



NEW ZEALAND QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY  
MANA TOHU MĀTAURANGA O AOTEAROA

***Quality Assurance  
Standard  
for  
Accreditation of  
Secondary  
Schools***

**May 2004**

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## Section 1 – Introduction

### Purpose of this document

This document sets out quality assurance requirements for accreditation of schools. In particular it specifies the requirements to be met for initial accreditation, confirmation of ongoing accreditation or extending the scope of accreditation for schools.

In this document the term school refers to secondary and composite schools which include state, private, integrated, area, schools of special character, wharekura and te kura kaupapa.

### Background

Since 1993, initial accreditation and extensions to the scope of accreditation of schools has been based on the requirements of the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) publication *Guidelines and Criteria for Accreditation to offer National Certificates and National Diplomas*, 1992. A process to confirm ongoing accreditation has not previously been in place.

The *Quality Assurance Standard for Secondary Schools (QA Standard for Schools)* was developed to update the above guidelines and improve the consistency of NZQA's quality assurance processes across the different education sectors. The *QA Standard for Schools* parallels quality assurance standards for other education providers but has been adapted to meet the specific needs of secondary school accreditation.

Links between the elements of the new *QA Standard for Schools* and the previous accreditation criteria from the guidelines are listed in Appendix 1.

The Education Review Office (ERO) was consulted in the development of the *QA Standard for Schools* and ERO and NZQA worked closely together in developing procedures for the confirmation of ongoing accreditation process. Information on ongoing accreditation is included later in this introduction and further details are available in SecQual circular S2003/58.

### Course approval and accreditation in schools

The accreditation requirements outlined in this document are part of a broader quality assurance process for qualifications carried out by NZQA. The two key quality assurance processes that relate to NZQA's work in schools are course approval and accreditation.

#### *Course approval*

Course approval assures the public that courses advertised "approved by NZQA" have been assessed for quality. An approved course has clear and consistent aims, content, outcomes and assessment practices.

Schools require approval for:

- a local course<sup>1</sup>, designed to meet specific school needs
- courses that are intended exclusively or mainly for foreign students under section 35 (B) of the Education Act 1989.

The schedule of fees and charges for course approval applications is available on the NZQA website, [www.nzqa.govt.nz/for-providers/aaa/fees.html](http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/for-providers/aaa/fees.html).

A school can obtain information on the current course approval criteria and the course approval process by contacting its School Relationship Manager.

### ***Accreditation***

Accreditation allows schools to assess against standards on the National Qualifications Framework (NQF). A local course must be approved and accredited.

Processes for initial accreditation, confirmation of ongoing accreditation and extensions to the scope of accreditation for schools will be based on the *QA Standard for Schools*. This standard is defined in sections 2 and 3 of this document.

There are no charges for processing applications for the Base Scope of Accreditation for Schools<sup>2</sup> (BSAS) and for confirmation of ongoing accreditation of schools. However, NZQA is required to charge schools for work associated with accreditations outside the BSAS, as outlined in the schedule of fees and charges. For applications outside the BSAS, Industry Training Organisations (ITOs) and other Standard Setting Bodies (SSBs) will also charge fees as per the relevant Accreditation and Moderation Action Plan (AMAP).

### **Initial accreditation of schools**

Initial accreditation of schools involves an evaluation of a Quality Management System (QMS) document that provides evidence of the potential of the school to assess against standards.

In applying for initial accreditation, a school is required to develop a QMS document that addresses the elements and requirements of the *QA Standard for Schools*, as specified in sections 2 and 3 of this document.

Applications for accreditation can be for the BSAS alone or for the BSAS and specified other NQF sub-fields, domains and/or unit standards. For these other

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<sup>1</sup> Local courses are courses for which assessment is not based on NQF standards but for which schools might wish to seek credit inclusion for the NCEA or credit recognition and transfer by inclusion of a qualification on the Register of Quality Assured Qualifications.

<sup>2</sup> Formerly known as accreditation for conventional school subjects.

NQF applications, evidence is required that relevant AMAP requirements will be met and relevant consultation with SSBs has been undertaken.

A school that wishes to make an initial accreditation application should approach its School Relationship Manager or, if one has not yet been assigned, contact the Schools Liaison, Monitoring and Reporting Unit of the Secondary Education Group at NZQA.

## **Confirmation of ongoing accreditation**

After initial accreditation, a process of confirmation of ongoing accreditation will occur approximately every three years, in line with the ERO review cycle.

Confirmation of ongoing accreditation requires evidence that the requirements of the *QA Standard for Schools* continue to be met. To avoid duplicating processes already carried out by ERO, ITOs, other SSBs and the NZQA Schools Liaison, Monitoring and Reporting Unit, the confirmation of ongoing accreditation process will involve:

- collating evidence from ERO and Managing National Assessment reports and any information received directly from the Ministry of Education, ITOs or other SSBs
- matching this evidence against all the requirements of the *QA Standard for Schools*, as outlined in section 3 of this document
- co-ordinating necessary follow up activities to address identified problems
- notifying schools, and other parties contributing evidence to the confirmation of accreditation process, of accreditation outcomes.

NZQA will initiate processes for confirmation of ongoing accreditation of schools. Schools will only be directly involved if follow up action is required. If appropriate steps are not taken to address identified problems, schools may have their accreditation withdrawn in the relevant NQF sub-fields, domains or unit standards.

## **Extending the scope of accreditation**

The process for extending the scope of accreditation applies to schools that have already gained accreditation for the BSAS or the BSAS and other specified NQF sub-fields and/or domains or unit standards.

In evaluating an application to extend accreditation, NZQA does not conduct a detailed re-evaluation of the QMS document, as this will have already been evaluated in the initial accreditation application. NZQA does however, seek evidence that the QMS document is up-to-date and that the school's system remains applicable, and will be applied to delivery and assessment in the areas covered by the extension application. NZQA again seeks evidence that the

relevant AMAP requirements will be met and relevant consultation with SSBs has been undertaken.

A school can obtain information on extension of accreditation applications by contacting its School Relationship Manager.

### **Administration information**

Schools must notify NZQA, ITOs or relevant SSBs of any significant changes that affect assessment, moderation and quality assurance of their programmes.

A glossary of terms relating to quality assurance and assessment that may help schools to develop policies, procedures and their QMS is available on the NZQA website, [www.nzqa.govt.nz/about/glossary](http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/about/glossary).

#### *Review of this quality assurance standard*

NZQA reviews its policies and procedures on a regular basis. Schools will be notified of any changes made to the *QA Standard for Schools* and of any transition arrangements required to meet the revised standard.

#### *Contact details*

Any queries relating to accreditation or course approval applications should be addressed to:

School Relationship Manager (name.surname@nzqa.co.nz).

Any other queries relating to this document should be addressed to:

Applications Advisor (Schools/PTEs)  
Approvals, Accreditation and Audit  
New Zealand Qualifications Authority  
PO Box 160  
Wellington

## Section 2 – The QA Standard for Schools

The following are the elements of the NZQA *Quality Assurance Standard for Secondary Schools*. A school is required to have a QMS document that covers all elements of the *QA Standard for Schools* and reflects the Ministry of Education’s “National Education Guidelines” and “National Administrative Guidelines”.

### Defining goals and objectives<sup>3</sup>

1.1 The school has measurable goals and objectives.

### Systems to achieve goals and objectives

1.2 The school puts into practice quality management systems to achieve its goals and objectives, including:

1.2.1 **Governance and management** – the school has adequate and appropriate governance and management systems to achieve its goals and objectives

1.2.2 **Personnel** – the school recruits, manages and develops its staff to achieve its goals and objectives

1.2.3 **Physical and learning resources** – the school has adequate and appropriate physical and teaching and learning resources to achieve its goals and objectives

1.2.4 **Student information and support** – the school provides adequate and appropriate information and support services to students

1.2.5 **Development, delivery and review of programmes** – the school adequately and appropriately designs, develops, delivers and reviews its teaching and learning programmes consistent with its goals and objectives

1.2.6 **Assessment and moderation** – the school has adequate and appropriate systems of assessment and moderation to meet the expected outcome of learning programmes

1.2.7 **Reporting on student achievement** – the school adequately and appropriately reports on student achievement.

### Achieving goals and objectives

1.3 The school is achieving its goals and objectives, and can provide assurance that it will continue to do so.

Specific requirements within each element of the standard are noted in section 3.

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<sup>3</sup> For consistency with other NZQA documentation this document uses the term goals and objectives, whereas Ministry of Education documentation refers to goals and targets.

## **Section 3 – Detailed requirements of the standard**

### **1.1 Goals and objectives**

**The school has measurable goals and objectives.**

*The school demonstrates this by:*

- i. stating in its charter its goals and objectives
- ii. having performance indicators to measure the achievement of its goals and objectives.

## 1.2 Systems to achieve goals and objectives

The school puts into practice quality management systems to achieve its goals and objectives.

### 1.2.1 Governance and management

The school has adequate and appropriate governance and management systems to achieve its goals and objectives.

*The school demonstrates this by:*

- i. having its Board of Trustees develop a strategic plan, meet regularly and communicate decisions
- ii. having school management regularly report to its Board of Trustees, relevant information to make informed governance decisions
- iii. consulting with its community and managing the school in the community's best interests
- iv. developing and applying a coherent<sup>4</sup> set of policies and procedures (quality management system) within the school and to programmes and assessments carried out off-site
- v. defining clear organisational structures, roles, responsibilities, authorities, lines of reporting and accountability
- vi. defining how it addresses the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi and how it implements plans to improve the performance of its Māori students
- vii. using acceptable financial management practices, achieving acceptable financial performance and allocating funds to reflect the school's stated priorities
- viii. meeting relevant legislative requirements including those for programmes outside the BSAS
- ix. defining fee protection policies and mechanisms for foreign students (where relevant) that meet the *Code of Practice for the Pastoral Care of International Students* requirements

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<sup>4</sup> Coherent policies and procedures are complete, currently put into action, understandable and reflect actual practice. This requires that systems, policies and procedures are established, documented, approved, implemented and regularly reviewed. Policies and procedures should be appropriate to the size and nature of the school or, where relevant, to the school's tikanga and kawa and be developed to cover all relevant aspects of the *QA Standard for Schools*. Schools may call their quality management systems other names and the policies and procedures may be spread across a number of related documents.

x. defining its internal review processes.

## 1.2.2 Personnel

**The school recruits, manages and develops its staff to achieve its goals and objectives.**

*The school demonstrates this by:*

- i. using recruitment and selection practices to make sure it has appropriate<sup>5</sup> personnel with:
  - teaching and subject knowledge
  - assessment and moderation expertise
  - educational management experience
  - quality management expertise
  - student support skills
  - financial and administration expertise
- ii. providing fair conditions of employment<sup>6</sup>
- iii. appraising staff performance<sup>7</sup>
- iv. providing ongoing development<sup>8</sup>and support for staff.

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<sup>5</sup> The number of personnel will depend on the size and nature of the school. A school may not have permanent staff with the requisite skills and expertise and may have to access the expertise externally.

<sup>6</sup> 'Fair conditions of employment' means that the obligations of both the employer and employee are clearly recorded and documented and understood by both parties. At a minimum, staff must be provided with:

- good and safe working conditions
- employment agreements for all staff that comply with the Employment Relations Act 2000
- policies and procedures for EEO, disciplinary procedures, dispute resolution, privacy/protected disclosures and health and safety.

The school must also be aware of, and responsible for, compliance with all other relevant employment related legislation such as being a good employer as defined in the State Sector Act 1988.

<sup>7</sup> As required under Section 77(C) of the State Sector Act 1988.

<sup>8</sup> The school must also show evidence that planned staff professional development has taken place within the previous twelve months and that it has planned future staff development.

### 1.2.3 Physical and learning resources

**The school has adequate and appropriate physical, and teaching and learning resources to achieve its goals and objectives.**

*The school demonstrates this by:*

- i. ensuring its premises, facilities and other physical resources are adequate to cater for the number of students and the range of programmes offered<sup>9</sup>
- ii. complying with negotiated conditions of any current asset management agreement and implementing a maintenance programme to ensure the school buildings and facilities provide a safe, healthy learning environment<sup>10</sup>
- iii. ensuring the teaching and learning resources<sup>11</sup> are adequate to support delivery of programmes offered and requirements of assessment processes.

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<sup>9</sup> This also applies to any:

- premises and facilities external to the school site
- industry or standard setting body AMAP requirements
- physical resources for administrative or collective use eg computers.

<sup>10</sup> This also includes premises and facilities external to the school site.

<sup>11</sup> This includes:

- teaching and learning resources for individual programmes eg texts
- independent learning opportunities eg library books, internet.

#### 1.2.4 Student information and support

**The school provides adequate and appropriate information and support services to students.**

*The school demonstrates this by:*

- i. providing accurate and sufficient information to students covering:
  - subject choices and courses
  - any fees payable including fees for specialist courses
  - pastoral care, welfare and student support services
  - career guidance
  - school rules, regulations and disciplinary procedures
  - assessment processes, including additional assessment opportunities and appeals of results
  - health and safety procedures
- ii. dealing with students fairly and equitably
- iii. identifying and responding to students' specific learning needs
- iv. providing a safe physical, cultural and emotional environment and access to guidance, support systems and welfare services
- v. complying with the mandatory *Code of Practice for the Pastoral Care of International Students* (where relevant).

### 1.2.5 Development, delivery and review of programmes

**The school adequately and appropriately designs, develops, delivers and reviews its teaching and learning programmes consistent with its goals and objectives.**

*The school demonstrates this by:*

- i. following school procedures to systematically design and develop teaching and learning programmes that:
  - meet New Zealand curriculum and SSB requirements where appropriate
  - are based on the needs of learners and other stakeholders and do not present unreasonable barriers to learning
  - specify the learning outcomes and expected standards of achievement
  - provide for learning outcomes that are achievable within the timeframe of the programme
  - have appropriate content, teaching and learning strategies, teaching and learning resource requirements and assessments
  - address equity issues
  - integrate any off-site practical or workplace components<sup>12</sup>
- ii. timetabling and delivering courses to meet the needs of learners
- iii. systematically monitoring and reviewing all courses and using the results to improve learning outcomes and achievement
- iv. monitoring learner and any other relevant stakeholder satisfaction with the quality of education provided
- v. specifying<sup>13</sup>, monitoring and reviewing the standard of delivery and support for any programmes delivered off-site
- vi. maintaining course approvals for courses intended exclusively or mainly for foreign students
- vii. keeping relevant programmes, outside the BSAS, current with latest industry requirements.

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<sup>12</sup> As well as outlining the relevance of these components, there should be documentation outlining how the quality of learning and assessment in the off-site activities, including field trips, is maintained.

<sup>13</sup> The school is responsible for the quality assurance of off-site components of programmes, no matter what delivery arrangements are in place. Where relevant, contractual agreements or memorandum of understanding must be in place. A school that is contemplating offering New Zealand qualifications at an overseas site must first contact NZQA for information on procedures that must be followed.

### **1.2.6 Assessment and moderation**

**The school has adequate and appropriate systems of assessment and moderation, to meet the expected outcomes of learning programmes.**

*The school demonstrates this by:*

- i. having appropriate procedures for managing assessment processes, including appeals of assessment results
- ii. ensuring, for each course, assessment:
  - processes and decisions are transparent, systematic and consistent
  - methods are appropriate, fair, manageable, and integrated with learning
  - evidence is valid, authentic and sufficient
- iii. internally moderating assessment materials and judgements to ensure these comply with 1.2.6 (ii)
- iv. complying with the external moderation requirements of NZQA and SSBs.
- v. using assessment information to inform learning and review programmes and/or courses
- vi. ensuring samples of student achievement are adequately stored to meet moderation requirements and to respond to student appeals
- vii. having necessary accreditations and course approvals, prior to assessment.

### 1.2.7 Reporting on student achievement

**The school adequately and appropriately reports on student achievement.**

*The school demonstrates this by:*

- i. systematically recording student achievement<sup>14</sup>
- ii. reporting appropriately and regularly to:
  - students and parents/caregivers on individual student progress and achievement
  - the school community on the overall achievement of students and groups of students from the school
- iii. transferring student achievement of standards for recording on the NZQA Record of Learning database:
  - accurately
  - on a regular and timely basis
  - only in relation to the scope of accreditation granted<sup>15</sup>
- iv. maintaining a reliable system of archiving information on student achievement.

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<sup>14</sup> The school must keep records of student achievement, and make these available on request by NZQA or another appropriate government agency. Record keeping systems must allow for the monitoring of student progress at both a course and qualification level. Systems must comply with the Privacy Act 1993 and the Official Information Act 1982.

<sup>15</sup> NZQA keeps records of achievement of standards and national qualifications for individuals on its learner database, only for the scope of accreditation granted.

### 1.3 Achievement of goals and objectives

**The school is achieving its goals and objectives, and can provide assurance that it will continue to do so.**

*The school demonstrates this by:*

- i. applying appropriate performance indicators to measure and monitor the achievement of goals and objectives and reporting progress in its annual report
- ii. using the results of self review to update goals, objectives and performance indicators
- iii. regularly collecting feedback from students, parents or caregivers and other stakeholders to confirm the effectiveness of the school and to further improve performance
- iv. using its self review and evaluation processes to either:
  - confirm that policies and procedures, as set out in the QMS document, are current, are being applied consistently and are effective in achieving desired outcomes, or
  - identify areas for ongoing improvement, which are then actioned
- v. following up external review recommendations and findings.

## APPENDIX 1: Links to previous accreditation criteria

The following table links the numbering of the elements of the *QA Standard for Schools* with the eight accreditation criteria from the NZQA publication *Guidelines and Criteria to offer National Certificates and National Diplomas, 1992*, that were previously used to evaluate accreditation applications.

Note that there is not a direct match between the listed elements and criteria. The new emphasis of the *QA Standard for Schools* is to define goals and objectives (1.1), develop and implement systems to achieve these (1.2) and to review progress and take actions for ongoing improvement (1.3). The previous assessment criteria emphasised policy and procedures and evaluation of these within each separate criterion.

QA Standard for Schools		Accreditation Criteria	
No.	Element	No.	Criterion
1.1	Defining goals and objectives		New emphasis
1.2.1	Governance and management		New emphasis but includes the financial aspects of criteria 2
1.2.2	Personnel	3	Staff selection, appraisal and development
1.2.3	Physical and learning resources	2	Financial (transferred to 1.2.1), administrative and physical resources
1.2.4	Learner information and support	4 5	Student entry Student guidance/support systems
1.2.5	Development, delivery and review of programmes	1 6	The development and evaluation of teaching programmes Off-site practical/work-based components
1.2.6	Assessment and moderation	7	Assessment
1.2.7	Notification and reporting on learner achievement	8	Reporting
1.3.	Achievement of goals and objectives		New emphasis