

# AUSTRALIAN BUSINESS DEANS COUNCIL

## POSITION WITH RESPECT TO AQF FIRST EDITION (2011) AND THE APPLICATION TO BUSINESS PROGRAMS – SEPTEMBER 2011

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This paper has been prepared by the Australian Business Deans Council (ABDC) which is the collective voice for Deans of Business Schools and Faculties and their associated business programs. This paper has been prepared to support the effective implementation of the AQF to business programs. Specifically, the paper has the following objectives:

- To have an agreed perspective by Business Deans on issues of uncertainty relating to the revised Australian Qualifications Framework (2011) (AQF First Edition);
- To present arguments and evidence to the AQF Council as to why these positions are valid; and
- To seek AQF Council endorsement of the ABDC position as valid and reasonable, and ensure effective program development and quality assurance into the future.

Business programs are heavily influenced by the global context in which they operate, the extensive links to relevant professions (and the focus on graduate capabilities and quality brought by the rigour of ongoing liaison and professional accreditation), and the relative significance in terms of student numbers and the need to ensure demonstrable quality at an international level for long term sustainability of this position.

There are six areas which, from a business programs perspective, require some specific interpretation. The ABDC position with respect to these areas is as follows.

**Acceptable Titles of programs** - The ABDC proposes that the option of reverse order of titles allows the Executive Master of Business Administration (EMBA) to be a compliant title, consistent with accepted international practice. Further, the ABDC proposes that current Australian university qualifications in business titled “Postgraduate Certificate in Business” and “Postgraduate Diploma in Business” are respectively equivalent to Level 8 “Graduate Certificate” and “Graduate Diploma” and are therefore compliant.

**Professional doctorates** - The ABDC endorses the AQF requirement for doctorates at Level 10 and acknowledges the minimum requirement for all doctorates including professional doctorates such as DBAs. As such, the ABDC strongly encourages its members to review their DBA programs to ensure compliance at level 10.

**Recognition of prior learning and pathways** - The ABDC supports the AQF perspective that recognition of prior learning both formal and informal is appropriate and indeed to be encouraged,

and that informal learning should be based around identified learning outcomes. The ABDC interprets the guidelines with respect to credit arrangements at 2.1.10 as a minimum (providing there is appropriate demonstration of the required learning outcomes) and supports public recognition of practice in this regard.

**Volume of learning** – The ABDC proposes that for family of Master of Business Administration (MBA) degrees, where evidence of appropriate experience can be shown to support achievement of learning outcomes, that 1.5 equivalent full time years be recognised as the typical volume of learning; and for Masters (Coursework) degrees that are designed principally for professional conversion to be effective in a particular professional area, or which are recognised by the relevant professional body, 1.5 years be recognised as a standard volume of learning.

**Structured practice related learning** - The ABDC regards that for a master degree (level 9) where there is a relevant professional body, that the structured learning experience is satisfied if the program is accredited by the relevant professional body. For a master degree where there is no relevant professional body, the structured learning experience is satisfied by evidence of appropriate graduate destinations and strong employability.

**Combined, dual and joint degrees** - The ABDC supports that any combined, dual or joint degree program be required to demonstrate achievement of the relevant learning outcomes specified for the AQF double or joint qualification in question (i.e. level 7 or level 9), but also achieve the disciplinary learning outcomes of both qualifications (eg. Bachelor of Commerce & Bachelor of Laws if level 7; Master of Commerce & Master of Engineering if level 9); and that a maximum of 50% overlap be permitted in the learning outcomes of the two separate degrees when taken at the same level.

## INTRODUCTION

### BACKGROUND

The Australian Business Dean's Council<sup>1</sup> held a meeting with representatives of the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) Council<sup>2</sup> on 27<sup>th</sup> July in Sydney. The strong attendance at this meeting was a reflection of the importance that Business Schools and their Universities place on an efficient and effective system to ensure a quality reputation of our programs.

The meeting constituted a very positive discussion as Business Deans sought to clarify interpretation and issues regarding the AQF as they relate to business programs in Australia. The meeting was productive and the ABDC is grateful to the AQF representatives for their engagement in this process.

Based on the discussion, the ABDC committed to present this paper – which represents a consolidated perspective of the relevant issues in the application of the AQF Policy Framework to business programs. This paper is a demonstration that the ABDC is strongly supportive of the development of clear frameworks that reinforce quality in Australian higher education. We are strongly supportive of the spirit and intent of the directions proposed by the AQF Council. Since its inception in 2002, the ABDC, and its constituent members, have demonstrated commitment to enhancing the quality of higher education in business programs in Australia. Evidence of the clear commitment by the ABDC is demonstrated by:

- Establishment in 2004 of the Associate Deans (Learning and Teaching) Network as a sub-group of the Australian Business Deans Council, which has had a significant impact in cross-fertilising good practice in teaching and learning in business schools
- Support of ALTC teaching grants initiatives since its inception, most notably its leadership role in the 2010 Learning and Teaching Academic Standards project; and
- Appointment and funding of the ABDC Scholar to support a national collaborative approach to academic standards.

While it will be TEQSA's role to ensure compliance with the AQF, the ABDC believes the AQF will be made effective in improving outcomes if there is a mutual understanding and interpretation with the AQF Council who have undertaken to develop the qualifications framework prior to the establishment of TEQSA.

Our intent as Deans of Business Schools is that this paper will be a helpful and professional approach to providing a common view and that this will support the effective implementation of the AQF to business programs.

---

<sup>1</sup> Present at the meeting were the majority of the Dean's from all 38 of the member Business Schools (or nominees), Professor Phil Hancock (Chair, ABDC Associate Deans Teaching and Learning Network) and Associate Professor Mark Freeman (ABDC Scholar).

<sup>2</sup> The AQF representatives present were Ms Di Booker and Ms Suzi McKenna.

## OBJECTIVES

This paper has been prepared with the following objectives:

- To have an agreed perspective by Business Deans on issues of uncertainty relating to the revised Australian Qualifications Framework (2011) (AQF First Edition);
- To present arguments and evidence to the AQF Council as to why these positions are valid; and
- To seek AQF Council endorsement of the ABDC position as valid and reasonable and ensure effective program development and quality assurance into the future.

## BUSINESS PROGRAMS IN AUSTRALIA

The application of a common framework to Higher Education is made complex by the diversity that exists between areas of study and across disciplines. While there are significant benefits from having a common framework, it is recognised that the distinctive nature of given disciplines will require appropriate interpretation – not to sidestep the pursuit of quality but to recognise the particular parameters of each discipline. Therefore, this paper seeks to apply the AQF Policy Framework within the distinctive nature of Business Schools as a specified area in higher education. In this regard we would focus on three areas that impact on interpretation of the framework:

- Business Schools are amongst the upper end of disciplines operating in a full global context. This impact includes the rigours of international accreditation, exposure to internationally oriented independent rankings (especially the MBA,) and competition from all markets of the world for international students. Business Schools operate in a truly global market and face the challenges (and benefits) that competition brings, while at the same time being subject to significant scrutiny;
- Strong links to relevant professions and their professional bodies, with the accompanying focus on graduate capabilities and quality brought by the rigour of ongoing liaison and professional accreditation; and
- Business programs occupy a dominant position within Universities as a source of significant student demand – and the need to ensure demonstrable quality particularly at an international level for long term sustainability. Business Schools often are at the forefront of quality initiatives in international education. For example, the ABDC T&L Network with funding from the ALTC Discipline Support Strategy has sponsored the visits of a number of distinguished international teachers. As a demonstration of outcomes, following the visit of Professor Larry Michelsen a number of Business Schools have adopted Team Based Learning with some impressive results.

## ISSUES FOR CLARIFICATION

There are six key points that the ABDC would like to ensure that there is an understood position with respect to the application of the AQF framework:

- Acceptable titles of programs
- Professional doctorates
- Recognition of prior learning and pathways
- Volume of learning
- Structured practice related learning
- Combined, dual and joint degrees

These issues are addressed in turn, although it is noted that there is some relationship and overlap between some of them.

### ISSUE 1: ACCEPTABLE TITLES OF PROGRAMS

Page 71 of the AQF Qualifications Issuance Policy (section 2.3 AQF Qualification Titles) states:

*“While it is common to list the qualification title before the field of study/discipline, the reverse order may be used. The field of study/discipline may be expressed broadly or explicitly and may also include sub-categories.”*

We draw particular attention to the program titled ‘Executive Master of Business Administration’ degree or more commonly referred to as simply the EMBA. This program falls under the general umbrella of a level 9 Master (Coursework) qualification. The EMBA is directed at individuals with considerable industry experience who hold executive-level positions in practice. For instance, admission requirements to the EMBA often require a minimum of 7 to 10 years work experience with at least five of those years at management level. The program then draws upon the significant work experience of the cohort to create a learning experience that is intensive, fast-paced and collaborative. EMBA programs are widespread throughout the world and all carry the same title. Indeed, recognition of the title is so widespread that the *Financial Times* publishes an annual list of its global top 100 EMBA programs.

The ABDC recognise that the title ‘Master of Business Administration (Executive)’ is an alternate title option that could be used to describe the degree. However, the reverse order title of Executive Master of Business Administration is the common title that is accepted and in use all over the world. Variation from the EMBA title would place Australia out of step with the rest of the world. Hence we seek recognition that this qualification title is compliant.

A second issue arises in respect of level 8 titles. Page 70 contains a statement in the AQF Qualifications Issuance Policy (section 2.3 AQF Qualification Titles):

*Titles of AQF qualifications are the representation of the qualification type, level and field of study/discipline of the qualification and provide the basis for national and international recognition. AQF qualifications will have titles that unambiguously identify the qualification type, level and field of study/discipline such as:*

- *Level 8 Graduate Certificate (Field of study/discipline)*

- *Level 8 Graduate Diploma (Field of study/discipline)*

Commonly used titles in business study include “Postgraduate Certificate in Business” and “Postgraduate Diploma in Business”, and these programs are consistent with descriptors in the AQF policy document. These qualifications are typically used as part of a Masters suite. The qualifications are also sometimes used where students do not possess a bachelor qualification in business and hence direct entry to a Masters program may not be possible, or where the intended target audience has a more specific industry orientation. In both cases students are prepared for senior roles in business and professional practice and meet the Level 8 learning outcomes.

***ABDC Position re acceptable titles of programs***

The ABDC proposes that the option of reverse order of titles allows the Executive Master of Business Administration (EMBA) to be a compliant title, consistent with accepted international practice. Further, the ABDC proposes that current Australian university qualifications in business titled “Postgraduate Certificate in Business” and “Postgraduate Diploma in Business” are respectively equivalent to Level 8 “Graduate Certificate” and “Graduate Diploma” and are therefore compliant.

**ISSUE 2: PROFESSIONAL DOCTORATES**

A doctorate qualification offered in some Business Schools, aside from the traditional Doctor of Philosophy, is the Doctor of Business Administration (DBA). Generally described as a professional doctorate, the DBA appropriately fits AQF Level 10 and the ABDC acknowledges that there is at best a weak argument to seek a further exception to the use of the “doctor” title at level 9. The typical DBA contains a substantial body of knowledge developed at the cutting edge of business and management, including a contribution to knowledge. The DBA typically includes at least two years of research and normally requires two external examiners of the dissertation component. It also comprises the development of research knowledge and skills in the social sciences commensurate. In this sense, the DBA sits comfortably with the proposed learning outcomes at Level 10. It is, therefore, a more advanced form of learning and development than that undertaken at Level 9. Moreover, the MBA and other Masters degrees at Level 9 provide an appropriate pathway in to the DBA.

At present, approximately one third of Australian Universities offer a DBA program. Informal discussion among Business Deans suggests that some of the existing DBA programs may not fully meet the AQF level 10 criteria. Specifically, some DBA programs do not contain the requirement of two years of research and would need to be adapted. The ABDC believes that it would be confusing, unwieldy and inappropriate to have a degree program with the same title at different institutions meeting either the level 9 or level 10 AQF criteria.

***ABDC Position re professional doctorates***

The ABDC endorses the AQF requirement for doctorates at Level 10 and acknowledges the minimum requirement for all doctorates including professional doctorates such as DBA programs. As such, the ABDC strongly encourages its members to review their DBA programs to ensure compliance at level 10.

### ISSUE 3: RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING AND PATHWAYS

The AQF policy states that “Recognition of prior learning or advanced standing for relevant and current informal and informal or non-formal learning will be available for students and may be used for entry requirements or credits towards an AQF qualification” (p77). While the policy includes guidelines about typical credit for existing pathways that have conventionally been accepted (section 2.1.10), for example “50% credit for an Advanced Diploma or Associate Degree linked to a 3 year Bachelor Degree” (page 77), there is some uncertainty about other arrangements that desirably require further clarification.

Section 2.1.11 supplements the suggested levels of credit for AQF qualifications that are contained in Section 2.1.10 and allows for other arrangements to be negotiated. The ABDC notes that the AQF encourages universities to clearly promulgate existing institutional credit arrangements on their public register and over time consider how individual arrangements for RPL might be recognised.

The AQF policy does not include statements with respect to the length of breaks from previous learning, and therefore this is interpreted as being a matter for each university.

An example of individual negotiations that believe fits the intent of this section, and would be deemed as acceptable, would be those in place between NSW TAFE with the four NSW universities where credit provided is 100% and not 50%. Thus 50% (in section 2.1.10) is a guide and most use it as a ‘minimum’ but the level could also be regarded as a ‘maximum’. In such a case, the onus is on the institution to argue the case but to do so in relation to achievement of the learning outcomes and the other aspects relating to comparability as addressed in Section 2.1.9).

Encouraging greater participation is to be facilitated through the recognition of prior learning, but needs to be within the bounds of Section 2.1.9 and section 2.1.4 which notes that giving credit should not impinge on a student’s potential success nor the integrity of the overall system.

Section 2.1.6 allows non-AQF qualifications and work experience to contribute to a qualification (i.e. ‘credit towards’) as well as be used for entry (i.e. ‘credit into’).

#### ***ABDC Position re recognition of prior learning and pathways***

The ABDC supports the AQF perspective that recognition of prior learning both formal and informal is appropriate and indeed to be encouraged, and that informal learning should be based around identified learning outcomes. The ABDC interprets the guidelines with respect to credit arrangements at 2.1.10 as a minimum (providing there is appropriate demonstration of the required learning outcomes) and supports public recognition of practice in this regard.

### INTRODUCTION

The ABDC believes there is a need to provide input on the interpretation of the framework with respect to the volume of learning in Masters (Coursework), and within this context, two specific and popular degrees typically pursued in business. The AQF policy refers to:

*The volume of learning of a Masters Degree (Coursework) is typically 1 – 2 years; in the same discipline 1½ years following a level 7 qualification or 1 year following a level 8 qualification; in a different discipline 2 years following a level 7 qualification or 1½ years following a level 8 qualification.*

In the Australian context, historical practice of ‘full-time’ refers to 2 semesters per year with 4 courses of study per semester (comprising around 13 weeks of learning followed by a week of formal exams). This can translate into various types of credit points locally as there is no national credit point system (i.e. unlike the European Credit Transfer System or ECTS). However, in discussion with European accreditation systems and partners, Australian business schools translate 1 Australian semester of full-time study as 30 ECTS.

The ABDC recognise and support that notion that the volume of learning should not be interpreted in isolation from the achievement of the learning outcomes relevant to the AQF level of the relevant qualification.

Based upon the above assumption of equivalent full-time study and the notion that qualifications must meet learning outcomes appropriate to the level of the qualification, many level 9 Masters degrees in the business field in Australia typically comprise between one and two years full-time study. Of particular relevance are the Master of Business Administration (MBA), Executive MBA (EMBA) and various professional Master degrees, most commonly in Accounting and Finance (e.g. Master of Professional Accounting (MPA)).

### MBA

The MBA is distinctive from other level 9 qualifications because of its historical and global role in tertiary education and its relationship with other qualifications within the Master degree family. The MBA program fits with the AQF definition of a level 9 qualification in so far as it applies an advanced body of knowledge to professional practice and offers a pathway for further learning. However, the MBA differs from other Master (Coursework) qualifications because of the way in which the program expects learners to apply their existing knowledge and skills to a new disciplinary area. In essence, it builds upon existing specialised knowledge and skills gained first through prior undergraduate studies and then extended by experience gained from working in particular industries. The MBA is designed to facilitate a move into a managerial position where general business knowledge and skills are required. The program adds distinctly new business-related knowledge and skills but also requires the application of existing knowledge and experience. A typical example is a technical specialist, such as an engineer with 3-5 years of experience post-graduation from a Bachelor of

Engineering, who wishes to advance their career by completing an MBA and thus support a move into management.

The MBA is a widely accepted international degree and existing Australian practice conforms with global norms in terms of both the volume of learning and the learning outcomes. While some US universities offer two year full-time MBA programs, the US-style degree reflects the admission criteria which focuses on selecting level 7 Bachelor graduates with limited post-graduate work experience. In contrast, European institutions generally require more experienced graduates and hence European MBA programs are offered typically over two to three semesters full-time (for example, the top ranked global institution INSEAD offers an accelerated programme in 10 months). Australian universities have been moving from a US to a European model which comply with the guidelines issued by EQUAL; the international association of quality assessment and accreditation agencies in the field of European management education. The members of EQUAL have agreed on a European MBA framework. Clause 5 of the guideline states: 'The MBA has a minimum length of one academic year of full-time study' and clause 6 provides further guidance: 'The MBA will require a minimum of 400 hours of classroom study or structured contact. The entire programme should require a minimum of 1200 hours of personal work.'<sup>3</sup>

As with European MBAs, entrants to Australian MBAs are normally required to have several years of industrial experience prior to admission. This work experience means that MBA students in Australia will have developed applied knowledge in their particular industry or sector based on both their bachelor qualifications and their subsequent work experience. Students will also have developed cognitive, technical, communication and interpersonal skills in their first degree and the work place on which they are expected to build during their MBA studies. Australian MBA students are starting, therefore, from a higher base than other Masters students who are admitted immediately or soon after their first degree in the same discipline. The possession of advanced knowledge and skills relevant to the program, and the student ability to apply such knowledge and skills, means that effectively MBA students possess 'Required Prior Learning'.

When considering the volume of learning necessary to achieve level 9 learning outcomes, Business Deans believe that it is important to interpret the understanding and application of the word 'typically' which appears in the AQF policy in the context of the unique features of the MBA. Because of the required prior knowledge and work experience imposed as admission requirements, a typical MBA program is less than two years full-time study and typically around 18 months of full-time study. This volume of learning reflects the knowledge, skills and experience that students bring to their studies, as well as being in line with the international practice.

***ABDC Position re volume of learning re MBA program***

The ABDC proposes that for family of Master of Business Administration (MBA) degrees, where evidence of appropriate experience can be shown to support achievement of learning outcomes, that 1.5 equivalent full time years be recognised as the typical volume of learning appropriate for a level 9 qualification for the Masters (Coursework) classification.

<sup>3</sup> [http://www.fibaa.org/uploads/media/European-MBA-Guidelines\\_10.pdf](http://www.fibaa.org/uploads/media/European-MBA-Guidelines_10.pdf)

## CONVERSION MASTERS DEGREES

Conversion Masters degrees are designed primarily for graduates wishing to pursue entry to a new profession (e.g. Master of Applied Finance) and in some cases a new professional body (e.g. Master of Professional Accounting). Other common examples are a Master of Business or Master of Commerce in which a field of specialization or major of study leads to a professional outcome. Such level 9 Masters degrees provide a foundation in the discipline (e.g. finance, accounting, marketing) framing the education process to take account of the broader experiential foundation of students at this level.

An example of a 'conversion' Master (Coursework) student in a business program is a Bachelor of Arts graduate who wishes to change career. Such a program (e.g. Accounting; Logistics, Human Resource Management) relies on a strong relationship with a relevant professional body to ensure graduates are appropriately prepared to meet industry and professional needs.

The Master (Coursework) degree in Accounting is an example of these types of programs and is currently offered by all Australian Universities. These programs are most commonly offered as a 12 course program, with an equivalent duration of 1.5 years (full-time study).

Business Deans consider that the 1.5 year (12 course) structure for these programs meet level 9 learning outcomes, despite falling outside the 'typical' volume of learning recommended for a degree following a level 7 qualification in a different discipline. The following points support this view:

- These programs are professionally recognised and accredited by associations external and independent of the University. Professional associations prescribe broad learning outcomes and attributes for graduates and consider the 1.5 year program to be sufficient at Masters level to meet these requirements. When accreditation of programs is conducted, accrediting panels assess not only the program, but also assessment, quality assurance, teaching and resources, and are cognisant of the level of the program being offered.
- Applicants for conversion courses have often completed an undergraduate degree in a 'related', or cognate, discipline (e.g. economics, engineering) and aim to enhance more general skills. Requirements could therefore be said to be similar to those for '1.5 years following a level 7 qualification in the same discipline' – that is, the 'cognate' discipline is relevant. The ABDC notes the ambiguity surrounding the lack of a clear definition of 'discipline' within the AQF framework.
- The requirement for a 2-year volume of learning would insufficiently recognise the existing knowledge and skills upon which the bachelor graduate from a cognate discipline builds. Such interdisciplinary knowledge and skills are increasingly valuable in a global and dynamic context. In these ways, students are able to apply knowledge and skills to unfamiliar contexts. While the content of these programs is typically similar to undergraduate material, because of their background degree, graduates will nevertheless obtain "specialised knowledge and skills", their skill development will be at a more "advanced" level, their knowledge will include "recent developments", and they will "demonstrate autonomy,... judgement and adaptability... as a practitioner", albeit within the context of a new discipline.

- The ALTC Learning and Teaching Academic Standards project for Accounting identified these programs as “Master (Entry)” degrees, where students who have completed a first degree in a field outside of business have developed not only a set of specific knowledge and skills but also generic skills from their first degree and/or work experience - these would be the foundation upon which their business knowledge and skills are developed, generic skills further refined and prior knowledge, where appropriate, utilised (See Appendix 1).

***ABDC Position re volume of learning re Master (Coursework) programs***

The ABDC proposes that for Masters (Coursework) degrees that are designed principally for professional conversion to be effective in a particular professional area, or which are recognised by the relevant professional body, 1.5 years be recognised as a standard volume of learning appropriate for a level 9 qualification for the Masters (Coursework) classification.

**ISSUE 5: STRUCTURED PRACTICE RELATED LEARNING**

On page 59, the AQF policy requirements for Level 9 Master Degree states that:

*“The Masters Degree (Coursework) is designed so that graduates will have undertaken a program of structured learning with some independent research and project work or practice related learning. If this qualification is to prepare graduates for a profession a significant component of structured learning will be developed in collaboration with a relevant professional, statutory or regulatory body.”*

The ABDC understands that the requirement “will be developed in collaboration with a relevant professional, statutory or regulatory body” is met if a program has been developed to meet the requirements of a relevant professional body and has been accredited by the professional body. For example, a Master of Professional Accounting which has been accredited by CPA Australia, the Institute of Chartered Accountants in Australia and/or the Institute of Public Accountants, would comply with this requirement.

The ABDC understands that for a Master Degree (Coursework) where there is no professional and external accreditation process that providers will need to articulate an argument around other evidence such as graduate employability and destinations. For example, where evidence can be provided to show that a large majority of graduates are employed in a relevant profession and at the appropriate level, then this would demonstrate compliance with the AQF requirement.

***ABDC Position re structured practice related learning***

The ABDC regards that for a master degree (level 9) where there is a relevant professional body, that the structured learning experience is satisfied if the program is accredited by the relevant professional body. For a master degree where there is no relevant professional body, the structured learning experience is satisfied by evidence of appropriate graduate destinations and strong employability.

## ISSUE 6: COMBINED, DUAL AND JOINT DEGREES

The ABDC notes that the AQF policy is silent on combined, dual and joint degrees. The ABDC is cognisant that there are valid contexts for undertaking qualifications in a combined or joint mode, particularly as higher education becomes more interdisciplinary. However, the ABDC is concerned that a lack of clarity in the AQF policy on this matter, together with the substantial variation in practice, could result in practices that could damage the quality and reputation of higher education.

In dealing with this issue we draw on work undertaken by the 2010 ALTC Learning and Teaching Academic Standards Statement for Accounting project. Specifically, in section 2.1 Scope:

*“This statement also applies to degrees with titles other than those indicated above. It is the responsibility of an individual higher education provider to relate any pathway within a degree to the appropriate standards statement(s). Where accounting is studied as part of a joint program or double degree or double major then this statement should be applied in conjunction with the other relevant standards statement.”*

Further, the issue of credit is relevant. Specifically, the question arises as to how much credit should be permitted and the ABDC argues that the answer should depend upon the commonality of learning outcomes across the two separate degrees. In an absolute sense, the ABDC believes there should be a maximum allowable limit of 50% credit having regard to overall quality and reputational concerns. The issue of credit in this context is restricted to combined, dual and joint degrees across the same AQF qualification level and should not be confused with RPL considerations and articulation between programs across different qualification levels (which the ABDC has commented on previously in this paper).

### **ABDC Position re combined, dual and joint degrees**

The ABDC supports that any combined, dual or joint degree program be required to demonstrate achievement of the relevant learning outcomes specified for the AQF double or joint qualification in question (i.e. level 7 or level 9), but also achieve the disciplinary learning outcomes of both qualifications (eg. Bachelor of Commerce & Bachelor of Laws if level 7; Master of Commerce & Master of Engineering if level 9); and that a maximum of 50% overlap be permitted in the learning outcomes of the two separate degrees when taken at the same level.

## APPENDIX 1: ALTC THRESHOLD LEARNING OUTCOMES - ACCOUNTING

### JUDGEMENT

Bachelor graduates in Accounting will be able to exercise judgement under supervision to solve routine accounting problems in straightforward contexts using social, ethical, economic, regulatory and global perspectives.

Master (Entry) graduates in Accounting will be able to exercise judgement under supervision to solve routine accounting problems in diverse contexts using social, ethical, economic, regulatory and global perspectives.

Master (Advanced) graduates in Accounting will be able to exercise judgement under minimal supervision to solve emerging and/or advanced accounting problems in complex contexts using social, ethical, economic, regulatory and global perspectives.

### KNOWLEDGE

Bachelor graduates in Accounting will be able to integrate theoretical and technical accounting knowledge which includes a selection of auditing and assurance, finance, economics, quantitative methods, information systems, commercial law, corporation law and taxation law.

Master (Entry) graduates in Accounting will be able integrate theoretical and technical accounting knowledge which includes a selection of auditing and assurance, finance, economics, quantitative methods, information systems, commercial law, corporation law and taxation law.

Master (Advanced) graduates in Accounting will be able to integrate advanced theoretical and technical accounting knowledge which includes a selection of auditing and assurance, finance, economics, quantitative methods, information systems, commercial law, corporation law and taxation law.

### APPLICATION SKILLS

Bachelor graduates in Accounting will be able to critically apply theoretical and technical accounting knowledge and skills to solve routine accounting problems.

Master (Entry) graduates in Accounting will be able critically apply theoretical and technical accounting knowledge and skills to solve routine accounting problems.

Master (Advanced) graduates in Accounting will be able to critically apply advanced theoretical and technical accounting knowledge and skills to solve emerging and/or advanced accounting problems.

## COMMUNICATION AND TEAMWORK

Bachelor graduates in Accounting will be able to justify and communicate accounting advice and ideas in straightforward collaborative contexts involving both accountants and non-accountants.

Master (Entry) graduates in Accounting will be able to justify and communicate accounting advice and ideas in diverse collaborative contexts involving both accountants and non-accountants.

Master (Advanced) graduates in Accounting will be able to justify and communicate accounting advice and ideas in complex collaborative contexts involving both accountants and non-accountants.

## SELF-MANAGEMENT

Bachelor graduates in Accounting will be able to reflect on performance feedback to identify and action learning opportunities and self-improvements.

Master (Entry) graduates in Accounting will be able to seek and reflect on performance feedback to identify and action learning opportunities and self-improvements and initiate this process for others.

Master (Advanced) graduates in Accounting will be able to seek and reflect on performance feedback to identify and action learning opportunities and self-improvements and initiate this process for others.

## **ABOUT THE ABDC**

The Australian Business Deans Council (ABDC) is a national council comprising Deans, Heads and Directors of Australian University business faculties and schools. The Council seeks to advance and promote business education and research and does this through collective representation of business faculties and schools and their needs to government, industry and the community. The ABDC is particularly concerned to improve business education through curriculum development, and forging strong relationships with the business community and liaison with government. The Council also advocates research and development activity to enhance understanding of business and the key drivers of economic activity and is interested in how to achieve greater investment in the commercialisation end of science and innovation. The ABDC endeavours to retain Australian business education's leading position by keeping abreast of issues of quality assurance and accreditation activities worldwide. Active links are maintained with organisations such as the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) and the European Foundation for Management Development which manages the European Quality Improvement System (EQUIS).

The ABDC Teaching and Learning Network is a committee of the ABDC and was established in 2004 as a national community of practice to facilitate professional development for Associate Deans in teaching and learning. It provides a forum to share evidence-based good practice, through biannual two-day meetings. It also coordinates the sharing of international visiting scholars, and once or twice a year the Network sponsors a distinguished scholar to undertake a series of national workshops. Increasingly the Network has been a conduit for developing and embedding good practice resources via collaborative projects. Since its development, many changes have occurred that impact upon how the Network operates and prioritises its activities, including: major projects funded by a variety of sources including professional and industry bodies, the Council itself and government; the establishment of the ABDC Scholar; and the opportunity for greater stakeholder engagement (eg. with employers and professional bodies) particularly as part of the Learning and Teaching Academic Standards Project; and the formation of TEQSA.