Asia-Pacific Regional Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications in Higher Education

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Section I – Definition of Terms

Many of these definitions were taken directly from this region’s 1983 Regional Convention, Lisbon Convention, and current UNESCO definitions. Some specific terms of interest include:

– Competent Recognition Authority
– Higher Education Institution
– Mutatis Mutandis
– Non-traditional Qualification
– Partial Studies
Section II – The Competencies of Authorities

• This section is about clarifying the role of the competent authority to make decisions in recognition matters.

• This section allows for each country to choose the competent authorities within its constitutional structure

• In some countries – there could be more than one competent authority.
Section III – Basic Principles related to the Assessment of Qualifications

• Holders of Qualifications should be able to request that their qualification can be assessed
• Procedures and criteria for assessment should be transparent, coherent, reliable, fair and non-discriminatory
• Decision made on the recognition is based on the information available
• Countries need to provide clear information on its education system
• Timeliness and appeal through appropriate procedures in each Party
• In this document qualification recognition is talking about Academic Recognition not professional recognition. Professional Recognition is a separate exercise which differs from country to country.

• Countries have the right within their constitutional framework to determine how they manage the process of recognition.
Section IV – Recognition of Qualifications
Giving Access to Higher Education

• Recognition for access between parties unless substantial difference can be shown
• Developing guidelines for Substantial difference will be the main topic for discussion at the first meeting of the parties
• Countries still have the right to make decisions within their own constitutional and regulatory frameworks
• Non-traditional modes is included
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Section V - VII
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• Section V – Recognition of Partial Studies
• Section VI – Recognition of Higher Education Qualifications
• Section VIII – Recognition of Qualifications held by Refugees, displaced persons and persons in a refugee-like situation.
Section V – Recognition of Partial Studies

• Each party shall recognise, where appropriate partial studies – within the framework of their higher education
• Where appropriate a holder of a qualification can request an assessment.
• This is within the legal, constitutional and regulatory frameworks of a country.
• Some countries have bilateral agreements which allows for the recognition of partial studies between them or their institutions.
Section VI – Recognition of Higher Education Qualifications

• Substantial difference is mentioned in this section. Guidelines on this will be worked through during the implementation phase of this convention.

• Recognition can be used for:
  – 1. Entry into further higher education studies; or
  – 2. Titles e.g. PhD; or

• The employment issue does not require recognition of professional qualifications. Each country has its own regulations and legislation governing this issue.
Section VII – Recognition of Qualifications for Refugees ....

- This section requires countries to make reasonable efforts within the framework of its education system.
- Such recognition is within a country’s constitutional, legal and regulatory requirements to develop procedures for the recognition of qualifications held by refugees, displaced persons and persons in a refuge-like situation.
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Section VIII - X
Section VIII – Section X

- Section VIII – Information on Assessment, Accreditation and Recognition matters
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Section VIII – Information on Assessment, Accreditation and Recognition matters

• Provision of adequate information on higher education systems to enable other competent authorities to make decisions
• Provide up to date information
• Development of a national information centre
  – A Party does not currently need a NIC in place to sign the convention.
  – Does not require a new structure or organisation
  – Requires someone or an office to be the single point of contact regarding the Higher Education System
• Article VIII.4 asks countries to promote the diploma supplement – it is not a requirement.
Section IX – Implementation

- Establishment of a “body” to oversee, promote and facilitate implementation
- A committee established (Article IX.2)
- A network of national information centres – established to assist the practical implementation
- Secretariat of the network of information centres entrusted to UNESCO
- Future meetings will establish guidelines on issues such as substantial difference, non-traditional etc.
Section X – Final Clauses

• Open to all UNESCO Member States and the Holy See
• There are options to express consent to this Convention
• The 1983 will remain in force until 5 Member States have expressed their consent to be bound by the revised convention
• In practice both the 1983 & 2011 Conventions will co-exist initially until five Asia-Pacific countries ratify, accede or approve the Revised Regional Convention
• Reservations on defined sections are permitted in Article X.6 which include: Article IV.7, Article V.1, Article V.2, Article V.3, Article VI.3, Article VIII.4