AQF COUNCIL

Graduate and Vocational Graduate Certificates and Diplomas in the Australian Qualifications Framework

June 2012
1. INTRODUCTION

The AQF Council has undertaken a review of the AQF Graduate and Vocational Graduate Certificates and Diplomas qualification types in the AQF.

The review was a consequence of the AQF Council’s advice to the (then) Ministerial Council for Tertiary Education and Employment (MCTEE) in November 2010 on a strengthened AQF. The AQF Council informed MCTEE that there was an emerging view that greater differentiation of the Graduate Certificate and Graduate Diploma qualification types may be required and that a new qualification type may be needed to achieve this. There was also a general view across the vocational education and training and higher education sectors that the distinction between vocational and higher education Graduate Certificates and Diplomas was no longer necessary because the revised descriptors allow for either vocational or academic outcomes. The AQF Council also informed MCTEE that the AQF Addition and Removal of Qualification Type Policy would allow for changes to be made should evidence justify it and the levels-based structure of the revised AQF provides the framework to consider how greater differentiation in these qualifications could be achieved.1

The AQF Council consulted stakeholders on the future of the AQF Graduate and Vocational Graduate Certificates and Diplomas qualification types by means of a paper entitled AQF Council Review of Graduate and Vocational Graduate Certificates and Diplomas in the Australian Qualifications Framework, November 2011.2 This was disseminated widely to higher education and vocational education and training AQF stakeholders in late 2011 and the consultation period concluded on 24 February 2012.

The paper comprised an analysis of the issues, a brief history of these qualification types in the AQF and its predecessors, and proposed the following four options for consideration:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>AQF Level 7 Qualification Types</th>
<th>AQF Level 8 Qualification Types</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Graduate Certificate</td>
<td>Graduate Certificate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Graduate Diploma</td>
<td>Graduate Diploma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Graduate Certificate</td>
<td>Graduate Diploma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Graduate Certificate</td>
<td>Postgraduate Certificate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Graduate Diploma</td>
<td>Postgraduate Diploma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Graduate Certificate</td>
<td>Vocational Graduate Certificate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Vocational Graduate Diploma</td>
<td>Vocational Graduate Diploma</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Responses to the consultation paper were received from sixty six stakeholder organisations, primarily providers, from higher education and vocational education and training. There was no unanimity of views from stakeholders with regard to any

2 AQF Council, Review of Graduate and Vocational Graduate Certificates and Diplomas in the Australian Qualifications Framework, November 2011, www.aqf.edu.au
preferred option. However it was apparent that overall AQF stakeholders perceived a need for change. Views were divided between, on the one hand, support for minimal revision of the qualification types and, on the other, a major change involving the introduction of new qualification types. Overall there was a strong concern to maintain the taxonomic consistency, stability and simplicity of the AQF and to eschew complexity.

There was significant support for the inclusion of intermediary qualifications at both level 7 and level 8 with flexibility to accommodate programs of learning for deepening of knowledge and skills in the same discipline/professional area, and for broadening of knowledge and skills in a different discipline/professional area; and to provide pathways between the AQF levels. There was some support for the introduction of two additional higher education sector specific qualifications types. However the arguments put forward for this mostly appeared to be based on current institutional practices inconsistent with the revised AQF. The majority of respondents clearly favoured the elimination of the Vocational Graduate Certificate and Vocational Graduate Diploma qualification types.

The AQF Council considered the views of stakeholders provided in response to the consultation paper and undertook further research to address the issues raised. In particular, the volume of learning and pathways into and out of these qualification types were fully explored to ensure the robustness of the qualification types.

The AQF Council has established a preferred position on the future of these qualification types. In doing so, it has taken into account the principles that underpin the AQF; that is that the framework should:

- Support lifelong learning and be student-focused
- Be understandable in the labour market and support employer and student demands for intermediary qualifications
- Be future oriented
- Retain its taxonomic integrity and remain simple without a proliferation of qualification types, and
- Be internationally comparable and support qualification recognition.

In reaching its position, the AQF Council also gave careful consideration to guard against any unintended or negative consequences that could impact on the utility of the AQF for the primary end users of qualifications - graduates and employers.

Before finalising changes to these qualification types, the AQF Council would like to hear the views of AQF stakeholders. The purpose of this consultation paper is to provide you with an opportunity to identify any unanticipated consequences of the AQF Council’s intended approach, to consider the specifications for the qualification types and to identify any requirements for implementation.

You are invited to consider the AQF Council’s intended approach and to provide comments by the close of business on Friday 27 July 2012. Comments should be sent to the AQF Council by email to aqfc@innovation.gov.au.
2. FUTURE QUALIFICATION TYPES

The AQF Council intends making the following changes:

- Remove the Graduate Certificate and Vocational Graduate Certificate, currently located at AQF level 8, from the AQF and replace them with a Graduate Diploma at AQF level 7
- Remove the Graduate Diploma and Vocational Graduate Diploma, currently located at AQF level 8, from the AQF and replace them with an Advanced Graduate Diploma at AQF level 8
- The new level 7 Graduate Diploma and level 8 Advanced Graduate Diploma should be available for accreditation and issuance in both the higher education and vocational education and training sectors.

2.1 Rationale

This structure retains the taxonomic integrity and simplicity of the AQF and avoids a proliferation of qualification types. It is consistent with the already established pattern in the AQF with Diplomas at a lower level than Advanced Diplomas.

This structure meets the requirement to have these intermediary qualification types at two levels with the flexibility for both broadening and deepening qualifications to meet student and labour market needs. It assists with building end user (employers and graduates) recognition of qualification types that are clearly differentiated. It recognises the reality of existing practice that many qualifications of these types are at level 7.

This structure provides flexibility to enable progression through nested qualifications to a Masters Degree consistent with conventional practice and through less common pathways to the Masters Degree from level 6 via level 7 or 8 qualification types. It remedies the existing hiatus in the vocational education and training pathways to higher qualification levels where progression from the Advanced Diploma at level 6 to the (Vocational) Graduate Certificate/Diploma at level 8 involves a gap at level 7. It also ensures comparability with the Bachelor Honours Degree pathway to higher level qualifications.

This structure accommodates the needs of both the higher education and vocational education and training sectors. It allows for the qualifications types to be available for accreditation and issuance in both the vocational education and training and higher education sectors.

The AQF Council considered the option of moving the Graduate Certificate to level 7 and retaining the Graduate Diploma at level 8. However it is considered that a Graduate Certificate of short duration is not sufficiently robust as a stand alone qualification and that a qualification with a greater volume of learning better reflects the value of a qualification type at this level and for its stated purpose.

The AQF Council also considered including a Graduate Certificate (level 7) and Advanced Graduate Certificate (level 8) in addition to the Graduate Diploma and Advanced Graduate Diploma. However as there is no taxonomical differentiation between a Graduate Certificate and Graduate Diploma or an Advanced Graduate Certificate and Advanced Graduate Diploma and the former serve as exit points for the latter, they would not be sufficiently robust to stand alone as AQF qualification types and could potentially reduce their labour market value.
Modelling of the potential student pathways to a Masters Degree of each of the options considered highlighted potential problems arising from insufficient volumes of learning to support the achievement of level 9 outcomes.

2.2 Graduate Diploma

The Graduate Diploma, located at AQF level 7, will be a new qualification type added to the AQF to replace the existing Graduate Certificate and Vocational Graduate Certificate located at AQF level 8.

The Graduate Diploma will be available for accreditation and issuance in both the higher education and vocational education and training sectors.

The learning outcomes for the Graduate Diploma allow for qualifications designed to extend knowledge and skills in the same discipline or to build knowledge and skills in a different discipline. It allows graduates from AQF level 6 and above to undertake qualifications at this level for either purpose. The volume of learning is specified as a range of 1 to 2 years to accommodate these different pathways.

The AQF provides the option of statements of attainment, commonly used in the vocational education and training sector, to recognise exit points from or partial completion of Graduate Diplomas.

2.3 Advanced Graduate Diploma

The Advanced Graduate Diploma, located at AQF level 8, will be a new qualification type added to the AQF to replace the existing Graduate Diploma and Vocational Graduate Diploma located at AQF level 8.

The Advanced Graduate Diploma will be available for accreditation and issuance in both the higher education and vocational education and training sectors.

The learning outcomes for the Advanced Graduate Diploma allow for qualifications designed to extend knowledge and skills in the same discipline or to build knowledge and skills in a different discipline. It allows graduates from AQF level 6 and above to undertake qualifications at this level for either purpose. The volume of learning is specified as a range of 1 to 2 years to accommodate these different pathways.

The nomenclature of ‘Advanced’ is used instead of the term ‘Postgraduate’ for a number of reasons, including the following:

- It is consistent with other AQF qualification type nomenclature, that is, the Diploma and Advanced Diploma at AQF levels 5 and 6 respectively
- ‘Postgraduate’ implies pathway imperatives and no other AQF qualification type is described as being post or prior to any other qualification type
- ‘Graduate’ and ‘postgraduate’ in common usage of language is synonymous and both connote a stage after graduation; the difference lies in differing linguistic geography notably between the United States and the United Kingdom
- While the nomenclature ‘postgraduate’ is used in both the United Kingdom and New Zealand qualification frameworks, its usage is not widespread internationally; there is no perceived disadvantage to Australia in using a title that is different to other countries
- In the vocational education and training sector, ‘postgraduate’ in titling lacks meaning and purpose.
3. AQF SPECIFICATIONS FOR THE QUALIFICATION TYPES

The November 2011 consultation paper, Review of Graduate and Vocational Graduate Certificates and Diplomas in the Australian Qualifications Framework, included draft qualification type descriptors for level 7 and 8 qualifications for comment. The descriptors have now been revised and the specifications for the Graduate Diploma and Advanced Graduate Diploma developed.

The specifications are consistent with the specifications for the other qualification types and the descriptors for the qualification types are taxonomically sound and consistent with the AQF levels. The specifications were tested through a small focus group, drawing on expertise from both vocational education and training and higher education.

The specifications, which include the descriptors and the volume of learning, are provided in Attachment 1 for comment.

Both qualification types are flexible and accommodate programs of learning for deepening of knowledge and skills in the same discipline or professional area, and for broadening of knowledge and skills in a different discipline or professional area.

The range in the volume of learning is designed to accommodate multiple entry and exit pathways and the different purposes of qualifications of these types. As these qualification types provide pathways into higher level qualification types, adequate volume of learning is important to preserve the integrity of higher level qualification types and to support the likely success of graduates achieving the higher level learning outcomes.

The following selected examples of pathways illustrate the volume of learning for qualifications accredited for typical pathways towards the Masters Degree via the level 7 Graduate Diploma and level 8 Advanced Graduate Diploma. Actual time to achieve the level 9 outcomes will vary depending upon delivery methodologies and individual student progression.

**Examples of nested qualification pathways**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level 6</th>
<th>Level 7</th>
<th>Level 8</th>
<th>Level 9</th>
<th>Total Volume of learning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Deepening</td>
<td>Advanced Diploma 1.5 – 2 years</td>
<td>Graduate Diploma 1 - 2 years</td>
<td>Advanced Graduate Diploma as an exit point nested within a Masters Degree 1.5 years</td>
<td>4 – 5.5 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broadening</td>
<td>Advanced Diploma 1.5 – 2 years</td>
<td>Graduate Diploma 1 - 2 years</td>
<td>Advanced Graduate Diploma as an exit point nested within a Masters Degree 2 years</td>
<td>4.5 – 6 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deepening</td>
<td></td>
<td>Bachelor Degree 3 years</td>
<td>Advanced Graduate Diploma as an exit point nested within a Masters Degree 1.5 years</td>
<td>4.5 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broadening</td>
<td></td>
<td>Bachelor Degree 3 years</td>
<td>Advanced Graduate Diploma as an exit point nested within a Masters Degree 2 years</td>
<td>5 years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Examples of qualifications pathways for non-nested or stand alone qualifications

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level 6</th>
<th>Level 7</th>
<th>Level 8</th>
<th>Level 9</th>
<th>Total Volume of learning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Broadening</td>
<td>Advanced Diploma</td>
<td>Graduate Diploma</td>
<td>Advanced Graduate Diploma</td>
<td>Masters Degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.5 – 2 years</td>
<td>1 - 2 years</td>
<td>1 year</td>
<td>1.5 years</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deepening</td>
<td>Bachelor Degree</td>
<td>Advanced Graduate Diploma</td>
<td>Masters Degree</td>
<td>5 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 years</td>
<td>1 year</td>
<td>1 year</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broadening</td>
<td>Bachelor Degree</td>
<td>Advanced Graduate Diploma</td>
<td>Masters Degree</td>
<td>5.5 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 years</td>
<td>1 year</td>
<td>1.5 years</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deepening</td>
<td>Bachelor Honours Degree</td>
<td>Masters Degree</td>
<td>5 years</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 years</td>
<td>1 year</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. TRANSITION ARRANGEMENTS

The AQF Council anticipates that the introduction of the Graduate Diploma (level 7) and the Advanced Graduate Diploma (level 8) could take effect from 1 January 2013.

Changes to the TEQSA and ASQA legislation are not required for implementation of this change.

The Graduate and Vocational Graduate Certificates and Diplomas would not be removed from the AQF until the end of the agreed transition period. A mapping of these existing qualification types against the new Graduate Diploma and Advanced Graduate Diploma will be required to show equivalence for graduates of the former qualification types in the future.

The current transition arrangements for the revised AQF require all new enrolments to be in qualifications that meet the AQF from 1 January 2015. It is considered that the same time line could apply to the new Graduate Diploma and Advanced Graduate Diploma noting that it may take longer for level 8 Graduate and Vocational Graduate Certificates and Diplomas to be phased out of the AQF.

5. RESPONDING TO THE INTENDED APPROACH

You are invited to comment on:

- The final draft of the AQF Specifications for the Graduate Diploma and the AQF Specifications for the Advanced Graduate Diploma qualification types, which include the volume of learning, provided at Attachment 1
- Any unanticipated consequences that may arise from the change
- Requirements for implementation and transition arrangements.

Comments are required by close of business on Friday 27 July 2012 and should be sent to the AQF Council by email to aqfc@innovation.gov.au. Hard copy responses by mail are not required. Responses may be published on the AQF website.

Queries should be directed to the AQF Council by email to aqfc@innovation.gov.au or 08 8406 4735.
ATTACHMENT 1: AQF SPECIFICATIONS FOR THE QUALIFICATION TYPES

AQF specification for the Graduate Diploma (Level 7)

This Specification informs the design and accreditation of Graduate Diploma qualifications.

The principal users of the AQF Qualification Type Specifications are the accrediting authorities in each education and training sector, which are responsible for the accreditation of AQF qualifications and the developers of AQF qualifications in each education and training sector.

The other users of the Specifications are the authorised issuing organisations, industry and professional bodies, licensing and regulatory bodies, students, graduates and employers.

The purpose of the Graduate Diploma qualification type is to qualify individuals who apply broad and coherent knowledge and skills within a discipline or area of practice for professional or highly skilled work and/or further learning.

Graduate Diploma qualifications are located at level 7 of the Australian Qualifications Framework.

Qualifications accredited as a Graduate Diploma qualification must be designed and accredited to enable graduates to demonstrate the learning outcomes expressed as knowledge, skills and the application of knowledge and skills specified in the level 7 criteria and the Graduate Diploma descriptor.

**AQF level 7 criteria**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Summary</th>
<th>Graduates at this level will have broad and coherent knowledge and skills for professional work and/or further learning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge</td>
<td>Graduates at this level will have broad and coherent theoretical and technical knowledge with depth in one or more disciplines or areas of practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skills</td>
<td>Graduates at this level will have well-developed cognitive, technical and communication skills to select and apply methods and technologies to:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• analyse and evaluate information to complete a range of activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• analyse, generate and transmit solutions to unpredictable and sometimes complex problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• transmit knowledge, skills and ideas to others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Application of knowledge and skills</td>
<td>Graduates at this level will apply knowledge and skills to demonstrate autonomy, well-developed judgement and responsibility:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• in contexts that require self-directed work and learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• within broad parameters to provide specialist advice and functions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Graduate Diploma qualification type descriptor

| Purpose | Qualifies individuals to apply broad and coherent knowledge and skills within a discipline or area of practice for professional or highly skilled work and as a pathway for further learning |
| Knowledge | Graduates will have broad and coherent knowledge of a discipline or professional area |
| Skills | Graduates will have within a discipline or professional area:  
  - cognitive and technical skills to demonstrate a broad understanding of knowledge with depth in any specialisation  
  - cognitive and creative skills to exercise critical thinking and judgement in identifying and solving problems with intellectual independence  
  - communication skills to present a clear, coherent and independent exposition of knowledge and ideas |
| Application of knowledge and skills | Graduates will demonstrate the application of knowledge and skills within a discipline or professional area:  
  - with initiative and informed judgement in planning, problem solving and decision making in professional practice and/or scholarship  
  - to adapt knowledge and skills in diverse contexts  
  - with responsibility and accountability for own learning and practice and for some aspects of the work or function of others within broad parameters |
| Volume of learning | The volume of learning of the Graduate Diploma is typically 1 - 2 years.  
  The volume of learning is contingent upon the level of the previous qualification and whether the purpose is for deepening or broadening of knowledge and skills. |

### Qualification nomenclature

The title used for a Graduate Diploma must be consistent with the AQF Qualifications Issuance Policy.

### Pathways

Each qualification accredited as a Graduate Diploma will include documented pathways consistent with the AQF Qualifications Pathways Policy.

Issuing organisations offering a Graduate Diploma qualification must meet the requirements of the AQF Qualifications Pathways Policy.

### Responsibility for accreditation and development

Accrediting authorities and those developing qualifications for accreditation must adhere to the AQF specification for this qualification type and any government
Accreditation standards for vocational education and training or higher education when accrediting a Graduate Diploma qualification.

Accrediting authorities are responsible for monitoring the quality of issuing organisations against any government regulatory and quality assurance arrangements.

When accrediting AQF Graduate Diploma qualifications accrediting authorities must ensure that:

- Graduates of a Graduate Diploma qualification will achieve learning outcomes at level 7.
- All the learning outcomes (knowledge, skills and the application of knowledge and skills) of the Graduate Diploma qualification type are evident in each qualification accredited as this type. Some may have more emphasis than others in different Graduate Diploma qualifications depending on their purpose. A Graduate Diploma may be designed to provide a program of learning for deepening of knowledge and skills in the same discipline or professional area, or for broadening of knowledge and skills in a different discipline or professional area.
- Generic learning outcomes are explicitly identified in the qualification and align with the level of the qualification type, the purpose of the qualification and the discipline. Generic learning outcomes fall into four broad categories: fundamental skills; people skills; thinking skills; and personal skills. In the vocational education and training sector they are expressed as employability skills as defined by the National Quality Council (2008). In the higher education sector they are generally known as graduate attributes and are defined by each higher education institution.
- The relationship between the learning outcomes in the level 7 criteria, the qualification type descriptor, and the discipline is clear.
- The design of the components of the qualification will provide coherent learning outcomes for the level and qualification type and will enable graduates to demonstrate them.
- The volume of learning is sufficient for graduates to achieve the learning outcomes for a qualification of this level and type.

Once a qualification is accredited it must be placed on the AQF Register in a form consistent with the AQF Qualifications Register Policy.

**Authority to issue the qualification**

A Graduate Diploma qualification may only be issued by an organisation that is authorised by an accrediting authority to do so, and meets any government standards for the sector.

Assessment leading to the award of the qualification lies with the issuing organisation. The issuing organisation is responsible for ensuring the quality of the learning outcomes and that the graduate has satisfactorily completed any requirements for the awarding of the qualification.

Issuing organisations must issue qualifications consistent with the AQF Qualifications Issuance Policy. Students exiting prior to achievement of a Graduate Diploma
qualification may be issued with a statement of attainment for successfully completed components, consistent with the AQF Qualifications Issuance Policy.

Issuing organisations will maintain a register of the AQF qualifications they have issued consistent with the AQF Qualifications Register Policy.
AQF specification for the Advanced Graduate Diploma (Level 8)

This Specification informs the design and accreditation of Advanced Graduate Diploma qualifications.

The principal users of the AQF Qualification Type Specifications are the accrediting authorities in each education and training sector which are responsible for the accreditation of AQF qualifications and the developers of AQF qualifications in each education and training sector.

The other users of the Specifications are the authorised issuing organisations, industry and professional bodies, licensing and regulatory bodies, students, graduates and employers.

The purpose of the Advanced Graduate Diploma qualification type is to qualify individuals who apply an advanced body of knowledge and skills in a range of contexts to undertake professional or highly skilled work and as a pathway for further learning.

Advanced Graduate Diploma qualifications are located at level 8 of the Australian Qualifications Framework.

Qualifications accredited as an Advanced Graduate Diploma qualification must be designed and accredited to enable graduates to demonstrate the learning outcomes expressed as knowledge, skills and the application of knowledge and skills specified in the level 8 criteria and the Advanced Graduate Diploma descriptor.

**AQF level 8 criteria**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Summary</strong></th>
<th>Graduates at this level will have advanced knowledge and skills for professional or highly skilled work and/or further learning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Knowledge</strong></td>
<td>Graduates at this level will have advanced theoretical and technical knowledge in one or more disciplines or areas of practice</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Skills** | Graduates at this level will have advanced cognitive, technical and communication skills to select and apply methods and technologies to:  
  - analyse critically, evaluate and transform information to complete a range of activities  
  - analyse, generate and transmit solutions to complex problems  
  - transmit knowledge, skills and ideas to others |
| **Application of knowledge and skills** | Graduates at this level will apply knowledge and skills to demonstrate autonomy, well-developed judgement adaptability and responsibility as a practitioner or learner. |
## Advanced Graduate Diploma qualification type descriptor

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Qualifies individuals to apply an advanced body of knowledge and skills in a range of contexts to undertake professional or highly skilled work and as a pathway for further learning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge</td>
<td>Graduates will have advanced knowledge within a discipline or professional area</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Skills | Graduates will have within a discipline or professional area:  
- cognitive skills to review, analyse, consolidate and synthesise knowledge and identify and provide solutions to complex problems  
- cognitive skills to think critically and to generate and evaluate complex ideas with intellectual independence  
- specialised technical and creative skills in a field of highly skilled work and/or professional practice  
- communication skills to demonstrate an understanding of theoretical concepts  
- communication skills to transfer complex knowledge and ideas to a variety of audiences |
| Application of knowledge and skills | Graduates will demonstrate the application of knowledge and skills within a discipline or professional area:  
- to make sound, high level, independent judgements in a range of technical or management functions in varied specialised contexts  
- to initiate, plan, implement and evaluate broad functions within varied specialised technical and/or creative contexts  
- with responsibility and accountability for personal outputs and all aspects of the work or function of others within broad parameters |
| Volume of learning | The volume of learning for the Advanced Graduate Diploma is typically 1-2 years.  
The volume of learning is contingent upon the level of the previous qualification and whether the purpose is for deepening or broadening of knowledge and skills. |

### Qualification nomenclature

The title used for an Advanced Graduate Diploma must be consistent with the AQF Qualifications Issuance Policy.
Pathways

Each qualification accredited as an Advanced Graduate Diploma will include documented pathways consistent with the AQF Qualifications Pathways Policy.

Issuing organisations offering an Advanced Graduate Diploma qualification must meet the requirements of the AQF Qualifications Pathways Policy.

Responsibility for accreditation and development

Accrediting authorities and those developing qualifications for accreditation must adhere to the AQF specification for this qualification type and any government accreditation standards for vocational education and training or higher education when accrediting an Advanced Graduate Diploma qualification.

Accrediting authorities are responsible for monitoring the quality of issuing organisations against any government regulatory and quality assurance arrangements.

When accrediting AQF Advanced Graduate Diploma qualifications accrediting authorities must ensure that:

- Graduates of an Advanced Graduate Diploma qualification will achieve learning outcomes at level 8.
- All the learning outcomes (knowledge, skills and the application of knowledge and skills) of the Advanced Graduate Diploma qualification type are evident in each qualification accredited as this type. Some may have more emphasis than others in different Advanced Graduate Diploma qualifications depending on their purpose. An Advanced Graduate Diploma may be designed to provide a program of learning for deepening of knowledge and skills in the same discipline or professional area, or for broadening of knowledge and skills in a different discipline or professional area.
- Generic learning outcomes are explicitly identified in the qualification and align with the level of the qualification type, the purpose of the qualification and the discipline. Generic learning outcomes fall into four broad categories: fundamental skills; people skills; thinking skills; and personal skills. In the vocational education and training sector they are expressed as employability skills as defined by the National Quality Council (2008). In the higher education sector they are generally known as graduate attributes and are defined by each higher education institution.
- The relationship between the learning outcomes in the level 8 criteria, the qualification type descriptor, and the discipline is clear.
- The design of the components of the qualification will provide coherent learning outcomes for the level and qualification type and will enable graduates to demonstrate them.
- The volume of learning is sufficient for graduates to achieve the learning outcomes for a qualification of this level and type.

Once a qualification is accredited it must be placed on the AQF Register in a form consistent with the AQF Qualifications Register Policy.
Authority to issue the qualification

An Advanced Graduate Diploma qualification may only be issued by an organisation that is authorised by an accrediting authority to do so, and meets any government standards for the sector.

Assessment leading to the award of the qualification lies with the issuing organisation. The issuing organisation is responsible for ensuring the quality of the learning outcomes and that the graduate has satisfactorily completed any requirements for the awarding of the qualification.

Issuing organisations must issue qualifications consistent with the AQF Qualifications Issuance Policy. Students exiting prior to achievement of an Advanced Graduate Diploma may be issued with a statement of attainment for successfully completed components, consistent with the AQF Qualifications Issuance Policy.

Issuing organisations will maintain a register of the AQF qualifications they have issued consistent with the AQF Qualifications Register Policy.