Session objectives

• What is a National Information Centre
• Why establish a National Information Centre
• AEI-NOOSR as an example
National Information Centres

• Can be referred to as Competent Authorities

• Officially recognised as the body which speaks on behalf of the country regarding recognition of qualifications

• Focus on higher education (in line with conventions)
  – Decisions based on the country's qualification framework

• Recognition Convention Principles
  – Decisions are defensible, timely and transparent
  – About establishing there is a *Substantial Difference*
  – *Use of a recognition tool such as the Diploma supplement*
Why do qualifications recognition?

Acknowledging a person’s qualifications for a particular purpose

• Purposes
  – Recognition for different purposes
    • Depends on National/Domestic laws
    • Australia: study, work or migration
  – Evaluation to a specific standard/benchmark
National Information Centre Activities

• Offer advice on the recognition of foreign qualifications to students, graduates, employers, higher education institutions and other interested parties

• Provide information on your Education system

• Provide advice on the recognition of the institution in your country

• Encouraging Higher Education Institutions to issue a Diploma Supplement (or similar instrument) to their students to facilitate recognition

• All policies are in accordance with National Laws
Australia’s structure:

Department of Industry Innovation Science Research and Tertiary Education

International Education Division

International Cooperation Branch

AEI - NOOSR
National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition (AEI- NOOSR)

- Australian Government recognised coordinating authority on recognition of overseas qualifications
  - Acts as the National Information Centre (Lisbon Recognition Convention)
- Provides information and advice about overseas education systems to facilitate the recognition of foreign qualifications in Australia
- Provides information about the Australian Education system to promote the recognition of Australian qualifications in other countries
Our Mandate

• Set up under the Lisbon Recognition Convention
  – Provide official information regarding Australian qualifications
  – Focus is qualification recognition – policies and procedures
  – Carry out variety of activities to support recognition
  – Not about equivalence
  – Only assess completed qualifications

• Support Stakeholders to make transparent recognition decisions
  – Provide recognition tools
Australian Recognition decision-makers

• For study ➔ education providers
• For employment ➔ employers
• For migration ➔ Department of Immigration and Citizenship and professional assessing authorities

• Organisations use AEI-NOOSR information services to inform their decisions
  – Country Education Profiles (online recognition tool)
  – Professional Development training on Qualification recognition
  – Advisory Service

• Educational Assessments
  – Complex cases only
  – Fee for service
AEI-NOOSR’s Methodology Principles

• UNESCO Convention principles guide our service

• Recognition is about improving mobility for educational and employment purposes

• Default position is (positive) recognition unless ‘substantial difference’

• We say ‘ comparable’ not ‘ equivalent’
  – Compare an overseas educational qualification to the educational level of an AQF award

• Advisory only
AEI – NOOSR Assessment Methodology

• A methodology is a framework that ensures comparisons are consistent and transparent

• Comparing qualifications is not always easy
  – Need to establish the key points of comparison
  – Not like an examination that applicants pass or fail
  – Education systems and qualifications are often very different
  – For us length of study is not the deciding factor
  – To maintain rigour we only assess completed qualifications
Methodology continued:

• Fundamental to our methodology is comparing Overseas qualifications to the educational level of an AQF qualification.

• We undertake analysis at 3 levels:
  – Country
    • Regulation and quality assurance, current factors in country
  – Institution
    • Legal status of institution, accreditation in country
  – Qualification
    • What can one do in country with this qualification
    • Entry level, academic level etc
Australian Qualification Framework

• Both Higher Education and Vocational Education covered in this framework
• Descriptors describe outcomes of qualifications
• Higher Education (UG, Master’s and PhD)
• Vocational Education- competency based programs
• Institutions can offer VET and Higher Education Qualifications
• Qualifications include a range of pathways
• Framework promotes flexibility
• No National Credit system
Australian Qualifications Framework
Specific Activities within our NIC

• Provide official information for Stakeholders
  – Recognition tool CEP - research and publish
  – Advisory service – to all CEP subscribers and Government Dept

• Assess Foreign Qualifications for clients
  – Charge a fee for this service
  – 1000 – 1500 Qualifications a year
  – Compared to AQF

• Officially contribute to recognition forums – ENIC NARIC listserv

• Actively participate in the UNESCO Regional Conventions

• Domestic focused programs related to recognition (Professional Recognition)
Obtaining Official Information

• If a NIC is in place we contact them via email for official information
  – Actively participate in the ENIC NARIC Network which assists us with knowledge regarding Europe

• Use of official sources (databases)
  – Recognition products
  – World List
  – Institutional websites
  – Accreditation agencies

• We have a large Counsellor network, situated around the world
  – This network keeps us aware of changes in country
Qualification Recognition Resources

Online Publications

- AEI-NOOSR Country Education Profiles
- UK NARIC International Comparisons
- AACRAO Electronic Database for Global Education (*EDGE*)
- Canada
  [http://www.cicic.ca/676/comparative-education-guides.canada](http://www.cicic.ca/676/comparative-education-guides.canada) and
  [http://education.cicic.ca/app/?lng=en](http://education.cicic.ca/app/?lng=en)
- Nuffic Country Modules
  [http://www.nuffic.nl/international-organizations/services/ diploma-recognition/country-modules](http://www.nuffic.nl/international-organizations/services/diploma-recognition/country-modules)
- Ireland
Resources continued

Information resources

- ENIC-NARIC http://www.enic-naric.net/
- World Higher Education Database http://www.whedonline.com/
Resources Hard copy

Hardcopy resources

• *World List of Universities and Other Institutions of Higher Education*
  • Most comprehensive listing
  • Brief entries for most institutions

• *International Handbook of Universities*
  • Includes brief account of country education system
  • List is less comprehensive for some countries
  • Often more detail about individual institutions
CEP Online : An recognition tool

• Database containing research and analysis of overseas education systems, 120 countries covered
• Information tool to support quality, consistent, timely decisions
• Subscription based product with over 8000 users and 20% of these are from Overseas
• Designed to add value to decision-making by providing:
  – Educational comparability of overseas qualifications to the Australian Qualifications Framework
  – Qualitative information about education systems
  – Comprehensive lists of recognised institutions
Substantial Difference

• Foreign qualifications shall be recognised unless the competent recognition authority is able to demonstrate that there is a substantial difference between the qualification for which recognition is sought and the corresponding qualification of the country (or rather education system) in which recognition is sought.

• A substantial difference between a general education and a specialised technical education.

• A difference in the length of study which substantially affects the curriculum content.

• The presence or absence or extent of specific subjects such as prerequisite courses or non academic subjects.
Establishing Substantial Difference

• It is up to the NIC to outline to the candidate the reasons why recognition has not been granted

• The candidate should have the right to an appeal process

• Issues raised:
  • Mode of study
  • Quality issues
  • Length of time
Summary

• Establishing a National Information Centre
  – No *one way* to establish a centre
  – Mandates of the centre are decided in country
  – Need to set a benchmark (NQF or similar)

• Critical elements to qualification recognition
  – Access to quality information
  – Transparent policies and processes
  – Timely decisions
Contact AEI – NOOSR

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