NEW ZEALAND QUALIFICATIONS

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NEW ZEALAND QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY
MANA TOHU MĀTAURANGA O AOTEAROA

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Guidelines for applying for approval of programmes leading to New Zealand qualifications at Levels 1–6 on the NZQF and the accreditation of organisations to provide approved programmes

New Zealand Government

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NZQA

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1. Introduction

These guidelines describe quality assurance processes for education organisations providing programmes leading to qualifications at Levels 1-6 listed on the New Zealand Qualifications Framework (NZQF).

A *programme* (see Glossary, p.19, for commonly-used terms) is a coherent arrangement of learning or training that is based on clearly linked aims, outcomes, content, and assessment practices leading to qualification(s) listed on the NZQF.

Specifically, the guidelines explain how education organisations (other than universities) apply for:

- approval of programmes of study or industry training leading to qualifications at Levels 1 – 6 listed on the NZQF

- accreditation of education providers to provide a programme of study leading to a qualification listed on the NZQF.

New Zealand qualifications at Levels 1 – 6 are intended to be achieved through more than one programme offered by a range of education organisations. All programmes leading to a *New Zealand* qualifications must demonstrate how they meet the requirements of the relevant qualification as it is listed on the NZQF.

The requirements for listing a qualification on the NZQF can be found at
http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/about-us/our-role/legislation/nzqa-rules/nzqf-related-rules/

The regulatory authority for NZQA Rules is under section 253 of the Education Act 1989. Approval and accreditation is required under sections 249 and 250 of the Act. Refer to section 9 of this document for further information.

These guidelines reflect that the role of industry training organisations is different from that of education providers. The functions of industry training organisations are specified in the Industry Training and Apprenticeships Act 1992 (section 1A (a)) and include *to develop and maintain skill standards for, and administer the delivery of, industry training*.

2. The New Zealand Qualifications Framework

The New Zealand Qualifications Framework (NZQF) is designed to optimise the recognition of educational achievement and its contribution to New Zealand's economic, social and cultural success.

The NZQF lists qualifications that:

- convey the skills, knowledge and attributes a graduate has gained through completing a qualification

- are integrated and coherent

- enable and support the provision of high-quality education pathways

- enhance confidence in the quality and international comparability of New Zealand qualifications

- contribute to Māori success in education by recognising and advancing Mātauranga Māori

- represent value for money, are sustainable and robust.

NZQA is responsible for protecting the integrity of New Zealand qualifications listed on the NZQF and therefore covers both the quality assurance of programmes and the education organisations that provide them.

3. Quality Assurance

NZQA's quality assurance integrates "front-end" quality assurance with the ongoing self-assessment activities an education organisation undertakes to assure itself of the quality of the graduate outcomes it provides for its learners and stakeholders. Quality assurance activities include qualification approval, programme approval and accreditation for education organisations to provide programmes leading to qualifications. Quality assurance uses an evaluative approach to reach judgements on a transparent, robust and credible basis, underpinned by the following principles:

- strategic and needs-based

- focused on outcomes

- quality as a dynamic concept – including ongoing improvement

- flexibility

- high-trust and accountability.

The responsibility for demonstrating how graduates will meet qualification requirements and outcomes through a programme of study rests with each education organisation through its self-assessment processes.

3.1   Te Hono o Te Kahurangi and iwi-wānanga qualifications

Te Hono o Te Kahurangi is the quality assurance approach used for qualifications and programmes leading to qualifications that are distinctively based on kaupapa Māori principles. This approach also includes programmes leading to qualifications specific to wānanga.

The following kaupapa underpin Māori programmes quality assured using Te Hono o Te Kahurangi:

- Rangatiratanga

- Manaakitanga

- Whanaungatanga

- Kaitiakitanga

- Pūkengatanga

- Te reo Māori.

The responsibility for demonstrating how graduates will meet qualification requirements and outcomes through a programme of study rests with each education organisation through its Whare Whakairi Kōrero framework.

Further information can be found at

http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/assets/Maori/MMEQA/MM-EQA-Programme-Tools.pdf

4. Using the evaluative approach

The decision to approve a programme of study (or industry training programme), or to accredit an education organisation, is based on the quality and sufficiency of evidence provided in an application. The application should meet criteria set out in parts 1 and 2 of the NZQF Programme Approval and Accreditation Rules 2013.

The evaluative methodology enables decisions about quality, value and importance to be reached on a consistent and reliable basis, and requires NZQA to:

- be explicit about the information and evidence on which judgements are made as well as the logic of its interpretation, and

- write the outcome in a clear, concise report which explains the key factors and reasons for the final decision.

4.1 Decision to approve a programme

The decision to approve a programme is made by answering the evaluation question:

> *How well does the programme design match the qualification outcomes and strategic purpose?*

The decision to approve a Mātauranga Māori programme is made by answering the evaluation question:

> *Kei te whai i ngā kaupapa o Te Hono o Te Kahurangi?*

NZQA reviews the information and evidence provided in the self-assessment / Whare Whakairikōrero report and programme of study or industry training document to determine how its learners will match the graduate outcomes of the qualification.

Rubric one (below) sets out the expected levels of performance in relation to the evaluation question for the programme to reach the decision. "Good evidence" is:

- relevant to answering the evaluation question

- obtained from more than one source (i.e. is corroborated or triangulated)

- of more than one type (e.g. quantitative and qualitative data)

- making sense in the context of the question.

Rubric one: Criteria for rating answers to the evaluation question to approve a programme of study or industry training

	Criteria
Programme approved	**ALL** of the following: • Good evidence the programme matches the strategic purpose and requirements of the qualification • Good evidence that the programme enables learners to achieve the qualification outcomes • Good evidence the programme is made up of learning outcomes structured in a coherent way to achieve the qualification outcomes and addresses the relevant needs of learners • Good evidence the programme is acceptable to the relevant communities and key stakeholders • No significant gaps or weaknesses in the programme

Programme not approved	**ANY** of the following: • The nature, quality and integrity of the information and evidence does not convincingly demonstrate that the programme matches the strategic purpose and/or requirements of the qualification • Insufficient evidence that the programme will enable graduates to meet the qualification outcomes • Insufficient evidence the programme is structured in a coherent way to achieve the qualification outcomes and address the relevant needs of learners • Insufficient evidence the programme is acceptable to the relevant communities and key stakeholders • Significant gaps or weaknesses in the programme

4.2 Decision to accredit an education provider

A decision to accredit an education organisation is reached by answering the evaluation question:

> *To what extent does the education provider have the ongoing capability and resources to support sustained delivery of the approved programme?*

A decision to accredit an education organisation to deliver a Mātauranga Māori programme is reached by answering the evaluation question:

> *Kua pakari rānei te tū o te whare ako, ā, ka māro tonu I te karawhiu o ngā kaupapa o Te Hono o Te Kahurangi*

NZQA reviews information and evidence provided in the self-assessment report using rubric two. Rubric two (below) sets out the expected levels of performance in relation to the evaluation question to decide whether to accredit the education organisation.

Rubric two: Criteria for rating the answers to the evaluation question to accredit an education provider to provide an approved programme of study

	Criteria
Education organisation accredited	**ALL** of the following: • Good evidence the education organisation has the capability and resources to provide the programme • Good evidence that the education organisation can manage the impacts of any specific programme requirements • Good evidence of formal arrangements with the programme owner where this is required • No significant gaps or weaknesses in the self-assessment report, and/or the underlying capability and resources of the organisation
Education organisation not accredited	**ANY** of the following: • Insufficient evidence the education organisation has the capability and resources to provide the programme • Insufficient evidence that the education organisation can manage the impacts of any specific programme requirements • Formal arrangements with the programme owner where these are required are insufficient to manage the provision of the programme • Significant gaps or weaknesses in the self-assessment report, and/or the underlying capability and resources of the organisation

5. Approving a programme of study or industry training

NZQA will accept applications for approval of a programme of study or industry training from NZQA recognised education organisations.

Education organisations are encouraged to ensure that programmes of study or industry training are sufficiently flexible to address a range of needs. For example, one programme application may lead to a qualification with more than one strand.

Approved programmes of study may only be provided by education providers accredited to do so by NZQA.

Applications for programme approval must be made on-line through the secure extranet at https://secure.nzqa.govt.nz/for-partners/sia-login.do

Where an application is for approval of a programme that has been changed to lead to a *New Zealand* qualification as a result of a mandatory qualification review, refer to section 6 and section 7 for information on the requirements.

5.1 Applications for programme approval

Two sets of information are required in an application for programme approval. For the requirements for applications from category 1 education providers[1] .

Guidance on each is described in the following section:

1   a self-assessment report that answers relevant evaluation questions (not required for category 1 tertiary education organisations)

2   a programme document.

Self-assessment report

This report illustrates how the education organisation is confident it has included sufficient information and gives evidence to answer the evaluation question: *how well the programme design matches the qualification outcomes and strategic purpose*.

Self-assessment is used by the education organisation to understand that its programme application meets all requirements and answers the evaluation question. NZQA uses the report as evidence that explains why the education organisation considers the programme meets requirements based on its own comprehensive, authentic, robust and transparent self-assessment processes.

Evidence of programme approval within the education organisation, for example, through the Academic Board, Board of Trustees or similar facility, is required. Where the programme is jointly owned the lead education organisation will submit the report via itsr internal academic approval processes.

Programme document

The programme document must demonstrate how the programme is acceptable to relevant communities and key stakeholders, and:

* meets the strategic purpose, qualification type definition, including all listed qualification requirements and length

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[1] These guidelines incorporate the arrangements agreed upon for category 1 tertiary education providers that do not apply to category 1 industry training organisations.

- has been designed to match the identified needs of target learner groups and enables them to achieve the qualification outcomes

- includes learning outcomes that map to the qualification(s) graduate profile (e.g. using an explanatory matrix)

- the programme is made up of components structured in a coherent way to achieve the qualification outcomes

- completes the specified data required in the on-line application template.

Components are units of learning that make up a programme. They include projects, papers, courses, modules, practicals and outcomes of assessment standards.

The programme document should include a brief description of each component:

- overview of the content of the component

- learning outcomes or outcomes of assessment standards

- level

- credits

- approach to assessment of each outcome which is valid for the learner group and the learning context (not the assessment activity).

Where assessment standards listed on the Directory of Assessment Standards are included in the programme, they need to be clearly identified.

Where a new assessment standard(s) has been identified for inclusion in the programme, the approval of the programme and the assessment standard(s) applications can occur concurrently.

Qualification definition

The qualification type definition details can be found at http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/studying-in-new-zealand/understand-nz-quals/

Target learner group

The target learner group must be identified, including a description of how the programme has been developed to match the needs of the target learner group, relevant industry stakeholders and community stakeholders.

Learning outcomes

Learning outcomes describe the specific knowledge, skills, understanding and application a learner will achieve through each component of the programme.

Learning outcomes must be:

- consistent with and demonstrate how learners achieve programme aims and the qualification outcome statement

- measurable and achievable, and integrated to provide a balanced and logical programme of learning

- presented in a logical, progressive way that demonstrates learners' development of knowledge, skills, understanding and application.

Learning outcomes are arranged into a series of programme components.

Meeting the qualification outcomes – coherent programme structure

The programme is structured to achieve qualification outcomes and any strands. It clearly shows how components are designed to form a coherent programme which demonstrates:

- progression and integration of learning and assessment throughout the programme to meet the strategic purpose statement, outcome statement, level and credit value of the qualification

- that programme length and components are clearly defined and appropriate for the level of learning and the qualification outcomes

- modes of learning are appropriate to the learning outcomes

- required workplace and education provider-based learning (where relevant) are identified

- requirements and regulations detailing how a learner is eligible to enter into and progress through a programme and is awarded the qualification (including the award of any strands or qualifiers).

Assuring consistency of graduate outcomes

Evidence should be provided to demonstrate how graduates will meet qualification requirements for assuring national consistency of graduate outcomes.

Assessment

Assessment methods should be appropriate for the programme, modes of delivery, the level of learning and the qualification outcome.

Programme ownership involving a collaborative or commercial relationship

Education organisations may seek approval for a programme developed collaboratively, for example as part of a consortium. Individual education organisations seeking accreditation for this programme may make type 1 changes to meet the needs of their learners. (See section 7).

If the programme is jointly owned, then the application for approval needs to include the formal arrangements made between the parties. (See section 8 for further information).

A lead organisation needs to be identified in the application.

Applications from category 1 education providers

Category 1 education providers that can demonstrate a successful history of provision in the subject area at the same qualification level need only to supply evidence of internal programme approval along with full programme details that meet NZQA criteria and data requirements.

For programme delivery in a new area, or at a level above current programme approvals and accreditations held in the area, the application requires full programme details to be submitted to meet NZQA criteria requirements. Additionally, the application should include a self-assessment report for programme approval using the evaluation question.

This does not apply to collaboratively developed programmes.

6. Accreditation to provide an approved programme

NZQA will accept applications for accreditation to provide an approved programme from NZQA recognised education organisations.

The following types of education organisations can be accredited to provide programmes of study: private training establishments; institutes of technology and polytechnics; government training establishments; wānanga; and schools.

Industry training organisations *are not* granted accreditation, but need to maintain consent to assess for the assessment standards included in the programme they will assess. Refer to *Consent to assess against standards on the Directory of Assessment Standards Rules 2011* (http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/about-us/our-role/legislation/nzqa-rules/standards-and-assessment-rules/consent-to-assess/).

Where the programme of industry training includes components other than assessment standards, the education organisations that will provide those components need to be accredited to deliver them.

Applications for programme approval and accreditation can be made concurrently. Programmes of study approved by NZQA may only be provided by education organisations accredited to do so by NZQA.

Applications for accreditation must be made on-line through the secure extranet at https://secure.nzqa.govt.nz/for-partners/sia-login.do

6.1 Applications for accreditation

Applications from category 1 tertiary education providers

Category 1 tertiary education providers that can demonstrate a successful history of provision in a subject area at the same level need only supply a statement from the Chief Executive confirming the organisation's ongoing capability and resources to effectively and sustainably provide the programme.

If an education provider wishes to offer programmes at a level above current approvals and accreditations held in the same area, or wishes to deliver in a new area, then a full application for accreditation is required (as for category 2 below).

Applications from category 2 and 3 tertiary education providers, schools and category 4 tertiary education providers (where permitted)

Category 2, 3 and 4 tertiary education providers and schools should present evidence for the following criteria.

A self-assessment report that describes:

1 Capability and resources required to effectively and sustainably provide the programme (human, physical, and teaching and learning).

2 Overall structure of a programme as it will be delivered including the assessment schedule. This includes any specific programme requirements including practical and work-place requirements.

3 Where relevant, evidence of the formal arrangements to provide the programme agreed with the programme owner (where this is not the applicant).

Capability and resources

A statement which demonstrates that physical, teaching and learning resources are comprehensive and sufficient for the level of the programme and appropriate to the methods of delivery. This includes the experience of the teaching staff, teaching and learning facilities, and learner support services.

Where relevant, the arrangements for workplace training need to meet the needs of the programme and enable the learner to achieve the qualification outcomes.

Structure of the programme

Teaching and learning approach

A brief description of the teaching and learning approaches used to meet learning outcomes.

Practical and work-place requirements

A description of how the education organisation intends to meet any practical and workplace requirements. This should include support provided to learners by the education organisation and employer during a work placement, and evidence of formal arrangements made with employers and other organisations to meet these requirements.

Assessment

Assessment schedules need to be appropriate for the programme.

The internal and external moderation processes should be appropriate to the programme and its delivery.

Other programme specific requirements.

The report may also include specific requirements that relate to the provision of the programme by the applicant (e.g. entry criteria, management of a particular strand or strands).

Formal arrangements

Where the applicant is not the sole programme owner, or is seeking accreditation for a programme owned by another party, evidence of formal arrangements must be included in the application.

These arrangements cover programme changes and reviews, dispute resolution, moderation of outcomes, and managing complaints about quality of delivery.

7. Making changes to programmes

NZQA requirements for making changes to approved programmes, the different types of changes, and how education organisations can apply for changes are provided below.

Changes to a programme may result from:

- changes in the industry or sector
- changes to the resulting qualification(s) - as a result of a review
- consistency reviews
- education organisation improvements to the programme.

Types of programme changes

There are two types of programme changes.

Type 1 change

Type 1 changes are minor changes to programme components. Type 1 changes do not have an impact on the total number of learning hours, credit value, or learning outcomes of the overall programme. Nor do they impact on achievement of the qualification outcomes to which the programme leads.

Education organisations seeking accreditation to an already approved programme may make type 1 changes to meet the needs of their learners.

Details of type 1 changes do not need to be reported to NZQA. Education organisations need to retain evidence of internal quality assurance processes which approved the changes, for example Academic Board, Board of Trustees or similar facility.

Examples of Type 1 changes:

- title of a component
- content of a component but not the learning outcomes
- specific assessment methodologies within a component.

Type 2 change

Type 2 changes relate to changes to components that have an impact on the programme as a whole. Type 2 changes may occur as a result of a review of the qualification.

The following information is required when submitting an application for a Type 2 change:

- a summary that details the changes to the programme, demonstrating that the programme continues to meet the qualification definition
- specified data requirements
- evidence of programme review, external consultation and internal approval.

Examples of Type 2 changes:

- title of programme
- credit value of the programme
- total learning hours of the programme
- removing, adding or replacing components as these change the learning outcomes of components
- level of components which cumulatively change the level of the programme
- requirements to practical, workplace and education provider learning
- regulations.

Type 2 changes must be approved by the NZQA before they can be implemented.

Applications for type 2 changes must be made on-line through the secure extranet at https://secure.nzqa.govt.nz/for-partners/sia-login.do

Changing from a "local" qualification to a programme leading to a New Zealand qualification

Following the targeted review of qualifications, tertiary education organisations need to transition from providing their "local or provider" qualifications to *New Zealand* qualifications.

Education organisations may develop and apply for approval of a new programme or convert their local qualification to a *New Zealand* qualification.

A local qualification can be converted into a programme leading to a *New Zealand* qualification where there is no change to the graduate profile. In this situation the following information is required in an application for programme approval:

- the programme title
- a map of how the component learning outcomes of the existing qualification match the graduate profile of the *New Zealand* qualification.

8. Agreements between organisations

8.1 Subcontracting

It is not expected that sub-contracting arrangements as described in this section apply to industry training organisations.

An education organisation can arrange for another organisation or individual to provide all or part of an approved programme on their behalf. This is deemed to be a sub-contracting arrangement (section 17.4(b) NZQF Programme Approval and Accreditation Rules, 2013).

There are different requirements when an education organisation engages a sub-contractor depending on whether the sub-contractor involved has accreditation to provide the approved programme.

If the education organisation proposes to use a sub-contractor, and both have accreditation, then prior to the programme being provided, the education organisation should notify NZQA of the arrangement.

If the education organisation has accreditation for the programme, but the sub-contractor does not, before any provision of the programme (or part) by the sub-contractor, the education organisation must apply to NZQA for approval to engage the sub-contractor and provide the following information:

- the name of the sub-contractor

- identification of the programme(s) (or part(s)) to be provided under the arrangement

- the reason for the proposed sub-contracting arrangement

- a copy of the sub-contracting arrangement between the education organisation and the sub-contractor

- evidence of internal quality assurance approval by the education organisation, through an Academic Board or similar facility.

The sub-contracting arrangement must specify:

- the names of the parties to the arrangement

- the term of the arrangement

- procedures for resolving any differences which might arise between the parties to the arrangement

- compliance with the arrangement and NZQA rules

- the ongoing monitoring of the arrangement and delivery

- assessment and moderation arrangements

- provision of resources, both physical and human

- maintaining and reporting student academic records

- clear process for the review of the arrangement and for the termination of the arrangement, and

- procedures for the protection of learners if the arrangement is terminated.

Criteria for approving sub-contracting arrangements

NZQA will grant approval to an application where it is satisfied that it meets the requirements of the relevant Rules in all sub-contracting arrangements:

- The education organisation remains responsible for the sub-contractor meeting all of the obligations that are relevant for the accreditation, including all relevant obligations in the Education Act 1989 and rules made under section 253 of the Act.

- There is a formal documented arrangement between the education organisation and the sub-contractor that includes provisions to ensure that NZQA is able to exercise its quality assurance and enforcement powers and functions in relating to the sub-contractors provision of the programme.

- All information and advertising provided for the programme of study or training programme must clearly state that it is provided through a sub-contracting arrangement.

- All student enrolments are through the education organisation. The education organisation must also maintain academic information.

8.2   Collaborative or commercial relationships

A written formal agreement should be established that clearly and accurately records how the education organisations will work together to develop and/or maintain the programme. The agreement must be signed by the legally recognised signatories of all parties.

Partner education organisations need to identify who is responsible for all relevant aspects of the programme and its management. This includes maintaining the quality of the programme.

The agreement must specify:

- the names of the parties to the agreement

- responsibility for the quality of the programme and the management of quality systems

- procedures for resolving any differences which might arise between the parties to the agreement

- responsibility for seeking programme approval

- procedures and responsibilities for managing the programme and its ongoing monitoring, and implementing changes to the programme

- assessment and moderation arrangements

- responsibility for communication of all necessary reports and other information to NZQA

- responsibility for all administrative arrangements such as decisions relating to progress through the programme, assessment, appeals, and remuneration of monitors and moderators (if applicable)

- a clear process for reviewing and terminating the agreement.

9. Rules and legislation for approval and accreditation

NZQA Rules are made under section 253 of the Education Act 1989, which gives NZQA the authority to make rules for the quality assurance processes for which it is responsible. Approval and accreditation is required under sections 249 and 250 of the Act.

NZQF *Programme Approval and Accreditation Rules 2013* are the NZQA rules covering the approval of programmes of study and accreditation for these programmes and can be found at http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/about-us/our-role/legislation/nzqa-rules/nzqf-related-rules/programme-approval-and-accreditation/1/

NZQF *Industry Training Programme Approval Rules 2012* are the NZQA rules covering the approval of programmes of industry training and can be found at http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/about-us/our-role/legislation/nzqa-rules/nzqf-related-rules/industry-training-programme-approval-rules-2012/

Education organisations planning offshore delivery of a programme leading to an NZQF qualification must meet the *NZQF Offshore Programme Delivery Rules 2012.* These can be found at http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/about-us/our-role/legislation/nzqa-rules/nzqf-related-rules/offshore-programme-delivery-rules-2012/

10. Glossary

Term	Description
Achievement standard	A coherent set of learning outcomes and associated assessment criteria, together with technical and management information that supports delivery and assessment; achievement standards specify three different standards of performance and the method of assessment, which may include national external assessment.
Assessment standard	The collective term for unit standards and achievement standards listed on the NZQA Directory of Assessment Standards.
Components	Parts of a programme (or training scheme), which together make up a coherent arrangement of learning or training. Components include projects, papers, courses, modules, practicum and skill and assessment standards
Industry training organisation	A body recognised by the Tertiary Education Commission under the Industry Training Act 1992 as having responsibility for setting standards and arranging the delivery of industry training for a specific industry or area of industry identified in a Tertiary Education Commission gazette notice.
New Zealand certificate or diploma	A qualification that meets the requirements for listing on the NZQF at Levels 1-6.
Programme (approved)	An approved programme is a coherent arrangement of learning or training that is based on clear and consistent aims, content, outcomes and assessment practices, which leads to a qualification listed on the NZQF. A "programme" in this document is a "course" in terms of sections 258 and 259 of the Education Act 1989.
Qualification	Formal certification for a given purpose of the achievement of specified learning outcomes to a given standard.
Qualification strand	A specialisation within a qualification that represents a major component of the qualification, and is at the level of the qualification. Strands are documented through strand-specific outcomes in the graduate profile.
Quality assurance body	NZQA or New Zealand Vice-Chancellors' Committee (also known as Universities New Zealand).
Stakeholders	Individuals, groups, or organisations with an interest (or "stake") in the outcome of a qualification.