



AACMA POLICY STATEMENT FOR APPLICANTS

ASSESSMENT OF OVERSEAS QUALIFICATIONS IN TRADITIONAL CHINESE MEDICINE

Last updated 27 May 2011

Introduction

The assessment of overseas qualifications for professional membership is an important part of the practitioner accreditation process.

There are three basic components of the overseas qualification assessment process:

- assessment of a qualification for equivalence to an Australian qualification;
- assessing the validity of a qualification (that is, that it is a genuine qualification); and
- assessing whether a qualification meets the AACMA accreditation standard.

There are two groups of post-secondary qualifications in the Australian Qualifications Framework against which an overseas qualifications is assessed for equivalence:

- higher education (HE) sector qualifications (diploma, advanced diploma, associate degree, bachelor degree, graduate certificate, graduate diploma, masters, and doctorates);
- vocational education and training (VET) sector qualifications (certificate I–IV, diploma, advanced diploma, vocational graduate certificate, and vocational graduate diploma).

The Health Training Package (HTP) in Complementary and Alternative Medicine (CAM) covers VET sector qualifications up to advanced diploma level, and no qualifications in Traditional Chinese Medicine other than TCM Remedial Massage (diploma level). Qualifications in Acupuncture and/or Chinese herbal medicine are not included in the HTP in CAM.

Under the Australian education system, the process for course accreditation varies according to the nature of the institutions and the type of program:

- universities are self-accrediting agencies which means that a course is not required to have specific approval from an external agency (other registration boards who are required to approve the course for the purposes of graduates obtaining registration);
- registered training organisations (RTOs) offering a higher education qualification (such as a bachelor degree) must have the approval of the relevant State Minister for Education in order to deliver the program;
- RTOs offering a qualification with the HTP for CAM must have the course included within their scope; and
- RTOs offering a VET sector qualification which is not part of a training package need to have the participation course approved by the state VET sector accreditation agency.

TCM qualifications covered under this Policy Statement are qualifications in one or more of the following modalities:

- Acupuncture;
- Chinese herbal medicine; and
- TCM remedial massage (Chinese manual therapy).

Assessing Qualifications Equivalency

The national body charged with determining policy about Australian equivalence of overseas qualifications is Australia Education International – National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition (AEI-NOOSR) which is part of the Australian government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations.

AEI-NOOSR publishes Country Education Profiles (CEPs) which provide information and guidelines on comparing qualifications from 119 countries. The CEPs form the backbone of the Australian system of overseas qualifications assessment.

AEI-NOOSR

AEI-NOOSR provides education assessments of higher education, post-secondary and technical and vocational qualifications. A fee applies for qualifications assessment and the process can take up to 3 months. New South Wales and overseas practitioners should also look at VETASSESS to compare costs. See AEI-NOOSR website; viewed online 27 May 2011:

<http://www.aei.gov.au/AEI/QualificationsRecognition/Information/EduAssessments.htm>.

Overseas Qualifications Units

State governments (other than New South Wales) also provide assessment of overseas qualifications, based on the CEPs, through state overseas qualifications units. All states and mainland territories provide this service to persons resident in the same jurisdiction, usually at no charge. NSW-based practitioners can apply for an educational assessment through AEI-NOOSR.

VETASSESS

VETASSESS, based in Victoria, provides qualification equivalency assessments to support an application for membership of a professional association and/or provider registration with a private health fund for people both within and outside of Australia. A fee applies for qualification equivalency assessments.

Australian universities

Australian universities may assess qualifications of prospective students for Australian equivalence using the AEI-NOOSR CEPs.

Loose ends

In some cases, it will not be possible to obtain a qualifications assessment. This may be because there is no CEP prepared for that jurisdiction, the education system of the country is not regulated, or the institution operates outside the country's regulated education system. In these situations, AACMA relies on its knowledge of particular overseas institutions to ascertain the relative standard of a qualification (see below for information on dealing with this group of applicants).

Validation of Qualifications

AACMA needs to satisfy itself of the genuineness of a particular overseas qualification.

For China-trained applicants, AACMA requires the qualification to be validated as 'genuine' by VETASSESS. This is a different process from assessment for equivalence to an Australian qualification.

Qualifications from other countries are assessed on a case-by-case basis, based on AACMA knowledge of the TCM education system in the relevant country and/or the specific institution. If there are concerns about validity of a particular qualification, the issuing institution may be contacted for verification of the award.

Standard of the qualification

The most important component in the assessment of overseas TCM qualifications is assessing the professional standard of the qualification; that is, does the program satisfy AACMA membership requirements.

For example, a course may satisfy the first two elements in the process of overseas qualifications assessment, but the actual course may not meet an acceptable professional standard or the professional standard of the course cannot be assessed.

AACMA policy is that, with three specified exceptions, all overseas-trained applicants must complete the AACMA entrance examination. Exemptions from parts of the entrance examination may be permitted depending on the applicants qualifications. For example, applicants with a qualification in western medicine may be exempted from the western medical sciences exam.

AACMA Accreditation Policy

In relation to overseas-trained applicants, AACMA practitioner accreditation policy requires that:

- An assessment of the primary-qualifying TCM qualification for equivalence to an Australian qualification be submitted;
- Chinese qualifications to be validated as genuine by VETASSESS (Hong Kong and Macau qualifications only post-reunification with China);
- The AACMA Entrance Examination be undertaken, except for:
 - o Applicants with a five year full-time Chinese Bachelor of Medicine qualification majoring in acupuncture, acupuncture/tuina, tuina, traditional Chinese medicine CM, TCM orthopaedics/traumatology or other approved TCM major;
 - o Applicants with a five to six year full-time Bachelor Degree in Korean Oriental Medicine issued by an approved South Korean university;
 - o Applicants from an approved overseas qualification on the AACMA Recognised Course List (currently there are no overseas programs on the List).

Requirements of third party payers for TCM services

Some health insurers require overseas qualifications to be assessed for equivalence by a university, an RTO or VETASSESS.

It is AACMA policy not to accept equivalency assessments of acupuncture and Chinese herbal medicine qualifications by vocational RTOs, because they are not qualified to assess higher education qualifications (such as bachelor degrees) for professional registration purposes.

It is noted that there are only two RTOs approved to deliver bachelor degree education in TCM, and neither has been approved to issue assessments of overseas qualifications for equivalence to an Australian bachelor degree. All other RTOs in the field of TCM/complementary medicine are VET sector organisations and are not even part of the higher education sector.

It is also noted that there are no RTOs or universities on the list of approved migration assessing authorities for professional occupations. See AEI-NOOSR website; viewed 27 May 2011: <<http://www.aei.gov.au/AEI/QualificationsRecognition/AboutUs/Relationship/default.htm>>.

Contact information for qualifications assessment agencies

AEI-NOOSR

International Education Group
1300 363 079 (within Australia)
+61 3 9938 2543 (outside Australia)

VETASSESS

Skills Recognition – General Occupations
Phone: +61 3 9654 2773
Fax: +61 3 9655 4801
eMail: migrate@vetassess.com.au

AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

Overseas Qualification Unit
Phone: +61 2 6205 3047
Fax: +61 2 6207 5862
Web: http://www.dhcs.act.gov.au/matsia/multicultural/services/act_overseas_qualifications_unit_oqu

NORTHERN TERRITORY

Overseas Qualifications Unit

Phone: +61 8 8999 3859

Fax: +61 8 8999 3889

Web: http://www.dcm.nt.gov.au/strong_community/a_great_place_to_live_and_work/multicultural_affairs

QUEENSLAND

Skills Recognition

Client Enquiries: +61 1300 369 935

Other enquiries Phone: +61 7 3237 1900

eMail: skillsrecognition@deta.qld.gov.au

Web: <http://www.training.qld.gov.au/information/skills-recognition/index.html>

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Skills Recognition Services (SRS)

Phone: 1800 658 887

Fax: +61 8 8226 5350

eMail: srs@saugov.sa.gov.au

TASMANIA

Tasmanian Qualifications Authority

Phone: +61 3 6233 7948

Fax: +61 3 6224 0175

Web: <http://www.tqa.tas.gov.au/>

VICTORIA

Overseas Qualifications Unit

All enquiries via e-mail to oku@employment.vic.gov.au

Website: http://www.business.vic.gov.au/BUSVIC/STANDARD/PC_62607.html

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Overseas Qualifications Unit

Phone: +61 8 9224 6566

Fax: +61 8 9224 6580

eMail: oku@det.wa.edu.au

Further Information

Assessment of Overseas Qualifications

<http://www.aei.gov.au/AEI/QualificationsRecognition/AboutUs/Relationship/default.htm>

<http://www.aei.gov.au/AEI/QualificationsRecognition/Assessing/Work.htm>

<http://www.aei.gov.au/AEI/QualificationsRecognition/default.htm>

<http://www.aei.gov.au/AEI/QualificationsRecognition/Information/CEP.htm>

<http://www.aei.gov.au/AEI/QualificationsRecognition/Information/EduAssessments.htm>

http://www.vetassess.com.au/migrate_to_australia/assess2_my_qualifications.cfm

Australian Qualifications Framework

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

http://www.aqf.edu.au/Portals/0/Documents/Handbook/AQF_Handbook_07.pdf

Health Training Package for Complementary and Alternative Health

<https://www.cshisc.com.au/>

<http://www.ntis.gov.au/>

Verification of Chinese qualifications

http://www.vetassess.com.au/migrate_to_australia/verify_chinese_documents.cfm