

# The best of both worlds? Integrating VET and higher education

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# Project purpose

- The overarching purpose of this project was to explore existing arrangements of integrated VET and HE qualifications.
- The research aimed to identify and examine:
  - existing arrangements of integrated VET and HE qualifications (and other credentials)
  - flexible entry/exit points in VET and HE to determine if and how these could be implemented more broadly.
- Key project phases:
  - An exploratory qualitative approach will be used to identify and describe current approaches for integrating higher education and VET qualifications. A snowballing technique will be used to identify these examples including through consultation with NCVER, interviews with a range of stakeholders and systemic searches of provider sites.
  - A short survey was sent to a broad selection of stakeholders to gather their views, knowledge and possible examples of integrated VET and HE qualifications (or other credentials).

# Australia's binary tertiary field

- Sharp division between sectors
- Credit transfer and articulation
- Student experiences – student movement

**Table 1 Australian Qualifications Framework Levels, VET Qualifications and HE Qualifications**

AQF Level	VET Qualification	HE Qualification
10		Doctorate
9		Masters
		Bachelors Honours Degree
	Graduate Certificate	Graduate Certificate
8	Graduate Diploma	Graduate Diploma
7		Bachelors Degree
6	Advanced Diploma	Associate Degree
5	Diploma	Diploma
4	Certificate IV	
3	Certificate III	
2	Certificate II	
1	Certificate I	

(Adapted from <https://www.aqf.edu.au/aqf-levels>)

# Problems of the binary tertiary field

- Finn (1991)
- ANTA (1998)
- PhillipsKPA (2006)
- Harris, Rainey and Sumner (2006)
- Bradley review (2008)
- NSW Government (2010)
- Moodie et al. (2015)
- Fowler (2017)
- Ithaca Group (2018)
- Gonski & Shergold (2021)



# Webinar overview

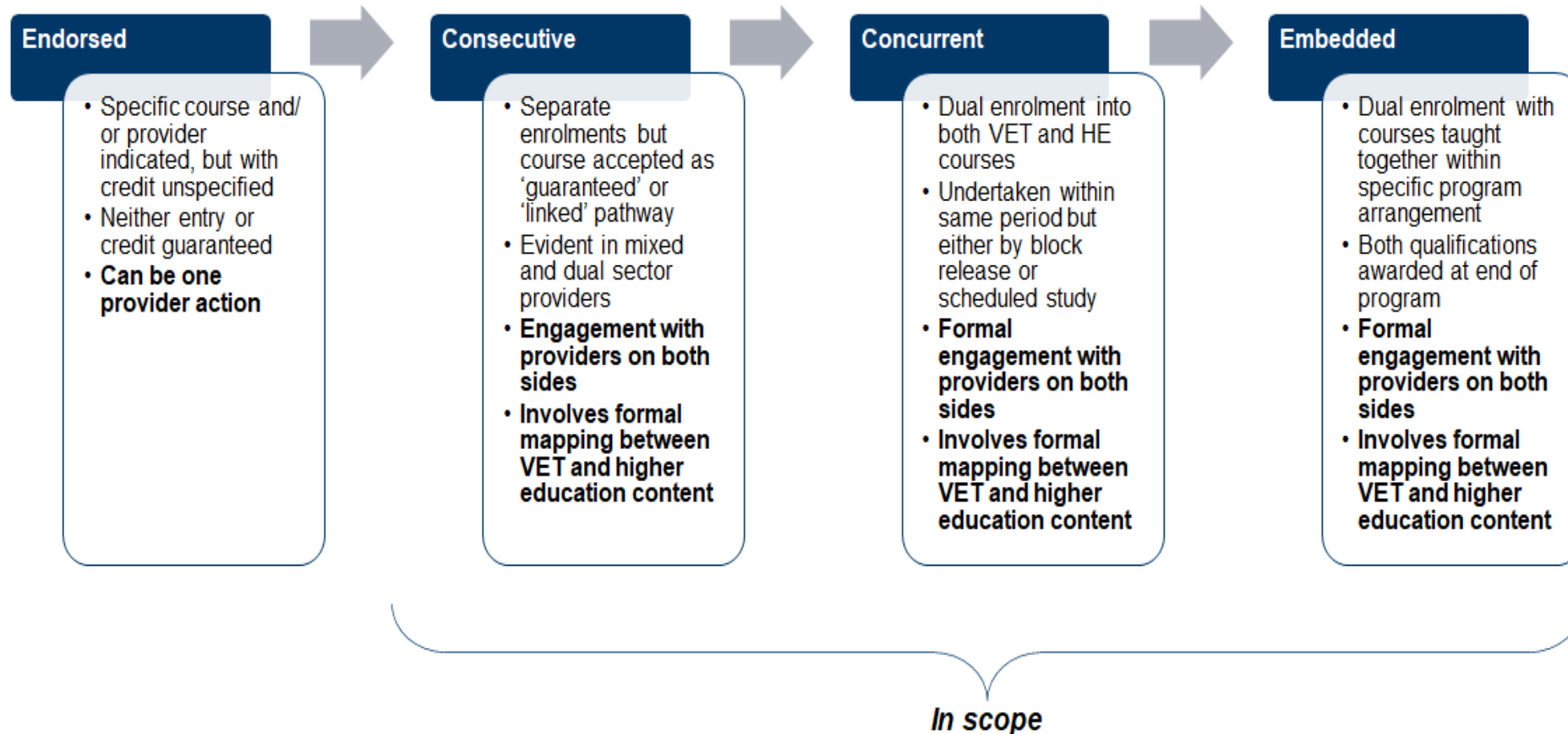
- Methods and emergent heuristic model
- Characteristics of sustainable high-integration models
  - Curriculum mapping
  - Relationships
  - Industry relevance
  - Student acceptance
- Future integration
  - Challenges
  - Support

# Methods

- Project phases:
  - An exploratory qualitative approach was used to identify and describe current approaches for integrating higher education and VET qualifications.
  - A snowballing technique identified these examples including through consultation with NCVER, interviews with a range of stakeholders and systemic searches of provider sites.
  - A short survey was sent to a broad selection of stakeholders to gather their views, knowledge and particular examples of integrated VET and HE qualifications (or other credentials).

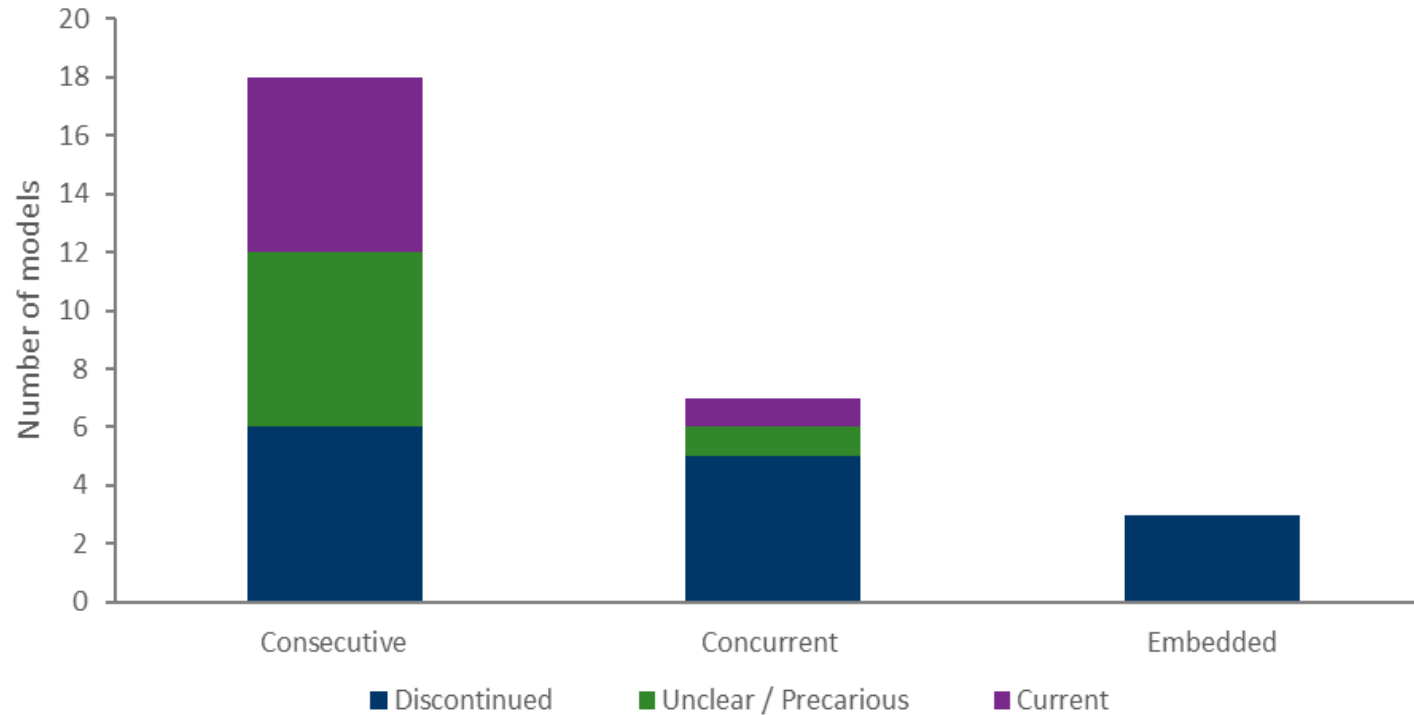


# Emergent heuristic model





# Problems sustaining high integration models



Status of high integration 'embedded' models examined, 2016–current

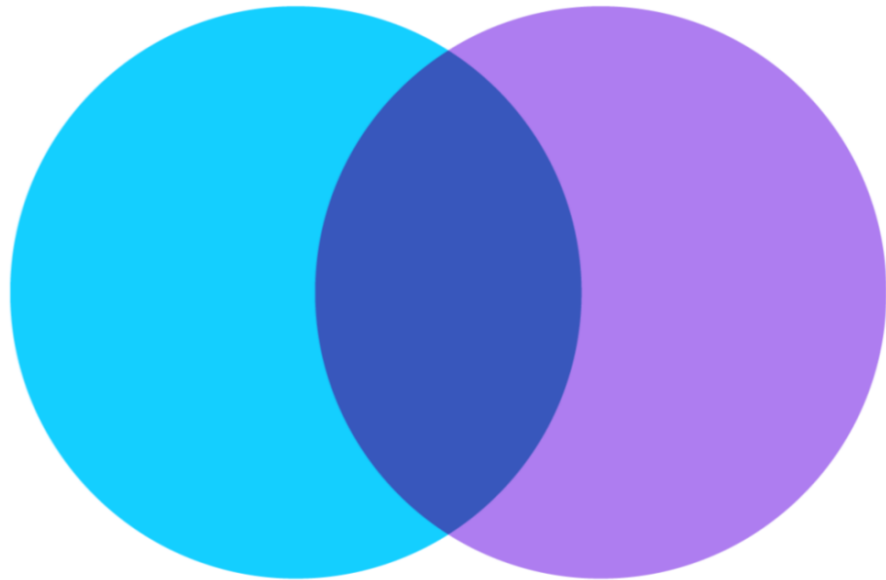
# Case study development

- Five case studies were developed, guided by the heuristic model and informed by in-depth interview data:
  - An embedded-type integration that combined apprenticeship programs with an Associate Degree in Advanced Manufacturing
  - Two concurrent-type integrations: an Advanced Diploma of Hospitality and a management degree, and Certificate IV in Animal Management and Bachelor of Animal Science
  - Two consecutive-type integrations: Diploma of Accounting and Bachelor of Commerce, and Diploma and Bachelor of Early Childhood Education and Care

# Characteristics of sustainable models

- Curriculum mapping
- Relationships
- Industry relevance
- Student acceptance

# Curriculum mapping



*my native tongue is VET, and then I have to translate everything into higher ed waffle*

- Resource-intensive preliminaries
- Curriculum challenges (both from VET and HE sides)
- Ongoing change

# Relationships



*effectively integrated higher education and VET qualifications is ... not necessarily a recipe for collaboration and seamless integration in some ways, if the regulatory frameworks can't even get people within a single institution to sort of play ball ... what hope have you got for very competitive dynamics across the entire sector?*

- Between institutions
- Within institutions

# Industry relevance



*industry wants people who have skills and knowledge, and the closer we can align VET and the university sector, the more students we produce who've got that skills and knowledge that industry want.*

- Both VET and HE components need to be relevant to industry

# Student acceptance



*the extra work placement requirement – unpaid hours of work in ECEC centres – was a significant disincentive for the students, who are often part-time and already employed in centres*

- Expectations
- Study costs
- Circumstances

# Future integration...



# Challenges for integration

- Consequences of the tertiary binary
- Curriculum
- History of integration initiatives
- Costs and expertise demands
- Industry and student perspective

# Supporting integration

- Providers can be supported with the expertise and resources to undertake mapping processes.
- Providers and their staff in the VET and HE sectors trust and value each other.
- Industries and employers value both the VET and HE qualifications in related fields.
- Students find the demands associated with integrated offerings acceptable.

# Support for integration

*having that infrastructure, facilitating that [is] much better – so having the funding and the regulatory systems and that sort of thing more integrated, so that the two are working together as opposed to against each other.*

*(Tertiary expert)*