredited by a course accrediting body, which does not meet the requirements of a full AQF qualification.*

Statements of Attainment include the following features:

- name and code of the issuing RTO
- name of the person who achieved the competencies or modules
- date issued
- a list of competencies (or modules where no competencies exist) showing their full title and the national code for each unit of competency
- authorised signatory
- the Nationally Recognised Training (NRT) logo
- the State/Territory Training Authority logo (only where use of the logo is directed by State/Territory Training Authorities, e.g within User Choice contracts)
- the words *A Statement of Attainment is issued by a Registered Training Organisation when an individual has completed one or more accredited units*
- the words *These competencies form part of [code and title of qualification(s)/course(s)]* (this is optional, where applicable)
- the issuing organisation's seal/ watermark or corporate identifier.

A Statement of Attainment will normally consist of a single page: it may run on to a further page where there is a long list of competencies (or modules).

Statements of Attainment which describe the completion of a **short course accredited by a course accrediting body**, which does not meet the requirements of a full AQF qualification includes the words: *These competencies/ modules were attained in completion of [insert code] Course in... [insert full title—note this is only for accredited courses titled 'Course in..']*

Statements of Attainment issued to recognise achievement of a **skill set identified in a particular Training Package** contains the name of the skill set and a statement using the wording given in the Training Package to indicate whether the skill set meets a licensing or regulatory requirement or an identified industry need.

Statements of Attainment awarded for a **skill set identified by an RTO as meeting enterprise needs** may include additional brief information reflecting its identified purpose.

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

Suggested forms of Statements of Attainment can be found on the following pages
Example A: Generic Statement of Attainment (for completion of units of competency from a nationally recognised qualification/ course)
Example B: Statement of Attainment for a Training Package skill set which meets a license or regulatory requirement
Example C: Statement of Attainment for a Training Package skill set which meets a defined industry need

11. Suggested Forms: Statement of Attainment

Example A: Generic (i.e., other than for skill sets identified in Training Packages)

STATEMENT OF ATTAINMENT

A STATEMENT OF ATTAINMENT IS ISSUED BY A REGISTERED TRAINING ORGANISATION WHEN AN INDIVIDUAL HAS COMPLETED ONE OR MORE ACCREDITED UNITS

NAME OF RTO and RTO CODE

This is a statement that

JANE SMITH

has attained

[list code and title of unit(s) of competency]

(Optional: These competencies form part of the [insert code and title of qualification(s)/course(s)],

OR

These competencies were attained in completion of [insert code] Course in [insert full title—note this is only for accredited courses titled 'Course in ...'],

OR

These competencies have been identified as meeting [insert brief statement of enterprise need] by [insert enterprise].)

These competencies have been delivered and assessed in [insert language] (*where relevant*)

Dated (insert date)

Authorised Signatory Issuing Body

Nationally Recognised Training logo

State/Territory Training Authority logo (only where use of the logo is directed by State/Territory Training Authorities, e.g within User Choice contracts)

Issuing organisation's seal/watermark or corporate identifier

Example B: Statement of Attainment wording for Training Package identified skill set which meets a licence or regulatory requirement

STATEMENT OF ATTAINMENT

A STATEMENT OF ATTAINMENT IS ISSUED BY A REGISTERED TRAINING ORGANISATION WHEN AN INDIVIDUAL HAS COMPLETED ONE OR MORE ACCREDITED UNITS

NAME OF RTO AND RTO CODE

This is a statement that

JANE SMITH

has attained

Alcohol and other Drugs Skill Set

**CHCAOD402B Work effectively in the alcohol and other drugs sector
CHCAOD406D Work with clients who are intoxicated
CHCAOD408A Assess needs of clients with alcohol and/or other drugs issues
CHCMH401A Work effectively in mental health settings.**

This skill set meets industry requirements as specified in the CHC08 Community Services Training Package for work in the area of alcohol and other drugs.

(Optional: These competencies form part of the [insert code and title of qualification(s)])

These competencies have been delivered and assessed in [insert language].) (*where relevant*)

Dated (insert date)

Authorised Signatory Issuing Body

Nationally Recognised Training logo

State/Territory Training Authority logo (only where use of the logo is directed by State/Territory Training Authorities, e.g within User Choice contracts)

Issuing organisation's seal/watermark or corporate identifier

Example C: Statement of Attainment wording for Training Package identified skill set which meets a defined industry need

STATEMENT OF ATTAINMENT

A STATEMENT OF ATTAINMENT IS ISSUED BY A REGISTERED TRAINING ORGANISATION WHEN AN INDIVIDUAL HAS COMPLETED ONE OR MORE ACCREDITED UNITS

NAME OF RTO AND RTO CODE

This is a statement that

JANE SMITH

has attained Clinical Coding Skill Set

**HLTCC301A Produce coded clinical data
HLTCC401A Undertake complex clinical coding
HLTCC402A Complete highly complex clinical coding**

These units from the Health Training Package (HLT07) meet industry requirements for clinical coding in the health industry

(Optional: These competencies form part of the [insert code and title of qualification(s)])

These competencies have been delivered and assessed in [insert language].) (*where relevant*)

Dated (insert date)

Authorised Signatory Issuing Body

Nationally Recognised Training logo

State/Territory Training Authority logo (only where use of the logo is directed by State/Territory Training Authorities, e.g within User Choice contracts)

Issuing organisation's seal/watermark or corporate identifier