

## ENDORSEMENT OF VOCATIONAL GRADUATE CERTIFICATE QUALIFICATION POLICY AND PROCEDURES STATEMENT CAREER INDUSTRY COUNCIL OF AUSTRALIA

### POLICY STATEMENT

The Career Industry Council of Australia (herein referred to as the “Council” or “CICA”) undertakes to endorse proposed and current Vocational Graduate Certificate qualifications specialising in career development, according to the Australian Qualifications Framework, so as to inform key stakeholders of the standing of those qualifications’ alignment with the Professional Standards for Australian Career Development Practitioners.

### BACKGROUND

CICA is the peak body responsible for the development and promulgation of the *Professional Standards for Australian Career Development Practitioners*.

CICA is not empowered to monitor and control the practice of individual *Career Development Practitioners*—this is the purview of the member organisations of CICA. CICA is empowered, however, to ensure that an appropriate standard of education, training and continuing professional development for Career Development Practitioners is maintained.

This responsibility includes ensuring that key stakeholders of the Australian career development industry (e.g. including, but not limited to, consumers, practitioners, education and training providers, government and delegated agencies, professions with an interest in career development practice) have access to information which would indicate whether qualifications, which are purported to serve as appropriate for meeting the requirements of the Standards, are sufficiently so aligned.

Member organisations of CICA are concomitantly responsible for ensuring that their members practice within the realm of the Standards and that their membership criteria comply with the requirements of the Standards.

CICA recognises that there are three formal pathways to recognition as a Professional Career Development Practitioner under the Standard 4.3 of the Professional Standards for Australian Career Development Practitioners, and these include:

1. Graduate Certificate endorsed by CICA;
2. Vocational Graduate Certificate endorsed by CICA;
3. Alternative Pathway to Professional Status deemed appropriate by CICA Member Associations;
4. Certificate IV endorsed by CICA; and
5. Alternative Pathway to Associate Status deemed appropriate by CICA Member Associations.

The **endorsed Graduate Certificate (and higher) qualification** is recognised as the primary entry-level qualification for professionals who are relatively new to the career industry or who are planning to enter the industry, and for attaining the status of Professional Career Development Practitioner as defined by the Standards. Nevertheless, CICA does not discourage established and advanced professionals for taking a Graduate Certificate (or higher) qualification.

The **endorsed Vocational Graduate Certificate** is recognised as another entry-level qualification for the status of Professional Career Development Practitioner, as defined by the Standards. The Vocational Graduate Certificate is an alternative to the Graduate Certificate in career development. The Vocational Graduate Certificate relates to the provisions for

Recognised Prior Learning (RPL) contained within the Standards. The RPL provisions were established to enable significantly experienced and competent career development practitioners who did not hold a Graduate Certificate (or higher) qualification in career development, to obtain a formally recognised qualification that fully accounts for their knowledge and skills, apropos of the competencies of a career development practitioner defined within the Standards.

**The Alternative Pathway to Professional Status, or to Associate Status, deemed appropriate by a CICA Member Association** is recognised as another entry-level route to the status of Professional Career Development Practitioner OR Associate Career Development Practitioner, as defined by the Standards.

The Alternative Pathway was established to enable significantly experienced and competent professionals who did not hold a Graduate Certificate (or higher) nor a Vocational Graduate Certificate qualification in career development, AND para-professionals who did not hold a Certificate IV qualification in career development but who, nevertheless, were able to demonstrate formal equivalent qualifications at professional or para-professional level in a discipline related to career development, in addition to significant career industry experience, and continued professional development.

CICA Member Associations are responsible for admitting individuals to their association as members, using a process that aligns with the qualification requirements of the Standards. A number of Australian and New Zealand higher education and training providers are able to provide Graduate Certificate, Vocational Graduate Certificate, and/or Certificate IV education and training courses in career development. Certificate IV qualifications are the subject of this policy and procedures statement.

This policy pertains to qualifications provided by government-registered Australian Registered Training Organisations. Whilst CICA's purview is the Australian career industry, courses offered by New Zealand training providers are included in this policy, so as to acknowledge the co-operation between professionals of the career development industry of both nations and the *Trans-Tasman Mutual Recognition Act 1997 (Cth)*.

## OBJECTIVES

CICA will establish an *Endorsement Process* for the assessment of qualifications.

CICA will establish a *Qualification Endorsement Committee* to conduct the Endorsement Process that would review and make recommendations regarding its endorsement of entry-level qualifications of Graduate Certificate (or higher) and Vocational Graduate Certificate, specifically in the discipline and professional practice of career development.

CICA will establish a *Course Endorsement Register* which will be a public record attesting to CICA's endorsement of listed qualifications. The *Course Endorsement Register* will be made public through the CICA website and through CICA members' websites.

In the absence of changes to a course that has received *Endorsement* from CICA, the award of *Endorsement* holds for a maximum period of five years.

CICA permits a Registered Training Organisation to use the following statement on their course documentation, including public promotional material, if a course has been endorsed: "This Vocational Graduate Certificate has been endorsed by the Career Industry Council of Australia (CICA) as being compliant with the relevant minimum qualification required by Professional Standards for Australian Career Development Practitioners. This endorsement expires on [date]. CICA takes no responsibility for modifications in qualification content and delivery subsequent to CICA's endorsement".

Endorsement of a qualification is immediately suspended should a Registered Training Organisation undergo organisational changes that would limit its capacity to provide effective assessment of an application for Recognised Prior Learning. This limitation includes sale or transfer of the Registered Training Organisation as a business entity. Endorsement resumes upon the organisation providing a statement to CICA that the changes have not in any

substantial way diminished its capacity to provide the service and that it has sustained the assessment procedures that enabled the its course to be endorsed originally. CICA will establish a process to advise stakeholders that the register is active and that it should be used as an additional source of information for stakeholders' inspection of qualifications that purport to meet the Standards.

#### **ELIGIBILITY FOR REVIEW FOR ENDORSEMENT**

Only Australian and New Zealand Registered higher education and training organisations seeking review of their qualifications may submit an application to CICA for review by the *Qualification Endorsement Committee*.

If all of the necessary information required for the review is not supplied at the time of submission, then the qualification will not be reviewed by the *Qualification Endorsement Committee*. The Council will advise the applicant that the process is suspended until the applicant has supplied the necessary additional information.

#### **THE QUALIFICATION ENDORSEMENT COMMITTEE**

The *Qualification Endorsement Committee* shall consist of three representatives.

Membership of the Committee is not restricted to representatives on CICA. CICA may co-opt alternative representatives for the committee, dependent upon the need and the individual's expertise. CICA representatives will make up the majority of the committee.

The *Qualification Endorsement Committee* will elect a Chair who will facilitate meetings of the *Qualification Endorsement Committee* and correspondence with applicants. The Chair will be a CICA representative.

Membership of the *Qualification Endorsement Committee* will be convened subsequent to receiving an application for endorsement. Membership will be established at the next meeting of the Council or at its convenience. Members will be appointed by the Council after a process of nomination or recommendation.

Prospective members of the *Qualification Endorsement Committee* are precluded should there be a conflict of interest with respect to their commercial or prejudicial association with a particular course or applicant. Should the prospective member have concerns, they should present them to CICA so as to allow the Council members to judge whether a conflict of interest is at all present and what remedies should ensue.

The duties of the *Qualification Endorsement Committee* are to review qualifications that have been submitted for endorsement and to offer recommendation to CICA whether the course should be endorsed. The Committee will report to the Council twice per year, providing summaries of endorsement activities and issues that need to be addressed by the Council.

The *Qualification Endorsement Committee* shall meet to review a qualification that has been submitted for endorsement. It may conduct its meetings by face-to-face, teleconference, or videoconference mode. Its communication processes may include email.

The *Qualification Endorsement Committee* will conduct an Initial Review and Subsequent Reviews.

#### **DOCUMENTS REQUIRED FOR REVIEW FOR ENDORSEMENT**

Registered Training Organisations are required to submit sufficient evidence that would enable CICA, through the *Qualification Endorsement Committee*, to endorse the qualification under review.

CICA will provide to the public, via its website, a list of the documents necessary for review. Only official or certified copies of original documentation may be submitted. Copies of original documents must be certified as genuine by a Justice of the Peace or Commissioner for Declarations, or any other legally constituted agent deemed appropriate for this purpose depending upon local circumstances. International documentation should be approved by a Notary Public for certification purposes. The following documents are mandatory (and it is acknowledged that there may be overlap with some documentation).

1. The applicant—Registered Training Organisation—must provide evidence of its standing with respect to the currency of registration and capacity to deliver the Vocational Graduate Certificate according to the requirements of the Australian Qualification Framework.
2. The Registered Training Organisation must supply its official internal accreditation approvals documentation. This would include documentation indicating how the course meets Australian Qualifications Framework standards as a Vocational Graduate Certificate.
3. The Registered Training Organisation must provide evidence that the person/s contracted or employed to teach module content and/or conduct the assessment of RPL are appropriately qualified to do so, and that the person/s hold/s appropriate professional degree qualifications in cognate disciplines that would subsume career development theory (e.g., psychology, education, human resources) and would be eligible for membership of a CICA organisation at the level of a Professional Career Development Practitioner.
4. The Registered Training Organisation must provide a detailed statement indicating how the course would enable a student to be assessed for RPL in relation to the core competencies (and nominated specialist competencies) listed in the Competency Guidelines in the Standards. In addition to a descriptive statement, the following information must be included:
  - a. course specifications objectives;
  - b. course/unit/subject/module content;
  - c. means of assessment; and
  - d. procedures for RPL.
5. The Council assumes that a Professional Career Development Practitioner, at the entry-level of Professional, would be able to demonstrate minimum competence in all of the core competencies of the Standards. Therefore, the Vocational Graduate Certificate must include content and an assessment of all core competencies within modules that are taught. The Vocational Graduate Certificate must not be awarded unless the entire set of core competencies has been demonstrably assessed at the minimum level. The Registered Training Organisation must indicate how this regulation will be enforced within its offering.
6. In the case of RPL for the entire Vocational Graduate Certificate, its process must comprise assessment and justification of all core competencies. The Vocational Graduate Certificate must not be awarded unless the entire set of core competencies has been demonstrably assessed at the minimum level. The Registered Training Organisation must indicate how this regulation will be enforced within its offering.
7. It is acknowledged that a professional need not demonstrate all of the specialist competencies within the Standards (viz, assessment, counselling skills, program delivery, working with people with disabilities, project management, and employer liaison), in order to ethically and effectively operate as a Professional Career Development Practitioner. Therefore, the Registered Training Organisation should indicate which specialist competencies are to be taught and assessed and how this will be achieved.
8. The Registered Training Organisation must establish clear pre-requisites for entry into its Vocational Graduate Certificate so as to ensure that only individuals with substantial professional experience in the professional field of career development are permitted to undergo the RPL process. Substantial experience would comprise at least five years of professional work in the area of career development, directly delivering career development services. The means by which this pre-requisite would be implemented by the Registered Training Organisation, must be presented in the application for endorsement.

9. The Registered Training Organisation may supply additional information or documents which purportedly add support to the application or provide clarity on certain points liable to misinterpretation.

### PROCEDURE FOR INITIAL REVIEW

The *Endorsement Process* will be based upon criteria apropos of the Standards, the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF), the National Principles and Operational Guidelines for Recognition of Prior Learning.

An *Initial Review* is conducted on a course which has been submitted for the first time. A six month window is required for the lag between application and completion of an *Initial Review*. Hence, a course should be submitted for review at least six months prior to the expiry of its *Endorsement*.

The *Qualification Endorsement Committee* will complete a *Qualification Endorsement Form* for each process of review. This form will document the *Qualification Endorsement Committee's* judgement on whether the qualification meets or does not meet the criteria parallel to the Standards. The form will document the *Qualification Endorsement Committee's* recommendation to the Council as a decision of either "Endorse" or "Reject".

The *Qualification Endorsement Form* will contain specific comments derived by a consensus process. The form will not contain general statements of feedback to the applicant. In the interests of transparency and procedural fairness, the applicant will be supplied a copy of the *Qualification Endorsement Form* along with official correspondence from CICA indicating the decision of the Council.

Courses that do not reach *Endorsement* upon original application must be resubmitted for an *Initial Review*.

Following its initial *Endorsement*, a course must undergo a *Subsequent Review* on a five-year cyclical basis, so as to ensure that a particular course is brought under inspection to ensure its ongoing satisfaction of the Standards.

If a course undergoes major changes during the period of its *Endorsement* and prior to its due date for *Subsequent Review*, the provider should alert CICA of the changes within six months of their onset. If the changes do not impair the course's ability to address the core competencies of the Standards, then no further action is required.

### PROCEDURE FOR SUBSEQUENT REVIEW

A course will be granted no more than five years *Endorsement*. A six month window is required for the lag between application and completion of *Subsequent Review*. Hence, a course should be submitted for review at least six months prior to the expiry of its *Endorsement*.

The process of a *Subsequent Review* will be conducted by the *Qualification Endorsement Committee*.

The documentation required for the *Subsequent Review* must meet the same requirements for an *Initial Review*, but must be current at the time of review—previously submitted or out-of-date documentation will not be accepted.

The provider is responsible for initiating and engaging in the process of the *Subsequent Review*. Failure to secure *Endorsement* by *Subsequent Review* will result in a course being removed from the *Course Endorsement Register*.

### ADMINISTRATIVE FEES

CICA will charge standard administrative fees which will be levied for the services of conducting the *Initial Review* and *Subsequent Review*.

The fee is payable upon CICA accepting a course for a *Review for Endorsement*. CICA will invoice the applicant upon acceptance. The review will not commence until payment has been received and processed.

Payment for the fee is not refundable.

The amount of the fee will be established by CICA on an annual basis.

## **POLICY AND PROCEDURE LIMITATIONS**

This policy should be read in conjunction with the *Professional Standards for Australian Career Development Practitioners*.

It is assumed that Registered Training Organisations will use the Standards and this policy to achieve endorsement. However, this policy does not supervene the RTO's internal policies, procedures and accreditation processes.

Member organisations of CICA must maintain their own separate membership criteria in addition to the requisite qualifications of the Standards.

CICA's *Endorsement* of a qualification does not pertain to the standards of any other organisation that is not a member of the Council.

CICA will establish a separate process for individuals seeking endorsement of their foreign qualifications (excluding those of New Zealand universities) that are not aligned with the standards of the AQF. This process will be known as *Individual Foreign Qualification Review* and is documented as a separate policy and procedure.

## **APPEAL**

A decision regarding an unsuccessful application for endorsement may not be appealed.

Second applications, which are subsequent to a decision which declined endorsement, must clearly indicate the differences from the previous (rejected) submission; otherwise the *Endorsement Process* will not commence.

## **DEFINITIONS**

The terminology used in this policy is drawn from the Standards, unless otherwise stipulated within the text of the policy.

"*Endorse*" does not mean to "accredit" in the sense for education and training terminology used by universities. Accreditation would refer to a process conducted by a university necessary for a course to be approved for delivery by that provider.

"*Endorsement*" of a course by CICA is a public statement, by CICA, that a course has been reviewed through a rigorous and transparent process, and that, according to the judgement of the *Qualification Endorsement Committee* which conducted the review, the stated objectives, content and delivery of a course would likely enable a student to be sufficiently exposed to learning opportunities for his or her development of the core competencies listed in the Standards.

The "Standards" means the Professional Standards for Australian Career Development Practitioners.

"Career Development Practitioner" within this policy means a "professional" as defined by the Standards.