

Skills in ANZSCO Online Survey

1. Do you agree implementation of the six options will provide a contemporary representation of skill within ANZSCO?

- **Are there other areas of concern or proposed options you believe should be considered?**
- **Should any of the six proposed options be modified or removed?**

ACECQA supports proposal 1 (review of structure) and proposal 2 (language and terminology) as a priority. Proposal 4 (clustered occupations by career pathway) would also be valuable to the children's education and care sector.

For context, ACECQA is the independent national authority established under the Education and Care Services National Law to guide the implementation and administration of the National Quality Framework (NQF). The NQF is the national system for regulating children's education and care services, including long day care, outside school hours care and family day care services, as well as most preschools and kindergartens. Since 2012, the NQF has progressively introduced higher staffing and qualification requirements for educators and teachers. Around 200,000 teachers and educators work in the children's education and care sector, with most of the sector workforce being vocationally trained certificate III and diploma qualified educators, although an increasing proportion are degree qualified early childhood teachers.

The current ANZSCO classifications for these occupations have not kept pace with reforms in the sector or the goals of the national system. Notably, the description of skills – in particular the 'skill specialisations' – do not reflect the current skills and knowledge or professional language associated with these occupations. There are five '6-digit' occupations that relate directly to the NQF:

- 134111 Child Care Centre Manager
- 241111 Early Childhood (Pre-primary School) Teacher
- 421111 Child Care Worker (including 'Child Care Worker Group Leader' specialisation)
- 421112 Family Day Care Worker
- 421114 Out of School Hours Care Worker

Early childhood teachers, a legislated role within the NQF, fall within the category of 'Unit Group 2411 Early Childhood (Pre-Primary School) Teachers'. This unit group is a sub-set of school teachers and includes teachers in the early years of primary school. As such, data extracted at this level likely over-represents estimates for the number of early childhood teachers working in NQF settings. In addition, the language used in the classification is not inclusive of early childhood teachers' practice and employment settings (e.g. 'students' and 'classroom').

Similarly, preschool education is grouped in 'Division P Education and Training', while long day care is grouped separately in 'Division Q Health Care and Social Assistance'. As such, industry level data analysis can misrepresent the size of the sector by excluding kindergarten and pre-school programs delivered by NQF approved providers or conversely including social assistance services that do not form part of the regulated children's education and care sector. Clustered occupations by career pathway, as proposed in Proposal 4, would assist governments and other national sector stakeholders to analyse sector workforce data at a system level as well as plan for future workforce development initiatives. It would also provide clearer direction for qualification developers.

The 'Minor Group 421 Child Carers' (inclusive of 421111 Child Care Worker; 421112 Family Day Care Worker and 421114 Out of School Hours Care Worker occupations) requires wholesale review to reflect the contemporary workforce. Terms such as 'child care' and 'entertaining children' reinforce outdated views about early learning and diminish community perceptions of the professional practice of educators and teachers who support young children's learning, wellbeing and development.

2. Do you have any suggestions regarding how to include micro-credentials and other training outside the AQF within ANZSCO?

- **What, if any, implications will implementation of the six proposed options create for your organisation?**

Micro-credentials provide the children's education and care sector a range of opportunities for educators and teachers to upskill or specialise in areas of identified need, for example leadership and management capability, cultural competency and safety, and educating and caring for children with additional needs. There may be scope to look at 'skill specialisations' within occupation classifications as part of the broader classification maintenance process.

3. Do you agree with the prioritisation of the six proposed options outlined in this paper?

- **If "no", please rank the six proposed options from most to least important and describe the criteria used for this ranking.**

Proposal 1 and 2 are the highest priority options for the early childhood sector.

A significant barrier to informed policy making and strategic planning is availability of workforce data at a national level. The ANZSCO classifications are the basis for several national data collections such as the Australian Bureau of Statistics' Labour Force Estimates and the National Skills Commission's Labour Market Insights and Employment Projections. These national data collections are used to inform policy and programs, for example the skilled migration visa program. The current classifications make it difficult for governments and researchers to assess current workforce supply and demand, and identify meaningful solutions at the sector level.

4. Do you consider implementation of any of the six proposed options more urgent?

If "yes", please rank the six proposed options from most to least urgent and describe the criteria used for this ranking

As above, Proposal 1 and 2 are the highest priority options for the early childhood sector.

The children's education and care workforce deliver a range of important benefits for Australia including improved and more equitable educational and developmental outcomes for children, increased intergenerational social mobility and higher labour market participation. However, available evidence indicates that the sector is facing significant and increasingly urgent workforce challenges.

Updating the ANZSCO classifications to better reflect the contemporary structure and language of the sector will have a flow-on effect to national data collections informing workforce supply and demand and policy decision making to support the implementation of national workforce initiatives.