



## GUIDE TO THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM OF AUSTRALIA AND ASPECTS TO CONSIDERED FOR THE VALIDATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION TITLES IN COLOMBIA

### INTRODUCTION

The Ministry of National Education of Colombia (MEN) has been working, in recent years, on the construction of guides for the educational systems of different countries. These instruments aim to facilitate decision-making as to where and what to study abroad, as well as to guide on the process and requirements for the recognition of foreign higher education degrees in Colombia.

The Directorate of Quality of Higher Education of MEN made a diagnosis of the Guides of Educational Systems that are already published on the website. In the exercise carried out, the need to bring the technical language of education closer to the citizen was highlighted, as well as to generate an interactive instrument. In this order of ideas, MEN and the Colombian Association of Universities – ASCUN, updated and redesigned the Educational Systems Guides.

In order to construct this guide, information was consolidated from various official sources, which made it possible to offer a practical and relevant tool for the citizen. Therefore, this includes relevant information on four central aspects: 1) the higher education system; 2) the legality of higher education programmes and institutions; 3) the quality assurance of higher education institutions and programmes; and, 4) aspects to be considered in starting the process of recognition of higher education diplomas obtained abroad.

All the information contained here includes the different accessibility requirements in Web tools and products, facilitating access to people with disabilities. This work was possible thanks to the invaluable collaboration of the National Institute for the Blind – INCI.

### 1. AUSTRALIAN HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM

Australia is a federation composed of eight states and territories: Tasmania, New South Wales, Western Australia, Northern Territory, South Australia, Victoria, Australian Capital



Territory Canberra and Queensland. Legislative power is conferred in the Federal Parliament which is referred to as the Commonwealth Parliament (Office of Parliamentary Counsel, 2013). The states, territories and the Australian Capital share the responsibility of providing and ensuring quality in the provision of education and training service throughout the territory. The Ministers of Education, Training and Employment are responsible for the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF (Australian Qualifications Framework Council, 2013)).

For more information about the different states and territories, please enter the following link: <https://www.studyinaustralia.gov.au/destinations>.

### **Educational system**

The education system in Australia is divided into: Primary School, which includes from preschool to preparatory (interval of six or seven years), Secondary School (interval of two or three years) and Senior Secondary (interval of two years) which corresponds to grades 11 and 12. Schools and institutions offering the service of primary, secondary and senior secondary education must be registered with the Department of Education of each territory or state.

At the senior secondary level, students must successfully pass the curriculum and take an exam to receive the Senior Secondary Certificate of Education, a prerequisite for entry into higher education or tertiary education. The Curriculum, Assessment and Certification Authority ACACA Agency of each state or territory is responsible for granting the Senior Secondary Certificate of Education, a document that, in turn, is recognized by universities and educational institutions of national or foreign order. For more information on the Senior Secondary Certificate of Education, please enter the following link:

<https://www.acaca.edu.au/index.php/senior-secondary-certificates/>.

For more information about Australia's education system, in particular basic, secondary and upper secondary education, please enter the following links:

<https://www.studyinaustralia.gov.au/spanish/australian-education/education-system>.

<https://www.studyinaustralia.gov.au/english/australian-education/schools>.



## 1. **Higher** Education

In Australia, tertiary education comprises higher education offered by universities and technical/vocational education (VET) offered by both universities and non-university institutions. Tertiary education is defined from levels 5 to 10 in the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF), which is the result of a national qualifications policy in the education sector, both tertiary and secondary. This Framework allows to easily move between levels of studies and from one institution to another.

For more information on the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF), please visit the following links:

<https://www.aqf.edu.au/>

<https://www.tegsa.gov.au/australian-qualifications-framework>

*\*Education and technical/vocational training -Professional High-quality Vocational Education and Training (VET).*

In Australia, education and technical / professional training -Professional High-quality Vocational Education and Training (VET), is configured in programs and accredited courses, and designed to meet the needs of the productive, business, industrial, commercial, educational sector or for the needs of communities that have not been served by the higher education programs approved at the national level. VET training, with its accredited programs and courses, is characterized by addressing, in a novel way, the rapid changes of industries or the business sector (Australian Government, 2021b). This level of training awards diplomas and certificates corresponding to levels 5 and 6 of the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF).

For more information about the certificates in VET training in Australia, please enter the following link:

<https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Latestproducts/D3E067F9EB1F5EB4CA256AAF001FCA44?opendocument>

### **Diploma**



It corresponds to recognition for the completion of courses and training focused on technical, theoretical and practical knowledge on the exercise for advanced or qualified labor sectors in the context of work. These are usually programmes and proposals lasting between one (1) and (2) years, classified at level 5 in the Australian Qualifications Framework (Australian Qualifications Framework Council, 2013) .

For more information about Diplomas in Australia, please enter the following link: <https://www.aqf.edu.au/aqf-levels>.

- **Advanced Diploma**

Advanced Diplomas correspond to the recognition for the completion and approval of programs and courses that focus their training on specialized knowledge for the different work contexts and skilled or advanced work. Unlike Diploma-awarding programmes, Advanced Diplomas are awarded for having studied programmes and courses lasting from a year and a half to two years of training, classified at level 6 of the Australian Qualifications Framework (Australian Qualifications Framework Council, 2013).

For more information about Advanced Diplomas in Australia, please enter the following link: <https://www.aqf.edu.au/aqf-levels>.

- **Associate Degree**

The Associate Degree corresponds to the recognition of graduates of programs and proposals focused on the specialized or advanced field of work and work. These training proposals constitute previous learning processes that introduce their graduates towards the continuation and deepening in their professional studies. Advanced Degrees are awarded for completion and approval of programmes and courses of a duration of two years, and are classified at level 6 of the Australian Qualifications Framework (Australian Qualifications Framework Council, 2013).

To access more information about Associate Degrees in Australia, please enter the following link: <https://www.aqf.edu.au/aqf-levels>.

For more information on the programs and courses of Technical Education and Training /Vocational Training (VET), please enter the following link: <https://www.asqa.gov.au/>.



## **Higher education**

Australia has a diversity of universities offering higher education courses and programmes, which award undergraduate/bachelor's degrees, dual or combined degrees, master's degrees and doctorates in 21 areas classified and defined by the Australian Standard Classification of Education (ASCED). To know the areas of study, please enter the following link: <https://www.qilt.edu.au/data/study-areas>.

## **Higher Education Institutions**

Higher education in Australia is offered by a sector of providers established and recognized by state, territorial, or Commonwealth governments. Among the categories of providers in higher education are: Institution of Higher Education, University, Australian University, and Overseas University. Some universities have the power to self-accredit while other Australian universities have branches or agreements with universities and higher education institutions abroad.

### **- Institute of Higher Education**

It is a higher education provider registered and identified under this category by The Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA). This type of institution awards an Australian higher education degree or a degree abroad. The object of these institutions is articulated with the purposes of higher education, which include free intellectual research. They also offer, at least, one accredited course or program (Australian Government, 2021a).

### **- University College**

A higher education provider registered under this category is able to offer an Australian higher education degree and/or a higher education degree overseas. It has the authority to self-accredit 70% of courses and programs at the time of application to TEQSA. In addition, it has a track record of at least five years of execution with high student results measurable under the TEQSA criteria. This type of provider is also characterized by advanced processes in terms of design, accreditation, self-evaluation and review of courses and training



programs, features that guarantee the preservation of quality and academic integrity. Typically, these universities have an extensive experience and are considered leaders in academic and research fields of higher education (Australian Government, 2021a).

- **Australian University**

This type of institutions has the authority to self-accredit each program or higher education course in all fields, except when the university has a specialized emphasis. It has state, territorial or Commonwealth support for registration as an Australian university. It offers studies and awards doctoral degrees (research) in at least three fields of education. It also has an operating record of at least five years demonstrating strong student results. These universities have advanced processes in terms of design, accreditation, self-evaluation and review of courses and training programs, characteristics that guarantee the maintenance of quality and academic integrity. They also have extensive leadership in the sector.

Australian Universities with a specialization emphasis have the possibility to self-accredit in one or two fields of education. When an Australian University has a specialized approach, it teaches courses of study in new broad fields of education. The provider must be successful in seeking authorization to self-accredit courses of study in the new fields within ten years of the beginning of those courses. By achieving self-accreditation authority in at least three broad fields of education, the Australian University is no longer considered to be of specialist emphasis. To conduct research leading to new knowledge, exert an original creative effort, and offer research training, are critical features for a higher education provider's status of an "Australian University(Australian Government, 2021a)".

- **Overseas University**

These are universities that provide at least one title of higher education abroad. Its profile of international offer is wide. It is recognized and accredited by the country's authority, with standards being acceptable and compatible with the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) and the Australian Qualification Framework (Australian Government, 2021a).



For more information about the institutions and different providers of higher education in Australia, please enter the following links:

<https://www.studyinaustralia.gov.au/english/australian-education/universities-and-higher-education>.

<https://cricos.education.gov.au/>.

<https://www.courseseecker.edu.au/>.

### **Access to Higher Education**

In Australia, applicants for higher education programs and courses need to have completed their upper secondary education and obtained the Senior Secondary Certificate of Education or, in some cases, its equivalents. For more information about the Senior Secondary Certificate of Education or equivalents in the different states and territories, please enter the following link:

<https://www.acaca.edu.au/index.php/senior-secondary-certificates/>.

Universities and higher education institutions take into consideration the Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR) to select upper secondary graduates and compare and determine the best averages and performance among students in each state, region or interstate level. However, some universities and higher education institutions consider other criteria in addition to the ATAR to select their admitted, such as portfolios, auditions, additional tests, etc. Other admissions processes exclude the ATAR and prioritize their own selection criteria. To access more information on the different admission criteria in higher education in Australia, please enter the following links:

<https://www.courseseecker.edu.au/admissions-information/student-profile-explained>.

<https://www.teqsa.gov.au/latest-news/articles/atar-not-only-admissions-pathway>.

### **Certificates, diplomas and degrees**

In Australia, certificates, diplomas and degrees are the recognitions for the approval and completion of courses or higher-level studies offered by institutions or universities, or in agreement with foreign entities. In the undergraduate level, the following recognitions are



awarded: Professional Degree -Bachelor's Degree- and Professional Degree with Honors - Bachelor's Honours (Australian Government, 2021).

Graduate studies are programs offered to bachelor and undergraduate graduates. Upon completion of this level, universities and higher education institutions award graduate certificates, postgraduate diplomas - Bachelor's Degree Entry-, master's and doctoral degrees.

At the master's levels, in Australia, there are three modalities: Research Master's Degree, Master's Degree in Professionalization or Improvement courses (Coursework) and Extended Master's Degree. Concerning doctoral studies, there are two modalities: Doctorate in Research and Professional Doctorate.

### **Bachelor's Degree**

Professional Degrees are awarded to graduates of undergraduate courses and higher education programs. This kind of training pursues to build and strengthen broad fields of knowledge and disciplines for future decision-making in professional-labor practice. In general, these are proposals and study programs whose extent is between four (4) years and, in some cases, depending on their complexity, up to five (5) years of training. Professional Degrees are classified at level 7 of the Australian Qualifications Framework (Australian Qualifications Framework Council, 2013).

For more information about Undergraduate Certificates, please enter the following links:

<https://www.courseseekeer.edu.au/admissions-information/qualifications>.

<https://www.aqf.edu.au/aqf-levels>.

### **Professional Degree with Honours -Bachelor's Honours**

The Professional Degree with Honors recognizes as graduates those who begin a process of training in research and learning, additional to that determined in the Professional Degree. Graduates who are awarded a Degree with Honors, have consolidated knowledge and learning in different fields and disciplines, in addition to having begun training processes and research. This training has an interval of one (1) year, after obtaining the Professional





Degree, or can be constituted in an additional year to the vocational training program. The Professional Degree with Honours is classified at level 8 of the Australian Qualifications Framework.

For more information about undergraduate certificates, please enter the following links:

<https://www.courseseekeer.edu.au/admissions-information/qualifications>.

<https://www.aqf.edu.au/aqf-levels>.

### **Bachelor's Graduate Entry - Graduate Certificate**

To start professional postgraduate studies, applicants must have completed their professional studies or have the Professional Degree. The Graduate Certificate and Bachelor's Graduate Entry certificates are awarded to students who have completed specialized training in knowledge, professional and work skills. These are training and projects that last at least one (1) year full-time, and are classified at level 8 of the Australian Qualifications Framework (Australian Qualifications Framework Council, 2013).

For more information about the Graduation Certificates and Entry to Professional Postgraduate Studies, please enter the following links:

<https://www.courseseekeer.edu.au/admissions-information/qualifications>

<https://www.aqf.edu.au/aqf-levels>.

[https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Latestproducts/5D711701A392059BCA256AA\\_F001FCA3E?opendocument](https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Latestproducts/5D711701A392059BCA256AA_F001FCA3E?opendocument).

#### **- Masters Degree**

To enter the master's level, applicants must have the Professional Degree or Professional Degree with Honors to demonstrate academic or professional performance. In some programs and courses, experience in a previous job or professional practices is taken into account for admission. In Australia, three types of degrees are awarded at the completion of the Master's training: Master's Degree (Research), Masters' Degree (Coursework) and, Master's Degree (Extended) (Australian Qualifications Framework Council, 2013).

#### **Master´s Degree (Research)**



Master's Degree (Research) programmes train people who can apply advanced knowledge in a specialized field or research context. This degree is obtained by demonstrating the application of knowledge and skills with creativity, high level of commitment and through a substantial research exercise. Master's Degree (Research) programmes and courses are developed over one (1) to two (2) years full-time, and are classified at level 9 of the Australian Qualifications Framework (Australian Qualifications Framework Council, 2013).

### **Master's Degree (Coursework)**

The Master's degree programmes - Master's Degree (Coursework) - train people to apply a set of advanced knowledge in a context of professional practice. Graduates of the Master's degree programs -Degree Masters (Coursework)- must develop a research project or a practice where they demonstrate the application of knowledge and skills with creativity, innovation and responsibility. The Master's degree programmes – Master's Degree (Coursework) – last between one (1) and two (2) years full-time, and are classified at level 9 of the Australian Qualifications Framework (Australian Qualifications Framework Council, 2013).

### **Master's Degree (Extended)**

Master's Degree (Extended) programs qualify people to apply a set of advanced knowledge in professional practice contexts as a deepening option in learning. In Australia, Extended Master's degrees are awarded for legal, medical, physiotherapy, dentistry, optometry and veterinary practice.

Master's Degree (Extended) programmes last between one (1) and four (4) years, and are classified at level 9 of the Australian Qualifications Framework (Australian Qualifications Framework Council, 2013).

For more information about Master's degrees, please enter the following links:

<https://www.aqf.edu.au/aqf-qualifications>.

<https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Latestproducts/3D64726ECC17AD71CA256AA001FCA3C?opendocument>.



## **Doctorate**

To enter the doctoral level, applicants must have the Master's Degree or Professional Degree with Honors, thus demonstrating academic or professional performance. The main objective of doctoral programs and proposals is the training of professionals who practice in important fields of knowledge, carry out research and generate new knowledge in one or more areas. On the other hand, in doctoral studies, research practice is defined as a determining characteristic for the degree process.

In Australia, there are two types of training and doctoral degrees: Doctoral Degree (Research) - and Doctoral Degree (Professional). With the formation of a Doctorate in Research, the doctoral student will make an original and novel contribution to knowledge while, in the Professional Doctorate, it is sought to make an original and important contribution in the context of professional practice. Doctoral degrees are classified at the top level (10) of the Australian Qualifications Framework and, although their interval may vary, this generally ranges between three (3) and four (4) years of study (Australian Qualifications Framework Council, 2013).

For more information about PhD degrees, please enter the following links:

[https://www.aqf.edu.au/aqf-qualifications.](https://www.aqf.edu.au/aqf-qualifications)

[https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Latestproducts/560B799A0F9F85C4CA256AA F001FCA3B?opendocument.](https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Latestproducts/560B799A0F9F85C4CA256AA F001FCA3B?opendocument)

## **Specialty in a health profession**

In Australia, medical specialization programs foster, through a variety of teaching and learning methods, the professional development. There are educational proposals that focus on self-directed learning, peer learning, group work, or work and study across interdisciplinary or interprofessional teams (Australian Medical Council Limited, 2016). Thus, the curriculum of a particular medical specialty program trains, strengthens and evaluates practice in a specific field of medicine or health. Medical specialty programs last between one (1) and five (5) years, depending on the degree of complexity. Students who



successfully study and pass the curricula, with all requirements, obtain a certificate of specialization.

Similarly, students, graduates and professionals in the field of health and medicine, must register in the National Registration and Accreditation System formed, in turn, by the different National Medical Boards.

For more information on the National Registration and Accreditation System, please enter the following link: <https://www.ahpra.gov.au/About-Ahpra/What-We-Do/FAQ.aspx>.

And, about the different National Medical Boards, please enter the following link: <https://www.ahpra.gov.au/National-Boards.aspx>.

Through the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law Act 2009 and the (Minister for Health and Ambulance Services, 2020) *Higher Education Standards Framework* (Australian Government, 2021a), providers in health and medical education are defined in Australia as those institutions, universities or organizations that offer the service and have the infrastructure, experience, academic and scientific trajectory that guarantees their quality. This way, specialized medical programs come mostly from the specialized medical faculties, which supervise everything related to the training of professionals from different scenarios of professional practice: public and private hospitals, offices, community health centers and some programs in laboratories (Australian Medical Council Limited, 2016).

These education providers offer a variety of programs and courses with improvement activities for the training of qualified specialists, for which they have the responsibility and authority to plan, implement and evaluate programs, curricula, procedures, advice on the design and implementation of public policy, evaluation of the procedures of national graduate medical specialists, foreigners and, finally, granting certificates of the training process. The Australian Medical Council (AMC) is responsible for accrediting medical education providers and their corresponding training programmes.

To know the medical schools that offer training programs, and are accredited by the Australian Medical Council -Australian Medical Council AMC-, please enter the following link:



<https://www.medicalboard.gov.au/Accreditation/Medical-schools.aspx>.

To know the medical faculties that offer training programs, accredited by the Australian Medical Council -Australian Medical Council AMC-, please enter the following link:

<https://www.medicalboard.gov.au/Accreditation/Specialist-medical-colleges.aspx>.

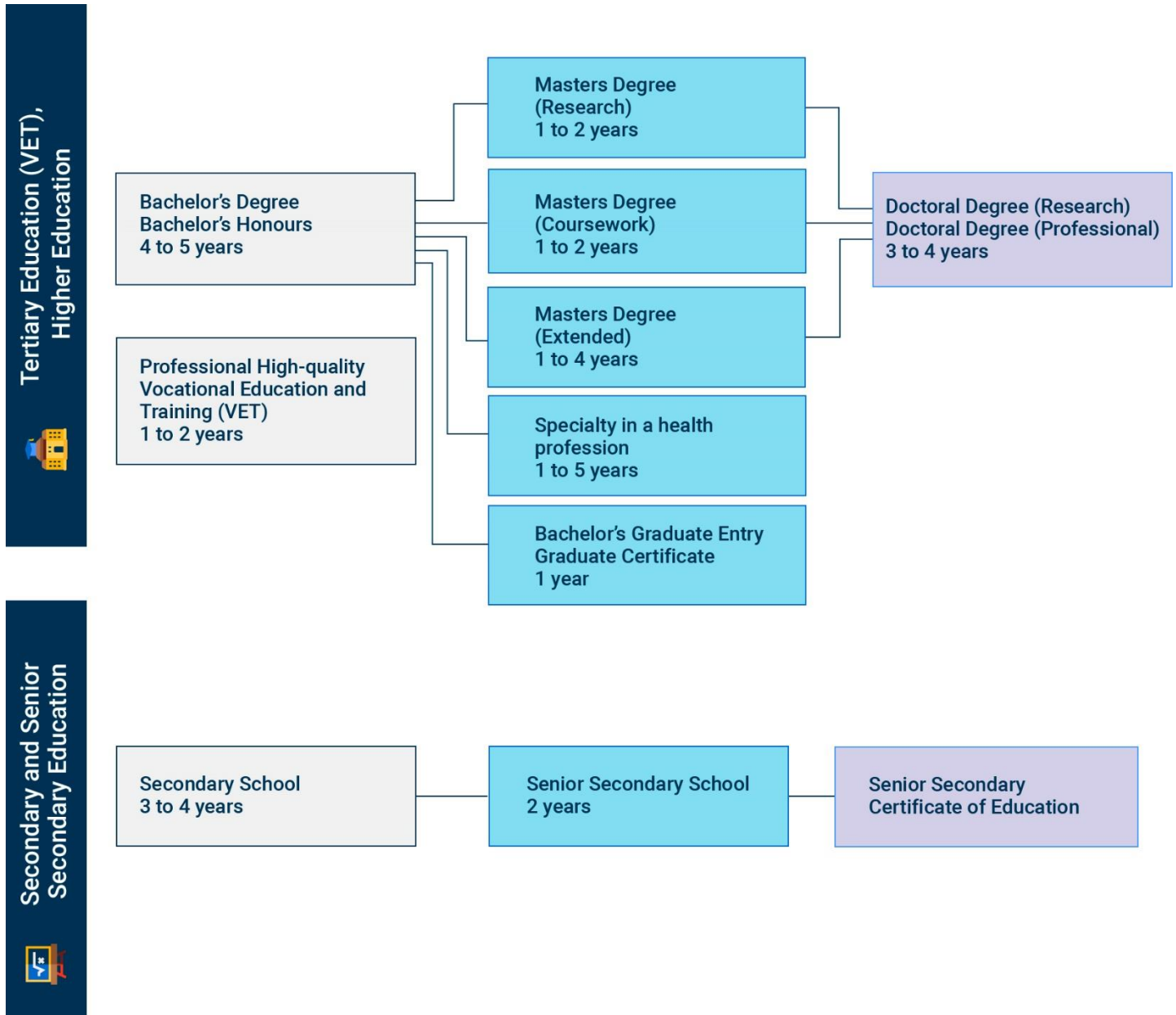
To learn about training programs accredited by the Australian Medical Council (AMC), please visit the following links:

<https://www.ahpra.gov.au/Accreditation/Approved-Programs-of-Study.aspx>.

<https://www.ahpra.gov.au/accreditation/approved-programs-of-study.aspx?ref=medical%20practitioner&type=specialist>.



### Structure of the Australian Education System



Based on (Australian Qualifications Framework Council, 2013), (Australian Government, 2021), (Australian Government. Department of Education and Training, 2015) y <https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Latestproducts/F501C031BD9AC9C5CA256A AF001FCA33?opendocument>



### 1.1 Comparative table of educational levels in Australia and Colombia

It is important to know the particularities of each of the educational levels, both in Australia and Colombia. Therefore, the following table presents a comparative analysis of both systems. In this comparison, reference is made to the highest levels of higher education:

Level 8: PhD level or equivalent

Level 7: Master's level, specialization or equivalent

Level 6: Degree in tertiary education or equivalent level

Level 5: Short cycle tertiary education.

**Comparative table: educational levels in Australia and Colombia**

UNESCO – ISCED LEVELS	LEVELS AUSTRALIA	YEARS	LEVELS COLOMBIA	YEARS
8	Doctoral Degree (Research)	3-4	Doctorate	4-5
	Doctoral Degree (Professional)			
7	Specialty in a health profession	1-5	Medical Surgical Specialization	1-5
			Medical Specialization	2
7	Masters Degree (Research)	1-2	Master's	2
	Masters Degree (Extended)	1-4		
	Masters Degree (Coursework)	1-2		
6	Bachelor's Graduate Entry	1	University Specialization	1
	Graduate Certificate			
6	Bachelor's Degree	4-5	University professional degree	4-5
	Bachelor's Honours			



5	N/A		Technological Specialization	<1
5	N/A		Technical Specialization	1
5	N/A		Technologist	3
5	Professional High-quality (VET) -Diploma	1-2	Professional technician	2

Based on UNESCOs Institute of Statistics (2013) (Australian Qualifications Framework Council, 2013), (Australian Government, 2021), (Australian Government. Department of Education and Training, 20015) and <https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Latestproducts/F501C031BD9AC9C5CA256A AF001FCA33?opendocument>.

It is important to highlight the measure of time corresponding to educational levels and their comparison with respect to international standards:

- a. **Academic credits:** Both in Colombia and Australia, the estimated time of academic activity of the student, depending on the academic competencies that the program is expected to develop, is expressed in units called Academic Credits.

**Academic credit in Australia:** In the Australian higher education system, an academic credit is defined as a full-time study load, which can vary in terms of hours of direct or self-employment. Therefore, in the country, there is no stipulated standard on the number of credits, since each institution or university enjoys autonomy and flexibility to establish its own credit system. However, from the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) and, to support quality processes, ranges of amount of time necessary for the consolidation of learning required at the different levels and fields of training are established (Australian Government, Department of Education and Training, 2015). The entity that supports and assists in the recognition of qualifications awarded abroad is the National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition (NOOSR).

For more information about the credit system in Australia, please enter the following link: <https://www.studyinaustralia.gov.au/english/australian-education/education-system/course-credits>.





For information related to the National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition (NOOSR), please enter the following link: <https://internationaleducation.gov.au/services-and-resources/Pages/qualifications-recognition.aspx>.

- **Academic credit in Colombia:** It is a unit of measurement of the student's academic work, indicating the effort to be made to achieve learning outcomes. It is equivalent to forty-eight (48) hours during an academic period. Institutions determine the ratio between the direct relationship with the teacher and independent practice of the student, justified according to the training process and the learning outcomes foreseen in the program. Institutions must express all training activities that are part of the curriculum in academic credits (Decree 1330 of 2019, article 2.5.3.2.4.1).
- **ISCED-UNESCO Levels:** The International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED), proposed by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), is a frame of reference for collecting, compiling and analyzing internationally comparable statistics in the field of education.

## 2. LEGALITY OF HIGHER EDUCATION PROGRAMMES AND INSTITUTIONS

In Australia, any higher education provider awarding certificates, diplomas and degrees, whether a university or another institution, must be registered with the National Registry for Providers and Courses, a system established by The Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA), an independent entity that establishes the guidelines and conditions of entry for providers, in order to prevent and minimize the promotion or offer of fake or unregulated educational services.

In this sense, the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) is the entity in charge of regulating and guaranteeing the quality of the higher education service in Australia, based on the Australian Qualifications Framework (Australian Government, 2021).

**Note:** Academic training in Australia is taught in English. The foreign applicant must have a certification of English language proficiency to obtain the student visa and be admitted to an educational institution or academic program attached to the Commonwealth Register of



Institutions, and courses for Overseas Students (CRICOS). For more information about CRICOS, please enter the following link:

<https://www.asqa.gov.au/cricos>.

For more information on study visas, please enter the following link:

<https://immi.homeaffairs.gov.au/visas/getting-a-visa/visa-listing/student-500#Eligibility>.

To know about higher education universities and institutions that are duly registered, please enter the following link: <https://www.teqsa.gov.au/national-register>.

### 3. QUALITY ASSURANCE

The registration of higher education providers with the National Register for Providers and Courses is a first element that guarantees the quality of the institutions, universities, courses and programs offered. Thus, all higher education institutions in Australia must be registered with The Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA).

Regarding accreditation and evaluation processes, the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) carries out the evaluation of institutions, some universities, courses and training programs, with a view to compliance with quality. Australian universities have the authority to self-accredit their courses and study programmes. Some Universities - Colleges accredit by themselves 70% of their programs and courses. For higher education institutions that do not have the authority of self-accreditation, TEQSA will accredit the program or course under the denomination of Quality of Tertiary Education and the 2011 Standards Agency Act (TEQSA Law) (Australian Government, 2021).

The accreditation of a program, course, institution or university may not exceed a period of seven years (Australian Government; Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency, 2019).

For information on The Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA), please enter the following link: <https://www.teqsa.gov.au/>.



#### 4. ASPECTS TO BE CONSIDERED FOR THE PROCESS OF VALIDATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION DEGREES OBTAINED IN AUSTRALIA

Resolution 10687 of 2019 of the Ministry of National Education regulates the validation of higher education diplomas awarded abroad, recognizing the quality assurance systems of the countries where the diplomas were obtained.

The process of validation of higher education diplomas in Colombia is part of the Quality Assurance System for Higher Education, which allows society to guarantee that, as well as the national offer, from other countries is officially recognized by the States where the certificates were issued.

**IMPORTANT:** if an undergraduate degree is in law, accounting, education, or part of the health sciences, additional requirements must be verified, stipulated in chapters one and two of Resolution 10687 of 2019 of the Ministry of National Education, available at the following link: [https://www.mineducacion.gov.co/1759/articles-401316\\_archivo\\_pdf.pdf.f](https://www.mineducacion.gov.co/1759/articles-401316_archivo_pdf.pdf.f).

It is worth recalling that it is not obligatory to advance the process of validation of higher education diplomas obtained in other countries. Recognition is required in the following cases:

1. For regulated professions where recognition is required by professional bodies.
2. For persons wishing to work in the public sector as contractors or civil officers.
3. For participating in public tenders where specifications indicate it as necessary.
4. For teachers in public education institutions to be properly graded.

To study in Australia and, subsequently, validate the degree in Colombia, the following must be taken into account:

1. Studies must be advanced at an Australian-recognized institution of higher education.
2. Have the respective apostille or chain of legalization in the documents.



The Australian Passport Office of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) is the entity in charge of verifying and certifying signatures, stamps and official documents through the issuance of authentication certificates or apostilles. Apostilles or certificates of authentication are signed by authorized personnel of the DFAT and corroborated, in turn, through different stamps. For more information on apostille procedures for degrees and certificates of study, please enter the following link:

<https://www.dfat.gov.au/about-us/our-services/passports>.

To locate the passports' offices in the different states or territories of Australia, please enter the following link:

<https://www.smarttraveller.gov.au/consular-services/notarial-services/documents>.

Different validation criteria must be taken into account, according to the program and the higher education institution that grants it.

If having a degree issued by an Australian higher education institution and, validation in Colombia be required, the following questions and answers can help understand the process:

1. When is it necessary to validate a foreign higher education degree? The answer to this question will be found at the following link:  
<https://www.mineducacion.gov.co/portal/convalidaciones/Convalidaciones-Educacion-Superior/350670:Conozca-el-proceso>.
2. What is the difference between homologating and validating? The answer to this question can be found at the following link:  
<https://www.mineducacion.gov.co/portal/convalidaciones/Convalidaciones-Educacion-Superior/355353:Preguntas-Frecuentes>.
3. In case of doubts, who can help? The answer to this question can be found at the following link:  
<https://www.mineducacion.gov.co/portal/convalidaciones/Convalidaciones-Educacion-Superior/355353:Preguntas-Frecuentes>.



4. What are the steps for the validation of higher education degrees? The answer to this question can be found at the following link: <https://www.gov.co/ficha-tramites-y-servicios/T366>.
5. What are the costs of the process of validating higher education degrees? The answer to this question can be found at the following link: <https://www.mineducacion.gov.co/portal/convalidaciones/Convalidaciones-Educacion-Superior/350995:Costo-y-duracion>.

For more information about the process, please enter the following link:

<https://www.mineducacion.gov.co/portal/convalidaciones/Convalidaciones-Educacion-Superior/355353:Preguntas-Frecuentes>.

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