Final report

Qualification Title: New Zealand Certificate in English Language (General/ Workplace /Academic) (Level 4)

Qualification number: 1883

Date and venue for review:
12 February; NZQA offices Level 12, PWC Building, The Terrace Wellington
17 February; NZQA offices, Millennium Centre, Building A, Level 2, 600 Great South Road, Auckland.

Final decision on consistency National consistency is confirmed

The evidence confirms that for the majority of programmes graduate outcomes are being achieved to a consistent and appropriate threshold. For all of providers the final submission of material to evidence their teaching, learning and assessment material sits at the right level and enables learners to meet the graduate profile, this ensures the sufficiency of their evidence. For example, this may include evidence of benchmarking or external moderation with other programme providers, or evidence from graduates and/or other stakeholders that graduates have the knowledge and skills outlined in the graduate profile statement.

Threshold

The threshold to determine consistency with the graduate profile was determined by the review group as evidence of:

- Referencing core texts and assessments to CEFR B2 level and other useful points of reference during programme planning and review
- Robust moderation of programmes' activities and assessments with other NZCEL Level 4 programme providers
- Gaining graduate and other key stakeholder feedback on how well graduate outcomes match the graduate profile

Tertiary Education Organisations with sufficient evidence

All TEOs have now submitted sufficient evidence to assure consistency of this qualification

Tertiary Education Organisation	Final rating
Christchurch Polytechnic and Institute of Technology	Sufficient
Eastern Institute of Technology	Sufficient
Nelson Marlborough Institute of Technology	Sufficient
Otago Polytechnic	Sufficient
Unitec	Sufficient
Alphacrucis	Sufficient
Manukau Institute of Technology	Sufficient
NorthTec	Sufficient

Aoraki Polytechnic	Sufficient
Kauri Academy (NZ) International Ltd	Sufficient
New Zealand Institute of Education	Sufficient
UUNZ Institute of Business Limited	Sufficient
Whitireia Community Polytechnic	Sufficient

Introduction

This 60 credit programme, intended for learners of English as an additional language, was developed by NZQA National Qualifications Services (NQS) and listed on the New Zealand Qualifications Framework (NZQF) in 2012. The programme has three qualifiers, a general, a workplace and an academic. The qualification is benchmarked to the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) level B2. This is the first consistency review.

The qualification outlines a graduate profile, with different language contexts stipulated for the three qualifiers. It lists four qualification outcomes with suggested credit values and possible unit standards that can be used to assess the outcomes. For the academic strand, five unit standards are mandatory. To date, graduates have achieved the qualification in the general and academic strands, with demand for the workplace qualifier being low.

Twenty one Tertiary Education Organisations (TEOs), representing both polytechnics and private training establishments met in Wellington and Auckland. Thirteen TEOs provided evidence and eight attended as observers, as they were yet to graduate students from their programmes.

Evidence

How well does the evidence provided by the education organisation demonstrate that its graduates match the graduate outcomes at the appropriate threshold?

TEOs supplied a range of evidence to demonstrate that their graduates met the outcomes. In assessing the sufficiency of the evidence provided by each education organisation, the reviewer was mindful of the nature, quality and integrity of the evidence. The extent and validity of evidence presented did vary, although themes emerged.

Programme design: alignment and benchmarking

A number of TEOs submitted evidence to demonstrate how their programme had been designed to align with the graduate outcomes.

Quality assurance systems

Several TEOs submitted evidence of quality management systems implementation to ensure the development and implementation of the programme. In particular, evidence included:

- TEOs' reports on the consultation process undertaken in the development of the programme with key stakeholders from both within and external to the education organisation
- Programme evaluation reports that reviewed the year's activity and documented resulting improvement actions. It was noted that the evidence presented for External Evaluation and Review, particularly to Key Evaluation Question Two, 'what is the

value of the outcomes for stakeholders, including learners?' is highly relevant to assuring and ensuring consistency with graduate profiles.

- Internal and external pre and post assessment moderation practices. The robustness of these processes was considered when reviewing this evidence.
- The reviewer noted strong practice occurring when external moderation was happening between a range of providers offering the qualification. This cross programme moderation gives assurance that providers are assessing at a consistent level.

Stakeholders' feedback

- TEOs strengthened their evidence with testimony from key stakeholders as to the value of the qualification meeting its intended outcomes. Examples of feedback included that from destination programmes, employers, community members, teaching staff as well as feedback from learners and graduates.

Graduate Outcomes

- This was the first consistency review for this qualification and many TEOs had only had a small number of graduates. Nonetheless, most had a good understanding of where those graduates were and what they were doing.
- Most of the graduates who have completed the academic qualifier have moved to further study.
- While some organisations have used informal mechanisms to understand how well learners achieve in destination programmes, only one organisation was able to present systematically collected data that showed good evidence that the majority of learners were achieving well at programmes at Level 5 and above.
- Many TEOs noted that they were putting in place processes to ensure the systematic collection of this data, particularly for learners who complete the academic qualifier.

Special Focus

No special focus

Examples of good practice
Good practice highlighted during the review included:

- referencing core texts and assessments to CEFR B2 level and other useful points of reference e.g. IELTS and Academic Word Lists
- benchmarking learners' results in IELTS and other external exams to evidence alignment of levels
- assessment schedules showing how different graduate outcomes were formatively and summatively assessed during the course of a programme
- text analysis to ensure alignment with the right degree of complexity
- benchmarking and alignment through cross TEO meetings where texts and assessments were shared to judge consistency of levels
- engaging with stakeholders to plan and check 'real-world' context for programme development and review
- use of NZQA exemplars to guide assessments for the mandatory unit standards used in the academic qualifier
- consultation with potential destination programmes, to ensure that texts used are relevant and aligned

- gaining graduate and other key stakeholder feedback on how well they match the graduate profile
- tracking graduates into study at level 5 and above to determine success

Issues and concerns

TEOs evidence to demonstrate that their graduates met the outcomes also highlighted issues and concerns:

- **Assessment:** While some examples of assessment activity can form part of the evidence base, the consistency review is not a moderation exercise. Evidence of robust external moderation is important however, this was lacking in some areas.
- **Programme design: alignment and benchmarking:** The entry processes to the qualification (ensuring that learners were at a sufficient level to engage meaningfully with the learning) did highlight gap between the NZCEL Level 3 graduate and their ability to cope in the NZCEL Level 4.
- **Quality assurance systems:** Of the TEOs which submitted material for external moderation for the English for Academic Purposes unit standards, three did not meet the requirements of the standard. This is a concern for the consistency of the qualification. Only the academic qualifier of this qualification has compulsory unit standards and assessing against these is new for many providers. How these TEOs are responding to this moderation information and are improving their internal assessment and moderation processes to ensure the standard is reached, this is critical for the consistency of the qualification.
- **Stakeholders' feedback:** The fact that TEOs are able to assure the 'real-world validity' of their judgements in relation to the graduate profile and outcomes was highlighted. Systematically collecting stakeholders' feedback is a highly effective way of demonstrating this. However, it can be difficult for an organisation to provide 'real-world validity' and demonstrate their graduates meet the graduate profile for a general qualifier if it does not have feedback from graduates and stakeholders from 'everyday, social and community' contexts'. The reviewer agrees that gathering this data can present challenges and it is reasonable that organisations consider sampling as an approach to ensuring that processes are sustainable. In the future, all TEOs plan to look at strengthening their practice in this area.
- **Assessment loading:** It was noted by a number of TEOs offering the academic qualifier that student feedback had highlighted the heavy assessment load required. Education organisations were also concerned about the volume of assessment required in order to meet the requirements of the unit standards.
- **Level of attainment of incoming students:** It was reported that some graduates from the level three qualifications were not adequately prepared for the level four programmes.

Recommendations to Qualification Developer

The main areas of concern need to be addressed:

- Volume of assessment in order to meet the unit standards
- General heavy assessment loading
- Level of attainment of level 3 graduates to meet end user requirements for level 4