

Education Policy

The DIA vision for design education in Australia is for a diverse and innovative offering of a choice of courses varying in focus and curriculum, a range of teaching and learning approaches, varied research orientations and distinct graduate outcomes.

Introduction

Design education in Australia has evolved beyond simply providing a trained workforce for professional career paths. If Australia is to embrace the benefits of a creative society it is essential to build awareness and an understanding of design within the broader community. This means educating about design, as well as expanding the profession's body of knowledge through design research and innovative practice.

The DIA also recognises the benefits of higher levels of education within the profession. There must therefore be access to design education through a range of pathways and flexible study options in the higher education and vocational education sectors, along with expanded opportunities for postgraduate study, professional development and lifelong learning.

With this in mind, the DIA seeks to:

- develop strong and open communication channels with tertiary institutions through DIA membership and engagement with DIA programs and events
- encourage research, postgraduate education and ongoing professional development
- contribute, in a consultative way, to curriculum development and course delivery
- support the sector to develop new programs in response to changes and advances in the profession
- promote the attainment of higher educational standards within the profession
- foster excellence in design education and training

Advocacy priorities

As the national peak body representing designers across all fields the DIA advocates on a number of issues relating to design education.

Teacher shortage

Surveys by the Design and Technology Teachers' Association of Australia (DATTA) are uncovering widespread difficulty for secondary schools in finding qualified teachers for design and technology subjects. The scale of the design skills deficit in schools has profound implications for the future of the sector.

Exposure to design skills while at school is important for inspiring interest in pursuing a design career. The number of roles requiring design skills is projected to continue to expand beyond the design sector into other areas. Ensuring that the workforce of the future has the right skills starts with students having the chance to see the application of those skills during secondary education. Increasing the number of teachers with industry experience would also be beneficial for students by better demonstrating how their school learning could be applied in future employment.

The DIA will collaborate with the Design and Technology Teachers' Association of Australia (DATTA) to identify opportunities to address the shortage, including practical measures to assist more people to take their existing design skills into teaching roles and microcredentials for non-specialist teachers.

Higher Education

Design thinking can add value in all fields and should be embedded across all levels of education. However, this does not reduce the need for design expertise appropriately developed by tertiary education.

Policy and funding settings for universities and vocational education institutions should support the aspirations of a diversity of emerging designers and produce sufficient graduates to equip Australia with the breadth of design skills necessary for a prosperous and sustainable future.

The DIA is in favour of increased engagement with industry by tertiary institutions.

Registration and licencing

Some states already have registration or licencing schemes in place for the construction industry, and others are likely to follow. The DIA supports the introduction of licencing or registration that recognises professionalism and requires specified qualifications and experience, provided it is tailored for designers.

DIA support for research and postgraduate study

The DIA recognises the importance of postgraduate study for continuing the development of practitioners in the field.

Among the DIA's goals are to foster design excellence and expand the body of knowledge within the profession. To achieve this, the DIA will encourage design research projects in collaboration with tertiary education institutions, and support the development of postgraduate education generally.

The DIA will advise and support Education Members seeking research funding from bodies such as the Australian Research Council. It will facilitate joint scholarships with industry to encourage design research and learning.

Through its international network of associated organisations, the DIA will foster connections for research in major centres of design throughout the world.

DIA Educational Membership

The DIA uses Educational Membership as the framework for engaging with tertiary educational institutions.

Educational Membership may be granted to a department or faculty within a University, Registered Training Organisation (RTO) or Registered Higher Education Provider.

To be eligible, the department or faculty must deliver a qualification that would enable graduates to become members of the DIA (see the *DIA Membership policy*).

Educational membership includes two individual memberships. Additional staff memberships can be purchased at a discount rate.

Educational Members are acknowledged and listed on the DIA website and are entitled to use the 'DIA: Educational Member' logo on letterhead, website and promotional material.

DIA Course Recognition

DIA Educational Members are entitled to DIA recognition for their courses. The following conditions must be met:

- The course is a nationally accredited design course, delivered by a University, RTO or Registered Higher Education Provider
- The course/faculty/department/institution holds a current DIA Educational Membership
- Graduates of the course will be eligible for Graduate Membership of the DIA (see the *DIA Membership policy*).

In their documentation for Recognised Courses, Educational Members are permitted to use the 'DIA: Recognised Course' logo and the phrase: '*Students and Graduates of this course may be eligible for Membership of the Design Institute of Australia*'. For more information, see the *DIA Logo Use policy*.

The DIA will acknowledge all DIA Recognised Courses on its website.

DIA support for course delivery

The DIA will provide Educational Members with consultative advice and support to improve the professional knowledge and practices applied to their course programs.

Through its State Councils, the DIA will undertake to find appropriate professionals to contribute to the following aspects of program delivery:

- developing project assignments that apply the latest industry practices
- coordinating student visits to professional design studios and portfolio reviews
- presenting on current professional knowledge and practices

- guest assessing
- assessment validating and moderating
- visiting lectures.

DIA support for new and revised courses

DIA Educational Members may seek DIA support for proposals for new and revised design courses.

A letter will be provided to the appropriate authority, supporting the development of the proposed course and stating that it is eligible for DIA Design Course Recognition.

The following conditions must be met for the proposed course to be supported:

- Graduates of the course will be eligible for Graduate Membership of the DIA
- There is at least one non-academic DIA representative on the Course Advisory Committee (or equivalent)
- The education provider is a current DIA Educational Member.

Quality and benchmarking

Through its National Office and/or State Councils, the DIA will identify DIA representatives to participate in the following aspects of DIA Recognised Course quality reviews:

- course advisory committees
- course review panels
- curriculum reviews
- national curriculum development (vocational education and training (VET) sector).

The DIA will develop a framework to guide its representatives when conducting reviews.

The DIA also supports excellence in Design Education through the Graduate of the Year Awards (GOTYA) program, the DIA's primary awards program for emerging designers.

GOTYA provides eligible institutions with a unique opportunity to benchmark the work of their graduates against other institutions. The program showcases a range of graduate attributes and also allows design professionals to view the best works from the range of eligible design courses throughout Australia and New Zealand.

The DIA strongly encourages Educational Members to enter their graduates in the GOTYA program.

DIA Professional Membership

Qualifications

The DIA recognises all Australian Accredited Design Qualifications in any field of design that have been conferred by a University, RTO or Registered Higher Education Provider. Further evidence may be required for overseas qualifications.

The DIA uses the Australian Qualification Framework (AQF) to recognise the level of an applicant's qualification. The AQF is the national policy for regulated qualifications in Australian Education and Training.

DIA professional members are students and graduates of design and experienced design professionals who hold (or are studying towards) an Advanced Diploma or a Degree in design (courses rated AQF 6 and 7 in the AQF).

An exception is made for design disciplines where the highest undergraduate qualification is an AQF 5 Diploma.

For further information, see the *DIA Membership* policy.

Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

The DIA supports the principles of lifelong learning and encourages all DIA Members to adopt the DIA CPD program.

The purpose of CPD is to ensure that professional members of the DIA maintain the highest possible standard of practice through a commitment to continued learning in their discipline.

Continued learning can take a variety of forms including further education, attending conferences, seminars and workshops, authoring, teaching, mentoring, professional reading and commitment to the business of the design professions through the DIA. These activities are eligible for CPD points in accordance with the DIA CPD policy.

Through its National Office, State Councils and partner network, the DIA will facilitate a range of endorsed activities for the benefit of members. The DIA will also partner with other organisations to provide DIA endorsed CPD opportunities and to develop microcredentials.

Members in the Accredited Designer™ program are required to attain a minimum number of CPD points each year. For further information, see the DIA CPD policy.

DIA recommendations for prospective design students

Course Selection

The DIA recommends studying at Institutions that hold DIA Educational Membership, and in DIA Recognised Courses.

Course Duration

The DIA recommends education and training courses of an appropriate length, such as:

- one year of full-time study or equivalent for a Certificate IV (AQF Level 4) course
- two years full-time study or equivalent for a Diploma (AQF Level 5)
- a minimum of three years full-time study or equivalent for Advanced Diplomas, Associate Degrees and Bachelor Degrees (AQF Level 6 and above).

Qualifications For Employment

Professional design roles generally require a three year bachelor degree at a minimum, with some roles requiring either a four year bachelor degree or a three year bachelor degree plus an honours year or postgraduate qualification.

The DIA advises that general bachelor degrees in design-related fields (without a specialisation) may not result in a specific vocational outcome. This type of qualification can be augmented by further study in a discipline-specific graduate diploma or masters program.

Foundation Courses

The DIA recognises Certificate IV (AQF 4 level) courses as valuable foundations for, and pathways to, further study. Students enrolled in these courses are therefore eligible for DIA Student Membership.

However, these qualifications on their own will not lead to DIA Membership at a higher level. Therefore, the DIA does not officially recognise Certificate IV courses.