

# QUALIFICATIONS RECOGNITION SERVICES

## PRINCIPLES AND POLICIES

### 1 QUALIFICATION RECOGNITION

Under the Education Act 1989, the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) functions<sup>1</sup> include the recognition of overseas educational and vocational qualifications.

Qualifications recognition is where a qualification gained in a country other than New Zealand is evaluated against the New Zealand Qualifications Framework. This process enables people to have qualifications gained in other countries recognised in New Zealand for purposes such as employment (including professional registration), admission to further education and immigration.

In New Zealand, all qualifications need to meet the definition of a qualification on the New Zealand Qualifications Framework. A qualification recognises the achievement of a set of learning outcomes for a particular purpose through formal certification. In order to be listed as a qualification on the New Zealand Qualifications Framework, a qualification must meet the following criteria:

- the programme of learning is offered by a quality assured, accredited provider of higher education in the country in which it is awarded
- the programme of learning is complete, moderated, coherent, and a minimum of 40 NZQF credits (approximately one semester of full-time study).

In evaluating foreign qualifications, NZQA considers these criteria, and provides applicants with a Recognition Statement which records the outcome of the evaluation of the applicant's foreign qualification(s) against the New Zealand Qualifications Framework.

### 2 PRINCIPLES

#### 2.1 NZQA offers a **fair and equitable service**:

NZQA provides holders of qualifications gained in other countries with adequate access, upon application, to an evaluation of their qualifications against the New Zealand Qualifications Framework without discrimination.

This includes (and is not limited to) racial, religious, political or other opinion, sexual, gender, colour, disability, language, national, ethnic or social origin, association with a national minority, property, birth or other status, or on the grounds of any other circumstance not related to the merits of the qualification for which recognition is sought.

NZQA's evaluation methodology ensures that evaluation procedures are consistent and clear, ensuring that applicants receive a fair consideration of their application.

#### 2.2 NZQA follows a **transparent process**:

NZQA takes into account the diversity of education traditions and systems in countries other than New Zealand when completing evaluations, and is committed to upholding its obligations under the relevant international conventions and arrangements.

Applicants who do not agree with the decision as recorded in the Recognition Statement have the right to seek a review of the decision.

---

<sup>1</sup> Section 246A(1)(h)

### 2.3 NZQA applies a **flexible approach**:

NZQA recognises that a degree of flexibility may be required in evaluation procedures in particular circumstances, whilst still ensuring that the core evaluation processes are followed.

NZQA implements systems which enable refugees to have their qualifications and other learning undertaken prior to their arrival in New Zealand evaluated for recognition purposes.

## 3 **POLICIES**

### 3.1 **Information**

It is the applicant's responsibility to provide sufficient information about the qualification(s) gained in another country.

It is NZQA's responsibility to make it clear in advance what information is required, for example what translations are required and the status of documents (original, certified etc). It will seek more information from third parties if needed, such as further information about the education and qualification system in the country where the qualification was awarded.

Recognition Statements are based on the information available to NZQA at the time the evaluation is undertaken. NZQA will aim to find the information that it requires, for example from third parties. In some cases, however, there may be insufficient information available to NZQA to enable it to make a decision.

### 3.2 **Fees**

Applicants will be informed in advance of fees that will be charged. The fees are set on the basis of cost recovery.

### 3.3 **Processing time**

The time normally required to process evaluations is specified on the NZQA website. The time begins once applicants have provided all relevant information.

NZQA will inform applicants of the reason for any delay and where possible the estimated time required to complete the evaluation. In particular, educational institutions where qualifications are awarded can take time to respond to NZQA's requests for information.

NZQA will cancel an application after two months from the time it was submitted electronically if the applicant has not provided, and the NZQA has not received the supporting documents needed to complete the evaluation.

NZQA will cancel an application after six months from the time additional information was requested if that information has not been provided and is required for the evaluation to progress. NZQA will issue a maximum of three requests in writing seeking further information to the applicant, nominated agent or relevant authority.

### 3.4 **Recognition Statement**

NZQA will provide applicants with a Recognition Statement which records the outcome of the evaluation of the applicant's foreign qualification(s) against the New Zealand Qualifications Framework.

A Recognition Statement does not imply any entitlement – education providers, employers, registration bodies and other government agencies make decisions regarding a person's suitability for admission to education programmes, employment, registration and immigration etc.

Recognition Statements will record the applicant's purpose in seeking qualification recognition.

### **3.5 NZQA has a two stage process for evaluating qualifications gained in another country:**

#### *Stage 1: Recognising the foreign qualification:*

NZQA tries to situate the qualification within the education system in which the qualification was gained. NZQA seeks to establish that the qualification was formally issued by a recognised awarding and met the regulations which applied within the relevant education system at the time.

#### *Stage 2: Assessing the qualification:*

Then NZQA takes into account the qualification's purpose, relative position and function compared to other qualifications within the relevant education system. If the country has a qualifications framework, that framework's features may provide reliable information for NZQA.

NZQA seeks to recognise the qualification's comparable level and type on the New Zealand Qualifications Framework, taking into account the purpose for which recognition is sought and the role of any relevant mandated competent bodies in New Zealand.

As part of this process, NZQA will consider the learning outcomes of the qualification – what the holders of the qualification were expected to know, understand and be able to do. It is recognised that learning outcomes can be achieved and demonstrated in a wide variety of settings. NZQA also considers:

- Entrance requirements – the typical admission requirements for entrance to the relevant learning programmes can help evaluators understand the level of the qualification;
- The duration of learning programme and volume of study – the typical learning time and workload required to complete the qualification can help evaluators understand the level of the qualification.

NZQA's processes may vary depending on an applicant's purpose in seeking qualifications recognition.

### **3.6 Taking into account recognition arrangements**

NZQA will refer to existing recognition arrangements early in the evaluation process. It will comply with the relevant comparability statements unless there is strong justification not to do so.

### **3.7 Outcome of the evaluation as recorded in the Recognition Statement**

The evaluation outcome will depend on the purpose of the application, the field of learning, and the information available to NZQA.