
AUSTRALIA-INDIA EDUCATION QUALIFICATION RECOGNITION TASKFORCE

Australia Consultations 2022

Organisation: TAFE Directors Australia (TDA)

Name: **Jenny Dodd**

Position: **CEO TDA**

Email: jdodd@tda.edu.au

Source of Delivery: **VET**

Are you a member of an industry body, if yes please specify?

Yes. The peak body for TAFE Institutes nationally: TAFE Directors Australia (TDA).

Questions

1 Based on your organisation's experience with the recognition of Australian qualifications in India to access higher education or general employment, what outcomes for the recognition of Australian qualifications would support your current or future engagement with India?

TDA is the peak body that represents Australia's national network of State and Territory publicly owned TAFE institutes and university TAFE divisions. All TAFE institutes and TAFE divisions of dual sector universities across Australia are members of TDA. TDA members range from the largest registered training provider in Australia with over 400,000 enrolments (TAFE NSW) to small, regional TAFEs with significant geographical coverage such as North Regional TAFE (WA).

The primary business of TDA members is vocational education and training focusing on nationally accredited qualifications and skill sets, non-accredited training for bespoke employer purposes, and foundation skills development for all learners. TAFEs dominate the market in the delivery of apprenticeships, partner extensively with secondary schools for delivery of vocational education and training and prioritise support for vulnerable and less advantaged Australians. Of the 29 TDA members, ten TAFEs are higher education providers and a further six are TAFE divisions of dual sector universities.

This background is important in response to the questions regarding the Australia-India Education Qualification recognition taskforce.

Whilst Higher Education qualifications are clearly a priority for many young Indians, in recent years consecutive Indian governments have identified that skills development delivered through the VET sector is at the centre of India's economic growth. The number of young Indians (18-22 years old) as a proportion of the population is greater than any other country in the world. There has never been a greater need to upskill a future workforce and therefore skilling is at the cornerstone of the Indian Government's 'Skill India' campaign which had an ambitious target of upskilling 400 million workers by 2022. Therefore, any consultations relating to the mutual recognition of Australia-India qualifications needs to include a focus on the VET sector not just Higher Education.

The bulk of TAFE Institutes' engagement with India have been through attracting Indian students to come to Australia to study. Currently India is the second biggest source country for international students coming to study in the Australian VET sector with June 2022 YTD data showing 52,000

In recent decades some TAFE Institutes have worked with various Australian and Indian government agencies and strategic partners to deliver a range of both accredited and non-accredited VET programs in India. Kangan Bendigo Institute in Victoria has been one such success story, delivering bespoke training, working with local providers and industry whilst maintaining a presence in India. Another program included TAFE Institutes delivering the Certificate 4 in Training and Assessment to TVET trainers in some Indian Institutes of Technologies. However, given the size of the market the biggest challenge for TAFE Institutes working in the Trans National Education (TNE) space in India has been the price point. The cost for TAFEs to deliver in India is much higher than the Indian capacity to pay.

Improving recognition arrangements of Australian VET Qualifications in India could result in much greater engagement with India by TAFE Institutes. There could be an increase in the number and quality of Indian students wishing to study in TAFE institutes.

In addition, with greater recognition of Australian VET qualifications, TAFEs could look at different and innovative modes of delivery in India. If more local students in India gain access to recognised VET qualifications from a TAFE Institute delivered in India, this could increase the scale and ultimately positively impact on the price point. There would need to be work done on courses requiring work placements as a part of their program to ensure they meet the needs of the local environment and are still compliant with quality delivery, industry needs and ASQA requirements.

2 Has your organisation received feedback from, or about, graduates unable to have their Australian qualifications recognised in India?

Reasons may include because the Australian qualification:

- **was undertaken via part-time study**
- **included a pathway program (including through a foreign/offshore provider)**
- **was shorter in duration than allowable under India's current recognition settings**
- **was delivered online or included online or blended learning elements**
- **was delivered offshore or in partnership with an offshore institution**
- **was delivered via a third-party arrangement**

Nationally accredited VET qualifications, whether they be delivered to Indian International students in Australia or part of an Australian TNE program in India, particularly ones that have links to TAFE, industry and employers are highly regarded in India. However, many Indian students who come to study VET programs in TAFE Institutes in Australia are often seeking permanent residency. This fact cannot be overlooked in the motivations that drive these students.

3. Why do your graduates, or graduates with whom you engage, seek recognition of their Australian qualifications in India?

- **pursue further study**
- **public sector employment**
- **general private sector employment**
- **employment in a registered or regulated profession**
- **other – please describe**
- **unsure or unable to assess**

Indian students graduating from TAFE Institutes whether they have accessed the program face to face in Australia, through a fully online or hybrid mode of delivery or through a TNE program in India will benefit from recognition of their Australian VET qualification in India in the following ways:

- Receiving an industry approved state of the art qualification from Australian public provider.
- Graduating as 'job ready'.
- An opportunity to fill identified 'skills gaps' within the Indian employment market. For job leavers in India there is little or no opportunity to gain advanced 'job specific' skills. Recent data suggests only 2.3 percent of India's workforce has received some formal skills training.
- Greater diversity of employment opportunities are emerging in India, many of which are linked to VET qualifications. The economy is now transforming to a manufacturing and service-based economy. This has resulted in an increased demand in skills-based employment opportunities.

- The geo-political challenges of recent years have seen India emerge globally as a safer source of trade and investment which adds to its need for a skilled workforce.
- The interim trade agreement with India (called the Australia-India Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement) was signed in April 2022 and provides the perfect back drop for increased recognition of Australian qualifications.

4 Based on your organisation's experience with the recognition of Indian qualifications in Australia to access higher education or general employment, what outcomes for the recognition of Indian qualifications would support your current or future engagement with India?

Any recognition of Indian VET qualifications would need to be based on thorough ongoing consultation with Australian industry, unions, employer groups, peak bodies, TAFE and government regulators to ensure any Indian qualifications seeking recognition in Australia meet Australian standards and are compliant with all industry and workplace requirements.

5 Have your students and/or partners (including education agents and partner institutions) raised concerns about the recognition of Indian qualifications in Australia? If so, what is the nature of the concerns raised?

The biggest concerns raised are as follows:

- Will the Indian qualifications meet the Australian Industry standards, even if the qualification is recognised in Australia?
- Unions may raise concerns about Australian workers being displaced by Indian workers with Indian qualifications.
- Employers may be reticent to employ graduates with Indian qualifications even if the qualifications are recognised in Australia.
- Unions have also been concerned about workplace exploitation in terms of some graduates earning more money than others depending on which country the qualification was issued in.
- Would consumers be concerned about using services and supplies from companies that employ graduates with Indian qualifications?

6 What factors do you consider most significant with respect to your ongoing engagement with India, and what further regulatory changes (if any) would be needed to achieve your specific objectives for the delivery of Australian qualifications in India?

This may relate to:

- **The recognition of AQF qualifications in India (in particular, those delivered online, part-time, offshore, by blended learning, through a pathway program, with a 'shorter than normal' duration, or part of a joint, twinning or dual degree program)**
- **The recognition of Indian qualifications in Australia**
- **India's regulatory settings governing the establishment of foreign campuses in India**
- **Australia's regulatory settings governing the delivery of Australian education offshore**
- **The cost of establishing offshore operations and delivering education in India**
- **Limited demand for partnerships with international provider**
- **Shared cultural and social literacy**

TAFE Institutes have a history of positive engagement with India. Many TAFE International Alumni are Indians who are successfully employed in their own communities in India or in many cases in Australia. The challenges TAFEs face when wanting to implement TNE programs in India have been described in answers to earlier questions.

The following regulatory changes could assist TAFEs further enhance their engagement with India.

- A complete review of the regulations concerned with the Genuine Temporary Entrant (GTE) for international students to ensure they are fit for purpose and relevant to Australia in 2022.
- Allowing students in India to complete part of their course online and still be classed as international students for visa and work rights purposes.
- Australian government to provide regulatory and financial assistance to TAFE Institutes who are committed to implementing long term TNE programs with approved strategic partners in India.
- India is aware that it cannot meet its ambitious training targets alone and will require quality partnerships. Attracting India's best international students, for example, has become a global competition. The Australian government should be working more strategically to attract quality Indian students, not just into the university sector but also into the public provider in Australia to ensure quality outcomes are sustained.
- Post-study work rights for VET students should reflect those in place for those in the Higher Education sector.