



**Guidelines for**  
**National**  
**Information**  
**Centres**

**A Reference for Asia-Pacific Practitioners**





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Australia

**Ms. Elizabeth Campbell-Dorning**

Manager, Australian Education International,  
Educational and Professional Recognition Unit (AEI-  
NOOSR)

Republic of Korea

**Mr. Daejoon Hwang**

First Vice-Chairperson of the Eleventh Session,  
Professor, School of Information and Communication,  
Sungkyunkwan University

People's Republic of China

**Mr. Tingxi Ming**

Second Vice-Chairperson of the Eleventh Session,  
Director, Overseas Academic Credential Evaluation  
Centre, Chinese Service Centre for Scholarly Exchange

Philippines

**Dr. Maria Cynthia Rose B. Bautista**

Rapporteur of the Eleventh Session,  
Commissioner, Commission on Higher Education (CHED)

Holy See

**Reverend Father Friedrich Bechina, F.S.O.**

Undersecretary, Congregation for Catholic Education  
Indonesia

**Mr. Nizam**

Secretary, Board of Higher Education, Ministry of National Education (MONE)

Fiji

**Mr. Eci Naisele**

Manager, Qualification and Research Unit, Fiji Higher Education Commission

India

**Dr. Jagannath Patil**

President, Asia-Pacific Quality Network (APQN), Deputy Adviser, National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC)

Malaysia

**Dr. Molly Lee**

Retired from UNESCO Bangkok, Former Asian Programme of Educational Innovation for Development (APEID) Coordinator

Finland

**Ms. Carita Blomqvist**

Head of Unit, Recognition and International Comparability of Qualifications  
Finnish National Board of Education

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## Acronyms and Abbreviations

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ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
APARNET	Asia Pacific Academic Recognition Network
APNIC	Asia Pacific Network of Information Centers
ENIC NARIC	European Network of Information Centers – National Academic Recognition Information Center
EQF LLL	European Qualifications Framework Lifelong Learning
HEIS	Higher Education Institutions
MOE	Ministry of Education
NIC	National Information Center
NZQA	New Zealand Qualifications Authority
NZQF	New Zealand Qualifications Framework
OECD	Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development

PDR	Peoples Democratic Republic
PRC	Peoples Republic of China
PTE	Private Training Centers
TWG	Technical Working Group
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organizations

## Glossary of Terms

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- **1983 Convention:** Refers to the Regional Convention of Studies, Diplomas, and Degrees in Higher Education in Asia and the Pacific, which was adopted in Bangkok on December 16, 1983.
- **2011 Convention:** Refers to the Asia-Pacific Regional Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications in Higher Education, which was adopted in Tokyo on November 26, 2011.
- **Access to higher education:** The right of qualified candidates to apply and to be considered for admission to higher education.
- **Accreditation:** The process of assessment and review that enables a higher education programme or institution to be recognised or certified as meeting appropriate standards.
- **Admission to higher education institutions (HEIs) and programmes:** The act of allowing or the system that allows holders of qualifications to pursue higher education in a given institution or programme.
- **Assessment of institutions or programmes:** The process of measuring the educational quality of an HEI or programme.

- **Competent recognition authority:** A governmental or non-governmental body that is officially authorised by a government to make decisions on recognising foreign qualifications in accordance with the mandates of the UNESCO Asia-Pacific Higher Education Qualification Statement.
- **Displaced person:** A person who is forced to move out of his or her locality or environment or to change his or her occupation.
- **General requirements for access to higher education:** Conditions that must on all cases be fulfilled for access to higher education.
- **Higher education:** Refers to post-secondary-level education, training, or research that is recognised by the relevant authorities of a party as belonging to its higher education system.
- **HEI:** An establishment recognised by the relevant authorities of a party that provides higher education.
- **Higher education programme:** A programme of study recognised by the relevant authorities of a party as belonging to its higher education system, the completion of which provides a student with higher education qualifications.
- **Non-traditional modes:** Refer to qualifications obtained through alternative delivery mechanisms.
- **Partial studies:** Any homogeneous part of a higher education programme that may not be complete in

itself but can be equated to a significant acquisition of knowledge or skills.

- **Qualification that gives access to higher education:** Any qualification issued by relevant authorities that attest to the successful completion of an educational programme and that gives the holder the right to be considered for admission to higher education.
- **Quality assurance:** An ongoing process of evaluating and enhancing the quality of a higher education system, institution, or programme to assure stakeholders that acceptable standards of education, scholarships, and resources for delivery are being maintained and enhanced.
- **Recognition of prior learning:** A process to formally acknowledge the knowledge and skills a person has obtained as a result of formal and non-formal learning.
- **Recognition of qualifications:** A formal acknowledgement defined and given by competent recognition authorities of a party to recognise the value of a foreign education qualification.
- **Secondary education:** A stage of studies of any kind that follows primary, elementary, preparatory, intermediate, or basic education, the aims of which may include preparing students for higher education, leading to the receipt of a secondary school leaving certificate, or enabling students to enroll in HEIs.

- **Specific requirements for admission to higher education:** Conditions that must be fulfilled in addition to general ones to gain admission to a particular higher education programme or to award specific qualifications in a particular field of study in higher education.
- **UNESCO Asia-Pacific Higher Education Qualification Statement:** A reference document in the Asia-Pacific region that provides a description of a student's qualifications and skills in an explicit and understandable manner. It can include a description of the nature, level, context, content, and status of the studies that were pursued and successfully completed by the individual named on the original qualification to which the statement is appended. It is an international and intercultural communication tool that can serve as a source of information for making mutual accreditation and evaluation decisions.



## Preface

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During the Twelfth Session of the Regional Committee held in Bangkok in the Kingdom of Thailand in 2013, it was recommended that Guidelines for the formation of National Information Centres (NICs) be developed to help Member States ratify and implement the Asia-Pacific Convention. The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) Asia-Pacific Regional Bureau for Education established a technical working group (TWG) to prepare the Guidelines for NICs for the Recognition of Foreign Qualifications in Higher Education.

The purpose of these guidelines is to create incentive and momentum to establish NICs by stressing that substantial administrative commitment is not necessary to establish and operate an NIC. The guidelines further aim to provide practical clarity for Member States on what may constitute an NIC by tabling a range of operating models that offer basic to more complex information services. These have been included as case studies.

It is hoped that these guidelines will provide practical options and incentives and will be easily understood by decision makers from relevant governments, assuming that one of their purpose is to get high-level sign-on for establishing NICs.



# Section 1:

## Introduction and Background

### 1.1 Background on the Development of the Revised Regional Convention

- 1983: The Regional Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Diplomas, and Degrees in Higher Education in Asia and the Pacific was signed by 14 countries, namely, Australia, Bhutan, the People's Republic of China (PRC), the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, India, Indonesia, Lao People's Democratic Republic (PDR), Nepal, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Turkey, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, and Vietnam.
- 1985: The 1983 Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Diplomas, and Degrees in Higher Education in Asia and the Pacific was implemented on October 23, 1985.
- 1984–2011: The PRC (1984), Australia (1985), Sri Lanka (1986), Turkey (1986), the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (1989), the Republic of Korea (1989), Nepal (1989), Maldives (1990), the Russian Federation (1990), Mongolia (1991), Tajikistan (1993), Armenia (1993), Azerbaijan (1995), the Holy See (1995), Kyrgyzstan (1996), Turkmenistan (1997), Kazakhstan (1997), India (2000), Lao PDR, the Philippines (2003), and Indonesia (2008) ratified the 1983 Convention on the Recognition of Studies,

Diplomas, and Degrees in Higher Education in Asia and the Pacific.

- 2005: The UNESCO proposed to revise the 1983 Regional Convention of Studies, Diplomas, and Degrees in Higher Education in Asia and the Pacific during the Eighth Regional Committee Meeting held in Kunming in the PRC.
- 2005–2011: A Working Party was established to oversee the revision of the Revised Regional Convention.
- 2011: The revised regional convention or its replacement entitled, “Asia-Pacific Regional Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications in Higher Education,” was signed on November 26, 2011 in Tokyo, Japan. The countries that signed the new convention include the Republic of Armenia, the People’s Republic of Bangladesh, the Kingdom of Cambodia, the PRC, Lao PDR, the Republic of Korea, the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste, the Republic of Turkey, and the Holy See.

## **1.2 Development of a Toolkit to Implement the Regional Convention**

During the Eleventh Session of the Regional Committee held in Seoul, Republic of Korea in 2012, it was recommended that a Toolkit be developed to help Member States ratify and implement the Asia-Pacific Convention. The UNESCO Asia-Pacific Regional Bureau for Education established a TWG that prepared the

## Toolkit for the Recognition of Foreign Higher Education Qualifications.

The main goal behind the development of this Toolkit was to provide a common reference guide for the Asia-Pacific region with regard to assessing higher education qualifications.

This Toolkit specifically intends to:

- Inform recognition practitioners, policymakers, government officials, HEIs, and other stakeholders about the 2011 Asia-Pacific Regional Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications in Higher Education
- Present a common language and concept for the use of academic recognition practitioners to facilitate easier alignment of studies, diplomas, and degrees
- Provide an additional reference on assessment requirements; basic principles related to qualification assessment; partial studies; recognition of qualifications held by refugees, displaced people, and people in similar situations; and implementation mechanisms for making informed decisions
- Facilitate the implementation of regional cooperation regarding the recognition of foreign qualifications in higher education through national, bilateral, sub-regional, and regional mechanisms

The Twelfth Session of the Regional Committee held in Bangkok, Thailand in 2013 approved the Toolkit on the Recognition of Qualifications.

During the Twelfth Session of the Regional Committee, it was also recommended that a new TWG be established to draft Regional Guidelines on NICs.

# Section 2: Rationale for the Establishment of National Information Centres

## 2.1 Summary of the Regional Convention's Relevant Clauses

The Asia-Pacific Regional Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications in Higher Education (2011) requires Parties to have an NIC. This does not necessarily require a new structure or organisation to be formed. Parties need to provide a single point of contact from within existing ministries and organisations or a new entity. The relevant clauses include:

### Article VIII.1

Each Party shall provide adequate information on any institution belonging to its higher education system and on its quality assurance system with a view to enabling the competent recognition authorities of the other Parties to ascertain whether the quality of the qualifications issued by these institutions justifies recognition in the Party in which recognition is sought. This includes:

1. A description of its higher education system
2. An overview of the different types of HEIs belonging to its higher education system and of the typical characteristics of each type of institution

3. A list of recognised and/or accredited HEIs, public and private, belonging to its higher education system, indicating their powers to award different types of qualifications and the requirements for gaining access to each type of institution and programme
4. An explanation of quality assurance mechanisms
5. A list of educational institutions located outside its territory, which the Party considers as belonging to its education system

#### **Article VIII.2**

Each Party shall provide relevant, accurate, and up-to-date information in order to facilitate the recognition of qualifications concerning higher education by:

1. Facilitating access to authoritative and accurate information on the description of its higher education system and qualifications
2. Facilitating access to information on the higher education systems and qualifications of the other Parties
3. Giving advice or information on recognition matters and assessment of qualifications in accordance with national laws and regulations

#### **Article VIII.3**

Each Party shall take adequate measures for the development and maintenance of an NIC that will provide higher education information. The form of the NIC can vary.



#### **Article VIII.4**

The Parties shall promote, through their NICs or otherwise, the use of the:

1. UNESCO Diploma Supplement and/or any comparable document produced by their respective HEIs
2. UNESCO/Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD) Guidelines for Quality Provision in Cross-Border Higher Education and/or any comparable document produced by the Parties' respective HEIs, subject to their respective national laws and regulations

## **2.2 Obligations of the Signatories of the Regional Convention**

In summary, the goals of NICs are to:

1. Provide information that will assist a NIC to work collaboratively with other NICs in sharing information from their higher education system, which includes:
  - a. A description of their higher education system
  - b. An overview of the different types of HEIs that belong to their higher education

system and of the typical characteristics of each type of institution

- c. A list of recognised and/or accredited HEIs, public and private, that belong to their higher education system, indicating their powers to award different types of qualifications and the requirements for gaining access to each type of institution and programme
  - d. An explanation of their quality assurance mechanisms
  - e. A list of educational institutions located outside their territory that are considered part of their education system
2. Provide information to support the recognition of qualifications by:
    - a. Facilitating access to authoritative and accurate information on the description of their higher education system and qualifications
    - b. Facilitating access to information on the higher education systems and qualifications of the other countries
    - c. Giving advice or information on recognition matters and assessment of qualifications in accordance with national laws and regulations

3. Promote the use of the:
  - a. UNESCO Diploma Supplement and/or any comparable document produced by their respective HEIs
  - b. UNESCO/OECD Guidelines for Quality Provision in Cross-Border Higher Education and/or any comparable document produced by the Parties' respective HEIs, subject to their respective national laws and regulations

### **2.3 Format of a National Information Centre (NIC)**

Each country should seek to establish a system, a unit or a center that acts as the single point of contact for providing information on qualifications and higher education systems.

The main objective of having an NIC is to assist in promoting the mobility of students, teachers, and researchers by providing authoritative advice and information concerning the academic recognition of qualifications undertaken in other States. The main users of this service will be HEIs and students and their advisers, parents, teachers, prospective employers and other NICs.

The status, scope, and operation of individual NICs will differ from State to State. In the majority of the States, institutions of higher education are autonomous, making their own decisions with regard to admitting foreign students and exempting them from parts of courses

of study programmes based on education undertaken abroad. However, in countries where most higher education institutions are funded and run by central or regional governments, a NIC may be a division or section of the appropriate government ministry or department.

## Section 3:

# Establishing a National Information Centre

Establishing a NIC may seem a formidable task. This section provides guidance for countries wishing to establish a NIC. Much of the information suggested below is often available but sometimes is not centralised in one location. NICs can provide the one-stop-shop for all this information.

### **1. Basic NIC Information**

Provide the NIC's name, full address, phone number, fax number, email address, website link, and the name or title of the person to contact. This could also be a division within a government ministry or department such as the Equivalency of Certificates Division or an independent organisation.

### **2. Description of the education system**

This section could provide a brief overview of the schooling, technical, vocational and higher education sectors as well as the roles of government at both national and provincial/state level.

### **3. Detailed description of the higher education system**

Provide a brief overview of the national and/or regional education bodies that are involved with higher education,

along with a brief statement about their role. This could also include links to the relevant websites which can save time when updating information that quickly becomes outdated.

#### **4. Quality Assurance and Accreditation**

This could include systems used for assuring quality for operating higher education institutions as well as qualifications and programmes. However, this could also be included under higher education, depending on the complexity of the system or systems.

#### **5. Qualifications Framework**

Provide a brief description about the framework or system for organising higher education qualifications within the country. This could also be included in the section on more detailed description of the higher education sector.

#### **6. Procedures for the recognition of foreign qualifications**

This could include:

- national legal or regulatory framework for recognition and assessment, including competence of different stakeholders
- Requirements regarding information applicant must provide;
- Fees for recognition (where applicable);
- Possible requirements regarding the translations.

## Section 4:

# Guidelines and Procedures in the Operation of NICs

### 4.1 Information on Recognition

Information is of key importance in assisting students and those who already hold higher education qualifications to move as freely as possible within the Asia-Pacific region and with the rest of the world. At the same time, information on recognition is equally important in ensuring acceptance of qualifications from other countries. It is also of crucial importance in a number of other contexts, including for further study, for gaining access to regulated professions, and for employment in non-regulated parts of the labour market.

The main problem facing credential evaluators and others called upon to assess or otherwise make use of foreign qualifications is not lack of information per se but lack of authoritative, adequate, relevant, well-targeted, and easily available information.

A key function of the NIC is to provide accurate, reliable, authoritative, and easily accessible information on their own and foreign higher education systems and on the recognition of qualifications.

## **4.2 Role of National Information Centres**

NICs should be the principal providers of authoritative information on recognition, particularly on:

- Higher education systems and qualifications of the country where they are located
- Recognition of foreign qualifications in the country where they are located
- Foreign education systems to serve enquirers in the country for which they are responsible

NICs should either be in a position to answer enquiries (“one stop”) or to refer enquirers to the appropriate body that can provide authoritative answers (“two stop”).

At international level, NICs should represent their respective countries in the Asia-Pacific Network of Information Centres.

## **4.3 Terminology**

In providing information, NICs should explain their use of specialised terminology and define technical terms that are important in the context of the information provided and/or significantly differs from common international use of these terms.

## **4.4 Standards of Information Provision**

NICs should consistently aim to provide information that is of high quality, accurate, adequate, and relevant to users.



In general, the information they provide should:

- Be meaningful to users and should respond to their needs
- Recognise that different users or user groups have different information needs
- Seek to provide information that is relevant to each group without overburdening them with irrelevant information
- Be accessible in terms of content, language, and style (i.e., avoid unnecessary complications or specialised language)
- Be accurate (i.e., be factually correct and also avoid oversimplification, implying that a balance needs to be struck between accessibility and accuracy)
- Originate from and as much as possible be provided by the competent authority closest to the source of information (the subsidiarity principle [e.g., information on a given education system should be provided by the authority competent for that system])
- Be up-to-date
- Be timely

#### **4.4 Target Groups**

Each NIC should carefully consider the main target groups for its activities and as much as possible adapt the information it provides to the needs of individual target

groups. While allowances should be made for the diversity of national situations, the key target groups are likely to include:

- Individual holders of qualifications
- Public authorities (typically but not limited to ministries responsible for higher education)
- Quality assurance agencies
- HEIs and bodies such as Rectors' conferences or similar structures
- Other NICs

#### **4.5 Types of Information**

NICs should be in a position to provide information on both higher education systems and qualifications frameworks as well as on the status of individual institutions, programmes, and qualifications. Within each broad category of information, they should seek to identify the precise information that is most likely to be of interest to each of their main target groups.

#### **4.6 Information Dissemination**

NICs should use a variety of means to provide information to various target groups. Information should be provided by all appropriate means, including:

- Information technologies in accordance with internationally accepted standards

- Printed information sheets, leaflets, and booklets
- Interviews and articles in appropriate journals, newspapers, and other media
- Other means of promotion, as appropriate

NICs should as much as possible provide standardised information adapted to the needs of specific target groups. This information should be provided in the appropriate national languages as well as in at least one widely spoken foreign language.

In addition to written information provided electronically or in printed form, NICs should seek direct contact with the main stakeholders through participation in relevant fairs and similar events as well as by organising information meetings and seminars for relevant target groups.

#### **4.7 Networking and Information Exchange**

This is not mandatory but it is suggested that NICs should seek to establish regular contact with their main organised target groups such as ministries, HEIs, student organisations, employers and their organisations, quality assurance agencies, student loan and grant authorities, immigration authorities, and others. Where pertinent, they should seek to establish networks of stakeholders and cooperation partners for regular exchange of information.



## Section 5: Co-Ordination of Regional National Information Centres

### 5.1 Asia-Pacific Network of Information Centres

The 2011 Asia-Pacific Recognition Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications in Higher Education also requires the establishment of a network of NICs to develop policy and practice for the recognition of qualifications.

#### Article IX.3

1. A network of NICs on academic mobility and recognition shall be established and shall uphold and assist the practical implementation of this Convention by the competent recognition authorities.
2. Each Party shall appoint a member of their NIC to the network of NICs. In cases in which more than one NIC is established or maintained, all these shall be members of the network, but the NICs concerned shall dispose of only one vote.
3. The network of NICs shall meet annually in a plenary session. It shall elect its President and Bureau.
4. The role of the Secretariat of the network of NICs shall be entrusted to the Director-General of UNESCO.
5. The network of NICs shall collect relevant information from the Parties relating to academic recognition and mobility.

The Network is made up of the NICs of the States party to the 2011 Asia-Pacific Regional Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications in Higher Education. The Asia-Pacific Network of Information Centres (APNIC) is a body set up by the national authorities. While the NICs' sizes and specific competence may vary, they will generally provide information on:

- Recognition of foreign diplomas, degrees, and other qualifications
- Education systems in both foreign countries and the ENIC's own country
- Opportunities for studying abroad, including information on loans and scholarships as well as advice on practical questions related to mobility and equivalence

The Network aims at improving academic recognition of qualifications in higher education and periods of study in the Member States of the Asia-Pacific region. All member countries should have designated NICs, the purpose of which is to assist in promoting the mobility of students, teachers, and researchers by providing authoritative advice and information concerning the academic recognition of qualifications in higher education and periods of study undertaken in other States. The main users of this service are HEIs as well as students and their advisers, parents, teachers, and prospective employers.

In the majority of States, institutions of higher education are autonomous, making their own decisions on admitting foreign students and exempting them from

parts of courses of study programmes based on education undertaken abroad. As a result, most NICs do not make a decision but offer advice on foreign education systems and qualifications.

## **5.2 APARNET Website**

APARNET has been developed to assist Member States to carry out the tasks they have been mandated to accomplish within their own jurisdiction by directing them to up-to-date information supplied and maintained by competent bodies in each Member State and by each member organisation.

It is also APARNET's express purpose to help other interested organisations and individuals easily find information on current issues on international academic and professional mobility as well as on procedures for the recognition of foreign qualifications.

## **5.3 Regional Committee Meetings**

The Asia-Pacific Regional Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications in Higher Education also requires the establishment of a Committee to oversee, promote, and facilitate the implementation of the Convention. This is entrusted to the Director-General of UNESCO.

## Article IX.2

1. The Committee, which is hereby established, shall be composed of one representative of each Party.
2. States, which are not Parties to this Convention, may participate in the meetings of the Committee as observers. Representatives of governmental and non-governmental organisations active in the field of recognition in the region may also be invited to attend meetings of the Committee as observers.
3. The Committee may adopt, by a majority vote of the Parties, recommendations, declarations, protocols, and models of good practice to guide the competent recognition authorities of the Parties in their implementation of this Convention and in their consideration of applications for the recognition of qualifications in higher education. While they shall not be bound by such texts, the Parties shall use their best endeavours to apply them, to bring them to the attention of the competent recognition authorities, and to encourage their application.
4. The Committee shall maintain its links to the UNESCO Regional Committees for the Application of Conventions on the Recognition of Studies, Diplomas, and Degrees in Higher Education adopted under the auspices of UNESCO.
5. A simple majority of the Parties shall constitute a quorum.
6. The Committee shall adopt its Rules of Procedure. It shall meet in ordinary session at least every three years. The Committee shall meet for the first time within a year of the entry into force of this Convention and annually for the first five years after that in order to manage its implementation.
7. The role of Secretariat of the Committee shall be entrusted to the Director-General of UNESCO.



## **5.4 Workshops**

From time to time, the Regional Convention Committee will organise workshops on a range of topics for NICs and Member States. These will generally be held in conjunction with the Regional Committee meetings and will be dependent on donor funding.

## **5.5 Regional National Information Centres**

Some regional NICs that are currently being developed may also be part of the Regional Committee structure. These include for the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the South Pacific Commission the “Pacific Register for Qualifications and Standards.”



## Section 6: Model of NICs

### 6.1 Australia

#### *Background*

Australia ratified the UNESCO Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications Concerning Higher Education in the European Region (Lisbon Recognition Convention) in 2002. As an obligation of the Lisbon Recognition Convention, Australia established a NIC. Australia ratified the UNESCO Asia-Pacific Regional Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications in Higher Education in 2014. The Australian NIC will fulfil Australia's obligations under the Asia-Pacific Convention.

AEI-NOOSR, located within the Australian Government Department of Education, is the Australian NIC. Before becoming the Australian NIC in 2002, it had already operated for 33 years. Its main role was to facilitate student and labour mobility through educational and professional recognition for study, employment and migration. As a NIC, much of this work continued, which explains why the Australian NIC engages in more wide-ranging recognition activities than the minimum obligations under the Conventions.

Australia has a decentralised system of recognition. Recognition decisions are not usually made by the Australian NIC, but by competent recognition authorities.

Competent recognition authorities include education providers for student admission decisions, employers for employment decisions, and professional bodies for skilled migration decisions. These organisations are supported by information and services provided by the Australian NIC.

### **How Australia meets its NIC obligations**

#### *Article VIII.3*

*Each Party shall take adequate measures for the development and maintenance of a national information centre that will provide higher education information. The form of the national information centre could vary.*

Australia meets this obligation through identifying AEI-NOOSR as the National Information Centre for qualifications recognition in Australia and providing its contact details on a Department of Education website and the ENIC-NARIC website.

#### *Article VIII.1*

*Each Party shall provide adequate information on any institution belonging to its higher education system, and on its quality assurance system, with a view to enabling the competent recognition authorities of the other Parties to ascertain whether the quality of the qualifications issued by these institutions justifies recognition in the Party in which recognition is sought. This includes:*

- (a) a description of its higher education system;*
- (b) an overview of the different types of higher education institutions belonging to its higher education system, and of the typical characteristics of each type of institution;*

- (c) *a list of recognised and/or accredited higher education institutions (public and private) belonging to its higher education system, indicating their powers to award different types of qualifications and the requirements for gaining access to each type of institution and programme;*
- (d) *an explanation of quality assurance mechanisms; and*
- (e) *a list of educational institutions located outside its territory which the Party considers as belonging to its education system.*

Australia meets this obligation by:

- publishing the **Australia Country Education Profile** that covers information about obligations (a) to (e) and
- answering enquiries about the Australian education system in a timely and transparent manner

*Article VIII.2*

*Each Party shall provide relevant, accurate and up-to-date information in order to facilitate the recognition of qualifications in higher education by:*

- (a) *facilitating access to authoritative and accurate information on its higher education system and qualifications;*
- (b) *facilitating access to information on the higher education systems and qualifications of the other Parties; and*
- (c) *giving advice or information on recognition matters and assessment of qualifications, in accordance with national laws and regulations.*

Australia meets this obligation by:

- publishing the **Australia Country Education Profile**
- answering enquiries about the Australian education system in a timely and transparent manner
- referring enquirers to relevant Australian authorities if appropriate
- liaising with other NICs to seek authoritative and accurate information on their education systems and qualifications
- maintaining a website that provides information about the Australian NIC's role and how recognition works in Australia including information about competent recognition authorities for study, employment and migration
- providing an email address for the public to seek additional information and advice about recognition

The Australian NIC also provides information and services in addition to basic NIC obligations under this Article, including:

- publishing **Country Education Profiles** that cover the education systems, institutions and qualifications of over 125 foreign countries for use by competent recognition authorities

- providing an email advisory service for competent recognition authorities to ask advice on complex qualifications
- offering professional development workshops to train competent recognition authorities on recognition practices based on the Convention principles
- undertaking educational assessments of foreign postsecondary qualifications, if there is no competent recognition authority that can do the assessment

*Article VIII.4*

*The Parties shall promote, through their national information centres or otherwise, the use of the:*

- “UNESCO Diploma Supplement” or any other comparable qualification supplement; and*
- The UNESCO/OECD Guidelines for Quality Provision in Cross-border Higher Education and/or any comparable documents produced by the Parties’ respective higher education institutions, subject to their respective national laws and regulations.*

Australia meets this obligation by:

- development of the **Australian Higher Education Graduation Statement** (AHEGS) in 2008
- providing information about the AHEGS on the Department of Education website and on education provider websites

- supporting and promoting the use of Diploma Supplements in bilateral and multilateral engagement activities
- working collaboratively with education providers to remove barriers to the recognition of cross-border education
- development of cross-border higher education policies by regulatory and sectoral bodies



## Section 7: Examples of NIC Information

This Section provides an example of the information that the NIC provides.

### National Information Centre(s)

#### **New Zealand Qualifications Authority**

Mana Tohu Mātauranga o Aotearoa  
PO Box 160, Wellington 6140  
New Zealand  
Phone: +64-4-463 3000  
Fax: +64-4-802 3401  
E-mail: [pamela.hulston@nzqa.govt.nz](mailto:pamela.hulston@nzqa.govt.nz)  
Web site(s):  
<http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/>  
Contact person:  
Mrs. Pamela Hulston, Manager

#### **YÖK Uluslararası İlişkiler Birimi**

The Council of Higher Education - International  
Relations Office - ENIC-NARIC Turkey  
Yükseköğretim Kurulu Başkanlığı (YÖK)  
06539 Bilkent - ANKARA  
Turkey  
Phone: +90 312 298 79 38  
Fax: +90 312 266 47 44  
E-mail: [naric@yok.gov.tr](mailto:naric@yok.gov.tr)  
Web site(s):  
<http://bologna.yok.gov.r/>  
Contact person:  
Ms. Canan Ünvan / International Relations Unit  
([canan.unvan@yok.gov.tr](mailto:canan.unvan@yok.gov.tr));

## National Education Bodies

This section should provide the national education bodies that are involved with higher education along with a brief statement about the role of the national education body. For example:

Official name:

**Ministry of Education**

*Te Tāhuhu o te Mātauranga*

The Ministry of Education is the Government's lead advisor on the education system, shaping direction for education agencies and providers and contributing to the Government's goals for education.

Official name:

**New Zealand Qualifications Authority**

*Mana Tohu Mātauranga o Aotearoa*

NZQA's role in the education sector is to ensure that New Zealand qualifications are regarded as credible and robust, nationally and internationally, in order to help learners succeed in their chosen endeavours and to contribute to New Zealand society.

Official name:

**Tertiary Education Commission**

*Te Amorangi Mātauranga Matua*

Tertiary Education Commission is responsible for funding tertiary education in New Zealand, assisting our people to reach their full potential and contributing to the social and economic well-being of the country.

Official name:

**The Council of Higher Education of Turkey**  
*Yükseköğretim Kurulu Başkanlığı (YÖK)*

National Body Responsible for Higher Education

Official name:

**Ministry of National Education**  
*Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı (MEB)*

For matters related to basic and secondary education

## System of Education

This should provide a brief overview of the system of education or a link to a fuller description of the system.

***The New Zealand Education System - An Overview*** is a Ministry of Education produced document.

### ***National Higher Education System***

In 1981, in accordance with the new Higher Education Law (No. 2547), the administration of higher education in Turkey was comprehensively restructured. The system thereby became centralized, with all higher education institutions tied to the Council of Higher Education (Yükseköğretim Kurulu or YÖK). After this restructuring, all institutions of higher education were designed as universities. Expansion of higher education throughout the country was achieved, application to higher education was centralized, and a central university exam and placement were introduced. In addition to public universities, the first non-profit foundation university in Turkey started to provide education for students in 1986.

## Higher Education (Universities)

This section should provide an overview of the system of higher education, including entry and a description of the Government and non-Government components.

### **Universities New Zealand - Te Pūkai Tara**

is responsible for the quality of university programmes, administers a range of scholarships and represents the universities in the public interest, both nationally and internationally.

**StudyLink** is a Ministry of Social Development service. This service connects people with the information they need to make informed decisions about student finances and other study-related issues, and provide financial support to students.

### **Access to University Education**

Admission to undergraduate study programs is based on nation-wide selection examinations. These central university entrance examinations (called YGS and LYS) are two staged, held once a year and are administered by the Assessment Selection and Placement Center (ÖSYM). Candidates gain access to institutions of higher education based on their composite scores consisting of the scores on the selection examination and their high school grade point averages. The Council of Higher Education (YÖK) and Assessment Selection and Placement Center (ÖSYM) are working in collaboration for admission to undergraduate programs.

## Quality Assurance in Higher Education

This section provides an overview of the quality assurance mechanisms in place.

### **New Zealand Qualifications Authority**

New Zealand Qualifications Authority acts as a quality assurance body and approves all qualifications by private training establishments (PTEs), institutes of technology and polytechnics (ITPs), wānanga and workplace training.

### **Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics Quality**

An independent committee of Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics New Zealand Inc. that operates under formal delegated authority from the New Zealand Qualifications Authority. They provide external quality assurance of courses offered in the Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics sector.

Note: From 1 January 2011 quality assurance within this sector will be provided by the New Zealand Qualifications Authority.

### **Committee on University Academic Programmes**

Sits within Universities New Zealand. This committee is charged with setting up and applying inter-university course approval, accreditation and moderation procedures. It is the body, therefore, to which universities must submit any proposals to offer new qualifications or make substantial changes to existing qualifications.

## Post-secondary Non-University Education

This section briefly describes the technical, vocational, training sectors which are not part of the university or higher education sectors.

### Ministry of Education

Tertiary education refers to all post-secondary education including higher and vocational education. Refer to The New Zealand Education System - An Overview a Ministry of Education produced document.

### New Zealand Qualifications Authority

Provides information about tertiary education, choosing a tertiary course, education providers and other useful information.

**Turkey has a unitary system consisting only of universities. Therefore, there does not exist a non-university sector in Turkey.**

## Recognised higher education institutions

This should provide information about the regulatory and legislative basis for establishing higher education institutions within the country.

### **New Zealand Qualifications Framework**

The New Zealand Qualifications Framework (NZQF) replaces the New Zealand Register of Quality Assured Qualifications (the Register) and the National Qualifications Framework and is the definitive repository for nationally approved, quality-assured qualifications in New Zealand. All qualifications on the Register and the National Qualifications Framework have transferred onto the NZQF. The NZQF lists all recognised education providers in New Zealand and the accredited qualifications that they are allowed to offer. The NZQF is maintained by the New Zealand Qualifications Authority.

### **Higher Education Institutions in Turkey**

Higher education institutions are established in Turkey under the law of The Turkish Grand National Assembly. Within the Turkish Higher Education System, higher education institutions (both public and non-profit foundation) are tied to the Council of Higher Education. Therefore, higher education institutions are recognized by the Council of Higher Education of Turkey since its foundation. Since study programs of higher education institutions are approved by the Council of Higher Education, those study programs are also recognized.

## **Policies and procedures for the recognition of foreign qualifications**

### **Qualifications Recognition Services**

The Qualifications Recognition Services (QRS) team within the New Zealand Qualifications Authority undertakes foreign post-secondary qualifications recognition.

New Zealand universities may have their own procedures for the assessment and recognition of foreign credentials for entry into university programmes for persons undertaking further study. Please contact the university directly for further information. If the purpose is for a reason other than further study, please see the information above.

## **Qualifications Framework**

This section should describe the framework or system for organising higher education qualifications within the country.

### **Framework**

**New Zealand Qualifications Framework**  
The New Zealand Qualifications Framework can be searched through by providers or by entering specific qualifications directly into the search field.



## Policy

Qualification developers must seek qualification approval from the relevant quality assurance body. All qualifications must be consistent with the general listing requirements as outlined in the policy document Requirements for listing and maintaining qualifications on the New Zealand Qualifications Framework that has been developed by the New Zealand Qualifications Authority.

The establishment of the NQF for HE in Turkey was launched by the Council of Higher Education in 2006, and the NQF for general HE has been approved in 2009. Level descriptors for the first, second and third cycles were prepared taking the EQF-LLL as a reference point. Fields of Education and Training were determined taking ISCED 97 fields as reference points and the qualifications on each field was prepared and approved by the Council Decision on January 13, 2011. Four universities were selected as pilot implementation universities. In line with the timetable prepared, at the end of June 2011, these universities completed the work on defining their programme qualifications within their degree programmes (first, second and third cycles) and course learning outcomes. All other higher education institutions in Turkey are asked to complete the studies on their programme qualifications until the end of December 2012.

## Other Information

*Information on DS (legislation, template, chart, etc)*

### **Tertiary Education Qualification Statement**

The Tertiary Education Qualification Statement (TEQS) is New Zealand's Diploma Supplement-equivalent. It is a document issued on completion of a tertiary education qualification. The New Zealand Qualifications Authority has developed the guidelines for implementing a TEQS in New Zealand.



