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Certificates and diplomas in New Zealand:

A description of approval, accreditation and registration processes

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September 2009

Table of contents

1. Executive summary	4
2. Introduction	5
2.1 <i>The gazetted criteria for approval and accreditation of courses</i>	6
2.2 <i>Credit recognition and transfer policy</i>	6
2.3 <i>Duplication and pathways</i>	7
3. Approval, accreditation and registration processes	9
3.1 <i>New Zealand Qualifications Authority</i>	10
3.2 <i>Framework Registration</i>	11
3.3 <i>Registration, Approval and Accreditation</i>	13
3.4 <i>Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics Quality</i>	16
3.5 <i>Committee on Universities Academic Programmes</i>	19
Appendix A: Methodology	27
Appendix B: New Zealand qualifications system	29
<i>The New Zealand Register of Quality Assured Qualifications and the National Qualifications Framework</i>	29
<i>Qualifications in New Zealand</i>	30
<i>The New Zealand Register of Quality Assured Qualifications and KiwiQuals</i> ...	31
Appendix C: Quality assurance of qualifications	33
<i>Quality assurance bodies</i>	33
Appendix D: Criteria for Approval and Accreditation of Courses	35
Glossary	38
References	40

List of figures and tables

<i>Figure 1: An example of qualification structure on the National Qualifications Framework (NZQA, 2006b, p. 11).....</i>	<i>8</i>
<i>Figure 2: Approval, accreditation and National Qualifications Framework accreditation</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>Figure 3: Overview of activities in Framework Registration for approving and registering new National qualifications.....</i>	<i>11</i>
<i>Figure 4: Overview of activities in Registration, Approval and Accreditation for approving new provider-developed qualifications</i>	<i>13</i>
<i>Figure 5: The New Zealand Register of Quality Assured Qualifications.....</i>	<i>30</i>
<i>Figure 6: Overview of the New Zealand Register of Quality Assured Qualifications titles and levels.....</i>	<i>31</i>
<i>Figure 7: Overview of quality assurance bodies responsible for quality assurance of qualifications in the tertiary sector in New Zealand</i>	<i>34</i>
 <i>Table 1: Criteria, guidelines and application of qualifications quality assurance by quality assurance bodies.....</i>	 <i>20</i>

Disclaimer

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ISBN: 978-1-877444-39-5

1. Executive summary

This report describes how the approval, accreditation and registration processes and procedures of qualifications design in New Zealand are applied. It is one in a series of reports completed as part of the evidence gathering of the targeted review of the qualifications system focusing on certificates and diplomas (levels 1 to 6).

This report includes descriptions of:

- the New Zealand Register of Quality Assured Qualifications and the National Qualifications Framework
- the quality assurance processes used by quality assurance bodies to approve, accredit and register new qualifications on the New Zealand Register of Quality Assured Qualifications (and National Qualifications Framework, where relevant)
- the application of credit transfer and pathways policies.

2. Introduction

The New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) and the Ministry of Education were charged by the Skill New Zealand Tripartite Forum¹ to undertake a targeted review of the New Zealand qualifications system (the targeted review), focusing on diploma and certificate level qualifications (Action 7, Skills Strategy Action Plan, Skills New Zealand Tripartite Forum, 2008). In April 2009, the Minister of Education approved the targeted review as planned and the project contributed to areas of focus and expectation of NZQA as contained in the Letter of Expectation with the Minister and NZQA's Statement of Intent, 2009-2012.

This review included the active participation of the Tertiary Education Commission, Department of Labour, Business New Zealand, New Zealand Council of Trade Unions, the Industry Training Federation, industry training organisations, the Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics New Zealand², the private training establishment sector and Te Taihū o Ngā Wānanga.

An objective of the targeted review is to investigate the number and clarity of qualifications for both industry (employers) and individuals (students and employees). Clarity is important for understanding the acquired skills and knowledge for employment purposes as well as the potential pathways opportunities (i.e. certificate to diploma).

This report maps the qualifications approval, accreditation and registration processes undertaken by quality assurance bodies that quality assure qualifications at levels 1 to 6 on the New Zealand Register of Quality Assured Qualifications (the Register). It also describes the process NZQA has for placing a new qualification onto the Register following on from approval.

NZQA and the Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics Quality (ITP Quality) are the primary focus of this report as they are responsible for quality assuring the largest numbers of certificate and diploma level qualifications (levels 1 to 6). Although the Committee on University Academic Programmes also approve and accredit some qualifications at these levels, their guidelines were not assessed. The New Zealand Vice-Chancellors' Committee (NZVCC) was consulted in the preparation of this report.

For further background information on the qualifications system in New Zealand and quality assurance bodies, please refer to appendices B and C.

¹ The Skill New Zealand Tripartite Forum was brought together as part of the work related to the previous government's New Zealand Skills Strategy Action Plan 2008. The Forum comprised government Ministers and officials, Business New Zealand, New Zealand Council of Trade Unions and the Industry Training Federation.

² Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics New Zealand (ITPNZ) has since been disestablished (October 2009).

2.1 The gazetted criteria for approval and accreditation of courses³

The criteria for the approval of qualifications and for the accreditation of tertiary education organisations to provide and deliver these qualifications are established by NZQA under section 253(d)-(e) of the Education Act, 1989⁴. The approval criteria cover the quality of the qualification (content and structure), while accreditation criteria relate to the provider's capability and capacity to deliver the qualification.

The gazetted *Criteria for approval and accreditation of courses* (New Zealand Gazette, 2008) (Gazetted Criteria) apply to all tertiary education organisations, except some non-government funded private training establishments as these organisations are only required to have approval and accreditation if international students are enrolled in their qualifications⁵. The Gazetted Criteria do not apply to standards setting bodies. In the development of qualifications, standards setting bodies must comply with the *Register criteria for National Qualifications Framework qualifications* (NZQA, 2006b).

Accountability for ensuring tertiary education organisation compliance with the Gazetted Criteria rests with NZQA for wānanga, government training establishments, institutes of technology and polytechnics (levels 8 to 10) and private training establishments. The Committee on University Academic Programmes, through the NZVCC, is accountable for the compliance of universities with the Gazetted Criteria. ITP Quality is accountable to NZQA under delegation (section 260, Education Act, 1989) for the compliance of institutes of technology and polytechnics for qualifications up to and including undergraduate degree level (levels 1 to 7).

The Gazetted Criteria comprise seven high level requirements (see Appendix B) that measure qualification design and provider quality, and additional requirements for degrees and related qualifications that have research components. NZQA has the statutory power to amend these criteria in consultation with the NZVCC and ITP Quality.

2.2 Credit recognition and transfer policy

The Register introduced a common credit currency for New Zealand qualifications (levels 1 to 10). In December 2002, NZQA released *Supporting learning pathways: Credit recognition and transfer policy*. This document was developed by the Credit Transfer Working Party, which included representation from universities, institutes of technology and polytechnics, wānanga, colleges of education and private training establishments.

³ The terms qualification and course (or programme of study) have been used inter-changeably in this report.

⁴ Section 253(d) and (e) of the Education Act, 1989, "...subject to subsection (2), to establish policies and criteria for the approval of courses of study and training at institutions and private training establishments...subject to subsection (2), to establish policies and criteria that will enable institutions, secondary schools, and private training establishments to be granted accreditation to provide courses of study and training".

⁵ Private training establishments may apply to be exempted from approval and accreditation if their course is less than three months and is for hobby, leisure or recreational purposes, with no educational value. Exemptions such as these are very rare.

The *Credit recognition and transfer policy* provides an underlying rationale and an implementation plan for “consistent credit transfer systems within New Zealand education providers” (NZQA, 2002, p. 1). It identifies quality assurance and communication as drivers for the achievement of credit recognition and transfer outcomes. A strategy where qualifications developers and providers reach formal agreements regarding credit recognition and transfer is suggested. This includes credit recognition and transfer processes being part of the compliance requirements of qualification approval and accreditation. The *Criteria, requirements and guidelines for course approval and accreditation* (NZQA, 2003, 2008) were updated to reflect this.

2.3 Duplication and pathways

Quality assurance bodies use different methods to consider duplication and pathways. All qualifications must meet the criteria for registration on the Register. The criteria are designed to ensure the consistency of quality assurance, comparability between qualifications and pathway information. The criteria are based on the use of outcome statements, levels, credits and the New Zealand Standard Classification of Education (NZSCED) classification system.

If there is a proliferation of similar qualifications this can lead to duplication. Pathways are viewed broadly as pathways between qualifications (i.e. certificate to diploma), into education and employment, and skills and knowledge evidenced within a qualification’s outcome statement⁶. Pathways information can be highlighted in an outcome statement through providing information on other levels of qualification (i.e. learners that complete level 4 can progress onto level 5), or potential employment that may be undertaken with the skills and knowledge gained.

NZQA’s Framework Registration has rigorous processes for assessing duplication and pathways. Both NZQA’s Registration, Approval and Accreditation and ITP Quality follow similar criteria in relation to duplication and pathways.

2.3.1 Framework Registration (NZQA)

Reducing duplication and ensuring pathways is a specific aim of the guidelines used by Framework Registration to register new qualifications.

When assessing an application for a new standard or qualification, Evaluators can run ‘qualification scenarios’ through the reporting tool Business Objects, which lets them create an ‘overlap report’. This reporting tool cross references duplication and educational pathways between qualifications. The overlap report can compare different standards and qualifications on the National Qualifications Framework using keywords and credits owned by other standards setting bodies.

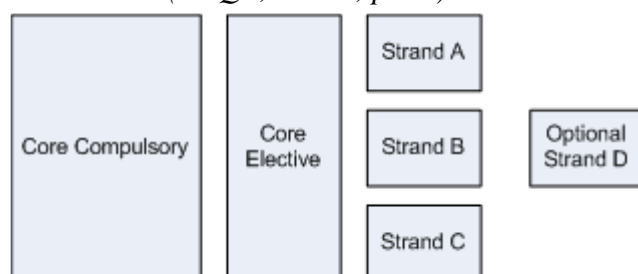
If a standards setting body can evidence that a new National qualification is necessary, and the statement of the qualification’s purpose signifies this difference, the Evaluator may discretionally recommend approval of the qualification.

⁶ Refer to Vermillion Peirce and Grice (2009) *The clarity of certificates and diplomas on the New Zealand Register of Quality Assured Qualifications* for further discussion and analysis of pathways within qualification outcome statements.

Evaluators can also assess the educational pathways between National qualifications at lower and higher levels. If a qualification is 50 percent similar to one already approved, an Evaluator will recommend the applicant apply for a ‘stranded’ qualification. This is used as a way of “preventing proliferation of similar qualifications” (NZQA, 2006b, p. 11).

The structures of qualifications on the National Qualifications Framework are arranged so that there is a base from which to focus on specialist areas. There should be a core compulsory (i.e. National Certificate in Textiles Manufacture), a core elective (i.e. Woollen Spinning) and strands of a qualification (i.e. Ring Spinning or Mule Spinning). The qualification illustrated in Figure 2 will be awarded to learners that have met the core compulsory and core elective requirements, and the requirements of strand A, B or C. Strand D is optional.

Figure 1: An example of qualification structure on the National Qualifications Framework (NZQA, 2006b, p. 11)



2.3.2 Registration, Approval and Accreditation (NZQA)

Tertiary education organisations assess the need and demand for the new qualification that they seek approval for. Advisors in Registration, Approval and Accreditation do not consider whether an application duplicates other provider-developed qualifications, as Advisors rely on a qualification developer’s own quality management systems and consider each qualification as a whole.

However, if an applicant has applied for approval and accreditation of a qualification in the same field as an existing National qualification, they must provide a rationale for why a provider-developed qualification is being used. If an application is made up of standards on the National Qualifications Framework and that qualification comes within 5 percent of the credit value of a National qualification in the same field, the Advisor may recommend declining the application. When making this decision, the Advisor considers the credit value or size of the qualification rather than the content of it.

Applicants may include a list of qualifications on the Register that their proposed qualification could connect with or have pathways to and from. This can relate to qualifications the provider already has approval and accreditation for. The Advisor may contribute further to this list based on their knowledge of quality assured qualifications.

Qualifications are structured around qualification titles. The title should provide an indication of the aims and outcomes of the qualification and is made up of two or three parts: a qualification type (i.e. diploma), a designator (i.e. computing) and if required, a qualifier (i.e. software).

2.3.3 ITP Quality

ITP Quality expects that during the process of development and through academic board approval, polytechnics have assessed the need and demand for the new qualification. Evaluations conducted do not consider whether an application duplicates other polytechnic-developed qualifications. Recommendations for approval are made based on evidence from a polytechnic's academic board, the polytechnic's quality management system and an evaluation of the qualification as a whole.

However, if a polytechnic has applied for approval and accreditation of a qualification in the same field as an existing National qualification, they must provide a rationale for why a polytechnic-developed qualification is being used. In this instance, a recommendation to decline the application may be made.

Applicants may include a list of qualifications that their proposed qualification could connect with or have pathways to and from. This can relate to qualifications the polytechnic already has approval and accreditation for.

3. Approval, accreditation and registration processes

Framework Registration (NZQA), Registration, Approval and Accreditation (NZQA) and ITP Quality have developed their own processes for quality assurance of qualifications in different contexts and at different times; however, all quality assured qualifications must align with the Register. NZQA's Registration, Approval and Accreditation, ITP Quality and CUAP must also base their standards on the Gazetted Criteria.

NZQA's Framework Registration has developed *Registration Criteria for National Qualifications Framework Qualifications* (NZQA, 2006b) for registration onto the National Qualifications Framework. The Gazetted Criteria do not apply to standards setting bodies because they do not deliver qualifications.

Quality assurance bodies provide approval and accreditation of new qualifications as part of their quality assurance function. The table below summarises these.

Figure 2: Approval, accreditation and National Qualifications Framework accreditation

National Qualifications Framework qualification registration	Confirms that a National qualification is different in purpose to any already registered on the National Qualifications Framework, is flexible, portable and transferable, and provides learners with attainable milestones, career options and qualification pathways.
Approval	Confirms that a qualification is based on clear and consistent aims, content, outcomes and assessment practices which meet the necessary criteria and requirements.
Accreditation	Confirms that a provider is deemed capable of delivering an approved qualification. Providers who wish to deliver another organisation's approved qualification must seek accreditation to deliver that qualification.
Approval and accreditation	Are often linked and can be applied for as one application. Providers usually apply for approval together with accreditation.
National Qualifications Framework accreditation	Confirms that a provider is capable of assessing against standards on the National Qualifications Framework. A provider must have National Qualifications Framework accreditation for all unit standards assessed in a course before obtaining course accreditation. National Qualifications Framework accreditation should be applied for separately from accreditation only.

3.1 New Zealand Qualifications Authority

NZQA has four processes for qualification approval:

1. Degrees and post-graduate qualifications (above level 8) are approved by the Deputy Chief Executive, Quality Assurance and the Chief Executive of NZQA. The NZQA Board is also updated every quarter of the level 8-10 qualifications approved in that period. If this level of qualification has never been approved before, this is taken to the NZQA Board for consideration
2. Provider-developed qualifications (level 1 to 6) are approved by the Manager, Registration, Approval and Accreditation
3. Other non-National Qualifications Framework qualifications such as New Zealand diplomas are approved by the Manager, Registration, Approval and Accreditation.
4. National qualifications (level 6 and below) are endorsed by the Manager, Framework Registration and approved by Deputy Chief Executive, Quality Assurance.

The approval processes 2 and 3 above are managed by Registration, Approval and Accreditation and are guided by the *Criteria, requirements and guidelines for course approval and accreditation* (NZQA, 2003, 2008), which incorporates the Gazetted Criteria.

The approval process 4 above is managed by Framework Registration and are guided by the *Registration criteria for National Qualifications Framework qualifications* (NZQA, 2006b) and the *Criteria for approval and registration of National*

Qualifications Framework accreditation and moderation action plans (AMAPs) (NZQA, 2006a).

Following the release of various internal and external reports, NZQA made extensive changes to the processes, criteria and policies used by Framework Registration and Registration, Approval and Accreditation to register or approve new qualifications. Registration, Approval and Accreditation recently went through a change process to reduce timeframes and increase efficiencies. The *Criteria, requirements and guidelines for course approval and accreditation* (NZQA, 2003, 2008) document was reviewed in 2008 to ensure that regulations for cross-credit, credit transfer and recognition of prior learning had been considered.

3.2 Framework Registration

The Framework Registration business unit quality assures National standards, National qualifications, National Qualifications Framework classifications and accreditation and moderation action plans and registers them on the National Qualifications Framework.

A National Certificate or National Diploma must comprise standards that are registered on the National Qualifications Framework. The quality assurance process used by Framework Registration involves evaluation of the qualifications against the registration criteria. Depending on the outcome of the evaluation, the qualification may be recommended for registration; referred back to the standards setting body for further work before being resubmitted for a compliance check; or referred back to the standards setting body for further development before being resubmitted for a second evaluation. The process for quality assuring qualifications follows.

Criteria and guidelines used: *Registration criteria for National Qualifications Framework qualifications* (NZQA, 2006b) and *Guidance and examples for NQF qualifications* (NZQA, 2004).

Application of policies, guidelines and processes

The processes Framework Registration uses when it receives new applications are extensively documented and standardised. Checklists guide allocation and evaluation of applications for registration of standards and qualifications. The process has distinct administration, evaluation and management activities.

Figure 3: Overview of activities in Framework Registration for approving and registering new National qualifications⁷

Activity \ Actor	Receive	Allocate	Evaluate	Outcome	Notify
Administration					
Evaluator					
Team Leader					
Manager					
DCE, QA					

⁷ Shading reflects where actors have a substantial input into the activity identified.

Receive

Standards setting bodies may submit applications to Framework Registration by post or electronically. The application is logged into QA Applications by an Administrator, who also copies all the documents into a centralised filing system. The application may go through editing prior to its allocation to an Evaluator.

Allocate

The Manager, Framework Registration, manages the allocation process. He/she assesses the application and estimates the time it will take to evaluate the application. When he/she allocates the application to an Evaluator, the standards setting body is advised the name of the assigned Evaluator and the expected completion date.

Evaluate

An Evaluator's initial evaluation looks at the purpose statement, credits and level. If a qualification is replacing an existing National qualification, then transition arrangements must also be included. The full evaluation processes Evaluators use are detailed in the *Evaluators Manual* (this is wiki-based and updated regularly by Framework Registration) and in *Guidance and examples for NQF qualifications* (NZQA, 2004).

Where an Evaluator recommends that an application undergo further development, the re-submission will usually be assigned to a different Evaluator for either a second evaluation or a compliance check. Each time an application is resubmitted following further work or development, it is entered into a new quality assurance cycle (evaluation). The performance target for the duration of quality assurance cycles is an average of 20 working days.

Qualifications must fall within a standard setting body's recognised standards setting coverage. However, standard setting bodies may use standards developed by other standard setting bodies as this ensures standards are portable.

Outcome (recommend)

When an Evaluator is confident that an application is at the appropriate standard they recommend approval. The Manager or one of the Team Leaders, Framework Registration, will view the recommendation and notify the standard setting body of the recommendation, expected approval date, and anticipated publication date on the National Qualifications Framework.

Outcome

The Deputy Chief Executive, Quality Assurance (NZQA) is then provided with an approval report (generated from QA Applications). He/she will sign the letter of approval based on the recommendations of the Manager, Framework Registration.

Notify

The applicant is then notified by email that following approval the qualification has been registered on the National Qualifications Framework. NZQA's website is updated regularly and new additions are made the second Tuesday of each month. This information is also viewable on the Register/*KiwiQuals* (overnight refresh).

3.3 Registration, Approval and Accreditation

The Registration, Approval and Accreditation business unit quality assures applications for approval and accreditation for new qualifications from private training establishments, wānanga, government training organisations and other tertiary education providers. Registration, Approval and Accreditation is responsible for the approval of qualifications, accreditation of approved qualifications, exemption from qualification approval, and the approval and accreditation of degrees and related qualifications.

Criteria and guidelines used: *Criteria for approval and accreditation of courses (New Zealand Gazette, 2008)* and *Criteria, requirements and guidelines for course approval and accreditation (NZQA, 2003, 2008)*.

Application of policies, guidelines and processes

The approval and accreditation process has three distinct activities related to administration, assessment and management.

Figure 4: Overview of activities in Registration, Approval and Accreditation for approving new provider-developed qualifications

Activity \ Actor	Receive	Allocate	Analyse	Outcome	Notify
Administration					
Advisor					
Manager					

Receive

Applications are received by NZQA through its standard mail system, where they are logged and sent to Registration, Approval and Accreditation. Currently the application is inputted into the database ResMan, which is due to be replaced by a new database where applicants will be able to submit their applications electronically. The information the applicant provides, in hard copy is:

- A completed application form
- A completed Course and Qualifications Detail form
- An Independent Subject Expert Report⁸, for a new qualification application
- A copy of the qualification.

A Registration, Approval and Accreditation Administration Officer, upon receipt, will create a new project in the ResMan database, where the file receives a unique number and a name taken from the title of the qualification the applicant is seeking approval of.

The Administration Officer then prepares the application for the Advisor. The following documentation is added to the file:

- A cover sheet with a summary file and qualification name
- A 'pre-analysis' checklist form

⁸ An applicant must engage an expert in the subject field of their proposed qualification to report on the quality of the application. This report is based on the Gazetted Criteria and may include suggested changes, to which the applicant must demonstrate what their response has been.

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- The provider's most recent audit report (where relevant)
- An R0275, which is a list of all the qualifications that the provider has approval, accreditation and National Qualifications Framework accreditation for, this is generated from the reporting tool Business Objects
- Previous qualification approval files if the applicant is seeking to update or change an already approved qualification.

The physical application is then added to a queue of applications for assessment.

Allocate

Advisors are rostered on a monthly basis to conduct 'pre-analysis' checks of applications. This initial assessment is to check that the application is at a standard where it could be assessed. The pre-analysis stage forms the first part of the analysis. The requirements of this pre-analysis are that:

- all documents required are included and completed
- all details are correct in the Course and Qualifications Details form

And that the application includes or demonstrates:

- direct evidence that the applicant has followed their internal quality management system approval procedures for the new qualification
- direct evidence that the applicant has adequate and appropriate stakeholder support
- a completed Independent Subject Expert Report, and
- response to any issues raised by the Report above incorporated into the application.

In the pre-approval stage, an analysis report is created in ResMan that is added to throughout the whole assessment process. The Advisor may contact staff within NZQA, such as the Auditor that conducted the provider's last audit or Tertiary Assessment and Moderation business unit if the application is for National Qualifications Framework accreditation, to gather further information. If there are any issues raised during this process, the Advisor may request that the applicant address them. The Advisor will make a decision whether to go ahead with the application by adding it to a queue (standard or preferential), to hold the application and request further information, or to return the application to the provider/developer.

An application is also assessed for 'preferential' and 'standard' assessment tracks during this stage. Addition to the preferential track is dependent on the provider's audit cycle⁹, the expertise of the provider in the subject field of the qualification, the level of the qualification, as well as the previous experience with the subject area. An application is added to the preferential track or the standard track, in the order it is received.

⁹ Quality audits examine a tertiary education organisation's management system to see whether its activities are effective in achieving an organisation's goals and objectives. NZQA conducts quality audits of private training establishments, government training establishments, wānanga, industry training organisations, adult education providers, qualification owners or foundation learning providers on cycles of two, three and four years, this is due to be phased out and replaced with external evaluation and review (also conducted on a cyclical basis).

Registration, Approval and Accreditation estimate that applications in the preferential track will take one month to quality assure, while applications on the standard track will take three months.

Analyse

When an Advisor is ready to analyse a new application, they manually select a new file from the top of the pile. They then ask the Administration Officer to allocate the file to them. The Administration Officer updates the ResMan file to change the contact information from Manager, Registration, Approval and Accreditation, to the Advisor. A 'work in progress' report is then generated through ResMan by the Administration Officer, new reports from this can be run as needed to provide details of work allocated. They do not provide information on the level of completion, only that a project has been allocated and is in progress, or that it has been closed.

The Advisor analyses the application. If they require further information from the provider they will send the provider a report after the initial analysis detailing where further information is required. The provider has 15 days in which to respond to the request and an extension to this timeframe will be granted if requested.

If the Advisor receives no response they will contact the provider again before informing the Manager, Registration, Approval and Accreditation. The Advisor may also choose to decline an application at this stage. If no response has been received, or the provider withdraws their application, the Advisor will hand over the file to the Administration Officer. The provider is then sent a letter to inform them of the decision to decline or close their application.

Outcome (recommend)

Once the Advisor receives a response to any request for further information he/she then proceeds with the application. The Advisor will recommend an outcome (approve or decline), to the Manager, Registration, Approval and Accreditation, for an application. Approval will be recommended if the Advisor is confident the structure of the 'programme of learning' is balanced and sound and it meets the Gazetted Criteria.

Outcome

The Manager, Registration, Approval and Accreditation, is then provided with a letter of outcome (written by the Advisor), the Course and Qualification Details form and the full file to review. The Manager will sign the outcome letter if he/she is satisfied the analysis against the criteria supports the recommendation.

Notify

If approved, the qualification information is inserted into Register Maintenance by an Administration Officer. If declined, the applicant is informed of the decision and has the right to seek a review of the decision.

After the qualification developer receives notification of approval, they may begin the funding application process with Tertiary Education Commission that is initiated after entering the new application details in STEO (Services for Tertiary Education Organisations, see glossary). The qualification information is transferred from the

Tertiary Education Commission course and qualifications registers into NZQA's Register Maintenance database.

A Register Administrator conducts an internal quality check that may involve removing repeated information. The provider may be asked to verify the information is correct before it is made publicly viewable on *KiwiQuals*.

3.4 Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics Quality

ITP Quality, through ITP New Zealand, has delegated authority from NZQA to exercise the powers of NZQA specified under the Education Act, 1989¹⁰. This delegation applies to all qualifications offered by polytechnics up to and including bachelors degrees. It excludes bachelors with honours, postgraduate certificates, postgraduate diplomas, masters and doctorate qualifications, which are quality assured by NZQA. In addition, ITP Quality has been delegated by NZQA to grant National Qualifications Framework accreditation to polytechnics that seek to deliver qualifications on the National Qualifications Framework.

The delegation is reviewed and monitored by NZQA, in accordance with the new quality assurance framework¹¹, to provide confidence that ITP Quality is applying the relevant NZQA policies and criteria (under sections 253(1)(d) and (e), Education Act, 1989). ITP Quality is required to report regularly to NZQA through forwarding its Annual Report, annual statement of objectives and copies of all external evaluation and review reports. ITP Quality Board decisions made under the delegation are reported to NZQA and regular meetings are convened with Deputy Chief Executive, Quality Assurance Division (NZQA) and ITP Quality to discuss any mutually agreed issues with the delegation.

Each governing council of a polytechnic is required (under section 182(2), Education Act, 1989) to establish an academic board whose advice it is required to seek on matters related to programmes of study or training, awards and other academic matters. ITP New Zealand has developed *Institute of technology and polytechnic academic boards: Guidelines for process and practice* (ITP New Zealand, 2007) as guidelines for good practice within academic boards. Academic boards are required by ITP Quality to approve every new qualification prior to submission to ITP Quality.

Polytechnics may apply to ITP Quality for approval and/or accreditation of qualifications, National Qualifications Framework accreditation and approval of significant changes to existing qualifications¹². For approval and accreditation, one of two processes is applied depending on the new qualification and the Quality Assured

¹⁰ 254(5) Consent to award a degree; 255A Compliance Notices; 258 Approval of courses; 258A Conditions on course approval; 259 Accreditation to provide approved courses; 259A Conditions on accreditation to provide approved courses.

¹¹ "The monitoring arrangements will reflect the concept of a high trust and high accountability relationship. A high trust relationship encompasses the notion of partnership, goodwill and shared interests and is based on openness, collaboration and reciprocal support. High accountability requires that NZQA has a high level of confidence that ITP Quality will exercise guardianship of quality. This confidence is sought through NZQA's independent appraisal of the exercise of the delegated roles and the trust accorded to ITP Quality by NZQA would be maintained on this basis." (p. 2, *Monitoring arrangements for the delegation from NZQA to ITP New Zealand*, 2009).

¹² "These generally relate to more significant structural changes, the level, credits or learning outcomes of the course" (ITP Quality, 2008, p. 2).

Status¹³ of the polytechnic. These two processes are ‘Academic Board Provision’ and ‘Evaluation’.

Application of policies, guidelines and processes

The following key documents form the initial part of the summary of ITP Quality’s approval and accreditation process for sub-degree approval.

Criteria and guidelines used: *Criteria for approval and accreditation of courses (New Zealand Gazette, 2008)* and *Guidelines for sub-degree approval and accreditation and NQF accreditation (ITP Quality, 2009)*.

Receive and allocate

Applications for approval and accreditation may be submitted under Academic Board Provision or Evaluation. Approximately 89% of applications go through Academic Board Provision, while the remaining 11% go through Evaluation¹⁴. Both types of applications must be submitted electronically and include the relevant application form:

- For applications made under Academic Board Provision: Form A1 (Brief course and qualification details to allow verification of meeting the requirements of the Register)
- For applications submitted for Evaluation: Form A2 and a full programme document that demonstrates how the criteria for approval and accreditation are met
- If the course includes exit qualifications, a Form E1 is required for each specifying details for inclusion on the Register
- For all courses, a copy of the polytechnic’s academic board minutes approving the course (without any qualifying statement).

ITP Quality performs a preliminary check of the application to ensure that it has the appropriate information. If necessary, ITP Quality will request any missing documents before the application proceeds. ITP Quality estimate that applications in the Academic Board Provision will take one month to quality assure, while Evaluation will take three months.

Academic Board Provision (application)

If the polytechnic has Quality Assured Status and is seeking approval and accreditation for a sub-degree qualification in a subject area and level it has demonstrated expertise and experience, it may apply for approval and accreditation under Academic Board Provision (using Form A1).

Under the Academic Board Provision, the ITP Quality Board may grant approval and accreditation on the recommendation of the Director ITP Quality. This includes the assurance that the polytechnic’s academic board has formally confirmed the qualification meets the Gazetted Criteria and it has been approved for submission to ITP Quality.

¹³ A polytechnic is awarded ‘Quality Assured Status’ by ITP Quality when it meets all 12 Academic Quality Audit Standards.

¹⁴ This includes courses under 40 credits, approximately 21% of qualifications over 40 credits go through Evaluation.

Evaluation (application)

If the polytechnic does not have previous accreditation or experience in a subject area, is applying for at a level higher than that already offered, is applying for a degree, or the applicant polytechnic does not have 'Quality Assured Status', the application is submitted under Evaluation (Form A2). The application must include sufficient information for ITP Quality to undertake an evaluation against the Gazetted Criteria.

Based on the content of the qualification, ITP Quality will establish an ITP Quality Evaluation Panel¹⁵ comprised of a Panel Chair and members with specialist knowledge of the subject areas of the qualification and/or the mode of delivery for assessment.

The Panellists evaluate the application against the *Guidelines for sub-degree approval and accreditation and NQF accreditation* (ITP Quality, 2009). They make any requests for further information to the designated contact person from the applicant polytechnic. On occasion, the Panel may require a 'Site Visit' to determine whether all criteria have been met. ITP Quality oversees the evaluation process and is also available to provide guidance where necessary. Once the Panel has completed their evaluation, the Panel Chair then sends the drafted report to the applicant polytechnic to be checked for factual accuracy.

Recommendation (Academic Board Provision and Evaluation)

If the application is made under the Academic Board Provision, the Director ITP Quality submits the applications with the appropriate recommendations to the ITP Quality Board. If the application is made under Evaluation, the Panel Chair submits the final panel report to ITP Quality with his/her recommendations, where it is reviewed by the ITP Quality Secretariat before being submitted to the ITP Quality Board for a decision.

Final Approval (Academic Board Provision and Evaluation)

For both Academic Board Provision and Evaluation, the ITP Quality Board makes all final decisions relating to the quality assurance of polytechnic-developed qualifications. They will consider the new qualification based on recommendations provided by the ITP Quality Director (Academic Board Provision) or the Panel Chair (Evaluation).

If required, the ITP Quality Board may seek further information from the ITP Quality Secretariat, the Panel Chair or the applicant polytechnic. They may also take advice from other groups (such as legal representatives, registration bodies or NZQA) prior to making decisions.

Notify

The decisions of the ITP Quality Board are communicated to the applicant polytechnic, Panel Chair (if appointed), Tertiary Education Commission, Ministry of Education and Ministry of Social Development within two working days. Polytechnics may appeal decisions made by the ITP Quality Board.

¹⁵ ITP Quality appoints Panel Chairs from a pool of appropriately experienced and qualified individuals to assess applications. ITP Quality allocates applications for approval and accreditation to Panellists based on their skills and knowledge.

After the polytechnic receives notification of approval, they may begin the funding application process with Tertiary Education Commission which is initiated after the polytechnic has entered the new application details in STEO. The qualification information is transferred from Tertiary Education Commission's course and qualifications registers into NZQA Register Maintenance database.

Following the notification from the polytechnic that the qualification has been entered onto STEO and approved by the Tertiary Education Commission, ITP Quality verifies that the information meets the requirements of the Register and approves the qualification to appear on *KiwiQuals*. NZQA may conduct a check on the information, for minor editing requirements, before it is made publicly viewable on *KiwiQuals*.

3.5 Committee on Universities Academic Programmes

NZVCC's Committee on University Academic Programmes (CUAP) has the responsibility of quality assuring new or changed qualifications developed by universities. The guidance provided to universities is updated regularly, and the *Functions and Procedures 2009-2010* (NZVCC, 2009) was viewed for this report.

CUAP meets four times a year. Two of these meetings are to make decisions relating to approval and accreditation. A peer review methodology is used to assess the qualification against the Gazetted Criteria and the Register policy. Additional criteria within the *Functions and Procedures 2009-2010* (NZVCC, 2009) provide further detail on the application of the Gazetted Criteria and CUAP procedures for approval and accreditation of university-developed qualifications.

CUAP is subject to periodic audit, with the last one commissioned by the NZVCC in March 2005.

Table 1: Criteria, guidelines and application of qualifications quality assurance by quality assurance bodies

	NZQA		ITP Quality
	Framework Registration	Registration, Approval and Accreditation	
Overarching themes	Regulatory and unifying	Enabling	Enabling
	Fit within Register policy and National Qualifications Framework requirement for qualification definitions	Fit within Register policy for qualification definitions	Fit within Register policy for qualification definitions
	Requirements focus	Guidelines focus	Guidelines focus
	Value placed on consistency and comparability based on established criteria and document requirements	Value placed on unique contribution and interpretation	Value placed on accountability for polytechnics (academic board), unique contribution and interpretation
Criteria	<i>Registration criteria for National Qualifications Framework qualifications (2006)</i> ¹⁶	<i>Gazetted Criteria for approval and accreditation of courses (2008)</i> ¹⁷	<i>Gazetted Criteria for approval and accreditation of courses (2008)</i> ¹⁸
Guidelines	<i>Guidance and examples for NQF qualifications (2004)</i>	<i>Criteria, requirements and guidelines for course approval and accreditation (2008)</i>	<i>Guidelines for sub-degree approval and accreditation and NQF accreditation (2009)</i>
	Provides criteria for registration: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • requirement focus includes instruction on how to design qualifications • including detail on formatting and language “Qualifications must [...] meet NZQA documentation requirements for qualifications, have a logical internal structure and be achievable [and] set out clearly, and without unnecessary complexity, the requirements for award” (p. 4)	Provides information about the process: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • including requirements of qualification description (as per Register policy) The description of the course should include “a full description of the course, including a description of each component (including a description of any component from other approved courses that are to be included in the proposed course.)” (p. 13) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requirements of the Register referred to and applicants are informed where to get further 	Requirements of the Register policy provided (title, level, outcome statement, credit requirements, subject classification, entry requirements and provider details)

¹⁶ All quotations under the Framework Registration column are from NZQA (2006) *Registration criteria for National Qualifications Framework qualifications*

¹⁷ All quotations under the Registration, Approval and Accreditation column from NZQA (2008) *Criteria, requirements and guidelines for course approval and accreditation*

¹⁸ All quotations under the ITP Quality column from ITP Quality (2009) *Guidelines for sub-degree approval and accreditation and NQF accreditation*

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	NZQA		ITP Quality
	Framework Registration	Registration, Approval and Accreditation	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requirements of the Register policy referred to 	information from NZQA's website	
Process	Centrally controlled and highly prescriptive administration and managerial processes throughout receipt, allocation, evaluation and result notification phases of the registration process	Administration processes in place for receipt and result notification phases of the approval and accreditation process	Administration processes in place for receipt, allocation and result notification phases of the approval and accreditation process
	Checks and measures must be met in every stage, standard setting body may put forward argument for one-off consideration (but outcome may disrupt progress of application)	Checks available but implemented on a case-by-case basis, connected to the quality management system and audit of the tertiary education organisation	Checks available but implemented on a case-by-case basis, emphasis on quality management system of polytechnic and the recommendations of its academic board
	Credit-value and overall fit within existing qualifications on National Qualifications Framework "National qualifications are packages of nationally recognised standards" (p. 3)	Sound and structured content for delivery and learning	Sound and structured content for delivery and learning
Information systems (NZQA)	Business Objects, QA Applications, Register Maintenance	ResMan (to be replaced by FileNet), QA Applications, Register Maintenance	Register Maintenance
Evaluation	<p><u>Titles</u> "The title of the qualification must be classified according to one or more of the following NQF categories – field, subfield, or domain [...] In addition, the title of the qualification must be unique, consistent with the purpose, nature and composition of the qualification [and] consistent with the recognised coverage of the [standard setting body]" (p. 7) e.g. National Certificate in Textiles</p>	<p><u>Titles</u> "Course and qualification titles should provide a concise, accurate and informative indication of the aims and outcomes of the courses" (p. 4)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Designators are used to identify main disciplinary emphasis of qualification, i.e. Diploma in <i>Design</i> Qualifiers may be used to indicate a sub-field within the discipline, i.e. Diploma in Design (<i>Computer Graphics</i>) <p>Also captured under <i>Title, aims, learning</i></p>	<p><u>Titles</u> Captured under <i>Title, aims, learning outcomes and coherence</i> in Gazetted Criteria</p>

	NZQA		ITP Quality
	Framework Registration	Registration, Approval and Accreditation	
	<p>Manufacture (Woollen Spinning) (Level 2) with strands in Ring Spinning and Mule Spinning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subfield, <i>Textiles Manufacture</i> • Descriptor, <i>Woollen Spinning</i> • Strand, <i>Ring Spinning and Mule Spinning</i> 	<p><i>outcomes and coherence</i> in Gazetted Criteria</p>	
	<p><u>Duplication</u> Reduction of duplication is a priority: “Qualifications will be registered on the NQF when it has been shown that the qualifications are different in purpose from any already registered on the NQF” (p. 4)</p>	<p><u>Duplication</u> Duplication is not a consideration, qualification is judged on its own merit. Accountability for determining need for a new qualification responsibility rests with tertiary education organisation</p>	<p><u>Duplication</u> Duplication is not a consideration, qualification is judged by ITP Quality Board based on recommendations of an academic board and Panel Chair (if applicable). Accountability for determining need for a new qualification rests with the polytechnic and its academic board</p>
		<p><u>Standards-based qualifications</u> “Where a course contains NQF unit standards and the credits exceed the credit requirements for a National qualification by more than 5%, the title of the course and the resulting qualification must be different to that of the National qualification. In this case, the National qualification is embedded in the course” (p. 14)</p>	
	<p><u>Pathways</u> Credits for new qualifications will transfer to other qualifications already Registered on the National Qualifications Framework: “the purpose statement for NQF qualifications must [...] highlight portability of credit to other related NQF qualifications” (p. 7) “Qualifications will be registered on the NQF</p>	<p><u>Pathways</u> “[The] outcome statement: - expresses what graduates gain as a result of the qualification in terms of applied knowledge, skills, understanding and attitudes - identifies pathways to further study or into industry - assists potential learners to understand more</p>	<p><u>Pathways</u> “The course outcomes statement is consistent with the requirements of the Register” (p. 18)</p>

	NZQA		ITP Quality
	Framework Registration	Registration, Approval and Accreditation	
	<p>when it has been shown that the qualifications [...] are flexible in structure where appropriate, and provide learners with attainable milestones, career options, and qualifications pathways [and] recognise broad transferable and generic skills as well as specialised industry and professional skills” (p. 4)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Also, requirements of the Register policy, including Outcome Statements, is noted 	<p>about the qualification and where the qualification can lead</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - allows meaningful comparison” (p. 16) • Also, requirements of the Register policy noted throughout 	
	<p><u>Credit recognition and transfer</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommendations provided for how a standard setting body should make provisions for awarding of credits between non-National Qualifications Framework qualifications <p>“[This] provision has been developed in line with the principles and objectives expressed in [the] <i>Credit Recognition and Transfer</i> policy” (p. 14)</p>	<p><u>Credit recognition and transfer</u></p> <p>Captured under <i>Regulations</i> in the Gazetted Criteria</p> <p>“5.1b Provisions for awarding credit towards a qualification or exemptions from specific course requirements as a result of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - cross-crediting (from another course within the organisation) - credit transfer (from a course awarded by another organisation) - recognition of prior learning (credit awarded for informal or uncertificated learning) <p>“5.1c Course structure, including any specified pre- and co-requisites, compulsory and optional/elective components, practical/work-based components and alternative entry and exit points” (p. 25)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommendations provide for how a provider should show how credit recognition and transfer is applied in QMS of qualification <p>“All certifications or awards granted (including certifications that are not quality assured</p>	<p><u>Credit recognition and transfer</u></p> <p>Captured under <i>Regulations</i> in the Gazetted Criteria</p> <p>“General and course-specific regulations are clear, comprehensive and fair, and cover where appropriate: [...] “Provisions for awarding credit towards a qualification or exemptions from specific course requirements as a result of cross-crediting (from another course within the organisation), credit transfer (from a course awarded by another organisation) or recognition of prior learning (credit awarded for informal or uncertificated learning)</p> <p>“Course structure, including any specified pre- and co-requisites, compulsory and optional/elective components, practical/work-based components and alternative entry and exit points” (p. 19)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommendations provided for how a provider should make provisions for awarding of credits <p>“Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics should be aware of [NZQA’s <i>Credit Recognition</i></p>

	NZQA		ITP Quality
	Framework Registration	Registration, Approval and Accreditation	
		qualifications) must be appropriate. It should have acceptance from industry and must comply with Register criteria” (p. 16)	<i>and Transfer</i>] policy and adopt internal strategies to facilitate these policies and principles” (p. 27)
	<p><u>Structure</u> Most qualifications consist of core compulsory and elective requirements. Where there are “two or more qualifications of the same type at the same level [they] must be stranded when their requirements overlap by 50 percent. The rationale for this criterion is to prevent proliferation of similar qualifications and to ensure that clear pathways are mapping among qualifications” (p. 11)</p>	<p><u>Structure</u> Register and Gazetted Criteria may suggest appropriate structure; however, direct guidance is not given</p>	<p><u>Structure</u> Register and Gazetted Criteria may suggest appropriate structure; however, direct guidance is not given</p>
Monitoring and review	<p>NZQA retains copyright of all standards and qualifications registered on the National Qualifications Framework. Qualification developer (standard setting body) retains ownership Information on NZQA’s National Qualifications Framework website updated regularly (second Tuesday of each month). Expired standards and qualifications removed annually. Information is transferred onto Register Maintenance on an overnight refresh</p>	<p>Qualification developer (tertiary education organisation) retains copyright of approved and accredited qualifications New qualification information updated into Register Maintenance and the Register regularly</p>	<p>Qualification developer (polytechnic) retains copyright of approved and accredited qualifications New qualification information updated into Register Maintenance and the Register regularly</p>
	<p>Standard setting body is electronically notified of pending review of standards or qualifications on the National Qualifications Framework over a two-year period. Standards and qualifications are required to be reviewed by the qualification developer every 3 to 5 years.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivery of a qualification may be monitored through audit, particularly during the initial years following approval and accreditation: “Monitoring [is] in addition to providers’ own monitoring and reviewing of their courses, and to any requirement to notify NZQA of proposed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approval does not expire; however, a qualification may be monitored: “In certain circumstances ITP Quality may determine that a course or category of courses will be subject to on-going monitoring by ITP Quality [...] When monitoring is considered to be necessary, it will generally be by an analysis of an

	NZQA		ITP Quality
	Framework Registration	Registration, Approval and Accreditation	
	Expired qualifications removed from National Qualifications Framework through Administration processes.	<p>changes” (p. 9)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approval does not expire unless approved for a fixed period: <p>“If the provider wishes to continue to offer the course [after its approval and accreditation has expired], a further application for approval and accreditation must be made at least three months prior to the end of the set period” (p. 10)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tertiary education organisations must notify significant changes or expiring qualifications: <p>An “effective system for the regular monitoring, evaluation and review of courses such that the course approval and accreditation criteria and requirements continue to be met” (p. 31)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A system for monitoring the performance of a qualification must be in place: <p>“There is an effective system for the regular monitoring, evaluation and review of course such that the course approval and accreditation criteria and requirements continue to be met” (p. 31)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Qualifications are required to be reviewed within a specified timeframe: <p>“Indicate a date when the organisation will carry out a major review of this course” (p. 31)</p>	<p>annual course evaluation report from the ITP to ITP Quality” (p. 15)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Polytechnics must notify significant changes or expiring qualifications: <p>An “effective system for the regular monitoring, evaluation and review of courses such that the course approval and accreditation criteria and requirements continue to be met” (p. 20)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A system for monitoring the performance of a qualification should be in place: <p>“There is an effective system for the regular monitoring, evaluation and review of course such that the course approval and accreditation criteria and requirements continue to be met” (p. 23)</p>
Approval	Approves National Qualifications Framework standards and qualifications	Approves provider-developed qualifications	Approves polytechnic-developed qualifications

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	NZQA		ITP Quality
	Framework Registration	Registration, Approval and Accreditation	
Accreditation	Not applicable as standard setting bodies do not deliver education and training	Accredits providers to deliver approved qualifications and/or, standards or qualifications on the National Qualifications Framework	Accredits polytechnics to deliver approved qualifications and/or, standards or qualifications on the National Qualifications Framework
Registration	Approves standards and qualifications to be registered on the National Qualifications Framework	Approves qualifications for addition onto the Register	Approves qualifications for addition onto the Register

Appendix A: Methodology

Current state analysis and mapping methodologies were used to assess the existing qualification approval, accreditation and registration policies, criteria and guidelines. It comprised the following steps:

1. Description of the processes and associated controls of the qualifications system put in place by quality assurance bodies
2. Identification of any issues and needs of the quality assurance bodies and qualifications developers not being met
3. An assessment of gaps regarding relevance and user-friendliness for students and employers, and the consequent effectiveness of the qualifications design processes.

The current state analysis has two aims. The first is to describe current processes, to establish what they are. The second is to identify areas for change through analysis of the themes of the user-friendliness and relevance of the processes to quality assure qualifications. The first aim (1) is the subject of this report. The second aim (steps 2 and 3) are the subject of *Certificates and Diplomas in New Zealand: An assessment of approval, accreditation and registration processes*.

Process

To gain understanding of the system and its processes in relation to approval, accreditation and registration, the quality assurance bodies of interest were ITP Quality, and the relevant business units within NZQA (Registration, Approval and Accreditation and Framework Registration). An initial description of the processes was created after examination of secondary sources (documents publicly available).

CUAP's publicly available policies, criteria and guidelines were viewed. An assessment of its processes was not assessed for this report, as the university sector was outside of scope.

Written summaries were prepared that included completion of step-by-step diagrams of each quality assurance bodies' approval, accreditation and/or registration processes.

The diagrams depicted the system as it is designed to work, and discussions with management and staff of the quality assurance bodies further confirmed the processes. Conversations focused on clarifying the diagrams and descriptions, as well as tapping into any implicit activities used (i.e. not written down) within the processes. These conversations led to a broader understanding of the different parts of the process.

Registration, Approval and Accreditation, Framework Registration and ITP Quality were contacted individually. After meetings with the Manager, Registration, Approval and Accreditation, Manager, Framework Registration and Director, ITP Quality, they were asked to nominate staff or other key system knowledge holders for further conversations about policies and procedures application.

The conversations lasted 60 to 90 minutes. Five conversations took place. Participants were asked to talk through the process of quality assurance they were responsible for. They were then asked to view the diagrams and descriptions to correct, confirm and/or elaborate on them. Participants also provided supplementary

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documentation and information they also used to approve, accredit and register new qualifications.

Following the conversations with quality assurance Advisors, Evaluators and other knowledge holders responsible for these processes this summary report was prepared. The report was shared with participants to confirm its accuracy. Any subsequent amendments were then made.

In all the steps (1, 2 and 3) how duplication and pathways between qualifications are processed were of particular focus.

Appendix B: New Zealand qualifications system

The New Zealand Register of Quality Assured Qualifications and the National Qualifications Framework

The political, economic and social reforms of the 1980s highlighted the need for significant changes to the education sector, which was increasingly characterised by a lack of comparability in educational programmes, confusion around naming and classification, and a population who lacked the skill and education levels needed to compete effectively in an international marketplace (Hamil, 2001).

Under section 253 (1)(c)(i)-(ii) of the Education Act 1989, NZQA is required to:

- [...] develop a framework for national qualifications in secondary schools and in post-school education and training in which –
- (i) all qualifications have a purpose and a relationship to each other that students and the public can understand; and
 - (ii) there is a flexible system for the gaining of qualifications, with recognition of competency already achieved.

There was also a significant shift away from the mentality of ‘one qualification for life’ in order to maintain and enhance learners’ ability to transfer credit by the establishment of a common system of credit. To fulfil this statutory mandate, between 1990 and 1991 NZQA consulted on the development of a national qualifications framework that would include all qualifications. The outcome of this consultation was overwhelming support for a single, unified system. Subsequently the National Qualifications Framework was introduced in November 1991.

The National Qualifications Framework was predicated on ‘units of learning’ – a term that evolved into ‘unit standards’ – with a standard format, and a National catalogue. This shift to unit standards was seen as a key change to the existing qualifications system and aimed to increase the responsiveness of the education system to industry needs by focusing less on inputs, and more learner competencies. Basing the National Qualifications Framework on unit standards caused discord with the university sector.

The NZVCC argued that the introduction of a standards-based system would remove academic freedom and innovation, and that university study was at too high a level to be broken down into small, competency based unit standards. Consequently, the NZVCC withdrew its support from the National Qualifications Framework in 1996 before the development was complete.

In 1994, the Tertiary Lead Group was tasked with incorporating degrees into the National Qualifications Framework. The Group recommended that all qualifications be incorporated into a single harmonised qualifications framework. Mechanisms were proposed for registration onto this framework at both National and provider level, specified in terms of learning outcomes and objectives, credits and levels.

A record of learning was to be kept for all learners, with NZQA being responsible for maintaining it in a central computer database, and the multiplicity of existing classifications was replaced by three terms for registration on the framework: National

Certificate; National Diploma; and National Degree. The record of learning has since been changed to the Record of Achievement.

By the late 1990s, the National Qualifications Framework was in place and, in 2001 NZQA established a comprehensive list of all quality assured qualifications known as the Register. The inception of the Register accommodated degrees without requiring them to be in a unit standard format by allowing providers to register a qualification that was not standards-based.

The National Qualifications Framework then became a subset within the Register, while sharing the same levels and qualification descriptors as the wider Register. In 2001, the National Qualifications Framework was further developed to allow the registration of ‘achievement standards’ for school subjects and the subsequent introduction of the National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA) in 2002.

Figure 5: The New Zealand Register of Quality Assured Qualifications



In May 2004, NZQA undertook a Register Compliance project to ensure that all standards and qualifications listed on the Register were reviewed against the Register’s criteria. The process was complex and involved more than 400 providers and 2,500 qualifications. During the process it was found that in many cases, provider-developed qualifications were in fact National qualifications. For this and other reasons, more than 500 qualifications were removed from the Register. The outcome was that any qualifications not compliant with the Register criteria by 1 August 2006 were removed. This deadline was extended until December 2006 due to the influx of information.

Qualifications in New Zealand

Qualifications in New Zealand are registered at one of ten levels, increasing in levels of complexity from 1 (least complex) to 10 (most complex). Each level has a designated credit value and qualification type. This includes certificates (levels 1 to

7), diplomas (levels 5 to 7), bachelors degrees, graduate diplomas and certificates (level 7), postgraduate diplomas and certificates, bachelors degrees with honours (level 8), masters degrees (level 9) and doctorates (level 10).

Figure 6: Overview of the New Zealand Register of Quality Assured Qualifications titles and levels

Level	Naming sequence
10	Doctorates
9	Masters degrees
8	Postgraduate diplomas and certificates, bachelors degrees with honours
7	Bachelors degrees, graduate diplomas and graduate certificates
6	Diplomas
5	
4	Certificates
3	
2	
1	

The figure above outlines how qualifications are defined by level and credit. However, research components can alter the requirements for achievement, for example qualifications at level 7 and above.

The term ‘National’ is restricted to qualifications based on unit or achievement standards, or qualifications that have components for which there is automatically transferable credit. The term ‘New Zealand’ has been available for non-standard based qualifications of national standing.

Any qualification that is not registered on the National Qualifications Framework is referred to as a provider-developed or local qualification. These qualifications may be developed to meet specific needs of the provider and their stakeholders (including relevant academic, industrial, professional and other communities) may be in an area where there is no industry coverage, or may have a National qualification embedded and the local content added on.

Qualifications developers must develop qualifications that are consistent with the definitions of qualifications outlined in the Register. They must also gain approval for the qualification from the relevant quality assurance body. All providers must gain accreditation for any qualification they deliver¹⁹.

The New Zealand Register of Quality Assured Qualifications and *KiwiQuals*

All qualifications that are 40 credits or more and quality assured by a recognised quality assurance body are eligible to be added to the Register. There are different categories of qualifications. National qualifications are approved and registered by Framework Registration (NZQA), while New Zealand and provider-developed qualifications (from certificate to degree level, levels 1 to 10) are quality assured by

¹⁹ Private training establishments must also be registered by NZQA to deliver learning and teaching.

Registration, Approval and Accreditation (NZQA), ITP Quality or the Committee for University Academic Programmes.

Currently, the Register serves as a database that brings together all quality assured qualifications available in New Zealand, and also prescribes the criteria on which all qualifications must be registered.

The policy for the Register was approved in 2001 by the NZQA Board. It was developed by a working party with representatives from NZQA, the inter-institutional bodies, student bodies and other key groups. The purpose of the Register is:

- to identify clearly all quality assured qualifications in New Zealand
- to ensure that all qualifications have a purpose and relation to each other that students and the public can understand
- to maintain and enhance learners' ability to transfer credit by the establishment of a common system of credit
- to enhance and build on the international recognition of New Zealand qualifications (NZQA, 2007, p. 4).

KiwiQuals, launched in July 2003, is the web-based, public face of the Register (<http://www.kiwiquals.govt.nz>). All qualifications on the site have been approved by a recognised quality assurance body and are delivered by an accredited education or training organisation.

An overview of each qualification appears on *KiwiQuals* under 12 sub-headings. These are the qualification title, a qualification number, subject/classification (taken from NZSCED codes) the name of the organisation(s) that deliver the qualification, qualification type, qualification level, qualification credit value, entry requirements, outcome statement, qualification owner (the organisation that developed the qualification), quality assurance body and content.

The Register (*KiwiQuals*), demonstrates domestically and internationally that New Zealand has consistent quality assurance of qualifications. This promotes international recognition for graduates with New Zealand qualifications, as well as for individuals with qualifications gained overseas.

Appendix C: Quality assurance of qualifications

Section 258(2)-(4) of the Education Act, 1989, states that an education organisation may apply to NZQA for approval of a qualification. Further to this, NZQA may “grant or refuse approval of the course” and “[i]n deciding whether to grant or refuse approval to a course [NZQA] is required only to consider the course as a whole”.

NZQA monitors the performance of industry training organisations²⁰, private training establishments, wānanga, government training establishments and other tertiary education providers through its Quality Assurance Division. Registration, Approval and Accreditation (NZQA) assures the quality of qualifications developed by private training establishments, wānanga, government training establishments and other tertiary education providers.

Framework Registration (NZQA) assures the quality of standards and qualifications on the National Qualifications Framework that are developed by standard setting bodies (this includes industry training organisations, NZQA and the Ministry of Education). Industry training organisations have legislated authority to set skill standards for, and administer the delivery of, industry-based training (Section (a), Industry Training Act, 1992). National Qualifications Services and Māori Qualifications Services (NZQA) develop standards and qualifications that do not have coverage of an industry training organisation.

As part of NZQA’s role to approve qualifications it may also “impose conditions on approval that are specific to the approval for that particular course” (Education Act, 1989, section 258a(2)).

Quality assurance bodies

Quality assurance bodies have legislated or delegated authority to quality assure tertiary organisations. There are three quality assurance bodies for the tertiary sector:

- NZQA (Framework Registration, and Registration, Approval and Accreditation)
- Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics Quality (ITP Quality) – delegated authority by NZQA through Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics of New Zealand
- The Committee on University Academic Programmes (CUAP) of the New Zealand Vice-Chancellors’ Committee (NZVCC).

These quality assurance bodies have the responsibility for quality assuring applications for approving or registering qualifications put forward by their respective sectors. Registration, Approval and Accreditation directly charges applicants for its approval and accreditation services. Framework Registration and ITP Quality meet these costs within their operating budgets.

²⁰Regular reviews assess industry training organisations accreditation to register assessors, report against standards on the National Qualifications Framework and provide information to Tertiary Education Commission on funding and coverage.

Figure 7: Overview of quality assurance bodies responsible for quality assurance of qualifications in the tertiary sector in New Zealand

Quality assurance bodies	Description
NZQA	Framework Registration is responsible for the quality assurance and registration of standards, qualifications and accreditation and moderation action plans ²¹ developed by standard setting bodies on the National Qualifications Framework.
	Registration, Approval and Accreditation is responsible for the approval and accreditation of qualifications developed by private training establishments, wānanga, government training organisations and other tertiary education providers, approving National Qualifications Framework accreditation, registering new private training establishments and change of private training establishment ownership.
ITP Quality	The Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics of New Zealand, under delegation (section 260, Education Act, 1989) established ITP Quality for the audit and qualification quality assurance of institutes of technology and polytechnics.
CUAP	The NZVCC established the Committee for University Academic Programmes (CUAP) in 1990 to conduct quality assurance of qualifications activities for the university sector. The New Zealand Academic Audit Unit, independently of NZVCC, monitors the quality of universities' academic activities.

²¹ Framework Registration quality assures and registers accreditation and moderation action plans. These are developed by standards setting bodies for providers that deliver standards or qualifications on the National Qualifications Framework. Industry training organisations moderate the use of standards and qualifications they have registered on the National Qualifications Framework. Tertiary Assessment and Moderation (NZQA) moderate the delivery of standards and qualifications on the National Qualifications Framework that National Qualifications Services and Māori Qualifications Services have developed.

Appendix D: Criteria for Approval and Accreditation of Courses

New Zealand Gazette, No. 188 (2008)

Pursuant to section 253(3) of the Education Act 1989, notice is given that the New Zealand Qualifications Authority, having undertaken the consultation required by section 253(2) and having established criteria in respect of the approval and accreditation of courses in certain categories of applications, pursuant to section 253(1)(d)-(e), hereby publishes them.

It is expected that organisations will, in the development and delivery of courses, give effect to the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi as expressed in their business plans and/or quality management documents.

All tertiary education organisations shall focus on the quality and value of their outcomes for learners and other stakeholders and the effectiveness of key processes that contribute to these outcomes.

From 1 January 2009, all organisations whose courses are approved pursuant to these criteria and/or that are accredited to deliver courses pursuant to these criteria, shall undertake self-assessment of their own performance and the results of this self-assessment shall be used to monitor and continuously improve the quality of outcomes for learners and other stakeholders.

From 1 January 2009, all organisations whose courses are approved pursuant to these criteria and/or that are accredited to deliver courses pursuant to these criteria shall be subject to periodic external evaluation and review by their quality assurance bodies.

The categories of applications to which these criteria apply are:

- (a) all applications in respect of approval of courses and accreditation of organisations to deliver them.
- (b) all applications in respect of course approval only, where the course developer will not deliver the course.
- (c) all applications in respect of accreditation only, where the course has already received approval under (a) or (b) above.

The New Zealand Qualifications Authority or any body exercising powers of approval and accreditation under the provisions of section 260(2) of the Education Act 1989, or the New Zealand Vice Chancellors' Committee in exercising the power of approval and accreditation under the provisions of section 260(1) of the Education Act 1989, shall satisfy itself as to the standard and quality of every course for which approval and/or accreditation is sought in regard to the following criteria.

Category (a) – All Applications in Respect of Approval of Course and Accreditation of Organisations to Deliver Them

Title, aims, learning outcomes and coherence:

The adequacy and appropriateness of the title, aims, stated learning, outcomes and coherence of the whole course. (*Note: Qualification developers are also required to meet the criteria for registration on the New Zealand Register of Quality Assured Qualifications*).

Delivery and learning methods:

The adequacy and appropriateness of delivery and learning methods, for all modes of delivery, given the stated learning outcomes.

Assessment:

The adequacy of the means of ensuring that assessment procedures are fair, valid, consistent and appropriate given the stated learning outcomes.

Acceptability of the course:

The acceptability of the proposed course to the relevant academic, industrial, professional and other communities in terms of its stated aims and learning outcomes, nomenclature, content and structure.

Regulations:

The adequacy and appropriateness of the regulations that specify requirements for admission, credit for previous study, recognition of prior learning, course length and structure, integration of practical/work-based components, assessment procedures, and normal progression within a programme.

Resources:

The capacity of the organisation to support sustained delivery of the course, in all delivery modes, with regard to appropriate academic staffing, teaching facilities, physical resources and support services.

Evaluation and review:

The adequacy and effectiveness of the provision for evaluation and review of courses; for monitoring the on-going relevance of learning outcomes, course delivery and course standards; for reviewing course regulations and content; for monitoring improvement following evaluation and review; and for determining whether the course shall continue to be offered.

Special Requirements

Degrees and related qualifications

The adequacy of provision of research facilities and support of staff involved in research, the levels of research activity of staff involved in the course and of ways by which the research-teaching links are made in the curriculum.

Category (b) – All Applications in Respect of Course Approval Only, Where the Course Developer Will Not Deliver the Course

Title, aims, learning outcomes and coherence:

The adequacy and appropriateness of the title, aims, stated learning, outcomes and coherence of the whole course. (*Note:* Qualification developers are also required to meet the criteria for registration on the New Zealand Register of Quality Assured Qualifications).

Acceptability of the course:

The acceptability of the proposed course to the relevant academic, industrial, professional and other communities in terms of its stated aims and learning outcomes, nomenclature, content and structure.

Regulations:

The adequacy and appropriateness of the regulations that specify requirements for admission, credit for previous study, recognition of prior learning, course length and structure, integration of practical/work-based components, assessment procedures, and normal progression within a course.

Assessment:

This paper is for discussion purposes only, it is not government policy

The fairness, validity, consistency and appropriateness of the assessment methodology, given the stated learning outcomes.

Evaluation and review:

The adequacy and effectiveness of the provision for evaluation and review of courses; for monitoring the on-going relevance of learning outcomes, course delivery and course standards; for reviewing course regulations and content.

Category (c) – All Applications in Respect of Accreditation Only, Where the Course Has Already Received Approval Under (a) or (b) Above

Acceptability of the course:

The acceptability of the proposed course to the relevant academic, industrial, professional and other communities in terms of its stated aims and learning outcomes, nomenclature, content and structure.

Delivery and learning methods:

The adequacy and appropriateness of delivery and learning methods, for all modes of delivery, given the stated learning outcomes.

Assessment:

The adequacy of the means of ensuring that assessment procedures are fair, valid, consistent and appropriate given the stated learning outcomes.

Resources:

The capacity of the organisation to support sustained delivery of the course, in all delivery modes, with regard to appropriate academic staffing, teaching facilities, physical resources and support services.

Evaluation and review:

The adequacy and effectiveness of the provision for evaluation and review of courses; for monitoring the on-going relevance of learning outcomes, course delivery and course standards; for reviewing course regulations and content; for monitoring improvement following evaluation and review; and for determining whether the course shall continue to be delivered.

Special Requirements

Degrees and related qualifications

The adequacy of provision of research facilities and support of staff involved in research, the levels of research activity of staff involved in the course and of ways by which the research-teaching links are made in the curriculum.

These criteria will be effective from 1 January 2009.

Glossary

Accreditation	<i>Accreditation</i> is the status awarded when an organisation has shown it is capable of delivering an approved course or assess against standards on the National Qualifications Framework.
Approval	Approval is a process of quality assuring qualifications and programmes against established criteria (see <i>approved course</i>).
Approved course	An <i>approved course</i> is a coherent programme based on clear and consistent aims, standards and assessment practices (see <i>qualification</i>).
Business Objects	NZQA reporting tool used for applications for National Qualifications Framework standards and qualifications to Framework Registration, and applications for qualifications to Registration, Approval and Accreditation.
ITP	Institute of technology or polytechnic.
New Zealand Register of Quality Assured Qualifications (the Register)	The Register is a comprehensive list of all quality assured qualifications in New Zealand, including National qualifications. All qualifications recognised by a quality assurance body are automatically included on the Register and can be viewed and compared on the <i>KiwiQuals</i> website.
New Zealand Standard Classification of Education – Field of Study (NZSCED-Field)	<i>NZSCED-Field</i> is the preferred classification code for qualifications on the Register. <i>NZSCED-Field</i> is a Ministry of Education owned classification based on a classification developed in 2001 by the Australian Bureau of Statistics which is known as the Australian Standard Classification of Education – Field of Study (<i>ASCED-Field</i>). It includes three levels of categories: broad, narrow and detailed Fields. The first, second and third pairs of digits associated with the 6-digit <i>NZSCED-Field</i> code indicate the broad, narrow and detailed Fields, respectively. The more digits a classification level has, the more detailed the educational Field is.
QA Applications	NZQA course database.
Qualification	<i>Qualification</i> is used to describe a programme of study or course. According to NZQA terminology, <i>courses</i> that are approved and accredited do not always lead to a qualification. If a course is less than 40 credits, it does not lead to a qualification. Similarly, if a course does not meet the requirements of the Register policy it cannot be approved as a <i>qualification</i> . Throughout this report, however, the term <i>qualification</i> has been used interchangeably with course.
Qualifications developer	A <i>qualifications developer</i> develops a qualification in that they combine a list of components that will lead to a qualification.

Qualification owner	A <i>qualification owner</i> is an organisation that oversees the qualification.
Quality assurance body	<i>Quality assurance bodies</i> have legislated or delegated authority for quality assurance functions. Such organisations include the Committee on University Academic Programmes of the New Zealand Vice-Chancellors' Committee, NZQA, ITP New Zealand.
Quality management system	A system of clearly defined organisational structures, processes, responsibilities and resources used to assure quality.
Register Maintenance	NZQA qualifications database (networked to Tertiary Education Commission's course and qualifications registers).
ResMan (to be replaced by FileNet)	NZQA database used for applications for qualifications to Registration, Approval and Accreditation.
Services for Tertiary Education Organisations (STEO)	The <i>STEO</i> site is run by the Ministry of Education, and is a portal for all education agencies. It is a password-controlled site that tertiary education organisations can use to access the Tertiary Education Commission course and qualifications registers, the NZSCED classification system and submit their Single Data Returns (SDR). The SDR is a source of information that Tertiary Education Commission use for funding allocation.

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