



NEW ZEALAND QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK
TĒTAURA HERE TOHU MĀTAURANGA O AOTEAROA

Guidelines for the review of qualifications at levels 1 to 6 on the New Zealand Qualifications Framework

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Section 1: Qualification reviews – purpose and responsibilities

Introduction

The New Zealand Qualifications Framework (NZQF) was established in July 2010 with a clear set of requirements for the listing of level 1 – 6 qualifications. Over time, all level 1-6 qualifications currently listed on the NZQF will be reviewed to ensure they meet those requirements.

This document sets out NZQA's expectations and requirements for the reviews of qualifications and provides guidelines to assist qualification developers with *current* qualifications listed on the NZQF to meet these requirements. It applies to those qualifications at levels 1-6 quality assured by NZQA.

This document should be read in conjunction with the:

- *Guidelines for approval of qualifications at levels 1-6 for listing on the NZQF* which can be found at: <http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/studying-in-new-zealand/nzqf/guidelines-for-listing-qualifications-on-the-nzqf/>
- *Requirements for listing and maintaining qualifications on the NZQF* which can be found at: <http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/assets/Studying-in-NZ/New-Zealand-Qualification-Framework/requirements-nzqf.pdf>
- *Policy for reviews of qualifications at levels 1-6 on the New Zealand Qualifications Framework* which can be found at: <http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/assets/Studying-in-NZ/New-Zealand-Qualification-Framework/policy-reviews-qualifications.pdf>

This document uses the term qualification developer to refer to the owners of qualifications which are listed with a status of *current* on the NZQF (qualification owners) and qualification developers who will lead the development of New Zealand qualifications to meet the listing requirements.

Purpose

Qualification reviews aim to ensure that each individual level 1 – 6 qualification remains useful and relevant and continues to meet the needs of the learners, industry and stakeholders for which it was initially developed.

Reviews are also an important mechanism for reducing the duplication and proliferation of qualifications on the NZQF.

Key points applying to each review:

- qualifications have been scheduled into groups of similar qualifications to be reviewed together. It is not intended that an individual qualification would be reviewed in isolation from the relevant group.
- the principles underpinning qualifications at levels 1-6 on the NZQF - namely strategic and needs based, practical focus on outcomes, flexibility and mutual trust and accountability - apply to the review process
- the context for each review is the wider workforce requirements of the industry, sector or community

- select stakeholders carefully. Individuals representing stakeholders will be able to speak with authority on behalf of the sector they represent. They will be credible, respected and able to take a strategic view of the workforce requirements.

Successful reviews will be those conducted in a spirit of trust, co-operation and collaboration between the participants. It may be appropriate for reviews to be jointly led, for example between an industry training organisation (ITO) and an education provider, two ITOs or other combination of organisations.

Responsibilities

The respective responsibilities of NZQA and qualification developers in the reviews of current qualifications are set out below.

- NZQA is responsible for:
 - developing, negotiating and publishing a Qualifications Review Schedule
 - triggering and tracking each qualification review
 - identifying and notifying all qualification developers (where a group of qualifications is being reviewed together)
 - considering and approving recommended actions following a review
 - providing support in developing capability in qualification development and review
 - following up and working with qualification developers who decline to participate in a scheduled review, to determine the status of their qualifications on the NZQF following the outcome of the review
- Qualification developers are responsible for:
 - planning and conducting reviews of their qualifications in accordance with the Qualifications Review Schedule
 - submitting a plan for each review to NZQA, and planning the approach to the review so that it is cost effective and appropriate for the number and range of stakeholders involved to enable their participation
 - co-ordinating and communicating with relevant stakeholders
 - liaising with NZQA if any mandatory stakeholder does not participate in a scheduled review. Mandatory stakeholders include qualification developers, relevant standard setting bodies and/or regulatory bodies, and education providers providing programmes leading to the qualification.
 - working with the industry/community to identify relevant sector leaders where these are needed to support the review
 - reporting on the results of the review and recommended changes to qualifications to NZQA for approval
 - implementing approved recommendations
 - agreeing to accept the results of the review, including recommendations to change the status of their own qualification(s)
 - nominating a delegate if they choose not to actively participate in the review

NZQA's contribution to the process

NZQA can contribute the following direct support to the review process:

- assign a NZQA staff member to each review whose role is to provide advice, monitor the progress of the review, assist with problem solving, co-ordination and arranging resources.
- provide a training workshop to explain the requirements for reviewing and listing qualifications at levels 1-6. This is expected to be especially useful at the start of a review and could be provided alongside an initial meeting with mandatory stakeholders.
- administrative support for arranging meetings etc

Costs

Qualification developers, in conjunction with stakeholders, are responsible for any costs associated with the reviews. It is expected this will normally be a contributory process with costs shared appropriately between participants.

The costs of developing new qualifications arising from the review will be borne by the developer of each qualification.

Managing challenges to the review process

There are two specific challenges that may arise during the review process.

Delay in commencing the review

In the event a scheduled review is not commenced or a plan for review not submitted within the three month period, NZQA will, in the first instance:

- follow up with the qualification developers to determine the reason
- agree the remedial action to be taken

If the remedial action is not undertaken, then NZQA may:

- refer the matter to the NZQA Risk and Compliance team for further action
- reassign responsibility for the review
- co-ordinate the review

Disputing review outcomes

As part of its guardianship of the NZQF, NZQA is responsible for qualifications listed on the NZQF and in this role is the final decision-maker on the outcome of a qualification review. It is anticipated that in the great majority of reviews there will be consensus over the outcome of the review process.

If an individual qualification owner or stakeholder proposes an outcome that NZQA is unable to accept, then NZQA will consult with the affected parties over its proposed final decision. In making its final decision, NZQA will take into account the views expressed in the consultation and will also explain its decision.

Changes to programmes leading to the new qualification

Changes to qualifications following a review will have a direct impact on any programmes leading to them. Programme owners will:

- determine whether their programme continues to meet the outcomes of the new qualification or if changes are required

and either

- make any changes required and apply to NZQA for approval to change a programme and include the relevant transition arrangements for current learners

or

- map their approved programme, demonstrating how it meets the outcomes and requirements of the new qualification and then advise NZQA.

Section 2: The review process

The following section outlines NZQA's expectations and provides guidance for qualification developers carrying out a review.

Reviews have five distinct stages:

1. Triggering the review
2. Planning the review and lodging the plan with NZQA within three months of the review being triggered
3. Conducting the review
4. Reporting on the results of the review with recommendations for qualifications. This is normally expected within six months of the review being triggered.
5. Implementing the approved changes to qualifications in accordance with the agreed timeframe

Qualification reviews are part of the lifecycle of a qualification. A flowchart linking the qualification approval and review processes is included in Appendix 1.

STAGE 1: TRIGGERING THE REVIEW

Actions

1. NZQA triggers the review when the review date is reached by formally notifying each of the qualification developers involved in the review. The notification:
 - signals the start date for the review process
 - requests a plan for the review to be lodged with NZQA
 - includes a list and the contact details of all qualification developers included in the review
 - allocates a NZQA staff member
2. NZQA begins tracking the review

Guidance

Factors triggering reviews

The following factors may trigger the review of an individual or group of qualifications:

- the review date of an individual qualification
- identified groups of qualifications where there is duplication and/or proliferation
- identified groups of qualifications with a direct relationship to each other (e.g. education and/or employment pathways)
- a request from the qualification developer or accredited user, arising from:
 - major workforce changes or social, industry and technological shifts
 - changes in legislation or government policy
 - lack of use of a qualification (e.g. no enrolments after two years)

Qualification Review Schedule

A Qualifications Review Schedule has been established for each of the years 2011 to 2014. The schedule includes the review start dates for qualifications with a status of *current* at levels 1-6 on the NZQF quality assured by NZQA.

The Schedules are published on the NZQA website and will be updated on a regular basis, and at least once each year. <http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/studying-in-new-zealand/nzqf/reviews-of-qualifications/qualifications-review-schedule/>

STAGE 2: PLANNING THE REVIEW

Actions

1. Qualification developers, usually with the NZQA liaison, decide together how the review will be led.
2. Prepare a plan for the conduct of the review that includes:
 - objectives and scope for the review
 - timelines and deliverables
 - roles and responsibilities including how decisions will be made and how the work will be undertaken
 - resources and how the costs of the review will be met
 - risks that may impact on the review
 - an outline of the approach to:
 - identifying the wider sector, industry or community workforce needs
 - assessing the need and demand for the current qualification(s)
 - addressing any issues of duplication and/or proliferation
 - involving and consulting with appropriate stakeholders
 - communicating with all stakeholders
3. Lodge the plan with NZQA within three months of the review being triggered.

Guidance

Leading the review

There are a range of possible parties who could lead the review either together or alone. These include one or more of the tertiary education organisations involved, or a recognised independent industry body or individual. In some cases, an independent party could act as a neutral facilitator, for example where there is a diverse range of tertiary education organisations and other stakeholders involved in the review.

Jointly leading a review promotes collaboration and co-operation across parts of the sector, assists in ensuring parties are able to make an equal contribution and contributes to ensuring the various perspectives are fully considered.

ITOs, with their legislated standard setting and leadership roles in relation to training, could be well placed to take on this responsibility for sectors under their gazetted coverage. A range of education providers could also be well positioned to jointly lead reviews.

It is important that the decision as to who will lead the review does not delay the review in any way.

Making decisions and undertaking the work of the review – governance and operations

During the planning for the review, participants need to establish how decisions will be made and how the qualification development work will be undertaken. This applies particularly to reviews involving a range of TEOs and a diverse group of stakeholders.

One option is to establish two distinct groups to undertake these functions.

A designated decision making (governance) group would include people who are representative, credible, and have the authority to sign-off decisions on behalf of their stakeholders. The function of the governance group is to look strategically across the sector/industry included in the review and consider the current and future workforce development needs and associated qualifications.

Guidance (continued)

A second operational or working group, formed on behalf of the governance (decision) group, could then act as the secretariat to the review, prepare papers for wider consultation and undertake the initial qualification development work. Members of this group should include people with a range of educational expertise as well as those with technical knowledge.

The plan

The plan provides the parties involved in the review and NZQA with clarity on the agreed approach, timelines, and respective roles and responsibilities. It is a central communication tool for all qualification developers and stakeholders.

A key aspect of the review is to promote participation of all participants so the approach needs to be cost effective and appropriate for the range of participants.

The plan does not require approval by NZQA. It is provided for information purposes and to enable NZQA to track and maintain oversight of the progress of the review.

Lodging the plan

The three month period is a guide as it is expected that many groups will complete and lodge their plans well before the three month period. The plan should be lodged at NZQA by emailing it to nzqfquestions@nzqa.govt.nz.

Consulting and communicating with stakeholders

There are a number of factors to consider in planning how to most effectively consult with and gather information from stakeholders including:

- the number of stakeholders involved
- their location
- the degree of national representation
- the level of established relationships/communication lines
- access to communication technology
- the type of information to be obtained

A range of cost effective means for communication and consultation can be considered. These need to reflect the nature, complexity and diversity of the review along with the type of information to be obtained. Examples of ways of gathering information include workshops, interviews, surveys, face-to-face meetings, emailing, teleconferencing, web enabled etc.

Ensure that the nature and tone of any communications between participants about the review is appropriate and reflects the collaborative approach, which is essential for a successful review.

The following models may be useful in planning stakeholder engagement:

Model 1 – *Regional stakeholder meetings held in the first instance to agree an approach and the selection of a representative group. The representative group has a number of face-to-face meetings to progress the review, with sub-groups being used to complete and report back on specific tasks. The wider stakeholder group is kept up to date on progress via a structured feedback process.*

Model 2 - *Written or verbal consultation undertaken with the appropriate stakeholders to agree who would represent them. The representative group meets via video/teleconference to progress the review, with individuals completing and reporting back on specific tasks. The wider stakeholder group is kept up to date on progress via regular email communication.*

Model 3 - *The qualification developers work with stakeholders directly via video/teleconference and email.*

STAGE 3: CONDUCTING THE REVIEW

Actions

1. Follow the plan for the review lodged with NZQA
2. Use the following steps to review the qualifications together:
 - confirm that all relevant qualifications are included
 - establish a Stakeholder Profile(s) for the review
 - map existing qualifications to workforce requirements by identifying current roles/skill sets
 - work with stakeholders to confirm current and future needs for the sector and formulate a revised suite of qualifications to meet those needs
 - determine the actions to be recommended for each qualification in the review
3. Invite all relevant stakeholders to participate in the review

Guidance

The size and scope of each review will vary depending on the number and nature of the qualifications, qualification developers and stakeholders involved. The steps described are recommended as one way to ensure the review process is credible and robust.

a) Confirm all relevant qualifications have been included

Confirm that the qualifications identified for inclusion in the review (as listed in the Qualification Review Schedule) are all those that are relevant. Identify any additional qualifications from the NZQF that may be substantially the same, or are related to those already included in the review.

b) Establish a Stakeholder Profile for the review

A Stakeholder Profile normally identifies those individuals, groups or organisations with an interest in the outcome of a qualification, confirmed as appropriate, credible and representative.

Where groups of qualifications are being reviewed together, the Stakeholder Profile needs to be sufficiently broad to appropriately cover the sector.

All relevant stakeholders are invited to participate in the review. However, stakeholders (other than mandatory stakeholders) may choose not to participate or to nominate a delegate to represent them.

Refer to *Guidelines for Listing a Qualification on the NZQF* for guidance on developing a Stakeholder Profile.

Mandatory stakeholders can choose to be involved in the review or to nominate a delegate to represent them. However, they must agree to accept the outcomes of the review and any changes in the status of their qualification(s) (for qualification developers).

c) Map existing qualifications to current roles/skill sets

It is suggested that a workforce development approach is taken to identifying the roles and the relevant qualifications that prepare people to undertake those roles within a sector. This requires a strategic view of the current and expected future needs.

Construct a clear map of the relationships between current roles/skill sets and qualifications within a sector. This map may be in the form of a schematic, table, chart or matrix.

Guidance (continued)

The map can be completed prior to stakeholder consultation and will provide:

- a foundation or starting point for the review
- background information for discussions with stakeholders
- a reference to confirm that an action for each qualification is agreed at the end of the review

Creating the map involves:

- identifying the current roles/skill sets in the sector
- arranging the roles/skill sets to reflect usual patterns of progression from entry level to advanced
- matching the existing qualifications involved in the review to the identified roles/skill sets
- identifying any:
 - roles (with or without qualifications) that are being phased out from the sector
 - new roles for which there are no qualifications
 - qualifications for which there is no associated role/skill set

d) Work with stakeholders to confirm current and future needs and formulate a suite of qualifications

Work with the relevant stakeholders from the Stakeholder Profile to:

- confirm that the roles/skill sets identified in the map are comprehensive and an accurate reflection of the current and future workforce needs of the sector
- arrange the qualifications to reflect usual patterns of progression
- use the map to:
 - identify the current and future qualification needs of the sector
 - scope each qualification for approval to develop. This includes provisional title, level, type, Strategic Purpose Statement and Outcome Statement
- confirm with stakeholders that the resulting suite of qualifications will meet the needs of the sector

The intent is to develop a map, endorsed by the wider stakeholder group, which will endure and enable new qualifications to be matched to the requirements identified in the map.

Note: It is likely that some of the qualifications included in the review will be similar to some of the proposed new qualifications.

It is recommended that rather than attempt to adapt these qualifications to the NZQF requirements, it is better to collectively develop new qualifications to meet the listing requirements.

e) Determine the action to be recommended for each reviewed qualification

Once the suite of qualifications has been confirmed with stakeholders, the reviewers decide and agree on:

- the qualification developer(s) responsible for developing each new qualification
- the timeframe for the development of each qualification
- the most appropriate action for each existing qualification and the likely timeframe for any change in status to *Expiring* or *Discontinued*
- any specific risks to be managed
- the approach to managing the transition to the suite of qualifications

STAGE 4: REPORTING THE RESULTS OF THE REVIEW WITH RECOMMENDATIONS FOR QUALIFICATIONS

Actions

1. On completion of the review, a report with recommendations for the new qualifications is prepared using NZQA's *Qualification Review Report* template, and submitted to NZQA for approval.
2. The report includes a summary of:
 - issues arising in the review leading to variations from the planned approach and a brief description of how they were managed
 - lessons learned from the review that may be useful for other reviews
 - any recommendations for other pathways, groupings or changes to types and levels of qualifications outside of the review, that have been identified through the review
 - any risks associated with transitioning to the suite of qualifications
3. A table of:
 - each qualification included in the review along with a recommendation for any change to these qualifications. This includes the proposed date for the qualification status to be changed eg from current to expiring or discontinued.
 - details of each new qualification in the new suite of qualifications and the proposed date by which development of each will be completed
4. The following evidence needs to be attached to the report:
 - final workforce map and new qualifications map
 - completed *Qualification Review Outcome: Changing the status of current qualifications* for each qualification included in the review
 - completed *Approval to Develop a Qualification* applications for each new qualification, including evidence of the need and stakeholder confirmation (NZQF 2)

Guidance

Review Report

Reports should be prepared using the *Qualification Review Report* (NZQF 5) template on the NZQA website and submitted, with supporting documents, to NZQA for approval.

The purpose of *Qualification Review Outcome: Changing the status of current qualifications* attestation (NZQF 6) is to confirm that each organisation with a qualification(s) confirms their acceptance of the new suite of qualifications arising from the review and advises NZQA of any resultant change in status to their current qualifications on the NZQF with an indicative date on which it will take effect. The *Qualification Review Outcome: Changing the status of current qualifications* template is available on the NZQA website.

The *Approval to Develop a Qualification* (NZQF 1) template is available on the NZQA website. Refer to the *Guidelines for approval of qualifications at levels 1-6 for listing on the NZQF* for guidance in completing the application.

Implementation of the plan should not begin until NZQA has approved the report and the proposed qualifications for development.

Guidance (continued)

Approval of the recommendations

The information provided in the report will be used to approve the new suite of qualifications. NZQA will apply the same quality assurance process used for the assessment of applications for *Approval to Develop a Qualification* to ensure that each new qualification meets the requirements for listing on the NZQF and that appropriate actions have been identified for all existing qualifications.

For qualifications where the status will be changed to *expiring or discontinued*, the report should state the proposed date that the relevant programme providers **anticipate** they will start using the new qualification.

It is envisaged that the approved map of the suite of qualifications will inform each TEO's business planning, as well as the development of Investment Plans for the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC).

The map will be used by NZQA and qualification developers as an indication of the future need for a qualification in a sector or industry.

STAGE 5: IMPLEMENTING THE RECOMMENDATIONS

Actions

1. Following approval of the recommendations, implementation of the changes to qualifications and development of new qualifications begins to meet the agreed timeframes.
2. NZQA tracks the progress of implementing the approved recommendations to ensure all actions are completed as agreed.

Guidance

Each new qualification should be submitted to NZQA for approval and listing on the NZQF using the templates for *Application for approval of a qualification at levels 1-6* on the NZQA website.
<http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/studying-in-new-zealand/nzqf/guidelines-for-listing-qualifications-on-the-nzqf/>

Applications will be assessed in accordance with the process set out in Section 3 of the *Guidelines for approval of qualifications at levels 1-6 for listing on the NZQF*.

Section 3: Glossary

Term	Description
<i>Assessment standard</i>	The collective term for unit standards and achievement standards listed on the NZQA Directory of Assessment Standards.
<i>Industry training organisation</i>	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.
<i>Mandatory stakeholders</i>	For the purposes of qualification reviews, all or any of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• existing qualification developers• ITOs with gazetted coverage, other standard setting bodies, and/or regulatory bodies• education providers who are currently delivering programmes leading to the award of qualifications included in the review.
<i>Programme</i>	<p>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.</p> <p>A “programme” in this document is a “course” in terms of sections 258 and 259 of the Education Act 1989. Programmes of learning must meet the Gazetted Criteria for Approval and Accreditation of Programmes</p>
<i>Qualification</i>	Formal certification for a given purpose of the achievement of specified learning outcomes to a given standard.
<i>Quality assurance body</i>	NZQA or New Zealand Vice-Chancellors’ Committee (also known as Universities New Zealand).
<i>Stakeholders</i>	Individuals, groups, or organisations with an interest (or ‘stake’) in the outcome of a qualification.
<i>Tertiary education provider</i>	All or any of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• an institution (i.e. a polytechnic, institute of technology, technical institute, community college, specialist college, university, wānanga)• a registered establishment (i.e. private training establishment that has been granted registration by NZQA)• a government training establishment• any other person or body that provides, or proposes to provide, tertiary education and that is funded through non-departmental output classes from Vote Education (e.g. adult and community education providers).
<i>Tertiary education organisation</i>	Any of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• a tertiary education provider (as above)• an industry training organisation.

Lifecycle of a qualification

