

# APPLICATION FOR RECOGNITION OF BIG PICTURE INTERNATIONAL LEARNING CREDENTIAL –PRELIMINARY REPORT FROM RECOGNITION ASSESSMENT PANEL

## GENERAL INTRODUCTION

### TASC Recognition

TASC-recognised formal learning qualifications issued by other providers of qualifications can be listed on the TASC-issued Qualifications Certificate (QC), and in some cases contribute to the standards of the Tasmanian Certificate of Education (TCE). Through the evidence supplied in the application process and additional points of reference (such as internet searches of relevant materials and interviews with stakeholders) TASC undertakes general assessments in order to establish the suitability of the qualification and its issuer for recognition under Section 55ZZM of the *Office of Tasmanian Assessment, Standards and Certification Act 2003* (the *Act*). Such general assessments are necessary in order to ensure the integrity of the Office of TASC, the QC, and the TCE, and are considered under powers given to TASC by Section 55ZZM(2)(a), (c) and (d) of the *Act*. Additionally, in order to be recognised by TASC a qualification must have a:

- level of complexity of Level 1 or higher
- size value
- robustness of level 2 or higher (also see Section 55ZZM(2)(b) of the *Act*).

While applicants may nominate these characteristics, they are assigned by TASC based on the evidence provided.

### Current Application

An application for TASC recognition of the International Big Picture Learning Credential (IBPLC) has been made by Ms Viv White (Co-founder and CEO, Big Picture Education Australia). It was received by the Office of TASC on 6 April 2021. The qualification is reported to be based on formal program-based learning.

The qualification is issued by Big Picture Education Australia Pty., warranted by the University of Melbourne Assessment Research Centre (ARC).

Examples of the qualification are given at Appendix F of the Application. It includes:

- a personal statement
- achievements (e.g. a list of other qualifications gained)
- real world experiences (e.g. a list of internships/voluntary work)

- a diagram representing Levels of progression (achievement) (1 to 5) in each of six Learning Goals:
  - Knowing how to learn
  - Social reasoning
  - Communication
  - Personal qualities
  - Quantitative reasoning
  - Empirical reasoning.

Each feature and associated 5 progressions are defined in terms of goals, quality criteria, indicators and capabilities (See Appendix A of the Application).

## GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR RECOGNITION:

**(1) The integrity of the qualification-issuer (e.g. they are reliable, will report as per MoU conditions, may reasonably be expected to undertake the processes described in their application, they have high community standing)**

The integrity of the qualification issuer – Big Picture Education Australia Pty., warranted by the University of Melbourne Assessment Research Centre (ARC) – is firmly established.

**(2) The qualification is meaningful, and valued by the Tasmanian community**

While the nomenclature of qualifications is set by the issuer, TASC must be satisfied that - if it is to be listed on the QC - the qualification title clearly represents the learning it purports to (e.g. the title does not contain the word 'management' when no learning about management was undertaken), and that it is meaningful to the wider community, and valued.

The title 'International Big Picture Learning Credential' (IBPLC) is acceptable to the Office.

Big Picture Learning is available in 10 countries, including Australia. The IBPLC qualification was trialled in Australia in 2020 and is being offered to Tasmanian learners via Launceston Big Picture School and Ogilvie High School in 2021, with the first graduates expected in 2022. As a new qualification the IBPLC currently has limited meaning and value to the wider Tasmanian community. Evidence supports the proposition that Big Picture Education Australia has the capacity, ability and motivation to dramatically increase public understanding of - and the value attached to - the qualification in the short- to medium-term. For example:

- the information given on their website [Welcome | Big Picture Education Australia](#)
- recent publicity such as [Big Picture Education Australia program helps students enter university without ATAR score - ABC News](#) (Posted by ABC on 19 April 2021)

- Fifteen (15) Australian universities (including UTAS) offer IBPLC Entry (See Application Appendix D).

(3) The learning undertaken is meaningful, and suitable for Tasmanian senior secondary learners (see Section 55ZZM(2)(a) of the Act)

This is clearly evidenced in the materials supplied in association with the Application such as:

- Appendix B1 *The Big Picture design for learning and school*
- Appendix B2 *Enduring problems; old and new responses*
- Appendix G1 *International Big Picture Learning Credential 2021 Guide*
- Appendix C2 *Big Picture Learning Cycle – Helping Students Learn*
- Appendix I.1-5 *Learning Guides*.

(4) That the learning involved has a balance of generic and subject/area specific skills and knowledge. While the required ratio of generic to specific skills and knowledge is not defined, a program of study should not be so specific that it has no identifiable generic learning outcomes

The Application (p.9) describes the generic nature of the skills, knowledge and understanding associated with each of the six Learning Goals. Appendix E, pp.5-10 of the Application (*Standards in the International Big Picture Learning Credential – Mapping the IBPLC Performance Levels to the AQF and the ACSF*, undertaken by the Assessment Research Centre, Melbourne Graduate School of Education) notes the generic learning associated with the qualification and summaries them in four 'broad categories':

- Fundamental skills
- People skills
- Thinking skills
- Personal skills.

(5) Access to the qualification (e.g. who can undertake the qualification? Are any rules about who can undertake the learning or pre-requisites for the course fair, reasonable and just?)

The Application notes that the qualification is available to students after the completion of Year 10. Students must complete two years of post-Year 10 study to gain the qualification. Students need to enrol in a school/learning institution approved and supported by Big Picture Education Australia.

## (6) Delivery of the formal learning involved (see Section 55ZZM(2)(c) of the Act)

The method of program delivery is described in the Application (pp. 7-8), with greater detail of the methodology given in Appendix G1 (*International Big Picture Learning Credential 2021 Guide*) and Appendix I.1-5 (*Learning Guides*). Learner agency and self-directed learning are contextualised within a structured program with articulated outputs, evidences and assessment measures.

## (7) Overlap with other TASC courses/recognized qualifications

It is important to identify potential overlap in learning between a qualification being considered for recognition and other TASC-accredited or recognised courses of study/qualifications. Significant overlap would have implications for any possible contribution to the Participation and Achievement Standard of the TCE. TASC does not allow credit points to be 'counted twice'.

The learning described in the Application – especially that related to the six Learning Outcomes – does not significantly duplicate that of other TASC accredited courses or recognised qualifications, or VET. Given the proposed allocated size value of the IBPLC qualification (20 per Learning Outcome, see below) is well below the claimed size value of the qualification (240 credit points), and that any TASC accredited courses, recognised qualifications, or VET are listed in the 'Achievements' section of the credential, the risk of 'double counting' credit points and associated impact on the integrity of the TCE is very low.

## REQUIRED CHARACTERISTICS FOR TASC RECOGNITION

### A. Size value: how long/big is the course of study?

TASC-accredited courses and recognised qualifications are assigned a size value based on the number of hours a typical learner would require in order to undertake learning and assessments. On successful completion of a qualification TASC converts the size value it has assigned into credit points that contribute to the Participation and Achievement Standard of the TCE (10 hours = size value 1 = 1 credit point on successful completion, with 120 credit points in total needed to meet the TCE standard, with 80 of the 120 at Level 2 or higher).

The Application (p.8) notes the size/duration of the learning associated with the qualification to be 2400 hours (= size value 240).

The claimed size is based on students being engaged in learning 6 hours a day, 5 days a week for 40 weeks over 2 years, noting that, "They do the work inside the school and in the community." No direct evidence is provided to support the claim.

Given that 120 credit points are required to meet the TCE's Participation and Achievement Standard, it is recommended that the size value of the qualification is set at the TCE threshold of 120 (with each of the six Learning Goals being allocated 20 – see complexity below).

Additionally, any credit points gained from the successful completion of TASC-accredited courses, other TASC Recognised Formal Learning, and VET studies (typically listed in the Achievements section of the IBPLC) will be added to the 120 gained from completion of the IBPLC qualification.

For example:

Completion of the IBPLC = 120 credit points (20 X 6 Learning Goals)

OR

Completion of the IBPLC = 120 credit points (20 X 6 Learning Goals)

+

Gaining an SA in TASC-accredited *Biology* Level 3 = 15 credit points

+

Unit of Competency THHBFB09A Provide responsible service of alcohol = 1 credit point

= a total of 136 credit points.

### B. Level of Complexity: how 'hard'/difficult/demanding is the course?

TASC uses a ten (10) level scale – Level 1 is the lowest level in senior secondary education and contributes to the TCE. Level 1 is comparable with the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) level 1. The highest level (Level 10) applies to a doctoral degree. Senior secondary learners in Tasmania typically study at Levels 1, 2, 3 and/or 4.

A qualification must be at least of complexity Level 1 for TASC recognition.

Appendix E of the Application is a report *Standards in the International Big Picture Learning Credential – Mapping the IBPLC Performance Levels to the AQF and the ACSF* undertaken by the Assessment Research Centre, Melbourne Graduate School of Education. The table below summarises the findings of the report regarding IBPLC Progression (performance) levels and the ACSF. The Report also maps the IBPLC Progression levels to the Senior Secondary Certificate of Education (SSCE) as defined in the AQF. The Report's findings that the IBPLC meets the SSCE specifications defined in the AQF is confirmed by TASC analysis. The Report does not map the IBPLC Progression levels to the AQF qualification levels (1 – 10). TASC has undertaken this mapping (see table below).

IBPLC performance level (per Learning Goal)	Mapping to ACSF (by Assessment Research Centre, Melbourne Graduate School of Education)	TASC confirmation of ACSF level	TASC assignment to AQF level
1	2	Y	1
2	3	Y	2
3	4	Y	2/3
4	5	Y	3
5	(above ACSF)	Y	4

For TCE purposes at least 80 of the 120 credit points required by the Participation and Achievement Standard must be at Level 2 or higher.

Based on the analysis noted above it is proposed that:

- Any Learning Outcome of the IBPLC at Progression level 1 is allocated 20 credit points at Level 1
- Any Learning Outcome of the IBPLC at Progression level 2, 3, 4 or 5 is allocated 20 credit points at Level 2(+).

An allocation of 2(+) is used to indicate that the qualification may sit at Level 2 or at a higher level, 'higher' not being a threshold consideration for TCE purposes.

If recognised by TASC, reporting to TASC by Big Picture Education Australia Pty. would need to include details of the number of each student's Learning Outcomes that are at IBPLC Progression level 1, and the number at IBPLC Progression level 2 and higher.

### C. Robustness: the degree of reliability and validity of results issued in a course

A five-level system is used by TASC to reflect the degree of reliability and validity of results: robustness level 1 is the lowest, level 5 the highest.

Courses/qualifications with a robustness below level 2 are not accredited or recognised by TASC.

In making judgements about robustness the following criteria are applied:

1. The nature of the evidence of achievement
2. The reliability/precision of the evidence
3. The validity/truth of the evidence.

#### 1. The nature of the evidence of achievement:

- *How much evidence is there? (A lot or a little?)*
- *How direct is the evidence? (Is it closely linked to the achievement or tenuously inferential?)*
- *How accessible is the evidence? (Can no-one else ever see it or is it easily and readily open to view?)*

The Application (pp.6 & 11-12) outlines the scope and nature of the evidence of achievement: it appears substantial. This is further supported by Appendix L (*IBPLC Sources of Evidence*), and Appendix G1 (*International Big Picture Learning Credential 2021 Guide*, p.16). The link between the evidence and achievement is attested by the fact that the qualification is warranted by the University of Melbourne Assessment Research Centre (ARC). Evidence is available digitally via the appropriate University Admission Centre.

## 2. The reliability/precision of the evidence:

- *Would the result change much with a different assessor?*
- *Would the result change much on a different occasion?*
- *How different are the achievements of two students with the same results?*

IBPLC assessment methodologies are described in Appendix J of the Application, and the use of the Assessment Frame is detailed in Appendix G1 (*International Big Picture Learning Credential 2021 Guide*, pp.14-15). The Assessment Frame articulates the level of performance, behavioural indicators and quality criteria that learners must demonstrate at each Learning Progression (level 1 to 5) for each of the six learning Outcomes.

IBPLC assessors undertake a five-day foundation training professional learning program, with advanced training and on-going professional development opportunities available (Application p.12). Moderation methodologies are described on p.10 of the Application and include the use of an External Moderation Team as part of the program's quality assurance methodologies. The qualification is warranted by the University of Melbourne Assessment Research Centre (ARC), and the draft report *The Design and Validation of the International Big Picture Learning Credential* (University of Melbourne) finds in part, "Processes are in place to support comparability and consistency in assessment across advisory groups and schools" (Application, p.15 #8).

## 3. The validity/truth of the evidence:

- *Is there a match of the evidence and what the achievement result seems to promise?*
- *Is there a match of the evidence and the achievement result?*

The draft report *The Design and Validation of the International Big Picture Learning Credential* (University of Melbourne) finds in part, "Assessments are reliable, comparable, and distinguish between students of different levels and environments" (Application, p.15 #7).

Based on the above evidences the qualification may be allocated a Robustness level of 4.