

Cambridge Professional Development Qualifications: UK NARIC Benchmarking Report

	UK			Australia			South Africa	
	Regulated Qualification Framework (RQF)	Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ)		Australian Qualification Framework (AQF)			South African National Qualification Framework (NQF)	
	8	Technical/Vocational Qualifications Level 8		10	Doctoral degree		10	Doctoral degree
	7	Technical/Vocational Qualifications Level 7		9	Master's degree		9	Master's degree
	6	Technical/Vocational Qualifications Level 6		8	Bachelor Honours degree Graduate Certificate Graduate Diploma		8	Postgraduate Diploma Advanced Bachelor degree Bachelor Honours degree
				7	Bachelor degree		7	Advanced Diploma Bachelor degree
Cambridge PDQ Diploma	5	Level 5 Diploma, Higher National Diplomas (HND)		6	Advanced Diploma Associate Degree		6	Diploma Advanced Certificate in Education / National Professional Diploma in Education
Cambridge PDQ Certificate	4	Level 4 Certificate, Higher National Certificates (HNC)		5	Diploma			Advanced Certificate
	3	Level 3 awards, GCE AS and A Levels		4	Certificate IV		5	Higher Certificate
							4	National Certificate (Vocational) Level 4, National Senior Certificate
	2	Technical/Vocational Qualifications Level 2, GCSEs at grade A* - C and 2017 grade 4-9		3	Certificate III			
				2	Certificate II		3	National Certificate (Vocational) Level 3
	1	Technical/Vocational Qualifications Level 1, GCSEs at grade D-G and from 2017 grade 3-1 (England).		1	Certificate I		2	National Certificate (Vocational) Level 2
	Entry level	Entry Level Certificates (1-3)						

Context and scope

Cambridge Professional Development Qualifications (PDQs) are designed to support and recognise formally the continuing professional development and training of practising teachers and education leaders. Cambridge PDQs are provided at both Certificate and Diploma level.

Cambridge PDQs, awarded by Cambridge Assessment International Education, can be taken globally through Cambridge-approved Professional Development Centres.

In order to facilitate wider understanding and stakeholder recognition of Cambridge PDQs for

the purpose of work or further study, UK NARIC was commissioned by Cambridge Assessment International Education to undertake an independent benchmarking of the Cambridge PDQ Certificate and Diploma to the UK, Australian and South African education systems to determine:

- The comparable academic level of the Cambridge PDQ Certificate and Diploma in the UK, Australia and South Africa
- The ways in and extent to which the Cambridge Teacher Standards reflect Teachers' Standards in each country.
- Academic credit evaluation for Cambridge PDQs.

Overview of Cambridge PDQs

Candidates have to be practising teachers and education leaders to be eligible for Cambridge PDQs.

Cambridge PDQs are offered in four areas of education:

- Teaching and Learning
- Educational Leadership
- Teaching Bilingual Learners
- Teaching with Digital Technologies.

The qualification is composed of three modules that must be completed sequentially to achieve the qualification. To achieve the Cambridge PDQ Certificate qualification, candidates have to pass the first module, while candidates who have passed all three modules achieve the Diploma qualification. The first module is further broken down to three units.

The recommended minimum time duration for each module has been 120 preparatory learning hours with 40 hours of compulsory guided learning. A new syllabus was introduced in January 2018 and, in practice, programmes now normally involve at least 150 hours with 50 hours of guided learning and this will be the recommended minimum time set to acknowledge this.

The qualification is taught through but not limited to:

- Guided learning - workshops, seminars, one to one sessions and tutorials
- Practical and work-based learning
- Independent and collaborative study.

Learning outcomes are prescribed under each module or unit. The learning outcomes of the Cambridge PDQ Certificate in all four areas expect candidates to develop broadly similar knowledge and skills: candidates at this level are expected to be able to understand and apply principles, evaluate and analyse information, plan lessons or actions, effectively communicate and reflect on own practice.

The same is observed for the Diploma, with Diploma programmes in each of the four areas

aiming to enable candidates to demonstrate higher order skills including the critical understanding of principles, the ability to analyse and evaluate information critically and plan and design lessons.

For each module, candidates are assessed through a portfolio of evidence of practice, learning and reflection. In the portfolio, candidates provide evidence demonstrating how they have achieved the learning outcomes prescribed for each module.

Examples of evidence in Teaching and Learning include observing a colleague's classroom practice, observation of own practice and feedback by their mentor, and the candidate's own reflections on their learning and practice.

Examples in Education Leadership include evidence of inquiry into successful leadership, personal development planning with feedback from mentor and colleagues, and implementing and evaluating leadership initiatives concerning teaching and learning, change for improvement and staff development.

Candidates are assessed according to four criteria:

- Understanding
- Developing thinking and practice
- Analysis and discussion
- Communication and presentation.

Candidates for Cambridge PDQs can receive one of three grades; Distinction, Pass and Fail. To achieve an overall grade of Distinction in the Diploma, a candidate must achieve Distinction in at least two modules.

Overview of the Cambridge Teacher Standards

The Cambridge Teacher Standards serve as a benchmark which teachers can use to inform and guide their own professional development and school leaders can use to identify professional development needs and plan, implement and evaluate professional development in their schools.

The Cambridge Teacher Standards underpin the aims and learning outcomes of Cambridge PDQs. This is clearly illustrated in the expectation that on completion of their Cambridge PDQ teachers will be able to design coherent learning activities and use a range of teaching and learning strategies in order to enhance student learning, and to use reflective skills and critically to engage with educational theory and research evidence in order to develop their own professional practice.

There are eight Cambridge Teacher Standards¹ each made up of a number of individual standard statements that outline what Cambridge believe a teacher should know and be able to do, or demonstrate, in terms of professional knowledge, practice and engagement.

Key findings – International Comparability

Cambridge PDQs were compared against the education and qualification frameworks in UK, Australia and South Africa.

UK

Overview

Responsibilities for education and teaching are devolved to separate authorities in England, Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland. In this study, the focus is on the education system and teaching in England.

In England, education is the responsibility of the Department for Education, where a wide range of qualifications are governed by Ofqual. Qualifications in England are either within the Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF)² or the Frameworks for Higher Education

Qualifications (FHEQ)³. Further information on how the different education systems and frameworks in UK compare is provided in *Qualifications can Cross Boundaries*⁴.

The Teaching Regulation Agency is responsible for teaching in the UK. Those who wish to work in maintained primary, secondary and special schools and non-maintained special schools are required to hold Qualified Teacher Status (QTS).

QTS is awarded by the Teaching Regulation Agency in its role as the competent authority for the profession in England. The Teachers' Standards "are the minimum level of practice expected of trainees and teachers from the point of being awarded qualified teacher status (QTS)"⁵.

Academic comparability

The Cambridge PDQ Certificate aims to enable candidates to demonstrate and apply knowledge, evaluate and analyse as expected in both the RQF and FHEQ Level 4 descriptors. The FHEQ and RQF Level 5 descriptors include higher level skills including the ability critically to evaluate and perform reflective thinking that are similarly developed in the Cambridge PDQ Diploma.

The learning outcomes of the Cambridge PDQ Certificate and Diploma are also found to be closely aligned to a Level 4 Certificate and Level 5 Diploma in Education and Training respectively. Further there is good comparability between the competencies developed in the first two years of a Bachelor in Education degree (typically aligned at FHEQ 4 and 5) and Cambridge PDQs.

³ Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA), 'UK Quality Code for Higher Education Part A: Setting and Maintaining Academic Standards-The Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree-Awarding Bodies', 2014.

⁴ 'Qualifications Can Cross Boundaries: A Guide to Comparing Qualifications in the UK and Ireland'.

⁵ Department of Education, 'Teachers' Standards: Guidance for School Leaders, School Staff and Governing Bodies', 2011 <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/665520/Teachers__Standards.pdf>.

¹ Cambridge Assessment International Education, 'Cambridge Teacher Standards', 2018 <<https://www.cambridgeinternational.org/Images/466465-cambridge-teacher-standards.pdf>>.

² Ofqual, 'Section E - Design and Development of Qualifications - Ofqual Handbook: General Conditions of Recognition - Guidance - GOV.UK', 2018 <<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/ofqual-handbook/section-e-design-and-development-of-qualifications>> [accessed 22 November 2018].

Teacher Standards

The Cambridge Teacher Standards address the majority of the Teachers' Standards in England, where both set out expectations that teachers should:

- Establish a safe and stimulating learning environment for all students that is rooted in mutual respect
- Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of how students learn and how this impacts on teaching
- Demonstrate an understanding of and take responsibility for promoting high standards of literacy and numeracy
- Demonstrate an awareness of the physical, social and intellectual development of students and know how to adapt teaching to progress their learning
- Make a positive contribution to the wider life and ethos of the school.

Minor differences are encountered. For example, the Teachers' Standards for England refer to statutory assessment requirements. These are not evident in the Cambridge Teacher Standards.

The Teachers' Standard in England "deploy support staff effectively" is not reflected in the Cambridge Standards. However, it is acknowledged that the Cambridge Teacher Standards are designed to be international, for teachers working in various different contexts and it may be that in some countries, there are no support staff or that the deployment of support staff may not fall within the teachers' remit.

[Australia](#)

Overview

Each state and territory has its own primary and secondary education system, although broad similarities exist. There is a National Schools Strategy in place to encourage collaboration between the states and territories, and to promote consistency in assessment and certification. A national curriculum is also in the process of being introduced.

The Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF)⁶ was introduced throughout Australia and fully implemented by 1999. The AQF is under the responsibility of state and territory governments.

The Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) works with the individual state and territory education authorities that have their own requirements to regulate teacher education and create a national system of teacher registration. The Australian Professional Standards for Teachers⁷ have seven standards that outline what teachers should know and be able to do.

Academic comparability

According to the UK NARIC Band Framework, RQF and FHEQ Level 4 and 5 in England are comparable to the AQF Level 5 and 6 in Australia respectively.

Comparison with the AQF Level 5 and 6 descriptors supported this finding, where the learning outcomes of the Cambridge PDQ Certificate in all four areas are found to develop broadly similar skills to the AQF Level 5 descriptors. These include demonstrating technical and theoretical knowledge in a specific area, selecting and applying methods to analyse information, providing solutions to problems and transmitting information and skills to others, and demonstrating autonomy and ability to take responsibility within known contexts.

On the other hand, the learning outcomes of the Cambridge PDQ Diploma in all four areas are found to demonstrate similar demand of knowledge and skills to the AQF Level 6 descriptors.

The AQF Level 6 descriptors expect candidates to demonstrate higher skills including the ability to provide specialist advice and functions; this is similarly developed in the Cambridge PDQ

⁶ Australian Qualifications Framework Council, 'Australian Qualifications Framework Second Edition January 2013'.

⁷ Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL), 'Australian Professional Standards for Teachers', 2011.

Diploma. For example, the Cambridge PDQ Diploma in Teaching and Learning aims to enable candidates to “plan and teach a lesson specifically designed to improve an aspect of classroom practice”.

Further, the skills developed in the Cambridge PDQ Certificate and Diploma are found to reflect the skills developed in the Australian Diploma in Education Studies (AQF Level 5) and Associate Degree of Education (AQF Level 6) respectively.

Teacher Standards

The Cambridge Teacher Standards are found to reflect the majority of the AITSL Teacher Standards across a range of key themes, where teachers are expected to:

- Know their students and how they learn
- Have good subject and curriculum knowledge
- Implement effective teaching, learning and assessment practices
- Create safe and supportive learning environments
- Engage in professional learning.

A few differences are found. For instance, the AITSL Teacher Standard “demonstrates understanding of assessment moderation and its application to support consistent and comparable judgements of student learning” expects teachers to assess students reliably and consistently.

It can be inferred from the Cambridge Teacher Standards “plan for progression in learning by designing effective learning sequences within lessons and across a series of lessons” and “use an appropriate range of teaching strategies, learning activities and resources which develop the students’ required knowledge, skills and understanding, and which promote equality and inclusion” that teachers should be assessing students reliably and consistently. However, since there is no direct reference to teachers demonstrating assessment moderation, this AITSL standard is considered to be partially met by Cambridge.

South Africa

Overview

The Department of Basic Education (DBE) is responsible for formal school education up to Grade 12 and the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) is responsible for all higher education institutions.

The South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) is responsible for setting up the National Qualification Framework (NQF)⁸ that consists of ten levels and three qualification sub-frameworks.

The South African Council for Educators (SACE) is a professional council that is responsible for the registration of teachers, management of professional development and setting and maintaining of code of ethics. Since 2000, all teachers have to register with SACE.

Currently in South Africa, there are no national Teachers’ Standards; however, the Department of Higher Education and Training have prescribed eleven minimum competences⁹ that all newly trained teachers are expected to develop.

Currently SACE are drafting a new set of Teachers’ Standards to strengthen the profession of teaching in South Africa. The proposed Teachers’ Standards¹⁰ centre around ten principles, detailing what teachers should know and be able to do, and are applicable across all educators in South Africa.

⁸ South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA), ‘Level Descriptors for the South African National Qualifications Framework’, 2012.

⁹ Department of Higher Education and Training, ‘Revised Policy on the Minimum Requirements for Teacher Education Qualifications’, *Government Gazette*, 2015.

¹⁰ South African Council for Educators (SACE), ‘Professional Teaching Standards: Provincial Consultations’, 2018 <https://www.sace.org.za/assets/documents/uploads/sace_26198-2018-06-26-SACE%20Teacher%20Professionalisation%20Presentation%2001042018.pdf>.

Academic comparability

According to the UK NARIC Band Framework, South African NQF Level 6 qualifications can be considered comparable to either RQF and FHEQ Level 4 and 5. For example, a South African NQF Level 6 Advanced Certificate degree is considered comparable to RQF/FHEQ Level 4 in the UK, while South African NQF Level 6 National Professional Diploma in Education (NPDE) and Advanced Certificate in Education (ACE)¹¹ qualifications are comparable to RQF/FHEQ Level 5 in the UK.

Using this as a reference point, Cambridge PDQs were compared against the NQF Level 6 descriptors. The Certificate is found to reflect the majority of the NQF Level 6 descriptors with few differences observed, while the Diploma is found to cover fully the competencies described in all the NQF Level 6 descriptors.

The NQF Level 6 descriptors expect candidates to demonstrate the ability to select and apply appropriate methods in investigation, evaluate and solve problems; skills that are similarly developed in both the Cambridge PDQ Certificate and Diploma in all four areas.

In terms of knowledge, the NQF Level 6 descriptors expect learners to demonstrate detailed knowledge and the ability to apply concepts and demonstrate an understanding of different forms of knowledge, schools of thought and forms of explanation.

The Cambridge PDQ Certificate expects candidates to demonstrate a broad knowledge with some application while the Diploma expects candidates to demonstrate more detailed knowledge with an awareness of different ideas or approaches. Hence, the Cambridge PDQ Certificate is found to meet partially the level of knowledge specified in the NQF Level 6 descriptors, while the Diploma is found to meet

fully the level of knowledge required by the NQF Level 6 descriptors.

Cambridge PDQs were compared with three South African NQF Level 6 qualifications; Advanced Certificate, Advanced Certificate in Education (ACE) and National Professional Diploma in Education (NPDE) degrees. Whereas the Cambridge PDQ Diploma, ACE and NPDE qualifications expect candidates critically to evaluate and demonstrate the ability to design and reflect on learning programmes, this is not evident in both the Cambridge PDQ Certificate and South African Advanced Certificate degree.

However, the learning outcomes of both the Cambridge PDQ Certificate and South African Advanced Certificate degree are found to be comparable in developing candidates' ability to demonstrate and apply knowledge and to evaluate and analyse information to inform future practice.

Teacher Standards

The Cambridge Teacher Standards are found to meet all of the minimum competences specified for newly trained teachers in South Africa, which include having sound subject knowledge, highly developed literacy, numeracy and information Technology (IT) skills, the ability to assess learners and use assessment results to inform future teaching and learning and critically reflect on their own practice.

Similarly, the Cambridge Teacher Standards are found to reflect the majority of the provisional SACE Teacher Standards. Both the SACE and Cambridge Teacher Standards expect teachers to:

- Demonstrate ethical commitment to the learning and wellbeing of all learners
- Collaborate with others to support teaching, learning and their professional development
- Create well managed and safe learning environments
- Have good subject knowledge and know how to teach it
- Choose appropriate teaching and learning strategies

¹¹ Note that the ACE is different from an Advanced Certificate degree that is also a one-year programme aligned at NQF Level 6, but offered in different subjects that include counselling and communication skills, early childhood development, financial planning and management studies.

- Understand that language plays an important role in teaching and learning
- Plan and organise learning programmes and lessons
- Monitoring and assessing learning.

Some differences are observed. For instance, the provisional SACE Teacher Standards make reference to teachers respecting different aspects of learners' identities (including gender, race, language, culture, sexual orientation and disability). The Cambridge Teacher Standards address understanding the needs of all students including those from diverse linguistic, cultural, religious and socioeconomic backgrounds and those with disabilities.

Further the Cambridge Teacher Standards expect teachers to demonstrate respect for others and fairness in interaction with students. Nevertheless, no explicit reference is made to the learners' gender and sexual orientation; thus the aforementioned SACE teacher standard is considered to be met partially by the Cambridge Teacher Standards.

European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS)

Overview

ECTS credits¹² express the “volume of learning based on the defined learning outcomes and their associated workload” and are used for credit transfer across higher education institutions across Europe. The ECTS credits are aligned to the Bologna system, in which the ECTS has been one of the main objectives to be achieved by the countries participating.

ECTS credit allocation for Cambridge PDQs

A review of Cambridge PDQs showed that the qualifications have clearly articulated learning outcomes that detail the competencies developed, rigorous assessment of the learning outcomes and good quality assurance procedures in place.

¹² For more information on ECTS, please see the *ECTS Users' Guide* on http://ec.europa.eu/education/ects/users-guide/docs/ects-users-guide_en.pdf
Copyright © 2018 UK NARIC

Further, Cambridge PDQs are aligned at RQF/FHEQ Level 4 and 5 in the UK, where both levels are comparable to European Qualification Framework (EQF) Level 5; thus satisfying the ECTS credit eligibility criteria.

ECTS credits are allocated on the basis of total learning hours where one ECTS credit corresponds to 30 learning hours. The total minimum learning hours for the Cambridge PDQ Certificate and Diploma have been set at 120 and 360 hours respectively, but this is about to change to 150 and 450 hours to acknowledge the demands of the new syllabus introduced in January 2018. On this basis the ECTS credits for the Cambridge PDQ Certificate and Diploma are 5 and 15 ECTS credits respectively.

In addition to ECTS, universities may refer to Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ) credits or Credit Accumulation and Transfer Scheme (CATS) points, where one FHEQ credit or CATS is equivalent to 10 learning hours. Thus the FHEQ credit or CATS points for the Cambridge PDQ Certificate and Diploma are 15 and 45 respectively.

Summary

Cambridge Assessment International Education is found to have in place suitably robust and fit-for-purpose quality assurance procedures that maintain the standards and quality of the Cambridge PDQ Certificate and Diploma, sufficient for the purposes of determining comparability in this study, in the context of the UK, Australian and South African education systems.

The Cambridge PDQ Certificate is found to be comparable to:

- UK-RQF and FHEQ Level 4
- Australia - AQF Level 5
- South Africa - NQF Level 6 Advanced Certificate degree.

The Cambridge PDQ Diploma is found to be comparable to:

- UK-RQF and FHEQ Level 5
- Australia - AQF Level 6

- South Africa - NQF Level 6 National Professional Diploma in Education and Advanced Certificate in Education.

The ECTS credits for the Cambridge PDQ Certificate and Diploma are determined to be 5 and 15 ECTS credits respectively on the basis of the updated minimum.

The FHEQ credit and CATS points for the Cambridge PDQ Certificate and Diploma are 15 and 45 respectively.

Methodology

Based on UK NARIC's well-established methodology for credential evaluation, this independent benchmarking study comprised a detailed review of Cambridge PDQs in terms of:

- Entry requirements
- Duration, including recommended guided learning hours
- Content and structure
- Modes of learning and assessment
- Learning outcomes and assessment objectives
- Associated outcomes.

Consideration was also given to the quality assurance and control mechanisms that oversee and underpin the development, delivery and assessment of the award.

Comparative analysis: comparable academic levels

The level descriptors of the qualification frameworks and similarly focussed qualifications in each country were used as reference points in this study. Further, a triangulation process and the UK NARIC Band Framework¹³ were used to

¹³ UK NARIC, 'UK NARIC Band Framework' <<https://www.naric.org.uk/naric/Code%20of%20Practise/Band%20Framework.aspx>> [accessed 22 November 2018].

The UK NARIC Band Framework is a hierarchical set of outcomes, with 16 Bands, designed to provide maximum differentiation in comparing qualifications. The Band Framework therefore acts as a translation mechanism for international qualifications – illustrating comparable level, and the types of UK qualification to which the international award best compares.

determine the comparable academic levels in the context of the Australian and South African education systems.

Mapping the Cambridge Teacher Standards to the teacher standards in each country

A “best fit” approach is used for the mapping process, that is based on identifying the best fit between the competencies rather than the direct equivalence; recognising the differences between the two systems including variations in the level of specificity and terminology that are used. For the mapping process, the principal source was the Cambridge Teacher Standards; reference was additionally made to Cambridge PDQs as appropriate.