ANALYSIS OF APPLICATION FOR RECOGNITION OF THE LEADERSHIP CERTIFICATE ISSUED BY PONY CLUB AUSTRALIA

INTRODUCTION

An application for TASC recognition of the Pony Club Australia Leadership Certificate qualification has been made by Catherine Ainsworth (Project Leader, Pony Club Australia Ltd) and Elizabeth Stanfield (Pony Club Tasmania). It was received by TASC on 24 November 2023. The qualification is reported to be based on formal program-based learning whereby learners will undertake a chosen course of study under a mentorship arrangement.[1] The outcomes are assessed by a panel, and on successful completion of the course learners are issued with Leadership Certificate by Pony Club Australia Ltd.

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 – Pony Club Australia Ltd – is firmly established. The first Pony Club in Australia commenced in 1939 and clubs were quickly established in numerous states, including Tasmania. It is noted that the Pony Club Tasmania website homepage includes notation of support from the Tasmanian Government.

(2) The qualification/s are 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 of the qualification under analysis is Pony Club Australia Leadership Certificate. Inclusion of the issuing bodies title in the qualification name clarifies the nature and context of the learning leading to the qualification.

The qualification was first piloted in 2021, and as a new qualification has yet to be widely recognised. Given the reputation of Pony Club Australia Ltd it is highly likely that the qualification's value will increase quickly as it becomes more widely known.

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[1] The Applicants note, "…all mentors have WWCC [WWVP] registration. PCA is a National Sporting Organisation and our Child Safety framework is ratified by Sport Integrity Australia. The National Integrity Framework can be found here https://ponyclubaustralia.com.au/about-us/resources/national-integrity-framework/ "

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

Analysis has been undertaken of the program of study associated with the qualification. It is found that the learning:

- does not involve any illegal or criminal activities, nor does it promote them

- is relevant to the senior secondary cohort in terms of its application to real life situations such as: skill acquisition and development; community involvement; leadership; and reflective practices

- is of a complexity / degree of difficulty appropriate to senior secondary learners.

(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 (pp.11-12) lists both generic and course/qualification specific skills and knowledge associated with learning. The identified balance between the two sets appears to be appropriate, as are their nature to Level 2 learning in a senior secondary student context.

(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 candidates must be:

- at least 15 years old

- paired with a suitable mentor.

The official brochure also notes that, 'Candidates need to work with their Pony Club to meet the costs of their own participation and projects.'

These requirements appear just, fair and reasonable within the context of the specific learning involved.

(6) Overlap with other TASC courses/recognised qualifications

Significant overlap would have implications for any possible contribution to the Participation and Achievement Standard of the TCE.

A preliminary analysis has not identified any significant overlap in learning between the qualifications being considered for recognition and other TASC-accredited or recognised courses of study/qualifications.

There is potential for possible overlap between the community development module (12 hours within Pony Club) of the qualification under review and the TASC-accredited course *Community Service Learning* Level 2. The TASC course does note that, "Work submitted for assessment must be produced over the duration of one calendar year, be unique to this course and not be work

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submitted for assessment in any other course." Also, the course's focus on social justice is significantly different to that of Pony Club.

REQUIRED CHARACTERISTICS FOR TASC RECOGNITION

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

TASC-accredited courses and recognised formal program-based learning qualifications are assigned a size value based the number of hours a typical learner would require in order to undertake the learning of course contents and assessments. On successful completion of a qualification TASC converts the size value it has assigned to credit points that contribute to the Participation and Achievement Standard of the TCE.

The Application notes the size/duration of the learning to be 50 hours.

Candidates:

- undertake at least 12 hours of volunteer work

- attend 6 x 1 hour webinars delivered by subject matter experts. The topics are:
    - Understanding leadership
    - Budgets and finance
    - Managing projects and priorities
    - Managing stakeholders
    - Communication
    - Presentation skills.

It is noted that, "The other time [32 hours] is spent on modules 1 and 3 and preparing their presentation/report. The candidates also have some time in their mentoring sessions."

> *Conclusion – Size value*
>
> TASC can reasonably confirm the nominated size value of the qualification at 5 credit points (50 hours).

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.

In assigning a level of complexity to a course or formal program-based qualification TASC considers the following:

- the nature of the course content (the relative complexity of what is studied)

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- the nature of the achievement standards (the degree of difficulty applied in assessment judgements).

Supplied evidence regarding the nature of the programs of study (the content) leading to the qualification shows that it is comparable in degree of complexity to that studied in TASC-accredited courses at Level 2 or higher.

The achievement standards for each of the four Modules leading to the Leadership Certificate qualification are expressed on a scale of 0 (zero, no demonstration) to 3 (three, high level). Candidates must achieve a total score across the Modules of 27 out of 36 to pass. This means that the overwhelming majority of Module Outcomes (12 in total) must be completed at 'good level' or higher in order for a candidate to pass. The Module Outcomes standards given in the Assessment Rubric have been assessed by TASC and found to be comparable in complexity with those typical of the Australian Qualifications Framework level 2.

<u>Conclusion – Level of complexity</u>

Evidence regarding the nature of the content of the program of study and the achievement standards allows TASC to assign a level of complexity 2 to the qualification.

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

A five level system is used 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 scope and scale of assessment tasks to be undertaken are appropriate to both the size value and level of complexity.

The nature of the assessment tasks noted in the Assessment Rubric align well with the related content and the achievement standards used to measure learning outcomes.

The Applicant has been able to supply exemplar presentations, demonstrating that they are available, but also noting that their circulation is restricted to those with a legitimate need to view the materials.

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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?*

The Applicant has noted that, "The assessment panel is made up of PCA board members and appointees to the PCA Education and Development Committee (EDC). Some of these people are coaches, others have significant corporate leadership/professional careers and most actually have both. …Members of the EDC must have skills and experience in one or more of the following areas.

   o Education – design and delivery of secondary and tertiary education programs
   o On-line learning and development platforms
   o Psychology
   o Change management
   o Coaching of diverse horse sports
   o Business transformation and agile project management
   o Communication and engagement."

The Applicant has further noted that the panel – currently consisting of 5 assessors, changing to between 3 and 7 in the future – typically comprise at least two qualified teachers/VET assessors. During the assessment phase assessors discuss any significant discrepancies, and final marks reflect an averaging of the assessment panel members' scores.

The Assessment Rubric used has both clarity and detail. For example, it includes example features of each achievement level for each outcome that clearly differentiate the features of responses at different levels of understanding. Use of such a rubric great assists achievement of standardisation of assessment outcomes.

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?*

Evidence of a sample of candidate work demonstrated a sound match to the achievement result.

TASC has undertaken an analysis of a significant sample of student work, comparing the evidence with the assessment rubric standards and the assessment judgments given. A strong alignment between these features was noted.

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