

COUNTRY EDUCATION PROFILES

AUSTRALIA

2008



Australian Government

Australian Education International

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About AEI-NOOSR

AEI-NOOSR is the Australian Government authority on the recognition of overseas qualifications in Australia. It is part of Australian Education International (AEI) in the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR).

AEI-NOOSR provides information and advice to organisations including the Australian Department of Immigration and Citizenship, state and territory governments, universities, professional bodies and other assessing authorities on issues relating to recognition. AEI-NOOSR also promotes the recognition of Australian qualifications outside Australia, and encourages better international arrangements for recognition. Recognition assists people to participate in employment or further study.

AEI-NOOSR's services include:

- publication of the *Country Education Profiles Online* – an essential recognition tool providing expert guidance on the comparability of overseas qualifications, lists of recognised educational institutions and information about education systems covering over 110 countries;
- professional development workshops on assessing overseas qualifications;
- an advisory service to educational institutions, professional assessing authorities and state and territory governments; and
- assessments of educational qualifications obtained outside Australia to assist those seeking to work or study in Australia.

For more information about AEI-NOOSR, see:

- <http://aei.gov.au/AEI/QualificationsRecognition/Default.htm>

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Australian education system

The Commonwealth of Australia consists of six states and two territories – New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia, Tasmania, Victoria, Western Australia, the Australian Capital Territory and the Northern Territory.

There are three levels of Australian government: Australian (Federal), state and territory and local.

Overview of the Australian education system

School education

School education has a similar structure across Australia with only slight variations between states and territories. School education is compulsory between the ages of 6 and 16 (Year 1 to Year 9 or 10). School education is thirteen years and divided into:

- a preparatory year before Year 1: not compulsory but almost universally undertaken;
- primary schooling: six or seven years – Years 1-6 or 1-7; and
- secondary schooling: five or six years – Years 7-12 or 8-12.

State or territory	Preschool	Preparatory year (first year of school)	Primary school	Secondary school (incl. senior secondary school)
ACT	Preschool	Kindergarten	Years 1-6	Years 7-12
NSW	Preschool	Kindergarten	Years 1-6	Years 7-12
NT	Preschool	Transition	Years 1-7	Years 8-12
QLD	Preschool	Preparatory	Years 1-7	Years 8-12
SA	Preschool	Reception	Years 1-7	Years 8-12
TAS	Kindergarten	Preparatory	Years 1-6	Years 7-12
VIC	Preschool	Preparatory	Years 1-6	Years 7-12
WA	Kindergarten	Pre-Primary	Years 1-7	Years 8-12

Post-school education

Postsecondary education is offered in two sectors – the vocational education and training (VET) sector and the higher education sector.

Language of instruction

English is the official language of Australia and the language of instruction. A few schools offer bilingual programs or programs in other languages. Indigenous languages may also be used in some regions.

Many schools offer students a choice of foreign language studies, including Arabic, Chinese, French, German, Bahasa Indonesian, Italian, Japanese, Modern Greek and Spanish. Foreign language classes can start as early as preschool, but usually begin in secondary school.

Academic year

The school year is from February to December. Most states and territories operate on a four-term per year system, but Tasmania has a three-term school year.

In the vocational education and training (VET) sector, the teaching year for Technical and Further Education (TAFE) institutes and colleges runs from late January to mid-December; in some states and territories it is divided into three terms, while others use a semester system.

In the higher education sector, most universities operate over two semesters, and the academic year begins in February and ends in November. Some universities, including Bond University, have three academic semesters. Some non-university institutions run programs year round.

Administration and finance

The administration and financing of education in Australia is shared between the Australian Government and the Australian states and territories. The nature of the arrangements depends on the educational sector and legislative responsibilities.

Consultation between the Australian Government and the states and territories occurs through the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA). MCEETYA was established in 1993 and comprises Australian, New Zealand and state and territory ministers responsible for the portfolios of education, employment, training and youth affairs.

Distance and external education

All states and territories provide distance or external school education programs. Many VET and higher education institutions offer external courses. Online course provision is now widely available as well as more traditional correspondence programs.

Education system reforms

The Australian Government education policy is articulated in the New Directions Paper – *The Australian economy needs an education revolution*. This was released in January 2007, when the Australian Labor Party (ALP) was still the Opposition, prior to forming government in November 2007.

Proposed reforms include:

- improving learning outcomes;
- implementing a national school curriculum;
- increasing school retention rates; and
- providing more funding for schools, vocational education and training, higher education and research.

For more information, see:

- http://www.alp.org.au/download/now/education_revolution_r1.pdf

Australian Qualifications Framework

The Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) was established in 1995 and fully implemented in 1999. The Framework links qualifications from school, vocational education and training and higher education sectors. It is a quality-assured national system.

Some AQF qualifications are offered in more than one sector. AQF qualifications are shown below, grouped according to the educational sector responsible for their accreditation.

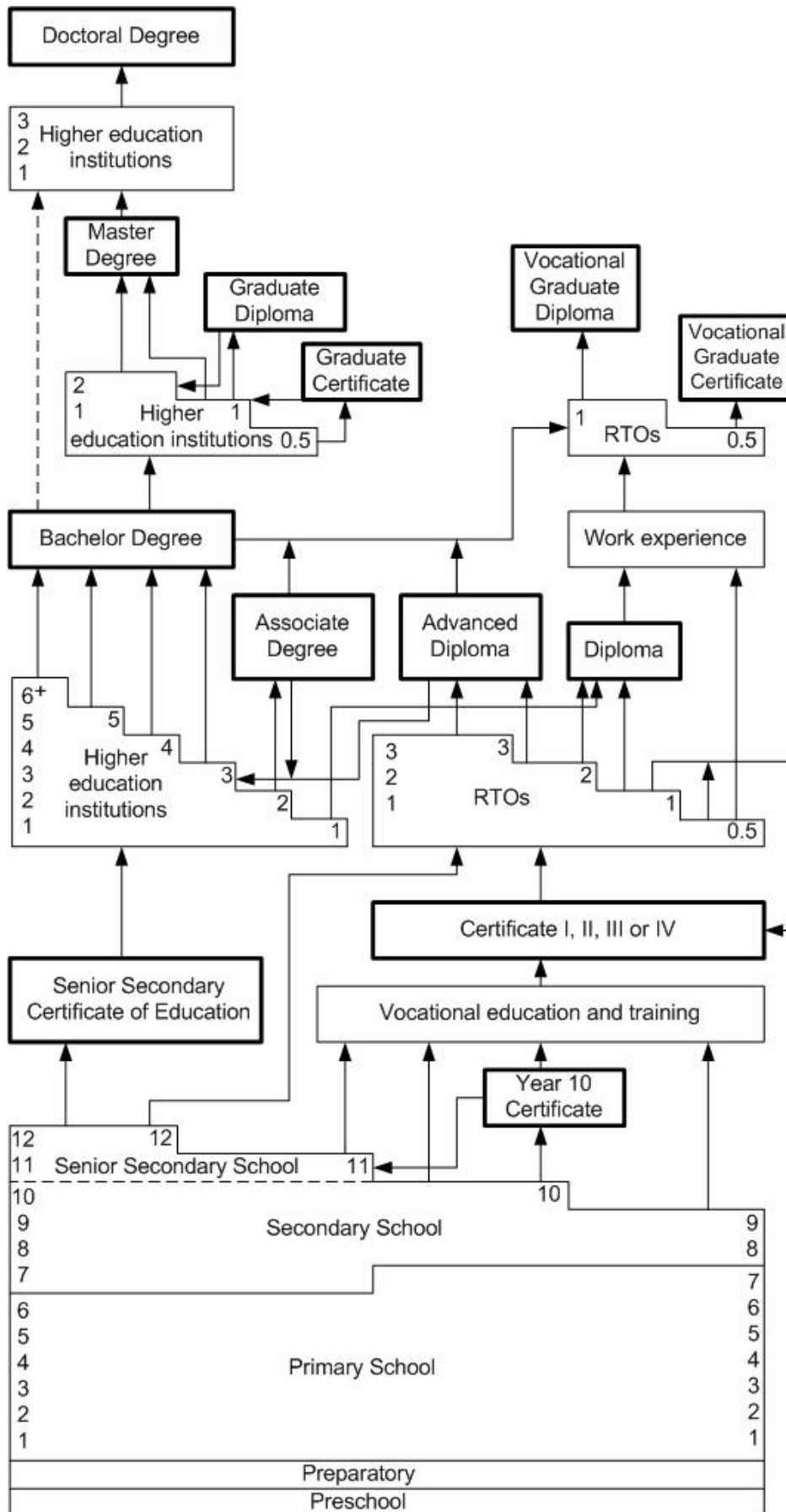
Schools Sector	Vocational Education and Training Sector	Higher Education Sector
		Doctoral Degree
		Masters Degree
	Vocational Graduate Diploma	Graduate Diploma
	Vocational Graduate Certificate	Graduate Certificate
		Bachelor Degree
	Advanced Diploma	Associate Degree Advanced Diploma
	Diploma	Diploma
Senior Secondary Certificate of Education	Certificate IV	
	Certificate III	
	Certificate II	
	Certificate I	

The AQF provides flexibility, and there are many articulation agreements in place to allow student transfer between school, VET and higher education sectors.

For more information, see:

- Admission requirements, Higher education, page 12
- Admission requirements, Vocational education and training, page 29

Diagram of the Australian education system



Higher education

Higher education in Australia refers to university and non-university higher education institutions which award degree or sub-degree qualifications. The three main cycles of higher education are Bachelor, Master and Doctoral studies.

Australian Qualifications Framework

The Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) was established in 1995. The Framework links qualifications from school, vocational education and training and higher education sectors. It is a quality-assured national system. AQF higher education qualifications are knowledge-based rather than competency-based (as in the VET sector).

The objectives and academic requirements of courses are set by the higher education institutions and include peer review and the requirements of relevant professional bodies. Non-self accrediting institutions (non-university institutions) have their courses accredited by the state and territory higher education accreditation authorities.

Schools Sector	Vocational Education and Training Sector	Higher Education Sector
		Doctoral Degree
		Masters Degree
	Vocational Graduate Diploma	Graduate Diploma
	Vocational Graduate Certificate	Graduate Certificate
		Bachelor Degree
	Advanced Diploma	Associate Degree Advanced Diploma
	Diploma	Diploma
Senior Secondary Certificate of Education	Certificate IV	
	Certificate III	
	Certificate II	
	Certificate I	

Courses and qualifications

Australian higher education institutions offer two types of higher education programs:

- academic; and
- professional – programs leading to degree level qualifications that allow for practice in a specific profession or occupational field.

Programs can be taken either full-time or part-time. Distance and online education has grown rapidly in recent years. In many cases, programs may be provided outside Australia (known as offshore education).

Undergraduate courses and qualifications

Diploma

The AQF Diploma is a para-professional qualification. Diplomas require one or two years of full-time study. It is a dual-sector qualification, offered in both the higher education and vocational education and training sectors.

In the higher education sector, Diplomas are based on an academic program with an applied focus, providing general or specialised training for employment at the para-professional level. Diplomas can articulate to Advanced Diploma programs. Diplomas can also provide advanced standing or credit transfer (usually one year) into a Bachelor Degree program.

Advanced Diploma

The AQF Advanced Diploma is a professional-level qualification. Most Advanced Diplomas require two years of full-time study. It is a dual-sector qualification, offered in both the higher education and vocational education and training sectors.

In the higher education sector, an Advanced Diploma has units from a Bachelor Degree program, providing an early exit point with a stand-alone qualification but with the option of continuing to the Bachelor Degree. Entry is usually based on normal university entry requirements. Advanced Diplomas can provide advanced standing or credit transfer (usually two years) into a Bachelor Degree program.

Associate Degree

Associate Degree programs require two years of full-time study. Associate Degrees emphasise the introductory research-based knowledge of one or more academic disciplines and the development of generic employment skills. Associate Degrees can provide advanced standing or credit transfer (usually two years) into a Bachelor Degree program in the same field.

The Associate Degree and the Advanced Diploma are at the same level on the AQF. The difference is in the focus of the programs. Associate Degrees are more academically oriented, whereas Advanced Diplomas emphasise vocational or professional studies.

Bachelor Degree

Australian Bachelor Degrees are diverse. There are several types of Bachelor Degrees including three-year degrees, four-year degrees, professional degrees, combined degrees and honours degrees. All Bachelor Degree programs must lead to the same educational outcomes as indicated on the AQF regardless of length or specific program requirements.

The Bachelor Degree is the first degree in the arts, sciences and most professional fields. Programs are designed to introduce students to a discipline and develop analytical skills. Bachelor Degree programs aim to prepare students to assimilate and interpret new information and ideas and continue to apply and extend such techniques after graduation.

A Bachelor Degree program normally includes a significant amount of specialisation, with a major subject or subject area studied in depth. There is little in the way of general education components, which are covered at the secondary level. All Bachelor Degree programs involve a progressive development of knowledge, analytical skills and problem-solving techniques to an advanced level which provides a basis for postgraduate study.

The Australian Qualifications Framework Bachelor Degree is a generic grouping that encompasses all of the following types of Bachelor Degrees.

Three-year Bachelor Degree

This Bachelor Degree requires three years of full-time study or part-time equivalent. Some examples include the Bachelor of Arts (BA), Bachelor of Science (BSc), Bachelor of Commerce (BCom), Bachelor of Applied Science (BAppSc), and Bachelor of Business Administration (BBusAdmin). These programs do not have a significant general education component, and are highly focused on the major field of study. Graduates can continue to postgraduate study or employment.

Four-year (or longer) Bachelor Degree

Some Bachelor Degree programs are four or more years in duration. Apart from Honours Degrees this is most common in professional education, where additional time is required for professional preparation. For example, Bachelor Degrees in law (LLB), engineering (BEng) and agriculture (BAGSc) normally require four years of full-time study; Bachelor Degrees in architecture (BArch), dentistry (BDS) and veterinary science (BVSc/BVS) normally require five years of study. The medical degree (MB BS) is six years in duration.

Some universities offer three-year Bachelor Degrees in professional fields, such as technology [engineering] (BTech), jurisprudence (BJuris) and architectural studies (BAppSc-ArchSc), which provide professionally oriented education different from that of the four-year BEng and LLB and the five-year BArch.

Combined or Double Bachelor Degrees

Bachelor Degrees may be taken in a variety of combinations. Law degrees, for example, are often undertaken with arts, science or commerce degrees. An LLB/BA or LLB/BCom normally requires five years of full-time study or six years for Honours.

Bachelor Honours Degree

The term Honours Degree is usually used to distinguish this qualification from a three- or four-year Bachelor Degree. A Bachelor Honours Degree requires an additional year of study after a three. Four or five year Bachelor Honours Degrees may be awarded on the basis of performance in the degree, or may require an additional year of study. Bachelor Honours Degrees involve specialisation in one subject, or in two for a Combined Honours degree. This is usually the subject the student majored in. Bachelor Honours Degrees are available in most, but not all, fields, depending on the university and faculty.

Students are admitted on the basis of outstanding academic achievement in the undergraduate degree program. The additional year normally involves specialised study and research, and the submission of a thesis.

In some professional fields, the Honours program can be integrated into the normal length of the Bachelor Degree. In this case, Honours Degrees are often awarded solely on merit, but in some cases additional work is required, usually in the final year. Generally this involves an integrated increased course load and/or short thesis but occasionally an additional year of study is required.

Bachelor Honours Degrees are awarded with the abbreviation 'Hons' - for example, BA (Hons), LLB (Hons) – and in a class or division – for example First Class or Second Class (Upper Division). Graduates with Honours in the First or Second (Upper Division) Classes may enter a Doctoral program directly.

Graduate-entry Bachelor Degree

A few Australian universities offer Bachelor Degrees which cannot be entered directly from secondary school. The majority of these degrees are professional qualifications in fields like architecture, law, education, medicine and social welfare. These are also known as Postgraduate Bachelor Degrees.

Graduate-entry Bachelor Degrees include:

- Bachelor of Architecture – offered as a two-year, full-time course following a three-year Bachelor Degree;
- Bachelor of Law – offered as a three-year, full-time course following a Bachelor Degree;
- Juris Doctor (JD) – offered as a two-year, full-time program for mature graduates with a Bachelor Degree from a field other than law;
- Bachelor of Medicine/Bachelor of Surgery (BMed/BSurg) – offered as a four-year full-time program following a first degree and a special entrance examination;
- Bachelor of Education – the Postgraduate BEd, BEd Studies or BSpecEd is a specialised professional qualification, requiring between one and two years of study after a four-year BEd or a BA/BSc DipEd; and
- Bachelor of Letters (BLitt or LittB) – offered as a one or two year full-time program following a three-year Bachelor of Arts degree.

Bachelor Degree program requirements

Bachelor Degree program structures and requirements depend on the major subject area, the department and/or faculty and the institution concerned. Detailed information can be found on institution websites.

Programs usually include mandatory core subjects, specialisation subjects and elective subjects. Requirements vary between universities, and sometimes between faculties within universities. Some programs are described in terms of courses, normally between nine and twelve, which correspond to subjects requiring one year of study. Other universities use points or credits, but there is no uniformity: requirements may be based on 20 to 24 points, 68 to 72 points, 100 to 144 points, 240 points, 300 points or 1080 points or credits for a Bachelor Degree.

Professional programs such as medicine normally have many compulsory core subjects, with few choices for specialisation or electives. In law, students have more opportunities for professional specialisation. In engineering, students specialise in a branch of engineering at an early stage in their undergraduate courses. Bachelor Degrees in commerce and business normally require

completion of a range of core courses, with students having the option of specialising in a subject or subject area, particularly at third year level.

Bachelor Degrees in arts and science vary considerably in structure, but are generally more flexible. Universities normally require completion of at least one major specialisation which is studied over three years. Many students undertake two or even three majors over three or more years. Most universities have regulations concerning the minimum and maximum numbers of subjects to be completed at first-, second- and third-year levels.

Undergraduate study may involve lectures, tutorials, seminars, laboratory work, fieldwork or supervised practical work. The number of class contact hours per week varies according to the nature of the program of study.

Assessment usually involves examinations, performance in tutorials, seminars and laboratory work, completion of assignments, field or practical work, and individual or group research work. Bachelor Honours Degrees usually require a thesis.

Postgraduate courses and qualifications

Graduate Certificate

Programs leading to the Graduate Certificate are designed to develop skills in a specialised area. Graduate Certificate programs are coursework-based and normally require one semester of full-time study, or part-time equivalent.

Graduate Diploma/Postgraduate Diploma

Like the Graduate Certificate, the Graduate Diploma is a specialised, often vocationally-orientated award. Graduate Diplomas either develop new professional or vocational skills for graduates or extend the knowledge and skills gained in the first degree. Graduate Diplomas normally require one year of full-time study, or part-time equivalent.

Some institutions distinguish between Graduate Diplomas and Postgraduate Diplomas. In this case Graduate Diplomas involve the development of new skills, with courses that may not be at a postgraduate level academically. Postgraduate Diplomas are intended to build on knowledge gained in the first degree.

A Graduate Certificate or Graduate Diploma may be awarded if a student completes postgraduate preparatory work such as a Master Degree qualifying year, but does not proceed to the degree course.

Master Degree

There are three types of Master Degree programs: coursework, research and professional. Most Master Degrees require two years of full-time study after a three-year Bachelor Degree or one year of full-time study after a Bachelor Honours Degree or four-year (or longer) Bachelor Degree.

Master Degree by coursework

A Master Degree may be undertaken by coursework, project work and research in varying combinations. Coursework Master Degrees are often structured in a three to four semester articulation arrangement, with the Graduate Certificate (one semester), Graduate Diploma (a further semester) and Master Degree (a further two semesters). Master Degrees with a major

coursework component often have a professional or vocational orientation, but some are academic in orientation.

Master Degree by research

The research Master Degree program is at least two-thirds research with a substantial thesis, which is externally examined. It normally requires a minimum of one year of full-time study. The research Master Degree often leads to a Doctoral program.

Professional Master Degree

The professional Master Degree program may involve a work-based project and coursework. Professional coursework Master Degrees are often undertaken on a part-time basis.

Doctoral Degree

There are three types of Doctoral Degree programs:

- Research Doctorate;
- Professional Doctorate; and
- Higher Doctorate.

A typical program requires three to four years of full-time study. Students are expected to make a substantial original contribution to knowledge in the form of new knowledge or significant and original adaptation, application and interpretation of existing knowledge.

Research Doctorate

Research Doctorates are by supervised research and an original thesis. The thesis is usually examined by two or three expert academics, at least two of which must be external.

Professional Doctorate

Professional Doctorates require significant professional practice either prior to or as part of the program. Students undertake a program consisting of both coursework and research.

Some universities award Professional Doctorates for programs with an orientation towards advanced professional practice, typically in fields such as education (DEd), business administration (DBA), psychology (DPsych), and law where the degree is often a Doctor of Juridical Science (SJD) to distinguish it from the higher Doctor of Laws (LLD).

Higher Doctorate

Most universities in Australia award Higher Doctorates such as the Doctor of Letters (DLitt), Doctor of Science (DSc), Doctor of Laws (LLD), Doctor of Medicine (MD). Regulations for the award vary between institutions, and in many universities the award is restricted to scholars with a substantial connection with the institution.

In most disciplines, Higher Doctorates are awarded on the basis of published or unpublished work considered constituting a significant original contribution to the field of study. However, Higher Doctorates may be awarded on the basis of a thesis, especially in medicine, dentistry and law. Few Higher Doctorates are awarded in Australia, with the Doctor of Medicine the most common.

Qualifications outside the Australian Qualifications Framework

Some universities offer a limited number of programs leading to awards outside the Australian Qualifications Framework.

Executive Certificate

Executive Certificates are professionally-oriented programs which provide graduate-level introductory courses in business education for senior executives without a first degree. Executive Certificates are awarded by the faculty rather than the university. Executive Certificates with an average grade of 'credit' or above may provide transfer credit for up to four subjects towards a relevant university accredited Graduate Diploma.

Admission requirements

Undergraduate admission requirements

Undergraduate admission is usually based on a score, rank or index determined by the tertiary entrance system in a student's state or territory.

For more information, see:

- State and territory school education, page 40

Associate Degree

Entry to the Associate Degree normally requires an Australian Year 12 Certificate, the Senior Secondary Certificate of Education, or equivalent with an appropriate tertiary entrance score or an appropriate vocational qualification (Certificate III or IV).

Bachelor Degree

Entry to a Bachelor Degree program is normally based on completion of secondary school (Year 12). Entry to specific programs is determined by a tertiary entrance score, rank or index. State and territory tertiary admissions centres coordinate admission. Students can use their tertiary entrance rank, score or index from their home state or territory to apply for admission elsewhere in Australia.

In some cases, entry may be based on additional requirements such as an interview, portfolio of work, prerequisite courses, and/or a demonstrated interest or aptitude for the study program.

Most institutions have different entry requirements for mature-age students (usually over 25 years). Such students may be admitted without completion of Year 12, on the basis of work experience in the area they wish to study, an entrance examination, or a demonstrated aptitude for study.

Admission to Bachelor Honours Degrees is on the basis of student results during the underpinning Bachelor Degree program.

Postgraduate admission requirements

Graduate Certificate and Graduate Diploma

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

Master Degree

Entry requirements depend on the type of Master Degree undertaken:

- Master Degree by Coursework - entry is normally based on a Bachelor Degree, Honours Bachelor Degree or Graduate Diploma;
- Master Degree by Research - entry is normally based on an Bachelor Honours Degree, Master preliminary year, a research-based Graduate Diploma or equivalent research experience; and
- Professional Master Degree – entry is normally based on a Bachelor Degree. Professional experience may also be required. Entry may also be based on articulation from a Graduate Certificate or Graduate Diploma program.

Doctoral Degree

Research Doctorate

Entry is by a research or part-research Master Degree or a Bachelor Honours Degree (First or Second Class, Upper Division).

Professional Doctorate

Entry is by a combined research and coursework Masters Degree, a Bachelor Honours Degree (First or Second Class, Upper Division) or equivalent.

Alternative pathways

Decisions about credit transfer and Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) processes are made separately from admission decisions, and students must have an offer of a course place before any formal consideration of credit occurs.

Credit transfer

Credit transfer refers to the recognition of previous formal learning so that study does not have to be repeated. Credit transfer is available in both undergraduate and postgraduate programs, at the discretion of the institution. The ways in which credit may be awarded are complex, and depend on the formal study for which recognition is sought.

There are different processes which apply to seeking credit, including those for:

- study previously undertaken at the same Australian higher education institution;
- study previously undertaken at an Australian university with reciprocal credit arrangements;
- study previously undertaken with an institution (Australian or overseas) with which an Australian higher education institution has a partnership agreement that includes recognition of formal study for credit in certain programs of study; and
- study previously undertaken in courses for which there are some structured credit arrangements.

All Australian universities have information about credit transfer and articulation arrangements which can be accessed from www.goingtouni.edu.au. Information is updated regularly, and many universities provide a credit transfer database that is interactive and can be searched by students who wish to match their existing qualifications with the list of possible credits that may be available in programs of study offered.

Credit transfer and RPL

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is for students to seek recognition of previous informal training, work experience, professional development, professional licensing and examinations and other work-based education and training.

Cross sector qualification linkages

Most higher education institutions allow some credit transfer from vocational education and training (VET) sector accredited courses of Registered Training Organisations (RTOs), depending on the level of the VET course and its relevance to the proposed higher education studies.

Australia also has a small number of dual-sector universities which offer both VET and higher education programs. Private higher education institutions may also be RTOs and structure their courses to allow for credit transfer across the sectors.

The Australian Qualifications Framework Advisory Board (AQFAB) has co-ordinated major work in both credit transfer and Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL).

For more information, see:

- <http://www.aqf.edu.au/cs.htm>

MCEETYA has adopted good practice principles for credit transfer to promote improvements in institutional practice.

For more information, see:

- www.mceetya.edu.au/mceetya/report_of_the_national_study_on_credit_transfer,11910.html

Types of institutions

There are two types of higher education institutions in Australia:

- universities; and
- non-university higher education institutions – including both self-accrediting and non-self-accrediting institutions.

All higher education institutions offer qualifications under the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF). Recognised institutions and can be found on a national register.

For more information, see:

- www.aqf.edu.au/register.htm

Universities

Australia has 37 public and two private universities, one approved branch of an overseas university (Carnegie Mellon University) and four other self-accrediting higher education providers. Universities and other self-accrediting higher education providers in Australia are established or recognised under state and territory or Commonwealth legislation.

Australian universities differ in size. The largest have around 40,000 students and the smallest have around 2,000 students. Many universities are located in the major cities but others are in smaller regional centres. Larger universities usually have a number of campuses. Most universities are organised on the basis of faculties or schools but may also have a number of specialised research centres or institutes.

Universities are multi-disciplinary whereas non-university higher education institutions tend to offer a narrower range of studies, in some cases offering programs in only one or two fields of study.

Universities are self-governing and are responsible for their own management structure, budgets, resource allocation, staff matters, student enrolments, accreditation of qualifications, quality assurance and curricula development.

Non-university higher education institutions

Australia also has around 150 higher education institutions approved by state and territory authorities to offer particular higher education courses. These higher education institutions offer courses approved by state and territory government accreditation authorities in a range of areas including theological studies, business and information technology and arts and health related studies.

Accreditation and quality assurance

Quality Assurance Framework

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

The following are the principal elements of the quality assurance framework for higher education.

National Protocols

The *National Protocols for Higher Education Approval Processes* have been designed to ensure consistent criteria and standards across Australia in the following areas:

- the recognition of new universities and protection of the title 'university';
- the operation of overseas higher education institutions in Australia;
- the accreditation of higher education courses to be offered by non-self-accrediting institutions;
- program delivery arrangements for higher education institutions involving other organisations; and
- the endorsement of courses for overseas students.

The *National Protocols* were first approved by the Australian Government and state and territory governments in 2000. Revised *National Protocols* were approved in 2007 along with detailed *National Guidelines* for approval and accreditation processes.

For more information, see:

- www.mceetya.edu.au/mceetya/national_protocols_for_higher_education_mainpage,15212.html

The Australian Qualifications Framework

Australia has a single national and comprehensive system of qualifications within the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF). The AQF is a national system covering 17 different qualifications and linking universities, vocational education and training, and school education.

The AQF specifies the required learning outcomes for each qualification achieved and shows pathways to further education. The AQF also maintains a public register of approved institutions and accreditation authorities.

For more information, see:

- <http://www.aqf.edu.au>

Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA)

The Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA) conducts quality assurance audits of higher education institutions. The focus of these audits includes teaching, learning, research and management. AUQA also conducts quality assurance audits of the state and territory higher education accreditation authorities.

Audits are conducted every five years. Quality audits are undertaken by panels of experts with substantial senior academic and administrative experience in higher education. Institutional

audits assess the internal quality assurance mechanisms of each institution and the maintenance and improvement of standards. Audits also examine the offshore operations of Australian universities, if applicable. The outcomes of audits are made public.

For more information on AUQA, see:

- <http://www.auqa.edu.au>

Accreditation

Australian Government responsibilities

The Australian Government provides significant funding to higher education institutions. As a condition of funding, institutions must meet a range of quality and accountability requirements that are set out in the *Higher Education Support Act 2003*.

The legislation requires that an institution must:

- operate at an appropriate level of quality;
- comply with an authorised accreditation authority listed on the Australian Qualification Framework Register; and
- be audited by an independent quality agency.

The Australian Government also monitors the provision of education and training services to international students in Australia through the *Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) Act 2000* and associated legislation.

For more information, see:

- http://www.dest.gov.au/sectors/international_education/policy_issues_reviews/key_issues/esos/default.htm

State and territory government responsibilities

State and territory governments are responsible for the administration of university legislation, accrediting new universities and accrediting higher education courses offered by non-self-accrediting institutions. Higher education in Australia's external territories, such as Norfolk Island, is regulated by the Australian Government.

Once a higher education institution is accredited, it is listed on the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) Register of Recognised Education Institutions and Authorised Accreditation Authorities in Australia. The state and territory higher education accreditation authorities are also listed on the AQF Register.

University responsibilities

Universities are self-accrediting and have authority to accredit their own programs and are primarily responsible for their own quality assurance.

Universities have internal processes for assessing new courses. Accreditation of new courses usually involves consultation with relevant industry or professional bodies, accreditation by these bodies, and formal consideration and approval by Academic Boards. Normally courses are reviewed for reaccreditation every five years.

External bodies in quality assurance and accreditation

External bodies play an integral role in assuring the continuing high quality of higher education in Australia. Professional bodies accredit higher education courses in certain professions, higher degrees by research are externally evaluated, and universities cooperate to provide peer reviews in the competitive grants process.

Administration and finance

The Australian Government has significant financial and policy responsibility for higher education, while state and territory governments retain major legislative responsibility. At a federal level higher education policies and programs are administered by the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations – DEEWR (formerly known as the Department of Education, Science and Training - DEST). The provision of government funding is outlined in the *Higher Education Support Act 2003*.

Consultation between the Australian Government and the states and territories occurs at Ministerial level through the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA), and at an official level through the Joint Committee on Higher Education (JCHE), which advises MCEETYA on higher education matters.

For more information, see:

- <http://www.mceetya.edu.au/mceetya/default.asp?id=11408>

The Australian Government also provides substantial funding to the higher education sector in support of research through various grants and programs:

- Institutional Grants Scheme;
- Research Training Scheme;
- Research Infrastructure Block Grants;
- Australian Postgraduate Awards; and
- Research projects administered by the Australian Research Council (ARC) and National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC).

Fees and charges

Higher education students in Australia are subject to a range of fees and charges. There are several funding options available to students. Australian students can undertake higher education studies at an approved Australian higher education provider as either a Commonwealth-supported student or a fee-paying student. Both of these options require students to pay for their education, but the amount differs significantly.

Commonwealth supported places and HECS-HELP

Most undergraduate students are in Commonwealth supported places (formerly known as HECS places). This means that the Australian Government has made a financial contribution to the higher education provider through the Commonwealth Grant Scheme (CGS) for those places. Students are also required to make a contribution towards the cost of their education. Australian citizens, New Zealand citizens and permanent resident visa holders are eligible for Commonwealth supported places.

The student contribution can be paid directly to the higher education institution or an eligible student can take out a HECS-HELP loan. Students with a HECS-HELP loan incur a Higher Education Loan Program (HELP) debt and are not required to repay their loan until their personal income exceeds the minimum threshold for compulsory repayment. After exceeding the personal income threshold, the loan is repaid gradually through the taxation system.

For more information on Commonwealth supported places and HECS-HELP, see:

- <http://www.goingtouni.gov.au/>

Fee-paying places and FEE-HELP

In addition to Commonwealth-supported places there are also fee-paying places. Universities must fill their Commonwealth-supported places before offering fee-paying places to domestic students. The majority of non-research postgraduate courses and a small number of undergraduate courses are fee-paying.

Fee-paying places require students to contribute the full cost of their education, without the subsidies given to students in Commonwealth-supported places through the Commonwealth Grant Scheme. As with Commonwealth-supported places, there are financing options available to students to help cover their contributions.

FEE-HELP is a loan program to assist students studying in a domestic fee-paying place. Australian citizens and permanent humanitarian visa holders may be eligible for FEE-HELP assistance. Students are only required to begin repaying their loan when their income reaches the minimum repayment threshold.

The Australian Government intends to phase out domestic fee-paying undergraduate places at public universities from 2009. Fee-paying students who begin their courses before then will be able to continue on a fee-paying basis.

For more information on fee-paying places and FEE-HELP, see:

- <http://www.goingtouni.gov.au/Main/Resources/FEEHELPinformation/Default.htm>

Other financial assistance options

The Australian Government has several programs which provide financial assistance to students. These include:

- Research Training Scheme – for eligible students undertaking research-based Master and Doctoral Degrees;
- Australian Postgraduate Awards – for eligible students undertaking research-based Master and Doctoral Degrees; and
- Commonwealth Learning Scholarships – for eligible students from low socio-economic backgrounds to assist with either educational costs or accommodation costs.

Vocational education and training

Australia's vocational education and training (VET) system is founded on a partnership between governments and industry. Representatives of industry groups and employers play a central and critical role in determining training policies and priorities, and in developing training qualifications that can deliver the skills employers need for the workforce.

For more than 15 years, Australia's national training system has provided high-quality and nationally recognised training developed by industry to about one in eight working-age Australians. The training system is based on competencies, nationally consistent and quality-assured.

Australian Qualifications Framework

The Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) was established in 1995. The Framework links qualifications from school, vocational education and training and higher education sectors. It is a quality-assured national system. AQF vocational education and training qualifications focus on competency in occupational skills.

The AQF recognises prior learning or current competence, and makes credit transfer and flexible learning pathways easier. AQF VET qualifications are outcomes based, and focus on the skills and competencies gained rather than on the length or type of course studied.

Schools Sector	Vocational Education and Training Sector	Higher Education Sector
		Doctoral Degree
		Masters Degree
	Vocational Graduate Diploma	Graduate Diploma
	Vocational Graduate Certificate	Graduate Certificate
		Bachelor Degree
	Advanced Diploma	Associate Degree Advanced Diploma
	Diploma	Diploma
Senior Secondary Certificate of Education	Certificate IV	
	Certificate III	
	Certificate II	
	Certificate I	

For more information, see:

- <http://www.aqf.edu.au>

National Training Information Service (NTIS)

The National Training Information Service is a useful resource for information about the Australian VET sector. NTIS is an online database of:

- Registered Training Organisations (RTOs);
- Training Packages and competency standards;
- national qualifications based on Training Packages;
- accredited courses not covered by Training Packages; and
- state and territory registering bodies.

For more information, see:

- <http://www.ntis.gov.au>

Courses and qualifications

Vocational education and training (VET) programs that lead to AQF qualifications are developed through the National Skills Framework. The Framework has two key aspects:

- quality delivery – through the Australian Quality Training Framework 2007 (AQTF 2007); and
- quality training products – through training packages, accredited courses and support material.

AQTF 2007 comprises national standards for the registration and auditing of training providers, national standards for state and territory registering bodies and national standards for the accreditation of courses.

Training Packages and accredited courses provided by Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) lead to the following AQF qualifications:

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

The Australian VET sector is flexible, with multiple pathways to nationally recognised qualifications. Vocational education and training can be undertaken in schools, in the workplace, in training organisations, by distance education, by apprenticeship or traineeship or by Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL).

The length of programs depends upon:

- the skills previously acquired before undertaking the program;
- the rate of achieving the new skills and competencies and assessment outcomes; and
- credit transfer/advanced standing used to reduce the length of study.

Training Packages

Training Packages are nationally recognised and developed by industry to meet industry needs. A Training Package usually includes more than one AQF qualification, depending on the type and level of competencies achieved, and the options for specialisation. Training Packages are delivered by Registered Training Organisations (RTOs).

Training Packages offered by RTOs:

- lead to AQF qualifications which are nationally recognised and are considered comparable regardless of the method of attaining the award; and
- are listed on <http://www.ntis.gov.au>.

Program requirements for Training Packages vary, depending on the specialisation. Both theoretical and practical studies are normally required. Details about the content of Training Packages are available on the National Training Information Service (NTIS) database.

For more information, see:

- <http://www.ntis.gov.au>

Accredited courses

AQF VET qualifications can also be gained through accredited courses. These are courses that address skill requirements for industry, enterprises and the community where these are not covered by nationally endorsed Training Packages.

Accredited courses are usually developed by RTOs and accredited by state and territory training authorities. These courses must meet national accreditation standards. They consist of theoretical and practical studies linked to competencies or modules. The proportion of theory and practice varies depending on the field or occupation and the level of skills being developed. Practical training may be undertaken at the RTO or in the workplace.

Assessment

Both Training Package qualifications and accredited courses are assessed against a range of specified competency standards. Assessment is conducted during and/or at the end of the program. Programs are most commonly organised on a semester basis with two semesters per year.

Assessment is generally based on a combination of tests or examinations, projects, practical exercises and tests. Theoretical and practical aspects of the program are often assessed by teaching staff within the RTO. The workplace components are usually assessed either by teaching staff from the RTO or by qualified industry-based workplace assessors.

Workplace-based programs and courses

Workplaces may engage a RTO to offer programs for their employees. Some workplaces may also be RTOs. The organisation of programs based largely in the workplace is variable and includes:

- workplace training in combination with RTO-based training, off-the-job;
- workplace training only; and
- no training, only workplace assessment of skills.

Workplace training allows the customisation of training programs to meet the needs of both employers and employees. It gives full-time employees access to learning and employees can receive credit for years of learning on-the-job. It can provide a pathway to a nationally recognised qualification for employees if a registered training organisation is involved.

Australian Apprenticeships

The national scheme for apprenticeships and traineeships is called Australian Apprenticeships (formerly known as New Apprenticeships). Australian Apprenticeships are contracts of training between an employer and an employee. Apprentices agree to achieve a level of competency through a combination of work-based training and training with a RTO. These programs can be taken either part time or full time and are sourced from Training Packages.

These programs lead to skills that are recognised nationally by the relevant industry, and to AQF qualifications. Australian Apprenticeships cover both traditional trade areas and non-trade areas in service and para-professional 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 are the responsibility of the state and territory training authorities working in co-operation with employers and RTOs. All training agreements are registered with the relevant state or territory training authority.

For more information, see:

- <http://www.australianapprenticeships.gov.au>

AQF qualifications in the VET sector

For more detailed information about the following qualifications please see the AQF Implementation Handbook:

- <http://www.aqf.edu.au/implem.htm>

Certificate I, II, III and IV

A Certificate I, II, III or IV qualification can be gained through a number of pathways including apprenticeship, traineeship, RTO-based training, school-based training and Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL).

In addition to literacy, numeracy and communication skills, students are expected to achieve industry competencies in their chosen field. The complexity of these competencies increases with each Certificate level.

The length of time taken to complete a program leading to a Certificate qualification depends on how long it takes to achieve the required competencies. Graduates can progress to further education or employment.

Certificate I

The Certificate I is a preparatory qualification focussing on a range of basic employment-related skills. The competencies demonstrate the ability to perform a defined range of activities or basic practical skills under direction, most of which would be routine and predictable.

Certificate II

Certificate II competencies demonstrate the ability to carry out a specific range of routine functions and procedures with some complex or non-routine activities. They include basic operational knowledge and a defined range of skills. They also demonstrate the ability to apply known solutions to a limited range of predictable problems. Many Australian Apprenticeships or lead to a Certificate II.

Certificate III

Certificate III competencies demonstrate some relevant theoretical knowledge and the ability to perform a defined range of well-developed skills. They involve known routines, methods and procedures, but with some discretion and judgement required. Responsibility for personal work and the work of others is required. A large number of Australian Apprenticeships lead to a Certificate III.

Certificate IV

Certificate IV competencies demonstrate understanding of a broad knowledge base incorporating some theoretical concepts. They include the ability to perform a broad range of skilled applications, including evaluating and analysing current practices, developing new criteria and procedures for performing current practices, and providing supervision and leadership in the

workplace. Certificate IV competencies demonstrate the skills needed for some technician-level and first-line supervisory or management occupations.

A broad range of occupations and fields of study are covered at this level as well as a small number of Australian Apprenticeships.

Diploma

Diploma programs aim to prepare students for employment in technical or management roles and develop initiative and independence. They are based on Training Packages or accredited courses, and meet national competency standards. Competencies demonstrate understanding of a broad knowledge base incorporating theoretical concepts with substantial 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 or management skills to a range of situations, and to analyse and evaluate information or applications or programs.

A Diploma can be gained through a number of pathways including work-based training, RTO-based training and Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL). RTO-based Diploma programs normally require two years of full-time study, or the equivalent part time.

The Diploma is also a higher education sector qualification. Diploma graduates may continue to employment or further education in the VET sector (usually an Advanced Diploma program), or under certain articulation agreements, in the higher education sector (with up to one year advanced standing in a Bachelor Degree program).

Advanced Diploma

Advanced Diploma programs aim to prepare students for employment in technical or management roles and develop complex techniques, specialised knowledge of the specialisation, initiative and personal accountability. They are based on Training Packages or accredited courses, and meet national competency standards. Competencies at this level demonstrate an understanding of specialised knowledge with substantial depth in some areas, and the ability to apply a significant range of fundamental principles and complex techniques across a wide, highly specialised variety of contexts. On achievement of the competencies, students have highly developed analytical, diagnostic, technical and/or creative abilities that can be applied in specialised areas.

The Advanced Diploma can be gained through a number of pathways including work-based training, RTO-based training and Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL). RTO-based Advanced Diploma programs normally require two or three years of full-time study, or the equivalent part-time.

The Advanced Diploma is also a higher education sector qualification. Advanced Diploma graduates may continue to employment or further education in the VET sector (usually a Vocational Graduate Certificate), or under certain articulation agreements, in the higher education sector (with up to two years advanced standing in a Bachelor Degree program).

Vocational Graduate Certificate and Diploma

The Vocational Graduate Certificate and the Vocational Graduate Diploma were introduced in 2005. They are more vocationally oriented programs than the Graduate Certificate or Graduate Diploma in the higher education sector. Programs focus on industry competencies more than

academic outcomes. They also provide a VET pathway from a Bachelor Degree for specialist industries or those that require specific occupational competencies.

Vocational Graduate Certificate

Vocational Graduate Certificate programs aim to build on prior knowledge and skills in specialised vocational areas. Programs emphasise skills in initiation, analysis, planning and evaluation for technical and management functions.

A Vocational Graduate Certificate can be gained through a number of pathways including work-based training, RTO-based training and education, a combination of this or Recognition of Prior Learning. Length of study varies depending on the pathway but normally requires six months of full-time study or the equivalent.

Graduates may continue to employment or further education in the VET sector (usually a Vocational Graduate Diploma with up to 50% advanced standing), under certain articulation agreements, continue to a coursework Master Degree program.

Vocational Graduate Diploma

Vocational Graduate Diploma programs aim to build on prior knowledge and skills in specialised vocational areas. Programs emphasise skills in initiation, analysis, planning and evaluation for highly specialised functions.

A Vocational Graduate Diploma can be gained through a number of pathways including work-based training, RTO-based training and education, a combination of this or Recognition of Prior Learning. Length of study varies depending on the pathway but normally requires one year of full-time study or the equivalent.

Graduates may continue to employment or, under certain articulation agreements, continue to a coursework Master Degree program.

AQF documentation

Documentation provided for AQF vocational education and training qualifications should include a certificate or diploma with the following information:

- the name and logo of the RTO and its national provider number;
- the name of the Australian Qualifications Framework qualification, e.g. Certificate IV;
- the industry descriptor with the occupational or functional stream in brackets, e.g. Information Technology (Systems Analysis and Design);
- the logo for nationally recognised training (NRT);
- the logo for the state/territory registering body;
- the language of delivery and assessment if not English;
- the words *the qualification certified herein is recognised within the Australian Qualifications Framework*; and
- the words *achieved through Australian Apprenticeship arrangements* where appropriate.

A transcript is normally provided with the following information:

- a list of the units of competency from the Training Packages, or competencies or modules from accredited courses - these may be referred to as national modules or competencies; and
- a list of the courses completed where appropriate.

Statement of Attainment

Statements of Attainment are issued by RTOs to students who complete units of competency or modules from a Training Package or accredited course, but do not complete the entire program leading to an AQF qualification. Statements of Attainment are not a VET qualification in their own right, but indicate completion of one or more national recognised units of competency or modules. They can be used for employment purposes or for admission or advanced standing in another program.

Previous VET qualifications

Before the implementation of the current national VET system in the mid 1990s, technical and vocational education was developed by each state and territory to meet the needs of business and industry.

Most vocational education and training was provided by TAFE colleges and institutes with only a small number of private training organisations offering programs. Programs and courses offered by vocational education and training providers were developed by the institutions or relevant education authorities often in conjunction with local employers or industry advisory bodies, and were accredited through the state or territory training/recognition authorities.

The curriculum combined theoretical and practical components relevant to the subject area and level of education/training. In many fields, practical training in the workplace was included. Programs were based on the awards under the Register of Australian Tertiary Education (RATE) which included:

- Certificate;
- Advanced Certificate;
- Associate Diploma; and
- Diploma*.

**The Diploma in the RATE system represents a different level of achievement to the Diploma in the AQF system.*

Trade training was regulated by the states and territories and usually involved an apprenticeship combined with formal training at a TAFE college. Certificates awarded on completion were either called Trade Certificates or Craft Certificates. An apprenticeship would take three to four years to complete. Apprenticeships could only be undertaken in occupations such as plumbing, gas-fitting, electrical, automotive, and carpentry and joinery.

Admission requirements

AQF courses and qualifications

Entry to VET programs is flexible. There are many pathways into VET programs, and admission can be based on a number of factors, such as:

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

Programs that have an entry requirement of Year 12 do not usually require a Tertiary Entrance Score. Programs may have prerequisites such as mathematics or English at Year 12 level.

Some programs require a prerequisite qualification. For example, entry to a Diploma of Community Services Management can be based on a Certificate IV in any community service area or a Certificate III in an aged-care area.

Some programs have additional entry requirements such as a demonstrated ability or interest in the chosen field, work experience, or an interview.

Pathways between VET and higher education

The VET system has multiple pathways. The pathways provide choices for individuals to move between study and training undertaken at school, at an RTO, at university, or in the workplace.

Movement between vocational education and training and higher education programs is based on articulation agreements between institutions. Articulation often involves a sequential pathway between qualifications in vocational education and training and higher education, allowing students to progress from one qualification to the next, and offering multiple entry and exit points.

Students also move between the two sectors through credit-transfer arrangements, which involve the recognition of prior study in the form of:

- block credit – stages or years of a course;
- specified credit – competencies in vocational education and training explicitly recognised as equivalent to units in higher education; and/or
- unspecified credit – in the form of course credit points or similar.

Articulation and credit transfer

The VET system encourages articulation between different levels of qualifications or different fields of training, and between education and employment.

Direct articulation refers to one program leading to another, such as a Certificate II in one field which articulates to courses at Certificate III level in several fields.

Individual institutions may have credit transfer arrangements with other VET providers. Students may receive exemptions for the credit value of program completed for further study or training

options at another institution. For example, a Diploma or Advanced Diploma program may articulate into a Bachelor Degree program, usually into the second year.

For institutions without formal articulation agreements credit transfer can be arranged on a case-by-case basis.

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

Recognition of Prior Learning is an alternative entry pathway. Applicants may apply to individual training organisations for an assessment of their existing or current skills and knowledge, and be granted admission to or advanced standing in a particular program.

Recognition of Prior Learning can be based on formal study, work experience, informal study undertaken for personal or recreational interests, industry- or enterprise-based learning, and life experiences.

Types of institutions

Vocational education and training is offered by Registered Training Organisations (RTOs). Only RTOs can issue nationally recognised qualifications and statements of attainment. These institutions must comply with the requirements and standards of the Australian Quality Training Framework. The current version of the framework is AQTF 2007. Training Organisations are registered and quality assured by state and territory registering bodies and the National Audit and Registration Agency.

There are more than 4000 Registered Training Organisations, consisting of 78 TAFE institutes and other government providers, with the remainder being private providers.

Registered Training Organisations (RTOs)

RTOs are organisations that have been approved to offer VET programs by meeting the national quality standards outlined in AQTF 2007. All RTOs must be registered with a state or territory training authority and are then listed on the National Training Information Service (NTIS) website. RTOs offer programs leading to AQF qualifications. Some RTOs are also higher education providers and offer Associate Degrees and Bachelor Degrees which are part of the higher education sector.

For more information about the NTIS, see:

- <http://www.ntis.gov.au>

Public Registered Training Organisations

Public RTOs include colleges and institutes of Technical and Further Education (TAFEs) and a range of specialist institutions.

Technical and Further Education (TAFE) institutions

TAFEs are the largest providers of vocational education and training in Australia. They are owned and administered by state and territory governments. TAFEs may be called institutes of technology or colleges or institutes. Some TAFEs are affiliated with universities.

They offer a comprehensive range of programs on-site, in workplaces and in schools. TAFEs mostly operate on a two semester or three-term year. Programs are based on Training Packages or are accredited by the relevant state or territory training authority. Program areas include information systems and technology, business, management, and VET teacher and assessor education.

Private Registered Training Organisations

Private RTOs are registered by a state or territory training authority. The training authority should be identified on the documentation issued by private RTOs.

Private RTOs include:

- independent colleges and commercial training businesses;
- enterprises; and
- industry and business associations.

Private RTOs are sometimes referred to as private providers. They may be called colleges, schools or institutes, with a few called institutes of technology. The most common fields of study offered by private RTOs are business, computing, hospitality and tourism.

Some private RTOs offer assessment services only and do not offer education and training programs. They provide assessment services for employers who are offering workplace training or are seeking assessment of the skills of their employees in the workplace.

Adult and Community-based Registered Training Organisations

Community-based RTOs include:

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

Australian Technical Colleges

Australian Technical Colleges are for senior secondary students in Years 11 and 12 to enrol in part-time apprenticeships in traditional trades while they complete their final years at school. They provide academic studies relevant to a career in trade and trade-related vocational courses as well as developing employability and entrepreneurial skills. Technical colleges focus on key industries such as metals and engineering, automotive, building and construction, electro-technology and commercial cookery.

For more information, see:

- <http://www.australiantechnicalcolleges.gov.au>

Accreditation and quality assurance

The key elements of national vocational education and training system under the National Skills Framework are:

- quality delivery through the Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF 2007);
- quality training products through training packages, accredited courses and support material.

Australian Quality Training Framework

The Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF) provides the basis for a nationally consistent, high-quality VET system. AQTF 2007 was implemented on 1 July 2007 and improves national consistency.

AQTF 2007 includes standards for registration, auditing and quality assurance of the VET system and standards for accreditation processes. These include:

- standards for Registered Training Organisations;
- standards for state and territory registering bodies;
- standards for state and territory accrediting bodies; and
- standards for accredited courses.

These AQTF 2007 standards were developed collaboratively with the Australian Government and the state and territory governments, industry and training organisations.

For more information, see the ‘publications’ link:

- <http://www.training.com.au/aqtf2007>

Principle of national recognition

The principle of national recognition is the cornerstone of the AQTF, and ensures the operation of a nationally consistent VET system. National recognition has two elements:

- national recognition of RTOs – each state and territory recognises the decisions of all other states and territories in registering training organisations under the AQTF. This enables an RTO to operate in any state or territory without a further registration process; and
- national recognition of qualifications and statements of attainment – RTOs recognise and accept AQF qualifications and statements of attainment issued by other RTOs. This enables individuals to have national portability of the qualifications and statements of attainment they achieve.

Training Packages

Training Packages are nationally recognised VET programs developed by industry. They are endorsed at a national level. Training Packages contain three core quality-assurance components:

- national industry competency standards;
- assessment guidelines; and
- national qualifications under the Australian Qualifications Framework.

Accredited courses

If there is no Training Package offered in a certain area, the Australian system allows for state and territory training authorities to accredit additional VET courses and programs. Under the AQTF, nationally recognised vocational education and training is only available through RTOs offering a Training Package or an accredited course.

To be eligible for accreditation a course must be based on industry needs, must not duplicate outcomes of Training Packages and the final qualification must adhere to AQF descriptors. Also, national competency standards must be maintained, assessment policies must be in place and ongoing monitoring and evaluation processes are required.

For more information and state and territory training authority contact details, see:

- http://www.dest.gov.au/sectors/training_skills/policy_issues_reviews/key_issues/nts/lnk/government.htm

Administration and finance

The Australian Government contributes about one-third of government funding for vocational education and training, with the other two-thirds coming from state and territory governments. Australian Government funds are used to support national priorities.

National policies

The national system of vocational education and training is underpinned by a series of national policies and strategies that have guided and developed the vocational education and training sector to meet emerging skills needs.

The objectives of *Shaping Our Future – Australia’s National Strategy for VET 2004-2010* are to enable industry, employers and individuals to better respond to the multiple and diverse needs of business. It encourages partnerships between governments, industry and communities to plan and provide opportunities for learning in vocational education and training.

For more information, see:

- http://www.dest.gov.au/sectors/training_skills/policy_issues_reviews/key_issues/nts/dap/strategy.htm

Roles and responsibilities

The national training system brings together students, employers, governments and registered training organisations in the delivery of vocational education and training. Key roles include driving economic growth and addressing areas of skills needs. Through strong industry leadership, the national training system provides Australians with the skills needed to enter the workforce for the first time, to re-enter the workforce, to retrain for a new job, to upgrade skills for an existing job and to learn throughout their lives.

State and territory governments have constitutional responsibility for the management and administration of vocational education and training within their jurisdictions including state-level planning, regulation of training providers, allocation of funds to public and private training providers, setting student fees and charges and managing Technical and Further Education (TAFE) institutes.

The Australian Government has taken a national leadership role in vocational education and training, working collaboratively with states and territories and with industry, as part of the national Government’s responsibility for Australia’s national economic development. States and territories operate within the framework of national policies for vocational education and training to address specific priorities and needs in their individual jurisdictions.

Government investment

Under the 2005-2008 funding agreement, the Australian Government has committed to providing almost \$5 billion to states and territories to support their training systems.

In addition to the funding provided under the agreement, the Australian Government directly funds a number of programs to support the vocational education and training system. These include:

- Australian Apprenticeships, including support for employers and new apprentices;
- Australian Technical Colleges;

- Workplace English Language and Literacy Program which provides existing workers with English language, literacy and numeracy skills; and
- Language, Literacy and Numeracy Program which provides basic language, literacy and numeracy assistance to job seekers.

Industry investment

Employer contributions to training in Australia include:

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

Most employer-provided training takes the form of short courses or on-the-job training.

School education

School education in Australia includes preschool, preparatory, primary school, secondary school (or high school) and senior secondary school (or college). Schooling generally lasts for 13 years, from preparatory to senior secondary. School is compulsory until the age of 15 or 16, depending on the state or territory.

Schools include government schools, non-government schools including faith-based schools (such as Catholic or Islamic schools) and schools based on educational philosophies such as Montessori and Steiner. All non-government schools are registered with the state or territory education department and are subject to regular inspection. They generally use the same curricula as government schools and must conform to government requirements in terms of infrastructure and teacher registration.

Preschool

Preschool education is offered to children aged three to five. Preschool is the year before the preparatory year, and is not compulsory. It is sometimes referred to as kindergarten, as in Tasmania and Western Australia. Programs consist of several half-day sessions, or the equivalent in full days and combine structured learning and creative individual activities.

Preparatory year

School education begins with a preparatory year before Year 1. It is known as kindergarten, reception, pre-primary or transition. The preparatory year is not compulsory but enrolment is almost universal. The focus of the preparatory year is on the overall development of the child. The curriculum is linked to the primary curriculum and focuses on literacy, mathematics, physical skills, and personal and social skills in preparation for Year 1.

Primary school

Primary school is from Year 1 to Year 6 or 7. The emphasis is on developing English language and literacy skills, numeracy and simple mathematics, studies of society, health and creative activities.

There are no standard examination requirements for progression through primary school, and no formal certificates are awarded. Students progress to secondary school on the basis of having completed the final year of primary school and on the recommendations of teachers in consultation with parents. All students are accepted into secondary school without further examinations.

Secondary school

Secondary school is from Year 7 or 8 to Year 10. The first one or two years of secondary school are a general program 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), technological and applied studies, creative arts and personal development, health and physical education. Some subjects are offered at several levels of depth and complexity.

Senior secondary school

Senior secondary education covers Years 11 and 12. Senior secondary education offers several types of programs which prepare students for future study, employment, and adult life. The relevant state or territory Senior Secondary Certificate of Education is awarded on successful completion of Year 12. Different names are used for the certificates in each state and territory. There are also senior secondary awards outside the state and territory school systems, such as the International Baccalaureate.

For more information, see:

- School education outside state and territory systems, page 64

Vocational education and training in schools

Vocational education and training (VET) within the senior secondary system provides an alternative to higher education pathways.

School VET programs are undertaken alongside regular secondary subjects as part of studies leading to the relevant state or territory Senior Secondary Certificate of Education. They also provide credit towards a nationally recognised VET qualification on the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF). The majority of programs are at AQF Certificate I and II levels. The most popular fields are hospitality, information technology and business services.

Programs are delivered in schools, TAFE colleges or other Registered Training Organisations (RTOs), and local employers and businesses. The courses are developed from Training Package programs or are accredited VET courses.

Assessment of school education

There are annual tests in literacy and numeracy for Year 3, 5, 7 and 9 students around the country. This provides a nationally comparable system of reporting against agreed national minimum benchmarks. States and individual schools also have their own assessment tests.

Until Year 11, assessment is mainly carried out in schools using a variety of assessment methods including projects, assignments, group research and investigation, oral presentations, classroom tests and classroom participation. Assessment may also include school-wide examinations. State- or territory-wide external examinations may also be conducted.

In Year 11 and 12, the most common methods for senior secondary evaluation include external examination, moderated school-based assessment, non-moderated school-based assessment and external scaling tests.

Administration of school education

States and territories have primary responsibility for policy and administration of school education. The Australian Government has no day-to-day responsibilities for schools but provides funding and co-ordination.

Australian Government responsibilities

Support is provided through general recurrent, capital and targeted programs, policy development, research and analysis of nationally significant education issues. A key priority for the Australian Government is to provide a nationally consistent school system through a

common starting age, common national testing in key subject areas, consistency in curriculum outcomes, and a common information system for the transfer of student data when students move interstate.

State and territory government responsibilities

States and territories have primary responsibility for the organisation, 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 own policies and practices on organisation of schooling, curriculum, course accreditation, student assessment and certification. Curriculum and assessment is underpinned by the *National Goals for Schooling in the Twenty-first Century* which focuses on the learning outcomes for students and provides a framework for national reporting on student achievement.

For more information, see:

- http://www.dest.gov.au/sectors/school_education/policy_initiatives_reviews/national_goals_for_schooling_in_the_twenty_first_century.htm

Quality assurance of school education

Australia's state and territory governments play a significant role in the quality assurance of all education sectors. State and territory government agencies are responsible for accrediting qualifications and the registration of providers.

State and territory school education

Australian Capital Territory

Public school education in the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) is the responsibility of the ACT Department of Education and Training.

Formal school education is 13 years in length, including a preparatory year called Kindergarten which is not compulsory but almost universally undertaken, six years of primary school – Years 1 to 6, and six years of secondary school – Years 7 to 12. Public secondary schools offer a four-year program covering Years 7 to 10, and public secondary colleges provide education in Years 11 and 12. Some non-government schools offer education for Years 7 to 10 only, while others offer education across Years 7 to 12.

The ACT Curriculum Framework P-10, *Every Chance to Learn*, provides a structure for curriculum development from Preschool to Year 10 in the areas of: the arts, English, health and physical education, languages, mathematics, science, social sciences, technology and interdisciplinary studies.

Sector	Name/Years	Qualification	Awarding Body
Preschool	Preschool		
Preparatory	Kindergarten		
Primary	Years 1-6		
Secondary	Years 7-10	Australian Capital Territory Year 10 Certificate	School
Senior Secondary	Years 11-12	Australian Capital Territory Year 12 Certificate	ACT Board of Senior Secondary Studies

Preschool

Preschool is the non-compulsory year of part-time education the year before Kindergarten, and two years before Year 1. Twelve hours of free preschool education is provided for all eligible four-year-olds.

Primary school

Primary school includes Years 1 to 6.

Qualifications

There is no formal qualification awarded at the completion of primary school.

Access to secondary school

All primary school graduates are eligible to continue to secondary school.

Secondary school

Secondary school lasts for four years between Years 7 and 10.

Curriculum

Subjects include English, mathematics and health, physical education and sport. Other subjects include science, studies of society and the environment (SOSE), arts, technology and languages.

Qualifications

The ACT Year 10 School Certificate is awarded following successful completion of Years 9 and 10. Assessment for the Year 10 Certificate is school based and includes academic performance, attendance and conduct. The High School Record is awarded to those students ineligible for the ACT Year 10 School Certificate. Before 1989 students received both types of documentation.

Access to senior secondary school

Students with the ACT Year 10 School Certificate are eligible to continue to senior secondary education.

Senior secondary school

Senior secondary school consists of Years 11 and 12. Studies in Years 11 and 12 are the responsibility of the ACT Board of Senior Secondary Studies (BSSS).

Curriculum

Courses in the ACT are developed by schools, based on BSSS course frameworks. Courses consist of a number of units. There are four types of courses indicating the depth of study given to the particular subject area:

- a minor course of 2 units;
- a major course of at least 3.5 units;
- a major/minor course of 5.5 units; and
- and a double major course of 7 units.

Courses are classified as follows:

- **T courses** are accredited by the Board and prepare students for higher education. Achievement in the courses can contribute towards a Universities Admission Index.
- **H courses** are designed and accredited by an Australian university and are recognised by the Board. They contribute to a Year 11/12 program and can be recognised towards an undergraduate program. Achievement in the courses can contribute towards a Universities Admission Index.
- **A courses** are accredited by the Board and are suitable for all students in Years 11 and 12. The courses are not accepted for inclusion in a Universities Admission Index.
- **M courses** are accredited by the Board and are considered to provide appropriate educational experiences for students who satisfy specific disability criteria. The courses are not accepted for inclusion in a Universities Admission Index.
- **R courses or units** are registered with the Board and are designed to provide personal development, recreational or community service activities. The courses are not accepted for inclusion in a Universities Admission Index.
- **Vocational programs** are accredited by the Board and can lead to the award of a Vocational Certificate or Statement of Attainment. The content of the program is based on the competencies defined in the relevant Training Package and follows the requirements of the Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF). Vocational programs may be A, T or M courses.

Students can also take courses outside of the formal structured learning program. This includes school-based apprenticeships, which allow students to complete vocational and technical qualifications during their senior secondary studies.

Qualifications and assessment

The ACT Year 12 Certificate is awarded by the BSSS following a coherent program of BSSS accredited courses. The ACT Year 12 Certificate lists the units and courses studied, with a minimum of 17 units required and a unit being at least 55 hours of class time. The ACT Secondary College Record is awarded to students that do not complete the requirements for the ACT Year 12 Certificate.

In Years 11 and 12, assessment is continuous and school-based. For A and T courses, structured, consensus-based peer review moderation procedures are undertaken to achieve comparable standards across the system. Vocationally-oriented A and T courses are assessed against industry-endorsed competency standards where available. Unit grades are reported on a 5 point scale from A to E, with A representing the highest level of achievement. All teachers meet twice a year to moderate grades in all courses.

Access to higher education

Senior secondary school graduates that intend to continue to higher education receive a Tertiary Entrance Statement (TES) and a Universities Admission Index (UAI). Students use the UAI score to apply for admission to the university program of their choice.

Students can qualify for a TES through completing a TES package which includes a minimum of 20 units during Years 11 and 12, and sitting the Australian Scaling Test (AST). Eighteen units must be from A or T courses and at least three majors and one minor at the T level.

The ACT Scaling Test (AST) is used by the ACT Board of Senior Secondary Studies (BSSS) to facilitate statistical scaling of T scores across the ACT, both within and among colleges for the purpose of calculating the Universities Admission Index (UAI). The ACT Scaling Test aims to measure general skills relevant to success at university. The test enables students to be compared equitably regardless of the college attended.

The UAI is administered for NSW and ACT universities by the Universities Admissions Centre (NSW and ACT). The UAI is calculated on the scaled scores of the best three T majors plus part of the next best T score, and reported as a percentile ranking on a scale of 0-100 with intervals of 0.05.

New South Wales

The NSW Department of Education and Training is responsible for the administration of government school education in New South Wales (NSW).

The Board of Studies, New South Wales is responsible for curriculum development from Kindergarten to Year 12, and the assessment, examinations, and credentialing for the School Certificate – Year 10, and the Higher School Certificate – Years 11 and 12. The Board is also responsible for the registration of non-government schools.

School education is 13 years in length, made up of one preparatory year called Kindergarten which is not compulsory but is almost universally undertaken, primary school of six years – Years 1 to 6, and secondary school of six years – Years 7 to 12.

Sector	Name/Years	Qualification	Awarding Body
Preschool	Preschool		
Preparatory	Kindergarten		
Primary	Years 1-6		
Secondary	Years 7-10	School Certificate	Board of Studies, New South Wales
Senior Secondary	Years 11-12	Higher School Certificate (HSC)	Board of Studies, New South Wales

Preschool

Preschool is a non-compulsory year of part-time education the year before kindergarten. The number of half or full day sessions offered varies depending on the number of places available. Some preschools are operated by the Department of Education and Training but most are privately operated, in which case they are overseen by the Department of Community Services.

Primary school

Primary school includes Years 1 to 6. The key emphasis of primary education is literacy and numeracy.

Qualifications

There is no formal qualification awarded at the completion of primary school.

Access to secondary school

All primary school graduates are eligible to continue to secondary school.

Secondary school

Secondary school lasts for four years between Years 7 and 10.

Curriculum

There is a mandatory curriculum in addition to optional subjects. For the School Certificate to be awarded, students are required to take state-wide external tests in English-literacy, mathematics, science, Australian history, geography, civics and citizenship and computing skills.

Qualifications and assessment

The School Certificate is awarded following successful completion of Year 10. Assessment is school-based in terms of course performance descriptors. Students receive a Record of Achievement showing external test results together with grades for all subjects studied in Years 9 and 10. Schools award a Grade from A to E in each subject studied in Years 9 and 10. External test results are shown on a scale of 0 to 100.

Access to senior secondary school

All students with a School Certificate are eligible to continue to senior secondary school.

Senior secondary school

Senior secondary school consists of Years 11 and 12.

Curriculum

Students in senior secondary programs take courses leading to a Higher School Certificate (HSC). There are two types of HSC courses:

- Board Developed Courses – developed by the Board of Studies and available state-wide. They are examined on a state-wide basis. The results from the examination of Board Developed Courses can be included in the calculation of the Universities Admission Index (UAI) for university admission.
- Board Endorsed Courses – courses designed by individual schools or group of schools and endorsed by the Board, or courses developed by the Board based on examples of successful school-designed courses. These courses do not have state-wide examinations and results are not accepted for university admission.

Courses are usually worth two units. In some subjects additional units can be undertaken as extension courses. Each unit requires 60 hours of study per year (two hours of classroom time per week). At least two units of a Board Developed Course in English must be taken in Year 11 and Year 12.

Qualifications and assessment

The Higher School Certificate is awarded at the end of Year 12. To be awarded the HSC, students are required to take HSC courses worth a total of 22 units over Years 11 and 12. Students receive an HSC Record of Achievement showing all courses that have been satisfactorily completed, as well as marks and performance bands for Board Developed HSC Courses.

Students also receive a course report for each examinable HSC course, showing their assessment, examination and final HSC marks. There are also descriptions of the level of knowledge and skills typical of students in each band/mark range, as well as their state-wide position in the course.

Board Developed Courses are assessed by a combination of state-wide external examination and moderated school-based assessment. School-based assessment is statistically moderated against external examination marks. Board Endorsed Courses are assessed by school-based assessment and are reported as a mark out of 50 per unit.

Access to higher education

The Universities Admission Index (UAI) replaced the Tertiary Entrance Rank (TER) in 1998. It is administered for NSW and ACT universities by the Universities Admissions Centre (UAC).

The UAI is reported on a scale of 0 to 100 with intervals of 0.05. A scaled aggregate is calculated using the student's best 10 units, two of which must be English. A UAI indicates a student's ranking relative to other students, for example, a UAI of 90.00 puts a student in the top 10% of their cohort.

Technical and vocational school

Vocational education and training (VET) programs are available in the NSW school system, including part-time traineeships.

Qualifications and assessment

Students can obtain an award under the AQF for the VET studies completed during Years 11 and 12 at the same time as gaining the HSC. Completion of VET programs are reported on the Record of Achievement without marks but with reference to other documentation such as AQF awards.

Students may choose to sit for an optional written examination for some VET programs. In this case, the course will be reported on the HSC Record of Achievement with an examination mark, and the mark from this examination may be included in the calculation of the Universities Admission Index (UAI).

VET programs are assessed using industry-endorsed competency standards in the Training Packages developed by Australian industry bodies and endorsed under the Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF).

Northern Territory

School education in the Northern Territory is the responsibility of the Northern Territory Department of Employment, Education and Training (DEET).

Formal school education is 13 years in length, including a preparatory year called Transition which is not compulsory but almost universally undertaken and three years each of early, primary, middle and senior years of schooling.

The Northern Territory Curriculum Framework (NTCF) identifies learning outcomes up to Year 10.

Sector	Name/Years	Qualification	Awarding Body
Early Years	Preschool – Year 3		
Primary Years	Years 4 - 6		
Middle Years	Years 7 - 9		
Senior Years	Years 10-12	Northern Territory Certificate of Education (NTCE)	Northern Territory Board of Studies (NTBOS)

Preschool

Preschool is the non-compulsory year of part-time education prior to formal schooling. Preschool is offered as four or five half-day sessions per week.

Primary school

Primary school consists of part of the Early Years program, plus the Primary Years.

Qualifications

There is no qualification awarded at the completion of primary school.

Access to secondary school

All primary school graduates are eligible to continue to secondary school.

Secondary school

Secondary school consists of both the Middle Years and Senior Years.

Qualifications and assessment

There is no formal qualification awarded upon completion of school up to Year 10. Previously, the Northern Territory Year 10 Certificate or the Junior Secondary Studies Certificate was awarded at the end of Year 10.

Access to senior secondary school

All students who complete secondary school are eligible to continue to senior secondary school.

Senior secondary school

Studies in Years 11 and 12 are the responsibility of the Northern Territory Board of Studies (NTBOS). The curriculum, assessment and certification framework for the NTCE is based on the South Australian Certificate of Education (SACE) and is administered by the Senior Secondary Assessment Board of South Australia (SSABSA).

Curriculum

Subjects undertaken at the senior secondary level include English, mathematics, arts, humanities, social and cultural studies, science and technology.

Studies for the NTCE are undertaken in two stages: Stage 1 – generally Year 11, and Stage 2 – generally Year 12. Award of the NTCE requires students to undertake the following:

- 22 units of study, with at least:
 - 16 with a Satisfactory Achievement grade, including three two-unit sequences at Stage 2. (A unit is a semester length course of 50 to 60 hours of classroom and school-based activity. A 2 unit sequence is a year-long subject.)
- Satisfy the written literacy assessment.

NTCE subjects offered at Stages 1 and 2 are SSABSA Accredited Subjects. Higher Education Selection Subjects (HESS) may be HESS General or HESS Restricted. HESS General subjects can count towards any university course. The HESS Restricted subjects can count towards some university courses. The subjects are classified into five categories:

- Stage 1 subjects;
- Stage 2 publicly examined subjects (HESS General);
- Stage 2 publicly assessed subjects (HESS General);
- Stage 2 school assessed subjects (HESS Restricted); and
- Stage 2 school assessed – VET.

Qualifications and assessment

NTBOS awards the Northern Territory Certificate of Education (NTCE) following successful completion of program requirements. Besides the Northern Territory Certificate of Education, students also receive a Record of Achievement which records subject results that count towards their NTCE. A Statement of Results is issued on request.

At Stage 1, assessment is school-based using criteria and assessment components prescribed by SSABSA. Assessment plans are approved by DEET. At Stage 2, all subjects include at least 50% school-based assessment. All school-based assessments are moderated by SSABSA. Some subjects have an external assessment of up to 50%.

Access to higher education

Students can apply for university admission based on completion of the NTCE and their Tertiary Entrance Rank (TER). A University Aggregate is calculated from the five best Stage 2 scores. The University Aggregate is then used to place students in rank order. The TER is reported as a number between 0 and 99.95.

Students apply for entry to universities in the Northern Territory and South Australia through the South Australian Tertiary Admissions Centre (SATAC). Students apply to universities in other states through the relevant state admission centre.

Queensland

School education in Queensland is the responsibility of the Queensland Department of Education, Training and the Arts. Syllabuses for Years P-12 are the responsibility of the Queensland Studies Authority (QSA).

School education is 13 years in length with one year of preparatory education which is not compulsory but widely undertaken, seven years of primary school – Years 1 to 7, and five years of secondary school – Years 8 to 12.

Sector	Name/Years	Qualification	Awarding Body
Preparatory	Preparatory		
Primary	Years 1-7		
Secondary	Years 8-10		
Senior Secondary	Years 11-12	Queensland Certificate of Education Senior Statement Queensland Certificate of Individual Achievement	Queensland Studies Authority

Preschool

Preparatory is the non-compulsory year of full-time education offered before Year 1. The Preparatory Year provides a firm foundation for formal schooling. Children develop independence and social skills, oral language, literacy and numeracy understandings, creativity and curiosity about the world.

The QSA has developed the Early Learning Record which teachers use to build a picture of a child's learning and development during the Preparatory Year and on transition to Year 1. Assessment for the Early Learning Record is standards-based. Preparatory teachers discuss a folio of work with parents/carers and forward a report to Year 1 teachers.

Primary school

Primary school includes Years 1 to 7.

Qualifications and assessment

There is no qualification awarded at the completion of primary school.

Achievement in literacy and numeracy is monitored in Years 1 to 3. Assessment for Years 1 to 9 is school-based, and derived from the Queensland Curriculum, Assessment and Certification (QCAR) Framework Years 1-9 which will be implemented from 2008. Reports are issued to parents twice yearly.

Queensland Comparable Assessment Tasks (QCATs) are being developed for students in Years 4, 6 and 9. QCATs in English, Mathematics and Science will be trialled in 2008. The QCATs

provide information on what students know, understand and can do. QCATs are intended to promote consistency of assessment decisions across the state.

Access to secondary school

All primary school graduates are eligible to continue to secondary school.

Secondary school

Secondary school lasts for three years between Years 8 and 10.

Curriculum

Secondary curriculum is based on eight key learning areas including English, health and physical education, languages, mathematics, studies of society and the environment (SOSE), science, technology and the arts.

For more information about the secondary syllabus, see:

- <http://www.qsa.qld.edu.au/syllabus/574.html>

Qualifications and assessment

There is no formal qualification awarded at the completion of secondary school.

Access to senior secondary school

All students who successfully complete secondary school are eligible to continue to senior secondary school.

Senior secondary school

Senior secondary school consists of Years 11 and 12. Senior secondary education is based on programs leading to the Queensland Certificate of Education (QCE).

Curriculum

Requirements for the QCE include the following at the standard of Sound Achievement, Pass or equivalent grade:

- a minimum of 12 credits must come from completed core courses of study (including authority and authority-registered courses);
- a total of 8 credits from a combination of core, preparatory, enrichment or advanced courses may contribute towards the 20 credits;
- a maximum of 4 credits may come from preparatory courses; and
- literacy and numeracy requirements must be met.

For more information about course specifics, see:

- <http://www.qsa.qld.edu.au/certificates/3171.html>

For more information about senior secondary syllabus, see:

- <http://www.qsa.qld.edu.au/syllabus/671.html>

Qualifications and assessment

The Queensland Certificate of Education (QCE) is awarded upon completion of Year 11 and 12 requirements. Students must complete at least 20 credits at a set standard. The QCE is usually issued at the end of Year 12, but from 2009 will also be issued in July each year.

The Senior Statement is issued to students with at least one result in any course. It records what, where and when a student learned and the standard achieved. The Queensland Certificate of Individual Achievement (QCIA) is issued at the end of Year 12 to students with impairment or learning difficulties. It records individual learning achievements.

Most subjects are evaluated by externally-moderated school-based assessment based on the curriculum and assessment standards stated in syllabuses developed and accredited by the QSA.

In Years 11 and 12, most subjects are graded into five levels of achievement based on criteria and standards stated in syllabuses. The levels are:

VHA	Very High Achievement
HA	High Achievement
SA	Sound Achievement
LA	Limited Achievement
VLA	Very Limited Achievement

Access to higher education

Tertiary admission in Queensland is administered by the Queensland Tertiary Admissions Centre (QTAC). Eligible students are awarded Tertiary Entrance Statements which report Overall Positions (OPs), and up to five Field Positions (FPs). Students who are not eligible for an OP or FP may enter certain tertiary courses based on ranks calculated by QTAC.

The Overall Position (OP) indicates a student's rank order position based on overall achievements in Authority subjects. To be eligible for an OP, students are required to have the following:

- studied at least 20 semester units of authority subjects, three having been studied for four semesters each; and
- sat the Queensland Core Skills (QCS) Test to provide the scaling parameters for combining students' results in certain subjects to form OPs and FPs for tertiary entrance.

The OP uses equal weightings for all subjects and is scaled using QCS Test results. The OP of a student's rank order position is reported as being in one of 25 bands from Band 1 which is the highest to Band 25 which is the lowest.

Band 1	Around 2% of the student cohort
Bands 2-6	Around 15% of the student cohort
Bands 7-21	Around 70% of the student cohort
Bands 22-24	Around 11% of the student cohort
Band 25	Around 2% of the student cohort

Results in the QCS Test are reported as grades from A (highest) to E (lowest) on the Senior Statement.

Field Positions (FPs) indicate students' rank order positions based on overall achievements in Authority subjects in up to five fields. They are calculated only when students are eligible for an OP and use variable weightings for subjects, scaled using QCS Test results. FPs provide information on how students have performed in authority subjects. Field Positions are reported from Band 1 which is the highest down to Band 10 which is the lowest.

Technical and vocational school

Vocational education and training (VET) programs are available in the Queensland school system, including school-based traineeships and apprenticeships. In these programs students can undertake both training and employment leading to a recognised qualification while completing their school studies.

Qualifications and assessment

School-based traineeships lead to AQF Certificate II or III qualifications. Programs include practical training and contribute four credits for Certificate II and up to eight credits for Certificate III qualifications towards the Queensland Certificate of Education (QCE).

School-based apprenticeships lead to aAQF Certificate III qualifications. Competencies achieved in the apprenticeship program can contribute up to two credits towards the QCE, but are not counted towards completed core requirements. Students must also complete practical training of 96 days in a two year period, which can contribute four credits towards core requirements for a QCE.

Credit may also be given for incomplete VET programs undertaken as part of a traineeship or apprenticeship.

South Australia

School education in South Australia is the responsibility of the South Australian Department of Education and Children's Services.

Formal school education is 13 years in length, including a preparatory year, called Reception which is not compulsory but is almost universally undertaken, seven years of primary school – Years 1 to 7, and five years of secondary school – Years 8 to 12.

Sector	Name/Years	Qualification	Awarding Body
Preschool	Preschool		
Preparatory	Reception		
Primary	Years 1-7		
Secondary	Years 8-12	South Australian Certificate of Education	Senior Secondary Assessment Board of South Australia (SSABSA)

Preschool

Preschool is the non-compulsory year of part-time education the year before the preparatory year. Most students attend up to four half-day sessions per week.

Primary school

Primary school includes Years 1 to 7.

Qualifications and assessment

There is no formal qualification awarded at the completion of primary school.

Access to secondary school

All primary school graduates are eligible to continue to secondary school.

Secondary school

Secondary school lasts for five years between Years 8 and 12, with Years 11 and 12 comprising senior secondary studies.

Qualifications and assessment

There is no formal qualification awarded at the completion of secondary school.

Access to senior secondary school

All students who successfully complete Year 10 are eligible to continue to senior secondary studies in Years 11 and 12.

Senior secondary school

Studies in Years 11 and 12 are the responsibility of the Senior Secondary Assessment Board of South Australia (SSABSA). Successful study at Year 11 and 12 level leads to the South

Australian Certificate of Education (SACE). Studies for the SACE are undertaken in two stages: Stage 1 in Year 11 and Stage 2 in Year 12.

Senior secondary education in South Australia was being revised in 2007-08. A new SACE program will be implemented in 2009.

For more information, see:

- <http://www.futuresace.sa.gov.au/>

Curriculum

Stage 1 SACE subjects are SSABSA accredited subjects based on curriculum statements. Stage 2 SSABSA accredited subjects are known as HESS (Higher Education Selection Subjects) and are accepted for admission to university. HESS are classified as general – the subject can count towards any university course, or restricted – the subject can count towards some university courses. Students can also take VET subjects, which are restricted, and non-HESS subjects.

SACE subjects are offered in units. Each unit represents 50 to 60 hours of classroom and school-based activity time. Subjects are one unit for a semester-long subject or two units for a year-long subject. Students must take at least 22 units of Stage 1 and 2 subjects.

Subjects offered in senior secondary include English or English as Second Language, Australian studies, science and mathematics in addition to many others.

Qualifications and assessment

Students are awarded the South Australian Certificate of Education (SACE) following successful completion of Stage 1 and 2 to the required standards.

Students also receive a Record of Achievement which records subject results for Stage 1 and Stage 2. Eligible students also receive a Tertiary Entrance Statement for admission to higher education.

Assessment of Stage 1 subjects is school-based and moderated by SSABSA. Stage 2 subjects have at least 50% school-based assessment. Some Stage 2 subjects have an external assessment component of up to 50%. All Stage 2 subjects can be used in the calculation of the Tertiary Entrance Rank (TER).

Access to higher education

SACE students are also issued with a Tertiary Entrance Statement which has a Tertiary Entrance Rank (TER) for admission to higher education. The TER is derived from a university aggregate devised by the South Australian universities which is calculated on the five best subjects. It is reported as a number between 0 and 99.95.

Tertiary admission in South Australia is administered by the South Australian Tertiary Admissions Centre (SATAC). The Higher Education Entrance Score (HEES), used from 1993 to 1995 was calculated on five subjects at Stage 2, with a maximum score of 70. In 1996 the maximum score was increased to 90. The HEES was replaced by the Tertiary Entrance Rank (TER) in 1997.

Tasmania

School education in Tasmania is the responsibility of the Tasmanian Department of Education.

Formal school education is 13 years in length, including a preparatory year called Preparatory which is not compulsory but is almost universally undertaken, six years of primary school – Years 1 to 6, four years of secondary school – Years 7 to 10, and two years of senior secondary (post-compulsory) – Years 11 and 12.

Sector	Name/Years	Qualification	Awarding Body
Preschool	Kindergarten		
Preparatory	Preparatory		
Primary	Years 1-6		
Secondary	Years 7-10		
Senior secondary	Year 11-12	Tasmanian Certificate of Education Qualifications Certificate Tasmanian Certificate of Educational Achievement	Tasmanian Qualifications Authority

Preschool

Kindergarten is the non-compulsory year of part-time education the year before the preparatory year. The core kindergarten program is ten hours per week.

Primary school

Primary school includes Years 1 to 6.

Qualifications and assessment

There is no formal qualification awarded at the completion of primary school.

Access to secondary school

All primary school graduates are eligible to continue to secondary school.

Secondary school

Secondary school lasts for four years between Years 7 and 10.

Qualifications and assessment

There is no formal, centrally awarded qualification at the completion of Year 10.

Access to senior secondary school

All students who successfully complete Year 10 are eligible to continue to senior secondary studies in Years 11 and 12.

Senior secondary school

Years 11 and 12 are the responsibility of the Tasmanian Qualifications Authority (TQA), which awards the Tasmanian Certificate of Education (TCE).

Curriculum

Tasmanian Qualifications Authority (TQA) accredited senior secondary courses are offered in learning areas such as the arts, English, health and physical education, information technology, languages, mathematics, science, society and environment, technology and manufacturing studies.

TQA accredited senior secondary courses are differentiated by their size value and level of complexity. The size value relates to the nominal delivery or design time. Every 10 hours of nominal delivery time equates to one size rating (for example, size value 7 equates to 70 hours). Before 2008, the size of courses was indicated by A, B or C (50, 100 and 150 hours respectively) in the syllabus name. In 2007 the TQA introduced a new system to describe levels of complexity. This system includes TQA levels 1, 2 and 3. Before 2007 the TCE level system (levels 2 to 5) was used. The relationship between the TQA levels of complexity and other systems is as follows:

TQA Level	TCE Level	AQF Level
Level 3	Level 5	Level III
Level 2	Levels 3 and 4	Level II
Level 1	Level 2	Level I

Only results in TQA level 3 courses with a size value of 15 (TCE level 5 C syllabuses) contribute to the calculation of Tertiary Entrance Ranks.

Qualifications and assessment

Before 2009 the Tasmanian Certificate of Education (TCE) was issued to all students at the completion of their senior secondary studies. It listed the TCE courses and awards gained by students, and vocational education and training (VET) courses or units of competency, and TQA recognised formal learning.

From 2009 the TQA will issue three certificates:

- Qualifications Certificate (QC) - replacing the previous TCE which functioned as a 'record of results'
- Tasmanian Certificate of Education (TCE) - following a 2 year program that meets a set of five standards: literacy; numeracy; information communication technology (ICT) skills; participation and achievement; and pathway planning. This program can include TQA accredited courses, VET courses/units, and other TQA recognised formal learning
- Tasmanian Certificate of Educational Achievement (TCEA) – a narrative certificate issued when the QC or TCE does not give an adequate description of a student's senior secondary participation and achievement.

Assessment of senior secondary courses has traditionally been criterion-based. Since 2008, courses using competency-based assessment have been accredited by the TQA. The award system varies depending on the assessment methodology. Courses using competency-based

assessment typically have an award of 'Pass' or 'Satisfactory Completion'. Courses using criterion-based assessment employ a five level award system:

EA	Exceptional Achievement
HA	High Achievement
CA	Commendable Achievement
SA	Satisfactory Achievement
PA	Preliminary Achievement

Senior secondary courses at TQA level 1 and 2 are assessed by education providers. The quality assurance of results reported by education providers to the TQA is the responsibility of the TQA. A variety of models are employed, including quality assurance audits and assessment of samples of student work. All courses that contribute to the calculation of Tertiary Entrance Ranks (TQA level 3 courses with a size value of 15) are assessed externally. External assessment is controlled by the TQA and includes formal written examinations, folios of student work, performances, and oral testing (in languages). External assessment places an upper limit on the award achievable by a student in those courses where internal assessments made by education providers are considered in the award algorithm.

For more information, see:

- <http://www.tqa.tas.gov.au>

Access to higher education

The TQA calculates a nationally comparable Tertiary Entrance Rank (TER) for students who have completed two years (or the equivalent) of senior secondary study and have satisfactorily completed a minimum of four TQA level 3 size value 15 (TCE level 5 C) courses, with at least three being done in Year 12.

A maximum of the equivalent of five TQA level 3 courses can count towards the TER, provided they were undertaken in Year 12 and one other year. A student who has completed the same eligible course twice can only count one of the two results towards a TER. If a student does more than the maximum number of courses (equivalent to five TQA level 3 courses), the TQA will determine which courses need to be counted to maximise their score.

In 2006, the University of Tasmania approved schedules and tables allowing the determination of an equivalent TER for students not eligible for a regular TER, up to a maximum equivalent TER of 65. This process uses results in all TQA accredited and recognised courses, as well as VET competencies and certificates.

Victoria

School education in Victoria is the responsibility of the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development.

Formal school education is 13 years in length, including a preparatory year called Preparatory, six years of primary school – Years 1 to 6, and six years of secondary school – Years 7 to 12.

The Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA) is responsible for the Victorian Essential Learning Standards, the curriculum standards for the school years Preparatory to 10, the Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) and Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL).

Sector	Name/Years	Qualification	Awarding Body
Preschool	Preschool		
Preparatory	Preparatory		
Primary	Years 1-6		
Secondary	Years 7-10		
Upper Secondary	Years 11-12	Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE)	Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA)
		Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL)	Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA)

Preschool

Preschool is the non-compulsory year of part-time education the year before the preparatory year. Most students attend four half-day sessions per week.

Primary school

Primary school includes Years 1 to 6.

Curriculum

The primary school curriculum emphasises literary and numeracy skills in the early years. Information and communication technology (ICT), English, mathematics, art and physical education are also in the curriculum.

In Years 3 and 4 more subjects are studied, including science, humanities, technology and civics and citizenship. In Years 5 and 6 languages other than English (LOTE), history, geography, economics and communication are introduced.

Qualifications and assessment

There is no formal qualification awarded at the completion of primary school.

Year 3 and 5 students undertake the Achievement Improvement Monitor (AIM) tests. These tests aim to report on student achievement compared to other students in the cohort, the average score

and the expected score of students of the cohort. The test includes reading, writing, spelling and mathematics.

Access to secondary school

All primary school graduates are eligible to continue to secondary school.

Secondary school

Secondary school lasts for four years between Years 7 and 10.

Qualifications and assessment

There is no award at the end of Year 10. Year 7 and 9 students undertake further AIM tests, as explained above.

Access to senior secondary school

All students who complete secondary school are eligible to continue to senior secondary school.

Senior secondary school

Senior secondary school includes Years 11 and 12. There are two main streams of studies at senior secondary level:

- Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE); and
- Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL).

Students can transfer into the VCE from the VCAL and receive credit for semesters that they have completed.

Curriculum

Students can take between 20 and 24 studies (subjects) over a two-year program. There are more than 90 study subjects to choose from. Around one third of these subjects are VCE vocational education and training (VET) programs that lead to nationally recognised industry qualifications.

The VCE provides students with opportunities to prepare for higher education and also to develop vocational skills. The groups of studies are English, arts, languages other than English (LOTE), health and physical education, humanities and social science, mathematics, science and technology.

Qualifications and assessment

Years 11 and 12 senior secondary qualifications are awarded by the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA). There are two courses in Victoria that have been accredited by the VRQA:

- Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE); and
- Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL, see technical and vocational school below).

Both are developed, administered, assessed and certificated by the VCAA. The VCE is a two-year program consisting of 'studies'. Each study is made up of subject-based units which are a half-year or a semester in length. There are four units in the full program – Units 1 and 2 are at Year 11 level and Units 3 and 4 are at Year 12 level. VCE students must satisfactorily complete

at least 16 units. Most students complete a VCE program of 22 to 24 units. At least three units must be in English studies, with one of these units at Unit 3 or 4 level.

Assessment of Units 1 and 2 is school-based, assessment of Units 3 and 4 is both school-based and by external examinations. The results of these assessments are used to calculate how a student performed in relation to others in the same program.

All students enrolled in Units 3 and 4 of any VCE study or VCE VET program must sit the General Achievement Test (GAT). It is a test of general knowledge and skills. The GAT aims to moderate school-based assessments and examinations. It is not used for university admission purposes and does not count towards the VCE.

A Statement of Results is issued to students who complete the VCE requirements. It includes unit results for studies in Years 11 and 12, assessment grades, VCE study scores, General Achievement Test (GAT) results, statement of attendance, recognised university studies, and recognised VET units.

Access to higher education

VCE graduates are eligible to apply for admission to higher education. The Equivalent National Tertiary Entrance Rank (ENTER), which is calculated by the Victorian Tertiary Admissions Centre (VTAC), is central to the selection process.

An ENTER ranking is a percentile ranking based on the student's study scores as scaled by VTAC. The ENTER is obtained by using English, the next best three studies together with increments for up to two additional studies. Both VET programs in the VCE and recognised university studies may contribute to the calculation of the ENTER.

Technical and vocational school

For students interested in undertaking a vocationally oriented senior secondary education there are two options:

- the Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL); or
- the Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) VET program.

Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL)

The VCAL provides practical work-related experience, as well as literacy and numeracy skills and the opportunity to build personal skills that are important for life and work. A VCAL program consists of modules and units from nationally-recognised VET courses, accredited adult education courses, the VCE and a range of units specifically developed for VCAL.

The VCAL can be undertaken at three levels – Foundation, Intermediate and Senior. Each level is designed as a one-year, full-time course. Students achieving an Intermediate VCAL will have demonstrated knowledge and skills broadly comparable to Year 11 level and Senior VCAL to Year 12 level. Students that complete all requirements for the award of the VCAL at Foundation, Intermediate or Senior level receive a certificate issued by the VCAA.

VCAL units are assessed by the method appropriate to that unit. Units from nationally recognised VET courses are assessed by the provider. Units from the VCE are assessed by VCE assessment standards. The Statement of Results issued by the VCAA indicates if the student is eligible for the award of the VCAL and lists units and modules successfully completed as part of the VCAL program.

Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) vocational education and training (VET) programs

Students can complete a vocational education and training (VET) program as part of their VCE requirements. Students undertake industry-based training such as hospitality, agriculture, information technology or engineering. This program leads to both a nationally recognised training qualification as well as a VCE.

Other VET options

Alternatively, students can choose to complete a VET qualification that is not formally accredited as a component of the VCE course as part of their VCE (which is distinct from undertaking a VCE VET program). AQF qualifications at Certificate II or above usually provide credit in the VCE.

Students may also undertake a School Based Apprenticeship and Traineeship program (formerly called School Based New Apprenticeships) as part of their VCE studies.

For more information, see:

- <http://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/vet/programs/newapprent.html>

Access to higher education and further training

Students with a VCAL do not generally qualify for admission to higher education, as they are not eligible to receive a Equivalent National Tertiary Entrance Rank (ENTER).

VCAL students and other students with senior secondary vocational qualifications may continue to courses at a Technical and Further Education (TAFE) Institute, to an apprenticeship, or to a university through arrangements for consideration of applications by students who do not have an ENTER.

Western Australia

School education in Western Australia (WA) is the overall responsibility of the Western Australia Department of Education and Training.

School education in Western Australia is 13 years of full-time education. The first of these, the pre-primary year, is not compulsory. This year is followed by seven years of primary school – Years 1 to 7, and five years of secondary school – Years 8 to 12.

Sector	Name/Years	Qualification	Awarding Body
Preschool	Kindergarten		
Preparatory	Pre-primary		
Primary	Years 1-7		
Secondary	Years 8-12	Western Australian Certificate of Education	Curriculum Council of Western Australia

Preschool

Kindergarten is the non-compulsory year of part-time education the year before the preparatory year. Kindergarten is eleven hours a week offered in four half days, two full days, or one full day and two half days per week.

Primary school

Primary school includes Years 1 to 7.

Qualifications and assessment

There is no formal qualification awarded at the completion of primary school.

Access to secondary school

All primary school graduates are eligible to continue to secondary school.

Secondary school

Secondary school lasts for five years between Years 8 and 12, with Years 11 and 12 comprising senior secondary studies.

Qualifications and assessment

There is no award at the end of Year 10. Between 1986 and 1993, the Certificate of Lower Secondary Studies (CLSS) was awarded on completion of Year 10.

Access to senior secondary school

All students who complete secondary school are eligible to continue to senior secondary studies in Years 11 and 12.

Senior secondary school

Senior secondary school includes Years 11 and 12. Senior secondary education in Western Australia was undergoing a reform process in 2007.

Curriculum

There are three types of courses offered at the senior secondary level:

- Tertiary Entrance Examinations (TEE) subjects;
- Wholly School-Assessed (WSA) subjects; and
- Western Australian Certificate of Education (WACE) courses.

TEE and WSA subjects are being replaced by WACE courses. All of these courses are developed by the Curriculum Council. WACE courses are delivered in semester-length units. WSA courses are full-year units. WSA subjects are not used to calculate the tertiary entrance score but may be used to meet the requirements for secondary graduation. WSA subjects are full-year subjects.

Qualifications and assessment

The Curriculum Council of Western Australia awards the Western Australian Certificate of Education (WACE) on completion of Year 12.

At the end of senior secondary school, all students enrolled with the Curriculum Council receive a folio of achievement. This folio includes the Western Australian Certificate of Education, a statement of results (including grades, any VET competencies and community service) and a course report with assessment outcomes and moderation results. A statement of results is also issued to students that complete at least one unit.

To be awarded the WACE students must:

- have at least 10 full-year subjects (or equivalent) over Year 11 and 12;
- achieve an average of C grade or better in at least eight full-year subjects;
- four full-year subjects must be at Year 12 level;
- meet the English language competence standard;
- complete two units from an English course;
- meet the breadth of study requirement; and
- complete 20 hours of community service (from 2009).

Standards are used to measure achievement in WACE course units. Achievement is recorded in terms of grades (A to E). Examinations are being implemented for WACE units. Tertiary Entrance Examination (TEE) subjects are assessed by school-based results moderated by an external examination. Wholly School-Assessed (WSA) subjects are moderated by the provision of assessment support and exemplar materials, school visits and consensus meetings.

Tertiary Entrance Examination (TEE) subjects and courses that are contributing towards the TER are reported in the Statement of Results with a numerical school assessment (0 – 100, raw examination mark, scaled mark and decile place). Wholly School-Assessed (WSA) subjects and course units are reported as grades.

The letter grades used in the statement of results are:

A	very high achievement
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B	high achievement
C	satisfactory achievement
D	limited achievement
E	inadequate achievement

Access to higher education

Students with a Western Australian Certificate of Education (WACE) are eligible to continue to higher education. The Tertiary Entrance Score (TES) is calculated by the Tertiary Institutions Service Centre (TISC) to determine the Tertiary Entrance Rank (TER).

The TES is 5.1 times the average of the highest combination of the TES scaled subject scores in four or five subjects (taking into account list requirements and unacceptable subject combinations) depending on which gives the highest average. The maximum TES is 510.

The Tertiary Entrance Rank (TER) reports a student's rank position relative to all other students of Year 12 school leaving age in the State. The TER is reported on a scale of 0 to 99.95 in intervals of 0.05.

University admission requires students to:

- meet the WACE requirements;
- achieve competence in English as required by the particular university;
- obtain a high TER for entry to the particular program; and
- satisfy other prerequisites for the particular program.

Technical and vocational school

Vocational and educational training is offered at the senior secondary level through units of competency integrated with subjects and courses, or delivered separately. Assessments are based on the requirements of the VET Training Packages and accepted by the Curriculum Council after endorsement by a Registered Training Organisation (RTO).

VET version courses have been developed to enable students to achieve a qualification as well as credit towards their WACE.

Schooling outside state and territory systems

The International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO) offers three programs for primary, secondary and senior secondary education. These operate independently of the state and territory school systems.

International Baccalaureate Primary Years Program (PYP)

The Primary Years Program is offered to students aged three to 12 years. The IBO has authorised 41 Australian schools to offer this program.

The PYP curriculum has six key areas:

- language;
- social studies;
- mathematics;
- arts;
- science and technology; and
- personal, social and physical education.

These subjects are taught in through an interdisciplinary approach. Assessment policies are developed by teachers for school-based assessment of learning outcomes.

International Baccalaureate Middle Years Program (MYP)

The Middle Years Program is offered to students aged 11 to 16. The IBO has authorised 48 Australian schools to offer this program.

The PYP curriculum has eight key areas:

- language A;
- language B;
- humanities;
- mathematics;
- arts;
- sciences;
- technology; and
- physical education.

Assessment is based on set standards and objectives for each subject. Assessment is continuous and school-based.

International Baccalaureate Diploma Program (IB)

The International Baccalaureate Diploma (IB) is a two year program for senior secondary students aged 16 to 19. It is an increasingly popular choice for Australian senior secondary students and provides an alternative to the Australian Senior Secondary Certificate of Education awarded by the state and territory authorities.

As of early 2008, there were 50 schools authorised by the International Baccalaureate Organization to offer the Diploma program within Australia.

For more information, see:

- <http://www.ibo.org>

Curriculum

The IB Diploma program has six subject areas:

- language A1 (the student's first language) – this area includes language and literature studies;
- second language (language A2) – students can choose from a range of modern languages plus Latin or classical Greek. These courses are offered at beginner, intermediate and advanced levels;
- individuals and societies – this area includes business and management, economics, geography, history, information technology in a global society, Islamic history, philosophy, psychology and social and cultural anthropology;
- experimental sciences – this area includes biology, chemistry, design technology, environmental sciences and physics;
- mathematics and computer science; and
- the arts – this area includes music, theatre arts and visual arts.

Student must study a subject from each of these areas. Three of these subjects are taken at the standard level, with each subject representing 150 teaching hours. The other three subjects are taken at a higher level, with a more substantial 240 teaching hours per subject.

The aim of the program is to prepare students for higher education through development of analytical, learning and communication skills.

Qualifications and assessment

The International Baccalaureate Diploma program has three compulsory core requirements, which encompass all six subject areas and encourage an interdisciplinary approach. These include:

- an extended essay – a project of 4,000 words in a topic of personal interest to the student;
- theory of knowledge – an interdisciplinary course that develops awareness of synergies and alternative perspectives; and
- creativity, action, service – a program that encourage participation in extra-curricular life.

Students are assessed at the end of the two-year program. Each subject has established standards, which students are assessed against in both school-based and external assessment.

School-based assessment includes oral tests, projects, fieldwork, student portfolios, presentations, laboratory work and performances. Assignments and essays may be completed in-school but assessed externally. However, externally-assessed examinations form the majority of assessable tasks for each subject.

Following successful completion of the program requirements, students are awarded the International Baccalaureate Diploma by the International Baccalaureate Organization.

Access to higher education

The International Baccalaureate Diploma is recognised by all Australian universities for entrance into higher education programs. Students apply for admission through the Tertiary Admission Centre (TAC) for the state or territory they wish to study in.

For more information, see:

- <http://www.ibo.org/country/AU/index.cfm>

Quality assurance of international education

Australian Education International (AEI)

Australian Education International (AEI) is part of the Australian Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR). Its role is to integrate the development of international government relations with support for the international activities of Australia's education community. The Australian Government, through AEI, also has responsibility for consumer protection for international students. This is facilitated through requiring educational institutions to register with state and territory authorities, who are responsible for quality-assuring registered institutions.

AEI's responsibilities and activities include:

- administering national legislation for financial and tuition-assurance mechanisms and codes of practice;
- strengthening of Australia's quality-assurance mechanisms for transnational education and training programs;
- facilitating relationships with governments around the world;
- managing Australia's education interests in major international and regional strategic conventions;
- working to enhance Australia's international education profile;
- facilitating qualifications recognition; and
- marketing and promoting Australian education services and events.

AEI offers a wide range of support and advisory services offshore. These are provided through AEI's network of education and training counsellors and staff located in Brazil, Chile, China, Europe, India, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Mexico, Middle East, Pakistan, Taiwan, Singapore, Thailand, the USA and Vietnam.

For more information, see:

- <http://www.aei.dest.gov.au>

Australian education and overseas students

Australia is internationally competitive in providing education and training both in Australia and offshore for students from outside Australia. Such students are known as overseas students.

In 2007, there were more than 450 000 overseas students studying in Australia on student visas, with the largest numbers coming from China, India, South Korea, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Japan, Indonesia, Thailand, United States of America, and Singapore. There has also been significant increase in the number of students coming from Nepal, South America and the Middle East. In addition to student visa holders, many overseas students undertake Australian education on other types of visas and are not reflected in student visa statistics.

Overseas students undertake the same programs as Australian students. The majority are enrolled in higher education programs, followed by VET programs, ELICOS (English language) programs and school education. The remainder are enrolled in non-award programs such as bridging programs or foundation courses.

Transnational education and training

Australian transnational education and training, also known as offshore or cross-border education and training, refers to the delivery and/or assessment of programs and courses by an accredited Australian provider in a country other than Australia. Transnational programs may lead to an Australian qualification or may be a non-award course.

Education and training services delivered offshore may take many different forms, including:

- a campus wholly-owned by an Australian institution;
- courses and programs offered in partnership with local providers;
- twinning arrangements;
- franchising of curricula or course where an accredited Australian provider remains an identifiable partner;
- distance education programs that contain a component of face-to-face instruction by local and/or Australian instructors;
- education and training activities conducted on behalf of an Australian entity;
- other face-to-face delivery undertaken in the name of an Australian provider; or
- providers that are not registered in Australia.

Transnational education quality assurance

A Transnational Quality Strategy framework was agreed by Ministers of education and training across Australia in November 2005 to promote and protect the quality of Australian education and training delivered outside Australia. The Strategy aims to ensure that:

- Australia's quality assurance arrangements are well-understood and well-regarded internationally;
- education providers can clearly understand their responsibilities in terms of delivery and quality assurance of transnational education and training;
- quality assurance functions are effective and efficient; and
- courses delivered overseas are comparable in terms of standards of delivery, outcomes and quality with courses offered in Australia.

A key aspect of the Strategy is AusLIST – the Australia List of Institutions and Courses in Other Countries. AusLIST is scheduled to be implemented for stakeholder use by mid-2008. It comprises a directory of Australian education and training providers, the Australian courses they offer offshore and the locations where these courses are offered.

Membership of AusLIST is voluntary, but indicates a commitment to providing quality education. To qualify for membership institutions and their courses must meet Australian registration, accreditation, quality assurance and reporting standards. Membership is free and lasts for two years.

For more information, see:

- <http://www.transnational.dest.gov.au/AusLIST/default.htm>

Regulation of international education

The Australian Government has a number of regulation processes to ensure that overseas students receive a quality education and training experience. These processes are in addition to the quality-assurance measures which apply within Australia.

The *Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000* (ESOS Act 2000) of the Commonwealth of Australia regulates all Australian education and training providers that enrol overseas students studying in Australia. It requires that a provider must be registered on the Commonwealth [Australian] Register of Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students (CRICOS). In order to be listed on CRICOS, an institution must be registered by the state and territory registration authorities, who ensure that:

- quality assurance standards are met;
- institutions comply with tuition and financial assurance requirements; and
- institutions monitor the compliance of overseas students with the conditions of their visas.

CRICOS lists all institutions authorised to offer both higher education and VET courses for overseas students in Australia, and all courses approved for overseas students in Australia. CRICOS and the *ESOS Act* are administered by DEEWR to ensure that overseas students studying in Australia receive high-quality education and training and receive the services for which they have paid.

For more information, see:

- <http://cricos.dest.gov.au>

Another form of regulation is the Provider Registration and International Students Management System (PRISMS), which requires RTOs providing education to overseas students to register these student enrolments for visa purposes. This is a requirement of the ESOS Act 2000. Providers are responsible for using PRISMS to inform the Department of Immigration and Citizenship if visa conditions are breached.

Recognition of Australian qualifications outside Australia

The recognition of Australian qualifications for employment or professional purposes in countries outside Australia should be taken into consideration by overseas students. Before embarking on a course of professional education in Australia, students might wish to identify that the intended qualification is recognised in their country.

Teacher education

Teacher education for all levels of schooling takes place in universities or accredited non-government colleges. Teacher education programs lead to Bachelor Degree or postgraduate professional qualifications.

Teacher education authorities

Teaching Australia

Teaching Australia – the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership – is the national professional body for teachers. Teaching Australia was formed to raise the status, quality and professionalism of teachers and school leaders in Australia. Together with state and territory teacher registration bodies Teaching Australia is developing a national system for accreditation of pre-service teacher education.

For more information, see:

- <http://www.teachingaustralia.edu.au>

State and territory education authorities/registration boards

Teacher registration is a state and territory responsibility. State and territory teacher registration authorities determine the conditions for teacher employment and qualification requirements. Each state and territory has different requirements based on the teaching skills required for different schooling structures, curriculum approach and assessment methodology.

All states and territories except the Australian Capital Territory require teachers to be registered before applying for employment.

Teacher education programs are developed by universities and colleges in consultation with the state or territory education authorities/registration boards. In some cases, programs are accredited with the authorities for future employment with the same authority.

For more information, see:

- <http://www.teachingaustralia.edu.au/ta/go/home/links/accreditation>

Current teacher education system

This section outlines the current teacher education options for prospective preschool, primary and secondary school teachers. To become a teacher, most states and territories require at least four years of university level training as the minimum pre-service or initial teacher education component.

Teacher education programs consist of:

- professional studies – theoretical knowledge and skills required for the teaching profession;
- curriculum studies – subject knowledge and pedagogical skills; and
- practical training – supervised professional training for between 12 and 20 weeks.

All courses are required to include studies in Aboriginal and cross-cultural awareness, teaching children with special needs and information and communication technology (ICT).

Preschool teacher education

Programs for preparatory or pre-primary teachers are often referred to as early childhood education or teaching programs. These programs provide education in the care and teaching of children from birth to eight years of age or from age three to eight years. They usually cover childcare education, preschool teacher education, preparatory/pre-primary teacher education and teacher education for the early years of primary school.

Primary teacher education

Primary teacher education programs provide education to teach children from ages of around five to 12 years in Years 1 to 6 or 7. The programs generally provide a balance of professional and curriculum studies to foster the intellectual, physical and social development of children.

Middle school teacher education

Middle school teacher education programs prepare teachers to teach at both primary and secondary school and in the newly emerging middle school sector.

Secondary teacher education

Secondary teacher education programs provide education to teach students of around 12 to 18 years of age in Years 6 or 7 to Year 12 of secondary school. The programs provide a balance of integrated professional studies and curriculum studies in one or two disciplines in the key learning areas appropriate for both the lower and upper years of secondary schooling.

Undergraduate courses and qualifications

Undergraduate programs require four years of full-time study. Qualifications include:

- Bachelor of Education (Early Childhood Education);
- Bachelor of Early Childhood Education;
- Bachelor of Education (Primary);
- Bachelor of Education (Upper Primary/Lower Secondary);
- Bachelor of Education (Middle School);
- Bachelor of Education (Primary and Middle Schooling) – can also be undertaken as a two-year program after a Bachelor Degree; and
- Bachelor of Education (Secondary).

Postgraduate courses and qualifications

Postgraduate teacher education programs usually require one or two years of full-time postgraduate study and lead to a Graduate Diploma or postgraduate Bachelor Degree qualification. Entry is normally based on a Bachelor Degree in another field. Programs consist of professional studies, curriculum studies and practical training. Curriculum study for secondary teacher programs are usually related to the subject of the student's first degree. Qualifications include:

- Graduate Diploma of Education (Early Childhood Education);
- Graduate Diploma in Education (Primary);
- Bachelor of Education (Primary);
- Bachelor of Teaching (Primary);
- Bachelor of Education (Primary and Secondary);
- Graduate Diploma of Education (Secondary); and
- Bachelor of Education (Secondary).

Upgrading and conversion courses and qualifications

Conversion courses exist to upgrade three-year Diploma or Bachelor qualifications. They normally require one year of full-time study. Qualifications include:

- Bachelor of Education;
- Bachelor of Primary Education Studies; and
- Bachelor of Education (Secondary).

Registered teachers are also able to undertake a wide range of professional and career development courses ranging from one-day in-service programs to Graduate Certificates and Graduate Diplomas. Many universities also offer Master Degrees and Professional Doctoral Degrees.

Previous teacher education systems

Primary teacher education and some lower secondary teacher education took place in Australia for many years at teachers colleges. The teachers colleges were mainly government institutions but there was a small number of non-government colleges run by religious orders/authorities and non-sectarian agencies. They offered a three-year Diploma of Teaching which was available until the early 1990s. These included:

- Diploma of Teaching (Early Childhood Education);
- Diploma of Teaching (Primary); and
- Diploma of Teaching (Secondary) or Advanced Diploma in Teaching.

When the Colleges of Advanced Education (CAEs) were established in the mid 1960s, many incorporated existing specialist institutions such as the teachers colleges. Certificates of Teaching and Teacher's Certificates were discontinued in the early 1970s. These programs required two years of full-time study for preschool and primary teaching qualifications or three years for a junior secondary teaching qualification.

The three-year Diploma of Teaching was replaced by the four-year Bachelor of Education. Upgrading programs for Diplomas of Teaching were also offered. CAEs also offered a one-year program for university graduates in addition to those programs offered by the universities. From 1989, the CAEs were incorporated into a university structure.

Bachelor Degrees requiring three years of full-time undergraduate study were on offer until the late 1990s. These were offered by universities and qualifications included:

- Bachelor of Teaching (Early Childhood Education);
- Bachelor of Arts (Education) Early Childhood Education;
- Bachelor of Teaching (Primary);
- Bachelor of Education (Primary);
- Bachelor of Arts (Education) – Primary; and
- Bachelor of Arts (Education) – Secondary.

Specialist teacher education

Universities offer a wide range of specialist teaching qualifications at undergraduate and postgraduate level. Qualifications include those for adult and community education, educational administration, Aboriginal education, art, business, computing, English as a Second Language, health and physical education, librarianship, music, religious studies, special education and educational psychology and counselling. Programs vary in structure, content and nomenclature.

Technical and vocational teacher education

Vocational education and training (VET) teachers must be able to conduct education and training programs and to assess skills based on the industry-endorsed competency standards. Teachers usually have qualifications and substantial employment experience in specialised fields. For those planning to teach VET in a secondary school a Bachelor Degree qualification specialising in secondary education is normally required.

VET teacher programs usually include studies in adolescent and adult learning theories, group and organisational behaviours, program and curriculum development, teaching and communication skills, management and evaluation strategies, and teaching technologies. The programs may include periods of internship or supervised work placement.

Entry to these programs may be based on one or more of the following:

- formal qualifications in a VET field or occupation;
- Bachelor Degree;
- relevant employment experience;
- teaching experience; and
- current employment as a VET teacher.

The type and length of program undertaken varies. Study can be undertaken full-time or, for practising teachers and trainers, part-time.

Undergraduate courses and qualifications

- AQF Certificate IV in Assessment and Workplace Training for those who are providing competency-based assessments only;
- Associate Degree in Vocational Education and Training, corresponds to the first half of the Bachelor of Vocational Education and Training, includes all of the competencies for an AQF Certificate IV in Assessment and Workplace training;
- Bachelor of Teaching/Bachelor of Design and Technology which is a four-year integrated course combining professional studies in education and vocational education, curriculum studies and teaching methodology; and
- Bachelor of Adult and Vocational Education requiring two-years full-time or four-years part-time study for practising VET teachers.

Postgraduate courses and qualifications

A range of Bachelor Degree programs are offered in the VET teacher training specialisation. Generally these programs require two years of part-time study for those with an existing non-VET teaching qualification or Bachelor Degree in another field. Programs provide a combination of professional studies in education focussing on adolescents, curriculum studies in areas of specialisation and teaching methodology.

Alternative program structures include a one-year, part-time program for practising teachers with a three-year Diploma of Teaching in a vocational field; or four years part-time by distance education for those with a two-year Certificate of Teaching in a vocational field. Examples include:

- Bachelor of Education (Vocational Education);
- Bachelor of Vocational Education and Training; and
- Bachelor of Arts (Education) Vocational Education and Training.

Shorter courses include Graduate Certificates requiring one year of part-time study following a Bachelor Degree and relevant industrial experience, and a Graduate Diploma requiring two years of part-time study following similar entry requirements. Examples include:

- Graduate Certificate in Vocational Education and Training (Curriculum and Instruction);
- Graduate Certificate in Vocational Education and Training (Communication);
- Graduate Diploma in Vocational Education and Training; and
- Graduate Diploma in Education (Vocational Education and Training).

Higher education teacher education

There are no formal teacher education programs for teaching at a university. Also, there are no national regulations regarding the qualifications required to teach at an Australian university. The decisions regarding employment of academic staff are the responsibility of individual universities. The emphasis is on expertise in the specific discipline or field, and normally academic staff have postgraduate qualifications, in many cases at Doctoral level.

Grading systems

Higher education grading systems

Undergraduate grading systems

Two grading systems are used for Bachelor Degree programs:

- grading for individual units or subjects; and
- classifications for Honours Degrees.

For subject grades each institution uses variations of several main types of subject grades:

- descriptive grades – for example, High Distinction, Distinction, Credit, Pass;
- letter grades – for example, A-E; and
- numeric grades – for example, 7-1, where 7 is the highest mark.

Some institutions may use Honours classifications for individual subjects, particularly in an Honours course.

Subject grades will often be aligned to a notional percentage mark. Two examples are provided below. Usually the grading system is indicated on the transcript.

High Distinction	85%-100%	80%-100%
Distinction	75%-84%	70%-79%
Credit	65%-74%	60%-69%
Pass	50%-64%	50%-59%

Some institutions use the conditional or conceded pass, but normally only one or two such subject passes would count towards graduation. Failed subjects must be repeated or an equivalent alternative taken in its place in order to complete a program.

Honours Bachelor Degrees are classified. Classifications can be expressed in a number of ways:

First Class	First Class	First Class	HI *	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			HIIC	HIIC

* HI – Honours First Class

If the level of academic achievement is insufficient for Honours, an Honours Degree may be awarded in the Pass Class. Many universities vary the above classifications for Honours awarded on merit in professional degrees. Third Class Honours are rarely awarded and Second Class Honours may not be differentiated.

Postgraduate grading systems

The majority of postgraduate awards are awarded unclassified, although exceptions may be made with Master Degrees by research. Some institutions award Master Degrees ‘with Honours’ (unclassified).

Comparison with USA grading system

The Australian system is low-marking compared to that commonly used in the USA: in Australian universities, a mark of 80 normally represents a comparatively higher level of academic achievement than it does in the US. World Education Services, an international academic credential evaluator in the United States, suggests the following comparison of Australian and US grades:

Grade Description	US Grade Equivalents
High Distinction	A+
Distinction	A
Credit	B
Pass	C
Conceded, Conditional or Compensatory Pass	D
Failure	F

Most Australian higher education institutions do not use a GPA-style grading system.

Vocational education and training grading systems

RTOs are responsible for the assessment of competencies or courses and issuing transcripts. Grading systems vary. Assessment is based on achievement of the competencies set out in a Training Package and each competency is listed with achievement as ‘Competent’ or ‘Not Yet Competent’.

A student may not have to undertake a course of study where assessment can be based on Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) or Recognition of Current Competencies (RCC). This is usually indicated on the transcript by ‘RPL’.

School education grading systems

For information about school education grading systems see the relevant state and territory section in school education.

Previous qualification systems

Australian Council on Awards in Advanced Education (ACAAE)

The rapid development of the higher education sector in the late 1960s emphasised differences between the different states and territories and necessitated some standardisation of programs and award nomenclature.

The Australian Council on Awards in Advanced Education was formally established in December 1971, with several key functions:

- promoting consistency of nomenclature in the advanced education sector;
- establishing consistent relationships between programs and awards;
- maintaining a national register of awards; and
- promoting understanding and appreciation of the award system in Australia and overseas.

The ACAAE was the national registration authority. Registration represented the final step in the approval/accreditation process, which was as follows:

- programs were developed by individual institutions (known generically as colleges of advanced education) in line with guidelines developed by the ACAAE;
- colleges then submitted their programs to the state and territory accrediting agencies for assessment, which was normally a multi-stage process; and
- state and territory agencies submitted accredited programs for national registration by the ACAAE. Registration was for a fixed period, normally five years.

Australian Council on Tertiary Awards (ACTA)

In January 1985, the Australian Council on Tertiary Awards replaced the ACAAE. Its functions were similar, but the award structure and nomenclature differed, particularly with the introduction in 1987 of a national award system in the Technical and Further Education (TAFE) sector. Previously, individual states and territories had their own award systems for their technical schools and TAFE colleges, and similar nomenclature had different meanings in different states and territories.

Under ACTA, the nomenclature of TAFE awards was tied to a system of program classification by stream as described in Register of Australian Tertiary Education (RATE) below.

Register of Australian Tertiary Education (RATE)

The Register of Australian Tertiary Education was established in 1990 by the Australian Education Council of the Ministers responsible for education in the Australian, state and territory governments. RATE took over ACTA's functions in providing a framework, but did not register awards as ACTA and ACAAE had done. RATE award nomenclature was similar to that of ACTA, and continued the classification of TAFE programs by stream. The RATE system was phased out from 1995 and replaced by the Australian Qualifications Framework which was fully implemented by the end of 1999.

Accreditation of courses was carried out by higher education institutions empowered by their various acts of establishment to accredit/approve their own courses, and by bodies in each state and territory which accredited tertiary award courses offered through TAFE institutes/colleges, non self-accrediting higher education institutions, and private training and education providers.

Certificate Stream 1000

Stream 1000 courses were for recreation, leisure or enrichment.

Certificate Stream 2100

Stream 2100 programs provided basic education and employment skills. Entry was usually open.

Certificate Stream 2200

Stream 2200 programs prepared students for further education, such as undertaking Year 12 study. Year 10 completion was normally required for entry.

Certificate Stream 3100

Stream 3100 programs, for operatives or semi-skilled workers, required a lesser level and range of skills than that of a tradesperson. Educational entry requirements were usually minimal.

Certificate Stream 3200

Stream 3200 programs, for specific occupations, trades and crafts, required practical skills in a range of related activities. Year 10 completion was normally required for entry but alternative entry requirements were also accepted, depending on the institution and the field of study.

Advanced Certificate Stream 3300

Advanced Certificate qualifications were at the level of trade technician, occupational technician, or technical supervisor but below the level and breadth of specialisation required by a para-professional. Entry was normally based on completion of Year 10 though some courses may have required Year 12, or a TAFE Certificate course in a relevant field of study, and/or a period of work experience. Courses normally required one to two years of full-time study or part-time equivalent. RATE Advanced Certificates were intended to develop the knowledge and skills necessary for specialised work and/or to work in first level supervisor, administrative or management positions. On completion, an Advanced Certificate could articulate to an Associate Diploma program.

Associate Diploma Stream 3500/3400

Associate Diploma qualifications were at the para-professional, associate or higher technician level. Associate Diploma courses were designed to provide the skills required to work in support of professionals or to work in technical, managerial and/or para-professional occupations. When offered at universities, the course had a more academic orientation. The Associate Diploma was a two-year full-time or part-time equivalent program, based on Year 12 entry or equivalent but may have required an Advanced Certificate course in a relevant field of study and/or work experience. While designed as a complete educational program, some Associate Diploma programs articulated into specific programs at TAFE institutions or universities.

Diploma Stream 3600

Diploma qualifications were the major professional qualifications offered by TAFE institutions in the RATE system. They were also offered at some universities, particularly in teaching and nursing until these professions became degree-based by the mid 1990s. Diploma courses provided the depth and breadth of specialised skills required for some professional occupations, such as the hospitality industry, design and performing arts and some areas of applied science and technology. The Diploma required a high level of knowledge and practical skill with a greater depth of conceptual development appropriate for a position of primary responsibility in

an occupation. Diplomas required three years of full-time study following completion of Year 12. Some Diploma programs articulated into specified programs at universities.

Summary of Australian qualification systems

AQF AWARDS	RATE AWARDS	ACTA AWARDS	ACAIE AWARDS
1995 - current	1990 - 1999	1985 – 1989 (TAFE awards from 1987)	1971-1984
Doctoral Degree	Doctoral Degree	Doctoral Degree (PhD)	
Master Degree	Master Degree	Master Degree	PG2 Master Degree
Graduate Diploma & Vocational Graduate Diploma	Graduate Diploma	Graduate Diploma	PG1 Graduate Diploma
Graduate Certificate & Vocational Graduate Certificate	Graduate Certificate	Graduate Certificate	
Bachelor Degree	Bachelor Degree	Bachelor Degree (including Honours degrees and Degrees with Honours)	UG1 Bachelor Degree
Associate Degree & Advanced Diploma	Diploma Stream 3600	Diploma	UG2 Diploma
Diploma	Associate Diploma Stream 3500 Stream 3400	Associate Diploma	UG3 Associate Diploma
Certificate IV	Advanced Certificate Stream 3300	Advanced Certificate	
Certificate III	Certificate Stream 3200		
Certificate II	Certificate Stream 3100		
Certificate I			
	Certificate Stream 2200		
	Certificate Stream 2100		

Comparative educational outcomes: USA/Australia, UK/Australia, NZ/Australia

This section provides an explanation and comparison of Australian qualifications for institutions and educational authorities overseas.

Australian Senior Secondary Certificates of Education (Year 12)

The Australian Senior Secondary Certificate is a multi-purpose award, serving both as a school leaving certificate and to give access to postsecondary and higher education. As such, there will be considerable variation in the comparative level of the award for international admissions purposes. School leavers who hope to gain entry to university education in Australia need a tertiary entrance ranking. For specific assessment purposes such as admission to a university, assessors should look at the program undertaken and the tertiary entrance ranking obtained to evaluate the admissions potential of an Australian student.

United States of America

Generally, the Australian senior secondary qualification is more specialised than a USA High School Diploma. Depending on the Australian state or territory, students normally undertake between three and six subjects, which may be taken at different levels. For example, a student in the science stream will often take only maths and science subjects in the final year.

Australian Year 12 subjects may have more breadth and depth in their coverage than similar subjects in the USA. Admission to Australian universities may be based on success in prerequisite subjects in Year 12.

United Kingdom

The Australian senior secondary program is often less specialised than a UK A-level program, and individual subjects may differ in content or depth. The National Academic Recognition Information Centre for the United Kingdom (UK NARIC) advises that the senior secondary certificates of the Australian states and territories are generally considered to satisfy entrance requirements of British universities if a tertiary entrance score/rating at a specified level has been achieved. It is a matter for individual UK universities to determine whether the Australian program meets the institution's specific prerequisite subject requirements. Australian universities regard UK A levels as a Year 12 qualification for admission purposes.

New Zealand

The New Zealand Senior Secondary award is called the National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA). The NCEA is offered at three levels and is part of the National Qualification Framework (NQF) of New Zealand.

The core requirements for the Australian Senior Secondary Certificate are similar to the NCEA Level 3 standard required by New Zealand universities for admission. AEI-NOOSR regards the NCEA Level 3 as comparable to the educational level of an Australian Senior Secondary Certificate of Education.

The major difference between NCEA and Australian secondary awards is that the NCEA is credit based and has specific credit requirements at different levels. But the credits can be

accumulated flexibly, such as from other awards from the NQF. This feature is not present in any of the Australian Senior Secondary Certificate programs.

Higher education

It is at the level of higher education that differences arise. Australia's history as part of the British Commonwealth often results in an assumption that the Australian system is identical to the British system, when in fact there are significant differences which affect the nature and level of the awards.

For detailed information about Australian Bachelor Degrees, see:

- Courses and qualifications, Higher education, page 6

United Kingdom

In the United Kingdom, the first degree is normally the three-year Honours Bachelor Degree. A graduate with an Ordinary or Pass Bachelor degree has either not completed the program with a sufficient level of academic achievement for an Honours classification, or has undertaken an Ordinary or Pass program which may in some instances contain less than a full year's component of studies at third year level. In Australia, the first degree is the Bachelor Degree. Many students in arts, science and commerce complete a three-year program. Some graduates will have a high level of academic achievement in individual subjects, and this information will be available from the transcript. The Australian Bachelor Honours Degree is a four-year specialised degree, with a research orientation and a thesis requirement, and requiring a superior level of academic achievement for admission to and graduation from the program. Relatively few students complete an Honours program.

Equally, the award of Honours in professional degrees in fields like law, engineering and medicine in Australia which require four or more years is normally limited to a small proportion of outstanding graduates. Lack of an Honours classification in a professional degree does not mean inferior academic performance.

United States of America

The differences between the Australian and the American system are more obvious, especially regarding the Bachelor degree. In the USA, the Bachelor Degree normally requires four years of full-time study, programs normally include a general education component and there may be some flexibility in the structure of the program, particularly regarding the major and the requirements for upper division credits.

In comparison, the Australian Bachelor Degree is between three and six years' duration, with specific requirements about the composition of the course, and the credits required at different levels, particularly in the major area(s) of study. Programs are normally specialised with one or two majors and there is no general education component. Most Australian universities use some form of semester credits. There may be a good deal of variation within the system, with some being semester subjects and some being year-long. It is not uncommon for subjects to carry different credit point weightings.

The Australian Bachelor Honours Degree with its specialised, research orientation has no counterpart in the mainstream American system, although some American universities offer special programs with a research orientation and thesis requirement.

New Zealand

In arts, science and commerce the basic qualification in New Zealand is the three-year Bachelor Degree. New Zealand Bachelor Degrees have specified credit requirements as part of the NQF (for example, 360 credits for a three-year program) compared to Australian Bachelor Degrees where the number of credits depends on the credit system used by the university concerned.

The Honours Degree system in New Zealand is similar to the Australian system, where relatively few students complete an Honours program. The Honours Degree from New Zealand requires an additional year of study; this could be part of an integrated Honours Degree or a separate qualification. High achieving students in four-year Bachelor Degree programs who complete a thesis can also be awarded an Honours Degree.

Recognised institutions

Registered Training Organisations (RTOs)

Registered Training Organisations are listed on the website of the Australian Qualifications Framework: <http://www.aqf.edu.au/register.htm>. The AQF Register (Accreditation) contains information about the recognition status of institutions and the qualifications they award.

Universities and other self-accrediting institutions

1. Australian Catholic University	http://www.acu.edu.au
2. Bond University	http://www.bond.edu.au
3. Central Queensland University	http://www.cqu.edu.au
4. Charles Darwin University	http://www.cdu.edu.au
5. Charles Sturt University	http://www.csu.edu.au
6. Curtin University of Technology	http://www.curtin.edu.au
7. Deakin University	http://www.deakin.edu.au
8. Edith Cowan University	http://www.ecu.edu.au
9. Griffith University	http://www.gu.edu.au
10. James Cook University	http://www.jcu.edu.au
11. La Trobe University	http://www.latrobe.edu.au
12. Macquarie University	http://www.mq.edu.au
13. Monash University	http://www.monash.edu.au
14. Murdoch University	http://www.murdoch.edu.au
15. Queensland University of Technology	http://www.qut.edu.au
16. RMIT University	http://www.rmit.edu.au
17. Southern Cross University	http://www.scu.edu.au
18. Swinburne University of Technology	http://www.swin.edu.au
19. The Australian National University	http://www.anu.edu.au
20. The Flinders University of South Australia	http://www.flinders.edu.au
21. The University of Adelaide	http://www.adelaide.edu.au
22. The University of Melbourne	http://www.unimelb.edu.au
23. The University of Notre Dame Australia	http://www.nd.edu.au
24. The University of Queensland	http://www.uq.edu.au
25. The University of Sydney	http://www.usyd.edu.au

26. The University of Western Australia	http://www.uwa.edu.au
27. University of Ballarat	http://www.ballarat.edu.au
28. University of Canberra	http://www.canberra.edu.au
29. University of Newcastle	http://www.newcastle.edu.au
30. University of New England	http://www.une.edu.au
31. University of New South Wales	http://www.unsw.edu.au
32. University of South Australia	http://www.unisa.edu.au
33. University of Southern Queensland	http://www.usq.edu.au
34. University of Tasmania	http://www.utas.edu.au
35. University of Technology, Sydney	http://www.uts.edu.au
36. University of the Sunshine Coast	http://www.usc.edu.au
37. University of Western Sydney	http://www.uws.edu.au
38. University of Wollongong	http://www.uow.edu.au
39. Victoria University	http://www.vu.edu.au
40. Australian Maritime College	http://www.amc.edu.au
41. Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education	http://www.batchelor.edu.au
42. Melbourne College of Divinity	http://www.mcd.unimelb.edu.au
43. Australian Film Television & Radio School	http://www.aftrs.edu.au/
44. Carnegie Mellon University	http://www.cmu.edu

Other higher education institutions

Other recognised higher education institutions are listed on the website of the Australian Qualifications Framework: <http://www.aqf.edu.au/register.htm>

The AQF Register (Accreditation) contains information about the recognition status of institutions and the qualifications they award. There are two registers which are relevant:

- iii. Non Self-Accrediting Higher Education Institutions and their AQF-approved qualifications
- v. Overseas Higher Education Institutions and their AQF-comparable approved qualifications

Mergers of Australian higher education institutions

For information about mergers and amalgamations of Australian higher education institutions, see:

- <http://www.universitiesaustralia.edu.au/documents/universities/AustralianHEMerges-Amalgamations.pdf>

Glossary

- ACAAE:** Australian Council on Awards in Advanced Education
- ACACA:** Australasian Curriculum and Certification Authorities
- ACE:** Adult and Community Education
- ACT:** Australian Capital Territory
- ACTA:** Australian Council on Tertiary Awards
- AEI:** Australian Education International
- AEI-NOOSR:** Australian Education International - National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition
- ANTA:** Australian National Training Authority
- AQF:** Australian Qualifications Framework
- AQFAB:** Australian Qualifications Framework Advisory Board
- AQTF:** Australian Quality Training Framework
- AST:** Australian Scaling Test, Australian Capital Territory
- AUQA:** Australian Universities Quality Agency
- Australian Government:** the central government of the Commonwealth of Australia
- AVCC:** Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee
- BSSS:** Board of Senior Secondary Studies, Australian Capital Territory
- CAEs:** Colleges of Advanced Education
- COAG:** Council of Australian Governments
- Commonwealth:** official title of the Australian nation, i.e. Commonwealth of Australia; may also refer to the Australian Government of Australia, i.e. Commonwealth Government, in contrast to the Australian state and territory governments
- CRICOS:** Commonwealth [Australian] Register of Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students
- DEEWR:** Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations
- DEST:** Department of Education, Science and Training
- ELICOS:** English Language Intensive Courses for Overseas Students
- ENTER:** Equivalent National Tertiary Entrance Rank in Victoria, used to determine admission to university
- ESOS:** Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000
- FEE-HELP:** loan scheme for students studying in a domestic fee-paying place
- GAT:** General Achievement Test, Victoria
- HECS:** Higher Education Contribution Scheme
- HELP:** Higher Education Loan Program
- HESA:** Higher Education Support Act 2003
- HEES:** Higher Education Entrance Score in South Australia, used to determine admission to university; now replaced by the Tertiary Entrance Rank (TER)
- HSC:** Higher School Certificate, awarded on completion of secondary schooling in New South Wales
- IB:** International Baccalaureate
- LOTE:** Languages Other Than English
- MCEETYA:** Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs
- NSW:** New South Wales
- NT:** Northern Territory
- NTBOS:** Northern Territory Board of Studies
- NTBS:** Northern Territory Board of Studies
- NTCE:** Northern Territory Certificate of Education, awarded on completion of secondary schooling

- NTF:** National Training Framework
- NTIS:** National Training Information Service, run by the Australian National Training Authority
- NTQC:** National Training Quality Council
- OS-HELP:** cash loan to assist students undertake some of their course of study overseas
- overseas qualifications:** qualifications gained outside Australia
- overseas students:** students from outside Australia studying at Australian institutions located within Australia. Also refers to those studying off-shore, i.e. at an Australian institution which is located outside Australia
- private providers:** private institutions and training providers of Vocational Education and Training
- preparatory year:** the year before Year 1 in Australian schools, which is known by different names depending on the state or territory
- preschool:** the term used for the educational program two years before Year 1 in Australian schools. This year was previously known by different names depending on the state or territory
- professional qualifications:** degree level awards qualifying the holder to practice in a profession such as architecture, dentistry, engineering, law, medicine, social work and veterinary science; may include other occupationally-oriented or vocational fields such as business, management, design, hospitality and tourism
- QLD:** Queensland
- QCE:** Queensland Certificate of Education
- QSA:** Queensland Studies Authority
- QTAC:** Queensland Tertiary Admissions Centre
- RATE:** Register of Australian Tertiary Education
- RCC:** Recognition of Current Competency
- RPL:** Recognition of Prior Learning
- RTO:** Registered Training Organisation
- RTS:** Research Training Scheme
- SA:** South Australia
- SACE:** South Australian Certificate of Education
- SATAC:** South Australian Tertiary Admissions Centre
- self-accrediting institution:** an institution offering higher education programs which has authority by or under relevant legislation to certify the quality and standards of its own academic programs
- SSABSA:** Senior Secondary Assessment Board of South Australia
- TAFE:** Technical and Further Education, usually used in connection with a public college or institute offering Vocational Education and Training. Previously used in the context of technical and vocational education, ie. TAFE education or at TAFE.
- TAS:** Tasmania
- TQA:** Tasmanian Qualifications Authority
- TCE:** Tasmanian Certificate of Education
- TEE:** Tertiary Entrance Examination subjects, Western Australia
- TER:** Tertiary Entrance Rank, used to determine admission to university in some states and territories
- TES:** Tertiary Entrance Score, used to determine admission to university in some states and territories
- TISC:** Tertiary Institutions Service Centre, Western Australia
- TRA:** Trades Recognition Australia
- UAC:** Universities Admission Centre, for New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory

- UAI:** Universities Admission Index, used determine admission to university in some states and territories
- VCAA:** Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority
- VCAL:** Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning
- VCE:** Victorian Certificate of Education
- vocational:** refers to studies or training oriented towards a specific occupation or type of employment; the studies or training can be at secondary, postsecondary or higher education level
- VET:** Vocational education and training (VET)
- VIC:** Victoria
- VQA:** Victorian Qualifications Authority
- VTAC:** Victoria Tertiary Admissions Centre
- WA:** Western Australia
- WACE:** Western Australian Certificate of Education

Sources

The following are published sources used in the preparation of this edition of the *Profile*.

Australian Council on Awards in Advanced Education, Second Annual Report, 1973, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, ACT.

Awards Registered in the Years 1982-1987, Australian Council on Tertiary Awards, Woden, ACT.

Goozee, Gillian. 2001, *The Development of TAFE in Australia*, National Centre for Vocational Education Research, Adelaide, SA.

Register of Australian Tertiary Education (RATE): *Major Tertiary Course Award Levels in Australia*, 1991, Australian Education Council, Carlton South, VIC.

World Educational Services: <http://www.wes.org>

AEI-NOOSR has also made extensive use of information on the websites of Australian education authorities.

Contact information

This section contains the contact details for Australian Government and national education authorities. For telephone calls or facsimiles originating from outside Australia, Australia's country code is '61' and the '0' is dropped from the area code.

Australasian Curriculum Assessment and Certification Authorities (ACACA)

Website: <http://www.acaca.org.au>

Australian Qualifications Framework

PO Box 609

CARLTON SOUTH VIC 3053

Tel: (03) 9639 1606

Fax: (03) 9639 1315

Website: <http://www.aqf.edu.au>

Australian Research Council

GPO Box 2702

CANBERRA ACT 2601

Tel: + 61 2 6287 6600

Fax: + 61 2 6287 6601

Website: <http://www.arc.gov.au>

Universities Australia (formerly the Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee)

GPO Box 1142

CANBERRA ACT 2601

Tel: (02) 6285 8200

Fax: (02) 6285 8211

Website: <http://www.universitiesaustralia.edu.au>

Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students (CRICOS)

Website: <http://cricos.dest.gov.au>

Curriculum Corporation

PO Box 177

CARLTON SOUTH VIC 3053

Tel: (03) 9207 9600

Fax: (03) 9639 1616

Website: <http://www.curriculum.edu.au>

Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations

16 Mort Street

CANBERRA CITY ACT 2600

GPO Box 9880

CANBERRA ACT 2601

Tel: 1300 363 079

Website: <http://www.deewr.gov.au>

Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA)
PO Box 202
CARLTON SOUTH, VIC 3053
Tel: (03) 9639 0588
Fax: (03) 9639 1790
Website: <http://www.mceetya.edu.au>

National Training Information Service (NTIS)
Website: <http://www.ntis.gov.au>

State and territory education authorities

Australian Capital Territory

School education:

ACT Department of Education and Training
GPO Box 158
CANBERRA ACT 2601
Tel: (02) 6207 5111
Fax: (02) 6205 9333
Website: <http://www.det.act.gov.au>

Senior secondary education:

ACT Board of Senior Secondary Studies
Lyons Education Centre
GPO Box 158
CANBERRA ACT 2601
Tel: (02) 6205 7181
Fax: (02) 6205 7167
Website: <http://www.bsss.act.gov.au>

Tertiary admission:

Universities Admissions Centre (NSW and ACT)
Locked Bag 500
LIDCOMBE NSW 2141
Telephone: (02) 9330 7200
Website: <http://www.uac.edu.au>

New South Wales

School education:

NSW Department of Education and Training
GPO Box 33
SYDNEY NSW 2001
Tel: (02) 9561 8000
Fax: (02) 9561 8759

Website: <http://www.det.nsw.edu.au>

School curriculum, assessment and certification:

Board of Studies NSW
GPO Box 5300
SYDNEY NSW 2001
Tel: (02) 9367 8111
Fax: (02) 9367 8484
Website: <http://www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au>

Vocational education and training:

Vocational Education Training and Accreditation Board
Locked Bag 21
DARLINGHURST NSW 1300
Tel: (02) 9244 5335
Fax: (02) 9244 5344
Website: <http://www.vetab.nsw.edu.au>

Tertiary admission:

University Admissions Centre
Locked Bag 500
LIDCOMBE NSW 2141
Telephone: (02) 9330 7200
Website: <http://www.uac.edu.au>

Northern Territory

School education:

Northern Territory Department of Employment, Education and Training
GPO Box 4821
DARWIN NT 0801
Tel: (08) 8901 4909
Email: infocentre.deet@nt.gov.au
Website: <http://www.deet.nt.gov.au>

Senior secondary education:

NT Board of Studies
GPO Box 4821
DARWIN NT 0801
Tel: (08) 8901 1371
Fax: (08) 8999 5640
Website: <http://www.deet.nt.gov.au>

Tertiary admission:

South Australian Tertiary Admissions Centre (for admission to Charles Darwin University and South Australian universities)

General Enquiries: 1300 138 400 (within Australia)

Website: <http://www.satac.edu.au>

Queensland

School education:

Queensland Department of Education and the Arts

PO Box 15033

CITY EAST QLD 4002

Tel: (07) 3237 0111

Website: <http://education.qld.gov.au>

Senior secondary education:

Queensland Studies Authority (for Syllabus Development and Certification)

PO Box 307

SPRING HILL QLD 4004

Tel: (07) 3864 0299

Fax: (07) 3221 2553

Website: www.qsa.qld.edu.au

Tertiary admission:

Queensland Tertiary Admissions Centre (QTAC)

PO Box 1331

MILTON QLD 4064

Tel: (07) 3368 1166

Website: <http://www.qtac.edu.au>

South Australia

School education:

Department of Education and Children's Services

PO Box 1152

ADELAIDE SA 5001

Tel: (08) 8226 1527

Fax: (08) 8226 1234

Website: <http://www.decs.sa.gov.au>

Senior secondary education:

Senior Secondary Assessment Board of South Australia (SSABSA)

60 Greenhill Road

WAYVILLE SA 5034

Tel: (08) 8372 7400

Fax: (08) 8372 7590

Website: www.ssabsa.sa.edu.au

e-mail: info@ssabsa.sa.gov.au

Tertiary admission:

South Australian Tertiary Admissions Centre (SATAC)
PO Box 2, Rundle Mall
ADELAIDE SA 5000
Tel: (08) 8224 4000
Website: <http://www.satac.edu.au>

Tasmania

School education:

Department of Education
116 Bathurst Street
HOBART TAS 7000
Tel: (03) 6233 6900
Website: <http://www.education.tas.gov.au>

Senior secondary education:

Tasmanian Qualifications Authority
PO Box 147
SANDY BAY TAS 7006
Tel: (03) 6233 6364
Fax: (03) 6224 0175
Website: <http://www.tqa.tas.gov.au>

Tertiary admission:

University of Tasmania
Admissions Officer
PO Box 252C
HOBART TAS 7001
Tel: (03) 6226 2101
Website: <http://www.utas.edu.au>

Victoria

School education:

Department of Education and Early Childhood Development
GPO Box 4367
MELBOURNE VIC 3001
Tel: (03) 9637 2000 (switchboard)
General Enquiries: Tel: (03) 9637 2222 or free call 1800 809 834
Email: edline@edumail.vic.gov.au
Website: <http://www.education.vic.gov.au>

Accreditation of senior secondary and VET certificates:

The Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority
Level 6 35 Spring St

MELBOURNE VIC 3000
Telephone: (03) 9637 2806
Fax: (03) 9651 3266
Email: vrqa@edumail.vic.gov.au
Website: <http://www.vrqa.vic.gov.au>

Administration, curriculum, assessment and certification of senior secondary courses:

The Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority
41 St Andrews Place
EAST MELBOURNE VIC 3002
Telephone: (03) 9651 4300
Fax: (03) 9651 4324
Email: vcaa@edumail.vic.gov.au
Website: <http://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au>
Information Services:
Telephone: (03) 9651 4544, (03) 9651 4328, 1800 134 197
Fax: (03) 9651 4550
Email: information.services.vcaa@edumail.vic.gov.au

Tertiary admission:

Victorian Tertiary Admission Centre (VTAC)
Suite B, 40 Park Street
SOUTH MELBOURNE VIC 3205
Tel: 1300 364 133
Website: <http://www.vtac.edu.au>

Western Australia

School education:

Department of Education and Training
151 Royal Street
EAST PERTH WA 6004
Tel: (08) 9264 4111
Fax: (08) 9264 5005
Website: <http://www.eddept.wa.edu.au>

Tertiary admission:

Tertiary Institutions Service Centre (TISC)
100 Royal Street
EAST PERTH WA 6004
Tel: (08) 9318 8000
Fax: (08) 9225 7050
Website: <http://www.tisc.edu.au>