**Qualification Title:** New Zealand Certificate in Information Technology Essentials (Level 4)

**Qualification number:** 2594

**Date of review:** 26 and 27 November 2018

**Final decision on consistency of the qualification:** *National consistency is Confirmed*

**Threshold:** The threshold to determine sufficiency with the graduate profile was determined as evidence of:

Graduates have gained relevant transferable skills and knowledge across a range of disciplines within Information Technology (IT), to allow for further study in the field of IT or for working under broad guidance in a range of entry level support roles which may include business support or retail roles, and some roles in the IT profession.

Graduates can:

- Apply essential knowledge and concepts of computer hardware, operating systems, applications, and networks to provide support for hardware and software resources and a foundation for the IT Profession.
- Apply essential knowledge and concepts of business analysis, database, and user experience to provide a foundation for supporting organisational information systems requirements.
- Contribute to user interface design using essential knowledge and concepts of web design.
- Apply essential knowledge and concepts of software development to provide a foundation for developing applications.
- Apply project management and planning tools to meet the requirements of specified briefs and provide a foundation for the IT Profession.
- Apply appropriate professional, ethical and legal principles and practices to comply with legal and organisational requirements and provide a foundation for the IT Profession.
- Communicate clearly and professionally to maintain relationships and achieve objectives in a range of contexts within the IT industry.

**Tertiary Education Organisations with sufficient evidence**

| Tertiary Education Organisation | Final rating |
|---|---|
| Manukau Institute of Technology | Sufficient |
| People Potential Ltd | Sufficient |
| Western Institute of Technology Taranaki | Sufficient |
| Wellington Institute of Technology | Sufficient |
| Universal College of Learning | Sufficient |
| Nelson Marlborough Inst of Technology | Sufficient |
| Otago Polytechnic | Sufficient |
| Southern Institute of Technology | Sufficient |
| Ara Institute of Canterbury | Sufficient |
| Toi Ohomai Institute of Technology | Sufficient |
| Eastern Institute of Technology | Sufficient |

**Introduction**

The purpose of this 60-credit, level 4 qualification, is to provide Aotearoa New Zealand with people who have the essential skills for further study that will equip them to work in the field of Information Technology (IT) as a profession. Some learners may use this qualification as a pathway from the computing user qualifications to the professional IT qualifications.

Graduates will have gained internationally relevant transferable skills and knowledge across a range of disciplines within IT, essential for working under broad guidance in a range of entry level support roles which may include business support or retail roles, and some roles in the IT profession. Graduates will also be capable of communicating with relevant stakeholders in a professional manner.

The qualification was developed by NZQA National Qualification Services in conjunction with Institute of IT Professionals New Zealand (IITP).

Consistency review meetings were held in Auckland and Wellington on consecutive days. In addition to the Education Organisations, the consistency review was attended by; a representative from NZQA as the Qualification Developer and an observer from Unitec Institute of Technology, which has a programme leading to this qualification but no graduates. An observer from NZQA Approval and Accreditation business unit also attended.

**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 statements relating to the consistency of graduate outcomes, including in relation to other providers of programmes leading to the qualification

**The following kinds of evidence were provided:**

- Destination data
- Graduate feedback
- Next level tutor/lecturer feedback
- Moderation results
- Programme related evidence

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

Destination data provided by all education institutes indicates that the vast majority of graduate's pathway as the qualification intended, and progress to Level 5 IT related diploma and some directly to Bachelor programmes. Almost all continue to study within the institute they completed NZ2594 qualification with. This outcome matches the strategic purpose statement.

Graduate feedback provided an opportunity for all education institutes to provide strong evidence that their graduates matched the graduate profile outcomes at the appropriate threshold. However many did not take full advantage of this opportunity. Although all education organisations bar one conducted graduate surveys the response rate for some was generally lower than is reasonable to anticipate and for a number of education organisations with a small number of graduates it is hard to draw authentic conclusions that are representative of the institute's graduates.  This is an area education organisations are able to be more proactive as the majority of graduates continued on to further study, in a related field at the same organisation.  Mostly graduate survey questions were a replication of the graduate profile outcomes, it was recognised by participants at the consistency review meeting that using the graduate profile outcomes as the focus of the questions within the survey was useful, however just repeating verbatim the outcomes did not reliably yield quality responses for analysis. Equally the timing of conducting the graduate survey was discussed recognising the need to capture feedback specific to the Level 4 graduate outcomes' and not perspectives on the next level of study in which most graduates are currently enrolled.

Next level tutor/lecturer feedback of Level 4 graduates, now in higher study was utilised as a source of evidence by many education organisations. The methodology to collect the information, and evidence that graduates skills and knowledge identified in the graduate outcomes, were met, varied.  Education organisations identified, during the consistency review and in the self-reviews a number of ways this valuable source of feedback and evidence could be improved.

Moderation, in particular external moderation, was a weakness identified across several education institutes. This is of some concern given the achievement based standards used to assess within the programme. The evidence of effective and robust internal moderation occurring systematically within education organisations was variable; this is disappointing considering moderation is a foundational academic quality assurance activity.

Programme related evidence, most submissions provided some evidence of the context in which the programme was delivered and assessed. All delivered the programme through four courses and provided evidence of mapped learning outcomes and course content to the graduate profile. Some also mapped the graduate outcomes to relevant assessments and evidence of quality processes that ensure effective programme delivery. The qualification conditions for programme structure and context, created a good source of discussion and most providers addressed this in their presentations.

Most education organisations at the consistency review and in the subsequent submission and self-review, demonstrated effectively that their graduates matched the graduate profile outcomes at the appropriate threshold. Overall the combination of evidence makes a convincing case to demonstrate that the education organisations graduates match the graduate outcomes at the appropriate threshold.

Some education organisations had a strong focus on the programme, a low number of graduate responses to surveys or the graduate feedback did not validate the skills and knowledge for graduates at Level 4 had been attained, and with little or no internal and/or external moderation in place it was therefore not possible to establish sufficiency of evidence for those providers.

## Special Focus

As mentioned previously the focus of providers and the consistency reviewer was on the majority of graduates who continued onto further study within the same institute. As a result, the vast majority of evidence about the organisation and its current students and graduate outcomes came from within the institute itself. For this reason, specifically in this consistency review, external moderation was given attention as it was consistently the only source of evidence independent from the education organisation and provided some measure of transparency and authentication.

## Examples of good practice

A few education institutes effectively tracked the progress of Level 4 graduates in the next level programme. Where comprehensive data was gathered it was a useful source of information for analysis to inform programme review and provided detailed findings which education organisations could convincingly demonstrate the extent that the Level 4 skills and knowledge had been met.

## Issues and concerns

Discrepancies in reporting the number of students enrolled and graduate numbers, where the institute data did not match the programme data, was problematic for a handful of education institutes and although rectified, it is difficult to provide convincing evidence if the baseline data is in question.

## Recommendations to Qualification Developer

Graduate profile outcome six; Apply appropriate professional, ethical and legal principles and practices to comply with legal and organisational requirements and provide a foundation for the IT Profession. This outcome was the lowest rated of outcomes, by graduates, across a number education institutes. This is an important graduate outcome and understanding the reason for the lower rating given by graduates was not clearly articulated by all education institutes. This is an area for further discussion at the qualification review due in 2019.

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