

Policy for reviews of qualifications at levels 1-6 on the New Zealand Qualifications Framework

1. Purpose

The purpose of reviewing a qualification is to ensure it remains useful and relevant and continues to meet the needs of the learners, industry and stakeholders for which it was initially developed. Wherever appropriate, the qualification should be considered in relation to the strategic workforce requirements of the industry as a whole.

A review is an important mechanism for managing duplication and proliferation of qualifications and ensures qualifications meet all the requirements for listing on the NZQF.

For some industries, it may be appropriate for the industry/community, tertiary education organisations and sector groups to identify a recognised independent group or individual to lead a specific review.

2. Roles and responsibilities

NZQA is responsible for:

- developing, negotiating and publishing an annual schedule for qualification reviews
- initiating and tracking each qualification review
- identifying and liaising with all relevant qualification developers (where a group of qualifications is being reviewed together)
- reviewing the plan for each review
- considering and approving recommendations for changes to qualifications as a result of a review
- providing support in developing capability in qualification development
- following up and working with any qualification developers who choose not to participate in a scheduled review to determine the status of their existing qualifications on the NZQF following the outcome of the review.

Qualification developers are responsible for:

- planning and conducting periodic reviews of qualifications developed by them and in accordance with the schedule of reviews

- submitting the plan for the review to NZQA, ensuring the approach to the review is cost effective and appropriate for the number and range of stakeholders involved to enable their participation
- coordinating and communicating with relevant stakeholders
- liaising with NZQA if any qualification developer or mandatory stakeholder chooses not to participate in the qualification review
- working with the industry/community and NZQA to identify relevant sector leaders where these are needed to support the qualification review
- reporting the outcomes of the review and recommendations to NZQA
- implementing approved recommendations
- agreeing to accept the outcomes of the review including changes in status to their own qualification
- nominating a delegate if the developer chooses not to participate in the scheduled review.

3. Time to complete a review

The qualification review must normally be completed within 6 months from the qualification review date listed on the NZQF. Implementation of recommended changes to qualifications will immediately follow the review.

Failure to meet this timeline without a reasonable explanation may result in the status of the qualification(s) on the NZQF being changed to *Expiring*.

4. Costs of a review

The qualification developer(s) in conjunction with stakeholders are responsible for any costs associated with the review. It is expected this will be a contributory process with costs shared appropriately between participants.

The costs of developing new qualifications will be borne by the qualification developer(s).

5. The review process

There are three stages in the conduct of a review.

Initiating a review

Each year NZQA will publish a schedule of qualifications to be reviewed. Qualifications will be scheduled for review based on:

- qualification review date specified on the NZQF

and/or one or more of the following triggers:

- identified duplication and proliferation especially in areas of economic and strategic importance

- workforce changes or social, industry and technological shifts which may require a new qualification or category of worker
- changes in legislation or government policy
- lack of use of a qualification e.g. after two years
- a request from the qualification developer.

NZQA will advise all the relevant qualification developer(s) as each review is initiated and request that a plan for the review be submitted to NZQA within three months of the qualification review date. Accredited users of a qualification may also request NZQA to initiate a qualification review. If a qualification developer does not agree to carry out a qualification review, NZQA will, in the first instance, take action as outlined in section 6.

Undertaking the review

The reviewers will:

- a. develop a plan with timelines and approach to:
 - assess the current need and demand for the qualification(s) and the fit with the demonstrated current and future requirements of learners, industry and stakeholders
 - identify and address any issues of duplication with similar qualifications on the framework
 - review the arrangements for consistency across the application of the qualification(s)
 - involve and consult with appropriate stakeholders, consistent with the qualification's Stakeholder Profile and incorporate their feedback. Mandatory stakeholders would include tertiary education organisations currently providing programmes of study and training leading to the qualification.
- b. conduct the review and make provision to align the resulting qualifications with the requirements for listing a qualification at levels 1-6 on the NZQF
- c. at the completion of the review, prepare and submit a review outcome report to NZQA which summarises the process of the review, its findings and the recommendations for any changes to be made which may include:
 - no changes to one or more of the qualifications
 - changes resulting in one or more new qualification versions
 - developing one or more new qualifications
 - expiring or discontinuing one or more qualifications.
Transition arrangements are required where the status of the qualification is being changed to expiring.

The report will include the proposed timeframe and approach to implementing the changes to qualifications.

NZQA's acceptance of the recommendations arising from the review of qualifications should meet the need for approval to develop a qualification.

Implementing the recommendations

The qualification developer(s) will implement the agreed recommendations and submit any new or revised qualifications to NZQA for approval within the agreed timeframe. Qualifications submitted must meet the approval requirements of a qualification specified in the *Guidelines for approval of qualifications at levels 1-6 on the New Zealand Qualifications Framework*.

NZQA will update the qualification record(s) on the NZQF to ensure qualification details are accurate and complete.

6. Managing challenges to the review process

Delay in commencing the review

In the event a scheduled review is not commenced or a review plan not submitted within the three month period, NZQA will, in the first instance, follow up with the qualification developers to determine the reason for the non-compliance and agree remedial action to be taken.

If the remedial action is not completed then NZQA may:

- refer the matter to the NZQA Risk and Compliance team for further action
- reassign responsibility for the review to an alternate stakeholder
- co-ordinate the review

Disputing review outcomes

As part of its guardianship of the NZQF, NZQA is responsible for qualifications listed on the NZQF and in this role is the final decision-maker on the outcome of a qualification review. It is anticipated that in the majority of cases there will be consensus over the outcome of a review process.

If an individual qualification developer or stakeholder proposes an outcome that NZQA is unable to accept, then NZQA will consult with the affected parties over its proposed final decision. In making its final decision, NZQA will take into account the views expressed in the consultation and explain its decision.