



THE UNIVERSITY OF
MELBOURNE

National Qualifications Frameworks in an international perspective

The Australian Qualifications Framework and EQF



The Australian Qualifications Framework

- A first phase NQF
- Preceded by developments in:
 - Recognition of informal (prior) learning
 - Credit transfer
- Derived from the vocational education and training sector – competency based
- Limited framework with sector divisions
- Stable – since 1995



The Australian Qualifications Framework

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



Australia and Europe

- European heritage
- One of three major regions:
 - North America – strategic
 - Asia – economic and strategic
 - Europe – ***cultural*** and economic



Educational engagement

- Cultural – the **curriculum** – essentially European
- Student and academic exchanges and visitations; bilateral relations
- European models:
 - Bologna;
 - Training – Germany, UK, France
 - Social partnerships
- Competitive markets
 - Implications of Bologna



The EQF

- The EQF is the ‘main event’ in qualifications at the international level:
 - Other regional frameworks not seen as significant;
- All Asia and Pacific regional developments reference it in some way;
- Option of formal alignment not yet forthcoming from any country – but this could happen.



Regional frameworks

- Two major regional organisations:
 - ASEAN – Association of South East Asian Nations
 - APEC – Asia and Pacific Economic Cooperation
- Numerous initiatives linked to qualifications:
 - Brisbane Communiqué - regional student and academic mobility
 - Washington Accord – engineering degrees
 - Skills recognition for migrant workers – Asian tiger economies
 - Skills shortages and recognition of skills
 - Refugees and recognition of skills



APEC study:

- Most supported a regional framework, but voluntary;
- Recommendation that EQF be adopted – because of developmental costs;
- Regional framework seems unlikely:
 - Regional identity not as strong – economic, cultural and labour market;
 - Lack of strong organisation;
 - Costs
 - Inertia



Broader engagement

- Bologna:
 - Bologna structure:
 - As an intrinsic model
 - As an exchange model
 - Export market
- Recognition of informal learning, credit systems, diploma supplement
- Training systems - apprenticeships



Qualifications, competence and outcomes

- Australian model has avoided the clash between knowledge and competence – compared with New Zealand and South Africa;
- Outcomes and competence as contested – debate is dormant, but could awaken;
- Can a framework be enabling within a regulatory system? The EQF model?
- An emphasis on knowledge and its place across the three sectors



The future

- ‘Strengthened’ EQF being developed:
 - Recommended that it be aligned to EQF: 8 levels; similar domains; etc
 - Can a qualifications type framework be married with a domain based framework?
- A regional or international framework as an option:
 - This has an intrinsic logic;
 - But little political logic



The EQF, the AQF and the Asia and Pacific region

- Will the EQF become more influential?
- The case for:
 - It is the main event – no competitor is likely;
 - Non-EU countries are using it;
 - The package of developments hold a lot of capital;
 - International alignment will increase.
- The case against:
 - Local interest are not outwards looking;
 - NQFs represent internal compromises;
 - International lessons with NQFs have been to advance slowly and consolidate
- Likely outcome:
 - It will retain a considerable amount of attention;
 - Some alignment of concepts and terminology (such as the Diploma Supplement);
 - Bologna will continue to have an impact;
 - Formal linkages are some way off.



THE UNIVERSITY OF
MELBOURNE

Thank You

Jack Keating

Jkeating@unimelb.edu.au