

Australian

Qualifications *Framework*

**AQFC Project to develop a Common
Terminology for Credit Transfer and
Articulation**

Consultation Questionnaire

Project overview

This project has been sponsored by the Australian Qualifications Framework Advisory Council (AQFC), formerly the Australian Qualifications Framework Advisory Board (AQFAB), in response to a MCEETYA recommendation in consideration of the 2006 Phillips KPA Report, *Giving Credit where Credit is Due*.¹ That report recommended the need for further work in developing a common terminology to support and enhance credit transfer and related processes. It identified the current lack of consistency in both the terms used and the meaning given to those terms as creating a significant impediment to credit transfer arrangements.²

Developing a common agreed national terminology will greatly add to policy and practice by creating a more simple, common and consistent language that will provide clarity of understanding and greater transparency for students and other persons involved in developing credit arrangements. Following the consultation process, the draft agreed national terminology will be forwarded to MCEETYA for approval.

Jane Carnegie Consulting has been commissioned by the Australian Qualifications Framework Council (formerly known as AQFAB) to undertake this project. The research for this project confirmed the findings of the Phillips KPA *Giving Credit* Report.³ The clear lack of guidance on terminology at the national level has created a vacuum which has meant that common terminology is non-existent.

As part of the brief for this project, the consultant was asked to review practice (institutional and organisational definitions) against the definitions and principles forming part of National Guidelines and Principles as well as the proposed definitions in the *Giving Credit* Report. The research showed some institutional definitions were referenced to the National Guidelines definitions but many others were not. Many other terms used in practice are not in the Guidelines. Definitions are inconsistent, overlap, include unnecessary terms, are replete with synonyms, etc.

The importance of this project is that terminology is critical to a coherent policy framework and hence to practice. In this area we currently have a situation where no-one is quite on the same plane of understanding. The outcome is considerable differences within and across and between institutions and organisations about the application and meaning of critical terms.

In determining the scope and focus of a possible common terminology a number of findings and issues emerged from the research. These are discussed in Section 3 of the project discussion paper and research findings and individuals/organisations contributing to feedback are advised to read this section.

The proposed terms and definitions are based on answering three central questions that reflect the main objective of the project. The questions are:

¹ Phillips KPA, *Giving Credit where Credit is Due, the National Study to Improve Outcomes in Credit Transfer and Articulation from Vocational and Technical Education to Higher Education* Study for the Department of Education Science and Training in 2006, http://www.mceetya.edu.au/verve/_resources/National_Study_final_report_June_2006_FINAL.pdf

² The term credit transfer an arrangement is used here for simplicity, as a global term covering the range of processes used to determine and grant credit. It is not intended that this term be 'crowned' as the basis of a global term covering these arrangements.

³ Phillips KPA: *The entire field is characterised by loose definitions, different terminology used in different institutions and in different sectors, people talking at cross-purposes because they use different terms and the community lacking in awareness of the potential of credit transfer because there are no agreed ways of referring to it.*

1. What are the outcomes for individuals/students and what terms define these outcomes?
2. What are the processes used to establish these outcomes?
3. What is involved in each process and how do they differ from each other?

The objective is to create a set of terms that:

- are already in use (the aim is not to add new terms or create greater confusion)
- are defined in a way which ensures each term is separate and distinct in meaning from each other
- add value in assisting to establish common and consistent understanding and practice
- are applicable within and between institutions and sectors
- are cognisant of and, where appropriate, consistent with international terms and definitions.

The proposed terms and their draft definitions were developed through a process of comprehensive data collation, analysis and synthesis, with each successive definition identifying other terms that needed to be included and their respective definitions. In this way the process built on itself and internal consistencies/inconsistencies were addressed with a clear separation of all terms. Appreciating how the definitions evolved through this iterative process is important and also helps the reader to understand the structure for Section 4 of the project discussion paper and research findings which details the development process, issues and rationale for each term and definition. Individuals and organisations seeking a more thorough understanding of the basis for the draft definitions are encouraged to read this section of the project discussion paper.

Consultation process

It is essential that wide-ranging consultation takes place on the draft terminology. It is intended that this will be primarily through electronic consultations via this survey instrument. Your input is important and we thank you very much for your participation in this survey and your contribution to this important project. The survey results will feed into a final draft for consideration by key stakeholder organisations and then the AQFC for recommendation to MCEETYA.

It is recommended that individuals and organisations/institutions interested in responding to the Consultation Questionnaire ***access the full project discussion paper and research findings*** and read this before submitting comments on the draft definitions. The discussion paper provides a more detailed discussion of the research findings, issues and rationale for the expression of the draft definitions. This can be downloaded from the AQF website - <http://www.aqf.edu.au>

Part 1 of the Questionnaire seeks general feedback on the project including identified recommendations in the project report.

Part 2 includes some additional background information and follows the structure of the project discussion paper in seeking feedback on individual terms and definitions.

Attachment A contains a chart which presents the relationships and linkages between the various terms.

A further series of charts is provided in the main discussion paper at Appendix 1 to assist the reader in working through each term, its definition and relationship to other terms.

Attachment B sets out the key characteristics and distinguishing features of the main processes for determining and granting credit.

Could you please complete this questionnaire and return it to

Jane Carnegie Consulting via/email by: 11 August 2008

Alternatively, if you would prefer to send a shorter response please send general comments via email.

If you have any questions on the draft definitions/ project discussion paper and research please contact Jane on the numbers listed below.

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Description of organisation (please indicate with a X)

Government Ministry or Department or Agency:

Higher Education Recognition Authority/Agency:

VET Recognition Authority/Agency :

Representative organisation:

Higher Educational Institution/Organisation: X

TAFE:

Other VET provider:

School:

Level of response: (please indicate with a X)

Whole/organisation/institution: X

Section of organisation/institution: (please identify)

Individual response:

PART 1: GENERAL RESPONSE TO THE TERMINOLOGY AND PROJECT REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

Please indicate with an (x) and provide comments as appropriate

Please note that the answers to these questions assume approval by MCEETYA of the terminology.

Paragraph references refer to the paragraph number in the project discussion paper.

You may prefer to answer Part I following your response to part 2.

Q.1	<p>Do you support the project objective of developing a common agreed national terminology for terms relating to credit transfer?</p> <p>Yes (X) No () Unsure ()</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Comments: The aims of the project are welcomed warmly. The confusion caused by the lack of linguistic precision has exacerbated the effective functioning of these pathways.
Q.2	<p>What do you see are the main benefits and uses of a common agreed national terminology for:</p> <p>a) your organisation? b) individuals/students? c) education generally?</p> <p>For a, b and c the main benefit is a shared understanding of the key terms. This in turn might promote: greater comparability in policy between institutions; further development of models based upon a shared baseline; greater consistency in development of relationships and agreements with industry and the public sector.</p>
Q.3	<p>a) Do you agree that the terms & definitions should be included in the <i>AQF Handbook</i> as a glossary?</p> <p>Yes (X) No () Unsure ()</p> <p>Comments: Nil.</p> <p>b) If yes, do you support Recommendation 1 that this glossary be extended to include a range of other terms to support national consistency relating to qualifications and education, as recommended in the project report? (refer to Para 43)</p> <p>Yes (X) No () Unsure ()</p> <p>Comments: we would prefer a much greater amount of time to respond to proposals if this were to occur.</p> <p>c) If yes to Q3(b), what terms do you think would be appropriate to include in an extended glossary?</p> <p>Comments: award, course, degree, program, unit, subject, outcomes, competency,</p>

	<p>qualification, exit point, specialisation, major, minor, elective, joint awards/degrees/qualifications (a single award accredited by more than one accrediting institution, including where institutions are from other countries as in Cotutelle arrangements),.</p>
Q4	<p>Do you agree with the decision to exclude some terms from the common terminology on the grounds that the terms are of limited value, act as synonyms or are too broad-ranging in meaning? (refer to Paras 41/ and 42)</p> <p>Yes (<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>) No (<input type="checkbox"/>) Unsure (<input type="checkbox"/>)</p> <p>Comments: the terms are too general to be of use.</p>
Q5	<p>If you support the proposal to develop a common terminology, what other policy documents and publications/ web information do you think need to include and reflect the common terminology?</p> <p>Comments: UAC, VTAC and other admission guides; Universities Australia and other industry body (e.g. Go8) documentation and policy; DEEWR publications and policy; AUQA documentation and policy.</p>
Q6	<p>a) Do you agree with Recommendation 2 that user friendly communications need to be developed to assist explanation and understanding of the common terms for students/the community? (refer to Para 44)</p> <p>Yes (<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>) No (<input type="checkbox"/>) Unsure (<input type="checkbox"/>)</p> <p>Comments: yes, perhaps as a set of guidelines.</p> <p>b) If yes, do you agree that this user friendly version needs to be broadly circulated to support a common approach?</p> <p>Yes (<input type="checkbox"/>) No (<input type="checkbox"/>) Unsure (<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comments: circulation is a bare minimum, as previous guidelines have been distributed but not always widely adopted. Perhaps universities and other bodies should be audited (by AUQA) against use of the terminology. There needs to be an agreement on the language and terminology and this needs to be disseminated widely and backed up by an assertive campaign to create more knowledge in both sectors about the operation and practicalities relating to articulation and credit transfer.

	<p>The need for specificity and agreement on the ways in which the sectors use terms that involve outcomes as well as processes (technical educational) and the ways in which the public uses terms, particularly prospective students, will remain a problem.</p>
Q7	<p>Do you agree with Recommendation 3 that the common terminology needs to be used/adopted consistently while allowing for elaboration through institutional/organisational documentation? (refer to Para 45)</p> <p>Yes (X) No () Unsure ()</p> <p>Comments: it may be useful to provide a single, sector-wide set of definitions as a short, professional-looking ('badged') publication from the AQFC which could then be used by each body in whatever way, and which students and others could then immediately recognise as <i>the</i> standard set of terms. Rather than burying the definitions within individual organisational policies so that they lose the sense of being national standards. (The definitions would of course also be embedded within all of the different institutional policies, but there would also be this separate, master glossary of terms for the whole sector). CSU assumes this is a planned outcome of the project in any case, to join the current suite of AQF publications.</p>
Q8	<p>a) Do you agree with Recommendation 4 that the common terminology adopt Recognition of Prior Learning as the relevant key term for defining this process and that the term 'skills recognition' be replaced with this term? (refer to Paras 125 -128)</p> <p>Yes (X) No () Unsure ()</p> <p>Comments: 'skills recognition' is much too narrow in focus.</p> <p>b) If yes, do you have any views on how this should be done? No.</p> <p>c) If no to Q8(a), how do you create a coherent common terminology that doesn't embrace parallel terminology? N/A</p>
Q.9	<p>a) Do you agree with Recommendation 5 that Recognition of Current Competency is different from RPL and should be defined as part of the broader glossary? (refer to Para 129)</p> <p>Yes (X) No () Unsure ()</p> <p>Comments: Nil.</p> <p>If no, how do you create a coherent common terminology that doesn't embrace parallel</p>

	terminology? N/A
Q10	<p>What are the implications (positive/negative) for your organisation of adopting the common agreed terminology?</p> <p>Comments: the lack of a standardised and authorised sector-wide terminology has created a great range of difficulties both internally and in dealing with external bodies. For example contracts and agreements often refer to credit arrangements in ways that mean different things to different parties to the agreement. It will also allow academic policy to have greater authority, as currently it is always possible to point to alternative definitions elsewhere in the sector.</p> <p>It will be a significant undertaking to update all policy, procedure and publications to embed the new definitions.</p>
Q11	<p>Do you have any views/suggested strategies on how to minimise any implications arising from the introduction of a common agreed terminology, for example, timelines for changing over documentation?</p> <p>Comments: significant time for implementation, and perhaps a national communication from the AQFC or government on the change terminology (to all possible stakeholders), explaining that universities and other providers are in transition to the new terms.</p>
Q12	<p>Given that a common agreed terminology provides guidance only, what broader strategies do you think would assist in facilitating acceptance and widespread use of the terms across all education sectors? As above, AUQA auditing. Also support from industry, professional, public sector and student associations would enhance implementation, as these bodies would then expect standardisation in their dealings with providers.</p>

PART 2: SPECIFIC RESPONSE TO THE PROPOSED DRAFT COMMON TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

Background

The process of research, analysis and definitional development clarified the project objective, namely, that a common terminology must be underpinned by six key factors:

- it needs to include the principal terms, widely used and accepted in the Australian context
- it needs to be cognisant of, and where possible, consistent with overseas terminology and definitions
- terms should only be included if they add value to a common understanding
- definitions of every term must be both distinct and distinguished from each other
- the terms need to talk to each other and be internally consistent
- the terms must be applicable within and between institutions and sectors.

It is hoped that these factors have been addressed in the draft definitions and that those individuals/organisations providing feedback will respond to the definitions with these factors in mind.

It will be evident that some terms used by some organisations have not been included in the common terminology. This will be because they may add confusion rather than clarity; or they may be a synonym or part synonym. The common terminology is built around the perspective of adopting one term only with one definitional focus. The consultation seeks feedback on the terms that have been omitted.

The terms and definitions included in the proposed common terminology are:

- credit
- the forms of credit – specified, unspecified, block, standardised, individualised
- exemption
- advanced standing (two separate options for consultation)
- credit transfer
- formal, non-formal and informal learning
- Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) (two separate options for consultation)
- Recognition of Individual Formal Learning
- articulation – end-on articulation and nested qualifications
- integrated awards

These terms can be broadly categorised as representing two focal points. One set of terms reflects the outcomes for an individual when institutions recognise the previous learning of any kind (formal, informal, non-formal) of that individual, as it relates to a qualification offered by the institution. These terms include:

- credit
- the forms of credit – specified, unspecified, block, standardised, individualised
- exemption
- advanced standing.

The other set of terms represents the processes that organisations use to determine the relevance, quantum and type of learning to be recognised. These processes are:

- credit transfer
- Recognition of Prior Learning
- enhanced pathways through qualification linkages reflected by articulation and integrated awards.

Each of these terms and definitions is considered below. You are invited to respond to any or all of the terms and definitions.

DRAFT DEFINITIONS RELATING TO OUTCOMES FOR INDIVIDUALS FOR PREVIOUS LEARNING

Q13 CREDIT

Definition

Credit is the assigned value of previous learning granted towards a qualification in recognition that this previous learning reflects and is equivalent to, in part or in whole, the educational requirements of the relevant qualification. For the purposes of credit, previous learning includes formal, non-formal and informal learning.

The provision of credit means that an individual does not have to enrol in those parts of the qualification for which credit is granted and the student record reflects the outcome of credit. This always shortens the time taken to achieve the qualification.

Credit may be granted as specified, unspecified and/or block credit. Credit may be standardised or individualised, depending on the process used to determine credit

Q.13a	<p>Do support the proposed draft definition?</p> <p>Yes () Yes with amendment (X) Unsure () No ()</p> <p>Comments: it's not clear that the learning needs to be 'previous', despite the definition proposed for integrated awards. The paper says credit in an integrated award is 'taken only as a reduction in time' because credit is built 'into the design'. This doesn't seem to make it a qualitatively different type of credit though – in both cases some of the key learning outcomes of the award are satisfied by learning undertaken elsewhere (formally, informally etc.). The focus of the definition seems to be too much upon chronology i.e. when study is undertaken, and not upon curriculum or outcomes i.e. what learning has taken place.</p> <p>Also perhaps the definition could be expanded to include the term 'experience' to alleviate the need to refer to yet another definition and to provide some room for institutional discretion.</p>
Q13b	<p>If yes, with amendment or unsure, what changes would you propose and why?</p> <p>We would prefer the definition to be focused upon learning outcomes rather than upon chronology, as above. There seems no necessary reason to focus upon when learning has occurred.</p>
Q13c	<p>If you do not agree with the proposed draft definition can you provide reasons and suggestions for an alternative definition?</p> <p>Reasons are as above. The definition is fine but doesn't need the emphasis upon chronology.</p>
Q13d.	<p>If this definition went ahead, what implications (positive/negative) would it have for your</p>

	<p>organisation, e.g. policy wording amendment/addition, changes to web information etc and how significant would the implications be?</p> <p>This would represent a more restricted definition of credit, and would shift the emphasis away from curriculum outcomes and towards chronology of study, which doesn't add a useful distinction to our current regulations. However implications wouldn't be too significant.</p>
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Q14 FORMS OF CREDIT

Definitions

Group A

Block credit

Block credit is credit granted towards whole stages or components of a qualification in recognition that the individual's previous learning reflects and meets the educational requirements of the exempted stage/component. This means the individual may be excused from (exempted) the requirement to undertake a block of units/subjects, a semester or whole year/s on basis of previous learning and the outcome is recorded as credits for the identified components or stages of the qualification. Block credit provides a substantial reduction in time and workload and is generally applied on the basis that previous learning is recognised as being broadly equivalent or comparable to the relevant parts of the qualification for which the block of credit is granted.

Specified credit

Specified credit is credit granted towards particular or specific units/subjects in a qualification in recognition that substantial equivalence exists between the learning outcomes/competency requirements of these specific units/subjects and the individual's previous learning. It involves a matching between the individual's previous learning and specific units/subjects in the relevant qualification. When matched the individual is 'credited' with having already achieved these units/subjects and the outcome is recorded as a credit for the nominated units/subjects on the student record.

Unspecified credit

Unspecified credit is credit granted towards elective units/subjects in a qualification in recognition that the individual's previous learning reflects and meets some general education objectives /requirements of the relevant qualification. It involves reducing the number of electives that an individual would normally be required to undertake to achieve qualification and the outcome is recorded as a credit for the elective units/subjects on the student record. In the higher education sector this would also generally mean the granting of credit points towards completion of the qualification

Group B

Standardised credit

Standardised credit means the same quantum and form of credit is granted to an individual based on achievement or partial achievement of the qualification for which credit has been determined. Standardised credit reflects the credit outcome from credit transfer and/or qualification linkage and design processes for assigning credit

Individualised credit

Individualised credit is credit for RPL which can be taken in the forms of specified, unspecified, block credit or exemption and/or full recognition of achievement of the award/qualification. Individualised credit means credit that has application only to that individual and in which the quantum of credit is variable dependent on the outcomes of the individual assessment process

Group A – specified, unspecified and block credit	
Q14a	<p>Do you support the proposed draft definitions in Group A?</p> <p>Yes () Yes with amendment (X) Unsure () No ()</p> <p>Comments: as for Q13, it's not clear that the emphasis upon 'previous' study adds a necessary distinction to credit terminology/policy.</p>
Q14b	<p>If yes, with amendment or unsure, what changes would you propose and why?</p> <p>See above. Additionally it may be wise to not restrict the use of the term 'unspecified credit' to electives. This would be the most common use of unspecified credit, but we wonder if a more generic definition would be less likely to be the victim of exceptions i.e. one based around the idea that credit here is simply not granted on the basis of demonstrated subject equivalences.</p> <p>Also for unspecified credit electives may sometimes be elective 'sequences' (majors, minors, specialisations etc.), which are not normally 'general education objectives/requirements' in a qualification. In fact they are normally highly specified. However the definition does make clear that it refers to elective units/subjects, so this may be a non-issue.</p>
Q14c	<p>If you do not agree with the proposed draft definitions can you provide reasons?</p> <p>See above.</p>
Q14d	<p>If this group of definitions went ahead, what implications (positive/negative) would they have for your organisation, e.g. policy wording amendment/addition, changes to web information etc and how significant would the implications be?</p> <p>The changes would not be significant, but would require some lead time to implement.</p>
Group B – standardised and individualised credit	
Q14e	<p>Do you support the proposed draft definitions in Group B?</p> <p>Yes (X) Yes with amendment () Unsure () No ()</p> <p>Comments: Nil.</p>
Q14f	<p>If yes, with amendment or unsure, what changes would you propose and why?</p> <p>N/A.</p>
Q14g	<p>If you do not agree with the proposed draft definitions can you provide reasons?</p>

	N/A.
Q14h	<p>If this group of definitions went ahead, what implications (positive/negative) would they have for your organisation, e.g. policy wording amendment/addition, changes to web information etc and how significant would the implications be?</p> <p>Minimal implications.</p>

Q15 FORMS OF PREVIOUS LEARNING - Formal, Non-Formal and Informal Learning**Definitions*****Formal learning***

Formal learning refers to learning that takes place through a structured program of instruction that has been formally approved through accreditation/endorsement and leads to the full or partial attainment of a qualification (for example, a certificate, diploma or degree).

This includes formal learning recognised as part of the AQF or other formal courses of study recognised by NOOSR or an institution/organisation.

Non-formal learning

Non formal learning refers to learning that takes place through a structured program of instruction but does not lead to the attainment of a formal qualification (for example, in-house professional development programs conducted by a business, education by professional associations, product courses and unaccredited structured training).

Informal learning

Informal learning refers to learning that results through experience of work-related, social, family, hobby or leisure activities. It is a natural consequence of everyday life. Unlike formal and non-formal learning, informal learning is not organised or structured in terms of objectives, time or learning support

Q15a	<p>Do you support the proposed draft definitions for formal, non-formal and informal learning?</p> <p>Yes (X) Yes with amendment () Unsure () No ()</p> <p>Comments: Nil.</p>
Q15b	<p>If yes, with amendment or unsure, what changes would you propose and why?</p> <p>N/A.</p>
Q15c	<p>If you do not agree with the proposed draft definitions can you provide reasons?</p> <p>N/A.</p>
Q15d	<p>If this group of definitions went ahead, what implications (positive/negative) would they have for your organisation, e.g. policy wording amendment/addition, changes to web information etc and how significant would the implications be?</p> <p>Minimal implications.</p>

Q16 EXEMPTION**Definition**

An exemption is recognition that an individual has previous learning which reflects and is equivalent to parts of the qualification which the individual is undertaking. This recognition exempts the individual from undertaking the relevant parts that have been achieved (units/subjects) but does not lead to credit. Typically, the individual will be required to select a different unit/subject in lieu of the unit/subject for which an exemption has been granted and to complete the same number of units/subjects as required by the rules of the qualification.

Exemption may, also mean, in some circumstances, release from undertaking particular requirements of relevant units/subjects, such as lectures, practicals, projects, assignments, assessment, on the basis of recognising previous learning, while still requiring the individual to satisfactorily meet the remaining requirements of those units/subjects

Q16a	<p>Do you support the proposed draft definitions for exemption?</p> <p>Yes () Yes with amendment (X) Unsure () No ()</p> <p>Comments: See below.</p>
Q16b	<p>If yes, with amendment or unsure, what changes would you propose and why?</p> <p>Allowing exemption for components of units/subjects may formalise partial credit for subjects, which is something that tends to be avoided in the sector as it is very difficult to operationalise in systems. Students do get exemptions in this way, so provided the definition doesn't then imply that this type of exemption needs to be formalised by the institution, it would be OK.</p> <p>The other full-subject type of exemption we feel is better termed 'substitution' or 'subject/unit substitution', as exemption in this case suggests that the unit/subject is simply skipped rather than replaced with another unit/subject.</p>
Q16c	<p>If you do not agree with the proposed draft definitions can you provide reasons?</p> <p>See above.</p>
Q16d	<p>If this definition went ahead, what implications (positive/negative) would they have for your organisation, e.g. policy wording amendment/addition, changes to web information etc and how significant would the implications be?</p> <p>Minimal implications.</p>

Q17 ADVANCED STANDING

Options

1 to not include the term in the common terminology.

2 define the term as:

Advanced standing is the collective term for credit in all its forms and for the processes used by institutions/organisations to determine credit. These different credit processes and credit outcomes are all developed in order to enable students to advance towards completion of a qualification more quickly on the basis of relevant previous learning.

3 define the term as:

Advanced standing is admission to a qualification at an advanced level with block credit in recognition that the individual's previous learning meets both the admission/entry requirements of the qualification as well as the educational requirements of particular components or stages of the qualification.

Q17a	<p>Which of these 3 options do you prefer?</p> <p>Option 1 (<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>) Option 2 (<input type="checkbox"/>) Option 3 (<input type="checkbox"/>)</p> <p>Comments: options 2 and 3 both emphasise award completion rather than equivalence in the curriculum/outcomes sense. As if the most general purpose of credit was to get through an award quickly, rather than to recognise learning equivalence between different qualifications and learning experiences.</p>
Q17b	<p>If you supported Option 2 or 3, do you support the proposed definition outlined in this option</p> <p>Yes (<input type="checkbox"/>) Yes with amendment (<input type="checkbox"/>) Unsure (<input type="checkbox"/>) No (<input type="checkbox"/>)</p> <p>Comments: N/A.</p>
Q17c	<p>If yes, with amendment or unsure, what changes would you propose and why?</p> <p>N/A.</p>
Q17d	<p>If you do not agree with the proposed draft definition for your preferred option can you provide reasons?</p> <p>N/A.</p>
Q17e	<p>If either Option 2 or 3 went ahead as the definition for advanced standing, what implications (positive/negative) would this have for your organisation, e.g. policy wording amendment/addition, changes to web information etc and how significant would the implications be?</p>

	Minimal implications, as it would be used as an over-arching term and therefore would have limited impact on individual policies and publications.
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DRAFT DEFINITIONS RELATING TO PROCESSES USED TO DETERMINE CREDIT AND OTHER FORMS OF RECOGNITION FOR PREVIOUS LEARNING

Background

The research report proposes three main and clearly distinguishable processes for determining credit and other forms of recognition. The three processes are:

- Credit transfer
- Recognition of Prior learning (RPL)
- Enhanced pathways through qualifications linkages and design incorporating articulation and integrated awards.

The proposed definitions for each of these terms and the processes they represent reflects three distinct processes, each marked by different characteristics including the nature of the process, the subject matter of the process and the outcomes of each. In considering each of the definitions, readers are encouraged to work through these sections of the report and to examine each definition in association with the other two process definitions.

Q18 CREDIT TRANSFER

Definition

Credit transfer is a key process for determining credit for formal learning.

(i) There are two main approaches to credit transfer. Both approaches involve institutional recognition of formal learning provided by other institution/s.

In the Vocational Education and Training (VET) sector, credit transfer means National Recognition as defined by the Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF). National Recognition provides for automatic credit to individuals who present Australian Qualification Framework (AQF) qualifications and/or Statements of Attainment issued by a Registered Training Organisation (RTO) to another RTO and where the same units of competency form part of the new qualification in which the student is enrolling. National Recognition applies to all RTOs issuing AQF qualifications authorised in the VET sector.

(ii) In the Higher Education sector, or at a cross-sectoral level, credit transfer is a process of comparability of qualifications to determine credit. This process involves mapping/evaluating the extent to which the content (defined as the required learning outcomes, units/subjects or competency standards) of one qualification is equivalent to the content requirements of another qualification and making a formal arrangement/agreement between the parties involved in the process as to the agreed credit outcomes.. This is transferred to the individual as standardised credit in the form of specified, unspecified, block credit or exemption. The parties to a credit transfer agreement/arrangement may be education institutions and other education institutions, and/or government agencies or representative bodies and education institutions

Q18a

Do you support the proposed draft definition for credit transfer?

Yes (X)

Yes with amendment ()

Unsure ()

No ()

Comments: we welcome warmly both the definition and the suggested processes for establishing levels of "credit Transfer ". The emphasis on mapping the outcomes between sectors and evaluating the points of commonality and divergence is a sound process which few organisations are aware of. It is

	necessary to get the sectors together when engaging in this process so that the outcomes for the students are maximised and so that the differences in learning design and assessment between the two sectors can be addressed explicitly and students can be successfully scaffolded into their next phase of learning.
Q18b	If yes, with amendment or unsure, what changes would you propose and why? N/A.
Q18c	If you do not agree with the proposed draft definition can you provide reasons? N/A.
Q18d	If this definition went ahead, what implications (positive/negative) would it have for your organisation, e.g. policy wording amendment/addition, changes to web information etc and how significant would the implications be? Minimal implications.

Q19 RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING (RPL)

Two options for definitions of Recognition of Prior Learning are proposed based on distinctions relating to whether RPL does or does not include assessment of an individual's formal learning. The first option reflects a definition embracing recognition for all forms of learning while Option 2 defines RPL as recognition for informal and non-formal learning. As a potential consequence of adopting Option 2 a further term is created to address recognition of formal learning negotiated between an individual and an institution

Option 1

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is a key process for determining credit. RPL is an assessment process which involves assessing individuals to determine the extent to which their previous learning reflects the requirements for entry/admission to a qualification and/or the content of the said qualification (defined as the required learning outcomes, units/subjects or competency standards) to determine credit to be granted.

The assessment process addresses all types of previous learning including formal, non-formal and informal learning. However, it excludes any formal learning captured via a credit transfer process and any credit which prevails through that process.

Credit granted through RPL is individualised credit taken in the forms of specified, unspecified, block credit or exemption and/or full recognition of achievement of the award/qualification.

Where relevant, institutions providing both credit transfer and RPL must enable individuals access to the standardised credit available from credit transfer as well as an RPL assessment to determine individualised credit.

Option 2

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is a key process for determining credit. RPL is an assessment process which involves assessing individuals to determine the extent to which their previous informal and non-formal learning reflects the requirements for entry/admission to a qualification and/or the content of the said qualification (defined as the required learning outcomes, units/subjects or competency standards) to determine credit to be granted.

Credit granted through RPL is individualised credit taken in the forms of specified, unspecified, block credit or exemption and/or full recognition of achievement of the award/qualification.

If an individual has formal learning covered by credit transfer, and an institution also offers RPL the individual should have access to the standardised credit available from credit transfer as well as an RPL assessment to determine individualised credit.

Further definition arising from Option 2

Recognition of Individual Formal Learning (RIFL)

Recognition of Individual Formal learning (RIFL) is a supplementary process for determining credit. RIFL is used to enable recognition of previous formal learning which has not been established through other credit processes for formal learning.

RIFL is an assessment process which involves assessing the evidence of individuals' previous formal learning and making an educational judgement to determine the extent to which this formal learning reflects the requirements for entry/admission to a qualification and/or the content of the said qualification (defined as the required learning outcomes, units/subjects or competency standards) to determine credit to be granted.

<i>Credit granted through RIFL is individualised credit taken in the forms of specified, unspecified, block credit or exemption and/or full recognition of achievement of the award/qualification</i>	
Q19a	Which of these 2 options do you prefer? Option 1 () Option 2 (X) Comments See below.
Q19b	In relation to your preferred option do you support the proposed definition outlined in this option Yes (X) Yes with amendment () Unsure () No () Comments: Our reading of the existing AQF principles is that ‘learning regardless of how, when and where it was acquired’ refers to informal and non-formal learning. The ‘regardless’ is an indicator to us that the focus of the definition was not on formal learning i.e. it wasn’t intended to be included within the scope of the definition. So perhaps the existing AQF definition was just badly worded.
Q19c	If yes, with amendment or unsure, what changes would you propose and why? N/A.
Q19d	If you do not agree with the proposed draft definition for your preferred option can you provide reasons? N/A.
Q19e	If this definition went ahead, what implications (positive/negative) would it have for your organisation, e.g. policy wording amendment/addition, changes to web information etc and how significant would the implications be? Minimal implications.
Q19f	If <u>you preferred Option 2</u> , do you agree with the need for another definition to capture credit processes for formal learning negotiated between the individual and an institution? Yes () Unsure () No (X)

	Comments: This seems to us to fall under the project's proposed definition of 'credit', which specifically mentions the 'individual' as one focus of application. That definition allows for both institutional and individual credit determinations.
Q19g	<p>If yes to Q19(f) do you support the proposed term and definition of <u>Recognition of Individual Formal Learning</u>?</p> <p>Yes () Yes with amendment () Unsure () No ()</p> <p>Comments: N/A.</p>
Q19h	<p>If yes, with amendment or unsure, what changes would you propose and why?</p> <p>N/A.</p>
Q19i	<p>If you do not agree with the proposed term and draft definition can you provide reasons/ identify another term?</p> <p>See comments in Q19f. It doesn't seem necessary to have a separate term, the project's proposed general definition of credit allows for this individual process.</p>
Q19j	<p>If this definition went ahead, what implications (positive/negative) would it have for your organisation, e.g. policy wording amendment/addition, changes to web information etc and how significant would the implications be?</p> <p>RIFL would be an unnecessary complication in our policies and procedures, although implementation would be relatively simple.</p>

Q20 ENHANCED CREDIT PATHWAYS THROUGH QUALIFICATION LINKAGES AND DESIGN

Two types of qualification linkage and design processes are identified for the common terminology which support credit outcomes:

- articulation which includes end-on articulation and nested awards
- integrated awards

Type 1: Articulation

Definitions

General definition of articulation

Articulation is a key process for determining both entry/admission and credit for individuals providing enhanced pathways for individuals to gain two or more qualifications. Articulation is a process of linking two or more qualifications together by creating/identifying the content relationships between them. The focus of the content relationships is at the level of the whole qualification, not the individual subjects/units components. In an articulation process these qualification relationships are set out as specific agreements/arrangements which may be developed within a single faculty/school, within an institution and/or between faculties/schools, institutions and sectors. In an articulation arrangement/agreement the entry, credit and qualification outcomes to individuals are known and transparent.

There are two main approaches to articulation: end-on articulation and nesting of awards/qualifications.

Definition of end-on articulation

End-on articulation focuses on defining the relationships between existing qualifications, usually in the same field, and modifying the design of these to enable entry and end-on credit from one qualification to another. The basis of this approach is a general acceptance of the relative value of the first qualification when linked to the other, combined with recognition of the broad content equivalences/general education outcomes in the first relative to the other. The initial outcome for the individual is both entry and block credit when the individual finishes the first qualification and transfers into the next linked qualification in the articulation arrangement. This outcome is known in advance. The final outcome is two qualifications or a dual award if the arrangement is accredited. These may be at the same qualification level or, more commonly, a combination of a lower and higher qualification. End-on articulation may be implemented within single faculty/school, within an institution and/or between faculties/schools, institutions and education sectors

Definition of articulation through nested qualifications linkages

Nesting of qualifications is a form of articulation involving a qualification design process which results in a nested suite of qualifications that have been specifically designed to build on each other. In this model, subjects/units from a lower qualification are included in the next qualification and these may comprise the first semester or year with additional subjects/units developed/included to reflect the higher level of the second qualification. This form of articulation includes a minimum of two qualifications and may provide for a suite of multiple qualifications in the design. By its nature a nested articulation arrangement is linear. The enhanced credit and entry pathway is created for individuals if they start at/near the bottom of the suite and then move through each successive qualification after successful completion of the previous qualification in the 'nest'. This approach may be implemented within a single faculty/school, within an institution and/or between faculties/schools, institutions and sectors

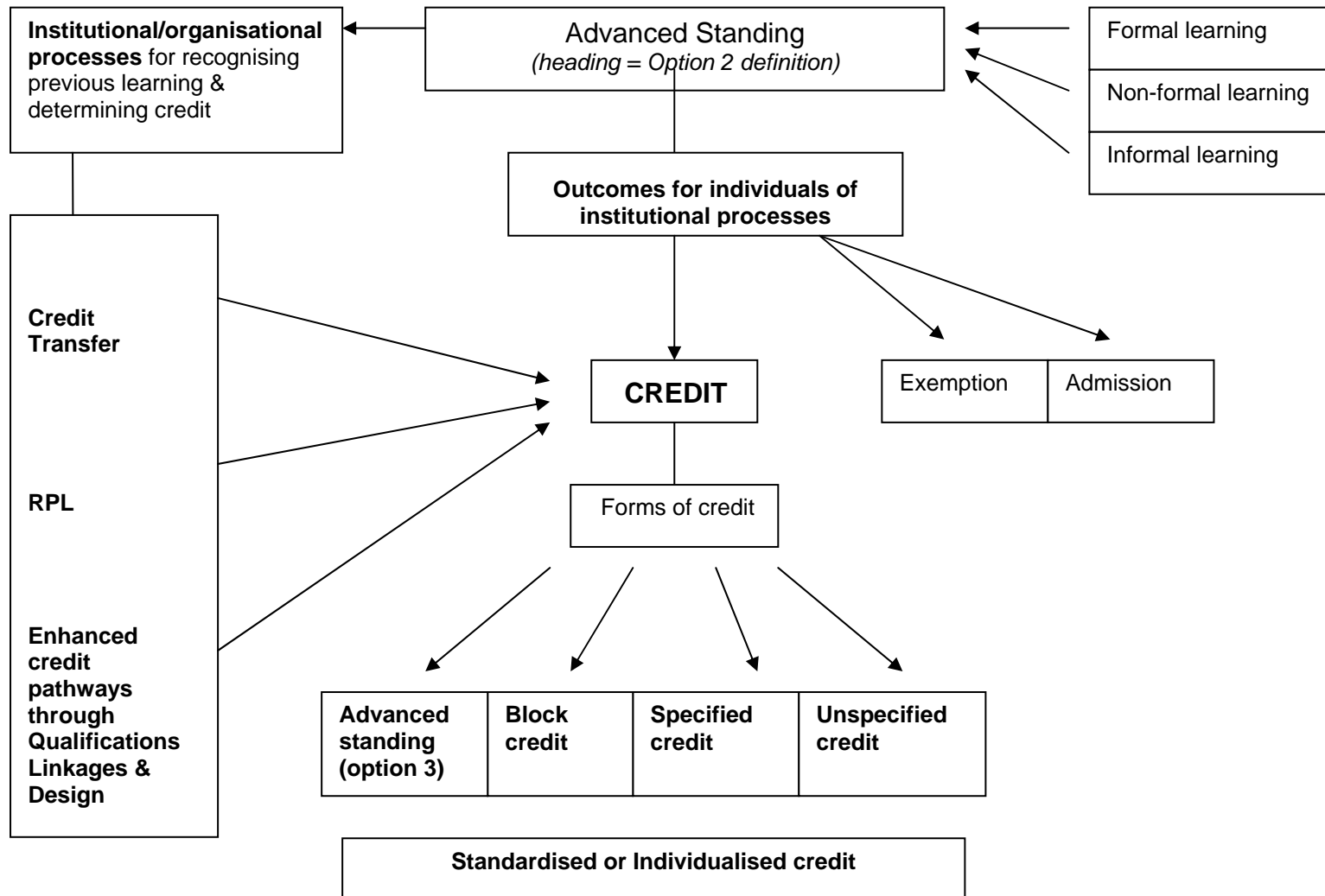
Q20a	<p>Do you support the proposed draft definitions for articulation?</p> <p>General definition Yes () Yes with amendment () Unsure () No (X)</p> <p>End-on articulation Yes () Yes with amendment () Unsure () No (X)</p> <p>Articulation through nested qualifications linkages Yes () Yes with amendment () Unsure () No (X)</p> <p>Comments: See below.</p>
Q20b	<p>If yes, with amendment or unsure, for any or all of these, what changes would you propose and why?</p> <p>N/A.</p>
Q20.c	<p>If you do not agree with the proposed draft definitions can you provide reasons?</p> <p>The definitions conflate a variety of things without getting to the essence of what articulation seems to be about. Firstly the emphasis on achieving more than one qualification seems more one for marketers – like a “two for the price of one” rationale. Students in articulated sets of courses can graduate with more than one award, but it is not integral to a <i>definition</i> of articulation (see below).</p> <p>Secondly not all articulated courses need have admission as a component. Students often have to apply for admission to the other articulated awards in a full competitive process (we suspect the unfortunate practice of describing all qualification linkages between different institutions as ‘articulation arrangements’ may have lead to the misplaced focus upon the linking, rather than upon the type of linking). Thirdly content relationships in articulated courses need not only be determined at the qualification level, it takes nothing away from the essence of articulation (see below) to determine these relationships at the unit/subject level as well. Lastly credit outcomes being known by students in advance is also not specific to articulation.</p> <p>To us articulation in its essence is about nesting. But it’s about the nesting of <i>entire qualifications</i> within one another, like Russian Matryoshka dolls. So that the lower-level award is completely nested within the higher-level articulated award (e.g. a Graduate Certificate, all of it, comprising the first component of an articulated Graduate Diploma). So the credit actually granted is 100%, for the lower-level award (credit limits normally apply between courses). Also the lower-level course must also then be the <u>first</u> component of the next level award in the set, as articulation is a progression between AQF levels.</p> <p>This is integral to the design of the AQF itself, that qualifications build upon each other as you move up the levels so that learning need not be repeated as you progress through the levels. It’s not clear from the proposed definition that this nesting of an entire qualification is what’s meant.</p> <p>There is also no mention of the two possible entry options to an articulated set of courses – either into the lowest level course in the set, or into the highest level, from which the student may then ‘exit’ with a lower-level course within the set.</p>

	<p>We see no real distinction between end-on and nested articulation, and would re-write the general definition along the lines of qualification nesting, as above. Preferred admission outcomes and multiple awards seem peripheral to articulation, and subsequently may also be achieved in other ways.</p> <p>Alternatively articulation and nesting could be two completely separate terms, the former referring only to the 'end-on' type arrangements (like articulated rail cars on a train). However it is difficult to see any credit-based (or academic-based) significance to linking qualifications in this way, it seems more a contractual or legal term signifying an agreement to link two programs of study sequentially. Where 'relative value' of the qualification is used to determine amounts of credit in end-on arrangements, it seems a nesting arrangement, not articulation.</p>
Q20d	<p>If these definitions went ahead, what implications (positive/negative) would they have for your organisation, e.g. policy wording amendment/addition, changes to web information etc and how significant would the implications be?</p> <p>Significant as the current CSU model of articulation as qualification nesting may not be covered by the proposed definitions.</p>
<p>Type 2</p> <p>Integrated awards</p> <p>Definition</p> <p><i>Integrated awards are qualifications that have been purpose designed, developed and accredited to provide a dual qualification outcome through a program of concurrent studies. Integrated awards are designed and developed collaboratively by the respective, faculties/schools and institutions who have agreed on the industry, education or professional need for such a dual qualification. Individuals undertaking a joint/integrated award only enrol once in order to receive the dual award outcome on successful completion of their studies. Credit is granted through a shortened workload and time than would be ordinarily required if the dual award were separate qualifications.</i></p>	
Q20e	<p>Do you support the proposed draft definition for Integrated/joint awards?</p> <p>Yes () Yes with amendment (X) Unsure () No ()</p> <p>Comments: See below.</p>
Q20f	<p>If yes, with amendment or unsure, what changes would you propose and why?</p> <p>The credit granted in concurrent study is no different to other credit, which also often results in shortened workload and time (also, can workloads be 'short'?).</p>
Q20c	<p>If you do not agree with the proposed draft definition can you provide reasons?</p> <p>It seems fine apart from the sentence on credit, as above.</p>
Q20d	<p>If this definition went ahead, what implications (positive/negative) would it have for your</p>

	<p>organisation, e.g. policy wording amendment/addition, changes to web information etc and how significant would the implications be?</p> <p>Minimal implications.</p>
<p>GENERAL COMMENTS ON THE PROPOSED COMMON TERMINOLOGY</p> <p><i>Comments: A great outcome in such a short timeframe.</i></p> <p>The period allowed for consultation on this report isn't long enough for proper consideration by a diverse range of people across the University.</p> <p><i>Are there other terms and definitions that must be included in common terminology? If so, please add here with a proposed definition.</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Credit limit – the maximum amount of credit allowed according to an institution's rules about amount of study required at that institution to take out one of its awards, and/or about how much credit can be granted between an award with which a student has already graduated and another award in which they wish to enrol, at the same institution. 2) Outcome credit – credit granted at either the subject or course level according to whether a student has met the broader outcomes for the subject or course, rather than having met specific content-based requirements. These outcomes could include graduate attributes, broad curriculum aims and objectives etc. 	

Please use this page for any other comments you may have regarding the project and/or terminology.

Overview of Common Terminology Structure



**Processes for Determining Credit
Summary of Key Characteristics & Distinguishing Features**

