Ratification of the Asia-Pacific Regional Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications in Higher Education

Australia’s experience

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Chair, Bureau of the Regional Committee
Australia’s treaty-level commitments

• UNESCO Regional Recognition Conventions
  – 1983 Asia-Pacific Convention (ratified 1985)
  – 2011 Revised Asia-Pacific Convention (ratified 2014)

• Provide the overarching principles and tools used in recognition for academic mobility
## Pathway to ratification

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Oct 2012</td>
<td>Minister for Education agrees to support ratification and seeks endorsement from Minister for Foreign Affairs and Attorney-General</td>
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<td>Nov 2012</td>
<td>Ministers agree that the Convention be tabled with Parliament (through JSCOT)</td>
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<td>May 2013</td>
<td>Convention tabled with National Impact Analysis</td>
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<td>June 2013</td>
<td>Parliament (through JSCOT) recommends Australia enters treaty</td>
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<td>May 2014</td>
<td>Convention submitted to Executive Council with Explanatory Memorandum</td>
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<td>May 2014</td>
<td>Executive Council agrees to ratify and Minister for Foreign Affairs signs instrument of ratification</td>
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<td>July 2014</td>
<td>Australia and China’s Ambassadors to UNESCO jointly deposit instruments of ratification with UNESCO</td>
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National Interest Analysis

• Detailed document
  – Reasons to enter the treaty action
  – Obligations of the treaty
  – Implementation of the treaty
  – Costs of meeting treaty obligations
  – Ramifications of future treaty changes
  – Withdrawal or denunciation
  – Consultation undertaken and feedback received
Explanatory Memorandum

• High-level summary document
  – Process followed and Ministers consulted
  – Purpose of ratification
  – Summary of obligations
  – Impact of ratification
  – Entry into force
Key obligations - competent recognition authorities

- II.1.1 and II.1.2
  - Government CRAs immediately bound by principles
- II.1.3
  - Other (autonomous) CRAs should be encouraged to apply principles
- II.2
  - UNESCO to be informed of CRAs
Key obligations – recognition principles

• III.1 – access to recognition services
• III.2 – transparent, reliable, coherent, fair and non-discriminatory procedures and criteria
• III.3 – burden of proof
• IV, V, VI – recognition unless substantially different
• VII – recognition in absence of documentary evidence
• VIII – information provision, national information centre, UNESCO Diploma Supplement
Consultation and advocacy

• Support needed at multiple levels
  – Political
  – Government
  – Higher education sector
  – Other competent recognition authorities, if relevant

• Practical advice on implications for stakeholders

• Quality assurance and qualifications framework authorities are valuable stakeholders
Factors for success

- Simple and consistent position on national benefits
- Link to existing government policies and national priorities/policies
- Stakeholder consultation to identify and address concerns
- Phased implementation strategy with realistic timeframes