



NEW ZEALAND QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY
MANA TOHU MĀTAURANGA O AOTEAROA

QUALIFY FOR THE FUTURE WORLD
KIA NOHO TAKATŪ KI TŌ ĀMUA AO!

Guidelines for programme approval and provider accreditation at levels 1-6 on the NZQF

October 2021

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1. Introduction

This document provides guidance to education organisations to support them in gaining approval for a programme they have designed, and/or accreditation to provide a programme they have the ability to deliver, that leads to a qualification at levels 1-6 on the New Zealand Qualifications Framework (NZQF).

To gain approval and/or accreditation an application must meet the criteria in the NZQF Programme Approval and Accreditation Rules 2021 and demonstrate quality in line with the rubrics set out in these guidelines.

These guidelines set out the New Zealand Qualifications Authority's expectations for a quality application that meets all criteria. They address and explain each programme approval and programme accreditation criterion and offer guidance on the information and evidence to be included in an application. Sample templates are provided in the appendices.

Context

Section 452 of the Education and Training Act 2020 (The Act) gives the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) the authority to make rules for the quality assurance processes for which it is responsible.

Programme approval and accreditation is required under sections 439 and 441 of the Act.

- NZQF [Programme Approval and Accreditation Rules 2021](#) govern the approval of programmes of study and accreditation for these programmes
- NZQF [Industry Training Programme Approval Rules 2021](#) govern the approval of industry training programmes.

Related Rules

Offshore delivery: education organisations planning offshore delivery of an NZQA approved programme must meet the [NZQF Offshore Programme Delivery Rules 2021](#). Related guidelines are available at <https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/assets/Providers-and-partners/Offshore-delivery/guidelines-offshore-delivery.pdf>

Programmes at levels 7 – 10: education organisations planning delivery of programmes leading to degree and related qualifications at levels 7 – 10 on the NZQF should refer to the [Guidelines for approving and maintaining degrees and related qualifications](#).

Quality assurance

The decision to approve a programme of study, and/or to accredit an education organisation to deliver a programme, is based on the quality and sufficiency of evidence provided. Evaluation rubrics enable decisions to be reached on a consistent and reliable basis. See approval rubric (Section 2: [Approval](#)) and accreditation rubric (Section 3: [Accreditation](#)).

In the evaluation process NZQA will be clear about the information and evidence on which decisions have been made. An evaluation outcome of *approved*, *not approved*, or *request for information (RFI)* will be provided based on the overall quality of the application. The intention of an RFI is to address minor gaps in the evidence provided, or to clarify design and/or delivery, and may lead to an approved or not approved outcome.

The [application process](#) is detailed in Section 6.

Te Hono o Te Kahurangi quality assurance

Education organisations can choose to have a programme evaluated through the Te Hono o te Kahurangi framework.

Te Hono o Te Kahurangi is the name of a unique whare ako framework and methodology used by NZQA to carry out quality assurance in the tertiary sector. The framework recognises ākonga Māori choosing to achieve educational success through Mātauranga Māori as relevant to their worldview, context and practices. Six dynamic and interconnected kaupapa are at the heart of Te Hono o Te Kahurangi.

- Rangatiratanga
- Manaakitanga
- Whanaungatanga
- Kaitiakitanga
- Pūkengatanga
- Te Reo Māori.

For more information please refer to the NZQA website:

↖ [Guidelines for Te Hono o Te Kahurangi evaluative quality assurance.](#)

↖ <https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/assets/Maori/Te-Hono-o-te-Kahurangi/te-hono-o-te-kahurangi-guidelines-.pdf>

Navigating these guidelines

For easy reference, the links below take you directly to the Rules on the NZQA website:

- Rule 4 [Criteria for approval](#)
- Rule 5 [Information required in the application](#)
- Rule 6 [Criteria for accreditation](#)
- Rule 7 [Information required in the application](#)
- Rule 13 [Changes to approved programmes](#)

Icons used throughout the document:

📁 'Folder icon' signals suggestions for documents to provide evidence

↖ 'Arrow icon' draws attention to website resources.

Who can apply for programme approval?

NZQA will only accept applications for programme approval from NZQA-recognised education organisations. These include

- Te Pūkenga and its subsidiaries
- Wānanga
- Registered Private Training Establishments (PTEs)
- Schools
- Transitional Industry Training Organisations (until 31 December 2022)

- Government training establishments.

Who can apply for programme accreditation?

Approved programmes of study may only be provided by accredited education organisations. NZQA will accept applications for programme accreditation from:

- Te Pūkenga and its subsidiaries
- Wānanga
- Registered PTEs
- Schools
- Government training establishments.

Schools

Under section 524 of the Education and Training Act 2020, schools are required to apply to NZQA for approval for new classes, courses or programmes where they are intended exclusively or mainly for international students. Otherwise, schools are encouraged to apply for programme accreditation only.

🔗 [Course Approval for International Student Classes, Courses or Programmes.](https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/approval-accreditation-and-registration/secondary-school-consent-to-assess/course-approval-for-international-student-classes-courses-or-programmes/)
<https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/approval-accreditation-and-registration/secondary-school-consent-to-assess/course-approval-for-international-student-classes-courses-or-programmes/>

For more information schools should contact their School Relationship Manager.

New Zealand Certificates for secondary schools

It is recommended that secondary schools liaise with a Tertiary Education Organisation (TEO) to deliver the TEO's approved programme, except where the school has expertise in developing and writing programmes of study. Guidance for schools seeking to design a programme is here:

🔗 <https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/assessment-and-moderation-of-standards/managing-national-assessment-in-schools/new-zealand-certificates-for-secondary-schools/>

For more information schools should contact their School Relationship Manager.

Programmes leading to the National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA)

Vocational Pathways provide more options for learners to complete NCEA and progress into further learning and work. Together with their NCEA (Level 2), students can achieve a Vocational Pathways Award.

For more information on Vocational Pathways see the Ministry of Education website:

🔗 <https://youthguarantee.education.govt.nz/initiatives/vocational-pathways/>

Tertiary education organisations can develop and submit an application to offer learners NCEA (Level 2) aligned with a Vocational Pathway. Application guidance is on the NZQA website:

🔗 [Applying for NCEA Level 2 aligned with a Vocational Pathway.](https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/approval-accreditation-and-registration/apply-for-ncea-l2-aligned-with-vocational-pathway-teo/)
<https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/approval-accreditation-and-registration/apply-for-ncea-l2-aligned-with-vocational-pathway-teo/>

Transitional Industry Training Organisations (TITOs)

TITOs who have not yet transitioned their arranging training function may apply for approval of a

programme of industry training. TITOs are not granted programme accreditation.

Except where noted with an asterisk* these approval guidelines apply to applications for programme of industry training.

Only TITOs can apply for approval of programmes of industry training. The Rules and instructions for how to submit an application are on the NZQA website:

↖ <https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/about-us/our-role/legislation/nzqa-rules/nzqf-related-rules/industry-training-programme-approval-rules/>

↖ <https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/approval-accreditation-and-registration/approval-prog-industry-training/apply-prog-of-industry-training/>

Transition of TITO programmes of industry training

TITOs have operated within their own legal framework which does not apply to other education providers and which will no longer exist following their planned disestablishment. To be able to enrol learners in programmes leading to qualifications listed on NZQF, and to award these qualifications, education providers require accreditation from NZQA.

Tertiary education organisations (TEOs) may apply for approval and accreditation for TITO programmes if they have been approved by the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) to take on responsibility for arranging training.

Guidance for the approval process and requirements for the transition of TITO programmes, specifically to PTEs, is available on the NZQA website and should be read alongside TEC advice:

↖ <https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/assets/Providers-and-partners/RoVE/Guidelines-for-the-transition-of-TITO-programmes-to-PTEs.pdf>

↖ <https://www.tec.govt.nz/rove/wdcs-and-ito-transitions/info-for-ptes/>

NB: PTEs that already hold approval and accreditation for a programme that leads to the same qualification and includes the same unit standards as that of a TITO programme, do not need to apply for a separate approval.

↖ More information is available at [Reform of Vocational Education » NZQA](#)

2. Approval

NZQA evaluates the programme against the criteria and considers the application using the following rubric and key evaluation question: *how well does the programme design match the qualification outcomes and strategic purpose?*

Approved [ALL of the following]:

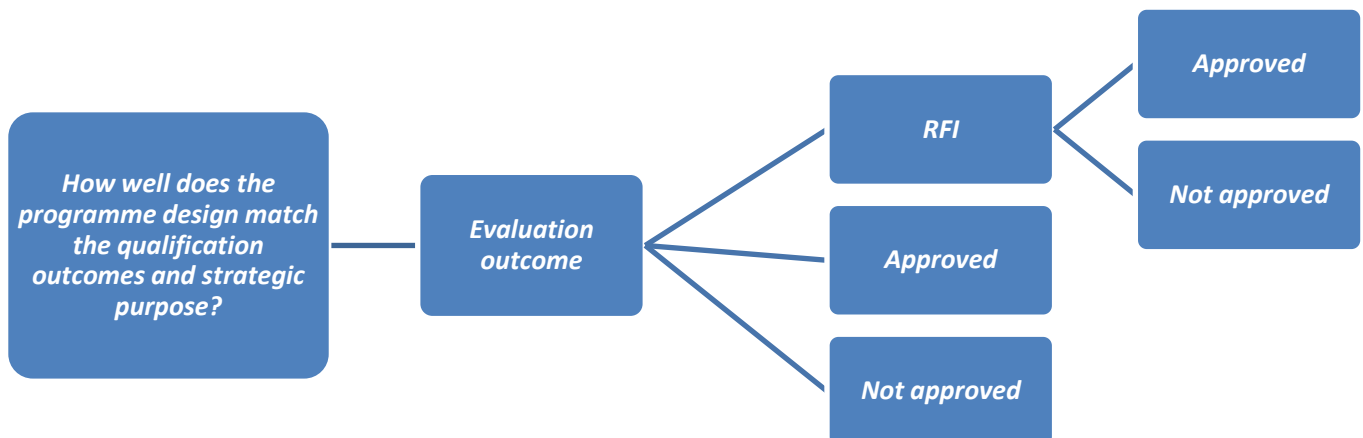
- Good evidence the programme matches the strategic purpose and requirements of the qualification.
- Good evidence that the programme enables learners to achieve the qualification outcomes.
- Good evidence the programme is made up of learning outcomes structured in a coherent way to achieve the qualification outcomes and addresses the relevant needs of learners.
- Good evidence the programme is acceptable to the relevant communities and key stakeholders.
- Programme leading to an industry qualification has been endorsed by the relevant Workforce Development Council (WDC) where applicable.
- No significant gaps or weaknesses in the programme.

Not approved [ANY of the following]:

- The nature, quality and integrity of the information and evidence does not convincingly demonstrate that the programme matches the strategic purpose and/or requirements of the qualification.
- Insufficient evidence that the programme will enable graduates to meet the qualification outcomes.
- Insufficient evidence the programme is structured in a coherent way to achieve the qualification outcomes and address the relevant needs of learners.
- Insufficient evidence the programme is acceptable to the relevant communities and key stakeholders.
- Programme leading to an industry qualification has not been endorsed by the relevant WDC.
- Significant gaps or weaknesses in the programme.

Request for information (RFI)

- To address minor gaps in the evidence provided, or clarification of design, the Evaluator will request information to progress the application.
- If the response to the RFI does not address the issues raised the application will not be approved.



Approval Criterion 1: **Qualification to which the programme leads**

The programme meets the definition published on the NZQA website of the applicable qualification type listed in the second column of the Table in the Appendix to the NZQF Listing and Operational Rules.

The purpose of this criterion is to ensure that learners who complete the programme achieve an NZQF qualification.

Each qualification type has an NZQF definition including its purpose, outcomes, level and credit requirement at that level.

↖ The qualification type, purpose, outcomes, level and credit definitions are in the [New Zealand Qualifications Framework](#) booklet.

Guidance

The purpose, outcomes, level and credits of the programme must align with its NZQF qualification type definition.

In general, the overall level and credit value of the programme must be the same as the qualification (or qualifications) it leads to. Where qualifications include elective and/or optional strands with varying credit values the programme credit value will reflect the credit value of the strand being awarded. In exceptional cases, where unit standards or achievement standards are the assessment tools, the total assessment credits may marginally exceed the qualification credits.

It is not permissible for the programme credits to be fewer than the qualification credits (including applicable strands).

Programmes may contain components that are lower than the level of the qualification (e.g. level 3 components in a level 4 qualification) but overall the graduate profile outcomes must be met by programme requirements at the level of the qualification. This includes outcomes within strands. Similarly, the programme may contain components that are higher than the level of the qualification; however, learners should be given appropriate supports to enable them to succeed and to ensure consistency of outcomes.

Note on components that are at a higher or lower level than the qualification:

- Qualification level is determined by evaluating the qualification graduate profile against the level descriptors. The graduate profile is viewed holistically, and the notion of best fit is applied in determining the level. In the same way, programme outcomes are viewed holistically against the qualification graduate profile.
- The minimum credits for 'Qualification type definitions' in the [New Zealand Qualifications Framework](#) booklet must be met.

Approval Criterion 2: **Title, aims, learning outcomes and coherence**

The title, aims, stated learning outcomes, and coherence of the whole programme are adequate and appropriate and clearly meet the graduate profile and specification for the qualification as listed on the New Zealand Qualifications Framework.

The purpose of this criterion is to ensure that learners who complete the programme will achieve the qualification's graduate profile.

Guidance

Title

The title of the programme should clearly and accurately reflect the subject area of the programme and the qualification to which it leads.

The programme title can be devised by the applicant or the qualification title can be used.

Learners who complete the programme will be eligible for the New Zealand Certificate or New Zealand Diploma to which the programme leads. The certificate awarded will refer to the qualification title in full, as it is listed on the NZQF. The qualification title as listed on the NZQF will also appear on the learner's New Zealand Record of Achievement (NZRoA) if reported to NZQA. Therefore, to avoid confusion for the learners and other stakeholders, the approved programme title should be either:

- exactly the same as the listed qualification title, or
- omit the words New Zealand Certificate or New Zealand Diploma.

Where this is not possible, or desired, a rationale should be included in the application.

For programmes that lead to more than one qualification a title should be devised by the applicant.

Protected terms¹ must be used as intended.

Titles for programmes leading to qualifications with strands:

Programmes leading to the award of a qualification with a strand should include only the title/s of the strand/s the programme will lead to.

Consider for example, a title for a programme leading to the award of the New Zealand Certificate in Advanced Snowschool Instruction (Applied) (Level 5) with strands in Ski, Snowboard, Telemark, and Cross-country (with optional strand in Business Development) via both its Ski strand and optional strand in Business Development, might be:

New Zealand Certificate in Advanced Snowschool Instruction (Applied) (Level 5) (Ski) (Business Development), or, a title devised by the applicant.

↩ *New Zealand Certificate/Diploma Specifications.* <https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/assets/qualifications->

¹ Organisational and qualifications titles that cannot be used without authority: including university, polytechnic, institute of technology, college of education; degree, Bachelor, Master, Doctor or postgraduate, and granting awards containing the words, "National/New Zealand".

Aims

An aim statement should inform learners and other stakeholders of the programme's purpose and the qualification to which it leads. The aim statement should reflect the programme's unique aspects, the specific identified needs of learners and/or target learner group.

Consider, for example:

- the programme's use and relevance to learners, industry and communities
- the programme's aim in terms of the cultural and social aspirations of Māori, Pasifika and other communities
- information relevant to the programme's key stakeholders
- information that is aligned with the strategic purpose statement of the qualification
- teaching and learning philosophy, strand, context, site of learning (e.g. workplace)
- pre-requisites, if designed as part of a qualification pathway / learner journey.

* For industry training programmes, which do not have specified programme outcomes, the strategic purpose statement of the qualification may be used.

Components

Components of learning make up a programme. They include courses, modules, papers, projects and work integrated learning.

Learners should get a result for each component. The content of each component is set out in a descriptor, e.g. a course outline in the student information.

Each component descriptor needs to include:

- title
- component aim
- level
- credits
- learning outcomes
- content summary and sequence
- learning activities (type, mode and mix)
- assessment methodology and a brief description of the assessment.

Consider including in the component descriptor (where relevant):

- sequence of the component in the programme
- detailed information about the assessment methods
- readings and resources
- expected use of communication channels, e.g. for submission of assignments.

Learning outcomes

Learning outcomes describe the knowledge, skills, understanding and application a learner will achieve through each component of the programme of study.

Learning outcomes provide a basis for the design of learning activities and assessment.

The application must show how the programme outcomes and the component learning outcomes map to the qualification's graduate profiles (GPOs) with an explanatory matrix, (see [Appendix 1](#))

* Industry training programmes are not required to set learning outcomes. They are deemed to be developed for each trainee, on-the-job, as part of their individual learning journey.

Learning outcomes must be:

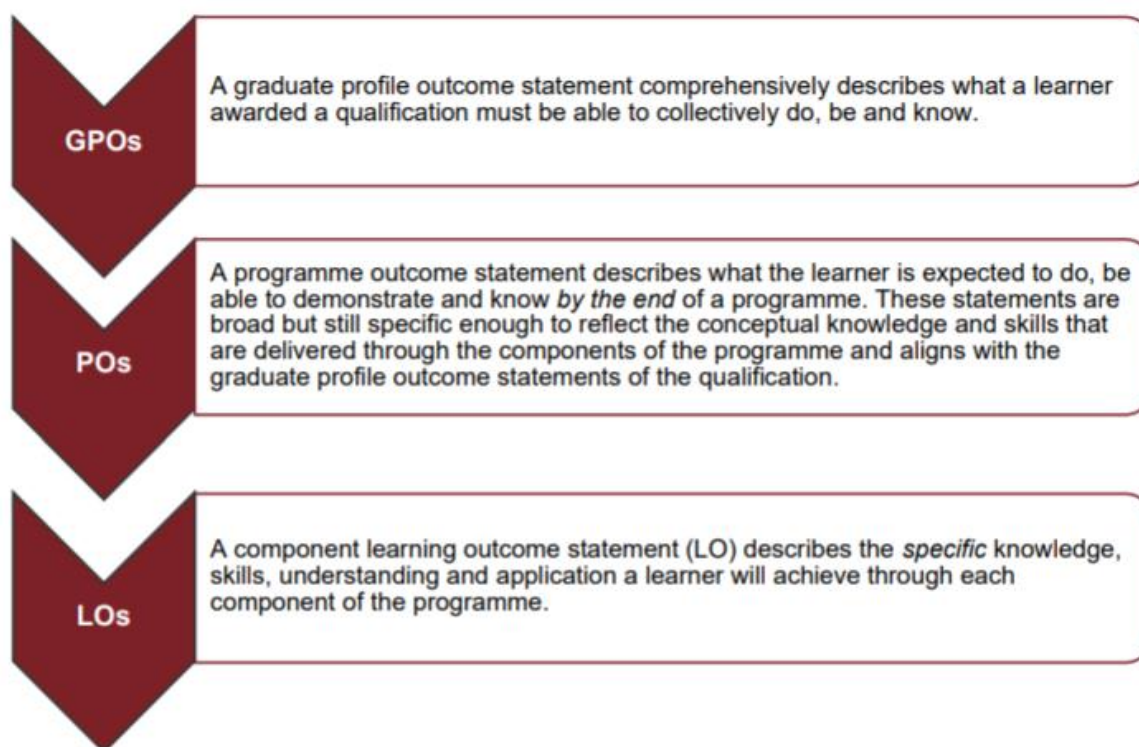
- consistent with programme aims and qualification GPOs
- measurable and achievable, and integrated to provide a balanced and logical programme of learning
- presented in a logical, progressive way that demonstrates learners' development of knowledge, skills, understanding and application.

Programme outcomes (if required)

Programme outcomes are the over-arching outcomes (the skills, knowledge, abilities or attributes) a graduate of the programme will have achieved. In large programmes it is good practice – but not mandatory – to include the key outcomes all graduates will have achieved by the end of the programme.

Component learning outcomes

Programme components must contain learning outcomes for which learning and/or assessment activities are designed. Component learning outcomes (skills, knowledge, abilities or attributes) may together contribute to or comprise the programme outcomes.



The diagram above is from the following NZQA booklet. It is recommended that applicants refer to this booklet which offers more guidance on the structure, key considerations and common mistakes to avoid when writing learning outcomes.

✎ *Writing learning outcomes: structure, considerations, and examples.*

<https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/assets/Providers-and-partners/Registration-and-accreditation/writing-learning-outcomes.pdf>

Coherence

Overall, the programme must be structured to achieve qualification GPOs. The application must show how the components have been designed to form a coherent programme.

Consider and check that:

- there is progression and integration of learning and assessment throughout the programme
- components reflect the appropriate level and duration of learning
- requirements for progress and award of the qualification are clear.

Suggestions for supporting documents:

📁 **Aims** should be part of the programme document and supported by documents developed for learner or employer information, e.g. marketing, draft website pages, prospectus.

📁 **Components & Learning outcomes**, may be in standalone component/ course / module /paper descriptors (see example in Appendix 2); or part of the programme document, and/or submitted as a supporting document in the format developed for teacher or learner use, e.g. teaching lessons, student handbook, materials.

📁 **Coherence** can be shown through the Programme document; Mapping of programme outcomes and component learning outcomes to GPOs (see example in Appendix 1); Progression and award regulations, entry information for learners, assessment information (see also, Criterion 5 for Regulations).

Approval Criterion 3: **Delivery methods**

The delivery methods are adequate and appropriate, given the stated learning outcomes for the programme. Where specific resources are necessary for the programme to be provided, those resources are clearly outlined.

The purpose of this criterion is to ensure that learner achievement of the learning outcomes is supported by the delivery methods and that learners are supported in ways suited to their educational, work, or cultural context.

Guidance

Delivery mode

The application should indicate what the delivery mode of the programme is and explain how the delivery methods will support the target learner groups to achieve.

The **delivery mode** is the overall delivery style:

1. Face to face on campus / in a proximate manner
2. Distance online (or by correspondence) / no site attendance required
3. Blended face to face and distance engagement is required.

A programme may have more than one delivery mode, if different learner groups require a different learning pathway through the programme. For example, a programme may have pathways for learners who attend weekly classes (i.e. face to face) and learners who study by distance online and attend a weekend workshop (i.e. blended).

Alternatively, different learning pathways may be outlined in separate programmes. Two or more programmes may lead to the same qualification, for example, one for learners who are enrolled in full time on-campus classes (face-to-face), and one for work-based learners who learn in the workplace and also engage with content assessment on-line (blended).

A note on delivery modes: these modes are used by NZQA to distinguish programmes that rely entirely on online tools or e-learning, from programmes where being in the same physical space, at least some of the time, is part of teaching and learning. Although remote videoconferencing involves face to face interaction, it is considered 'distance' for the purposes of these definitions. Also, note that 'blended' learning is sometimes used to describe programmes that use more than one learning context, for example off-shore and on-shore or employer-led and provider-delivered. In these definitions 'blended' only refers to delivery style.

For clarification of the distance mode, see:

↖ *Distance online delivery.* <https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/assets/Providers-and-partners/Registration-and-accreditation/distance-online-delivery.pdf>

Delivery methods and learning activities

These are the tools and formats used to engage with learners They may be used in any of the delivery modes.

The application should provide a description of the key learning activities that make up the learning

hours, to justify the credit value of the programme, and show how they map to the learning outcomes and assessment.

Consider:

- how each delivery method will assist the target learner group in achieving the learning outcomes of the programme
- the educational rationale for any practical, work integrated learning
- the clear relationship between learning hours and credit value
- the supply of, and learner access to, educational support, resources or equipment
- ways of informing learners of the activities that will be expected of them if they enrol in a programme.

Methods and activities may include:

- online integrated activities
- research
- individual coaching
- tutorials
- lectures
- on-job instruction
- work-based activity
- on-line conferences
- guest / external speakers
- group work
- field trips
- noho marae
- self-directed learning activities.

The application should show how any self-directed learning contributes to the overall programme of learning.

At lower levels, self-directed learning activities should be guided or planned to ensure the learning complements the directed learning activities and contributes to assessment. At higher levels, independent self-directed learning activities, such as reading and research, will be informed by the programmes' outcomes and the graduate profile of the qualification.


For more information on learning activities, see:

🔗 *Learning-hours questions and answers.* <https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/approval-accreditation-and-registration/programme-approval-and-provider-accreditation/definition-of-learning-hours/questions-and-answers/>

Suggestions for supporting documents:

- 📁 Delivery information may be part of the programme document and supported by documents developed for learner or employer information, e.g. marketing, draft website pages, prospectus
- 📁 Programme handbook
- 📁 Component outlines

 Timetables/delivery schedule

 Student Handbook.

Approval Criterion 4: **Acceptability of the programme and consultation**

There is a written summary of the consultation undertaken, the views expressed, and consideration of the views. The consultation and summary must articulate the need for and acceptability of the programme to the relevant communities (including ākongā, whānau, hapū, iwi and where appropriate, hāpori Māori) and other key stakeholders (including the qualification developer and any relevant academic, employer, industry, professional and other bodies) and any required endorsement by a WDC under section 366(1)(g) of the Act has been obtained.

The purpose of this criterion is to ensure that all learners have equitable access to the programme, will graduate 'work-ready' or equipped for further study, in an area of genuine need.

Guidance

NZQA requires evidence that relevant stakeholders have been meaningfully involved in the design of the programme. The application must include evidence of engagement, feedback and support from the education organisation itself, relevant industry, employer, community, professional bodies or other interested groups.

For education organisations engaged only in the international market, consultation with communities, industry or employers is still required even though graduates may not be remaining in New Zealand in the long term. Consultation is necessary and beneficial, as learners may be on programmes that have work placement or work experience practicums built into them; and/or learners may remain in New Zealand for longer periods, and their education and qualifications should reflect the New Zealand context.

Education organisations with more than one delivery site should consult with the communities associated with each site where the programme is to be delivered.

Local whānau, hapū, iwi and where appropriate, hāpori Māori

It is essential that education organisations maintain working partnerships with the Māori community most relevant to them and their operations. For any education organisation who has not established relationships, the following general information may assist in identifying the relevant group and engaging in the most appropriate manner.

To identify your local iwi, you are referred to:

- Te Kāhui Māngai is a web-based directory of Iwi and Māori Organisations (www.tkm.govt.nz), or
- Your local district council, or
- Your local Māori MP electoral office.

From these sources you should identify local iwi main office/ address area, identify the runanga (the governing council or board of directors for iwi/hapū) and then identify the key person in the runanga (e.g. CEO, chairperson, or nominated spokesperson).

Prior to engaging in discussions on the programme, it may support the process to become familiar with the iwi education plan or strategy so that you are aware of what the benefits of the programme and its graduates are to the iwi. Knowledge of the iwi tikanga (protocol) would be advantageous.

Consider, for example, how evidence of consultation with iwi, hapū, or hāpori Māori contributes to:

- teaching practices that are conducive to Māori learners,
- identified opportunities to develop policies and procedures for identifying distinct Māori learner needs
- processes to address equity issues for Māori learners
- how teaching environments and teaching methods meet the needs of Māori learners
- the development of resources.

The application must be able to show how Māori and Pasifika learners will be considered and supported in the delivery of the programme.

Pasifika

Integrating Pasifika methodologies such as *the Fonofale Model* that focusses on the importance of culture, family, environment, historical context and aspirations for Pasifika people will support the needs of Pasifika students. Based on these needs, educators can design ways to increase their participation in the class and provide them with an environment where the learners feel included and respected.

Industry

Industry includes advocacy groups, trade associations, an association of industries or groups with allied interests, who are non-profit organisations, in general. Examples include chambers of commerce, or business networks who aim to influence public policy, tertiary education and resource allocation decisions.

Industry is the category or general field in which an individual works or is preparing to work in. It is important that the programme is linked to the world of work; and consultation with industry may relate to the design of the programme, appropriate learner projects or periods in employment, internships or work placements. Ultimately, industry must be asked what the relevant skills, knowledge and attributes are, to ensure graduates meet the needs of industry.

Employers

Employers, as distinct to industry, have more specific and immediate requirements. They will be employing the graduates of the programmes they are invited to consult on and will be focused on graduates' work-ready skills, knowledge and attributes. Improving graduate employability skills contributes to the long-term sustainability of the programme. Consultation with employers should also inform the development of authentic assessments for the programme.

Qualification Developers

NZQA requires evidence of acceptability of the programme to the qualification developer.

Qualification developers can provide guidance on the proposed programme, or advise if there are new rules, regulations, specifications or conditions since the qualification was listed. Qualification developers may request all or some of the following:

- A copy of the proposed programme.
- An overview of industry and/or community input into the programme development, e.g. advisory group composition and process.
- A programme overview (delivery of practicum/theory, assessment and moderation approach).

- An outline of the resources required to deliver the programme.
- Evidence that any guidance in the qualification document has been considered when developing the programme.

Seeking support from a Workforce Development Council (WDC)

Most NZQF qualifications will have a WDC as the qualification developer, as WDCs are responsible for all qualifications in the industries they represent. Previously these qualifications were managed by TITOs and NZQA National Qualification Services.

There are six WDCs:

↖ <https://www.tec.govt.nz/rove/workforce-development-councils/the-six-wdcs/>

When seeking WDC support for a programme, education organisations are required to provide all of the information listed in the previous section. They are also required to complete a Programme Support Request form.

The WDC will check that the programme fits within the qualification guidelines and can be effectively delivered and assessed. If the WDC has concerns about the programme, it will work with the education organisation to help resolve those concerns.

↖ More details are available on each WDC's website: www.ohumahi.nz

Please note that this is an interim process until 1 February 2022 when it will be replaced with programme endorsement.

More information on the transfer of standard setting responsibilities from TITOs to WDCs can be found here:

↖ <https://ncea.education.govt.nz/reform-vocational-education-use-unit-standards-and-transitional-industry-training-organizations>

Other qualification developers

Non-vocational qualifications in Foundation and Bridging are managed by NZQA's National Qualification Services and Field Māori qualifications are managed by NZQA's Māori Qualification Services. There are also qualifications that are developed and maintained by TEOs.

To find the qualification developer, search for the qualification by keyword or qualification number on the NZQF section of the NZQA website. Click on the qualification to view the name of the qualification developer: <https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/nzqf/search/results.do>

Academic Bodies or Boards

Academic bodies are usually groups who have responsibilities for academic related matters within an institution or who share academic connections in a certain area in different institutions or organisations.

The rationale for including academic bodies, both within and beyond the institution, is to build up strong academic grounds for the development of the proposed programme, including programme structure and components, entry requirements, arrangements for assessment and moderation; and to foster a quality consistency of qualifications and graduates.

Professional Bodies

Professional bodies are usually non-profit membership organisations in a learned occupation that specify the requirements for entry to the profession or professional body, identify requirements for

continued membership, and set out the code of conduct for the profession as well as complaints and disciplinary procedures. Consider, for example, Engineering New Zealand, Human Resource Institute of New Zealand Management (HRINZ), NZ Institute of Safety Management (NZISM).

The rationale for including professional bodies in consultation is to ensure that the voice from the profession is heard and acted on so that the proposed programme is developed to meet the professional needs and standards.

Regulatory Bodies

Regulatory bodies are public organisations or authorities that are established by government to exercise a regulatory function, e.g. imposing requirements, restrictions and conditions; setting standards; and enforcing compliance. For example, Plumbers, Gasfitters, Drainlayer's and Roofers Registration Board, the Civil Aviation Authority, and Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency.

The obligation to consult regulatory bodies is to ensure (when applicable) that the programme meets relevant regulatory requirements and conditions.

Other Bodies

Other bodies include cultural or community groups such as student bodies, education partners, umbrella organisations, religious groups, or significant organisations which comprise part of the target learner group.

Suggestions for supporting documents:

- 📁 Notes of meetings with external advisors / stakeholders
- 📁 Letters of support from stakeholders
- 📁 Copies of relevant agreements with providers of work or field-based components
- 📁 Memoranda of understanding of stair-casing and cross-crediting with New Zealand or overseas organisations
- 📁 Copies of contracts with any other organisations on which the programme relies
- 📁 Description of how each stakeholder informed the design of the proposed programme
- 📁 Consultation Log – see Appendix 3

Approval Criterion 5: Regulations

There are clear, relevant, and appropriate regulations that specify requirements for

- admission
- credit recognition and transfer
- recognition of prior learning
- programme length and structure
- integration of practical and work-based components
- assessment procedures, including authenticity of student work
- normal progression within the programme.

The purpose of this criterion is to ensure that learners on the programme understand progress through the programme and the rules for qualification award.

Guidance

Admission and selection

Entry requirements should not pose any unreasonable barriers to entry and must be appropriate to the type and level of study. They may include for example, age, academic record, physical fitness, literacy, numeracy, previous learning or experience, or legislation (e.g. working with children).

Selection processes may be used to ensure learner success, or, if the number of applicants exceeds the available places on the programme. They may include date of application, interview, placement tests (e.g. for languages), recital, references.

English language entry requirements:

🔍 English language requirements for international students are set out in Rule 18 of the Programme approval and accreditation Rules 2021. Refer to the *Table* at:

<https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/about-us/our-role/legislation/nzqa-rules/nzqf-related-rules/the-table/>

The New Zealand Certificate in English Language (NZCEL) at levels 3-5 are listed as internationally recognised proficiency tests in the *Table*. NZCEL is a qualification so it remains on a learner's record of learning and can be used by the learner throughout their lifetime to show their learning history and academic achievement. However, to meet English language requirements for programme entry, NZCEL has a 2-year validity period in the same way as other tests listed in the *Table*.

Credit recognition and transfer and recognition of prior learning

The provisions for awarding credit towards a qualification or exemptions from specific programme requirements should cover

- cross-crediting (from another programme within the organisation)
- credit transfer (from a programme awarded by another organisation) (CRT)
- recognition of prior learning (credit awarded for informal or uncertificated learning).

Any limitations on credit awarded from cross-credit or recognition of prior learning (RPL) should be included with the reason for applying the limit.

Where CRT and RPL are part of the programme regulations useful information can be accessed at

<https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/assets/qualifications-and-standards/CRT-RPL-guidelines-Oct-20.pdf>

Learning credited through CRT or RPL is of equal standing with formal learning. This means there should be no arbitrary barriers or limits on the learning that can be credited through CRT or RPL, although limits are permitted. For more information see:

↖ *Recognising learning for credit: Guidelines for the recognition and award of credit for learning.*

<https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/about-us/consultations-and-reviews/guidelines-recognition-and-credit-for-learning/crt-rpl-guidelines/introduction/>

Programme length, structure and integration of practical and work-based components

Regulations should refer to a detailed programme structure, including

- maximum and minimum periods for completion of a component and/or the programme
- any specified pre- and co-requisites, compulsory and optional/elective components, practical and work-based requirements, alternative entry and exit points and any other regulations that apply
- how practical and work-based requirements are integrated into the programme.

Assessment procedures, including authenticity of student work

Regulations should refer to:

- grading of components and how this contributes to completion of the programme
- how, and when, learners will get results from components
- how, and when, final transcripts are issued, and qualifications awarded
- the achieved/not achieved or graded assessment criteria (e.g., a grade Key)
- re-assessments and re-submission
- appeals
- provisions for where learners cannot complete an assessment because of circumstances beyond their control
- the availability of assessment through te reo Māori
- controlled assessment (e.g. examination) rules.

Procedures to establish/confirm authenticity should include:

- Prevention activities. For example, management of assessment materials so current students cannot access previous students' tests.
- Detection activities. For example, the use of plagiarism software.

A Guide that addresses prevention and detection of cheating through documented and systematised practices is available on the NZQA website:

↖ <https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/assets/Providers-and-partners/NZQA-Effective-practice-guide.pdf>

Normal progression within the programme

The expected or normal progress through the programme should be described.

Consider the learners' ability to:

- repeat parts in subsequent delivery
- study part-time
- commence at any time (rolling enrolment)

- plan for a calendared start date (for example delivery by semester)
- enrol in different streams.

Suggestions for supporting documents:

- 📁 A complete set of the relevant regulations e.g. in the form of a learner or programme handbook, or separately referenced section of a Quality Management System (QMS)
- 📁 Academic regulations e.g. the grade key, assessment processes, appeals, re-submissions
- 📁 Admission requirements and procedures; Offer of Place, English language proficiency requirements; enrolment form and procedures, prospectuses, marketing or promotional material
- 📁 Enrolment information for students (may be in the student handbook, prospectus draft website)
- 📁 Sample academic transcript
- 📁 Additional work placement/work-based learning documentation e.g. MOUs, letters to employers.

Approval Criterion 6: Assessment and moderation

Assessment methodology is fair, valid, consistent and appropriate given the stated learning outcomes. There is an effective system for moderation of assessment materials and decisions.

The purpose of this criterion is to ensure the learner has the right assessment opportunities to achieve the learning outcomes of the programme.

Guidance

Assessment methodology

Assessment methods must be appropriate for the subject matter, mode of delivery, level of learning and learning outcomes.

Assessments must be specified for each component, and:

- focus on the learning outcomes to be assessed
- enable accurate decisions to be made about learner achievement
- specify the standard of expected performance and criteria to be used
- consider the overall workload for learners.

📁 The application should include examples of assessment methods and/or materials e.g. written examination, workplace observation, verbal presentation, written assignment.

Information on standards-based assessment is on the NZQA website, see:

🔗 *Assessment tools and approaches.* <https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/assessment-and-moderation-of-standards/assessment-of-standards/generic-resources/assessment-tools-and-approaches/>

🔗 *Assessment of standards.* <https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/assessment-and-moderation-of-standards/assessment-of-standards/>

There is also useful information on assessment in an online (distance) delivery mode:

🔗 *Online assessment: guidance for providers.* <https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/monitoring-and-assessment/online-assessment/>

Moderation systems

Outline how external and internal moderation will be managed for the programme. This includes moderation of materials before they are used for assessment, moderation of assessment decisions before results are released to learners (if applicable), and moderation of assessor decisions post – assessment for self-assessment.

Moderation should focus on whether there is enough evidence that:

- the learner has achieved the learning outcome(s)
- the learner work is authentic
- assessment materials allow learners the opportunity to achieve the learning outcome(s)
- assessors are being consistent in their judgements.

Consider:

- process governance (who has responsibility for moderation, who will undertake it?)
- proportions of pre and post assessment moderation (how many assessments will be selected for moderation?)
- frequency of moderation (when will moderation take place?)
- conditions for resubmission and/or resit of assessments
- any special requirements for moderation, e.g. if the programme is delivered by another provider.

Internal moderation

An effective internal moderation system:

- ensures that all assessment materials are moderated and approved before being used with learners (pre assessment moderation)
- verifies the fairness, validity, and consistency of assessor decisions before results are reported (post assessment moderation)
- provides feedback to assessors, assessment writers, and programme developers on the quality and effectiveness of assessment materials
- is flexible and accommodates a variety of learning outcomes, and assessment contexts (for example, onsite moderation for practical outcomes)
- clearly defines the role of all internal participants
- informs training and ongoing professional development opportunities
- provides participants with enough time to complete their moderation activities
- is viewed by participants as a value-add activity
- results in regular reviews, updates to assessments, and improved assessment practice
- contributes to the continuous improvement of the programme and its relevance to the end-user (for example, a future employer).

External moderation

External moderation provides an assurance that assessment decisions, in relation to assessment standards, are consistent when moderated outside the applicants' organisation.

It is not compulsory under NZQA Rules for a TEO to engage an external party to participate in its moderation system. However, NZQA strongly encourages TEOs to set up reciprocal moderation arrangements.

Standard setting bodies (SSBs), such as NZQA and TITOs, conduct external moderation of standards for which they are the SSB. Each SSB has their own external moderation requirements which TEOs must comply with if they are assessing and reporting results against any of their standards.

Guidance for standards-based moderation is on the NZQA website:

↖ *National external moderation for tertiary education organisations (Standards-based).*

<https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/assessment-and-moderation-of-standards/national-external-moderation/>

Approval Criterion 7: Programme Review

The institution:

- assesses the currency and content of the programme
- has adequate and effective processes for the ongoing review of the programme, taking account of the results of any review of the qualification
- has adequate and effective processes for monitoring the quality of outcomes for learners and other stakeholders, and for reviewing programme regulations and content
- updates the programme accordingly.

The purpose of this criterion is to ensure learners achieve quality graduate outcomes as a result of the education organisation's programme review and self-assessment.

Guidance

Self-assessment

Self-assessment enables a tertiary education organisation to find out what outcomes learners are achieving and how well; the value and currency of the outcomes to stakeholders including learners; and the effectiveness of processes in contributing to these outcomes. By identifying strengths and weaknesses, an education organisation can develop and implement improvement strategies.

More information, including case studies of self-assessment can be found on the NZQA website:

🔗 *Self-Assessment.* <https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/self-assessment/>

Use External Evaluation and Review (EER) Key Evaluation Questions (KEQs) to guide self-assessment:

1. How well do learners achieve?
2. What is the value of the outcomes for key stakeholders, including learners?
3. How well do programme design and delivery, including learning and assessment activities, match the needs of learners and other relevant stakeholders?
4. How effectively are learners supported and involved in their learning?
5. How effective are governance and management in supporting educational achievement?
6. How effectively are important compliance accountabilities managed?

For more information see

🔗 *Key Evaluation Questions.* <https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/self-assessment/make-self-assessment-happen/tools-and-resources/key-evaluation-questions/>

Other links for updating programmes:

- 🔗 Vocational Pathway Programmes can be checked and tested using the Ministry of Education's **Profile Builder Tool**: <https://youthguarantee.education.govt.nz/tools/profile-builder/>
- 🔗 If the programme has expiring standards, find the replacement (if there is one) by selecting 'Unit replacements by ID' in the NZQA **Framework Search** tool <https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/framework/search/results.do>
- 🔗 Changes to unit standards are set out in review summaries on the **NZQA Website**:

<https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/framework/updates/summaries.do>

Suggestions for supporting documents:

- 📁 Notes of meetings with external advisors / stakeholders
- 📁 Letters of support from stakeholders
- 📁 Student experience survey templates

3. Accreditation

Following analysis of the application against the criteria, NZQA considers the application for accreditation with the evaluation question: *to what extent does the education provider have the ongoing capability and resources to support sustained delivery of the approved programme?*

Approved [ALL of the following]:

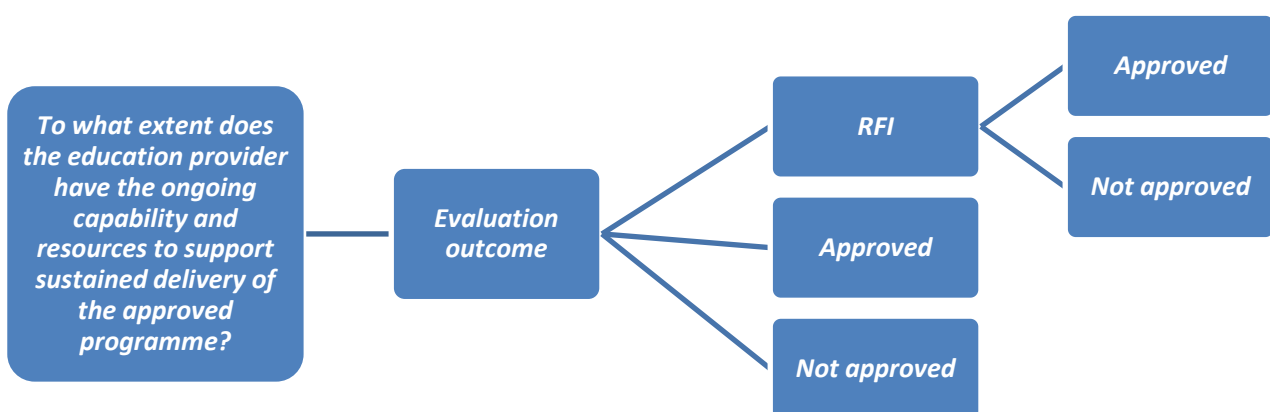
- Good evidence the education organisation has the capability and resources to provide the programme.
- Good evidence that the education organisation can manage the impacts of any specific programme requirements.
- Good evidence of formal arrangements with the programme approval holder where this is required.
- No significant gaps or weaknesses in the self-assessment report, and/or the underlying capability and resources of the organisation.

Not approved [ANY of the following]:

- Insufficient evidence the education organisation has the capability and resources to provide the programme.
- Insufficient evidence that the education organisation can manage the impacts of any specific programme requirements.
- Formal arrangements with the programme approval holder where these are required are insufficient to manage the provision of the programme.
- Significant gaps or weaknesses in the self-assessment report, and/or the underlying capability and resources of the organisation.

Request for information (RFI)

- To address minor gaps in the evidence provided, or clarification of delivery, the Evaluator may request information to progress the application. If the response to the RFI satisfactorily addresses the issues raised, the application will be approved.
- If the response to the RFI does not address the issues raised the application will not be approved.



Accreditation Criterion 1: Assessment and moderation

The institution has the capability and capacity to ensure assessment materials and decisions are fair, valid, consistent and appropriate for the level, given the stated learning outcomes.

The purpose of this criterion is to ensure that decisions made on learner evidence meet the requirements of the programme and the qualification.

Guidance

The key principles for assessment in NZQA-approved programmes are that assessment is fair, valid, consistent and appropriate given the stated learning outcomes.

- **Fair.** Assessment processes, activities, conditions and marking provide equal opportunity for all learners to achieve.
- **Valid.** Assessment has a clear purpose and measures what it aims to measure. Learner work is authentic.
- **Consistent.** Assessor judgements are reliable and accurate across all learners, regardless of who does the assessing or when the assessment occurs.
- **Appropriate given the stated learning outcomes.** Assessment activities and assessor decisions reflect the knowledge, skills, and application of knowledge or skills required at the appropriate NZQF level.

When designing assessment materials, consider:

- are all of the learning outcomes assessed? All learning outcomes are equal and important because they all contribute to the GPOs. The assessment must ensure that a 'pass' reflects the minimum performance criteria for each learning outcome
- does the marking guidance include criteria for the minimum standard of performance required for each learning outcome?
- are there judgements for each learning outcome, whether the assessment tool assesses one learning outcome or multiple learning outcomes?

Check and ensure that the assessment regime is practical and cost-effective, and that assessor qualifications align with the requirements of the programme, see: [Approval Criterion 5: Regulations](#) and [Approval Criterion 6: Assessment and moderation](#).

Accreditation Criterion 2: Resources

The institution has the capability and capacity to support sustained delivery of the programme through appropriate academic staffing, teaching facilities, educational and physical resources, and support services.

The purpose of this criterion is to ensure that the learner has access to support, expertise and materials required for delivery of the programme.

Guidance

Appropriate staff

The education organisation should have staff on appropriate employment agreements to deliver the programme in a sustainable manner. Collectively, the teaching staff must be adequate in numbers, have appropriate qualifications and, where relevant, New Zealand experience to ensure and maintain high standards.

Tutors on contract should be engaged in the same quality systems as permanent employees, inducted into moderation processes, updated on delivery changes, and upskilled with professional development as necessary.

Guest speakers, although a valuable resource for providing a real or realistic context to a programme, are not a substitute for experienced and qualified teaching staff. The use of guest speakers is an acceptable learning activity; however, the guest speaker should be organised (not impromptu) and have a clear purpose that contributes to the overall outcomes of the programme (and ideally can be connected to specific learning outcomes).

Appropriate qualifications for staff

The qualification held by tutoring/teaching staff should be in a relevant discipline to the specific component being taught and must be at least one level higher than the qualification being awarded.

In exceptional circumstances staff may hold equivalent relevant academic, professional or practice-based expertise.

It is strongly recommended that teaching/tutorial staff hold, or be working towards, a tertiary teaching qualification, such as the New Zealand Certificate in Adult and Tertiary Teaching (Level 4) or the New Zealand Certificate in Adult and Tertiary Teaching (Level 5), or equivalent.

Teaching and learning facilities

A list of the key physical, teaching and learning resources to support the delivery of the programme is required. Consider the quality and size of classrooms for programme numbers, spaces for group work, laboratory or practical activities.

Arrangements for work integrated learning

The roles and responsibilities of the learner, the workplace supervisory staff and the education organisation must be formalised for any work-based components. Consider the roles and processes involved:

- reporting and co-ordinating assessment
- evaluation and moderation

- how supervisors/employers will provide feedback (to both the learner and education organisation).

These must be documented in a formal agreement between the parties.

Student support services and resources

A learner/programme handbook (or draft) with programme information guidance should describe the general support and guidance services offered to learners and how they will be applied to this programme.

Consider:

- how learners will receive feedback on their progress
- support to assist learners to progress, including access to IT technology
- who will provide support and how students can access it.

Educational resources

Educational resources should suit the delivery mode (face to face, blended or distance).

Consider:

- what Learning Management System (LMS) has been selected and how will it support delivery of programme content?
- do learners have access to relevant online resources such as e-journals, conference databases, etc.?
- do learners have access to relevant materials, for example laboratory equipment and consumables?
- do learners have access to recommended textbooks, library and/or WiFi?

For programmes that are delivered online there is detailed guidance here:

↶ *Distance online delivery.* <https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/assets/Providers-and-partners/Registration-and-accreditation/distance-online-delivery.pdf>

Suggestions for supporting documents:

- 📁 Evidence of the availability or the plan to procure the resources required to deliver the programme
- 📁 Evidence from the organisation's senior management about the availability of resources including staff, finance and any special requirements for the ongoing viability/sustainability of the programme e.g. a statement of attestation from the Chief Executive, Director or equivalent
- 📁 Curriculum vitae of current staff or position descriptions of the staff who will deliver the programme
- 📁 Examples of information provided to learners
- 📁 Description of how learners' progress is identified, results reported, monitored and the range of actions available to address their progress
- 📁 Copies of agreements between the organisation, learner and the employer (provider of work-based training).

Accreditation Criterion 3: Support for delivery

If the applicant institution is not the holder of the programme approval, there is support from the holder of the programme approval.


The purpose of this criterion is to ensure that the holder of the programme approval is aware that another provider intends to deliver its programme, supports this, and is willing to support the applicant to deliver the programme as approved.

Guidance

Where the applicant is not the sole programme approval holder or is seeking accreditation for a programme where approval is held by another party, evidence of formal arrangements must be included in the application.

These arrangements should cover:

- programme changes and reviews
- dispute resolution
- moderation of outcomes
- managing complaints about quality of delivery
- involvement in ongoing programme review.

 The application must include evidence of support from the holder of the programme approval and any specific delivery requirements if applicable.

Accreditation Criterion 4: Programme Review

There must be adequate and effective review of programme performance and the institution's capability to support the programme.

There must be monitoring of improvement following review, and processes for determining whether the programme should continue to be delivered.

The purpose of this criterion is to ensure that learners are completing programmes that meet their needs and the needs of relevant communities (including ākongā, whānau, hapū, iwi and where appropriate, hāpori Māori) and other key stakeholders (including the qualification developer and any relevant academic, employer, industry, professional and other bodies).

If required endorsement by a WDC under section 366(1)(g) of the Act must be obtained.

Guidance

Programme review

The responsibility for demonstrating how graduates will meet qualification requirements and outcomes through a programme of study or industry training rests with each education organisation through its self-assessment processes.

There is overlap in this requirement with the self-assessment expected by programme approval holders. Applicants for accreditation should focus on how organisational *capability* will be reviewed, to ensure it is delivered as designed.

An effective programme review process:

- measures and monitors the quality of outcomes for learners and stakeholders, particularly for Māori and Pasifika learners
- ensures that the programme structure and content is current and reflects the needs and feedback of key stakeholders and learners
- evaluates emerging industry, employment and/or education pathway information to establish the impact on programme value and viability
- confirms that assessment and moderation systems support the credibility of learner outcomes
- confirms that academic staffing, support services, facilities, and educational and physical resources support sustained delivery of the programme
- results in timely updates to the programme to reflect the current version of the qualification
- ensures management oversight of the programme delivery and review process
- monitors the effectiveness of any programme changes and confirms they are adding value for learners and stakeholders
- confirms guidelines and expectations for the programme review are clear and followed.

WDC Endorsement

A reviewed programme must be supported and/or endorsed by the relevant WDC where applicable. See Approval Criterion 4: Acceptability of the programme and consultation.

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4. Making changes to programmes

The need to make changes to an approved programme may arise from:

- the programme review process
- internal or external moderation
- qualification review
- EER
- consistency reviews
- monitoring and assessment and any other processes.

Changes are defined in the Rules as Type 1 or Type 2.

Type 1

Rule 3.1

Type 1 change means one or more changes to components of an approved programme which do not impact on the programme as a whole.

A Type 1 change is a minor change to a programme component(s) which does not impact on:

- the programme aim, content or the outcome statement
- entry requirements
- the total credit value, total learning hours, delivery or vacation weeks (durations)
- mode of delivery, assessment methodology, or the overall programme structure.

Type 1 changes do not result in amendments to NZQA programme data requirements contained on the Programme Details Report (RO482). This report is normally attached to the NZQA approval letter.

Examples of Type 1 changes include:

- changes to learning activities
- minor changes to assessment methods and/or assessment weightings, for example an essay is replaced with a test
- changes to the title of a component.

Process for making Type 1 changes

Email Type 1 change notifications to qaadmin@nzqa.govt.nz. NZQA will acknowledge the notification of a Type 1 change and add the changes to our records. We will make contact if the proposed changes are considered to be Type 2 changes.

Type 2

Rule 3.1

Type 2 change means one or more changes to components of an approved programme which do have an impact on the programme as a whole.

Guidance

A Type 2 change must be approved by NZQA prior to implementation. Type 2 change applications

are evaluated against programme approval and accreditation criteria. They result in amendments to the programme approval and accreditation data held by NZQA and the programme is given a new version number.

Examples of Type 2 changes include:

- graduate profile outcomes and/or changes to learning outcomes
- the programme title, aim, content or outcome statement
- programme structure e.g. adding, combining or removing components, changing components (including work placements, etc.), or changing component credit values
- regulations, including entry requirements
- the total credit value, total learning hours, delivery or vacation weeks (durations)
- changes to unit standard versions where the level or credit value has changed
- mode of delivery (e.g. a move from face-to-face learning to distance online learning), and
- significant changes to assessment methods and/or assessment weightings.

Process for making Type 2 changes

Apply to make a Type 2 change via the TEO portal using the secure log-in.

A Type 2 change must be approved by NZQA prior to implementation.

NZQA reviews the whole programme in light of the proposed change. TEOs should ensure that any proposed change does not affect the overall coherence of the programme. If the number and/or extent of the proposed changes are so significant that the programme is markedly different to the current version of the programme, then the application may not be approved, and the applicant advised to submit a new programme application.

Not sure if the changes mean a new programme application is required? Talk to the Approvals and Accreditation contact person for your education organisation (listed under 'NZQA Contacts' on the TEO profile).

5. Agreements between organisations

Sub-contracting

An education organisation² with NZQA approval for a programme can arrange for another organisation to provide that approved programme, or part of the approved programme, on its behalf.

NZQA subcontracting approval is designed to accommodate access to specialised or niche expertise for the delivery and/or assessment of a part of a programme that an approved provider may not have themselves. A common example occurs when first aid training in the workplace is required as a part of a programme, where a specialist first aid training provider is subcontracted to deliver a short course as a part of a programme.

There are different requirements when an education organisation engages a sub-contractor that depend on whether the sub-contractor involved has accreditation to provide the approved programme (see the NZQF Programme Approval and Accreditation Rules 2021) and/or if the programme is assessed against Directory of Assessment Standards (DAS), whether both parties have consent to assess for the standards the programme is assessed against (see the NZQF Consent to assess against standards on the [Directory of Assessment Standards Rules 2011](#)).

- i) Both the applicant and the sub-contractor have accreditation for the programme (rare):

While it is commonplace for an education organisation with NZQA programme approval (e.g. a programme approval holder) or with programme approval and accreditation, and another education organisation (the subcontractor) to have consent to assess for the standards a programme is assessed against, it is rare for both parties to have NZQA accreditation to deliver the same programme.

If an education organisation with NZQA programme approval (programme approval holder) and/or programme approval and accreditation wishes to subcontract another education organisation (the subcontractor) to deliver part or all of its programme, **where the programme is not assessed against DAS standards**, and the subcontractor also has accreditation to deliver the same programme, the education organisation must notify NZQA of the arrangement prior to delivery and provide a copy of the agreement between the two parties.

If a programme approval holder wishes to subcontract another education organisation (the subcontractor) to deliver part or all of its programme, **where the programme is assessed against DAS standards**, where the subcontractor also holds both accreditation to deliver the same programme and consent to assess for the standards the approved programme is assessed against, then the programme approval holder must notify NZQA of the arrangement prior to delivery and provide a copy of the agreement between the two parties.

- ii) The applicant has accreditation, but the sub-contractor does not (common):

It is commonplace for an education provider with NZQA programme approval (e.g. a programme approval holder) or programme approval and accreditation to seek to subcontract another organisation to deliver and/or assess part or all of the programme on its behalf.

² Sub-contracting arrangements, as described in this section, do not apply to TITOs or schools.

The subcontractor may be another education organisation (e.g. another PTE or a school), or conversely another business, charitable trust or incorporated society that is not registered, recognised or affiliated with NZQA or any of the other state sector educational entity.

Before the sub-contractor provides any part of a programme, the education organisation must apply to NZQA for approval to engage the sub-contractor and provide the following information:

- the name and company number and/or NZ Business Number (NZBN) of the sub-contractor if it is not an NZQA registered educational organisation
- identification of the parts of the programme(s) (or the programme(s)) to be provided under the arrangement
- the reason for the proposed sub-contracting arrangement
- a copy of the sub-contracting arrangement between the education organisation and the sub-contractor
- evidence of internal quality assurance approval by the education organisation, through an Academic Board or similar facility
- evidence the teaching or training staff have or will have the qualifications and experience to deliver and/or assess learners, trainees, or students enrolled in the programme(s) e.g. CVs and role descriptions.

The sub-contracting arrangement must specify:

- the names of the parties to the arrangement and the corporate entity numbers (e.g. company number and/or NZBN) of the subcontractor if it is not an NZQA registered educational organisation
- the titles, programme, and version number of the programme(s) the agreement applies to
- the titles, numbers, levels and credit values of any DAS assessment standards that are assessed as a part of the programme, or programme(s) the agreement applies to
- the term of the arrangement
- procedures for resolving any differences which might arise between the parties to the arrangement
- compliance with the arrangement and NZQA rules
- the ongoing monitoring of the arrangement and delivery
- assessment and moderation arrangements
- provision of resources, both physical and human
- maintaining and reporting learner academic records
- clear process for the review of the arrangement and for the termination of the arrangement, and
- procedures for the protection of learners if the arrangement is terminated.

Criteria for approving sub-contracting arrangements:

NZQA will grant approval to an application where it is satisfied that it meets the requirements of the relevant Rules in all sub-contracting arrangements.

- The education organisation remains responsible for the sub-contractor meeting all of the obligations that are relevant for the accreditation, including all relevant obligations in the Education and Training Act 2020 and rules made under section 452 of the Act.
- There is a formal documented arrangement between the education organisation and the sub-contractor that includes provisions to ensure that NZQA is able to exercise its quality assurance and enforcement powers and functions relating to the sub-contractor's provision of the programme.

- All information and advertising provided for the programme of study or training programme must clearly state that it is provided through a sub-contracting arrangement.
- All learner enrolments are through the education organisation. The education organisation must also maintain academic information.

NZQA will not approve subcontracting arrangements between an education provider with NZQA programme approval (e.g. a programme approval holder) or programme approval and accreditation and a third party where:

- there is insufficient evidence that the third party (the subcontractor) has the expertise in the same field or occupational area to deliver and/or assess the programme
- there is insufficient evidence that the third party (the subcontractor) has the physical resources, hardware or equipment to deliver and/or assess the programme
- the delivery and assessment of an entire programme is proposed to be subcontracted, and there is no clear rationale as to why the approved provider is not delivering the programme itself.

Delivery Sites

If the proposed subcontracting delivery is frequent and on-going (i.e. more than once or twice over a period of 26 weeks or more), then the subcontractor's delivery site should be applied for as a permanent delivery site of the programme approval holder.

↶ See [Approval of delivery sites for Level 1-6 and level 7 diplomas.](#)

6. The application process

Applications from category 1 education organisations

Approval

Category 1 education providers that can demonstrate a successful history of provision in the subject area at the same qualification level need only supply evidence of internal programme approval along with full programme details that meet NZQA programme approval criteria.

For programme delivery in a new area, or at a level above current programme approvals and accreditations held in the area, the application requires a self-assessment report, internal programme approval and full programme details.

Accreditation

Category 1 tertiary education providers that can demonstrate a successful history of provision in a subject area at the same level need only supply a statement from the Chief Executive confirming the organisation's ongoing capability and resources to effectively and sustainably provide the programme.

For programme delivery in a new area, or at a level above current programme approvals and accreditations held in the area, the application requires full programme details that meet NZQA programme accreditation criteria.

Applications from category 2 and 3 tertiary education providers, schools, category 4 tertiary education providers (where permitted) and tertiary providers without a category (yet to have an EER)

All applications require full programme details that meet NZQA approval and accreditation criteria, a self-assessment report, and internal programme approval.

Self-assessment report

This report outlines how the applicant is confident that sufficient information has been included in the application, to show that:

- the programme design matches the qualification outcomes and strategic purpose
- the programme application meets all requirements and answers the evaluation question/s.

Internal programme approval

Evidence of programme approval within the education organisation (for example, through the Academic Board, Board of Trustees or similar facility) is required.

Where the programme is jointly owned, the lead education organisation will submit the report via its internal academic approval processes.

How to apply

Application instructions are set out in the *Online TEO applications* section of the NZQA website:

↗ <https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/login/online-teo-applications/>

and

↗ <https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/login/online-teo-applications/online-programme-approval-and-accreditation-application/>

The instructions for schools are here:

🔗 <https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/login/online-school-applications/>

When the application is received, an email quoting an NZQA case number will be emailed to the applicant. This number stays with the application through to its outcome.

The application will be assigned to an Approvals and Accreditation team or Quality Assurance Māori team Evaluator. Another email will advise the applicant of the Evaluator's name and contact details.

The Evaluator will commence evaluation and will contact the applicant if the submission lacks sufficient evidence for the evaluation to be carried out.

NZQA will process applications within 45 working days, or 30 working days for category 1 education organisations. This does not include the time when more information has been requested (i.e. RFIs). During an RFI, the application is on hold.

Supporting documents

This guide offers suggestions for supporting documents. Indicate how the documents support the application and meet the criteria if it is not obvious.

If a recent NZQA quality assurance activity or application, e.g. an application in the same subject area, included the same documents they do not need to be supplied again. Refer to the activity or case number in the application, and the evaluator will locate them.

How the application is evaluated

Evaluation

The Evaluator will assess the application against the criteria in the NZQA Rules, and will consider the application as a whole with the key evaluation question(s):

- How well does the programme design match the qualification outcomes and strategic purpose?
- To what extent does the education provider have the ongoing capability and resources to support sustained delivery of the approved programme?

Request for information (RFI)

What does it mean?

Overall, the Evaluator has deemed the application meets the criteria and is supported by documentation of sufficient quality that an RFI should resolve any questions about the programme's design or delivery.

There may be further work required to aspects of the programme's design or delivery plans. Where possible, suggestions may be made to assist the applicant. In some cases, the RFI will comprise questions about missing or unclear documentation.

The findings of the evaluation will be set out in a detailed RFI report. The Evaluator will be available to explain or clarify the findings in an RFI.

If the Evaluator concludes that the response to the RFI has not addressed the issues raised, then the application will not be approved.

Outcome

Applications will be approved or not approved.

If the application is not approved, the reasons will be set out in a detailed report linked to the criteria in the NZQA Rules. The Evaluator will be available for a phone call or meeting, or will provide clarification via email, in response to the outcome letter and report.

If applications are approved the education organisation will receive an approval letter with a copy of the approved programme details recorded on the NZQA system.

See also, approval rubric ([Approval](#)) and accreditation rubric ([Accreditation](#)).

What will it cost?

The work on the application is charged at a rate of \$190 per hour plus GST.

↩ NZQA Fees. <https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/about-us/our-role/legislation/fees/quality-assurance-fees/>

The evaluation of a high-quality application for a new programme approval and accreditation - that does not require an RFI - may take 3-4 hours including peer review.

Programme ownership involving a collaborative or commercial relationship

Education organisations may seek approval for a programme developed collaboratively, for example as part of a consortium. If the programme is jointly owned, then the application for approval needs to include the formal arrangements made between the parties.

A lead organisation needs to be identified in the application.

Appendix 1 - Mapping example

Programme Title leading to the New Zealand Certificate in

Component title	Content (Topics covered in the component)	Component Learning Outcomes	Credits	Assessments & weighting	Programme outcomes (if required)	Graduate profile outcomes
Title 1:	1	X	Test		GPO 2
		2	XXX X	Presentation		GPO 1 GPO 4
		3	X			GPO 1
Title 2	1	XX XX	Essay		GPO 3 GPO 4
		2	X XX XXX	Verification		GPO 1 GPO 3 GPO 4
		3	X X	Portfolio		GPO 1 GPO 2
		4	XXX	Exam		GPO 3

Appendix 2 - Component Descriptor example

Title			
Level		Credits	
Learning outcomes – What learners will know and do at the end of the learning period of this component	<p>On successful completion of this component, the learners will be able to...</p> <p>LO1:</p> <p>LO2:</p>		
Content (Topics covered in the component)			
<p>Delivery Methods / Learning Activities and hours (Include Self-directed learning activities and time) And resources specific to this module.</p>	<p>E.g., 5 hrs face to face classes; 5 hrs supervised work; 3 hrs group work; 2 hrs Self-directed research</p> <p>Total hrs x</p>		
Assessment methods	E.g., presentation, test, portfolio		
Assessment Standard(s) (if applicable)			

Programme Document

**Programme title
(level and credits)**

Leading to:

Qualification title and number

Contents

Programme Title	1
Programme Aim	1
Programme Outcomes (if required)	1
Programme Length	1
Programme Structure	2
Delivery Methods	2
Delivery schedule	2
Resources	2
Regulations	2
Assessment and Moderation	3
Moderation	3
Programme Self-assessment and Review	3
Component Descriptors	3
Acceptability of the programme and consultation	3
Evidence requirements for consistency	4

Programme Title

Programme Aim

Programme Outcomes (if required)

Programme Length

Teaching weeks:

Holiday weeks:

Total weeks:

Programme Structure

Component Title	Pre-requisites	Credits	Directed hours	Self-directed hours	Total hours
Totals					

Delivery Methods

- Learning and teaching strategies

Delivery schedule

Resources

Regulations

- Entry Requirements
- Credit Recognition and Transfer
- Recognition of Prior Learning
- Assessment procedures
- Authenticity
- Resits
- Integration of Practical and Work-based components

Assessment and Moderation

- Assessment in Te Reo Māori
- Assessment Appeals

Moderation

- Internal Moderation
- External Moderation

Programme Self-assessment and Review

Component Descriptors

Acceptability of the programme and consultation

Evidence requirements for consistency