Qualification Title: New Zealand Certificate in Business (First Line Management) (Level 4)

Qualification number: 2456

Date of review: 12-13 November 2018

Final decision on consistency of the qualification: Consistency is confirmed.

Threshold:

The threshold to determine sufficiency with the graduate profile was determined as evidence that:

- Graduates can operate as first line managers of workflows and teams.
- They contribute to achieving entity objectives, while working in accordance with internal and external workplace requirements, in an ethical manner, in bi- and multi- cultural environments.

Education Organisations with sufficient evidence

Tertiary Education Organisation	Final rating
New Zealand Management Academies Ltd	Sufficient
People Potential Ltd	Sufficient
Eastern Institute of Technology	Sufficient
Otago Polytechnic	Sufficient
Connexis Infrastructure ITO	Sufficient
ServiceIQ	Sufficient
The Skills Organisation	Sufficient
Waikato Institute for Leisure and Sports Studies	Sufficient
Universal College of Learning	Sufficient
Nelson Marlborough Institute of Technology	Sufficient

Introduction

The purpose of this 60-credit qualification is to provide New Zealand organisations with people who can effectively manage teams in first line management roles. The nine graduate profile outcomes of this qualification each clearly describe a graduate applying their acquired knowledge and skills. NZQA is the qualification developer (on behalf of and in collaboration with the sector) and a representative attended the consistency meeting. The representative was involved in the development of the qualification and is actively engaged with business stakeholders, planning for an upcoming review of this business qualification. The representative, reflecting the views of key business stakeholders, noted the education organisations needed to ensure their programmes met the "Conditions for programme

context" that the: "Programme design and delivery, and all assessment will be conducted in and for the context of a real or realistic business entity, and in light of the requirements of that context."

Ten education organisations had students who graduated during the review period and had representatives who participated to the meeting (two via video conferencing which was being trialled in this consistency review). There was a broad mix of tertiary educational organisations including industry training organisations (ITOs), institute of technology and polytechnics (ITPs) and private training establishments (PTEs). Also, some tertiary education organisations, who deliver an approved programme but did not have graduates in 2017, had observers who participated in the review meeting.

A wide range of approaches were also used to deliver the programmes: some graduates had learnt while working in relevant workplace roles, others offered fully online and/or blended delivery with block courses, and others offered full-time face-to-face delivery. Most education organisations reported less than ten graduates in the review period from 2015 through to the end of 2017. The graduates were working, whilst learning or after graduation, in commercial and not-for-profit settings, and in one case, working on a voluntary basis. There was a diverse range of work contexts that included sports coaching, supervising staff on construction work sites or in a retail environment and managing teams in the New Zealand Defence Force. A few graduates had progressed onto higher level related training.

Evidence

The education organisations provided a range of evidence to demonstrate that their graduates met the graduate profile outcomes.

The criteria used to judge the evaluation question were:

- The nature, quality and integrity of the evidence presented by the education organisation
- How well the organisation has analysed, interpreted and validated the evidence, and used the understanding gained to achieve actual or improved consistency
- The extent to which the education organisation can reasonably justify and validate claims and to demonstrate statements relating to the consistency of graduate outcomes, including in relation to other providers of programmes leading to the qualification

The evidence the education organisations provided has been broken down into three categories: programme related evidence, stakeholder feedback and graduate destinations.

Programme related evidence

Many education organisations provided a matrix showing how the learning outcomes or the unit standards of the programme mapped against the nine required graduate profile outcomes. A few organisations also used a matrix to also demonstrate that the delivery, assessment and moderation activity and results provided good coverage across the nine graduate profile outcomes. A few showed how many of their assessors had had their judgements moderated. The amount of internal and external moderation activity varied. Some organisations outlined the actions they were going to take to provide more robust programme-related evidence in the future.

Most submissions provided some evidence of the context in which the programme was delivered and assessed. There was a wide variability in the extent to which that this activity took place in a "real or realistic business contexts". In some cases, the graduates had trained and were assessed, while working in frontline management type roles in a business operating environment. These graduates were able to immediately apply the knowledge and skills of they were learning. Some other education organisations provided opportunities for the graduates to plan and manage a project that took place in a "real or realistic" business environment and their operational performance was assessed. For example, the students of one organisation managed a retail shop on campus. Some other education organisations used case studies of a real or hypothetical business and the students explained how they would manage these scenarios using their recently acquired knowledge and skills. These latter cases did not provide sufficient evidence of real-world competency however, the gap was less significant if the graduate was working in related employment applying their acquired capability and had stakeholder feedback on their performance. After the review meeting, some organisations developed an action plan to address this gap; they proposed an independent external review of the design, delivery and assessment to ensure that they took place in a "real or realistic" business environment in the future.

Stakeholder feedback

The key qualification stakeholders were the graduates themselves, the supervisors/managers of the organisations that engaged the graduates and potentially the tutor of a higher-level programme in which they enrolled.

- Most education organisations had surveyed their graduates. The quality of the survey questionnaire and results varied. The strongest surveys asked to what extent the graduates had demonstrated the nine graduate profile outcomes in a real-world context. Open questions and questions that rated the graduate's capability provided stronger data. A few providers had conducted structured phone interviews which mostly provided richer descriptions of the graduate's capability. Closed questions (e.g. yes/no) produced weaker data and often the analysis of these results was limited.
- Some organisations had feedback from the supervisors/managers of the graduates. A minority asked questions that were similar to those posed to the graduates. A few triangulated the results of the graduates and supervisors/managers to reach a judgement about how convincing the evidence was that the graduates had demonstrated the graduate profile outcomes.
- A minority of education organisations had a handful of graduates who progressed onto higher level training. One organisation had collected feedback from the tutor of these programmes on how well they were prepared for the training.

Graduate destinations

- As has been noted, some graduates were working in first line management roles when they undertook this study and graduated. Some education organisations provided details of the organisation and workplace roles in which the graduates were working; this was good supporting evidence. A few submissions clearly explained why the role was a first-line management position. No organisations provided evidence of graduates progressing into more responsible workplace roles as a result of graduating with this qualification.

- A few graduates enrolled on a higher-level and related training programme. Most of the education organisations provided the title of the programme and the name of the education organisation.

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

The nine graduate profile outcomes of this qualification explicitly state that the graduates must be able to use their acquired knowledge, skills and attributes in a first line management role. This expectation was reflected in the threshold statement.

Therefore, education organisations needed to provide convincing evidence that the graduates had demonstrated their competency in a real or realistic business context. Evidence of internal and external moderation planning, activity and results, mostly confirming the assessment judgements were valid, was essential. Submissions that showed the moderation undertaken (or planned) that fully covered all the assessments for the nine graduate profile outcomes enhanced the argument that the graduates had met the threshold.

The case that the graduates were capable was also strengthened if detailed evidence was also provided showing the graduates were working (paid or unpaid) in a first line management role.

Another key source of evidence was clear feedback from the graduates and/or their supervisor/manager that rated and/or describing how well the graduates demonstrated the graduate profile outcomes in their workplace. The stronger submissions analysed and triangulated the feedback from the two stakeholders. The case was enhanced if the response rate for the feedback collected was a high proportion of the graduates as this enabled a judgement to be made on how representative the evidence was of the full sample. Organisations that clearly identified any gaps in their evidence or processes and developed clear and specific plans to effectively address these gaps, provided another path to justifying that the standard for sufficiency had been met.

The presentation itself was an opportunity to provide an overall high-level justification that pulled together the triangulated evidence. Nearly all organisations presented a verbal summary of their case at the consistency review meeting, which usefully supplemented their written submission. The consistency reviewers asked questions where the education organisation representatives were able to clarify in the meeting or provide additional evidence and/or plans to address gaps, within the three days after the meeting.

Four of the ten tertiary education organisations met the criteria for being 'sufficient' based on their written self-assessment submission. Their presentations and the self-reflection strengthened the case they made. Other organisations provided supplementary evidence, after the review meeting which enabled them to meet the evaluative criteria for being sufficient.

Special Focus

There was no special focus for this review.

Examples of good practice

The following examples of good practise were provided by a variety of the education organisations present at the review:

- The ability to provide a succinct well-argued self-assessment submission using a consistent template for all its consistency reviews.
- The seeking of professional assistance in developing a well-designed survey questionnaire, recognising that designing a robust and effective survey is a specialist skill.
- The analysis of employer and graduate feedback together, which provided robust triangulated evidence that made the claims about graduate competency more credible.
- The use of a simple yet effective 3-point scale that rated to what extent a graduate had demonstrated a graduate profile outcome; the 3 ratings were 'consistently demonstrates', 'demonstrates', '(still) learning' to demonstrate the capability.

Issues and concerns

The key issue that emerged in this review was that education organisations needed to demonstrate that the graduates had applied or used their acquired knowledge and skills in a real or realistic business environment. This presented a substantial challenge for some organisations.

Recommendations to Qualification Developer

There were no formal recommendations of the qualification developer.