



NEW ZEALAND QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK
TE TAURA HERE TOHU MĀTAURANGA O AOTEAROA

The New Zealand Qualifications Framework

Version 2.0

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Section 1. The New Zealand Qualifications Framework

Te Taura Here Tohu Mātauranga o Aotearoa

The New Zealand Qualifications Framework (NZQF) was established, under section 253(1)(c) of the Education Act 1989, as a single unified framework on 1 July 2010.¹

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

Specifically, the NZQF:

- conveys the skills, knowledge and attributes a graduate has gained through completing a qualification
- requires the development of integrated and coherent qualifications
- enables and supports the provision of high-quality education pathways
- enhances confidence in the quality and international comparability of New Zealand qualifications
- contributes to the strengthening of Māori as a people by enhancing and advancing mātauranga Māori
- represents value for money, is sustainable and robust

This policy document outlines the general requirements for designing, developing and listing and maintaining a qualification on the NZQF.

Searching the NZQF

The NZQF contains a comprehensive list of all quality assured qualifications in New Zealand and can be searched online for accurate and current information.

The following information is available on all qualifications listed on the NZQF:

- the title, type and level of the qualification
- the credit value of the qualification
- the outcome statement (graduate profile, education and employment pathways and/or contribution to the community)
- the subject area of the qualification
- whether the status of the qualification is current, expiring or discontinued
- qualification review date
- details on the qualification developer.

NZQF users can compare different qualifications and see which providers are offering them. This assists learners when making decisions on which qualifications to undertake, and when, and where.

¹ The NZQF replaced the National Qualifications Framework and the New Zealand Register of Quality Assured Qualifications

The NZQF clearly states a qualification's level of complexity and the kinds of skills a learner could expect to gain by completing that qualification. There is also information on pathways between lower and higher level qualifications in the same subject.

Ongoing development of the NZQF

Over time, new and reviewed qualifications at levels 1-6 listed on the NZQF will have 'New Zealand' in the title of the qualification. The use of the term 'National' or a provider name in a qualifications title is being phased out as qualifications are reviewed. 'National' will be used to distinguish secondary school qualifications at levels 1-3, namely, National Certificates of Educational Achievement.

Section 2. Quality assurance arrangements

There are two quality assurance bodies responsible for approving qualifications in New Zealand. These bodies are also responsible for the quality that underpins the delivery of qualifications.

NZQA is responsible for quality assuring all non-university tertiary education organisations, and approves qualifications developed by these organisations.

The New Zealand Vice-Chancellors' Committee also known as Universities New Zealand, is responsible for quality assuring all universities, and approves qualifications developed by these organisations.

Qualification developers must seek qualification approval from the relevant quality assurance body. All qualifications must be consistent with the general listing requirements outlined in Section 3 and the requirements for maintaining a qualification listing outlined in Section 5. Qualifications at levels 1 to 6 must also meet the requirements outlined in Section 4 in order to be listed on the NZQF.

Section 3. General listing requirements for qualifications at levels 1 to 10 on the NZQF

All qualifications listed on the NZQF:

- are subject to quality assurance
- have the qualification title and details publicly available
- are defined by a qualification type and level
- are allocated a credit value
- have a subject area classification
- have a status to indicate whether the qualification is current, expiring or discontinued.

Qualification definition

A qualification recognises the achievement of a set of learning outcomes for a particular purpose through formal certification.

Qualification types and levels

All quality assured qualifications listed on the NZQF fit into a qualification type. Each qualification type is defined by an agreed set of criteria which includes the level at which the qualification is listed and the number of credits required at each level. The definitions for qualification types are provided in Table 1 (Section 6).

The NZQF has ten levels. The level descriptors are provided in Table 2 (Section 6). Levels are based on complexity, with level one the least complex and level ten the most complex. All qualifications on the NZQF are assigned one of the ten levels. It is possible for qualifications to include credit achieved at levels above and below the overall level at which the qualification is listed.

Level descriptors and qualification types on the NZQF

LEVEL	NAMING SEQUENCE
10	Doctoral Degree
9	Master's Degrees
8	Postgraduate Diplomas and Certificates, Bachelor Honours Degree
7	Bachelor's Degrees, Graduate Diplomas and Certificates
6	Diplomas
5	
4	Certificates
3	
2	
1	

Outcome statements

All qualifications listed on the NZQF contain outcome statements which describe the knowledge, skills and attributes of a graduate. The outcome statement is used by prospective employers and other tertiary education organisations, and for comparing qualifications. Different learners will achieve the outcomes in different ways, so outcome statements indicate the minimum achievement expected from a qualification.

Each outcome statement must include information on:

- **Graduate profiles** that identify the expected learning outcomes of a qualification. This is captured in notions of what a learner will know and understand and be able to do when they achieve the qualification.
- **Education pathways** that identify other qualifications that a graduate could enrol into after completing this qualification. Where qualifications are standalone, and do not prepare graduates for further study, the outcome statement should make this clear.
- **Employment pathways** or contributions to the community that identify the areas in which a graduate may be qualified to work, or the contribution they may make to their community.

Credit value

All qualifications on the NZQF have a credit value. The credit value relates to the amount of learning in the qualification.

In determining the amount of learning in a qualification, a qualification developer estimates how long it would typically take a person to achieve the stated outcomes in the context specified and to demonstrate that achievement through assessment. This determines the credit value for a qualification. One credit is equal to ten notional learning hours.

Notional learning hours include:

- direct contact time with teachers and trainers ('directed learning')
- time spent in studying, doing assignments, and undertaking practical tasks ('self-directed' or 'on-task' learning)
- time spent in assessment.

A qualification developer must be able to explain any significant variance in credit values in relation to similar qualifications.

Subject area classifications

All qualifications on the NZQF are assigned a six-digit code from the New Zealand Standard Classification of Education (NZSCED) classification system. The NZSCED classifies a qualification into a subject area, which can be used when searching for qualifications in an area of interest. Information about the NZSCED classification system is available from the Ministry of Education website at www.minedu.govt.nz.

Status

All qualifications listed on the NZQF must display and maintain clear information on the status using the following definitions:

Current

Qualifications that are current are those which are listed on the NZQF and can be offered by tertiary education organisations.

Expiring

Qualifications which are expiring are those which are either being replaced with a new qualification or the decision has been made for them to be closed. This will normally be as a result of a review.

The qualification may continue to be available to existing individuals while they complete their programme, but no new learners would be able to enrol. A time limit will apply to the expiry period.

Discontinued

Qualifications designated as discontinued will no longer be available or awarded.

Section 4. Specific requirements for listing NZQF qualifications at levels 1 to 6

The following listing requirements have been developed by NZQA for listing qualifications at Levels 1-6 on the NZQF. The requirements exclude university qualifications at these levels.

Applying to list a qualification on the NZQF

- LR1. A qualification developer seeking to list a qualification on the NZQF must apply to NZQA in two distinct stages and meet the requirements for:
1. pre-development approval must include all requirements specified in LR2 (a – h, and l)
 2. final approval and listing a qualification must include all requirements in LR2 (a – l).
- LR2. To be listed on the NZQF, a qualification must contain the following information that meets the requirements of the specified listing requirement:
- a. title (LR3 – 5)
 - b. qualification type (LR6)
 - c. level (LR7)
 - d. credits (may be a range within defined parameters) (LR8)
 - e. New Zealand Standard Classification of Education (NZSCED) code (LR9)
 - f. name and legal status of the qualification developer (LR10)
 - g. a statement of strategic purpose (LR11)
 - h. a qualification outcome statement (LR12)
 - i. award of the qualification (LR13 – 14)
 - j. period for review (LR15)
 - k. a specification which contains mandatory and optional conditions for programmes leading to the award of the qualification (LR16 – 18)
 - l. stakeholder support for the qualification (LR19 – 21).

Qualification title

- LR3. A qualification listed on the NZQF must have a title where the generic stem of the title begins with the legally protected term ‘New Zealand’, followed by its qualification type and is completed by a designator, which identifies its main discipline or subject field, and the level. The title may include other qualifiers, such as optional discipline and focus qualifiers.
- LR4. Qualification titles may include strands that recognise achievement of specialities.
- LR5. Names of trademarked products, training and assessment material, tertiary education organisations, or commercial organisations are not permissible terms within the title.

Qualification type, level, credits and classification

- LR6. Specify the qualification type in accordance with the relevant qualification type definition.
- LR7. Specify the level on the NZQF of the qualification in accordance with the relevant level descriptor.
- LR8. Specify the number of credits required to complete the qualification where one credit is equivalent to ten hours notional learning.
- LR9. Assign a six-digit NZSCED classification code.

Qualification developer

- LR10. A qualification must be developed by one or more organisations that NZQA accepts as a legal entity.

Statement of strategic purpose

- LR11. The statement of strategic purpose clearly states the qualification's use and relevance to learners, industry and the communities. It is developed from identification of the need for the qualification and must demonstrate the qualification is substantially different to other qualifications listed on the NZQF.

Qualification outcome statement

- LR12. The qualification clearly and concisely states information about its outcomes. It contains a graduate profile that clearly describes the skills, knowledge and application within outcome statements and expected education and employment pathways or contribution to the community resulting from achievement of the qualification.

Award of NZQF qualifications at levels 1 to 6

- LR13. NZQF qualifications at levels 1 to 6 may be awarded by NZQA, the qualification developer, the programme owner, the industry training organisation arranging training leading to the qualification in the industry for which it is recognised under section 5 of the Industry Training Act 1992; or by any education provider accredited under section 259 of the Education Act 1989 to deliver a programme leading to the qualification.
- LR14. The formal document certifying the award of an NZQF qualification bears the NZQF logo, which indicates the qualification is a quality assured New Zealand qualification. It may also include the name or logo of the qualification developer and/or other awarding body.

Period of review

- LR15. The qualification developer specifies the period for the review, which must be no longer than five years after listing the qualification on the NZQF or the previous review.

Specification

LR16. The qualification specification contains mandatory and optional conditions for programmes leading to the award of the qualification. The qualification must normally be able to be delivered in a range of contexts and achieved through a range of pathways.

LR17. Mandatory conditions include:

- quality assurance arrangements to ensure consistency of outcomes in the graduate profile
- arrangements for credit transfer and recognition of prior learning
- pre-requisites to meet regulatory body or legislative requirements such as for health and safety (where applicable)
- critical standards from the Directory of Assessment Standards, or regulatory body or industry standards, mapped to outcomes in the graduate profile (where applicable)
- the minimum standard of achievement and standards for grade endorsements such as merit or excellence (where applicable).

LR18. Optional conditions may include:

- entry requirements including pathways, minimum literacy level
- structure of the programme, including the sequence of critical standards or graduate profile outcomes
- the context for delivery or assessment
- other requirements such as the maximum time for completion and practicum.

Evidence of stakeholder involvement and support

LR19. Individuals and/or organisations with an interest or ‘stake’ in the outcome of the qualification must confirm the need at a national level for the qualification and participate in and endorse the qualification outcomes.

LR20. Mandatory stakeholders include the industry training organisations with gazetted coverage, or other standard setting bodies, regulatory bodies, and the education providers who may or are currently delivering a programme leading to the qualification.

LR21. Where the qualification developer can show exceptional circumstances, NZQA may waive the requirements of LR19.

Section 5. Maintaining a qualification listing on the NZQF

Qualifications listed on the NZQF are subject to ongoing reviews to ensure each qualification remains useful and relevant and continues to meet the needs of the learners, industry and stakeholders for which it was initially developed.

NZQA, as part of its guardianship of the NZQF, is responsible for qualifications listed on the NZQF and in this role reserves the right to amend the status of qualifications on the NZQF. Examples of situations where this could apply include:

- following changes in the circumstances of the qualification developer such as a poor external evaluation result
- the outcome of a review, where possible this would be done following consultation with the relevant qualification developers and providers.

Section 6. Qualification definitions and levels descriptors

The following definitions of each qualification type apply to all qualifications listed on the NZQF. Table 1 presents a summary of the definitions and Table 2 presents the levels descriptors for the ten NZQF levels.

Certificate level 1

Purpose

A certificate at level 1 qualifies individuals with basic knowledge and skills for work, further learning and/or community involvement.

Outcomes

A graduate of a level 1 certificate is able to:

- demonstrate basic general and/or foundation knowledge
- apply basic skills required to carry out simple tasks
- apply basic solutions to simple problems
- apply literacy and numeracy skills for participation in everyday life
- work in a highly structured context
- require some responsibility for own learning
- interact with others

Credit requirements

This certificate is listed at level 1 and must comprise a minimum of 40 credits.

Certificate level 2

Purpose

A certificate at level 2 qualifies individuals with introductory knowledge and skills for a field(s)/areas of work or study.

Outcomes

A graduate of a level 2 certificate is able to:

- demonstrate basic factual and/or operational knowledge of a field of work or study
- apply known solutions to familiar problems
- apply standard processes relevant to the field of work or study
- apply literacy and numeracy skills relevant to the role in the field of work or study
- work under general supervision
- require some responsibility for own learning and performance
- collaborate with others.

Credit requirements

This certificate is listed at level 2 and must comprise a minimum of 40 credits.

Certificate level 3

Purpose

A certificate at level 3 qualifies individuals with knowledge and skills for a specific role(s) within fields/areas of work and/or preparation for further study.

Outcomes

A graduate of a level 3 certificate is able to:

- demonstrate some operational and theoretical knowledge in a field of work or study
- select from and apply a range of known solutions to familiar problems
- apply a range of standard processes relevant to the field of work or study
- apply a range of communication skills relevant to the role in the field of work or study
- apply literacy and numeracy skills relevant to the role in the field of work or study
- work under limited supervision
- require major responsibility for own learning and performance
- adapt own behaviour when interacting with others
- contribute to group performance.

Credit requirements

This certificate is listed at level 3 and must comprise a minimum of 40 credits.

Certificate level 4

Purpose

A certificate at level 4 qualifies individuals to work or study in broad or specialised field(s)/areas.

Outcomes

A graduate of a level 4 certificate is able to:

- demonstrate broad operational and theoretical knowledge in a field of work or study
- select and apply solutions to familiar and sometimes unfamiliar problems
- select and apply a range of standard and non-standard processes relevant to the field of work or study
- apply a range of communication skills relevant to the field of work or study
- demonstrate the self-management of learning and performance under broad guidance
- demonstrates some responsibility for performance of others.

Credit requirements

This certificate is listed at level 4 and must comprise a minimum of 40 credits.

Certificate level 5

Purpose

A certificate at level 5 qualifies individuals with theoretical and/or technical knowledge and skills within an aspect(s) of a specific field of work or study.

Outcomes

A graduate of a level 5 certificate is able to:

- demonstrate broad operational or technical and theoretical knowledge within an aspect(s) of a specific field of work or study
- select and apply a range of solutions to familiar and sometimes unfamiliar problems
- select and apply a range of standard and non-standard processes relevant to the field of work or study
- demonstrate complete self-management of learning and performance within defined contexts
- demonstrate some responsibility for the management of learning and performance of others.

Credit requirements

This certificate is listed at level 5 and must comprise a minimum of 40 credits

Diploma level 5

Purpose

A diploma at level 5 qualifies individuals with theoretical and/or technical knowledge and skills within a specific field of work or study.

Outcomes

A graduate of a level 5 diploma is able to:

- demonstrate broad operational or technical and theoretical knowledge within a specific field of work or study
- select and apply a range of solutions to familiar and sometimes unfamiliar problems
- select and apply a range of standard and non-standard processes relevant to the field of work or study
- demonstrate complete self-management of learning and performance within defined contexts
- demonstrate some responsibility for the management of learning and performance of others.

Credit requirements

This diploma is listed at level 5. It must contain 72 credits at level 5 and have at least 120 of all credits contributing to the qualification at level 4 or above.

Certificate level 6

Purpose

A certificate at level 6 qualifies individuals with theoretical and/or technical knowledge and skills within an aspect(s) of a specialised/strategic context.

Outcomes

A graduate of a level 6 certificate is able to:

- demonstrate specialised technical or theoretical knowledge with depth within an aspect(s) of a field of work or study
- analyse and generate solutions to familiar and unfamiliar problems
- select and apply a range of standard and non-standard processes relevant to the field of work or study
- demonstrate complete self-management of learning and performance within dynamic contexts
- demonstrate responsibility for leadership within dynamic contexts.

Credit requirements

This certificate is listed at level 6 and must comprise a minimum of 40 credits.

Diploma level 6

Purpose

A diploma at level 6 qualifies individuals with theoretical and/or technical knowledge and skills in specialised/strategic contexts.

Outcomes

A graduate of a level 6 diploma programme is able to:

- demonstrate specialised technical or theoretical knowledge with depth in a field of work or study
- analyse and generate solutions to familiar and unfamiliar problems
- select and apply a range of standard and non-standard processes relevant to the field of work or study
- demonstrate complete self-management of learning and performance within dynamic contexts
- demonstrate responsibility for leadership within dynamic contexts.

Credit requirements

This diploma is listed at level 6. It must contain 72 credits at level 6 and have at least 120 of all credits contributing to the qualification at level 5 or above.

Certificate level 7

Purpose

A certificate at level 7 qualifies individuals with specialised and technical knowledge and skills within an aspect(s) of a professional context.

Outcomes

A graduate of a level 7 certificate is able to:

- demonstrate specialised technical or theoretical knowledge with depth within an aspect(s) of one or more fields of work or study
- analyse and generate solutions to unfamiliar and sometimes complex problems
- select, adapt and apply a range of processes relevant to the field of work or study
- demonstrate advanced generic skills and/or specialist knowledge and skills in a professional context or field of study.

Credit requirements

This certificate is listed at level 7 and must comprise a minimum of 40 credits.

Diploma level 7

Purpose

A diploma at level 7 qualifies individuals with specialised and technical knowledge and skills within a professional context.

Outcomes

A graduate of a level 7 diploma is able to:

- demonstrate specialised technical or theoretical knowledge with depth in one or more fields of work or study
- analyse and generate solutions to unfamiliar and sometimes complex problems
- select, adapt and apply a range of processes relevant to the field of work or study
- demonstrate advanced generic skills and/or specialist knowledge and skills in a professional context or field of study.

Credit requirements

This diploma is listed at level 7. It must contain 72 credits at level 7 and have at least 120 of all credits contributing to the qualification at level 5 or above.

Bachelor Degree

Purpose

A Bachelor Degree provides individuals with a systematic and coherent introduction to a body of knowledge of a recognised major subject² (or subjects, in the case of a double degree or a double major) as well as to problem-solving and associated basic techniques of self-directed work and learning.

A Bachelor Degree involves at least one sequential study programme in which content is progressively developed such that it might form a basis for postgraduate study and/or professional practice.

Bachelor Degrees are taught mainly by people engaged in research³, see s254 of the Education Act 1989.

Entry

A programme of study leading to a Bachelor Degree builds on prior study, work or experience, and is open to those who have met the specified entrance requirements, normally at level 3 on the NZQF.

Outcomes

A graduate of a Bachelor Degree is able to:

- demonstrate intellectual independence, critical thinking and analytic rigour
- engage in self-directed learning
- demonstrate knowledge and skills related to the ideas, principles, concepts, chief research methods and problem-solving techniques of a recognised major subject
- demonstrate the skills needed to acquire, understand and assess information from a range of sources
- demonstrate communication and collaborative skills.

Credit requirements

A Bachelor Degree requires a minimum of 360 credits from levels 5 to 7. Some Bachelor Degrees, notably in professional fields such as engineering, the health sciences and law, encompass additional credits and may require a longer period of study. For example, an eight-semester (four-year) degree would normally be equivalent to 480 credits.

Of the credits required for a Bachelor Degree, a minimum of 72 credits must be at level 7 or higher. The degree should specify a spread of credit across levels, so that the qualification demonstrates progression, reflects the requirements of the degree definition and achieves the associated learning outcomes in a way that is appropriate to the subject area.

² A major is defined by Universities New Zealand as a substantial component of a degree (usually at least one-third and often consisting of one subject only) selected by the individual, in accordance with the regulations, as the principal area of study for the degree. In addition, a major normally includes outcomes at the highest level of the degree.

³ Research is an intellectually controlled investigation that leads to advances in knowledge through the discovery and codification of new information or the development of further understanding about existing information, and practice (*Approval and Accreditation of Courses leading to Degrees and Related Qualifications, 2003* or *CUAP Functions and Procedures 2009-2010*).

Relationship with other qualifications

A person who holds a Bachelor Degree might be eligible to enrol in a Postgraduate qualification.

Graduate Certificate

Purpose

A Graduate Certificate is designed primarily as a vehicle for degree graduates to pursue further study at an advanced undergraduate level. The Graduate Certificate is typically designed as a bridging qualification to postgraduate study for individuals developing educational, professional or vocational knowledge in a new discipline, profession or subject area and/or as a broadening or deepening of skills or knowledge already gained in an undergraduate qualification.

Entry

Entry is open to degree graduates. However, subject to the regulations of the award, those who have been able to demonstrate equivalent practical, professional or educational experience of an appropriate kind may be granted admission.

Outcomes

In addition to the Bachelor Degree outcomes, a person with a Graduate Certificate is able to demonstrate some outcomes of a Bachelor Degree in a new area of study

Credit requirements

The Graduate Certificate requires a minimum of 60 credits, with a minimum of 40 at level 7 or above.

Relationship with other qualifications

A Graduate Certificate may provide the basis for postgraduate study.

Graduate Diploma

Purpose

A Graduate Diploma allows degree graduates to pursue a significant body of study at an advanced undergraduate level. The Diploma is typically designed as a bridging qualification to postgraduate study as well as broadening knowledge and skills in a familiar subject or discipline, or developing knowledge in a new area.

Entry

Entry is open to degree graduates. However, subject to the regulations of the award, those who have been able to demonstrate equivalent practical, professional or educational experience of an appropriate kind may be granted admission.

Outcomes

In addition to the Bachelor Degree outcomes, a person with a Graduate Diploma is able to demonstrate outcomes of a Bachelor Degree in a new area of study.

Credit requirements

A Graduate Diploma requires a minimum of 120 credits, of which 72 credits must be at level 7 or above.

Relationship with other qualifications

A Graduate Diploma may provide the basis for postgraduate study.

Bachelor Honours Degree

Purpose

A Bachelor Honours Degree recognises distinguished study at level 8. It may either be a degree in itself, or a discrete postgraduate degree following a Bachelor Degree.

The award of honours recognises outstanding achievement, meritorious achievement or a pass; these may be termed first class honours, second class honours: first or second divisions, and third class honours.

Entry

Entry to honours study is normally based on achievement of above average performance in the credits within the Bachelor Degree that are relevant to the proposed honours study.

Outcomes

A graduate of a Bachelor Honours Degree is able to:

- engage in self-directed learning and advanced study
- demonstrate intellectual independence, analytic rigour, and the ability to understand and evaluate new knowledge and ideas
- demonstrate the ability to identify topics for original research, plan and conduct research, analyse results, and communicate the findings to the satisfaction of subject experts.

Credit requirements

A Bachelor Honours Degree may be either a 480-credit degree, or a discrete 120-credit degree following a Bachelor Degree.

The degree has a minimum of 120 credits at level 8, with a research component that represents at least 30 credits at that level.

Relationship with other qualifications

Achieved to an appropriate standard, a Bachelor Honours Degree should prepare graduates for admission to further postgraduate study.

Note:

Where the Honours Degree is a 480-credit (or more) programme, it must provide an exit point at the end of the study that meets the requirements for a Bachelor Degree.

Some Bachelor Honours Degrees (for example Bachelor of Laws with Honours), approved prior to 1 January 2006, have a minimum of 60 credits at level 8. These qualifications will be grand-parented under previous rules.

Research in the context of a Bachelor Honours Degree develops an individual's ability to design and undertake a project under supervision, and to report on this in an appropriate way. It sharpens the individual's analytical and communication skills and provides a supported introduction to planning, conducting and reporting on the type of independent research that may be undertaken at higher levels.

Postgraduate Certificate

Purpose

The Postgraduate Certificate is designed to extend and deepen an individual's knowledge and skills.

The Postgraduate Certificate involves credits from a specified subject and cognate areas. It recognises continuing professional development or academic achievement in advance of a Bachelor degree in the same area as the individual's original degree or Graduate Certificate or Diploma.

Entry

Postgraduate Certificates require either a Bachelor Degree or Graduate Certificate or Diploma in a cognate subject, or relevant skills and knowledge acquired through appropriate work or professional experience.

Outcomes

A graduate of a Postgraduate Certificate is able to show evidence of advanced knowledge about a specialist field of enquiry or professional practice.

Credit requirements

The Postgraduate Certificate requires a minimum of 60 credits at level 8.

Relationship with other qualifications

A Postgraduate Certificate provides the basis for further postgraduate study.

Postgraduate Diploma

Purpose

A Postgraduate Diploma is designed to extend and deepen an individual's knowledge and skills by building on attainment in the principal subject(s) of the qualifying degree, graduate diploma or graduate certificate. A Postgraduate Diploma prepares an individual for independent research and scholarship in the principal subject of the diploma. A Postgraduate Diploma may be awarded with distinction.

Entry

An individual for the Postgraduate Diploma in a specified subject or, where appropriate, a related area will normally have completed all requirements of the relevant Bachelor Degree or Graduate Certificate or Diploma, or who is deemed to have acquired the relevant skills and knowledge through appropriate work or professional experience, at an additional level.

Outcomes

A graduate of a Postgraduate Diploma is able to:

- show evidence of advanced knowledge about a specialist field of enquiry or professional practice.
- engage in rigorous intellectual analysis, criticism and problem-solving.

Credit requirements

The Postgraduate Diploma requires a minimum of 120 credits from levels 7 and above, with a minimum of 72 credits from level 8.

Relationship with other qualifications

A person who holds a Postgraduate Diploma may be eligible to enrol in a Master's Degree

Master's Degree

Purpose

A Master's degree qualifies individuals who apply an advanced body of knowledge in a range of contexts for research, a pathway for further learning, professional practice and/or scholarship.

Master's Degrees usually build on a Bachelor Degree, Graduate Diploma, Bachelor Honours Degree or a Postgraduate Diploma. They may also build on extensive professional experience of an appropriate kind. Their outcomes are demonstrably in advance of undergraduate study, and require individuals to engage in research and/or advanced scholarship.

Master's Degrees are constituted in one discipline or coherent programme of study. They may be undertaken by taught courses or research, or by a combination of both.

Credit requirements

The Master's Degree must include a minimum of 40 credits at level 9 with the remainder at level 8. It comprises at least 240 credits in total, except where it builds on 4 years of prior study at Bachelor Degree level or above, in which case it can be fewer than 240, but no fewer than 120, credits.

Master's Degrees are structured in three principal ways:

By thesis or primarily by thesis

Entry to a Master's Degree by thesis is normally based on a bachelor honours degree or a postgraduate diploma in the same field of study. The degree includes 120 credits of which at least 90 credits (at level 9) consists of a research project presented in the form of a thesis, dissertation, substantial research paper or scholarly creative work.

By coursework and thesis

Entry to a Master's Degree by coursework and thesis is normally based on an undergraduate degree in the same field of study. The degree includes 240 credits of which at least 90 credits (at level 9) are in the form of a thesis, dissertation, substantial research paper or scholarly creative work and of which up to 150 credits are from coursework.

By coursework

Entry to a Master's Degree by coursework worth 120 to 240 credits is normally based on an undergraduate degree. The degree is achieved through coursework consisting of courses, project work and research in varying combinations. It may build on undergraduate study in the same academic field, or it may build on the more generic graduate attributes of an undergraduate degree in other fields, or in some cases on relevant professional experience. Master's Degrees that build on generic attributes and/or experience (often called "conversion Master's") are usually in professional fields and are recognised as appropriate professional preparation by the profession or industry concerned.

Entry

Providers of courses leading to Master's qualifications are responsible for establishing entry requirements. The minimum entry qualification for a 240-credit Master's Degree is a

Bachelor Degree or equivalent⁴. For a Master's Degree of fewer than 240 credits, normally the minimum entry qualification is a Bachelor Honours Degree or a Postgraduate Diploma or an undergraduate degree followed by relevant professional experience.

An applicant who holds either a Bachelor Honours Degree or a Postgraduate Certificate or Postgraduate Diploma may be exempted from all or some of the taught courses, in a 240 credit degree.

Outcomes

A graduate of a Master's Degree is able to:

- show evidence of advanced knowledge about a specialist field of enquiry or professional practice
- demonstrate mastery of sophisticated theoretical subject matter
- evaluate critically the findings and discussions in the literature
- research, analyse and argue from evidence
- work independently and apply knowledge to new situations
- engage in rigorous intellectual analysis, criticism and problem-solving.

If a Master's Degree includes a component of supervised research of not fewer than 90 credits at level 9, the graduate is also able to:

- demonstrate a high order of skill in the planning, execution and completion of a piece of original research or creative scholarly work, and
- apply such skills learned during the study programme to new situations.
- The research should be completed to internationally recognised standards and demonstrate that the graduate has a capacity for independent thinking.

Relationship with other qualifications

A person who holds a Master's Degree achieved to an appropriate standard and including a research component of at least 90 credits may be considered for admission to a programme of advanced study and/or original research leading to a Doctoral Degree.

Doctoral Degree

The Doctoral Degree is a research degree whereby the individual becomes an increasingly independent scholar who makes a substantial and original contribution to knowledge.

It is normally the culmination of study which begins at the bachelor level and reaches a stage beyond the masters. For the PhD/DPhil and the named doctorate (e.g. D Mus), the development takes place under the guidance of recognised experts in the field of study and under circumstances that allow the individual access to appropriate research resources.

The contribution to knowledge is judged by independent experts applying contemporary international standards of the discipline. The hallmark will be the individual's capacity

⁴ Admission as an individual for a Master's Degree is based on the evaluation of documentary evidence (including the academic record) of the applicant's ability to undertake postgraduate study in a specialist field of enquiry or professional practice. The individual must have attained, through formal study, professional or other experience, a high order of knowledge about the principal subject(s), and have demonstrated interest in, and an aptitude for, scholarship.

for substantial independent research or scholarly creative activity as attested by his/her educational institution and/or as demonstrated by submitted work.

The major component of all doctorates is original research. The body of work that leads to the award of a doctorate will be one or more of the following:

- a thesis (the PhD/DPhil)
- creative work in the visual or performing arts (the PhD/DPhil)
- a thesis or equivalent creative work in combination with coursework (the named doctorate)
- a creative work in the visual or performing arts (the named doctorate) with a thesis (the named doctorate)
- published work.

Credit requirements

A Doctoral Degree requires at least 360 credits and is listed at level 10.

The following types of Doctoral Degree are recognised.

Doctorate of Philosophy (PhD/DPhil)

A thesis constitutes the entire body of work on which the award of the qualification will be judged. Coursework may also be prescribed for the individual, but this will only contribute to the preparation for research and acceptance into the doctoral programme. Where appropriate, individuals may present a creative work as part of the thesis requirement.

Doctorate in a specified field or discipline - the named doctorate (e.g. EdD or the DMus)

For a doctorate in a specified field, coursework may contribute to the assessed programme of study, but research or the scholarly creative activity and the associated thesis must occupy at least two full-time academic years and contribute not less than two-thirds of the overall credit for the degree.

The coursework, which is to be at a standard in advance of that expected for a masters paper, must be part of a coherent programme with the research work, and should normally cover no more than one full-time academic year.

An individual for a named doctorate must gain a passing grade in both the coursework and the thesis or its creative work equivalent.

Higher Doctorate (e.g. the DSc or the DLitt)

Higher Doctorates are awarded for independent work of special excellence, as judged by leading international experts, which is completed before a person makes an application to enrol for the degree. Individuals will normally be expected to have completed at least ten years of independent work and to have published extensively.

Publication will normally be in scholarly books and/or in reputable international journals. Individuals in the visual or performing arts will have made equally outstanding contributions in their creative work.

Table 1: Summary of qualification definitions - levels 1-10

	Certificate 1	Certificate 2	Certificate 3	Certificate 4	Certificate 5	Diploma 5	Certificate 6	Diploma 6	Certificate 7
Purpose	To qualify individuals with basic knowledge and skills for work, further learning and/or community involvement	To qualify individuals with introductory knowledge and skills for a field(s)/areas of work or study	To qualify individuals with knowledge and skills for a specific role(s) within fields/areas of work and/or preparation for further study	To qualify individuals to work or study in broad or specialised field(s) / areas	To qualify individuals with theoretical and/or technical knowledge and skills within an aspect(s) of a specific field of work or study	To qualify individuals with theoretical and/or technical knowledge and skills within a specific field of work or study	To qualify individuals with theoretical and/or technical knowledge and skills within an aspect(s) of a specialised / strategic context	To qualify individuals with theoretical and/or technical knowledge and skills in specialised / strategic contexts	To qualify individuals with specialised and technical knowledge and skills within an aspect(s) of a professional context
Credits	A minimum of 40 credits at level 1 or above	A minimum of 40 credits at level 2 or above	A minimum of 40 credits at level 3 or above	A minimum of 40 credits at level 4 or above	A minimum of 40 credits at level 5 or above	A minimum of 120 credits from level 4 or above, including at least 72 credits at level 5.	A minimum of 40 credits at level 6 or above	A minimum of 120 credits from level 5 or above, including at least 72 credits at level 6	A minimum of 40 credits at level 7 or above

	Diploma 7	Bachelors 7	Graduate Certificate 7	Graduate Diploma 7	Bachelor Honours 8	Postgraduate Certificate 8	Postgraduate Diploma 8	Master's 9	Doctoral 10
Purpose	To qualify individuals with specialised and technical knowledge and skills within a professional context	To provide individuals with a systematic and coherent introduction to a body of knowledge of a recognised major subject (or subjects, in the case of a double degree or a double major) as well as to problem-solving and associated basic techniques of self-directed work and learning	To act primarily as a vehicle for degree graduates to pursue further study at an advanced undergraduate level	To act as a vehicle for degree graduates to pursue a significant body of study at an advanced undergraduate level	To recognise distinguished study at level 8	To extend and deepen an individual's knowledge and skills	To extend and deepen an individual's knowledge and skills by building on attainment in the principal subject(s) of the qualifying degree	To qualify individuals who apply an advanced body of knowledge in a range of contexts for research, a pathway for further learning, professional practice and/or scholarship	To become an increasingly independent scholar who makes a substantial and original contribution to knowledge
Credits	A minimum of 120 credits from level 5 or above, including at least 72 credits at level 7	A minimum of 360 credits from levels 5 to 7, including at least 72 credits at level 7	A minimum of 60 credits, including at least 40 credits at level 7 or above	A minimum of 120 credits, including at least 72 credits at level 7 or above	A minimum of 120 credits at level 8, with a research component that represents at least 30 credits at that level	A minimum of 60 credits at level 8	A minimum of 120 credits from levels 7 and above, including at least 72 credits at level 8	At least 240 credits, except where it builds on 4 years prior study at Bachelor Degree level of above, in which case it can be fewer than 240, but no fewer than 120 credits. The Masters Degree must comprise a minimum of 40 credits at level 9 with the remainder at level 8	At least 360 credits.

Table 2: NZQF Level Descriptors

Dimension	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	Level 6	Level 7	Level 8	Level 9	Level 10
Knowledge	Basic general and/or foundation knowledge	Basic factual and/or operational knowledge of a field of work or study	Some operational and theoretical knowledge in a field of work or study	Broad operational and theoretical knowledge in a field of work or study	Broad operational or technical and theoretical knowledge within a specific field of work or study	Specialised technical or theoretical knowledge with depth in a field of work or study	Specialised technical or theoretical knowledge with depth in one or more fields of work or study	Advanced technical and/or theoretical knowledge in a discipline or practice, involving a critical understanding of the underpinning key principles	Highly specialised knowledge, some of which is at the forefront of knowledge, and a critical awareness of issues in a field of study or practice	Knowledge at the most advanced frontier of a field of study or professional practice
Skills	Apply basic solutions to simple problems Apply basic skills required to carry out simple tasks	Apply known solutions to familiar problems Apply standard processes relevant to the field of work or study	Select and apply from a range of known solutions to familiar problems Apply a range of standard processes relevant to the field of work or study	Select and apply solutions to familiar and sometimes unfamiliar problems Select and apply a range of standard and non-standard processes relevant to the field of work or study	Select and apply a range of solutions to familiar and sometimes unfamiliar problems Select and apply a range of standard and non-standard processes relevant to the field of work or study	Analyse and generate solutions to familiar and unfamiliar problems Select and apply a range of standard and non-standard processes relevant to the field of work or study	Analyse, generate solutions to unfamiliar and sometimes complex problems Select, adapt and apply a range of processes relevant to the field of work or study	Analyse, generate solutions to familiar and sometimes unpredictable problems Evaluate and apply a range of processes relevant to the field of work or study	Develop and apply new skills and techniques to existing or emerging problems Mastery of the field of study or practice to an advanced level	Critical reflection on existing knowledge or practice and the creation of new knowledge.
Application [of knowledge and skills]	Highly structured contexts Requiring some responsibility for own learning Interacting with others	General supervision Requiring some responsibility for own learning and performance Collaborating with others	Limited supervision Requiring major responsibility for own learning and performance Adapting own behaviour when interacting with others Contributing to group performance	Self-management of learning and performance under broad guidance Some responsibility for performance of others	Complete self-management of learning and performance within defined contexts Some responsibility for the management of learning and performance of others	Complete self-management of learning and performance within dynamic contexts Responsibility for leadership within dynamic contexts	Advanced generic skills and/or specialist knowledge and skills in a professional context or field of study Some responsibility for integrity of profession or discipline	Developing identification with a profession and/or discipline through application of advanced generic skills and/or specialist knowledge and skills Some responsibility for integrity of profession or discipline	Independent application of highly specialised knowledge and skills within a discipline or professional practice Some responsibility for leadership within the profession or discipline	Sustained commitment to the professional integrity and to the development of new ideas or practices at the forefront of discipline or professional practice