



**Australian Government**  
**Department of Education**



# AUSTRALIA

## COUNTRY EDUCATION PROFILE

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The document must be attributed as the Australia Country Education Profile.

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# About the author

The Australian Government Department of Education supports international mobility through qualifications recognition. The department engages nationally and internationally on qualifications recognition policy, promoting best principles and practices, and engages in international policy dialogue on the Australian Qualifications Framework.

The Australia Country Education Profile provides authoritative information for overseas stakeholders about the Australian education and training system, studies and qualifications.

The department also provides a suite of policy products and services to support a diverse range of stakeholders involved in assessing and making decisions about overseas qualifications. These include:

- the Country Education Profiles, an online information tool on the comparability of overseas qualifications
- professional development workshops on how to assess overseas qualifications, and
- assessments of postsecondary overseas qualifications for individuals for general purposes.

More information can be found at [www.internationaleducation.gov.au](http://www.internationaleducation.gov.au).



A scenic landscape of rolling hills and mountains under a clear blue sky. The foreground is filled with tall, golden-brown grasses and some small yellow flowers. The middle ground shows several layers of green, forested hills and mountains, creating a sense of depth. The sky is a pale blue with a few wispy clouds. The overall lighting is bright and warm, suggesting a clear day. At the bottom of the image, there is a solid orange horizontal bar.

# **Australian education system**

## Overview of the Australian education system

The Commonwealth of Australia comprises eight states and territories:

- New South Wales
- Queensland
- South Australia
- Tasmania
- Victoria
- Western Australia
- Australian Capital Territory, and
- Northern Territory.

There are three levels of Australian government:

- Australian (federal)
- state and territory, and
- local.

Australian and state and territory governments are responsible for education and training.

### School education

School education is for 13 years. Students commence school at around five years of age. The stages of school education are:

- primary school (Foundation Year to Year 6)
- secondary school (Years 7 to 10), and
- senior secondary school (Years 11 and 12).

Primary and secondary education are usually delivered through separate schools, although some schools offer Foundation Year to Year 12 education. Many secondary schools also include senior secondary school.

### Postsecondary education

Postsecondary education is known as tertiary education. Tertiary education includes higher education and vocational education and training.

### Language of instruction

English is the official language of Australia and the main language of instruction for all education sectors. Some schools offer bilingual courses or courses in other languages. Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages may also be used and taught, as well as Auslan (Australian Sign Language). There are also opportunities to learn local Aboriginal languages, skills and cultural practices.

Most schools offer students foreign language studies, including Arabic, Bahasa Indonesia, Chinese (Mandarin), French, German, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Modern Greek, Spanish, Turkish and Vietnamese.



## **Academic year**

### **School education**

The school year is from February to December, with four terms per school year. State and territory governments determine the term dates for each year.

### **Higher education**

In higher education, most institutions have an academic year of February to November, with two semesters of approximately 16 weeks. This includes a mid-semester break and exam period.

Winter and summer sessions are typically optional and available for a limited range of courses. However, institutions are increasingly offering more intensive, trimester academic calendars with equal-length summer, autumn and spring sessions.

### **Vocational education and training**

In vocational education and training, the academic year is late January to mid-December. The academic calendar, and whether it is divided into two semesters, three trimesters or four terms, depends on the state or territory and the individual registered training organisation.

## **Administration and finance**

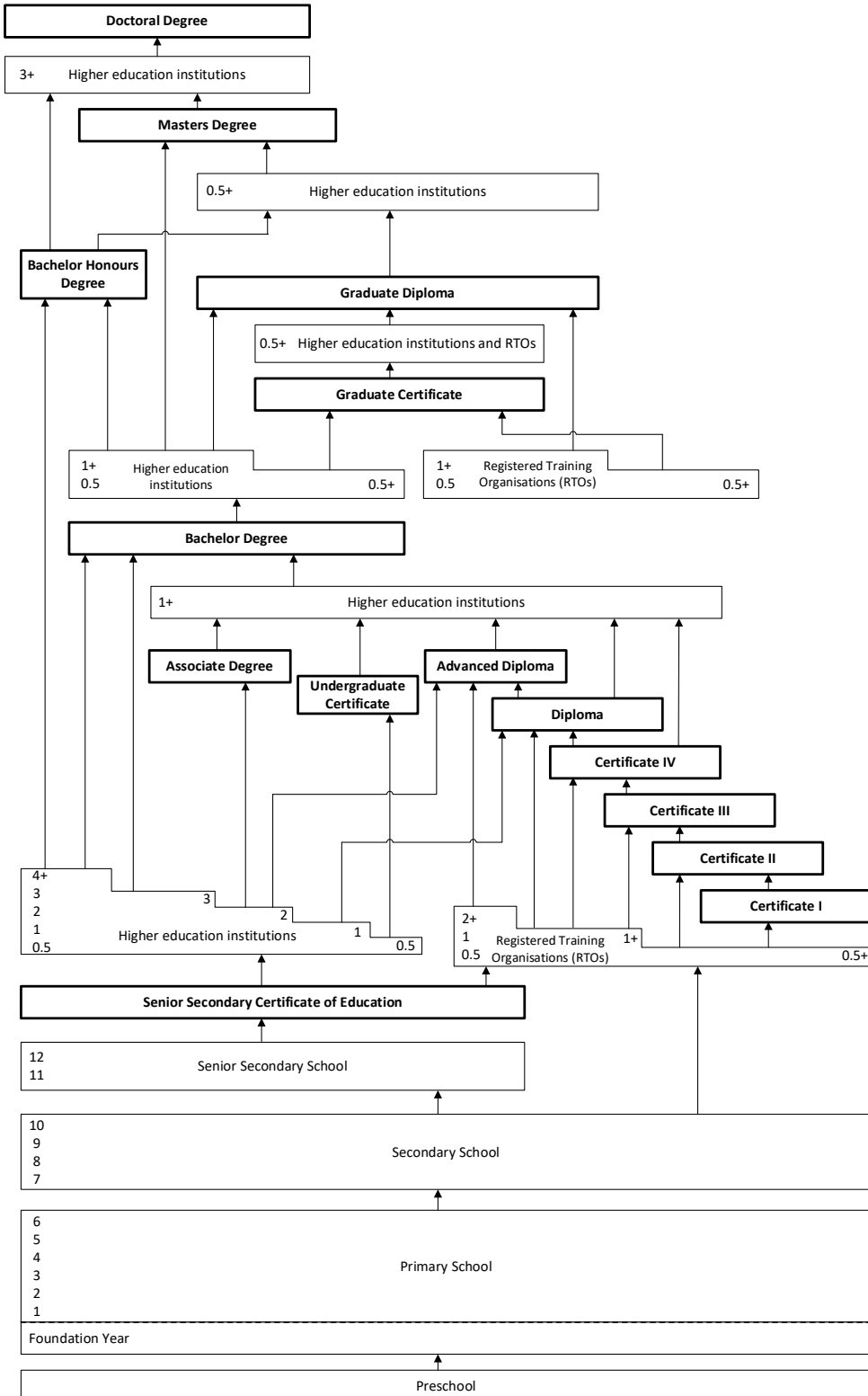
The administration and financing of education in Australia is shared between the Australian Government and the state and territory governments. The nature of the arrangements depends on the education sector and legislative responsibilities. Broadly, the Australian Government has policy and financial responsibility for higher education, and the Australian Government and state and territory governments share responsibility for vocational education and training and schools.

The Australian Government and the state and territory governments cooperate on education policy and planning through National Cabinet, which replaced the former Council of Australian Governments (COAG). National Cabinet provides a forum for the leaders of the Australian Government and each state and territory government to negotiate, cooperate and make decisions on national matters.

For more information on the administration and financing of Australia's education system, see:

- [Higher education administration and finance](#)
- [Technical and vocational education administration and finance](#)
- [Administration of school education.](#)

# Diagram of the Australian education system



## Australian Qualifications Framework

The Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF), is the national policy for regulated qualifications in Australia. The AQF covers qualifications from all education sectors:

- school education
- vocational education and training, and
- higher education.

Some qualifications are offered in more than one sector.

The AQF is the agreed policy of the Australian Government and state and territory government ministers and is administered by the Department of Education. The AQF has evolved from a long history of Australian qualifications systems. A comparison of AQF qualifications with Australia's previous qualifications systems is at [The AQF and previous qualifications systems](#) below.

The AQF emphasises flexible and lifelong learning, supporting pathways between education sectors, and between learning and employment. The AQF comprises learning outcomes for each AQF level and qualification type, and specifications for the development and accreditation of qualifications.

The AQF is supported by policies on:

- issuing AQF qualifications
- linkages and pathways, including credit transfer and articulation; and
- adding and removing qualification types.

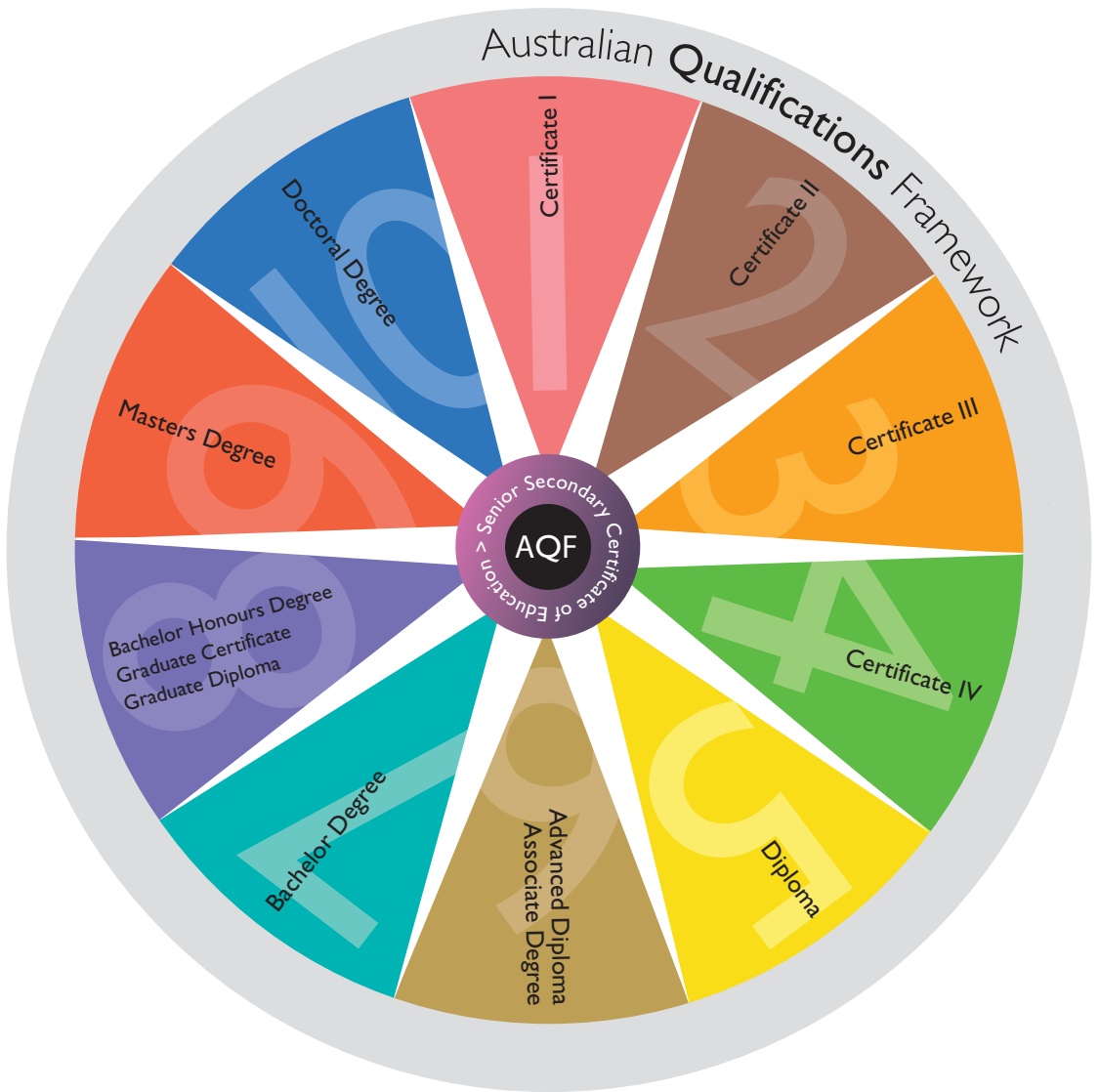
### AQF levels and qualification types

The AQF is divided into levels (see the AQF Diagram below), which refer to the complexity, breadth and depth of learning outcomes (known as level criteria). AQF levels range from 1 to 10, where AQF level 10 has the highest complexity. Each AQF level has qualification types, some of which can span both the higher education and VET sectors. The descriptors for qualification types are more specific than the level criteria. Both the level criteria and qualification type descriptors are based on broad, multidisciplinary learning outcomes that include:

- knowledge – this is what a graduate knows and understands. It can be general or specialised, in a single area or a range of areas and can be discrete or cumulative.
- skills – these are what a graduate can do. They can be cognitive, creative, technical, communication and/or interpersonal skills.
- application of knowledge and skills – this is the context in which a graduate applies acquired knowledge and skills. It is described in terms of autonomy, responsibility and accountability. Contexts range from predictable, routine and known, to unpredictable, non-routine and unknown.

A qualification type descriptor will also have a notional volume of learning. The notional volume of learning is a guide which represents the time, in years, of full-time study,

needed for graduates to achieve the learning outcomes of a given qualification type and level. Students may complete learning within a different timeframe if they study part-time or have a more intensive academic calendar.



Education providers may offer credentials that do not lead to the award of an AQF qualification, such as microcredentials, enabling courses, and foundation courses. Students can also undertake subjects on a non-award basis. While education providers deliver and quality assure these credentials, the credentials may be subject to additional regulatory requirements depending on the type of the credential. Some credentials that do not lead to an AQF award may be credited towards an AQF qualification.

The National Microcredentials Framework aims to provide greater clarity and understanding for education providers and learners as to the value and recognition of microcredentials. It provides information about the value, structure and recognition of microcredentials, and encourages transparency and consistency around credit recognition arrangements. The Framework establishes a national definition for microcredentials, unifying principles, and critical information and documentation requirements to be provided to learners, which can be used to inform recognition decisions. Education providers can align new offerings with the Framework's requirements. For more information, see [www.education.gov.au/national-microcredentials-framework](http://www.education.gov.au/national-microcredentials-framework).

## Quality assurance and accreditation

AQF qualifications are quality assured and accredited by the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA), the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) or the state or territory government accreditation authorities, including those in the school education sector. For more information, see [Accreditation and quality assurance in higher education](#), also [Accreditation and quality assurance in technical and vocational education](#) and [Administration of school education](#).

Accreditation is the process of approving a program of learning that leads to an AQF qualification, and the accrediting body depends on the sector of the qualification and the state or territory in which it is offered.

As part of a continuous policy improvement cycle, the AQF is subject to review and changes. The Australian and state and territory governments work together to address outcomes and recommendations of reviews.

For more information on AQF qualifications, pathways and accreditation, see [www.aqf.edu.au](http://www.aqf.edu.au).

## The AQF and previous qualifications systems

Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) 2 <sup>nd</sup> Edition	Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) 1 <sup>st</sup> Edition	Register of Australian Tertiary Education (RATE)	Australian Council on Tertiary Awards (ACTA)	Australian Council on Awards in Advanced Education (ACAAE)
<b>2013–present</b>	<b>1995–2012</b>	<b>1990–1999</b>	<b>1985–1989</b>	<b>1971–1984</b>
Doctoral Degree	Doctoral Degree	Doctoral Degree	Doctoral Degree	
Masters Degree	Masters Degree	Masters Degree	Master Degree	Master Degree (PG2)
Graduate Diploma	Graduate Diploma Vocational Graduate Diploma	Graduate Diploma	Graduate Diploma	Graduate Diploma (PG1)

Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) 2 <sup>nd</sup> Edition	Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) 1 <sup>st</sup> Edition	Register of Australian Tertiary Education (RATE)	Australian Council on Tertiary Awards (ACTA)	Australian Council on Awards in Advanced Education (ACAAE)
Graduate Certificate	Graduate Certificate  Vocational Graduate Certificate	Graduate Certificate	Graduate Certificate	
Bachelor Honours Degree				
Bachelor Degree	Bachelor Degree (including Bachelor Honours Degree)	Bachelor Degree (including Bachelor Honours Degree)	Bachelor Degree (including Bachelor Honours Degree)	Bachelor Degree (UG1) (including Bachelor Honours Degree)
Associate Degree  Advanced Diploma	Associate Degree  Advanced Diploma	Diploma Stream 3600	Diploma	Diploma (UG2)
Diploma	Diploma	Associate Diploma Stream 3500  Associate Diploma Stream 3400	Associate Diploma	Associate Diploma (UG3)
Certificate IV	Certificate IV	Advanced Certificate Stream 3300	Advanced Certificate	
Certificate III	Certificate III	Certificate Stream 3200		
Certificate II	Certificate II	Certificate Stream 3100		
Certificate I	Certificate I	Certificate Stream 2200		
		Certificate Stream 2100		

## International education in Australia

International students can enrol in Australian higher education, vocational education and training (VET), English Language Intensive Courses for Overseas Students (ELICOS), school education and non-award courses such as bridging courses or foundation courses. International students can access Australian courses onshore on a student visa or through offshore delivery options. For more information on studying in Australia as an international student, see [www.studyaustralia.gov.au](http://www.studyaustralia.gov.au).

### Regulation of international education

The *Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000* (ESOS Act) legislation ensures that international students studying in Australia receive high-quality education and training services. Although Australian education institutions are already regulated under domestic quality assurance requirements, the ESOS Act provides additional regulation for Australian education and training institutions that enrol international students in areas such as student fee protection and safety and well-being.

The ESOS Act requires all courses in which international students are enrolled to be registered on the Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students (CRICOS) at [cricos.education.gov.au](http://cricos.education.gov.au). An Australian education and training institution must meet, and continue to comply with, strict requirements under the ESOS framework to be listed on CRICOS. These include:

- ensuring resources to deliver quality education and training to a satisfactory standard
- protecting international student tuition fees
- promoting international student safety and well-being
- assisting with monitoring international student compliance with visa conditions, such as attending classes and progressing in their course.

All enrolments of international students in Australia on a student visa are also registered on a database called the Provider Registration and International Student Management System (PRISMS). Through PRISMS, education institutions meet reporting requirements to the Australian Government Department of Home Affairs, given their responsibilities for administering the student visa program.

### Tuition Protection Service

Australia's high quality education system is complemented by world-class protections for international students. The Tuition Protection Service (TPS) is an initiative of the Australian Government to assist international students in the event that their education institution is unable to fully deliver their course of study, for example, if their institution closes or discontinues delivering a course.

Where this occurs, the TPS assists international students to either complete their studies in another course or with another education institution, or receive a refund of their unspent tuition fees.

More information about the TPS can be found at [tps.gov.au](http://tps.gov.au).

## **Transnational education and training**

Australia has a long history of providing high-quality transnational education and training (also known as offshore or cross-border education and training). Transnational education and training refers to the delivery and/or assessment of courses by an accredited Australian institution in a country outside Australia.

Transnational courses may lead to an Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) qualification or may be a non-award course which does not lead to an AQF qualification being awarded.

The delivery of Australian education and training offshore can be in person, online or a blend of both, and can take different forms, including:

- campuses that are wholly owned by an Australian education or training institution
- courses offered in partnership with a local education or training institution
- twinning arrangements, where an Australian and an overseas institution jointly offer and cross-credit a course of study
- franchising of curricula or courses where an accredited Australian education institution is an identifiable partner
- distance courses that contain a component of face-to-face learning with instructors from Australia or the country of delivery
- education and training conducted on behalf of an Australian entity
- other face-to-face delivery undertaken in the name of an Australian education or training institution.

All Australian education and training institutions that offer a course of study partly or fully outside Australia that leads to an AQF qualification are required to comply with Australia's quality assurance requirements. The Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) and the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) are authorised to regulate that Australian education institutions' offshore operations comply with Australian requirements and quality standards.



A scenic landscape of rolling mountains and valleys under a clear blue sky. The foreground is filled with tall grasses and rocks, leading up to a valley with dense green vegetation. The mountains in the distance are hazy, creating a sense of depth. The sky is a gradient of light blue and white, with a few wispy clouds. The overall mood is peaceful and natural.

# Registered institutions

## Registered institutions in Australia

Australian higher education institutions and registered training organisations (RTOs) are required to be approved and registered by their respective regulators, the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) and the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) (see [Accreditation and quality assurance in higher education](#) and [Accreditation and quality assurance in technical and vocational education](#)). Australian schools are registered with their respective state and territory authorities (see [Administration of school education](#)).

### Higher education

TEQSA maintains the National Register for Providers and Courses that deliver higher education in Australia. The National Register is the authoritative source of information on the status of registered higher education providers in Australia, and specifies whether an institution has or does not have self-accrediting authority (see [Accreditation and quality assurance in higher education](#)).

To access the National Register, see [www.teqsa.gov.au/national-register](http://www.teqsa.gov.au/national-register).

### Vocational education and training

RTOs are listed on the National Register of VET. The National Register of VET contains information about the registration status of institutions and the qualifications they award.

To access the National Register of VET, see [www.training.gov.au](http://www.training.gov.au).

### School education

ACARA maintains the Australian Schools List, which is a compilation of the lists of registered schools from each state and territory school registration authority. It includes details on the location, school type and sector of every Australian school.

To access the Australian Schools List, see [asl.acara.edu.au](http://asl.acara.edu.au).

# Higher education

The image features a vast, scenic landscape of rolling mountains and valleys. The foreground is filled with tall, golden-brown grasses and some small yellow flowers. The middle ground shows several layers of mountain ridges, with the valleys between them appearing soft and hazy. The background consists of more distant, layered mountain ranges under a clear, light blue sky with a few wispy clouds. The overall lighting is bright and natural, suggesting a clear day. The text 'Higher education' is centered in the upper half of the image in a bold, black, sans-serif font.

## Higher education in Australia

The higher education sector in Australia is made up of universities, university colleges and a number of other types of higher education institutions that award qualifications from Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) levels 5 to 10. There are three main cycles of higher education, which respectively lead to the AQF awards of Bachelor, Masters and Doctoral Degrees. There are also sub-degree undergraduate qualifications and other postgraduate qualifications.

### Higher education courses and qualifications

Courses can be taken either full-time or part-time, on campus, by distance or through online study. All courses, regardless of mode of study, are subject to rigorous quality assurance arrangements.

For full descriptions of the qualifications below, see [www.aqf.edu.au](http://www.aqf.edu.au).

### Undergraduate courses and qualifications

#### Undergraduate Certificate

Undergraduate Certificate courses prepare graduates with the knowledge and skills for further study, employment, professional development and participation in lifelong learning. The Undergraduate Certificate is a six-month higher education qualification that is not located at a particular AQF level but certifies completion of half a year of full-time study which can be counted towards another higher education qualification at AQF levels 5, 6 and 7, such as a Diploma, Advanced Diploma, Associate Degree or Bachelor Degree.

The Undergraduate Certificate was added to the AQF in response to the COVID-19 global pandemic and associated community and industry needs.

#### Diploma

Diploma courses prepare graduates for paraprofessional work or further learning based on an applied academic course. Knowledge and skills at this level demonstrate understanding of a broad knowledge base incorporating theoretical concepts with depth in some areas. They include the ability to 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; and analyse and evaluate information, applications or programs. Courses are usually one to two years full-time. The Diploma is also offered as a vocational education and training (VET) qualification.

#### Advanced Diploma

Advanced Diploma courses prepare graduates for paraprofessional or advanced skilled work, or further learning. Knowledge and skills at this level include broad theoretical and technical knowledge of a specialisation or a broad field of work and learning. Graduates are expected to demonstrate specialised knowledge, problem-solving and analytical skills, and communication in a range of specialised situations. Courses are usually one-and-a-half to two years full-time. The Advanced Diploma is also offered as a VET qualification.

## **Associate Degree**

Associate Degree courses prepare graduates for paraprofessional work or further learning. Knowledge and skills at this level focus on underpinning technical and theoretical knowledge. Graduates are expected to demonstrate initiative and judgement, problem-solving, decision making and analytical skills, and communication in a range of paraprofessional situations. Courses are usually two years full-time.

The Associate Degree and the Advanced Diploma are at the same level on the AQF, however the qualification types differ in their focus. Associate Degrees are more academically oriented, whereas Advanced Diplomas emphasise vocational or occupational specific skills.

## **Bachelor Degree**

Bachelor Degree courses include development of knowledge and skills in one or more specialisations. Courses focus on progressive development of knowledge, critical analytical skills, and research and problem-solving techniques with intellectual independence, which prepare graduates for postgraduate study or professional work.

The structure and content of Bachelor Degree courses differ depending on the major subject area, the department and/or faculty, and the institution. Courses are typically highly focused on the major field of study from the first year onwards, and include mandatory core subjects, specialisation subjects and elective subjects, which may also be in the field of specialisation. There is no general studies component.

Courses that prepare graduates for work in a specific profession include a higher number of compulsory core subjects, with few choices for specialisation or electives. Other Bachelor Degree courses offer more choices of specialisation and allow for a wider range of subjects to be undertaken, allowing students to tailor their studies to their interests and career plans.

Bachelor Degree courses must normally have at least one major specialisation that is studied over the duration of the course. Many students undertake two or three majors. Universities have regulations concerning the minimum and maximum numbers of units to be completed each year. A unit is a component of a qualification, which may also be called a module, subject or unit of competency.

Courses emphasise the development of independent and critical thinking, research and analysis as well as exercising judgement in various contexts. They can comprise lectures, tutorials, seminars, laboratory work, and fieldwork or supervised practical work. The number of class contact hours per week varies according to the nature of the course of study. Assessment usually involves exams, research assignments and reports, presentations, field or practical work, individual or group research and performance in tutorials, seminars and laboratory work. Some courses include a final project or capstone experience developing research or independent problem solving skills, while others achieve these outcomes through major projects and works of academic writing within individual units of study.

Students can enrol in a double or combined Bachelor Degree which leads to the award of two Bachelor Degrees. This is more common in disciplines such as arts, commerce, law and science. Double or combined Bachelor Degree courses are at least four years full-time.

Some institutions also offer graduate-entry Bachelor Degrees, which cannot be entered directly from senior secondary school and require a Bachelor Degree for entry. Most of these courses are in professional specialisations.

Bachelor Degree courses vary in duration. Arts and science degrees can range between three to four years of full-time study, and professional degrees can range between three to six or more years of full-time study. Regardless of length or specific course requirements, all Bachelor Degree courses are quality assured and must conform to AQF level 7 requirements as well as requirements for the Bachelor Degree qualification type.

### **Bachelor Honours Degree**

Bachelor Honours Degrees are a distinct type of qualification, located at a higher AQF level than the Bachelor Degree described above. Bachelor Honours degree courses focus on the development of advanced knowledge and skills in research principles and methods in one or more specialisations. A research thesis or significant project is required. Admission to Honours is available to a small proportion of graduates with outstanding academic achievement.

A Bachelor Honours Degree requires an additional year of full-time, intensive study after a Bachelor Degree, or it may be undertaken as a four-year integrated course with a Bachelor Degree. The additional year typically involves specialised study and research focused on developing new knowledge and understanding, and the submission of a substantial thesis. Students specialise in one field of study, or a combination of fields for a combined Bachelor Honours Degree. This is usually the field or fields of study the student majored in. Bachelor Honours Degrees are available in most specialisations.

Bachelor Honours Degrees are usually awarded in a class or division that represents the level of academic achievement, for example, First Class or Second Class (Upper Division). This is often abbreviated, for example, a Bachelor of Arts with First Class Honours would be written as BA (Hons I).

In some professional specialisations, Bachelor Degrees using Honours terminology are awarded on the basis of academic achievement, for example, Bachelor of Laws with Honours. In such cases, an increased course load and/or thesis may have been required. However, the awarding of Honours terminology to Bachelor degrees where students are distinguished purely on the basis of their successful academic achievements or marks at the undergraduate level – may not result in a Bachelor Honours Degree in the Australian context. More information on Bachelor Honours Degree classifications can be found at [Higher education assessment and grading systems](#).

## Postgraduate courses and qualifications

### Graduate Certificate

Graduate Certificate courses are designed for professional or highly skilled work or further specialised learning. Graduate Certificate courses usually require one semester, or six months, of full-time study.

Graduate Certificate courses emphasise specialised theoretical and technical knowledge and skills in either a new or existing discipline or professional area. Graduates are expected to demonstrate initiative, analysis, planning and evaluation in a range of specialised functions. Courses may extend the knowledge and skills gained in a preceding Bachelor Degree or other qualification.

A Graduate Certificate may be awarded if a student undertakes postgraduate study, such as a Masters Degree course, but does not fully complete the course.

### Graduate Diploma

Graduate Diploma courses are designed for professional or highly skilled work or specialised further learning. Graduate Diploma courses cover a wider breadth and/or greater depth of knowledge in a particular field in comparison to the Graduate Certificate, and usually require one year of full-time study.

Graduate Diploma courses emphasise advanced theoretical and technical knowledge in either an existing specialisation or area of professional practice, or the development of new professional or occupational skills. Graduates are expected to demonstrate initiative, analysis, planning and evaluation in a range of specialised functions. Courses may extend the knowledge and skills gained in a preceding Bachelor Degree or other qualification.

A Graduate Diploma may be awarded if a student undertakes postgraduate study, such as a Masters Degree course, but does not fully complete the course.

### Masters Degree

Knowledge and skills at the Masters level focus on analysis and evaluation of complex information, ability to generate and evaluate complex ideas and concepts, and communication and research skills to present coherent knowledge to specialists and non-specialists. Graduates are expected to apply knowledge and skills to new situations, exercise high-level autonomy and accountability and to deliver a substantial piece of research or a research-based project.

Masters Degrees usually require one to two years of full-time study following a Bachelor Degree. All Masters Degrees include research principles, methods and skills and require the completion of a substantial piece of research, a research-based project, a capstone experience - for example, a final year project - and/or a professionally focused project.

There are three forms of Masters Degree courses: research, coursework and extended. All Masters Degrees must meet AQF level 9 requirements as well as the requirements of the Masters Degree qualification type. There are several other pathways to complete a Masters Degree (see the [Postgraduate admission requirements](#) and [Diagram of the Australian education system](#)).

### **Masters Degree (Research)**

Masters Degree (Research) courses are designed to provide graduates with advanced knowledge for research, scholarship and further learning purposes. Courses normally require one to two years of full-time study, depending on the preceding qualification and if it is in a related specialisation. Courses are at least two-thirds research-oriented with a substantial thesis, which is externally examined.

### **Masters Degree (Coursework)**

Masters Degrees (Coursework) courses are designed to provide graduates with advanced knowledge for professional practice, scholarship and further learning purposes. Courses normally require one to two years of full-time study, depending on the preceding qualification and if it is in a related specialisation.

### **Masters Degree (Extended)**

Masters Degree (Extended) courses are designed to provide graduates with advanced knowledge in preparation for professional practice and further specialised learning. Courses are usually three to four years full-time. Courses usually require structured learning and independent research involving substantial collaboration with organisations engaged in professional practice.

## **Doctoral Degree**

Doctoral Degrees are the highest level of academic study and focus on a critical understanding of a complex field of learning and highly specialised research skills. Courses are usually three to four years full-time.

Graduates are expected to undertake research that makes a substantial original contribution to knowledge in the form of either new knowledge or significant and original adaptation, application and interpretation of existing knowledge.

All Doctoral Degrees require completion of a thesis, dissertation or similar extended piece of work, which is usually examined by expert academics of international standing, external to the awarding institution.

### **Doctoral Degree (Research)**

Research Doctoral Degrees involve supervised research and an original thesis. The research Doctoral Degree is generally referred to as a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD). At least two-thirds of the course consists of research. Advanced coursework may be included to support research outcomes and the student's contribution to original knowledge.

### **Doctoral Degree (Professional)**

Professional Doctoral Degrees require significant professional practice either prior to or as part of the course. The professional Doctoral Degree is generally referred to as a Doctor of [field of study].

Courses include structured coursework and independent supervised study. At least two years of the course consists of research. Research based professional practice with a professional, statutory or regulatory body may also be included in the course to support research outcomes.



# Higher education admission pathways and academic credit

## Undergraduate admission requirements

Australian students typically enter undergraduate study following completion of an Australian Senior Secondary Certificate of Education (Year 12). For these students, admission is usually based on a student's Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR).

The ATAR is calculated by a state or territory Tertiary Admission Centre (TAC) (see table below) based on a student's results in their Senior Secondary Certificate of Education course of study. The ATAR is reported on a scale of 0 to 99.95 with increments of 0.05. It indicates a student's ranking relative to all other students in their age group. For example, an ATAR of 90.00 places a student in the top 10% of their cohort.

The ATAR was introduced in 2009 in New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory, with all other states and territories – except Queensland – adopting the ATAR in 2010. Queensland began using the ATAR for tertiary admissions in 2021. Prior to 2020, Queensland used a different system of Overall Positions (OPs) and Field Positions (FPs), in which students were ranked on a bell-curved scale of OP 1 (the highest rank) to OP 25 (the lowest rank).

## Organisations responsible for domestic undergraduate tertiary admissions by state and territory

State or territory	Responsible organisation for domestic undergraduate tertiary admissions	Website
Australian Capital Territory	University Admissions Centre (UAC)	<a href="http://www.uac.edu.au">www.uac.edu.au</a>
New South Wales	University Admissions Centre (UAC)	<a href="http://www.uac.edu.au">www.uac.edu.au</a>
Northern Territory	South Australian Tertiary Admissions Centre (SATAC)	<a href="http://www.satac.edu.au">www.satac.edu.au</a>
Queensland	Queensland Tertiary Admissions Centre (QTAC)	<a href="http://www.qtac.edu.au">www.qtac.edu.au</a>
South Australia	South Australian Tertiary Admissions Centre (SATAC)	<a href="http://www.satac.edu.au">www.satac.edu.au</a>
Tasmania	University of Tasmania (UTAS)	<a href="http://www.utas.edu.au">www.utas.edu.au</a>
Victoria	Victorian Tertiary Admissions Centre (VTAC)	<a href="http://www.vtac.edu.au">www.vtac.edu.au</a>
Western Australia	Tertiary Institutions Service Centre (TISCOnline)	<a href="http://www.tisc.edu.au">www.tisc.edu.au</a>

Other undergraduate admission pathways include:

- vocational education and training (VET) qualifications, such as a Certificate III or IV
- tertiary education preparatory short courses
- additional requirements such as an interview, portfolio of work, prerequisite courses, and/or work experience relevant to the study course
- bonus ATAR points issued by institutions based on criteria including:
  - academic or extracurricular achievement
  - initiatives to support students from specific groups or disadvantaged backgrounds
  - other measures that supplement admission requirements

- mature-age entry for students over 25 years based on relevant work experience, an entrance exam, interview and/or portfolio of work.

International students generally apply directly to institutions, rather than through the TACs. Admission is based on an Australian Senior Secondary Certificate of Education or comparable overseas qualification. Foundation or bridging courses may also be needed to meet entry requirements.

## **Postgraduate admission requirements**

### **Graduate Certificate and Graduate Diploma**

Entry is normally based on a Bachelor Degree. Admission may be granted for those with relevant work experience, depending on the institution and field of study.

### **Masters Degree**

Entry is normally based on a Bachelor Degree. For a Masters Degree by research, a Bachelor Honours Degree, research-based Graduate Diploma, or preparatory course may be required. For a Masters Degree by coursework, entry is usually based on a Bachelor Degree, though entry can be gained through a Graduate Certificate and Graduate Diploma.

Credit can be granted towards a Masters Degree if a Bachelor Honours Degree, Graduate Certificate or Graduate Diploma in a related field has been completed.

### **Doctoral Degree**

Entry is normally based on a Bachelor Honours Degree or a Masters Degree.

## **Pathways to further study**

The AQF supports lifelong learning and cross-sectoral pathways. Graduates of undergraduate courses can access further study in the higher education sector through pathways including:

- Undergraduate Certificate graduates are usually granted up to six-months credit towards a related undergraduate course such as a Diploma, Advanced Diploma, Associate Degree or Bachelor Degree.
- Diploma graduates are usually granted up to one year of credit towards a related Bachelor Degree course.
- Advanced Diploma graduates are usually granted between one and two years of credit towards a related Bachelor Degree course.
- Associate Degree graduates are usually granted one-and-a-half to two years of credit towards a related Bachelor Degree course.
- Bachelor Degree graduates are typically eligible for admission to Masters Degree study and other postgraduate qualifications such as the Graduate Certificate and Graduate Diploma.
- Bachelor Honours Degree graduates with Honours in the First or Second (Upper Division) Classes may enter a Doctoral Degree course directly.

## **Credit systems**

Australian educational institutions use a variety of different credit systems. As there are quality assurance arrangements in place to support national consistency and institutional autonomy, each institution has the flexibility to develop its own credit system or adopt the system of its choice to represent the load of a course of study.

For example, a three-year Bachelor Degree may require a total of 24 credits at one institution and 600 credits at another. This does not mean that one Bachelor Degree is more substantial than the other; rather, it means that the two institutions are using different credit systems. Both Bachelor Degrees would have the same status as an AQF Bachelor Degree qualification.

Credit systems used by individual institutions typically represent full-time study load, not contact hours. Single subjects may also have different contact hours and study hour requirements depending on the unit, course and institution. Therefore, the various credit systems used by Australian institutions cannot be converted into contact hours or study hours unless their policies specifically include this conversion.

The AQF does provide general guidance on the typical volume of learning required in years of full-time study and has a credit transfer and articulation policy.

## **Credit transfer and Recognition of Prior Learning**

Credit transfer refers to the recognition of previous formal education to support continued higher education study, and to ensure that a student does not need to repeat study that has already been completed.

Credit transfer is available in both undergraduate and postgraduate courses, at the discretion of the education institution. As the AQF is a comprehensive, cross-sectoral framework, credit can also be transferred between VET and higher education. The AQF Qualifications Pathways Policy provides guidance on the credit that can be granted for certain VET and higher education qualifications. Decisions on credit transfer rest with the individual institution.

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) provides a process for individuals to seek recognition of previous training, work experience, professional development, professional licensing and exams and other work-based education and training. Practices for recognising students' prior learning vary among institutions.

Decisions about credit transfer and RPL are made separately from admission decisions. Having met admission requirements, prospective students can usually apply for credit transfer or recognition of prior learning after they receive their offer of enrolment.

## Types of Australian higher education institutions

In Australia, higher education institutions are either self-accrediting or non-self-accrediting, which refers to whether they can accredit their own courses. Accreditation is explained under [Accreditation and quality assurance in higher education](#).

### Universities

There are 43 Australian universities, comprised of 37 public universities, 5 private universities and one overseas university operating in Australia. Australian universities must be established or recognised under Australian or state and territory legislation.

Universities are multi-disciplinary, self-governing institutions that are responsible for their own management structure, budgets, staffing, admissions, internal quality assurance (including course accreditation) and curriculum. All Australian universities:

- offer quality higher education
- can accredit their own courses
- offer undergraduate and postgraduate courses
- undertake research
- demonstrate good practice in teaching and learning, and
- are involved in the community.

Universities are located in major cities and in smaller regional centres. Larger universities usually have a number of campuses, and some have campuses outside Australia. Most universities are organised into faculties and/or schools and many also have specialised research centres or institutes.

### University Colleges

University colleges are high quality institutions that can accredit their own courses. While universities have a dual focus of teaching and research, university colleges are typically focussed on teaching excellence. There are four university colleges registered with the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA), Australia's national regulator and quality assurance agency for the higher education sector. TEQSA applies a merit-based assessment process to consider institutions that apply for categorisation as a university college.

### Institutes of higher education

The Australian higher education system includes several other types of providers known as institutes of higher education. These institutes form a significant majority of the accredited providers in Australia, including both self-accrediting and non-self-accrediting institutes of higher education registered by TEQSA. The majority of these institutions are private and they include international, faith-based and specialised organisations. For more information about accreditation, see [Accreditation and quality assurance in higher education](#).

## Offshore higher education delivery

Many international students study with Australian higher education institutions without studying within Australia. This can be done through:

- on-campus learning, such as by studying at an Australian university campus located overseas or at an overseas institution delivering Australian courses under a partnership arrangement, or
- distance learning, where an Australian institution delivers a course online.

## Accreditation and quality assurance in higher education

Quality assurance in higher education is based on a strong partnership between the Australian Government, state and territory governments and the higher education sector.

### Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency

The Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) is the national regulator and quality assurance agency for the Australian higher education system, established under Australian law through the *Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011* (TEQSA Act). TEQSA also assures the quality of higher education (and some English language and foundation program) services to international students in Australia under the *Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000*.

TEQSA provides national consistency in the regulation of higher education and maintains Australia's reputation for high-quality education, across all registered institutions and modes of delivery. All higher education institutions that offer Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) qualifications must meet quality standards through TEQSA's registration and re-registration processes, as well as course accreditation and re-accreditation for education institutions without self-accrediting authority. TEQSA's approach is underpinned by the three principles of regulatory necessity, reflecting risk, and proportionate regulation. This means that TEQSA's approach to regulating higher education institutions differentiates between institutions based on their track record of compliance with the Higher Education Standards Framework.

### Higher Education Standards Framework

The Higher Education Standards Framework is the benchmark against which TEQSA registers and evaluates higher education institutions. The Framework covers quality assurance matters such as teaching and learning, research, governance and administration.

A higher education institution must comply with the Framework to be registered with TEQSA as a higher education institution in Australia. TEQSA has the authority to enforce standards under the TEQSA Act.

## Course accreditation

Self-accrediting institutions have authority to accredit their own courses as complying with the Higher Education Standards Framework (instead of seeking accreditation from TEQSA). All universities and university colleges, as well as a small number of institutes of higher education, have self-accrediting authority.

Self-accrediting institutions have robust internal processes for accrediting new courses. This involves consultation with relevant industry or professional bodies, and formal consideration and approval by academic boards. Courses must be reviewed for re-accreditation at least every seven years.

All other higher education institutions are non-self-accrediting, which means that they must seek accreditation from TEQSA for every course that leads to the award of an AQF qualification. To gain accreditation, TEQSA must be satisfied that the proposed course meets the relevant standards under the Higher Education Standards Framework. Accreditation may be granted for up to seven years.

In certain occupations, professional bodies also accredit higher education courses. This is additional to accreditation by TEQSA or a self-accrediting institution and ensures graduates meet requirements for registration, licensing, membership, and/or professional practice. For example, the Australian Medical Council is responsible for accrediting education institutions and their courses of study for the medical profession. While accreditation approval by professional bodies is separate to course accreditation against the Higher Education Standards Framework, the Framework requires courses to meet Australian occupational standards.

For more information on TEQSA and to access the National Register of Higher Education Providers, see [www.teqsa.gov.au](http://www.teqsa.gov.au).

## Higher education administration and finance

The Australian Government has policy and financial responsibility for higher education which is administered by the Department of Education.

As a condition of funding, institutions must meet the quality and accountability requirements that are set out in the *Higher Education Support Act 2003*. The legislation requires that an institution must:

- be financially viable and use funds responsibly
- operate at an appropriate level of quality
- treat all students and potential students fairly, and
- be audited by an independent quality agency, namely the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA).

### Fees

Students make financial contributions to study in the Australian higher education system. The amount a student has to pay and when they have to pay depends on the type of student and education institution. Eligible students may enrol as a Commonwealth supported student if their course and institution qualify for a Government subsidy, or students may enrol in fee-paying courses for places that are not subsidised.

To support the equitable access to higher education, the Australian Government's Higher Education Loan Program (HELP) offers income-contingent loans to assist Australian citizens and certain permanent visa holders with the upfront cost of their tuition fees. Students are only required to begin repaying their loan through the taxation system when their income reaches a set amount.

Scholarships are also available to assist students with study and living costs. For more information on financial assistance for domestic and international students, see [www.studyassist.gov.au](http://www.studyassist.gov.au).

## Higher education assessment and grading systems

There is no national grading system in Australia. Each institution has its own grading system, but there are some typical unit or subject grades that are awarded with some variations across institutions.

Most universities use the following grades for many of their undergraduate and postgraduate programs:

Descriptive grade	Percentage range
High distinction	80-100% or 85-100%
Distinction	70-79% or 75-84%
Credit	60-69% or 65-74%
Pass	50-59% or 50-64%
Fail	Below 50%

Some institutions also use a conditional or conceded pass. However, there is a limit to the number of conceded pass results that may be accepted in a course. A failed subject must be repeated or an alternative taken in its place to complete a course.

Many Australian higher education institutions use a 'grade point average' (GPA) or 'weighted average mark' (WAM) to calculate an overall result that reflects a student's grades for all or multiple subjects. The use of the GPA and WAM, and the way in which they are calculated, varies among institutions.

### Classifications

Bachelor Honours Degrees may be awarded with different classifications. These classifications are also sometimes used to grade individual subjects in higher education courses. Classifications can be described in several ways:

Classification	Alternative names
First class	HI
Second class (Upper Division)	Second Class Division A, Second Class Division One, HIIA, HII/i
Second Class (Lower Division)	Second Class Division B, Second Class Division Two, HIIB, HII/ii
Third Class	HIII

Classifications may be calculated and awarded differently based on the institution and program. Second Class Honours may not be differentiated between divisions, and Third Class Honours is rarely awarded. A Bachelor Honours Degree may be awarded in the Pass Class if the level of academic achievement is low.

Most postgraduate qualifications, with the exception of some research-based Masters Degrees, are awarded unclassified. Some institutions award Masters Degrees 'with Honours' to signify high academic achievement.




For further information on course requirements, see [Higher education courses and qualifications](#).

### **Australian Higher Education Graduation Statement**

The grading system used by an institution is found on the academic transcript or Australian Higher Education Graduation Statement (AHEGS) for a qualification. The AHEGS is a statement that is produced by participating higher education institutions and presented to graduates in addition to other qualification documents, such as a testamur and academic transcript. The AHEGS provides information about the qualification, institution and the Australian higher education system in a nationally consistent format. This helps overseas organisations, such as universities and employers, to better understand and make decisions about Australian qualifications.

For more information on the AHEGS, see [Australian Higher Education Graduation Statement - Department of Education, Australian Government](#).



A scenic landscape of rolling hills and mountains under a clear blue sky. The foreground is filled with tall grasses and rocks, leading up to a valley. The text "Vocational education and training" is centered in the upper half of the image.

# **Vocational education and training**

## Vocational education and training in Australia

Australia's vocational education and training (VET) sector provides high-quality, nationally recognised training. The sector is supported by strong partnerships between the Australian Government and state and territory governments, registered training organisations and industry bodies. The Australian and state and territory governments provide funding, develop policies, and regulate and quality assure the sector. Industry bodies and employers help shape training policies and priorities, in order to develop qualifications that can deliver skills to the workforce.

Australia's VET sector is flexible, with multiple pathways to and from Australian Qualifications Framework qualifications. Modes of delivery include full-time, part-time, online education, distance education, apprenticeships and traineeships. Students can have competencies acquired through previous study and work experience assessed through the process of Recognition of Prior Learning, which is administered by each registered training organisation (see [Vocational education and training admission pathways](#)).

### National Skills Commission

The National Skills Commission plays an important role in strengthening Australia's VET system to align with its skills needs. It provides expert advice on Australia's labour market and workforce skills needs to improve the quality, accessibility, and relevance of VET.

For more information, see [www.nationalskillscommission.gov.au](http://www.nationalskillscommission.gov.au).

## Vocational education and training courses and qualifications

Only registered training organisations (RTOs) can deliver nationally accredited vocational education and training (VET). RTOs include public providers, such as Technical and Further Education Institutes (TAFEs), private providers, schools, enterprises, and higher education providers (commonly known as 'dual sector' providers). RTOs can deliver training from training packages and VET accredited courses.

VET is a competency-based system designed to deliver workplace-specific skills and knowledge for a wide range of skilled work and occupations. Nationally recognised training can lead to the following Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) qualifications:

- Certificate I, Certificate II, Certificate III and Certificate IV
- Diploma and Advanced Diploma
- Graduate Certificate and Graduate Diploma.

## Units of competency

VET qualifications are made up of individual units of competency. A unit of competency is a nationally-agreed specification of the knowledge and skills needed for a particular job function. This includes:

- how the unit is practically applied in the industry
- performance criteria to demonstrate achievement, and
- language, literacy, numeracy, legislative and regulatory requirements.

A unit of competency is the smallest component of a Training Package that can be assessed and recognised.

## Training packages

Training packages are developed to meet the needs of an industry, or a group of industries, specifying the knowledge and skills required to perform effectively in the workplace. Training packages include:

- units of competency that specify the knowledge and skills to perform effectively in the workplace
- assessment requirements that specify the evidence and required conditions for assessment
- qualifications that specify the number and titles of units of competency required to achieve an AQF qualification
- credit transfer between training package qualifications and higher education qualifications in line with the AQF Qualifications Pathways Policy.

When an industry need for training is identified, which is not already covered by an existing training package, a new training package can be developed by Industry Reference Committees (IRCs) in consultation with Skills Service Organisations (SSOs). IRCs are sector-specific and comprise a range of industry leaders, including peak bodies, operators of small and large businesses, and union representatives. SSOs are independent, professional services organisations that support the work of the IRCs. The Australian Government and state and territory governments are also responsible for endorsing training packages.

## Accredited courses

Where training is not already available in a training package, the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA), or state VET regulators in Victoria and Western Australia may accredit VET courses to meet an identified industry, enterprise, educational, legislative or community need. To be eligible for accreditation, a course must fulfil a training need not covered by an existing training package, or must be in a new or emerging field. Accredited courses lead to an AQF qualification, or to a Statement of Attainment where the course does not meet the requirements of a full qualification.

For more information, see [Accreditation and quality assurance in technical and vocational education](#).

## National Register

There are about 4000 RTOs in Australia. The National Register for VET qualifications at [www.training.gov.au](http://www.training.gov.au) contains a complete and regularly updated list of all RTOs. It also provides comprehensive information on:

- training packages and competency standards
- national qualifications based on training packages
- accredited courses not covered by training packages
- state and territory training authorities.

## Qualification types

Course length descriptions for VET qualifications provided below refer to the nominal volume of learning. The length of study can vary and depends on a student's ability to acquire the required skills and to achieve competencies. Length of study may be influenced by existing competence, assessment outcomes and recognition of prior learning (RPL).

For full descriptions of the qualifications below, see [www.aqf.edu.au](http://www.aqf.edu.au).

Note that for Certificate I, II, III or IV, qualifications can be obtained through training at RTOs, schools that also function as RTOs, apprenticeships, traineeships and RPL. In addition to literacy, numeracy and communication skills, students are expected to achieve competencies in their chosen field. The depth and breadth of these competencies becomes more complex with each certificate level. Graduates can progress to further VET, higher education or employment.

### Certificate I

Certificate I courses provide graduates with basic functional knowledge and skills in a narrow area to undertake work, access to further learning pathways and community involvement. Courses are usually six months to one year full-time.

Knowledge and skills at this level relate to basic fundamental knowledge in a narrow area of work and learning, and basic practical, communication and technical skills to undertake routine and predictable activities with limited autonomy.

### Certificate II

Certificate II courses qualify graduates to undertake mainly routine work and access to further learning pathways. Courses are usually six months to one year full-time.

Knowledge and skills at this level relate to basic factual, technical and procedural knowledge in a defined work or learning context, and cognitive, communication and technical skills required to undertake routine activities and apply known solutions to a range of predictable problems with limited autonomy and judgement.

### **Certificate III**

Certificate III courses qualify graduates to undertake skilled work and access to further learning pathways. Courses are usually one to two years full-time.

Many Australian Apprenticeships lead to a Certificate III, and commonly require three or four years of training and employment.

Knowledge and skills at this level relate to factual, technical, procedural and theoretical knowledge in an area of work and knowledge, and cognitive, technical, problem-solving and communication skills to undertake routine and some non-routine skilled technical tasks.

### **Certificate IV**

Certificate IV courses qualify graduates to undertake skilled work and access to further learning pathways. Courses are usually six months to two years full-time. Many occupations and fields of study are covered at this level, including a small number of Australian Apprenticeships.

Knowledge and skills at this level relate to broad factual, technical and theoretical knowledge in a specialised field of work and learning, and cognitive, technical, problem-solving and communication skills to perform specialised technical tasks or functions in known and unknown contexts.

### **Diploma**

Diploma courses qualify graduates to undertake skilled or paraprofessional work or access further learning pathways. Courses are usually one to two years full-time. Diploma graduates may continue to employment or further study in the VET sector (usually an Advanced Diploma course) or higher education sector (usually with one year of credit in a related Bachelor Degree course). The Diploma is also offered as a higher education qualification.

Knowledge and skills at this level relate to technical and theoretical knowledge in a field of work and learning, and the application of cognitive, technical, problem-solving and communication skills in a range of known and unknown situations.

### **Advanced Diploma**

Advanced Diploma courses prepare graduates to undertake paraprofessional or highly skilled work or access further learning pathways. Courses are usually one-and-a-half to two years full-time. Advanced Diploma graduates may continue to employment or further education in the higher education sector (usually with one to two years of credit in a related Bachelor Degree course). The Advanced Diploma is also offered as a higher education qualification.

Knowledge and skills at this level relate to specialised and integrated theoretical and technical knowledge in a field of work and learning, and the application of cognitive, communication, problem-solving and analytical skills to a range of complex known and unknown specialised situations.

## **Graduate Certificate and Graduate Diploma**

Graduate Certificate and Graduate Diploma (previously Vocational Graduate Certificate and Vocational Graduate Diploma) courses offered in the VET sector are more vocationally oriented than Graduate Certificate or Graduate Diploma courses in the higher education sector. Courses focus on industry competencies. They also provide a pathway for Bachelor Degree graduates to access VET for specialist industries, or those that require specific occupational competencies.

Graduates may continue to employment or, under certain articulation arrangements, to a Masters Degree course in the higher education sector. For more information on the Graduate Certificate and Graduate Diploma, see [Higher education courses and qualifications](#).

## **Australian Apprenticeships**

Australian Apprenticeships is the national scheme for apprenticeships and traineeships. Australian Apprenticeships are contracts of training between an employer and the apprentice. Apprentices agree to achieve a level of competency through a combination of work-based and RTO-based training. These courses can be taken either part-time or full-time and are based on training packages.

Courses lead to skills that are nationally recognised by the relevant industry, and to AQF qualifications. Australian Apprenticeships cover both traditional trade areas and non-trade areas in service and paraprofessional fields. Specialisations include agriculture, automotive, building and construction, business and finance services, community services and health, hairdressing, horticulture, information technology, manufacturing, public service, retail and telecommunications.

Approval of Australian Apprenticeships training arrangements is the responsibility of the state and territory training authorities working in cooperation with employers and RTOs. All training agreements are registered with the relevant state or territory training authority.

For more information, see [www.australianapprenticeships.gov.au](http://www.australianapprenticeships.gov.au).

## **Assessment**

Training package qualifications and accredited courses are assessed against specified competency standards. Assessment is conducted during and/or at the end of the course.

Assessment is generally based on a combination of tests or exams, projects and practical exercises. Theoretical and practical aspects of the course are assessed by teaching staff within the RTO. Any workplace components are usually assessed by teaching staff from the RTO and/or qualified industry-based workplace assessors consistent with the requirements specified in training packages.



## Statement of Attainment

Statements of Attainment are issued by RTOs to students who complete units of competency or parts of a training package or accredited course, but do not complete the entire course leading to an AQF qualification.

A Statement of Attainment is not an AQF qualification, but indicates completion of one or more nationally recognised units of competency or modules. A Statement of Attainment may be used for recognition of prior learning for admission into a VET course, for credit transfer for admission into a higher education course, or for employment purposes.

## Vocational education and training admission pathways

Entry to vocational education and training (VET) courses is flexible. There are many pathways into VET including:

- completion of Year 10
- completion of Year 12
- completion of a prerequisite qualification
- work experience
- demonstrated ability or interest
- interview.

Most courses that have an entry requirement of Year 12 do not normally require an Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR) (see [Senior secondary school education](#)). Courses may have prerequisites such as mathematics or English at Year 12 level.

Some courses have a prerequisite qualification. For example, entry to a Diploma of Community Services Management can be based on a Certificate IV in Community Services or a Certificate III in Aged Care. Consideration of a demonstrated ability and/or interest in the chosen field, work experience, or an interview are usually additional to a qualification requirement.

## Pathways between VET and higher education

The Australian education and training system supports articulation pathways (or direct progression) between different levels of qualifications, different fields of education and training, and between education and employment. It also encourages articulation between sectors, for example from VET to higher education and vice versa. Movement between qualifications is based on articulation pathways as per the AQF Qualifications Pathways Policy.

The AQF Qualifications Pathways Policy sets out credit for entry into a qualification and credit towards a qualification. Credit is the value assigned for the recognition of equivalence in content and learning outcomes between different types of learning and/or qualifications.

Credit for entry into a qualification means entry to a qualification with credit granted for studies already completed, for example, in meeting prerequisites or other specified requirements for entry into a program. Credit towards a qualification means entry from one qualification to another with credit granted by the receiving higher education institution or through negotiated agreements between institutions.

Credit can be given in the form of:

- block credit (stages or years of a course)
- specified credit (competencies in VET recognised as comparable to units in higher education)
- unspecified credit (course credit points or other forms of credit).

Decisions and agreements are based on learning outcomes, volume of learning, course content, and learning and assessment approaches.

### **Recognition of Prior Learning**

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is an assessment process undertaken by RTOs where individuals apply for an assessment of their current knowledge and skills. RPL assessment can be based on previous formal and informal study, work experience, industry-based or workplace-based learning, and life experience.

RPL can lead to admission in a VET course, credit in a particular course or the awarding of a qualification.

### **Recognition of Current Competency**

Recognition of Current Competency (RCC) refers to the assessment of a person's current ability to perform a task. It applies when a person has previously successfully completed the requirements of a unit of competency but needs to be assessed again to confirm that their competence is maintained. RCC is often needed for licencing requirements and training that is valid for a set period of time before requiring renewal, such as First Aid.

### **Unique Student Identifier**

The Unique Student Identifier (USI) is an individual number given to all students who undertake nationally recognised training. Students only need a single USI for life. The USI also provides access to an online record of all Australian training achievements. From 2023, all students at Australian higher education institutions will also need a USI in order to graduate and receive an award.

For more information, see [www.usi.gov.au](http://www.usi.gov.au).

## **Types of vocational education and training institutions**

Vocational education and training (VET) is offered by Registered Training Organisations (RTOs). RTOs award Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) qualifications and Statements of Attainment.

## Registered Training Organisations

There are approximately 4000 RTOs, including public Technical and Further Education institutes (TAFEs), other government education institutions, and private education institutions. RTOs offer courses and award AQF qualifications in line with the quality standards and requirements outlined at [Accreditation and quality assurance in technical and vocational education](#). A few RTOs are also higher education institutions and are accredited to offer higher education qualifications, such as Associate Degrees and Bachelor Degrees.

### Public RTOs

Public RTOs include colleges, institutes, TAFEs and a range of specialist institutions. Some schools and universities are also public RTOs.

TAFEs are the largest providers of vocational education and training in Australia. They are owned and administered by state and territory governments. Some TAFEs are affiliated with universities. TAFEs offer a comprehensive range of courses on-campus, by distance education and online, in workplaces and in schools. Courses are based on training packages or accredited courses that are accredited by the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) or the relevant state or territory training authority.

### Private RTOs

Private RTOs may be called colleges, schools, institutes or providers. Some business or industry associations are also RTOs. The majority of RTOs in Australia are privately owned.

Some private RTOs offer assessment services only and do not offer education and training courses. Assessment services are for employers who offer workplace training, or who seek an assessment of the skills of their employees.

### Adult and community-based RTOs

Adult and community-based RTOs include:

- major public organisations, such as fire services and hospitals
- community service organisations, such as major charities and sporting organisations
- organisations which have traditionally offered Adult Community Education (ACE), such as adult migrant education centres, adult learning centres and evening and community colleges.

### Workplace-based VET

Workplaces may engage an RTO to offer courses for their employees. Some workplaces may also be RTOs, usually known as enterprise RTOs.

Workplace-based courses include on-the-job training in combination with off-the-job RTO-based training, training only, and skills assessments.

Workplace training allows courses to be customised to meet the needs of both employers and employees. It gives employees access to learning and the opportunity to gain recognition for on-the-job learning, which can lead to a nationally recognised qualification.

For more information, see [www.training.gov.au](http://www.training.gov.au).

## Accreditation and quality assurance in technical and vocational education

The key elements of accreditation and quality assurance of the vocational education and training (VET) system are:

- national and state VET regulators
- quality delivery through the VET Quality Framework (VETQF) and the Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF)
- quality training products through training packages and accredited courses
- a national register of VET institutions, qualifications and courses.

The VETQF and AQTF provide national consistency for institution registration, monitoring and enforcement of quality standards.

### National and state VET regulators

The Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) is the national VET regulator authority, established under Australian law through the ***National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Act 2011***. ASQA is responsible for regulating Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) in the Australian Capital Territory, New South Wales, Northern Territory, South Australia, Queensland and Tasmania.

Victoria and Western Australia have not referred their regulatory powers to ASQA, although, any RTO in these states that also operates in other states or territories, or enrolls international students, is under the jurisdiction of ASQA. In Victoria and Western Australia, the state regulatory authorities continue in their roles.

ASQA quality assures the VET sector by implementing the Standards for RTOs, the Standards for VET Accredited Courses and the ***Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000***.

Prior to ASQA's establishment, there was a VET regulatory authority in each state and territory that quality assured RTOs and accredited courses in their jurisdiction. Decisions made by these bodies in referring states and territories remain valid until they expire, or ASQA re-registers or re-accredits the RTO or course.

### VET Quality Framework

The VET Quality Framework (VETQF) was introduced under the ***National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Act 2011***. Mirroring the AQTF (see below), the VETQF provides the basis for a nationally consistent, high-quality VET sector. The VETQF includes standards for registration, monitoring and quality assurance of the VET sector and standards for accreditation. These include the:

- Standards for RTOs
- Fit and Proper Person Requirements
- Financial Viability Risk Assessment Requirements
- Data Provision Requirements
- Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF).

The VETQF is supported by the Standards for VET Accredited Courses, which identify course design quality standards that must be adhered to.

## **Australian Quality Training Framework**

States that have not referred their registration and regulation powers to ASQA (i.e. Victoria and Western Australia) are required to meet the requirements of the AQTF.

The Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF) is the national set of compliance Standards and Essential Conditions that the VET training provider must meet to become a Registered Training Provider (RTO).

The AQTF was developed collaboratively with the Australian Government, state and territory governments, industry and training organisations, to support a nationally consistent, high-quality VET sector. It comprises standards for registration, auditing, quality assurance and accreditation, including standards for:

- RTOs
- state and territory registering bodies
- state and territory accrediting bodies
- accredited courses.

For more information about national and state VET regulators and quality assurance of the VET system, see [www.asqa.gov.au](http://www.asqa.gov.au) (national), [www.vrqa.vic.gov.au](http://www.vrqa.vic.gov.au) (Victoria) and [www.tac.wa.gov.au](http://www.tac.wa.gov.au) (Western Australia).

## **Technical and vocational education administration and finance**

Australia's vocational education and training (VET) system is underpinned by national policies, strategies and funding that brings together key industry bodies, employers, governments, students and Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) in the delivery of high-quality education and training.

### **Administration**

#### **National Cabinet**

National Cabinet is a key decision-maker for national policies in the VET sector, through the Skills National Cabinet Reform Committee and the Skills Ministers' Meeting. National Cabinet replaced the Council of Australian Governments (COAG), which had its own ministerial level councils.

#### **Australian Industry and Skills Committee (AISC)**

The Australian Industry and Skills Committee (AISC) is the national industry-led body responsible for providing advice on improving the quality and relevance of VET, including recommending national training packages for endorsement. AISC comprises members with industry expertise nominated by Australian Government and state and territory ministers. There is also peak industry body and government representation.

## **Australian Government roles and responsibilities**

The Australian Government, through the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations, has a national policy leadership role in the VET sector. The Australian Government works with state and territory governments and industry to support a high-quality VET sector that delivers quality skills and training to promote Australia's growth in economic productivity and social wellbeing. Responsibilities include:

- advice, research and analysis to inform policy
- management of national courses
- VET legislation and state and territory partnership agreements.

## **State and territory government roles and responsibilities**

State and territory governments are responsible for the administration of VET in their jurisdictions, including state-level planning, regulation of training institutions (usually referred to ASQA), allocation of funds to public and private training institutions, setting student fees and managing Technical and Further Education institutes (TAFEs). States and territories operate within the framework of national policies for VET to address specific priorities and needs in their jurisdictions. State and territory authorities report to their relevant Minister, who participates in National Cabinet processes.

## **Funding**

The Australian Government contributes about one-third of government funding for VET, with the other two-thirds coming from state and territory governments. This is based on a national agreement. Australian Government funds are used to support national priorities. State and territory governments can allocate funding depending on their specific priorities. Governments may also fund programs with the objective of supporting long-term reform in the VET sector and increased productivity.

Employers financially contribute to training in Australia through:

- payments associated with training courses and training provision
- paid time off work for employees to undertake training
- payment of fees, training materials, travel and subsistence payments
- training levies.

## **Fees**

VET students usually contribute to their own tuition fees. The amount a student has to pay and when they have to pay depends on the type of student and the education institution. Some courses are subsidised (either partially or in full) by state and territory governments in areas of priority.

To support access and participation in VET, the Australian Government provides financial assistance to help students with the upfront cost of tuition fees. The VET Student Loans program provides income-contingent loans to students, which means students only need to begin repaying their loan once their annual income exceeds a threshold.

There are several eligibility requirements that students must meet to access VET Student Loans, including citizenship and/or residency requirements, and enrolment in an approved course and provider. RTOs must also meet additional requirements to become a VET Student Loans approved course provider.

For more information on financial assistance, including loans and scholarships, see [www.studyassist.gov.au](http://www.studyassist.gov.au).

## **Grading systems in vocational education and training**

Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) are responsible for assessment and grading. Assessment is based on achievement of the competencies in a training package or accredited course and each competency is assessed as 'Competent' or 'Not Yet Competent'. If a course also includes graded subjects, an RTO may give a grade similar to the higher education sector, however these grading systems can vary between RTOs.

If a student is given Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) for a subject or unit of competency, it will be indicated on the transcript by 'RPL'. No grade is given.





# School education

The image features a vast, scenic landscape of rolling mountains and valleys. The foreground is filled with tall, golden-brown grasses and some small yellow flowers. The middle ground shows several layers of mountain ridges, with the lower slopes covered in dense green vegetation. The background consists of more distant, hazy mountain ranges under a clear, light blue sky with a few wispy clouds. The overall atmosphere is bright and serene, suggesting a clear day. The text 'School education' is centered in the upper half of the image in a bold, black, sans-serif font.

## Structure of school education

School education is 13 years, from Foundation Year to senior secondary education. It covers:

- preschool
- Foundation Year (or kindergarten, pre-primary, preparatory, transition or reception)
- primary school
- secondary school (high school)
- senior secondary school (or college).

Schooling is compulsory for all students aged 6 and over, and most children will commence their Foundation Year when they are four or five years old. While preschool is not compulsory, it has become a social norm for Australian children. Preschool or kindergarten is available to most children from around age 4, with some variation on the starting criteria between states and territories.

Schooling is compulsory until at least Year 10, with the school leaving age determined by states and territories, but this is typically until the age of 17.

All states and territories offer primary school from Foundation Year to Year 6, and secondary school (including senior secondary school) from Year 7 to Year 12.

Vocational education and training (VET) can also be delivered through schools and as part of school education.

Australia has a national curriculum for all primary and secondary schools which has been progressively developed by the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA). The Australian Curriculum provides schools, teachers, parents and students with a clear understanding of what students are learning (see also [School curriculum and assessment](#)).

### Primary school education

Foundation Year is known across Australia as kindergarten, preparatory, reception, pre-primary or transition. The focus of the Foundation Year is on the overall development of the child in preparation for Year 1.

The primary school curriculum focuses on:

- English language and literacy skills
- mathematics and numeracy skills
- science
- technology
- history
- geography
- health, and
- creative arts.

Languages other than English (LOTE), sports, music and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and culture are also commonly taught.

Although assessments take place, there are no standard exam requirements for progression through primary school and no formal qualifications are awarded. Students progress to secondary school after completing the final year of primary school.

## Secondary school education

The first one or two years of secondary school comprise general studies undertaken by all students. In later years, students take a core group of subjects and electives. Core subjects usually include:

- English
- mathematics
- science
- society and environment
- languages other than English (LOTE)
- information and communications technology (ICT)
- creative arts, and
- personal development, health and physical education.

Many subjects are offered at advanced levels, such as English, mathematics, science and ICT.

At most secondary schools, students take elective classes. These are classes separate to the core subjects that students get to choose, allowing the study of topics that interest students. Students may find elective classes in subjects such as art, business, computer programming, journalism and music.

## Senior secondary school education

Senior secondary education covers Years 11 and 12. Senior secondary education offers several types of courses which prepare students for tertiary study, employment, and adult life. The final school-leaving qualification is known generically as the Senior Secondary Certificate of Education (Year 12 award), which is an Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) qualification (but not allocated to an AQF level).

The Senior Secondary Certificate of Education is a multi-purpose award that serves as both a school-leaving certificate, and as a qualification to access tertiary education in the higher education and vocational education and training (VET) sectors. Students study multiple courses, or subjects, that have substantial academic breadth and depth. Subjects that prepare students for admission to higher education are academically oriented, which equips school-leavers with the knowledge and skills for higher education study.

Different names are used for the senior secondary qualification in each state and territory. The qualifications are awarded by the relevant state or territory senior secondary authority in the table below. There are also senior secondary awards outside the state and territory school systems, such as the [International Baccalaureate](#) described below.

State or territory	Name of Senior Secondary Qualification	Awarding body with responsibility for senior secondary studies	Website
Australian Capital Territory (ACT)	ACT Senior Secondary Certificate	ACT Board of Senior Secondary Studies	<a href="http://www.bsss.act.edu.au">www.bsss.act.edu.au</a>
New South Wales (NSW)	Higher School Certificate	NSW Education Standards Authority	<a href="http://www.educationstandards.nsw.edu.au">www.educationstandards.nsw.edu.au</a>
Northern Territory	Northern Territory Certificate of Education and Training	Northern Territory Board of Studies	<a href="http://education.nt.gov.au/committees,-regulators-and-advisory-groups/northern-territory-board-of-studies">education.nt.gov.au/committees,-regulators-and-advisory-groups/northern-territory-board-of-studies</a>
Queensland	Queensland Certificate of Education	Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority	<a href="http://www.qcaa.qld.edu.au">www.qcaa.qld.edu.au</a>
South Australia	South Australian Certificate of Education	South Australian Certificate of Education Board of South Australia	<a href="http://www.sace.sa.edu.au">www.sace.sa.edu.au</a>
Tasmania	Tasmanian Certificate of Education	Office of Tasmanian Assessment, Standards and Certification	<a href="http://www.tasc.tas.gov.au">www.tasc.tas.gov.au</a>
Victoria	Victorian Certificate of Education	Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority	<a href="http://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au">www.vcaa.vic.edu.au</a>
Western Australia	Western Australian Certificate of Education	WA School Curriculum and Standards Authority	<a href="http://www.scsa.wa.edu.au">www.scsa.wa.edu.au</a>

### Access to postsecondary education

The Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR) is a ranking used by higher education institutions to assist in the selection of school leavers for entry into undergraduate tertiary courses. The ATAR indicates a student's performance relative to other students in their cohort. More information on the ATAR and other undergraduate admission pathways available to senior secondary students is included under [Higher education admission pathways and academic credit](#).

### International Baccalaureate

The International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO) offers primary, secondary and senior secondary education courses that operate independently of the state and territory school systems.

Following successful completion of the senior secondary course requirements, students are awarded the International Baccalaureate Diploma by the IBO.

The International Baccalaureate Diploma is recognised for entry to higher education and vocational education and training courses. Students that complete an International Baccalaureate Diploma receive a score, with 45 the highest possible score. Diploma scores can be converted into ATAR equivalents for higher education entry. Students apply for admission through the Tertiary Admission Centre (TAC) for the state or territory they wish to study in.

For more information, see [www.ibo.org](http://www.ibo.org).

### **Vocational education and training in schools**

Vocational education and training (VET) is available at the secondary and senior secondary school education levels. Courses can be delivered by schools that are Registered Training Organisations (RTOs), as well as other RTOs such as Technical and Further Education institutes (TAFEs) and employers. Students can complete:

- training packages or accredited courses leading to nationally-recognised VET qualifications on the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF), usually at Certificate I or II level
- VET subjects as part of a senior secondary course leading to a state or territory Senior Secondary Certificate of Education
- school-based apprenticeships and traineeships, which combine senior secondary studies, paid employment and training.

Students can receive credit towards an AQF qualification and the state or territory Senior Secondary Certificate of Education, for the same VET studies. Apprenticeship studies can also count towards the state or territory Senior Secondary Certificate of Education.

VET courses are reported on a student's record of achievement for the Senior Secondary Certificate of Education without marks, and can refer to an AQF qualification that may have been awarded. A Statement of Attainment is issued to students that have partially completed an AQF qualification.

## Administration of school education

The Australian school system includes government schools and non-government schools. Approximately two-thirds of students are enrolled at government schools, and one-third in non-government schools.

Catholic schools represent the majority of non-government schools in Australia, with almost 20% of total student enrolments. There are many other types of independent schools, such as faith-based schools and schools based on educational philosophies. All schools must be registered with the state or territory government education department (see below) and are subject to government requirements in terms of infrastructure and teacher registration.

### State and territory responsibilities

State and territory governments have primary responsibility for policy, funding and delivery of school education. Each state and territory has its own education department and agencies which are responsible for publicly-funded education. State and territory responsibilities for non-government schools include registration, inspection and supplementary funding.

Each state and territory determines its policies on organisation of schooling, curriculum development and implementation within the context of the Australian Curriculum (see [School curriculum and assessment](#)), course accreditation, student assessment and certification. The relevant authorities for each state and territory and their websites are:

- Australian Capital Territory Government Education and Training Directorate at [www.education.act.gov.au](http://www.education.act.gov.au)
- New South Wales Department of Education at [www.education.nsw.gov.au](http://www.education.nsw.gov.au)
- Northern Territory Department of Education at [www.education.nt.gov.au](http://www.education.nt.gov.au)
- Queensland Government Department of Education and Training at [www.education.qld.gov.au](http://www.education.qld.gov.au)
- South Australia Department for Education at [www.education.sa.gov.au](http://www.education.sa.gov.au)
- Department of Education Tasmania at [www.education.tas.gov.au](http://www.education.tas.gov.au)
- Department of Education and Training Victoria at [www.education.vic.gov.au](http://www.education.vic.gov.au)
- Department of Education Western Australia at [www.education.wa.edu.au](http://www.education.wa.edu.au).

## Australian Government responsibilities

The Australian Government's role in school education is to provide funding, policy coordination and to undertake research and analysis of national education policies.

The Australian Government, together with state and territory governments, works to progress and implement national policy priorities, such as supporting student achievement, improving teaching standards and school leadership, building more respect for the teaching profession and teacher workforce needs, as well as enhancing the national evidence base to inform policy development.

## School curriculum and assessment

### Australian Curriculum

The development of the Australian Curriculum is the responsibility of the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) in consultation with state and territory education authorities. ACARA is an independent authority established under Australian law through the ***Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority Act 2008***, with responsibility for providing advice on and delivering national curriculum, assessment and reporting. The Australian Curriculum has drawn on national expertise and built on the diverse curriculum development and curriculum experiences of states and territories. Implementation of the Australian Curriculum is the responsibility of state and territory education authorities.

The Australian Curriculum aims to enhance the quality, equity and transparency of Australia's school education. It sets out quality expectations, standards, and a clear understanding of what students from Foundation Year to Year 10 are taught, regardless of where they live in Australia. It comprises eight learning areas:

- English
- mathematics
- science
- humanities and social sciences
- the arts
- technologies
- health and physical education, and
- languages.

The Australian Curriculum also contains general capabilities, such as critical and creative thinking, and cross-curriculum priorities, such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and culture.

For more information on the Australian Curriculum, see [www.australiancurriculum.edu.au](http://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au) and [www.acara.edu.au](http://www.acara.edu.au).

### **Assessment of school education**

Teachers employ a range of methods when assessing students up to Year 10, including written assignments and research reports, individual and group investigative projects, oral presentations, portfolios, tests and classroom participation. Assessment may also include schoolwide exams. State- or territory-wide external exams may also be conducted.

In Years 11 and 12, the most common methods for senior secondary evaluation include external exams, moderated school-based assessments, non-moderated school-based assessments and external scaling tests.

### **National Assessment Program**

The National Assessment Program (NAP) measures and monitors student achievement against national and international standards. Administered by ACARA, it consists of three initiatives:

- National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN), an annual assessment of reading, writing, language conventions and numeracy in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9.
- NAP Sample Assessments for science literacy, civics and citizenship in Years 6 and 10.
- International sample assessments, including participation of Australian students in the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) conducted by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) as well as other international studies.

For more information, see [www.nap.edu.au](http://www.nap.edu.au) and [www.acara.edu.au](http://www.acara.edu.au).

### **My School website**

The My School website provides nationally consistent school-level information and comparable data for all registered schools in Australia. It includes a range of information including their performance in NAPLAN, their student profile and their financial information. Data is sourced from schools and state and territory education and non-government authorities. ACARA is responsible for managing the My School website.

The My School website is a valuable information tool for parents and carers, school leaders, school staff and members of school communities, as well as policymakers.

For more information, see [www.myschool.edu.au](http://www.myschool.edu.au).



# Glossary

<b>ACARA</b>	Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority
<b>ACT</b>	Australian Capital Territory
<b>AHEGS</b>	Australian Higher Education Graduation Statement
<b>AISC</b>	Australian Industry and Skills Committee
<b>AQF</b>	Australian Qualifications Framework
<b>AQTF</b>	Australian Quality Training Framework
<b>ASQA</b>	Australian Skills Quality Authority
<b>ATAR</b>	Australian Tertiary Admission Rank
<b>BSSS</b>	Australian Capital Territory Board of Senior Secondary Studies
<b>COAG</b>	Council of Australian Governments
<b>CRICOS</b>	Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students
<b>ELICOS</b>	English Language Intensive Courses for Overseas Students
<b>ESOS Act</b>	<i>Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000</i>
<b>HELP</b>	Higher Education Loan Program
<b>HSC</b>	Higher School Certificate
<b>IB</b>	International Baccalaureate
<b>IEA</b>	International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement
<b>IRCs</b>	Industry Reference Committees
<b>LOTE</b>	Languages Other Than English
<b>NAP</b>	National Assessment Program
<b>NAPLAN</b>	National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy
<b>NESA</b>	New South Wales Education Standards Authority
<b>NSW</b>	New South Wales
<b>NT</b>	Northern Territory
<b>NTCET</b>	Northern Territory Certificate of Education and Training

<b>OECD</b>	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
<b>PIRLS</b>	Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (IEA)
<b>PISA</b>	OECD Programme for International Student Assessment
<b>PRISMS</b>	Provider Registration and International Student Management System
<b>QCAA</b>	Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority
<b>QCE</b>	Queensland Certificate of Education
<b>QLD</b>	Queensland
<b>QTAC</b>	Queensland Tertiary Admissions Centre
<b>RCC</b>	Recognition of Current Competency
<b>RPL</b>	Recognition of Prior Learning
<b>RTO</b>	Registered training organisation
<b>SA</b>	South Australia
<b>SACE</b>	South Australian Certificate of Education
<b>SATAC</b>	South Australian Tertiary Admissions Centre
<b>SCSA</b>	Western Australia School Curriculum and Standards Authority
<b>SSO</b>	Skills Service Organisations
<b>TAC</b>	Tertiary Admission Centre
<b>TAFE</b>	Technical and Further Education institute
<b>TAS</b>	Tasmania
<b>TASC</b>	Office of Tasmanian Assessment, Standards and Certification
<b>TCE</b>	Tasmanian Certificate of Education
<b>TEQSA</b>	Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency
<b>TEQSA Act</b>	<i>Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011</i>
<b>TISC</b>	Tertiary Institutions Service Centre, Western Australia
<b>TIMSS</b>	Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (IEA)
<b>TPS</b>	Tuition Protection Service
<b>UAC</b>	University Admissions Centre

<b>UNESCO</b>	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
<b>USI</b>	Unique Student Identifier
<b>VCAA</b>	Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority
<b>VCE</b>	Victorian Certificate of Education
<b>VET</b>	Vocational Education and Training
<b>VETQF</b>	VET Quality Framework
<b>VIC</b>	Victoria
<b>VSL</b>	VET Student Loans
<b>WA</b>	Western Australia
<b>WACE</b>	Western Australian Certificate of Education

# Sources

The Department of Education has made extensive use of information published by Australian and state and territory government agencies, including:

- Australian Bureau of Statistics, [www.abs.gov.au](http://www.abs.gov.au)
- Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority, [acara.edu.au](http://acara.edu.au)
- Australian Skills Quality Authority, [www.asqa.gov.au](http://www.asqa.gov.au)
- Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency, [www.teqsa.gov.au](http://www.teqsa.gov.au).

Information about Australian qualifications has been sourced from:

- Australian Qualifications Framework Council. 2013. *Australian Qualifications Framework: Second Edition*. [www.aqf.edu.au/publication/aqf-second-edition](http://www.aqf.edu.au/publication/aqf-second-edition).
- Australian Qualifications Framework. 2014. *Addendum to AQF Second Edition January 2013: Amended Qualification Type: Masters Degree*. [www.aqf.edu.au/publication/addendum-aqf-second-edition-january-2013-amended-qualification-type-masters-degree](http://www.aqf.edu.au/publication/addendum-aqf-second-edition-january-2013-amended-qualification-type-masters-degree).
- Commonwealth of Australia. 2020. *Addendum No. 4 to AQF Second Edition January 2013: Extending availability of the Undergraduate Certificate qualification*. [www.aqf.edu.au/publication/aqf-addendum-undergraduate-certificate](http://www.aqf.edu.au/publication/aqf-addendum-undergraduate-certificate).







