

Qualifications Framework

The Australian Qualifications Framework

What is the Australian Qualifications Framework?

A brief overview of the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) follows. For a full explanation of the AQF see the *AQF Implementation Handbook, 3rd Edition 2002*. You can download it from the Australian Qualifications Advisory Board (AQFAB) website (www.aqf.edu.au) or obtain a hard copy by contacting AQFAB on phone 03 9639 1606 or by emailing AQFAB on aqfab@curriculum.edu.au

The AQF provides a comprehensive, nationally consistent framework for all qualifications in post-compulsory education and training in Australia. In the vocational education and training (VET) sector it assists national consistency for all trainees, learners, employers and providers by enabling national recognition of qualifications and Statements of Attainment.

Training Package qualifications in the VET sector must comply with the titles and guidelines of the AQF. Endorsed Training Packages provide a unique title for each AQF qualification which must always be reproduced accurately.

Qualifications

Training Packages can incorporate the following six AQF qualifications.

- Certificate I in ...
- Certificate II in ...
- Certificate III in ...
- Certificate IV in ...
- Diploma of ...
- Advanced Diploma of ...

On completion of the requirements defined in the Training Package, a Registered Training Organisation (RTO) may issue a nationally recognised AQF qualification. Issuance of AQF qualifications must comply with the advice provided in the *AQF Implementation Handbook* and the Australian Quality Training Framework *Standards for Registered Training Organisations*, particularly Standard 10.

Statement of Attainment

Where an AQF qualification is partially achieved through the achievement of one or more endorsed units of competence, an RTO may issue a Statement of Attainment. Issuance of Statements of Attainment must comply with the advice provided in the *AQF Implementation Handbook* and the Australian Quality Training Framework *Standards for Registered Training Organisations*, particularly Standard 10.

Under the *Standards for Registered Training Organisations*, RTOs must recognise the achievement of competencies as recorded on a qualification or Statement of Attainment issued by other RTOs. Given this, recognised competencies can progressively build towards a full AQF qualification.

AQF Guidelines and Learning Outcomes

The *AQF Implementation Handbook* provides a comprehensive guideline for each AQF qualification. A summary of the learning outcome characteristics and their distinguishing features for each VET related AQF qualification is provided below.

Certificate I

Characteristics of Learning Outcomes

Breadth, depth and complexity of knowledge and skills would prepare a person to perform a defined range of activities most of which may be routine and predictable.

Applications may include a variety of employment related skills including preparatory access and participation skills, broad-based induction skills and/or specific workplace skills. They may also include participation in a team or work group.

Distinguishing Features of Learning Outcomes

Do the competencies enable an individual with this qualification to:

- demonstrate knowledge by recall in a narrow range of areas;
- demonstrate basic practical skills, such as the use of relevant tools;
- perform a sequence of routine tasks given clear direction
- receive and pass on messages/information.

Certificate II

Characteristics of Learning Outcomes

Breadth, depth and complexity of knowledge and skills would 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 operations to be applied.

Performance of a prescribed range of functions involving known routines and procedures and some accountability for the quality of outcomes.

Applications may include some complex or non-routine activities involving individual responsibility or autonomy and/or collaboration with others as part of a group or team.

Distinguishing Features of Learning Outcomes

Do the competencies enable an individual with this qualification to:

- demonstrate basic operational knowledge in a moderate range of areas;
- apply a defined range of skills;
- apply known solutions to a limited range of predictable problems;
- perform a range of tasks where choice between a limited range of options is required;
- assess and record information from varied sources;
- take limited responsibility for own outputs in work and learning.

Certificate III

Characteristics of Learning Outcomes

Breadth, depth and complexity of knowledge and competencies would cover selecting, adapting and transferring skills and knowledge to new environments and providing technical advice and some leadership in resolution of specified problems. This would be applied across a range of roles in a variety of contexts with some complexity in the extent and choice of options available.

Performance of a defined range of skilled operations, usually within a range of broader related activities involving known routines, methods and procedures, where some discretion and judgement is required in the selection of equipment, services or contingency measures and within known time constraints.

Applications may involve some responsibility for others. Participation in teams including group or team co-ordination may be involved.

Distinguishing Features of Learning Outcomes

Do the competencies enable an individual with this qualification to:

- demonstrate some relevant theoretical knowledge
- apply a range of well-developed skills
- apply known solutions to a variety of predictable problems
- perform processes that require a range of well-developed skills where some discretion and judgement is required
- interpret available information, using discretion and judgement
- take responsibility for own outputs in work and learning
- take limited responsibility for the output of others.

Certificate IV

Characteristics of Learning Outcomes

Breadth, depth and complexity of knowledge and competencies would cover a broad range of varied activities or application in a wider variety of contexts most of which are complex and non-routine. Leadership and guidance are involved when organising activities of self and others as well as contributing to technical solutions of a non-routine or contingency nature.

Performance of a broad range of skilled applications including the requirement to evaluate and analyse current practices, develop new criteria and procedures for performing current practices and provision of some leadership and guidance to others in the application and planning of the skills.

Applications involve responsibility for, and limited organisation of, others.

Distinguishing Features of Learning Outcomes

Do the competencies enable an individual with this qualification to:

- demonstrate understanding of a broad knowledge base incorporating some theoretical concepts
- apply solutions to a defined range of unpredictable problems
- identify and apply skill and knowledge areas to a wide variety of contexts, with depth in some areas
- identify, analyse and evaluate information from a variety of sources
- take responsibility for own outputs in relation to specified quality standards
- take limited responsibility for the quantity and quality of the output of others.

Diploma

Characteristics of Learning Outcomes

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 co-ordination.

The self directed application of knowledge and skills, with substantial depth in some areas where judgement is required in planning and selecting appropriate equipment, services and techniques for self and others.

Applications involve participation in development of strategic initiatives as well as personal responsibility and autonomy in performing complex technical operations or organising others. It may include participation in teams including teams concerned with planning and evaluation functions. Group or team co-ordination may be involved.

The degree of emphasis on breadth as against depth of knowledge and skills may vary between qualifications granted at this level.

Distinguishing Features of Learning Outcomes

Do the competencies or learning outcomes enable an individual with this qualification to:

- demonstrate understanding of a broad knowledge base incorporating theoretical concepts, with substantial depth in some areas
- analyse and plan approaches to technical problems or management requirements
- transfer and apply theoretical concepts and/or technical or creative skills to a range of situations
- evaluate information, using it to forecast for planning or research purposes
- take responsibility for own outputs in relation to broad quantity and quality parameters
- take some responsibility for the achievement of group outcomes.

Advanced Diploma

Characteristics of Learning Outcomes

Breadth, depth and complexity involving analysis, design, planning, execution and evaluation across a range of technical and/or management functions including development of new criteria or applications or knowledge or procedures.

The application of a significant range of fundamental principles and complex techniques across a wide and often unpredictable variety of contexts in relation to either varied or highly specific functions. Contribution to the development of a broad plan, budget or strategy is involved and accountability and responsibility for self and others in achieving the outcomes is involved.

Applications involve significant judgement in planning, design, technical or leadership/guidance functions related to products, services, operations or procedures.

The degree of emphasis on breadth as against depth of knowledge and skills may vary between qualifications granted at this level.

Distinguishing Features of Learning Outcomes

Do the competencies or learning outcomes enable an individual with this qualification to:

- demonstrate understanding of specialised knowledge with depth in some areas
- analyse, diagnose, design and execute judgements across a broad range of technical or management functions
- generate ideas through the analysis of information and concepts at an abstract level
- demonstrate a command of wide-ranging, highly specialised technical, creative or conceptual skills
- demonstrate accountability for personal outputs within broad parameters
- demonstrate accountability for personal and group outcomes within broad parameters.