National Course Accrediting Bodies Network

The National Course Accrediting Bodies Network meeting was held in Canberra on 6 and 7 October 2005. Representatives from each state and territory attended. The Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST) provided an update on redevelopment of the Training Package Development Handbook, review of AQF course descriptors, redevelopment of the Guidelines for Course Developers and the project on skills sets. The network discussed issues such as national consistency, including draft guidelines for modules used for general education in VET, vocational graduate certificates/diplomas; ongoing monitoring and evaluation of courses; importing Training and Assessment Training Packages (TAA) units into accredited courses; and extensions to courses and transition arrangements. The final session consisted of a moderated exercise of courses provided by SA, NT and ACT.

VQA’s registration and audit functions

The consultants Phillips KPA have completed an evaluation for the VQA of the effectiveness of the VQA’s registration and audit functions in addressing the key Australian Quality Training Framework standards related to teaching, learning and assessment from a user perspective. The evaluation also considered ways in which improvements in training outcomes and a more consistent approach to registration and audit could be achieved. The views of a representative sample of providers and other stakeholders, including auditors, training recognition consultants, students and employers, were sought in order to measure client satisfaction and to identify opportunities for improvement in outcomes and outputs.

The recommendations presented in the draft final report range widely over matters including registration and audit arrangements, the effectiveness of audit arrangements in enhancing standards of teaching and learning, and proposals to promote continuous quality improvement. The final report is scheduled for consideration at the December meeting of the VQA Board.

Development of national standards for Foundation Programs

Foundation Programs are nationally recognised courses for international students to equip them with the skills and capabilities to succeed in higher education programs. They provide an academic entry pathway to first-year undergraduate study or its equivalent. The VQA has been contributing to a Working Group sponsored by the federal Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST) to consider criteria, standards and quality assurance issues relating to ‘conventional’ Foundation Programs delivered in ‘face to face’ mode in Australia. The VQA has also drawn up specifications for a project to develop standards to support the key criteria for Foundation Programs developed by the Working Group.

The project is now proceeding, with joint funding from the International Division of Victoria’s Department of Education and Training, the VQA and DEST. The intention is to produce a clear set of national standards for use by state/territory government authorities in approving Foundation Programs for delivery to international students.

About the VQA

The Victorian Qualifications Authority (VQA) is the peak accreditation, certification and quality assurance body for post compulsory education. VQA aims to:

- safeguard the standard of Victorian qualifications
- ensure that qualifications work for Victoria’s economic future
- provide qualifications options that help Victorians achieve their career and personal ambitions.

VQA’s office is situated in the precinct of state government offices near Melbourne’s Treasury Gardens.

33 St Andrews Place
East Melbourne, VIC 3002
(Melway reference 2F K3)
Phone: (03) 9637 2806
Fax: (03) 9637 2422
Email: vqa@edumail.vic.gov.au

Published by the Victorian Qualifications Authority
33 St Andrews Place
East Melbourne, VIC 3002
(Melway reference 2F K3)
Phone: (03) 9637 2806
Fax: (03) 9637 2422
Email: vqa@edumail.vic.gov.au

© State of Victoria, 2005

In this issue:
- ‘Thinking the Future’ – Qualifications for a Learning Society
- ‘Rethinking Qualifications – Issues in VET’, by Andrea Bateman

The response to our request was impressive. Each paper presents a distinctively individual perspective of what lies ahead. Taken collectively, the papers represent an important contribution to some fresh thinking around qualifications and pathways, and identify the many expectations and associated tensions which will need to be reconciled.

Copies of the papers are available on the VQA website at www.vqa.vic.gov.au or on CD-ROM by contacting Stephen Moschner on 9637 3637 or by email at vqa@edumail.vic.gov.au.

The VQA Board this year commissioned a series of papers to be prepared on the broader issues surrounding qualifications and pathways. The Board considered these papers as part of its planning for the forthcoming VQA Corporate Plan for 2006–08. As part of this exercise the Board ensures that the present suite of qualifications and pathways meets the needs and expectations of all Victorians, and also considers future needs and possibilities. One major paper provides a comprehensive overview of recent developments and thinking, both in Australia and overseas. Prepared by the Centre for Post Compulsory Education and Lifelong Learning at the University of Melbourne, this paper looks at the range of influences on and approaches informing qualifications and pathways design over the last 10 years. Four broad themes are identified for closer examination – Participation and Opportunities, Standards and Recognition, Seamlessness and Flexibility, and Pathways and Provision.

Six ‘landscape papers’ were commissioned to speculate on the nature of the world of knowledge and skills in ten years’ time, and the implications for formal qualifications. These papers provide an array of views on the challenges likely to define the future landscape of qualifications and pathways. The six landscape papers are entitled:

- ‘From “Product” to “Purpose” – Some Speculations on the Qualifications Landscape of the Future’, by Rod McDonald and Anita Roberts
- ‘Enhancing the Roles of the Qualification System in a 21st Century Learning Society for Victoria’, by Peter Kearns
- ‘New Skills and Knowledge – Implications for Qualifications’, by Peter Noonan
- ‘Old Dogmas – New Tricks’, by Pam Jonas and John Glover
- ‘Rethinking Qualifications – Issues in VET’, by Andrea Bateman

The response to our request was impressive. Each paper presents a distinctively individual perspective of what lies ahead. Taken collectively, the papers represent an important contribution to some fresh thinking around qualifications and pathways, and identify the many expectations and associated tensions which will need to be reconciled.

Copies of the papers are available on the VQA website at www.vqa.vic.gov.au or on CD-ROM by contacting Stephen Moschner on 9637 3637 or by email at vqa@edumail.vic.gov.au.

About the VQA

The Victorian Qualifications Authority (VQA) is the peak accreditation, certification and quality assurance body for post compulsory education. VQA aims to:

- safeguard the standard of Victorian qualifications
- ensure that qualifications work for Victoria’s economic future
- provide qualifications options that help Victorians achieve their career and personal ambitions.

VQA’s office is situated in the precinct of state government offices near Melbourne’s Treasury Gardens.

33 St Andrews Place
East Melbourne, VIC 3002
(Melway reference 2F K3)
Phone: (03) 9637 2806
Fax: (03) 9637 2422
Email: vqa@edumail.vic.gov.au

Published by the Victorian Qualifications Authority
33 St Andrews Place
East Melbourne, VIC 3002
(Melway reference 2F K3)
Phone: (03) 9637 2806
Fax: (03) 9637 2422
Email: vqa@edumail.vic.gov.au

© State of Victoria, 2005

In this issue:
- ‘Thinking the Future’ – Qualifications for a Learning Society
- ‘Rethinking Qualifications – Issues in VET’, by Andrea Bateman

The response to our request was impressive. Each paper presents a distinctively individual perspective of what lies ahead. Taken collectively, the papers represent an important contribution to some fresh thinking around qualifications and pathways, and identify the many expectations and associated tensions which will need to be reconciled.

Copies of the papers are available on the VQA website at www.vqa.vic.gov.au or on CD-ROM by contacting Stephen Moschner on 9637 3637 or by email at vqa@edumail.vic.gov.au.

The VQA Board this year commissioned a series of papers to be prepared on the broader issues surrounding qualifications and pathways. The Board considered these papers as part of its planning for the forthcoming VQA Corporate Plan for 2006–08. As part of this exercise the Board ensures that the present suite of qualifications and pathways meets the needs and expectations of all Victorians, and also considers future needs and possibilities. One major paper provides a comprehensive overview of recent developments and thinking, both in Australia and overseas. Prepared by the Centre for Post Compulsory Education and Lifelong Learning at the University of Melbourne, this paper looks at the range of influences on and approaches informing qualifications and pathways design over the last 10 years. Four broad themes are identified for closer examination – Participation and Opportunities, Standards and Recognition, Seamlessness and Flexibility, and Pathways and Provision.

Six ‘landscape papers’ were commissioned to speculate on the nature of the world of knowledge and skills in ten years’ time, and the implications for formal qualifications. These papers provide an array of views on the challenges likely to define the future landscape of qualifications and pathways. The six landscape papers are entitled:

- ‘From “Product” to “Purpose” – Some Speculations on the Qualifications Landscape of the Future’, by Rod McDonald and Anita Roberts
- ‘Enhancing the Roles of the Qualification System in a 21st Century Learning Society for Victoria’, by Peter Kearns
- ‘New Skills and Knowledge – Implications for Qualifications’, by Peter Noonan
- ‘Old Dogmas – New Tricks’, by Pam Jonas and John Glover

The response to our request was impressive. Each paper presents a distinctively individual perspective of what lies ahead. Taken collectively, the papers represent an important contribution to some fresh thinking around qualifications and pathways, and identify the many expectations and associated tensions which will need to be reconciled.

Copies of the papers are available on the VQA website at www.vqa.vic.gov.au or on CD-ROM by contacting Stephen Moschner on 9637 3637 or by email at vqa@edumail.vic.gov.au.
Welcome to the tenth and latest edition of VQA Update. The 'Thinking the Future' papers described in this VQA Update were commissioned to support the VQA Board’s discussion at its planning day on future plans and priorities and to provide interesting and varied perspectives on the future qualifications landscape.

On the subject of the VQA Board, I’m delighted to welcome back Virginia Simmons, Julie Moss and Elizabeth Ward, all of whom have been re-appointed to the Board for a further term of office. National and local qualifications frameworks and the concept of lifelong learning have emerged as key policy drivers in countries right across the globe. But are these two key drivers connected? That’s a question that’s been explored in an international project managed by the OECD – the project report has just been launched.

There’s an opportunity for Victorians to hear of the outcomes of this project directly when its manager, Patrick Werquin, visits Melbourne at the end of November at the ... the VQA’s Kirby Lecture on 30 November. If you’re interested in attending this event, see the VQA’s homepage for details.

As part of the preparations for the VQA Board’s planning day, my VQA colleagues and I recently completed a series of meetings with members of our many stakeholder bodies to get feedback on the VQA’s past performance and to hear their views on priorities for the future. My sincere thanks to the many stakeholders who took the time to contribute to these meetings, which helped to shape the VQA Board’s discussion on future plans and priorities.

From the Director

Dr Dennis Gunning
Director, VQA

Building the Bridges – the latest credit matrix publication

The credit matrix aims to create a ‘common currency’ to build a bridge across senior secondary, vocational education and training (VET) and higher education (HE) qualifications. The credit matrix will work alongside the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF). The VQA is currently working on a series of proving projects on the credit matrix in Victoria but there is also considerable interest in the credit matrix from interstate.

In September, the VQA Credit Matrix team conducted a workshop in conjunction with the Tasmanian Qualifications Authority (TQA), using the credit matrix to assign a level to their senior secondary, VET and HE qualifications in childcare and tourism. The workshop involved 13 teachers and lecturers from the University of Tasmania, VET and schools, as well as TQA members. Rob Fearnside and Alison Vickers (VQA) led the workshop on the credit matrix and the rating process. Working in groups, the attendees, with support from Alison and Rob, were able to assign a level to approximately 80 qualification units.

Along with their ratings, workshop participants provided written comments about the ease of use of the credit matrix and the appropriateness and usefulness of the credit rating process. The University of Melbourne will analyse the outcomes of the workshop in a report that will help refine and improve future applications of the credit matrix in other state/territory jurisdictions.

For further information, or if you would like to be involved in the credit matrix project, contact Alison Vickers at the VQA on 03 9637 3426 or by email at vickers.alison.g@edumail.vic.gov.au.

Building the Bridges 2005–2006

A copy of the latest Building the Bridges 2005–2006 and the latest credit matrix brochure can be obtained from the VQA website at www.vqa.vic.gov.au or by contacting Angie Davidson-Slater on (03) 9637 3967 or by email at davidson-slater.angela.a@edumail.vic.gov.au.

Appraisal of standards for registration of VCAL providers and for quality assurance of VCAL programs

The VQA has commissioned the Deakin University Faculty of Education to conduct a review of VCAL registration standards. The purpose is to obtain qualitative information on the implementation of the Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL) and current standards of delivery through a process of in-depth consultation and discussions with a representative cross-section of VCAL providers. Based on the information gathered, key issues relating to the delivery of VCAL will be highlighted and an appraisal made of current registration standards for VCAL providers as well as of quality assurance procedures and processes governing VCAL programs.

The consultations will involve a representative sample of VCAL providers, including a range of government and private schools, Adult and Community Education (ACE) and Technical and Further Education (TAFE) providers, including partnership arrangements. Discussions will involve principals, VCAL coordinators and teachers, and other relevant stakeholders. The project findings will be used to assist in the creation of updated registration standards for VCAL providers and in further developing quality assurance standards for VCAL.

Alison Vickers (VQA) at the Tasmanian credit rating exercise