The Nature of the Regional Conventions and their Benefits and Relevance to Cross-Border Mobility of Students in Asia-Pacific

Australia’s perspective

Liz Campbell-Dorning
Director, Qualifications Recognition Policy
International Mobility Branch
The regional context

• Massification, diversification and internationalisation of higher education
• Transformational development
  – Demographic changes
  – Skills for knowledge economies
• Many multilateral forums
  – ASEAN, EAS, APEC, ASEM, UNESCO
  – Qualifications recognition outcomes are best achieved through broad participation
The national context

• Qualifications recognition benefits individuals, institutions, communities, and nations
  – Incentivises mobility and minimises barriers
  – Supports participation in study and work
  – Embraces diversity rather than requiring harmonisation
  – Enhances productivity, competitiveness, innovation and multiculturalism

• Governments and institutions have a responsibility to ensure graduates are recognised in other countries
  – Access to regional study and employment opportunities
  – Internationalised education systems and workforces
UNESCO Asia-Pacific Recognition Conventions

• 1983 UNESCO Regional Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Diplomas and Degrees in Higher Education in Asia and the Pacific (Regional Convention)
  – 21 ratifying member states

• 2011 UNESCO Asia-Pacific Regional Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications in Higher Education (Revised Convention)
  – Not yet entered into force
  – 2 ratifying member states (as of Oct 15)
  – 8 signatory member states plus Holy See
Revised Convention

• Establishes best-practice qualifications recognition principles
  – Transparent, coherent, reliable, timely and non-discriminatory
  – National information centres
  – Competent recognition authorities
  – Comparability using substantial difference

• Aims to improve policies and practices, not enforce a particular approach
Rationale for revision

• Regional Convention was updated to reflect the changing nature of higher education in the Asia-Pacific region
  – Increasing mobility and internationalisation
  – Growth in enrolments and providers
  – Changes in governance and regulation
  – Innovation in higher education
Challenges

• Shifting to a positive approach to recognition
• Regional definitions of technical concepts
  – Substantial difference
  – National information centres
• Building expertise and community of practice
  – Information sharing
  – Sustainable and low resource approaches
Opportunities

• Address unreasonable barriers to mobility
  – maintain national standards
  – protect institutional autonomy
• Multilateral engagement in qualifications recognition is effective
  – regional cooperation complements bilateral engagement
  – best-practice foundation for more specific types of cooperation in recognition
  – UNESCO Global Convention
Enhancing mobility

Qualifications recognition

Qualifications frameworks → Quality assurance